

## A Discourse Analysis of Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*

**Sachin D Bhandare**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Rajarshi Shahu Mahavidyalaya (Autonomous), Latur  
Maharashtra, India.

Received: February 08, 2019

Accepted: March 11, 2019

---

**ABSTRACT** *The term discourse refers to any meaningful interaction between conversational partners. Linguistic discourse can be written or oral. While talking about linguistic discourse in literature and especially in drama, it is of three major types: discourse between the author and the reader/audience, discourse between one character and another, and discourse between a character and a reader/audience. The term discourse incorporates linguistics/pragmatics' strategies of speech act theory, politeness principle, cooperative principle, cohesion, coherence turn taking etc. The present paper delineates the discourse analysis of Girish Karnad's Tughlaq by applying speech act theory.*

---

**Key Words:** : discourse analysis; speech acts; locutionary act; illocutionary act; perlocutionary act

---

**Introduction:** Literary texts can be studied by applying various theories of criticism, psychology, anthropology, sociology and linguistics. Appliance of linguistics theories to literary works is one of the crucial areas where much research is not carried out. Literary text, as mentioned by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, uses language as its medium. Hence, literary text is a linguistic entity which can offer, what it intends to be, only when the readers or audience can work out on the literariness or meaning which is hidden - in culture specific, speaker/writer intentional and context bound use of language, which is the area of discourse analysis. The term discourse refers to any meaningful interaction between conversational partners. Linguistic discourse can be written or oral. While talking about linguistic discourse in literature and especially in drama, it is of three major types: discourse between the author and the reader/audience, discourse between one character and another, and discourse between a character and a reader/audience. The term discourse incorporates linguistics/pragmatics' strategies of speech act theory, politeness principle, cooperative principle, cohesion, coherence turn taking etc. Let's see speech act theory.

### Speech Act Theory

Human beings do communicate through sentences or utterances. Speech act theory believes that every utterance is an act. It means the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action. Speech act theory was proposed by J L Austin in his posthumously published book *How To Do Things with words* (1962). Later on his student J R Searle in his *Expression and meaning Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (2011) revised his theory of speech acts. Austin proposes that the action performed by producing an utterance will consist of three related acts - the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutioanry speech acts.

**Locutionary Act** – It is the utterance of a sentence with some sense and references. It is the basic act of utterance. It is just the production of meaningful linguistic expression e.g. His father is a teacher.

**Illocutionary Act** – Mostly speakers do not produce well-formed sentences without a purpose. They form an utterance with some kind of function in mind. e. g. I will come tomorrow. (It is a promise.)

**Perlocutionary Act** – It is about bringing effects on the hearer(s) by means of uttering sentences. Such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance(s).

Speech acts are linguistic structures which are used with illocutionary force in specific social and institutional contexts. Following example will explain these acts explicitly.

A: I feel very hungry.

It is a statement of fact and it is a locutionary act. It conveys the information that the speaker A is thirsty. But there is an added dimension to it and that dimension is not discoverable in the actual words used. The illocutionary force, the functional value or the intention of the speaker A is that of a request for something to eat. The hearer has to go beyond the words used and look for hidden meanings. The response of the hearer after getting the exact meaning of the statement of the speaker A, will be, to go and bring something to eat and give it to the speaker A. This is a perlocutionary act or the effect of the speaker on the conversational partner.

As mentioned above John Searle has given a theory of speech acts in his *Expression and meaning Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (2011). On the functional basis J R Searle has classified five types of speech acts. They are – assertives, expressives, commissives, directives, and declarations.

The first, assertive or representatives are the speech acts, as Yule (2011:53) maintains, which show what a speaker believes to be is the case or not. It includes - Assertions, statement of facts, descriptions, and conclusions as exemplified in [1] below.

- [1] a. Today is a very hot day.  
b. Trees give us oxygen.  
c. Noam Chomsky didn't write about the art of painting.

Second expressives are the speech acts which refer to what a speaker feels. J. L. Austin calls them behabatives (1962:151). They express psychological states or social behavior. They include the expressions of joy, sorrow, pain, pleasure, likes, dislikes, and an apology as shown in [2].

- [2] a. Today I'm on cloud nine.  
b. I can't bear the perfume smell.  
c. I'm extremely sorry.

The third commissive speech acts as Austin (1962:150) maintains refer to promise or undertaking. They commit the speaker to do something. They express the speaker's intention. They are- promises, threats, refusals, oath, pledges etc as illustrated in [3].

- [3] a. We will go for a film.  
b. I'll see you.  
c. I don't come with you.

The Fourth directive speech acts get the addressee or the communiqué partner to do something. They express what the talker wants. They include commands, orders, requests, advice, permission and invitation as exemplified in [4]. They can be positive or negative in its nature.

