

Directive and Assertive Speech Acts in Selected Covid 19 News

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ABSTRACT

Covid 19 is one of the common events that is disseminated across the world nowadays . People tackle all the sources of media just to know how this virus destroys the life of the plant . The news of the number of the infected cases is the key point of this news at the moment . As such , the news of covid 19 has become worth studying for the researchers in the field of linguistics to know the linguistic aspect of this news . The study applies the pragmatic analysis by using the types of speech acts to find out which one of these acts is used more than the other . The study has reached out to the results that are highly important for the news of covid 19 . The study uses two types of speech acts , assertive and directive in analysis.

Keywords: Speech Acts, Covid 19.



1. Introduction

News is one of the means of distribution the reports . This attracts many researchers' attention to know the pragmatic aspects of the news. Accordingly, pragmatics is can be defined as "the study of meanings as communicated by a speaker/writer and independent by listener"(Yule 1996:3). Therefore , the meaning is produced by speaker is the main area of study because what the speaker says is decoded by the listeners. Pragmatics also refers to the invisible meaning (Yule, 2010: 128).

Also, Meyer (2009:48) states the role of context in explaining the intended meaning in order to interpret it properly . He tries to show the importance of the outer factors which context plays. So, pragmatics could be presented as "the study of principles which govern language in use" (Malmkjær, 2002: 148). Any misinterpretation of the intended meaning is not because of the misuse of pragmatic tools (speech acts, implicate, presupposition).

In his book, " How to Do Things with Words", he inspires others to start a new way of thinking and paves the way for the others to see words that are uttered as actions and not only mere words. He shifts others' views to find words as speech acts (Cruse, 2006:34).

Pragmatics concentrates on the speaker or writers function their linguistic knowledge to send a number of messages . In other words , pragmatics deals with using language in different types of interaction of real utterances . Therefore , those who study pragmatics are about where the language is used , and when it is used for and what it is used for , what it is used for. Yule (1996:47) points out to that we should not stick to the idea that we are only speaking, rather we are doing actions throughout utterances. Salgado (2011:21) says that "speech acts are the minimal units of comparable discourse". Searle (1969: 16) who assumes that "speech act is the basic or minimal unit of linguistic communication".

2.The Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is an intriguing theory in studying the language in use regarding the concept of communication . furthermore , it is a significant theory in the philosophy of language. Finegan (2008 : 281) says that speech acts as , "In fact, language is the principal means we have to greet, compliment, and insult one another, to plead or flirt, to seek and supply information, and to accomplish hundreds of other tasks in a typical day. Actions that are carried out through language are speech acts " .



Talking about speech act theory , Austin (1962:3-6) refers to main points . The first one is not all the sentence are in fact statement and conversations that are carried out with speakers are made up of made up of questions, exclamations, and commands:

Example:

Are you serving?

Example:

Excuse me!

Example:

Give me the dry roasted ones.

These sentences don't describe anything that is why they are not true or false . The second point is that although sentences are declarative in grammatical forms , they are not used mainly as statements . However , they are used to do things with language not just to say something .

Example:

I promise to take a taxi home

Example:

I give my word.

Austin (ibid.) states that these sentence include the concept of a certain action . Accordingly , by uttering (2.4) and (2.5) the speaker creates different speech acts like promising not just describing something . There are two types of sentences are performative and constative accordingly ibid.:3-6).

2.1.Types of Acts

Rimer(2010:109) notes that Austin in his study of the theory refers to the features of linguistic expressions that contribute to classify the utterance into three types :

- 1- Locutionary act: it is about the linguistic basic expression that is produced.
- 2- Illocutionary act: it is done through the force of communication in the utterance .



3- Perlocutionary act: this speech act refers to the result or the implementing of the act by the hearer when he or she recognizes the speech .

2.2. Searle's Speech Acts Theory:

Searle is a language philosopher and one of the most important developers of speech act theory. He was one of Austin's students. His ideas are not quite fit to what Austin shows in his book "How to Do Things with Word". He develops some of the main ideas and finds some new speech act verbs and he argues some speech acts. Searle holds Austin's thought of the illocutionary act but he argues division between perlocutionary and illocutionary. Searle appreciates that meaning and force are inseparable, so he concludes that illocutionary and elocutionary are possibly separable but he can't separate the illocutionary force from meaning within the utterance because it is part of it (Al-Sulaimaan, 2010: 294). Searle (1969: 23) adds how words carry reference only with the existence of context of the sentence.

