

Functional Aspects Of Speech Acts In Media Texts

Yuldosheva Vazira Ziloliddin qizi

Journalism and Mass Communications University of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

Received: 16 December 2025; **Accepted:** 10 January 2026; **Published:** 31 January 2026

Abstract: This article analyzes the impact and functional capabilities of mass media texts on society. The research is conducted on the basis of speech act theory and identifies the communicative functions of locative, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts used in the media. It is emphasized that speech is a means of providing information, evaluating, influencing the audience and forming social consciousness. Pragmalinguistic and discursive methods were used in the research process. The results obtained are of significant theoretical and practical importance for media linguistics, speech culture and modern linguistics.

Keywords: Media discourse, speech acts, pragmatics, illocutionary act, perlocutionary effect, communicative strategy, media linguistics.

Introduction: Language used in everyday life and mass media signifies far more than a mere vehicle for conveying information—it is a means of action, power, and intention. This conceptual shift was famously introduced by J. L. Austin (1962) in his work *How to Do Things with Words*, in which he revealed the performative nature of language and divided speech into three functional layers: locutionary (the act of saying something), illocutionary (the intended meaning), and perlocutionary (its effect on the listener). These categories reshaped the understanding of spoken and written utterances as actions in themselves—capable of transforming social reality. Building on Austin’s work, John Searle (1969) expanded the theory through a precise taxonomy of speech acts: Assertives (statements of belief), Directives (requests, commands), Commissive (promises, threats), Expressives (emotions and attitudes), and Declarations (utterances that bring about change, such as verdicts or resignations). When filtered through the lens of mass media discourse, this theoretical foundation illuminates the complex power of language in shaping public perception and behavior.

Language does not merely reflect reality; it actively constructs it. It creates social identities, reinforces ideologies, and legitimizes—or challenges—existing

power structures. This profound insight underpins Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), advanced by Norman Fairclough in his influential work *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (1995). Fairclough emphasizes the inherently political and social nature of discourse—a site of struggle where power is produced, negotiated, and sometimes resisted. CDA is not concerned solely with analyzing words; it seeks to uncover the power relations embedded within texts and discourse, particularly in institutional and media contexts. Mass media, especially state-controlled outlets, play a crucial role in manufacturing consent, shaping national identity, and legitimizing political authority. This is clearly observable in Uzbek media discourse.

An example from Uzbek media illustrates this dynamic: “Biz xalq uchun xizmat qilamiz.” (“We serve the people.”) (— A statement by a government official broadcast during a press conference on UzReport TV, April 2023.) At first glance, this statement appears merely declarative and informative—the official articulates an institutional mission. However, from a discursive analytical perspective, it carries a heavier ideological load. The statement functions as a rhetorical strategy to affirm political legitimacy and project moral authority. The phrase “for the people”

evokes solidarity, trust, and inclusivity, aligning the speaker with the public. From Fairclough's perspective, this constitutes a hegemonic stance—an explicit example of ideological language that reinforces the government's image as altruistic, morally upright, and aligned with public interests. The repetition of such phrases across television interviews, banners, and news headlines creates a discursive field in which political authority becomes naturalized and rarely questioned. From a discourse perspective, this example demonstrates intertextuality, frequently observed in political discourse, drawing on established ideological motifs such as service to the people, unity, or progress. Over time, these motifs form a discursive hegemony in which alternative narratives—particularly within state-controlled media environments—may be marginalized. Furthermore, the power asymmetry between the speaker (a state official) and the audience (citizens) is masked through inclusive pronouns such as “we,” subtly positioning the government and the people as equals. This linguistic move creates an illusion of unity and shared purpose while preserving institutional power. Thus, CDA enables us to strip away the layers of apparent neutrality and reveal how language is instrumentalized to sustain political processes and social control in Uzbek media.