- [4] a. Shoot the enemy.  
b. May I get a glass of water please?  
c. Don't touch it.  
d. Why don't you come and dine with us.?

The fifth speech act is declarations. As Levinson describes (2010:240), these speech acts bring immediate change in the state of human affairs. It is the exercising of powers, rights or influence (Austin 1962:150). Here a speaker performs special institutional role. Its consequence may be that others are compelled or allowed or not allowed to do certain acts (1962:154). Declaring war, excommunicating, performing marriage, firing from employment, compelling a player (not) to play further etc. are the paradigm cases as stated in [5].

- [5] a. Priest: I hereby pronounce you to be husband and wife  
b. Umpire: You are out  
c. Boss: Get lost. You are fired from this job.

### **An Outline of Tughlaq**

Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*, published in 1964, is a historical play. It deals with the life and ambitions of Tughlaq, the sultan or the Muslim king of the 15th century India. At the outset of the play, it is declared that the Jizia tax on the Hindus is closed down and the state capital will be shifted from Delhi to Daulatabad. Tughlaq earnestly desires to create a welfare state where every citizen will be happy. He also takes a revolutionary decision of introducing copper coins in his state. His intentions are defeated by opposition from all corners religious political, courtly and even the public.

### **Speech Act Theory and Drama**

The term drama is derived from the Greek verb draein which means to do. So the word drama would mean doing and by extension showing what men and women do i.e. how they speak, how they treat each other, interact etc. The dramatist creates men and women who speak to each other and make their intentions known to each other. It is here, the speech act theory is relevant. The characters in a play use speech acts to convey their messages thereby using illocutionary acts which lead to perlocutionary act. From this communication we gather the story of their life. Early history of drama tells us that it was predominantly verbal. For instance, Shakespeare's dramas. When drama is being performed on the stage, everything a dramatist wants to convey, conveys through dialogues or speeches by the characters. Similarly, when we read drama we read speeches or dialogues which reveal the message of the dramatist. The dictionary tells

us that a dialogue is conversation between two or more persons, real or imaginary. These dialogues or speeches fall in the category of speech acts hence dramatic dialogues can be analysed in the light of speech act theory. As mentioned above speech act theory comprises of locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is an act of saying something. It is the actual production of lexis with certain sense and reference. Illocutionary act refers to performing an act in saying something. It is the speaker's intention. And the perlocutionary act refers to say or do something as a response to an illocutionary act. Characters in drama do produce locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. When characters speak, they assert, conclude, describe, report, predict, inform accuse, testify, confess, swear, criticise, complain, state the fact and mention what they believe about the external world. John Searle terms this type of linguistic acts as assertive speech act. Sometimes characters do express their psychological state or social behaviour. They apologise, bless, curse, congratulate, praise, express joy, sorrow, likes, dislikes, pleasure, pains etc. Austin calls them perlocutionary acts and Searle uses the term expressive speech act. Occasionally, characters make commitment to do something. Promising, threatening, refusing, pledging, vowing, guaranteeing etc, bind the speaker or the listener to or not to do something. They basically express what the speaker intends. These acts are called as commissive speech acts. Periodically, characters in drama speak to get the addressee or someone else to do something. They do it by advising, inviting, permitting, ordering and requesting. It can be used in positive or negative sense. These vocal acts are known as directive speech act. Episodically, characters do speak which can bring some change in the world of conversational partners. For instance betting, declaring, resigning, passing a sentence, appointing, nominating etc. These speech acts are declarative speech act. Use of illocutionary speech acts such as assertives, expressives, commissives, directives and declaratives on the part of the dramatic characters, to impart information in the direct and indirect manner create the dramatic world and context. Audience or the readers of drama make use of these expressions by the characters to fully comprehend the message of the dramatist. Speech acts do tell us about the intention, nature and psychological state of the characters defining them heroic, villainous, coward, cunning, co-operative and so on. It means discourse in drama is created by speech acts. Let's make discourse analysis of the dramatic dialogues in *Tughlaq* with the help of speech acts.

### Assertive Speech Act

Assertive or representatives are the speech acts, as Yule (2011:53) maintains, which show what a speaker believes to be the case or not. Here the speaker wants the listener to believe the truth of what (s)he says. Following production of assertive speech act by Announcer reveals Tughlaq's just and secular outlook. Announcer states publicly that Brahmin Vishnu Prasad has filed a case against the benevolent Tughlaq, for his land has been illegally grabbed by Tughlaq's officer of the state. The Kazi-i- Mumalik adds that Brahmin's claim is just and recommends him to get a fund of five hundred silver dinars from the state treasury. Announcer further declares.

