PRAGMATICS : SPEECH ACTS AND THEIR ROLE IN COMMUNICATION

Do'stnazarova Lobar Norsoatovna

student of Faculty of Languages

Termiz State Pedagogical Institute

Email : lobardostnazarova@gmail.com

Phone : +998938562701

Abstract : *Speech act theory (J.L. Austin, J. Searle) categorizes utterances by function. It distinguishes locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, as well as direct and indirect speech acts. This paper highlights their significance in cross-cultural communication, artificial intelligence, and legal discourse.*

Аннотация : *Теория речевых актов (Дж. Л. Остин, Дж. Сёрль) классифицирует высказывания по их функции. Она различает локутивные, иллокутивные и перлокутивные акты, а также прямые и косвенные речевые акты. В статье рассматривается их значение в межкультурной коммуникации, искусственном интеллекте и юридическом дискурсе.*

Keywords : *Artificial intelligence, communication, illocutionary acts, indirect speech acts, linguistics, locutionary acts, perlocutionary acts, pragmatics, speech act theory.*

Language is not just a medium for conveying information but also a powerful tool for performing actions. The study of how language is used in context falls under the domain of pragmatics, and one of its most crucial aspects is the concept of speech acts. Speech act theory, introduced by J.L. Austin and later refined by John Searle, explores how people do things with words—how utterances can function as actions rather than mere statements. Understanding speech acts is essential in linguistics, communication, and even artificial intelligence, as it helps explain how meaning extends beyond words to include intention and social function.

Austin's theory of speech acts differentiates between three main types of acts that occur simultaneously when a speaker utters a sentence. The locutionary act is the basic act of producing a grammatically structured and meaningful sentence. The illocutionary act refers to the speaker's intended function, such as making a request, giving an order, or making a promise. The perlocutionary act is the effect that the utterance has on the listener, such as persuading, warning, or amusing them. For instance, when someone says, "It's cold in here," the locutionary act is the literal statement about temperature, the illocutionary act might be a request to close the window, and the perlocutionary act could be that someone actually gets up and shuts it. Building on Austin's work, John Searle further classified speech acts into five categories based on their function. Assertives are statements that express beliefs or describe reality, such as "The sun is shining." Directives are attempts to get the listener to do something, like "Close the door." Commissives commit the speaker to a future action, such as "I promise to call you tomorrow." Expressives convey emotions or psychological states, like "I apologize for being late." Declarations change reality simply by being spoken under the right circumstances, such as "I now pronounce you husband and wife." Speech acts can also be classified as direct or indirect. A direct speech act explicitly states the speaker's intention, such as "Pass me the salt." An indirect speech act, on the other hand, relies on context and social conventions to imply meaning, such as "Could you pass me the salt?" which functions as a polite request rather than a literal question about ability. Indirect speech acts are particularly common in cultures where politeness and indirectness are valued. Cultural differences play a significant role in how speech acts are used and interpreted. In Western cultures, directness is often preferred in professional settings, while in many Asian cultures, indirectness is seen as a way to maintain harmony and avoid confrontation. For example, refusing an invitation in American English might involve a direct but polite statement like "I'm sorry, I can't make it," whereas in Japanese, a more indirect response such as "It would be difficult for me to come" would signal the same meaning.

Speech act theory is also highly relevant in modern technology, particularly in the development of artificial intelligence and virtual assistants. AI systems like Siri, Alexa, and ChatGPT rely on speech act theory to interpret user intent and generate appropriate responses. For instance, when a user says, "Can you play some jazz music?" the system must recognize this as a directive rather than a literal question about capability. While AI has improved in handling direct speech acts, understanding indirect speech, sarcasm, and context-dependent meanings remains a challenge.Beyond AI, speech act theory has broad applications in fields such as law, education, and communication studies. In legal contexts, the illocutionary force of statements is critical, as contracts, oaths, and promises must be legally binding.

In education, teaching speech acts helps language learners understand how to use polite requests, apologies, and other functions appropriately in different social situations. In interpersonal communication, recognizing speech acts allows people to navigate conversations more effectively, avoiding misunderstandings and fostering better relationships. Ultimately, speech acts are a fundamental aspect of human communication, enabling speakers to perform actions with words and interpret meaning beyond the literal level. Whether in daily conversations, cross-cultural interactions, or technological advancements, understanding speech acts enhances our ability to communicate effectively. The work of Austin and Searle provides a valuable framework for analyzing how language functions in different contexts, showing that words are not just symbols but powerful instruments of action. As language continues to evolve in digital and globalized spaces, the study of speech acts remains essential for understanding and improving communication in the modern world.

Conclusion

Speech acts are fundamental to human interaction, enabling speakers to perform actions through language rather than just conveying information. Austin's and Searle's theories provide a framework for analyzing how speech acts function within different contexts, distinguishing between direct and indirect communication. Cultural variations in speech act usage highlight the importance of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication, where misunderstandings may arise due to differing

conventions. Additionally, advancements in artificial intelligence and natural language processing continue to integrate speech act theory, improving the interaction between humans and machines. In legal, educational, and technological domains, recognizing the power of speech acts allows for more effective communication and deeper linguistic analysis. As language evolves, speech act theory remains a crucial area of study, bridging the gap between semantics and real-world communication.

REFERENCES

1.Austin, J. L. (1962). How to Do Things with Words. Harvard University Press.

2.Searle, J. R. (1969). Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language. Cambridge University Press.

3.Searle, J. R. (1979). Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts. Cambridge University Press.

4.Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics. Longman.

6.Yule, G. (1996). Pragmatics. Oxford University Press.

7.Kabilova, S. A. (2023). Theoretical Foundations of the Study of Euphemisms. Proceedings of International Conference on Modern Science and ScientificStudies, 2(6),119-123. https://econferenceseries.com/index.php/icmsss/article/view/2256

8. Kabilova,S (2021). Metaphor in Newspapers. JournalNX, 7(1), 210-214.Stylistic Forms Of Euphemisms. (2024). Pedagogical Cluster-Journal of Pedagogical Developments, 2(5), 215-220.