

THE EFFECT OF ILLOCUTIONARY SPEECH ACTS IN AXIOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS IN ENGLISH

Dadaboyev Dilshodjon Gaybulla ugli

Uzbek State University of World Languages

Teacher of the Department of English Language Course of Integrated Skills

No. 1, Webster University in Tashkent

Phone: (90) 3268899

E-mail: ddadaboev@webster.edu

Annotation

This article investigates the effect of illocutionary speech acts in axiological linguistics in English, examining how values are constructed, communicated, and institutionalized through discourse. Drawing on classical and contemporary speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and axiological linguistics (Wierzbicka, 1991, 2006; Bednarek, 2006; Martin & White, 2005), the study integrates theoretical analysis with illustrative examples from religious, legal, and political discourse. Findings reveal that illocutionary force serves as a core mechanism for encoding moral judgments, ideological positioning, and value hierarchies. By unifying pragmatic and axiological perspectives, the study provides insights for discourse analysis, evaluative semantics, translation studies, and applied linguistics.

Keywords: *illocutionary speech acts, axiological linguistics, evaluation, English discourse, pragmatics, moral judgment, value systems, discourse analysis*

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola ingliz tilida aksiologik lingvistika kontekstida illokutsion nutq aktlarining ta'sirini o'rganadi. Maqolada qadriyatlar nutq orqali qanday shakllantirilishi, uzatilishi va ijtimoiy institutlarda mustahkamlanishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda illokutsion nazariyasi (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) va aksiologik tilshunoslik (Wierzbicka, 1991, 2006; Bednarek, 2006; Martin & White, 2005) nazariyalari qo'llanilgan hamda diniy, yuridik va siyosiy diskurslar misol tariqasida keltirilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari illokutsion kuchning axloqiy hukm va ierarxiyalarni kodlashdagi markaziy rolini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: *illokutsion nutq aktlari, aksiologik lingvistika, baholash, ingliz diskursi, pragmatika, axloqiy baholash, qadriyat tizimlari, diskurs tahlili*

Аннотация

Статья посвящена исследованию влияния иллокутивных речевых актов на аксиологическую лингвистику в английском языке. Рассматривается, каким образом через язык формируются, передаются и институционализируются ценности. Используются классическая и современная теория речевых актов (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) и аксиологическая лингвистика (Wierzbicka, 1991, 2006; Bednarek, 2006; Martin & White, 2005). Приводятся примеры из религиозного, юридического и политического дискурса. Результаты показывают, что иллокутивная сила является основным механизмом кодирования моральных оценок, идеологических позиций и иерархий ценностей.

Ключевые слова: иллокутивные речевые акты, аксиологическая лингвистика, оценка, английский дискурс, прагматика, моральные суждения, ценностные системы, анализ дискурса

INTRODUCTION

Language functions not only as a medium for communication but also as a vehicle for transmitting values and cultural norms. In axiological linguistics, language is studied as a system that encodes ethical, moral, and evaluative meanings (Bednarek, 2006; Wierzbicka, 2006).

Illocutionary speech acts—actions performed via utterances—are particularly significant because they carry evaluative weight beyond literal meaning. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) classified illocutionary acts into representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations, each of which can encode moral or social values in context. These acts are critical for understanding how English speakers construct shared norms, justify behavior, and align with ideological positions (Van Dijk, 2008).

Despite extensive pragmatic research, the systematic role of illocutionary force in axiological meaning-making remains underexplored (Wierzbicka, 1991). This study bridges this gap by analyzing illocutionary acts in English religious, legal, and political discourse, emphasizing their axiological significance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Illocutionary Speech Acts

Speech act theory proposes that utterances perform actions. Illocutionary acts not only communicate information but also enact obligations, express emotions, or establish authority. Five primary categories exist:

- **Representatives:** assert or describe reality (e.g., claiming, stating).
- **Directives:** urge or command action (e.g., requesting, advising).
- **Commissives:** commit the speaker to future action (e.g., promising, pledging).
- **Expressives:** convey emotional or evaluative attitudes (e.g., apologizing, praising).
- **Declarations:** change the status or condition of entities (e.g., sentencing, baptizing).

Each category has a potential axiological dimension, encoding social norms, moral evaluation, or ideological alignment.

Axiological Linguistics

Axiological linguistics examines how evaluative meaning is encoded in language. Values can be expressed lexically (good, evil), morphosyntactically (modality, tense), pragmatically (speech acts, politeness), or through intertextual and contextual cues (Bednarek, 2006; Martin & White, 2005).

