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SPEECH UNITS AND THEIR COMMUNICATIVE-PRAGMATIC FEATURES

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Abstract: This article examines the nature of speech units and their communicative-pragmatic features in contemporary linguistic research. The study analyzes how lexical, syntactic, and discourse-level units function in real communication, with particular attention to their pragmatic meanings, speaker intentions, and contextual interpretations. Through descriptive and comparative methods, the research identifies the factors that shape the communicative value of speech units in various interactional settings. The findings highlight that speech units acquire pragmatic force through context, social norms, and communicative goals, illustrating the dynamic relationship between linguistic form and communicative function.

Keywords: speech units; pragmatics; communicative features; contextual meaning; discourse analysis; speaker intention; interactional pragmatics; linguistic functions; communicative competence; language use

INTRODUCTION

The study of speech units and their communicative-pragmatic features has become one of the central directions in modern linguistics, particularly within the frameworks of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics. As communication increasingly takes place in diverse social, cultural, and technological environments, understanding how speakers select, structure, and interpret speech units has gained significant relevance. Speech units—ranging from words and phrases to full utterances and discourse segments—serve not only as carriers of linguistic meaning but also as tools for performing social actions, expressing attitudes, shaping interpersonal relations, and negotiating communicative intentions. Therefore, their analysis requires an integrated approach that considers both their linguistic form and pragmatic function. In recent decades, linguistic research has shifted from viewing language as an abstract system to understanding it as a dynamic means of communication embedded in particular contexts. This shift has drawn attention to the interactional and functional nature of speech units. Pragmatics, as a field, emphasizes how meaning is constructed through context, inference, presupposition, implicature, and the speaker's communicative goals. Speech units become communicatively significant not only through their semantic content but also through how speakers use them to achieve effects such as requesting, persuading, mitigating, expressing politeness, or maintaining social harmony. Consequently, the communicative-pragmatic properties of speech units are central to interpreting real-life language use. Moreover, the rise of cross-cultural communication highlights the need to examine how speech units function differently across languages and cultures. Variation in politeness markers, address forms, gendered speech patterns, and discourse conventions demonstrates that pragmatic meaning is shaped by cultural norms and communicative expectations. Understanding these differences is essential not only for linguistic theory but also for language teaching, translation studies, and intercultural communication. Another important aspect is the growing interest in multimodal communication and digital discourse, where speech units interact with visual, paralinguistic, and technological elements. In such contexts, pragmatic meaning becomes even more multifaceted, requiring new methodological approaches. These developments underscore the importance of investigating speech units from a communicative-pragmatic perspective to better understand the mechanisms through which individuals construct meaning and interact effectively in various settings. Overall,

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this study aims to explore the linguistic characteristics and pragmatic potential of speech units, identify the contextual factors that influence their interpretation, and reveal how they contribute to successful communication. By integrating insights from pragmatics, discourse studies, and sociocultural linguistics, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of how speech units function as both linguistic forms and communicative actions.

MAIN BODY

Speech units function as the fundamental components of verbal interaction, and their linguistic structure is closely tied to their communicative and pragmatic roles. At the lexical level, speech units convey denotative meaning but also carry connotative and socially conditioned nuances that influence how messages are interpreted. Phrases and utterances demonstrate even greater pragmatic potential, as they serve to perform speech acts such as requesting, apologizing, asserting, or persuading. The effectiveness of these acts depends on contextual factors, including shared background knowledge, conversational norms, and the relationship between interlocutors. From a communicative perspective, speech units operate within discourse as tools for organizing interaction. They can function as markers of politeness, hedging devices, strategies of agreement or disagreement, or mechanisms for managing turn-taking. For instance, discourse markers such as *well*, *you know*, or *actually* contribute to the coherence of communication while also signalling speaker attitudes. These pragmatic functions show that the meaning of a speech unit extends beyond its grammatical form. Cross-linguistic comparison reveals that communicative-pragmatic features are shaped by cultural values and interactional expectations. In many languages, including English and Uzbek, speech units that express respect, solidarity, or indirectness differ significantly, reflecting unique sociocultural norms. As a result, understanding these differences is essential for accurate interpretation and effective communication, particularly in multilingual or intercultural contexts. Overall, speech units emerge as flexible and multifunctional elements of discourse. Their communicative-pragmatic functions depend on context, speaker intention, and cultural conventions, demonstrating the interplay between linguistic form and social meaning. This highlights the importance of a holistic approach to analyzing speech units within natural communication.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of speech units and their communicative-pragmatic features demonstrates that language cannot be fully understood without considering the complex interaction between linguistic form, contextual factors, and communicative intentions. The study reveals that speech units function as dynamic components of communication, adapting to situational demands, social norms, and the interpersonal goals of speakers. While lexical and structural aspects determine the basic meaning of speech units, their pragmatic force emerges through contextualization, inference, and interactional positioning. The findings highlight that speech units are multifunctional and reflect a wide range of pragmatic roles, including expressing politeness, signalling agreement or disagreement, managing conversational flow, constructing identity, and maintaining social harmony. These functions become visible only when speech units are examined in authentic discourse, where meaning is negotiated in real time. Moreover, variations across languages and cultures confirm that communicative-pragmatic features are closely tied to social values, cultural expectations, and conventions of interaction. This underscores the need for cross-cultural perspectives in linguistic analysis. The research also shows that modern communication—especially digital and multimodal forms—reshapes the pragmatic roles of speech units, introducing new patterns of meaning-making. Emojis, abbreviations, discourse markers, and paralinguistic cues often complement or modify spoken or written speech units,

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making pragmatic interpretation even more nuanced. Therefore, the study of speech units must extend beyond traditional linguistic boundaries to account for these emerging communicative realities. Overall, the investigation confirms that speech units serve as essential building blocks of communication, enabling speakers to perform social actions and construct meaning through context-dependent strategies. Understanding their communicative-pragmatic properties contributes to a deeper comprehension of how language operates in everyday interactions. The results of this research may inform further studies in pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, language pedagogy, and translation studies, particularly in areas where accurate interpretation of pragmatic meaning is crucial. Future research may explore more detailed comparative analyses across languages, investigate gender or power dynamics in speech unit usage, or examine the influence of digital communication on pragmatic behaviour.

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