



Article Type: Research paper

Analysis of Ayatollah Khamenei's Friday Sermon Following the Martyrdom of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (2024/10/4) with Emphasis on John Searle's Speech Act Theory

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Article Info.

Received: 21/12/2024

Accepted: 29/11/2025

Available Online: 11/9/2025

Extended Abstract

Linguistic discussions and their applications in the study of texts and speeches facilitate a systematic reading of the materials. By applying rigorous linguistic tools, researchers can move beyond surface-level readings to uncover the pragmatic intentions, illocutionary forces, and perlocutionary effects that shape audience perceptions and societal responses. Within this broad domain, John Searle's speech act theory emerges as a particularly influential paradigm, originally building upon J.L. Austin's foundational work in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Searle, in his seminal text *Speech Acts* (1969) and subsequent elaborations like *Expression and Meaning* (1979), refines the taxonomy into five core categories of illocutionary acts: assertives (which commit the speaker to the truth of a represented proposition, such

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How to Site:

Ghayedgivi, Forood and Bagheri Dolatabadi, Ali (2025). Analysis of Ayatollah Khamenei's Friday Sermon Following the Martyrdom of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (2024/10/4) with Emphasis on John Searle's Speech Act Theory. *The Fundamental and Applied Studies of the Islamic World*, 7(3), 55-58.



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as stating facts or describing events), expressives (which articulate the speaker's psychological state or attitude toward a propositional content, like praising or lamenting), directives (which attempt to compel the hearer to perform an action, through commands, requests, or suggestions), commissives (which obligate the speaker to a future course of action, such as promises or vows), and declaratives (which effect a change in institutional reality simply by virtue of their utterance, like declaring war or baptizing). This research aims to apply John Searle's speech act theory in analyzing Ayatollah Khamenei's Friday prayer sermons delivered after the martyrdom of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, addressing the following questions: According to John Searle's speech act theory, what speech acts did Ayatollah Khamenei employ in his Friday sermon? What does the frequency of these acts signify?

The methodology used in this article is a mixed-methods approach, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The data collection method was purposive sampling and content validity was conducted based on a single focus group. The findings were presented in both descriptive and explanatory formats. The descriptive findings of the article show that among the speech acts of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the most speech acts were declarative speech acts. In other words, out of the total of 87 speech acts, 43 cases, which include 49.42 percent, were Assertive. In second place, the Expressive speech acts with 23 cases, i.e. 26.43 percent, expresses the speaker's feeling about the world. In this sermon, the directive speech act is in the next place. This speech act with 14 speech fragments, 16.10 percent, indicates that the speaker puts the listener in the performance of a task and forces him to do something. The Commissive speech act, with a frequency of 5 cases and 5.75 percent, indicates that the speaker intends to commit himself to perform an action in the future. Finally, the declarative act includes speech acts that, by expressing them, create real changes in the world, which has the lowest frequency in this sermon with only 2 cases and 2.30 percent. Therefore, the findings of the study indicate that in leadership speech, Assertive act had the highest frequency and declarative act had the lowest frequency. The frequency of Assertive act was 49.42 percent, Expressive speech act was 26.43 percent, Directive act was 16.10 percent, Commis-

sive act was 5.75 percent, and declarative act was 2.30 percent. Also, in the explanatory findings of the research, the rereading of this sermon according to John Searle's speech act theory showed that in this sermon, all five types of speech acts emphasized by Searle, including declarative, affective, persuasive, commitment, and declaration, can be found among the speech fragments. The reason why declarative acts are used most frequently in this sermon is that Ayatollah Khamenei, as the leader of the world's Shiites, in the religious-political sphere, considers the interests of the country and the resistance front, and his speeches reflect a deep look at political and cultural issues. Considering the context and circumstances that have arisen, the existence of crises, seditions, and specific political conditions prevailing in the region, and the impact of this on Iran as well as the resistance front in Islamic countries, the delivery of these sermons by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution can pave the way for the right choice in the path and movement of the people and officials, as well as the resistance movements in Islamic countries, including Lebanon, Palestine, Gaza, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and help them make appropriate decisions in their policies.

The findings of this study, as a feedback on the Friday prayer sermon of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, within the framework of Searle's speech act theory, indicate that the statements of Ayatollah Khamenei, as the religious-political leader of Iran and the Resistance Front, have provided his audience with the opportunity to strengthen their spirit of defiance and all-round resistance by choosing the right path and making effective decisions. The honesty in his speech and his frank and uncompromising expression, in explaining current events correctly and without exaggeration, has played an important role in enlightening society and has created the basis for a good and sincere relationship between the Leader of the Revolution and the people under his command in Iran and the Resistance Front. The high frequency of assertive acts among Ayatollah Khamenei's speech acts suggests that when delivering this sermon, he sought to fulfill the duty of enlightening and raising societal awareness regarding recent events, including the recent assassinations that led to the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh (2024-5-31) and Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (2024-10-4), as well as Iran's missile strikes against Israel

(Promise of Truth 1 & 2)(2024-4-13, 2024-10-01), in his capacity as the leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Resistance Front.

Key words: Speech Act, John Searle, Friday Sermon, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, Ayatollah Khamenei.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research study.