A Pragmatic Study for Speech Acts Analysis in Print Media Statements by Focusing on Pakistani Politics Ideological Agenda

Zara Saleem
Lecturer**,** CFL Department, University of Management and Technology Lahore.
theescapist768@gmail.com

Sadia Noreen
Lecturer CFL Department, University of Management and Technology Lahore.

Abstract

This research aimed to analyze print media statements in light of the speech act theory for Pakistani politics' ideological agenda. The sample of this research is collected from Lahore newspapers including the Dawn, the Nation, Tribune, and Dunya newspapers headlines. Speech act theory is taken as a theoretical framework. The findings of the research indicated that all types of speech acts are available in all selected newspaper headlines. Finally, it is found that all the political parties are striving for the maintenance of their own ideology.

Keywords: *Pragmatic Study, Print Media, Pakistan, Politics, Ideological Agenda*

1. Introduction

The role of mass media is very considerable in the lives of communities and newspapers has become very significant and essential for a news report in mass media platform (Ali and Al-Hindawi,2018). The newspaper headlines are established with certain linguistic strategies such as manipulation, bias, hegemony, and ideology for the achievement of certain purposes. It is a known phenomenon that communication and transmission rely on communities and societies through the interaction of human beings and acollaborative virtual environment is developed in human communication, but it is a vital strategy to be cooperative for human communication to fulfill the goals of speech communication. Moreover, it is also important for communication to be time-oriented and goal-driven. Similarly, in research paradigms the communication between differentagents in the same medium of transmission e.g. print media is challenging and interesting to explore further in the light of pragmatic theories such as speech act theorywhich takes part in the outside language dimension of communication (Bach, 2004) It alsoidentifies various actions and identities by using speech acts and these linguistic entitiesspread different situations also in the stretches of speech. Secondly, to study ofprint mediaspeeches as a political discourse and agent-oriented communication illuminates a wide range of perspectives such as power, manipulation, proposition, and psychological intentions (Hall, 2012).

Furthermore, language works as a tool to communicate, and people use languageto convey messages as well as express themselves by using language. In expressions, people not only use language, grammatical structures, and words but also, they perform various actions in their utterances (Yule,

1996). In the domain of the philosophy of language and meanings, speech act theory (SAT) is a well-known paradigm, and it revolves around the performative functions in communication and language (Allwood, 1977). Speech Act Theory conveys that actions are represented through language both in verbal and written form but few actions are performed by the hearer or listeners (Ludwig, et al. 2016). In other words, SAT claims that actions in language are perfumed and understood by the use of language itself. There are three acts and features which are described by (Austin, 1960) i.e., locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. In the present research, there is an evaluation of speech act theory in Pakistani print media political headlines for ideological purposes and speech act theory (SAT) will work as an evaluation tool for pragmatic study in print media statements by focusing on Pakistani politics ideological agenda. Finally, all the basic concepts of speech act theory (SAT) will be applied to analyze the selected Pakistani Print Media political headlines.

1.1. Objectives

To identify the use of speech acts in Pakistani English newspapers' politicalheadlines by focusing on the ideological agenda in newspaper statements.

2. Rationale/Significance

Language is constructed on the description of meanings because meanings play a significant rolein constructing ideas, beliefs, and ideologies. This study aims for a valuable contribution to the existing literature practically and theoretically. This study on the useof Speech Acts in Selected Pakistani Print Media Political News Headlines, for political ideological purposes will not only enhance the understanding of speech act theory among linguistics students but also it will develop the perception and comprehension of speech acts among newspaper readers that how functions and actions are performed via language. This research ismore beneficial in practical manners. Teachers can use such kinds of speech acts researchand apply them in their teaching materials to guide the students. The results and analysis ofsuch research can guide students to promote comprehension and perception of speech acts understanding. It is believed by the writer that this research will contribute to speech act knowledge for future researchers.

2.1. Research Questions:

1. What type of speech acts are used in Pakistani Print Media Statements by Focusing on Pakistani Politics Ideological Agenda?