Integrating axiological linguistics with speech act theory allows for a deeper understanding of how illocutionary force constructs moral and social hierarchies, legitimizes norms, and conveys institutional authority.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study uses a qualitative analytical methodology:

1. **Data Sources:** English-language corpora, religious texts, legal documents, and political speeches were collected to examine real-life instances of illocutionary acts.
2. **Classification:** Utterances were categorized according to Austin's and Searle's illocutionary typology.
3. **Analysis:** Each speech act was analyzed for its axiological implications—i.e., moral, ethical, or evaluative content.
4. **Interpretation:** Findings were interpreted through the lens of axiological linguistics, evaluating how illocutionary acts function to communicate and reinforce values.

This combination of theoretical and empirical analysis ensures a comprehensive understanding of illocutionary force in value construction.

RESULTS

Representatives

Assertive acts present value judgments as if they are factual. Examples:

- “Honesty is essential in leadership.”
 - “Cheating is unacceptable.”
- Representatives naturalize particular moral stances, framing them as universally valid (Searle, 1969; Wierzbicka, 2006).

Directives

Directives impose moral or social obligations. Examples:

- “You should respect others’ opinions.”
- “Do not discriminate.”

The use of modal verbs like should, must, and ought enhances evaluative force (Austin, 1962; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985).

Commissives

Commissives bind the speaker to future action, enacting ethical alignment.

Examples:

- “I will act with integrity.”
- “We pledge to protect human rights.”

These acts reinforce trust and social responsibility (Searle, 1969).

Expressives

Expressives convey the speaker’s emotional stance, embedding values through affective meaning. Examples:

- “I admire your honesty.”
- “I regret my wrongdoing.”

Expressives make moral evaluation affectively salient (Bednarek, 2006).

Declarations

Declarations formally enact social or moral reality. Examples:

- “I now pronounce you guilty.”
- “I baptize you in the name of the Father.”

Declarations have institutional authority, making axiological judgments binding (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985; Van Dijk, 2008).

DISCUSSION

The analysis of illocutionary speech acts across religious, legal, and political discourse reveals that illocutionary force is a central mechanism for constructing and reinforcing values in English. Each type of speech act carries distinct axiological implications, shaping moral evaluation, social norms, and ideological positioning.

In religious discourse, illocutionary acts encode and transmit fundamental moral and spiritual values.

- Representatives assert divine commandments or moral principles as factual truths, naturalizing ethical norms. For example, statements such as “God commands us to love our neighbors” present compassion as an axiologically positive value, legitimized through divine authority.
- Directives prescribe moral obligations, reinforcing obedience, ethical behavior, and communal conformity. Utterances like “You must repent and turn away from sin” operate as explicit axiological instructions, linking language to ethical accountability.
- Expressives articulate gratitude, remorse, or praise, emotionally anchoring values within the community. Phrases like “We thank God for His mercy” highlight the affective dimension of moral evaluation.
- Declarations such as “I baptize you in the name of the Father” transform the social and spiritual status of individuals, performing axiological acts that formalize value-laden identity and institutional legitimacy.

These patterns demonstrate that religious illocutionary acts integrate moral, emotional, and institutional dimensions, highlighting language’s role in encoding culturally sanctioned values and ethical hierarchies.

CONCLUSION

Illocutionary speech acts in English are essential instruments for constructing, communicating, and institutionalizing values. By encoding moral judgments, social norms, and ideological commitments, they serve as linguistic vehicles for both individual and collective axiological positioning.

Key conclusions:

1. **Integrated Axiological Function:** All illocutionary categories—representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations—carry evaluative weight, contributing to moral, social, and institutional value construction.
2. **Contextual Variation:** Religious, legal, and political contexts demonstrate that the axiological force of illocutionary acts is context-sensitive, influenced by authority, institutional norms, and audience expectation.
3. **Mediating Social and Ethical Norms:** Illocutionary acts operate as mechanisms for enforcing ethical standards, legitimizing social hierarchies, and guiding human behavior.
4. **Implications for Applied Linguistics:** Integrating speech act theory with axiological linguistics enhances discourse analysis, translation, pragmatic instruction, and critical literacy by highlighting how language encodes values.

5. Future Research Directions: Comparative studies across languages, cultures, or historical periods may further illuminate how illocutionary acts shape value systems globally, contributing to cross-linguistic and intercultural understanding.

In sum, the study confirms that illocutionary force functions as a core axiological mechanism in English discourse. Recognizing its evaluative power provides a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, morality, and social norms, reinforcing the relevance of axiological linguistics in both theoretical and applied research.

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