

The Importance of Speech Acts in Communication

Alikulova Sevara Abduvassi qizi

*Teacher at Department of Functional Lexicon of the English Language, Faculty of Philology,
Uzbekistan State World Languages University*

ANNOTATION

The role of communication is to send and provide information to a receiver, convey meanings, messages in an attempt to create shared understanding among participants. Having described various kinds of syntactic structures and what they mean we see that people often don't seem to say what they mean. They use languages differently from its apparent meaning; its functions are different from the apparent structure. Pragmatics is basically indispensable to understand what happens among interactors through linguists Austin and Searl who made up a theory on how language serves to perform action. Speech act belongs to the domain of pragmatics.

KEYWORDS: *Pragmatics, competence, speech acts, classification, illocution, locution, perlocution, assertive, expressive, declarations, directives, commissive.*

Introduction

Pragmatics also strongly related with context or situation when something is being said, thus it is very important for the speakers to focus on the context. Leech also states that pragmatics is the study of meaning which is related to the speech situations. In accordance to Leech statement, Yule (1996) argues that pragmatics should also consider aspects of context such as who people are talking to, when, where, and under what circumstances that will determine the way they say and what they want to say.

Yule (1996:3) states that there are four areas which pragmatics is concerned with:

1. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning.
2. Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.
3. Pragmatics is the study of how to get more communicated than it is said.
4. Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance.

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener or reader. People realize that pragmatics, different from other sub-disciplines of linguistics which tell how to understand and use language, tells more about how to use language appropriately.

In teaching language along with its culture, teacher should take pragmatic aspects into consideration, since understanding pragmatics will help foreign language learners to avoid false interpretation which will cause misunderstanding in communication between speakers with different culture and social backgrounds.

Definition of Speech Acts

In linguistics, a speech act is an utterance defined in terms of a speaker's intention and the effect it has on a listener. Essentially, it is the action that the speaker hopes to provoke in his or her audience.

Speech acts might be requests, warnings, promises, apologies, greetings, or any number of declarations. As you might imagine, speech acts are an important part of communication.

A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. We perform speech acts when we offer an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal. A speech act might contain just one word, as in "Sorry!" to perform an apology, or several words or sentences: "I'm sorry I forgot your birthday. I just let it slip my mind." Speech acts include **real-life interactions** and require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

Searle's Classification of Speech Acts

Searle (1969:65) distinguishes five major classes of speech acts; each constitutes a host of other sub-acts which can be distinguished from each other by their felicity conditions. These include:

Assertives (representative) are speech acts that have a truth-value which state what the speaker believes to be the case or not. In using an assertive, the speaker fits his/her words to the world. Statements of fact, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions are all examples of the speaker representing the world as he or she believes it is.

Assertive: Belief

Explicit: "I claim that it is raining outside"

Implicit: "It is raining outside"

I believe it is raining outside.

Expressives are speech acts that tell about the feeling of the speaker. They express the psychological state of the speaker in statements of pleasure, pain dislike, joy or sorrow. In using an expressive, the speaker does not get the world or the words to match each other. Examples are: thanking, complaining, criticizing, welcoming.

Expressive: welcoming.

Explicit: I welcome you.

Implicit: "Don't be shy, my home is your home"

Declarations (performative) are speech acts which in their production, the world is altered. In order for declarations to be performed appropriately, the speaker must have a special institutional role in a specific context. These are the acts which Austin gave the name "performatives".

Performative: order

Explicit: I order you that you do it yourself.

Implicit: "Do it yourself".

Directives are attempts to get the hearer to do something. They express what the speaker wants. This class includes: command, ask a question, order, advise, suggest, make a request, and so forth. They can be both positive and negative. In using a directive, the speaker attempts to make the world fit the words (via the hearer).

Many directive sentences are posed as questions, so they are easy to identify by the presence of a question mark. In addition to this, many directive speech acts are not stated as a question but as a request for assistance.

Directives: Want

Explicit: "I demand you to leave town immediately"

Implicit: "Leave the town immediately"

I want you to leave the town immediately.

Commissives are speech acts which commit the speaker to some future course of action. They express the intention of the speaker. Acts such as promise, refusal, threat, and offer are of such kind. In using a commissive, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words.

Commissive : Intend

Explicit: "I promise that I will repay money I borrowed"

Implicit: "I will repay the money I borrowed"

I intend to repay the money I borrowed.

Conclusion

The ability to understand the hidden message of utterance is really important to have. Some words or utterances could be misdirected into something unpleasant if we are not careful. By understanding Pragmatics and speech acts we can get clearer understanding of the utterances. It is imperative to accurately understand the intended meaning by analyzing the utterances. By understanding the norms and idiomatic expressions of the first and second language the students could determine the message of the utterances so that it could expand their knowledge resulting in the ability to perform the speech acts.

References

1. Austin, J.L. "How to Do Things With Words." 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.
2. Bach, K. and R. M. Harnish. 1979. Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
3. Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. 1989. Cross Cultural Pragmatics: Request and Apologies. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
4. Crystal, D. "Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics." 6th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.
5. Malmkjaer, K. "Speech -Act Theory." In "The Linguistics Encyclopedia," 3rd ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.
6. Nuccetelli, Susana (Editor). "Philosophy of Language: The Central Topics." Gary Seay (Series Editor), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, December 24, 2007.