2. How Pakistani Print Media Statements are being used for Politics Ideological Agenda?

3. Review of the Literature

Ramzan and Khan (2019) have suggested that stereotyped ideological constructions are enhanced by nawabs in Baluchistan. Further, Ramzan et al.(2021) have indicated that there is a manipulation and exploitation of the public in the hands of politicians and powerful people. Khan et al.(2017) have expressed that print media acts as a tool in the hands of capitalists. Bhutto and Ramzan (2021) have claimed that there is a collusive stance and pacifier agenda of media wrapped in the strategy of power. Nawaz et al.(2021) have said that power is striving for negative them and positive us. Functional aspects of language are seen in the study of pragmatics and it investigates theassociations between the meanings of language and the meanings of speaker because the meanings of speakers are placed in

utterances at the top. So, a layer of linguistic meanings is decorated in the utterances of speakers' which is called intended meaningsand it is called pragmatics (Searle, 1983). Nawaz et al. (2021) have claimed that discourse wraps various ideological agendas and the Pakistani government is determined toward ideological exploitation through political parties.

It can be said that pragmatic study revolves around the utterances and it is an attempt to interpret what is meant by the speaker when any piece of language is uttered by him/her. So, the present study will revolve around utterances (Speech Acts)and there is a wide difference between sentences and utterances (Austin, 1962). The sentence is the largest grammatical unit of language which is the hybridization of phrases and clauses and the main intention is to express feelings and statements. But contrary to the sentence, the utterance is known as specific language in a particular context and it explains what is meant by thespeaker for the hearer (Searle, 1979).

Many pieces of research are aimed to develop models and study systems for human-agent communication. Some works focus and studying only verbal communication for instance (Muhammad et al., 2020) produced an accessible navigation agency to navigate a virtual theatre environment but few other scholars are associated with the evaluation of gestures, body movements, and facial expressions (Muhammad, 2005) presents a system to train humans to handle abnormal situations while driving cars by interacting non-verbally with the agent to learn from or avoid abnormal driving behaviors. Furthermore, research focuses on thedomain of human–agent communication including a prototype that lacks a generic model and it is being used in different scenarios. Reah (2002) Introduced a model that presented a believable human-like interaction and virtual agents in a multi-stage system, but in their work, communication was handled in the same virtual environments, and also same resources were shared by the agents. Speech act theory is known as a tool for interpretation in verbal and written communication among human beings. Speech act theory is being used to analyze various shapes of communication such as questionnairewritten communication in the post of forum logs event (Siposova, 2011) and email correspondence. Speech Act Theory was adopted by Reah, (2002) in artificial intelligenceresearch between humans and agents for inter-agent communication. In Nigerian Newspapers Headlines ideologies in the realization of power were investigated (Taiwo, 2007). Muhammad (2005) analyzed pragmatics in selected English newspaper headlines. The Rhetoric in Persian News Headlines is another research that was conducted with the help of speech act analysis. Pragmatic Analysis in news headlines CNN was done by representing the Pakistani situation (Rustam, 2013) and it was done by describing the identity of illocutionary acts. A comparative pragmatic analysis was conducted as a research study in Baluchistan Newspapers Selected Headlines by(Ramzan, et al. 2020) which concluded that representative speech acts are being used most frequently in selected Baluchistan Newspapers Headlines.

4. Theoretical Framework:

4.1.Speech Act Theory:

Speech act theory, in the realm of linguistics and philosophy, holds immense significance and has emerged as a profound understanding, originating from the scholarly contributions of the renowned philosopher J.L. Austin. It was through a series of lectures delivered by Austin in 1955 that the foundation of this theory was laid, ultimately culminating in the publication of his seminal work titled "How to Do Things with Words" in 1962. Austin's proposition asserts that speech acts encompass the verbal expressions articulated by individuals within a particular context. Subsequently, numerous

philosophers such as Lavinson (1983), Searle (1969), Allan (1986), and Vanderveken (1990) have expanded upon Austin's ideas, thereby enriching the understanding and application of speech act theory.