In Searle's previous studies, he follows the theory of Austin, he distinguishes the separation between the phonetic act and the phatic act (Al-Sulaimaan, 2010: 293). He also shows that any utterance could have some kind of illocutionary force because it is hard to do any cutting works between the propositional act and Austin's hectic act of the utterance (Searle, 1969, p. 23). He states that the propositional act is determined by reference and prediction which he calls referential act and prediction which he calls referential act and prediction act. He shows a parallel idea with Austin about both illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (ibid).

According to Mey (2001: 120), Searle also sets his own classification of speech act taxonomy that he uses it to arrange and categorize it into its suitable category. Searle's categories of speech act are five and they are as follows , Assertives , Directives , Commissive , Expressives: Declaratives .

Also, Searle shows the notions of fit or the direction of fit which shows only four directions that any speech act can take it. They are as follows (Yule, 1996: 55):

The study will adopt Kreidler's (2005 : 183-85) six types of speech acts and the focus will be on two types :



No	Speech Act Type	Direction of Fit	Speaker's Role
1	Assertives	Words fit the world	Speaker believes X
2	Directives	World fits words	Speaker wants X
3	Commissives	World fits words	Speaker intends X
4	Expressives	Words fit the world	Speaker feels X
5	Declaratives	Words change the world

1. Assertive Utterances

This speech act refers to the what the speaker reveals like , believing or recognizing and so on :

She voted for Tom in election .

Assertive speech acts cove the data that occurs or occurred , therefor , they can be true or false . They can be investigated empirically .

One of types of the verbs that are related to way of telling information are announce ,declare ,disclose ,explain, express ,indicate ,mention, proclaim, relate, report

2. Directive Utterances

Directive acts refer to the state that when the speaker tries to force the addressee to act certain actions or prevent him or her from doing something else . Accordingly , the directive utterance has the common pronoun which is you as the actor when it is mentioned or not .

(You) stay there

Directive acts are about telling people to do things now not in the past .

Directive speech acts are as following :

1. Command

The command is used only when the speaker has the authority of forcing other people to do what he or she wants over the receiver

I (hereby) order you to come to school next Friday at 11 a.m.



2. Request

It refers to the situation when the speaker asks the listener to something but , he or she doesn't have the power of control over the addressee .

I appeal to you to give me your hand.

3. Suggestion

It is about what telling other people to do thing or not to do . It is a matter of giving opinion .

He warns her to be active .(Ibid)

The study will focus on two speech acts , Assertive and Directive in news of covid 19.

3. Language of News

News plays a significant role nowadays especially about the issues that affect people's life . Thus , this study is a fruitful one for explaining and discovering the linguistics aspects of this news. **Makcan (2006: 1)** delves that , by the editor during the 19th century, Charles Dane, news is anything that attracts many people in everyday events when they hear them for the first time. As a result , , news must be so affective and different from any ordinary text that makes nothing regarding the way of changing or informing .

News is one of the tools that make people communicate together inside the community . It also tells people about certain events and information to make them express their minds about these events . Generally speaking , new is also as a means of selected information in relation to the current events , and then it is done through a number of ways like print m broadcast , internet or word of mouth to a third-party or mass audience .

In addition to that , it can be the works that contain an announcement or a statement of recent or current events of new data and matters of interest in the field of medicine, science, or economic (Burns, 2004:49) .

Regarding the language of news , McKane (2006:105 -8) refers to the concept of language of news through certain aspects . The structure of the language of news must be simple and brief without meaning other complex features of language in syntax and others .As a result , the better sentences are the one that make no ambiguities in the text. Tuchman(1978:106) mentions the number of the words in the sentence that must have at least twenty words and leave the words that conatin two syllabus . Van Dijk(1988b:10 -11) states the dissimilarities of using declarative sentences in a normal state and in news articles as follows :

A normal state :

"Reliable sources declared that Libya has been attacked by U.S air force . "



In a news story :

Libya has been attacked by US Air Forces , reliable sources declared ."