ANNOUNCER: ... His Merciful Majesty has accepted the decision of the  
Kazi-i-Mumalik as just and in addition to the grant of  
five hundred silver dinars has offered the said Vishnu  
Prasad a post in the Civil services to ensure him a regular  
and adequate income. (Scene i: 3)

The intention or illocutionary force of this assertive utterance is to create an impression among the people that Tughlaq is just and though he is a Muslim king, he is very much careful about the privilege of Hindu people. The perlocutionary act implies change in the mind of the hearer. It entails that addressee should behave as per the desire expressed by the addresser. But the citizens' reaction/expressive speech acts, given below, shows that intended effect is not achieved.

OLD MAN: What folly is this! May Heaven guide our Sultan.  
HINDU: I don't believe a word of it. There's something more to  
this, that much is obvious - (Scene i: 3)

In another speech act, Muhammad Tughlaq while playing chess, informs his Step-Mother about the fact that Ain-ul-Mulk is marching towards Delhi as follows.

STEP-MOTHER: What do I know about your chess?  
You would better write it to Ain-ul-Mulk about it. He'll love it.  
MUHAMMAD: Funny you should mention him. I was just thinking of him -  
but not with reference to chess. You see, my dear friend Ain-ul-Mulk,  
the companion of my childhood, my fellow champion in chess, is at  
this very moment marching on Delhi.

STEP-MOTHER: What? What do you mean?

MUHAMMAD: Exactly what I said. He is marching on Delhi  
with an army of thirty thousand.

STEP-MOTHER: But why, Muhammad?

MUHAMMAD: I don't know. The last letter I wrote to him  
asked him to be the Governor of the Deccan.

I need a strong man there and I thought he would like it.

STEP-MOTHER: But there must be some reason!

(No reply.) What are you going to do now?

MUHAMMAD: Do the best I can ...

(Scene i: 9)

Tughlaq here intends to convey his Step-Mother the fact of Ain-ul-Mulk's march on Delhi. Her expression 'What ? what do you mean?' is the perlocutionary effect of Tughlaq's information. It shows that she is shocked to listen him. It is revealed through Tughlaq's speech act that Ain-ul-Mulk is Tughlaq's childhood companion. It creates perlocutionary effect on the readers/audience increasing curiosity among them as to why a bosom friend of Tughlaq is going to attack Delhi. Their dialogue, in the form of question and answer, reveals that Tughlaq is willing to make Ain-ul-Mulk the Governor of a province of his state but Tughlaq is defeated in his purpose as Ain-ul-Mulk doesn't like his offer. When Step-Mother asks, "What are you going to do now?" Tughlaq's response "Do the best I can" makes the readers/audience anxious about Tughlaq's future action. Thus, it leads the action of the play ahead by increasing the curiosity and anxiety among the spectators about Tughlaq's course of action.

### Expressive Speech Act

Expressives refer to what the speaker feels. They express psychological states or social behaviour and include the utterances of apology, blessing, cursing, congratulation, praises, joy, sorrow, likes, dislikes, pleasure, pains etc.

The play opens with some of the citizens discussing the state of affairs in country in front of the court in Delhi.

OLD MAN: God, What's this country coming to!

YOUNG MAN: What are you worried about, grandfather? The country is in  
perfectly safer hands-safer than any you've seen before.

(Scene i: 1)

The utterance by the Old Man is an instance of expressive speech act. To say something is to do something (Austin 1962:12). By saying an utterance, the Old Man has created the context or situation delineating that something wrong or unforeseen is happening in the country.

Linguistically speaking, what the old man has done in uttering this exclamation is: he has made use of English sounds and put them in particular sequence so as to produce words. The words he utters appear in a systematic sequence. As far as the grammar part of this utterance is concerned, he has chosen an exclamatory form. Thus, the production of the utterance involves syntagmatic or paradigmatic choices. The Old Man could have said the same thing in a variety of ways: 'It is a very worst situation in this country'; 'God, save this country from the danger'; 'It is difficult to survive in this country'; 'No one can live in this country' and so on. There are several possibilities. But there must be some reason for the choice of an exclamatory form. Probably the reason is interpersonal or social. The word or phrase is selected for utterance on the basis of maximum salience (Kecskes: 2013). The Old Man has made use of the hinting strategy. He has pointed his finger at something which he believes to be unspeakable, unmentionable and unpleasant. The Old Man has produced an utterance that refers to somebody and something. This is called a prediction or a proposition act (Searle 2011:24). The Old Man has produced an utterance in a specific polity-socio-cultural context. That gives a special significance to his words.

The possibilities we have mentioned above are the implications of his utterance. He has commented on the country's state of affairs. This suggestivity is called the illocutionary aspect of an utterance. The intended message of an utterance is appropriately understood by the people present there. The Old Man's comment has affected the Young Man. He responds and mentions that there is nothing to worry about. The country is in perfectly safe hands. The effect of the Old Man's comment on the Young man and others is called perlocutionary effect. In this dialogue, old man's expression about the affairs in the country is pessimistic. Young man's response to it is rather optimistic. This adjacency pair of expressions creates positive and negative opinions about the affairs in the country.

