

**PRAGMATICS, SPEECH ACT THEORY AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

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**Annotation:**

This article delves into the interconnected fields of pragmatics, speech act theory, and discourse analysis. It begins by defining pragmatics as the study of language in context, emphasizing its focus on how meaning is constructed and interpreted in social interactions. The article then introduces speech act theory, a subfield of pragmatics that examines how language is used to perform actions. It explores the different types of speech acts, including locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, and discusses the importance of felicity conditions for successful speech act performance. Finally, the article turns to discourse analysis, a broader field that examines language in use across various contexts. It highlights the different approaches to discourse analysis, such as conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis, and discusses how these approaches can be used to analyze speech acts in real-world communication.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, speech act theory, discourse analysis, locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary act, felicity conditions, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis

**INTRODUCTION**

Pragmatics, speech act theory, and discourse analysis are closely related fields that offer valuable insights into the complexities of human communication.

Pragmatics, the study of language in context, explores how meaning is constructed and interpreted based on the social, cultural, and situational factors surrounding an utterance. Speech act theory, a subfield of pragmatics, focuses on how language is used to perform actions, such as making promises, giving orders, or asking questions. Discourse analysis, a broader field, examines language in use across various contexts, such as conversations, texts, and media.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of how language is used in context to achieve communicative goals. It explores how speakers and listeners use their knowledge of the world, social norms, and the specific context of an interaction to interpret and produce meaningful utterances. Pragmatics focuses on the implicit or intended meaning of language, rather than just the literal meaning of words. Pragmatics transcends the structural confines of syntax and semantics to explore language in use. Central to pragmatics is the idea that meaning is not solely encoded in words but also shaped by the context of communication, including the speaker's intentions, the listener's interpretation, and the shared cultural and social norms. The study of pragmatics encompasses various subfields, such as implicature, deixis, and speech acts, each contributing to a nuanced understanding of meaning in context. Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics which studies those aspects of meaning which cannot be captured by semantic theory. It is a systematic way of explaining language use in context. Every time a speaker utters a sentence, s/he is attempting to accomplish something with the words; specifically, he intends to have some effect on the listener and wants the listener to recognize this intention. Speech-act theory, most notably attributed to John Searle, is designed to help us understand how people accomplish things with their words. A speech act is a functional unit in communication. It is an act that the speaker performs when s/he makes an utterance. Nonetheless, the pioneer of such a theory – Austin – completely disregards the power of the appeal of intention in communicative contexts. This is fortunately highlighted in Searle's approach where both the conventional and

intentional aspects of meaning are combined. Austin's and Searle's approach to Pragmatics lags behind other approaches in that their concentration is mainly situated on single communicative acts. However, it is easy to lose perspective on communication as a whole. After all, communicative acts seldom occur in isolation, but rather sequentially in interaction. Also, by focusing on the meaning of certain communicative activity verbs, there is always a danger that the analysis of communication becomes too linguistic which would disregard Pragmatics and give Semantics all the importance. Thus, adhering to Allwood's new conceptual framework of the study of communication seems to be the more suitable at the moment (1977). Here Grice comes in with his total focus not on speech act but on that of communication. This gave way to what Pragmatics now is all about – presuppositions and inferences. Our understanding of the world does not solely depend on what is said, but also on what is meant. Most of our utterances are comprehended by hearers based on not only the linguistic meaning, but also on the speaker's actual meaning via his actual intentions. Thus, and although the speech act theory still maintains its significant contribution to Pragmatics, the focus has drastically shifted from the analysis of speech to that of non-explicit meaning – giving further emphasis to the interconnected relationship between Psychology and linguistics. Therefore, it is highly recommended for teachers not only to teach students the semantic part of language, but to emphasize the pragmatic aspect of it. The secret to a successful implementation of education lies in the interdisciplinary and the integrational sect of learning; that is, teaching not only the grammar and the rules, but also the speaking aspect of communication. Additionally, language on its own can have a sufficient amount of significance in isolation, not in a context where other speakers or hearers are. To communicate is to not only transfer meaningful words or utterances, but also modify and customize what is being said in accordance to the hearer's thoughts and emotions. This sheds light on the “psychological” part of communication, which although hidden from the naked eyes, but serves as an essential component to a successful integration between two interlocutors. Thus, teachers should be able to show students the importance of

psychology in language speaking, and students should grasp this concept thoroughly to be not only good speakers but also good listeners.

Speech act theory is, in fact, another elemental notion within pragmatics, which happens to be of equal importance in political discourse by means of its analysis of the ways within which language can enact assertive, commissive, ...etc. These speech acts are not just communicative in nature but signaling the authority to command, state policies, or self-justification in political speeches. This is to say, for instance, that where a politician says, 'We shall win this war,' the speech act is complete within a statement of intention and within the performative speech act committed. Indeed, it is through this playing with speech acts in order to persuade or set public opinion that political actors make use of illocutionary acts, since their implications are contextually imperative to understand power in political discourse. Accordingly, the point of intersection between pragmatics and speech acts and political discourse analysis allows for a more subtle understanding of how language in politics operate not only to inform but to act and influence. Speech act theory, developed by philosophers such as J.L. Austin and John Searle, argues that language is not merely used to describe or represent reality, but also to perform actions. When we speak, we are not just uttering sounds or writing symbols, but also performing actions. These actions can be as simple as greeting someone or as complex as making a promise or giving a warning.