4.1.1. Austin's Speech Act Theory:

Austin (1962, p.3-6) introduced a fundamental distinction between the act of uttering words and the act of carrying out actions. He asserts that sentences encompass not only statements, but also commands, questions, explanations, and wishes, all of which are constructed by individuals within various linguistic contexts. This differentiation, as proposed by Austin, gives rise to the concepts of constative and performative utterances, further emphasizing the multifaceted nature of language and its capacity to go beyond mere descriptive statements.

4.1.2. Searle's Speech Act Theory

John R. Searle, a prominent American philosopher and a student of Austin, significantly built upon Austin's work and addressed its limitations by presenting a comprehensive and influential theory of speech acts. In his groundbreaking contributions, Searle (1965, p.173) redefined speech acts as functions derived from the meaning of sentences, introducing the term "illocutionary act" to replace Austin's terminology.

Expanding upon this foundation, Searle (1969, p.16) posited that speech acts constitute the fundamental building blocks of linguistic communication, representing the minimal units that carry meaning. According to Searle's extensive knowledge and theoretical interpretation, language is not merely composed of isolated sentences or words; instead, these linguistic elements themselves are speech acts that emerge within specific contextual conditions. By emphasizing the inseparable link between language and action, Searle sheds light on the dynamic nature of communication. Ramzan et al. (2023) have confirmed that subject-verb agreements are a provision of insights into ESL learning. Further, Ramzan et al. (2023) as an imperative aspect of effective academic writing, coherence demands that ideas be presented in a manner that facilitates smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs as well and cohesion is determined by the linkage of textual structure in discourse.

Furthermore, Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p.1) emphasized that speech acts, particularly illocutionary acts, serve as the essential units of human communication. These acts encompass a diverse range of communicative functions, encompassing not only declarative statements but also interrogatives, imperatives, apologies, and promises. Each speech act is performed by a speaker with specific intentions, within an appropriate context that grants meaning and significance to their utterances.

By recognizing the intentionality and contextual embeddedness of speech acts, Searle's theoretical framework offers a profound understanding of how language functions in the complex landscape of communication. It provides a framework for analyzing the pragmatic aspects of linguistic interactions, unveiling the underlying mechanisms through which individuals convey meaning, express intentions, and engage in effective interpersonal communication. Searle's insights continue to shape the field of linguistics and contribute to our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, action, and meaning.

5. Research Gap

After the detailed study of relevant literature, it is likely to be concluded that inthePakistani Context, the study of *Speech* Act Theory in Print Media political headlinesis for ideological purposes in Lahore and will be a unique and innovative type of study because such kind of study has not been conducted in the existing literature. It is said that the power of mass media is influencingthe lives of people (Bach, 2004). It is a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories.

6. Research Design and Methodology

a.   Type of Research

This research is a qualitative in approach and analysis is done by selecting a convenient sampling from the selected newspapers i.e. The Dawn, The Nation,Tribune and Dunia political headlines in light of Searle's Taxonomy of Speech Act (1979). This research is concerned with the study of speech acts and the source of data Pakistani English newspapers' political headlines selected from Urdu and English newspapers for the month of December 2022. The data will be collected from the selected English newspapers by considering the first page only and the method of this collection is documentation of all headlines given on the first page of selected English newspapers. First, the researcher will study the newspapers' headlines carefully and then the headlines will be analyzed inlight of Searle's taxonomy of speech acts (1979).

b.   Research Data Analysis

Miles (1984) has explained that data analysis is involved in three steps i.e., data reduction, data display, and drawing of conclusion. Data reduction is the first step which is associated with data selection, simplification, and transformation of raw data.In this step, the headlines from selected newspapers will be included in the research thesis. The second is known as data displaying which is linked with information indicatingand guiding the researcher to conclude. In this step, selected statements will be analyzed and grouped in the light of Searle's taxonomy of speech acts (1979). This analysis will help the researcher to draw a conclusion which is the last step in research.

c. Analysis of Headline:

The above-given headline is a statement articulated by the spokesman of Pakistan Tahreek e Insaf against PML N and the Pakistan People's Party by directing the judiciary that they need speedy decisions on foreign funding cases. The spokesman alsodepicts his intention of authoritative tone as well. Furthermore, Pakistan Tahreek e Insaf is endeavoring to enhance its significance by using authoritative speech devicesin the use of language.

i.   Statement Number One.

