

Speech Acts Revisited: Examining Illocutionary Speech Acts in Speeches of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

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Abstract

Pragmatics is an interdisciplinary subfield of applied linguistics that investigates the meaning in context. One of its research areas, speech acts, provides important implications on how the meaning behind the utterances is perceived and what effect it may have on the hearer. Theories and classifications proposed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1979) are particularly useful in understanding the hidden meaning and its effect on the audience. Political discourse is directly connected with speech acts and there is a body of research that focuses on the classification of illocutionary acts embedded within speeches of politicians. In this regard, the present research aimed to analyze illocutionary speech acts of two speeches of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; speech at the 10th anniversary of Turkish Republic and his Address to Turkish Youth which was a part of his great speech that he delivered to deputies and representatives of the Republican Party on 15th-20th October 1927 by employing qualitative content analysis on English translations of the speeches. Subsequent to meticulous analysis, the present qualitative study concluded that Atatürk used more speech acts in his speech at the 10th anniversary of the Turkish Republic than his Address to Turkish Youth. Speech acts in his speech at the 10th anniversary of the Turkish Republic primarily featured expressive, representative, commissive and directive speech acts respectively while his Address to Turkish Youth featured representative, commissive, directive and expressive speech acts. In total, the most used speech acts were representative, followed by expressive, commissive and directive, respectively. No declaration speech act was observed in either speech.

Keywords: Atatürk, Illocutionary Speech Acts, Pragmatics