

Article

The Pragmatic Characteristics of Speech Acts

Madaminova Muhabbat¹

1. Alisher Navoiy's Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, Associate Professor at the Department of Uzbek Language and its Teaching Methodology, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Philology

Abstract: This article provides a scientific and theoretical analysis of the discursive features of language functions within pragmalinguistic research. It explores the communicative, expressive, and persuasive functions of linguistic units in the process of discourse. The role of the relationship between speech subjects in shaping pragmatic meaning is also examined. Furthermore, the study reflects on the significance of context, communicative situations, and speech strategies within the structure of discourse. The article concludes with findings on the role of pragmalinguistics in modern linguistics and its methodological potential in discourse analysis.

Keywords: *Pragmalinguistics, discourse, language functions, communication, pragmatic analysis, speech strategy, context, discursive feature, linguistic unit.*

Introduction

In the process of communication, the influence of linguistic units on the listener is determined by both intralinguistic and extralinguistic factors inherent in the discourse situation. Within pragmalinguistic research, particular attention is paid to the extent to which language functions operate in a specific discourse context, as well as to their role in ensuring either the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of communication [1].

From a functional perspective, the language system constitutes a multidimensional structure whose characteristics vary depending on the nature of the text or discourse under consideration. Consequently, different approaches have been proposed for the classification of language functions [2].

Literature Review

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Y.D. Desheriyev distinguishes the following language functions:

- Communicative function [3];
- Social function;
- Expressive function;
- Aesthetic function;
- Gnoseological (cognitive) function.

Similarly, Karl Bühler identifies three principal functions of linguistic signs based on their orientation within the communicative process [4]:

- Expressive function;

Citation: Muhabbat, M., The Pragmatic Characteristics of Speech Acts. Journal on Integrated Education (IJIE) 2026, 9(2), 273-278

Received: 10th Feb 2026

Revised: 21th Mar 2026

Accepted: 08th Apr 2026

Published: 25th May 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Appellative function;
 Representational function [5].

Roman Jakobson, in turn, classifies language functions in communication as follows.

The emotive (expressive) function is directed toward the addresser and aims to express directly the speaker's attitude toward the message being conveyed. As noted in linguistic studies, communication may convey not only the logical content of information but also the speaker's psychological state, emotions, and desires. In such cases, language performs its emotive, or emotional-expressive, function [6].

According to Jakobson, this function is associated with the speaker's intention to influence the emotions and feelings of the recipient. The emotional layer of language is primarily manifested through interjections and other expressive means that impart a particular emotional coloring to utterances. Jakobson illustrates this phenomenon with an example from the theatrical practice of Konstantin Stanislavski [7]. During an audition at the Moscow Art Theatre, actors were instructed to produce forty different interpretations of the phrase "this evening" while varying its expressive content. The audience, in turn, was expected to identify the contextual meaning solely on the basis of the phrase's intonational realization. This experiment demonstrated that intonation alone can significantly alter the pragmatic and emotional interpretation of an utterance, thereby highlighting the crucial role of expressive language functions in communication [8].

The emotive function thus extends beyond the transmission of factual information. It enables speakers to communicate personal attitudes, emotional states, and subjective evaluations, thereby enriching interpersonal interaction and enhancing the communicative impact of discourse [9]. Through this function, language serves not merely as a medium of information exchange but also as a powerful instrument for expressing human emotions and influencing the perceptions of others.

Methodology

The conative (appellative) function is directed toward the addressee. It is typically expressed through imperative or vocative forms and is primarily concerned with influencing the recipient's behavior or response. Unlike other language functions, it does not necessarily adhere to the conventional rules governing declarative statements and does not express uncertainty regarding the information being conveyed. Its primary purpose is to address, persuade, command, request, or otherwise engage the recipient directly.

The referential (communicative) function is associated with the object, event, or phenomenon being discussed. This function focuses on the relationship between the message and its referent or contextual reality. Through the referential function, language serves as a means of transmitting information about the external world, enabling speakers to describe facts, situations, and events objectively.

The phatic function is concerned with establishing, maintaining, and verifying communicative contact. Its purpose is to ensure that communication channels remain open and that interaction between participants is functioning effectively. This function is commonly realized through ritualized expressions such as greetings, inquiries about well-being, congratulations, and other forms of social exchange. The primary role of such expressions is not the transmission of new information but rather the initiation, maintenance, or reinforcement of interpersonal communication.

The metalingual (interpretive) function refers to the use of language for explaining, clarifying, or interpreting linguistic expressions themselves. It establishes a correspondence between a syntactic structure and the meaning it conveys. As noted in linguistic scholarship, the term metalingual function may be understood as "speaking about language through language" or "explaining linguistic material by means of linguistic material". Through this function, speakers clarify meanings, define terms, interpret expressions, and ensure that interlocutors share a common understanding of the linguistic code being used.