<div dir="rtl">

اسی ماہ اسمبلیاں توڑ دوں گا۔ عمران خان

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Date of Statement One Spoken .11 December 22.

Name of Newspaper: Dunia Lahore

Type of Speech Act: Commissive Expressive

Explanation:

The present statement is thoroughly loaded with ideological expressions that elucidate that the Ex-Prime Minister and Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek e-Insaf is fully aware of the fame and reputation of his political power. He is indirectly expressing his success in the future election which is why he says that عمران خان۔ اسی ماہ اسمبلیاں توڑ دوں گا.

ii.   Statement Number Two.

Government says no chance of an Economic Emergency.

Date of Statement One Spoken .07 December 22.

Name of Newspaper: The Nation Lahore

Type of Speech Act: Expressive

Explanation: The statement is also equipped with the political agenda of the present government of that time which is trying to hide the poverty and bank rapt of the country for the promotion of their party's ideological stance.

iii.   Statement Number Three.

Government would ensure the protection of the rights of investors in all investment projects. PM Shahbaz

Date of Statement One Spoken .14 December 22.

Name of Newspaper: The Tribune Lahore

Type of Speech Act: Declarative

Explanation:

Again the statement expressed by PM Shahbaz is decorated with a powerful stance and equipped with the political agenda of the present government of that time which is revealing the materialistic power of powerful people. In other words, PM Shahbaz is idealizing the ideology of materialistic strata by leading them. In this statement, he looks, like a materialist instead of a prime minister.

iv.   Statement Number Four

پنجاب حکومت نہیں گرے گی۔ آپ کو پتہ چل جائے گا۔ فیصل واوڈا

Date of Statement One Spoken .15 December 22.

Name of Newspaper: Dunia Lahore

Type of Speech Act: Commissive

Explanation:

The above statement advocates the ideology of PTI and its workers who are unwilling to accept any defeat in politics and are determined for their success. Faisal Wawada is presenting the minds of all PTI workers. The workers of PTI are determined and hopeful for their success always.

v.   Statement Number Five.

Unwell PM to meet allies soon.

Date of Statement One Spoken .14 December 22.

Name of Newspaper: The Dawn Lahore

Type of Speech Act: Representative

Explanation:

The statement can be inferred that there is an issue in the government alliance against PTI because PM Shahbaz has decided to meet the national alliance urgently although he is sick. The matter is urgent so he is sacrificing his health condition over power issues for the sake of maintaining his ideological agenda.

vi.   Statement Number Six:

Pakistan no longer faces default risk, NA told.

Date of Statement One Spoken .14 December 22.

Name of Newspaper: The Dawn Lahore

Type of Speech Act: Declarative

Explanation:

In the above-given statement, there is an ideology of national alliance again which is expressed in the above-given statement of the national assembly that there is not any risk of default and the economy of Pakistan is prospering. But contrary to this the reality is opposite. The economy of Pakistan is near to default.

7. Findings and Conclusion:

In the light of the above analysis, it can be found that all types of speech acts are being used in all types of selected newspaper headlines and there is an individual party ideological agenda that survives in the newspaper headlines and every individual of every party is struggling for the resistance of his/her political party ideological agenda. Although it is a general concept that all the statements are decorated in the newspapers for rhetorical purposes. Gee, (2014) has explained that language is not only used to say things but also to be the things and do the things. Similarly, Pakistan politicians are either doing the things or being the things because there is a determination for power and ideology.   Politicians are

either trying to maintain power or sustaining ideological stances.

In the above studied statement, there is a high rate of representative speech acts which is advocating that it is only a rhetorical strategy but on the other hand, there are confessional, fearing, and sensationalizing elements of terrorism which have been faced by Pakistan since last more than twenty years. Such kinds of statements also create fear and tension for the readers and viewers. So rhetorical purposes are used to maintain ideological stance and power abuse as well and there is uncertainty as well.

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