

Performative Acts Exhibited in Selected Ghanaian Newspaper Headlines

Authors : Charlotte Tetebea Asiamah

Abstract : This paper sought to highlight the use of performative acts as exhibited in a Ghanaian newspaper headline; the Daily Graphic. The study categorically discusses and analyze thirty headlines on performative acts as captured in the month of June and July, 2024. The paper dwells on J.L Austin and J.R Searle's theory of speech acts. Although a lot has been done in the area of performative acts, there is still a gap as far as newspaper headlines are concerned. Getting to know performative act's stand in the domain of newspaper headlines will contribute to the discussion in literature thereby extending the scope of discourse as far as performative acts are concerned. Some of the questions for this study among others are; Do performative acts exhibited in newspaper headlines follow felicity conditions? Are the utterances explicitly stated or otherwise? A qualitative method approach was used in gathering and analyzing data. This approach was chosen in order to gain a depth insight of the study. The headlines were selected using the instrument of document analysis. Out of the numerous headlines, the researcher snapped over 60 headlines after which thirty (30) headlines were carefully selected for the study. The 30 newspaper headlines were purposively selected based on the element of performativity in them which were related to the study. Per the data, the findings depicted that, Performative Acts are exhibited in the Ghanaian Daily Graphic Newspaper headlines. The performative acts are expressed in all of the five categories of performative acts as J.R Searle discussed in his writing. These acts were seen in all the categories of the newspaper headlines; be it, governance or politics, social, international news and sports. It was also observed in the data that, directives were the most used performative act. The performative acts found in the newspaper headlines helped to grab readers attention, it also served as a way of influencing how readers perceive an utterance made by an individual in the headlines.

Keywords : explicit, headline, illocutionary, newspaper, performative

Conference Title : ICLL 2025 : International Conference on Linguistics and Languages

Conference Location : Cape Town, South Africa

Conference Dates : November 04-05, 2025