Speech act theory distinguishes between three types of acts:

- a. Locutionary act: The act of uttering words with a certain meaning.
- b. Illocutionary act: The act of performing an action through language, such as making a promise or giving an order.
- c. Perlocutionary act: The act of achieving a particular effect on the listener, such as persuading them to do something or making them feel a certain emotion.

For a speech act to be successful, certain felicity conditions must be met. These conditions relate to the appropriateness of the speech act in the given context and the sincerity of the speaker. For example, a promise can only be successfully performed if

the speaker intends to fulfill it and if the listener believes that the speaker intends to fulfill it. John Searle extended this framework, categorizing speech acts into five types:

1. Assertives: Statements that convey information (e.g., "The sky is blue").
  2. Directives: Attempts to get the listener to do something (e.g., "Close the door").
  3. Commissives: Commitments to future actions (e.g., "I promise to help").
  4. Expressives: Expressions of emotional states (e.g., "Thank you").
  5. Declarations: Utterances that change the state of affairs (e.g., "You are fired").
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From Speech Act Theory to Pragmatics” by Bruno Ambroise is another article discussing the development of research in pragmatics with the evolvement of speech act theory. Pragmatics and speech act theory tend to study the linguistic phenomenon that was left unexplained by the grammatical analysis of language. It is at Oxford in the 1950s that a group of philosophers known as “ordinary language philosophers” criticized logical analysis, since they focused on ordinary speech. They claim that a proposition can be analyzed in terms of “truth-conditions”. For instance, “The cat is on the mat.” would be true only if the cat is really on the mat. However, Austin, one of these aforementioned philosophers, wants to shed light on the pragmatic phenomena arising in speech; that is, the fact that discourse may accomplish an action. His focus was mainly concentrated on what is “done” in discourse rather than what is “said”. He distinguishes between utterances and sentences, where the former depends on felicity conditions. A felicity condition is circumstances not fulfilled when the content of a sentence is true but when the circumstances are adequate for using it. There are different kinds of speech acts such as promises, declaration statements, etc., and each has particular felicity conditions which are conventionally and contextually determined. Austin shows that all utterances are speech acts in that they perform specific actions. He specifies three ways an utterance can do something, locution – meaning, illocution – altering, and perlocution – affecting. Furthermore, every utterance has presuppositions,

implications, and commitments. For instance, if A promises to marry B, then it is presupposed that A is not already married and it is implied that A will marry . These pragmatic conditions are extremely important in Grice's analysis, in which they gain a cognitive role, where according to Austin, presuppositions carry no significant meaning. John Searle, who was Austin's student at Oxford in the 1950s, refines Austin's claims in a more systematic and mentalistic way. For him, a speech act is composed of an illocutionary force and a propositional content. For instance, "I promise to go to bed early." has the illocutionary force of a promise and propositional content of "I go to bed early." Two different speech acts may have the same propositional content and different illocutionary forces – for instance, I may use the propositional content "I go to bed early" to make a promise or a statement. His analysis depends on an intentional or mentalist view which implies that the speaker's intentions – and their recognition – are essential to the realization of a speech act, whereas for Austin, one cannot perform an act by making an appeal to intention. Searle's analysis thus combines conventional and intentional aspects to give a new semantic account of speech. Thus, speaking may be seen as a communication of intentions.

Discourse analysis is a broad field that examines language in use across various contexts. It explores how language is used to construct social identities, power relations, and cultural values. Discourse analysis can be used to analyze a wide range of texts, including conversations, written documents, and media texts. There are many different approaches to discourse analysis, including:

- a. Conversation analysis: This approach focuses on the detailed analysis of spoken interaction, examining how speakers and listeners use turn-taking, intonation, and other features to construct and interpret meaning.
- b. Critical discourse analysis: This approach examines how language is used to reproduce and challenge power relations. It focuses on the ideological dimensions of language and how language can be used to promote or resist social and political change.

## CONCLUSION

Pragmatics, through the lenses of speech act theory and discourse analysis, offers profound insights into the dynamics of communication. By emphasizing the interplay of linguistic, contextual, and social factors, these frameworks enhance our understanding of how language functions in real-world settings. Future research can further integrate these approaches, exploring their applications in emerging fields such as digital communication and artificial intelligence. The article shows how language can be used strategically and purposely to correctly deliver intended messages and achieve specific objectives in Jordanian social context. The address deployed carefully chosen words and rhetorical strategies to infuse into the audience a sense of self-respect, commitment, and self-assuredness. Through grounding of the speech in cultural values and experiences shared by all, it aimed to resonate with its audience, consolidate unity and solidarity. The purpose of this article was to rally support and shape perceptions towards issues such as national resilience, steadfastness in the face of adversity, and collective responsibility.

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