Together, these functions demonstrate that language is not merely a vehicle for conveying information but a multifaceted communicative system capable of expressing emotions, influencing recipients, maintaining social interaction, representing reality, and reflecting upon its own structures and meanings. Consequently, the study of language functions occupies a central place in pragmalinguistic research, as it provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which communication is organized and interpreted in various discourse contexts.

Results and Discussion

The poetic function refers to the function of language in which attention is focused not on other components of communication but on the message itself. According to Roman Jakobson, this function constitutes the most significant feature of literary texts. Scholars such as Talgat Bushuy and Shuhrat Safarov refer to it as the aesthetic function [10].

The classification of language functions proposed by V.P. Danilenko, drawing upon the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Bronisław Malinowski, is particularly close to the linguopragmatic approach as an interpretation of general philosophical concepts. From this perspective, Danilenko's theoretical views deserve considerable recognition.

While emphasizing the cognitive function of language, Humboldt did not overlook its other functions. In discussing the communicative function, he noted that complete mutual understanding is not always achieved in verbal interaction because both the speaker and the listener possess individual conceptions of reality. Humboldt also introduced ideas related to the pragmatic function of language [11]. According to this view, people use language to motivate one another toward action. In other words, language moves from communication as a process toward communication as practical action, thereby linking the communicative function with the pragmatic function.

The pragmatic function of language emerged as a distinct topic within the philosophy of language during the twentieth century. Among the scholars who contributed significantly to this field, Malinowski occupies a prominent position. In his view, the pragmatic function constitutes the primary function of language. This is especially evident in children's language use. Children employ language predominantly for pragmatic purposes: through language, they encourage adults to perform actions that satisfy their needs and desires [12].

It should also be noted that V.P. Danilenko interprets the pragmatic function primarily as a phenomenon that motivates individuals toward action and directs them toward particular forms of activity. In this regard, he cites the following observation by Vadim Kojinov:

"A superficial and mechanical opposition between human activity and language has become firmly established in our consciousness. Physical actions involving muscular effort undoubtedly change something in the world, whereas words seem to be merely expressions of thought or desire, existing as vibrations of air and lacking practical significance. However, such a view overlooks the fact that the professional activities of military commanders, ship captains, engineers, and many others often consist primarily of giving verbal instructions. Speech and language are among the most complete forms of human activity [13]. They genuinely transform the world. Every act of speech is directed toward change whether it contributes to the creation of something tangible by altering the state of an object, or whether it changes people's attitudes toward things and toward one another in politics, ideology, science, social life, and other spheres."

The pragmatic function of speech (or pragmatic competence) may be defined as the ability to utilize the social, emotional, and communicative functions of language in order to understand another person's social and psychological state, communicative intention, and behavior on the basis of various pragmatic factors. These factors include the context of communication, verbal and nonverbal behavior, verbal and nonverbal expressions, deductive reasoning, and metapragmatic awareness. Pragmatic competence is therefore closely associated with communicative effectiveness and productivity [14].

Pragmatic competence encompasses three principal components:
 Speech (linguistic) components;
 Paralinguistic components;
 Extralinguistic components.

Psychologist A. I. Melyokhin emphasizes that the full realization of the pragmatic function depends on the level of pragmatic competence possessed by the speaker. According to his view, successful communication is achieved through the interaction of multiple discourse-related factors, including contextual conditions, communicative intentions, linguistic choices, and social-psychological variables. Collectively, these elements form the discourse environment within which pragmatic meaning is generated, interpreted, and successfully conveyed [15].

Thus, from a pragmalinguistic perspective, language is not merely a medium for transmitting information but also a powerful instrument for influencing behavior, shaping attitudes, establishing social relationships, and achieving communicative goals. The effectiveness of communication depends largely on the speaker's ability to employ language pragmatically and the listener's capacity to interpret pragmatic cues appropriately within a given discourse context.