If language is a battlefield, argumentation is its most disciplined form of combat. While everyday conversations may flow freely, argumentative discourse—especially in public arenas such as mass media—is governed by logic, rules, and rhetorical maneuvers. Argumentation is not random persuasion but a structured exchange of speech acts aimed at resolving differences of opinion in a rational manner. Argumentation theory conceptualizes this process as a critical discussion consisting of distinct stages: confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion. Within this model, each speech act plays a strategic role—whether challenging a position, defending a standpoint, or closing a dispute.

METHODOLOGY

This study is grounded in pragma-stylistic analysis and employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology enriched by contemporary theories of speech acts and Critical Discourse Analysis. Drawing on the works of Austin, Searle, Mey, Fairclough, Bakhtin, Foucault, and Grice, the research examines how speech acts are

discursively realized in Uzbek media texts. A diverse corpus of authentic Uzbek media content was carefully selected, ranging from television programs and talk-show transcripts (2023–2024) to online headlines, advertisements, and government announcements. These texts were chosen for their institutional relevance, stylistic diversity, and cultural resonance. The aim was not merely to classify speech acts (assertives, directives, etc.) but to uncover their deeper ideological, relational, and performative roles within mass media discourse.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that speech acts in Uzbek media are neither neutral nor isolated; rather, they are deeply embedded within cultural values, institutional dynamics, and audience expectations. Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory and Hymes' ethnographic perspective illuminate how context determines the function of utterances, particularly in formal settings such as government broadcasts. Goffman's Face Theory helps explain the strategic use of politeness and indirectness—especially in official discourse—allowing institutions to maintain authority while projecting inclusivity and cooperation. Bakhtin's concept of dialogism reveals how multiple voices in news reports and talk shows create layered meanings. Foucault's discourse perspective uncovers how the repetition of ideological slogans such as “for the people” shapes collective identification and reinforces dominant power structures. Meanwhile, Grice's Cooperative Principle reveals how media texts carefully balance informativeness and clarity to maintain credibility and public trust. Collectively, these frameworks demonstrate that speech acts in mass media serve multiple functions: they inform, persuade, manage impressions, and construct social reality.

Findings

The findings indicate that speech acts in Uzbek mass media are not merely informational tools but complex, context-sensitive performances serving persuasive, ideological, and identity-based purposes. Three dominant discursive features emerge:

1. Contextuality – Speech acts are adapted to social hierarchies, institutional roles, and situational demands, reinforcing power relations while fostering reliability.

2. Politeness and Indirect Strategies – Mitigated directives and inclusive pronouns are employed in governmental and political discourse to maintain and display solidarity.

3. Intertextual and Ideological Framing – Recurrent phrases and culturally loaded expressions, such as nationalist or emotionally charged slogans, legitimize institutional agendas and shape public opinion.

CONCLUSION

This study explores how speech acts in Uzbek mass media transcend ordinary communication and instead function as dynamic, culturally embedded, and power-laden performances. Drawing on a rich theoretical foundation—from classical speech act theory to Critical Discourse Analysis and pragmatic stylistics—it becomes evident that language in media is never neutral. It performs, persuades, and positions. From emotionally charged headlines to carefully crafted political messages and commercially driven slogans, speech acts in Uzbek media reflect the values, ideologies, and relational strategies of a society in action. The interplay of indirectness, politeness, and intertextuality reveals a media discourse that is simultaneously strategic and sensitive—aimed at shaping public opinion, reinforcing authority, and cultivating national identity. Ultimately, this study underscores the power of language not merely as a means of expression, but as a social force capable of consolidating trust, asserting dominance, or inviting solidarity. In the evolving landscape of Uzbek mass media, speech acts stand as vivid evidence that words do not merely say something—they do something.

REFERENCES

1. Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
3. Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse & Society*, 17(3), 359–383.
5. Nurmonov, A. (2012). *Zamonaviy o'zbek tilshunosligi*. Toshkent: Fan.
6. Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics:*

An Ethnographic Approach. University of Pennsylvania Press.

7. Searle, J.R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press.