

THE ROLE OF SPEECH ACTS IN INTERNATIONAL
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Mirzamatova Ziyoda Abdullayevna

Teacher of English

School No. 41 Specialized in Selected Subjects

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ABSTRACT

International political communication is characterized by the strategic use of language to influence audiences, express national interests, and promote diplomatic cooperation. Among the most significant pragmatic mechanisms employed in political discourse are speech acts, which enable political leaders to perform communicative actions such as making commitments, expressing evaluations, issuing requests, and encouraging cooperation. This study investigates the role of speech acts in international political communication from the perspective of pragmatics and discourse analysis.

Political communication plays a crucial role in shaping international relations, influencing public opinion, and promoting cooperation among states. In the contemporary global environment, political leaders communicate not only with domestic audiences but also with governments, international organizations, and the wider international community. Consequently, political speeches have become one of the most influential forms of institutional discourse, combining informational, persuasive, and diplomatic functions. One of the most important pragmatic aspects of political communication is the use of speech acts. According to Speech Act Theory, language performs actions rather than merely conveying information. Political leaders employ speech acts to announce policies, make promises, express solidarity, encourage cooperation, criticize actions, and negotiate international agreements. These communicative acts shape both political relationships and public perception.

Theoretical Foundations of Speech Act Theory. Speech Act Theory is one of the fundamental approaches in pragmatics for explaining how language functions as a form of action. The theory, introduced by John L. Austin and further developed by John R. Searle, argues that speakers do not merely transmit information but perform communicative actions through their utterances. Every speech act consists of three interconnected dimensions: the locutionary act (the literal meaning of an utterance), the illocutionary act (the speaker's communicative intention), and the perlocutionary act (the effect on the listener).

Searle classified speech acts into five categories: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. These categories provide an effective analytical framework for examining political discourse because political speeches combine multiple communicative purposes, including informing, persuading, promising, requesting, and expressing solidarity.

Speech Acts in International Political Communication. The analysis of international political speeches indicates that representative speech acts occur most frequently. Political leaders employ these acts to describe international events, present official government positions, interpret political developments, and justify policy decisions. Such statements establish credibility and provide audiences with the institutional perspective of a government.

Directive speech acts also play a significant role. Rather than issuing direct commands, political leaders typically formulate recommendations, appeals, and invitations for cooperation. Expressions such as *We call upon all nations*, *We encourage dialogue*, and *Let us work together* illustrate how directives are softened through indirect and polite language.

Commissive speech acts are commonly used when governments announce future policies, international commitments, or cooperative initiatives. Promises of economic assistance, environmental cooperation, humanitarian support, and peacebuilding frequently appear in international forums. These speech acts reinforce political accountability and demonstrate commitment to international partnerships.

Expressive speech acts contribute to relationship-building by conveying appreciation, condolences, congratulations, or solidarity. During international crises, political leaders often express sympathy for affected populations and acknowledge the contributions of partner countries. Such expressions strengthen diplomatic ties and promote mutual trust.

Declarative speech acts occur less frequently but carry considerable institutional authority. Official recognitions, treaty announcements, declarations of national policy, and formal acknowledgments illustrate how language itself can produce political and legal consequences.

Pragmatic Analysis of Political Speeches. The qualitative analysis demonstrates that speech acts rarely occur in isolation. Political leaders frequently combine representatives with commissives to justify policy decisions while simultaneously announcing future commitments. Likewise, directives are often accompanied by expressive speech acts to encourage cooperation without creating confrontation.

Another notable finding concerns the indirect realization of speech acts. Sensitive political issues are commonly addressed through mitigated language rather than explicit criticism. Instead of assigning blame directly, speakers employ formulations that encourage dialogue and emphasize shared responsibility. This indirectness increases diplomatic flexibility and reduces the likelihood of escalating political tensions.

The analysis also reveals the frequent use of inclusive pronouns such as *we*, *our*, and *together*. These lexical choices reinforce representative and commissive speech acts by presenting political objectives as collective rather than individual responsibilities. Consequently, audiences are encouraged to identify themselves with national or international goals.

Modal verbs and hedging expressions further modify the pragmatic force of speech acts. Words such as *may*, *should*, *must*, and *can* enable political leaders to express varying degrees of obligation, certainty, and commitment. These linguistic devices allow speakers to adapt their messages to changing political circumstances while maintaining credibility.

Conclusion. The present study has demonstrated that speech acts play a fundamental role in international political communication by enabling political leaders to inform, persuade,

negotiate, and strengthen diplomatic relations through strategic language use. The analysis revealed that representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative speech acts function as effective pragmatic tools for expressing political intentions, promoting cooperation, and managing international interactions. The findings further indicate that the successful realization of these speech acts depends on the communicative context, audience expectations, and institutional objectives. Overall, the study highlights the importance of Speech Act Theory in understanding political discourse and contributes to the fields of pragmatics and discourse analysis by demonstrating how language serves as a strategic instrument for achieving political and diplomatic goals. Future research may extend this analysis by examining larger multilingual corpora and comparing speech act strategies across different political and cultural contexts.

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