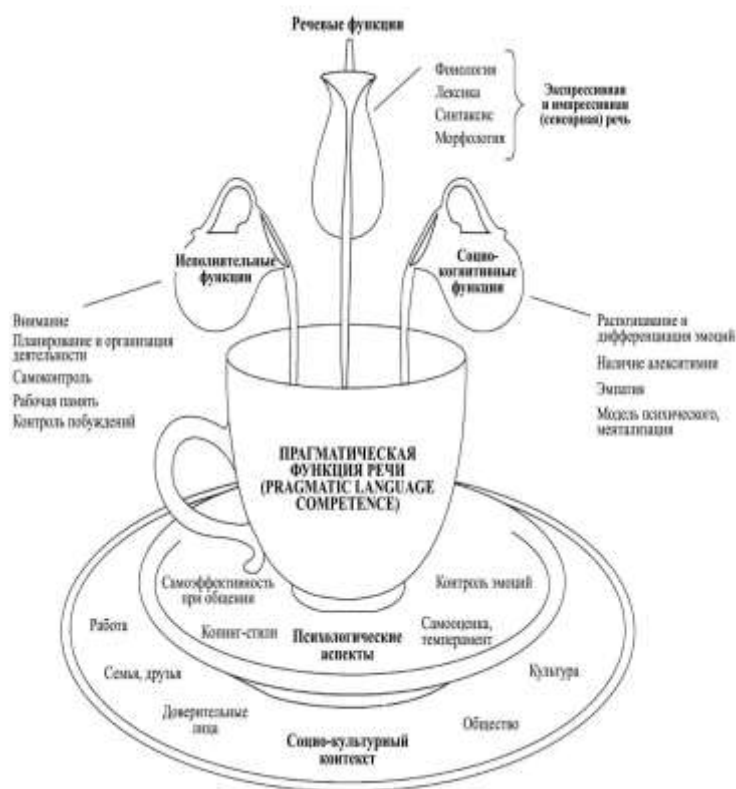


Figure 1.1. Processes Ensuring the Pragmatic Function of Speech (Adapted from P. Shaw and J. Douglas).

Language necessarily consists of two inseparable aspects: an external aspect, associated with the material, articulatory-acoustic complex, and an internal aspect, associated with immaterial meaning. The former enables speech to be conveyed to the perceptual organs through linguistic signs, without which verbal communication would be impossible; the latter is determined by the content connected with human thought and cognition.

Linguopragmatic Study of Text

The distinctive characteristics of a text naturally provide fertile ground for the investigation of its hidden meanings. The perception and interpretation of such meanings

require not only linguistic competence but also the activation of an individual's background knowledge and cognitive resources.

According to Nina Arutyunova, certain communicative situations necessitate the indirect or concealed expression of pragmatic meaning. In such cases, pragmatic content is "wrapped" or "hidden" within the utterance. The relationship between implicit meaning and the overt linguistic form is not always straightforward. This phenomenon can be observed in speech acts involving self-praise, utterances that undermine the addressee's dignity, or expressions of flattery. Likewise, inquiries into and disclosure of others' secrets are generally subject to communicative restrictions, despite conforming to the principle of truthfulness.

At the same time, indirect or concealed expressions do not necessarily violate communicative norms. Mitigating expressions such as "let us say" or "I suppose," as well as hypothetical constructions such as "let us imagine" or "let us consider," may serve legitimate communicative functions, including therapeutic or interpersonal purposes. Such expressions often signal that the content of the utterance does not correspond directly to objective reality. In many discourse situations, direct and explicit expression may be socially inappropriate or potentially disruptive.

Mahmud Hakimov employs the term "general implicitness" to express the notion of implication and argues that it encompasses all forms of hidden meaning. Although systematic research on this phenomenon in the Uzbek language remains limited, he emphasizes that theoretical sources related to classical literature contain an exceptionally rich body of material relevant to the study of implicit meaning.

Among the first scholars to address implication systematically was N. A. Panina (1979), who defined implicitness as the possibility of indirectly understanding the meaning of an utterance and deriving additional information from it. Similarly, Irina Arnold notes that implication gives rise to "additional meanings that emerge within the microcontext and are not directly indicated by linguistic units."

Y. V. Yermakova observes that while the principal characteristics of implicitness were initially investigated within the framework of syntactic semantics by scholars such as G.G. Pocheptsov, I.P. Susov, L.V. Lisochenko, Y.S. Martemyanov, N.D. Arutyunova, and V.V. Bogdanov, the phenomenon of implicitness in literary texts has received comparatively less scholarly attention. Notable contributions to this area include the works of Dolinin (1983), Bogdasaryan (1983), Nikitin (1988), Sitdikova (1985), Molchanova (1988), Bezugla (2007), Yermakova (2007, 2008, 2009), and Bertuccelli-Papi (2000).

As noted above, although concepts related to the explicit and implicit meanings of literary works have existed within Uzbek classical literary thought for centuries, systematic research on implicitness in contemporary literary texts is only beginning to emerge. The complex semantic structure of implicit meaning and its realization through diverse linguistic means constitute one of the most challenging and intriguing issues in contemporary linguistics. The successful creation of implicit meanings depends largely on the writer's artistic mastery, command of linguistic resources, and ability to exploit the stylistic potential of language. Consequently, literary texts provide a particularly rich field for identifying and analyzing the means through which implicit meanings are conveyed.