### Commissive Speech Act

Commissives commit the speaker to do or not to do something. They express what the talker intends. They include promises, refusals, threats, vows, guaranteeing, pledges etc. Following is an instance of commissive speech act in *Tughlaq*.

Tughlaq's Step-Mother, in *Tughlaq*, is worried about his decisions. She feels that Tughlaq may face some danger due to his improper decisions. She shares her feelings with Barani, a historian. Through the following utterance Barani promises Step-Mother that he will not leave Tughlaq in any situation.

STEP-MOTHER: It is not that. It's just I don't like so many of his advisers and his friends. (*Suddenly.*) Please promise me not to leave him-ever- whatever he does.

BARANI (overwhelmed to the point of tears): May God help me to retain Such confidence untarnished. I won't leave His Majesty, Your Highness, I promise you. I love him too much to do that.

(Scene ii: 17)

Here, Barani makes a promise and a commitment to himself. His promise has put some obligation on him. In future he is bound to behave or suit his action to his words. In the course of action ahead in drama, Barani proves the fact that he is loyal to Tughlaq

### Directive Speech Act

Directives are the speech acts, where the speakers use to get the addressee or someone else to do something as a response. As Yarahmadi and Olfati (2011) mention many directive sentences are posed as questions so they are easy to identify by the presence of a question mark. However, some sentences that end in question marks are rhetorical in nature and do not represent a directive speech act. Directives include requests, commands, warning, urging, appointing, voting which may be positive or negative. Similarly, advice, invite and permit are the directives.

Following statements of orders to his servants by sultan Muhammad is an example of directive speech act.

MUHAMMAD: ...

Go at once and tell the Vizier I want everyone here - All the Khans, Amirs, Sardars, - everyone - and at once!

(Scene iii: 19)

Muhammad Tughlaq is a king. Being an authority, he is in a position to direct or command his soldiers. Hence his commands are always obeyed by his fellowmen.

### Declarative Speech Act

As Levinson maintains (2010:240), declarative speech acts bring immediate change in the state of human affairs. It is as Austin mentions (1962:50) the exercising of powers rights or influence. Here a speaker performs a special institutional role. Its consequence may be that others are compelled or allowed or not allowed to do certain acts (1962:154). The class includes betting, declaring, resigning, passing a sentence, appointing, nominating, giving judgement etc. These speech acts are uncommon.

Following remarks by Muhammad is an illustration of declarative speech act. Being the supreme authority, the Sultan or the king of the state, he takes the decisions of shifting his capital and introducing copper coins in his state

MUHAMMAD: ... Later this year the capital of my empire will be moved from Delhi to Daulatabad

(Scene i: 3)

In Scene viii, we realize that the capital has been shifted from Delhi to Daulatabad.

MUHAMMAD: ... From next year we shall have copper currency in our empire along with the silver dinars.

(Scene vi: 39)

As per Tughlaq's orders, copper coins too are introduced in his state. It is revealed through the speech acts from the following scenes.

### Conclusion

Though plot is important in a drama, speech acts on the part of the characters carry forward the actions in a play. Above analysis shows, speech acts do tell us about the intention, nature and psychological state of the characters defining them heroic, villainous, coward, cunning, co-operative and so on. It means discourse in drama is created by speech acts. Here the discourse analysis of selected dialogues of *Tughlaq* has been done in the light of speech act theory. The analysis shows that all utterances in the selected plays can be categorized under one of the speech acts. Owing to the limitations of space, only particular expressions are

analysed with the help of speech act theory. Every character is seen performing some speech act or other to convey their intentions. They express actual state of affairs, express their feelings and attitudes towards others, try to get other conversationalists to perform some actions, and finally bring about some state of affairs (usually of the institutional sort) by virtue of the utterances itself. Hence, they perform actions with 'words'.

**[Note:** This research article is a part of the Minor Research Project entitled A Discourse Analysis of Four Indian Dramas. Research scholar is thankful to UGC for the financial assistance to this project.]

**REFERENCES**

1. Austin, J. L. How To DO Things With Words. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1962. Coulthard, Malcolm. An Introduction to Discourse Analysis. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Delhi: Pearson Education. 2007.
2. Karnad, G. Tughlaq. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2011.
3. Kecskes, I. "Why do we say what we say the way we say it?", Journal of Pragmatics. 48 (2013): 71-83.
4. Levinson, S. C. Pragmatics. UK: CUP. 2010.
5. Searle, J. R. Speech Acts. New York: CUP.2011. Yarahmadi M, Olfati N. "Speech Act Analysis of Anton Chekhov's The Seagull", Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research, (2011): 2522-527.