4. Types Of News:

There are many types of news that occur in different fields about many issues of life . Specifically, there are two main types of news according to

Rowe (2005:18) mentions two kinds of news :

a- Hard news is the news that treats events and development that occur on a daily basis or still be underway. This news is critical or serious for people that shouldn't be postponed The types of such news are politics, economics, laws, sciences, crimes, and so forth.

b- Soft news refers to news that make actions or incidents things or events to remember. This news is not too much necessary or being significant to be disseminated daily . This news is a social one. This news could be broadcasted or in other days such news is like people, places, communities, problems and so on . According to the types of news , Covid 19 news will be hard news

5. The Data .

The data of the analysis will be five pieces of news that are chosen randomly from different websites.

6. The Methodology

The analysis will be based on using these two speech acts on the news of covid 19 to find one which one is used higher than the other by showing the reason .

7. The Analysis of the Data

The analysis will be as follows :

1. Leaked White House report warns current Covid-19 mitigation efforts 'inadequate'

Daily death numbers are rising: 1,707 were **reported** by Johns Hopkins University on Tuesday. With some forecast models predicting a death toll beyond 400,000 by March, a year after the pandemic began, states across the US are implementing targeted social restrictions in attempts to beat back rising case numbers and reduce pressure on hospital resources.



The assertive speech acts in this news has been used more than directive one because this news is about telling what is going on regarding the effects of covid 19 on people .

2.SD County Reports 922 New COVID-19 Cases, 12 Deaths

San Diego County health officials Wednesday **reported** 922 newly diagnosed COVID-19 infections and a dozen fatalities, raising the county's cumulative case total to 67,241 and the death toll to 945.

The last five days have marked the highest daily case counts since the start of the pandemic, with 736 cases **reported** on Saturday, 833 on Monday and 718 on Tuesday.

In this news the verb of report has been mentioned more than one time to inform people about what happened regarding the spreading of virus . Still such news lacks of using directive speech acts.

3.Tougher COVID-19 restrictions to be imposed in London

London's mayor on Thursday **announced** that the British capital will move from Tier 1 to Tier 2 coronavirus restrictions, to be effective from Saturday, and warned that the virus was "spreading rapidly in every corner" of the city.

ing in Parliament, Health Secretary Matt Hancock **announced** that from Saturday Essex, Elmbridge, Barrow-in-Furness, North East Derbyshire, Erewash, Chesterfield and York would all also move to Tier 2.

This news is about imposing restrictions on people to help them get rid of covid 19 by telling a number of restrictions . This act of telling people is done by announcement what the government will do instead of using directive speech acts. The informing instructions are done by assertive speech acts.



4.COVID-19 second wave must be fought without vaccines: WHO

GENEVA -- The World Health Organization's emergencies director **warned** Wednesday that vaccines would not arrive in time to defeat the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ryan **warned** against slackening off individual vigilance against the virus in the mistaken belief that vaccines would now solve the problem instead.

In this news there is a verb (warn) . This verb refers to the directive speech act in the way of a suggestion for people to be cautious and avoid the increasing of infections . This news is about the vaccine , some people can feel that there is no virus , but still it is there that is why the warning is important that informing in such matters .

5. COVID-19 cases spike again in Middlesex-London, Elgin-Oxford

In Middlesex-London, 21 new COVID-19 cases were **reported** Wednesday, bringing the region's total to 1,391, with 1,209 resolved and 63 deaths, leaving 119 active cases.

does not match the record daily total of 36 cases **reported** Nov. 8, but it marks the fifth time this month that more than 20 cases were **reported** in a single day.

The speech act of informing or reporting is still used more than directive one . The news of covid19 is about telling the number of cases that appear around the world . Therefore , directive speech acts are not used in this situation .

Conclusion

The study has reached out to a number of results about using speech acts in news of covid19 . The analysis shows that assertive speech act is used more than directive ones . This refers the point of informing about the cases of covid19 . People are concerned with number of infected cases . Therefore , the directive act is not always preferable in this way of telling people . The virus spreads around the world and the rate of its infected cases is the important point for the people and what this makes people feel worried or better . The directive speech act appears in in some pieces of news only when there is news about the vaccine but as a warn to take the virus into consideration before finding the vaccine. However , the speech acts of assertive is higher than directive even when the news is about restricting the measures of how people move or go out to the streets .



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