Furthermore, the extent to which an author intends to communicate implicit information through a literary work, as well as the reader's ability to recognize and interpret hidden meanings, depends significantly on the recipient's intellectual capacities and conceptual understanding of the world. Thus, the interpretation of implicit meaning emerges as a dynamic interaction between authorial intention, textual structure, and reader cognition.

Conclusion

In the utterance spoken by Qurbonoy, "Tangrim hammasini ko'rib turibdi" ("God sees everything"), the pragmeme "God Himself will punish you" is implicitly conveyed. Later in the narrative, this brief discursive exchange acquires a much broader and deeper

significance. Through the interaction of characters, the author presents painful aspects of national history, including the years of colonial domination during the Soviet era, spiritual and psychological oppression, the horrors of political repression, and the tragedy of generations shaped by a restrictive social environment.

These themes are embodied in the intersecting life experiences of the characters: the Commissioner's perception of Qurbonoy's family as class enemies, his responsibility for the death of her parents, the hardships she endured as an orphan, and the eventual humiliation and downfall of the Commissioner himself, who, as a socially typical figure, had ruined the lives of many people. Qurbonoy becomes a direct witness to his final disgrace. These emotionally charged and historically significant processes are refracted through the author's artistic perspective and conveyed to the reader through the speech of the characters.

What makes this particularly noteworthy is that these implicit meanings are not communicated through direct authorial commentary. Instead, they emerge organically from the literary text itself and are embedded within the explicit content of the characters' speech. As a result, the deeper ideological, historical, and emotional layers of the narrative are revealed indirectly, demonstrating the powerful role of implicit meaning in literary discourse and pragmalinguistic interpretation.

REFERENCES

- [1] K. Bühler, *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*. Moscow, Russia, 1993, pp. 12–14.
- [2] T. A. Bushuy and Sh. S. Safarov, *Til qurilishi: tahlil metodlari va metodologiyasi [Language Structure: Methods and Methodology of Analysis]*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Fan, 2007, p. 21.
- [3] W. von Humboldt, *Selected Works on Linguistics*. Moscow, Russia, 1984, p. 77.
- [4] V. P. Danilenko, *General Linguistics and the History of Linguistics: Lecture Course*. Moscow, Russia: Flinta and Nauka, 2009, p. 18.
- [5] V. V. Kozhinov, "On the Study of 'Artistic Speech'," in *Context–1974*, N. K. Gey, Ed. Moscow, Russia, 1975, pp. 258–260.
- [6] A. I. Melyokhin, "Features of the Pragmatic Function of Speech in Old Age: Principles of Diagnosis and Methods of Rehabilitation," *Modern Foreign Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 9–52, 2017.
- [7] A. A. Reformatsky, *Introduction to Linguistics*, V. A. Vinogradov, Ed. Moscow, Russia: Aspekt Press, 1996, p. 20.
- [8] N. D. Arutyunova, "Origins, Problems, and Categories of Pragmatics," in *Linguistic Pragmatics*, vol. 16. Moscow, Russia: Progress, 1985, pp. 21–38.
- [9] M. Hakimov, *Foundations of Uzbek Pragmalinguistics*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Akademnashr, 2013, 176 p.
- [10] E. V. Yermakova, "Implicitness in Literary Texts (Based on Russian- and English-Language Prose of Psychological and Fantastic Realism)," *Abstract of Dr. Sci. (Philology) Dissertation*, Saratov, Russia, 2010, pp. 289–296.
- [11] H. N. Qahramonovich, "Worthy descendants of the Samarkandians: enlighteners jadids," *World Bulletin of Social Sciences*, vol. 13, pp. 37–40, 2022.
- [12] R. T. Usanov and N. K. Khakkulov, "Iz istorii izucheniya problemy 'Nenasilie'," *Ekonomika i Sotsium*, no. 6-2 (121), pp. 1406–1413, 2024.
- [13] T. Shaymardonov, "Siddiqiy-Ajziy hayoti va ijodining o'rganilishi," *Uzbekistan: Yazyk i Kultura*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 27–39, 2022.
- [14] T. A. Shaymardonov, "Sayidahmadxo'ja Siddiqiy-Ajziyning qofiya qo'llash mahorati," *Yosh Olimlar Axborotnomasi – Vestnik Molodykh Uchenykh*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 147–152, 2024.
- [15] T. A. Shaymardonov, "The role of Siddiqi-Ajzi in Uzbek jadid literature," *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 91–100, 2020.