The Pragmatics of Legal Discourse in the Algerian Official Gazette: An Analytical Study in Light of Speech Act Theory and Institutional Intentionality

Ismahane Zedadra[1],
University of 8 May 1945, Guelma, Algeria, zedadra.ismahane@univ-guelma.dz
Prof. Dr. Ouarda Bouiran[2],
University of 8 May 1945, Guelma, Algeria, bouiran.ouarda@univ-guelma.dz

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Abstract
This study aims to analyse legal discourse in the Algerian Official Gazette from a pragmatic perspective through a critical linguistic approach that investigates the discursive mechanisms through which legal discourse extends beyond merely informing and publishing legal texts to interpreting legal provisions, uncovering their underlying content, elucidating their meanings, and understanding their implications. It examines the functional transformation of the legal utterance from a linguistic structure into a performative act by investigating how legal language operates in actual use. Drawing on Speech Act Theory, the study argues that the binding force of legal texts derives from institutional intentionality and performative authority, which are realised through pragmatic and linguistic strategies that guide interpretation and confer illocutionary force upon legal utterances. The study concludes that, in addition to its function of publishing legal texts, the Algerian Official Gazette exercises linguistic authority that contributes to consolidating institutional dominance and regulating social relations through legal discourse, thereby fulfilling institutional intentions.
Keywords: Pragmatics; Legal Discourse; Official Gazette; Speech Act Theory.

Introduction

Legal discourse constitutes one of the most distinctive forms of institutional discourse because of its binding force and performative linguistic function, which extends beyond informing and reporting facts to establishing normative effects and regulating social relations within the State. This discourse defines rights and obligations and regulates relationships and transactions among individuals through a linguistic system of interaction between the speaker and the addressee, governed by legislative rules and institutional purposes. This makes legal discourse distinctive, particularly in terms of its terminological precision and the restriction of its meanings to a defined legal framework, thereby distinguishing it from other forms of discourse.

The Algerian Official Gazette is one of the principal vehicles of this discourse and the official medium through which it is embodied. It publishes official laws and the procedures for their

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implementation, serves as the institutional forum for issuing decrees, ensures the implementation of government decisions, and facilitates the functioning of State institutions. Its role, however, extends beyond these functions. It constitutes an institutional linguistic space in which the authority of legal discourse is exercised through discursive practices that employ pragmatic mechanisms and strategies to regulate the production of meaning, guide interpretation, and confer illocutionary force upon legal utterances in order to fulfil the institutional purposes of the Algerian legislator.

Based on this conception, the present study seeks to ianalyse legal discourse in the Algerian Official Gazette from a pragmatic perspective and to reveal how legal utterances are transformed from linguistic structures into speech acts possessing illocutionary force that produce effects within the institutional system. It also seeks to clarify the role of institutional intentionality in constructing the normative authority of legal texts and to identify the pragmatic and linguistic strategies that guide their interpretation and limit the possibilities of semantic deviation.

This objective gives rise to the following research question: **How do pragmatic mechanisms in the legal discourse published in the Algerian Official Gazette contribute to endowing legal texts with illocutionary force and achieving their institutional purposes?** This central question generates several subsidiary questions concerning the nature of the speech acts contained in this discourse, the role of institutional intentionality in establishing its authority, and the linguistic means through which interpretation is regulated and its effectiveness consolidated.

To address this problem, the study adopts a pragmatic method within a critical linguistic approach. It draws on Speech Act Theory as a framework for analysing the illocutionary force of legal utterances and on the concept of institutional intentionality to explain the relationship between linguistic structure and the regulatory function of discourse. This approach makes it possible to identify the linguistic and pragmatic dimensions through which the Official Gazette embodies institutional authority and fulfils institutional purposes.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to apply the pragmatic approach to the analysis of legal discourse as an institutional linguistic practice in which linguistic structure intersects with legislative function. This contributes to expanding the scope of linguistic research into legal discourse. Accordingly, the study seeks to enrich contemporary Arabic linguistic scholarship by connecting pragmatic analysis with legal discourse in the Algerian context.

Section One: The Pragmatic Complementarity Between Speech Acts and Intentionality in the Analysis of Legal Discourse

Legal discourse constitutes a pragmatic system that performs the function of regulating social relations and producing legal effects through utterances whose binding force derives from the institutional authority from which they originate. The legal formulations published in the Algerian Official Gazette are transformed into institutional acts that establish rights, impose obligations, and modify legal statuses. This makes legal language an instrument for performing acts and constructing legal reality.

Speech Act Theory provides a linguistic framework for analysing this performative function, demonstrating that a legal utterance performs a legal act that produces a binding effect within the

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legislative system. This illocutionary force derives from institutional intentionality, which embodies the will of the legislative institution and makes the legal text a vehicle of State authority and an expression of its regulatory will. Consequently, speech acts in legal discourse acquire their legitimacy and effectiveness through their integration with institutional intentionality, which confers upon them binding force and legal enforceability.

This relationship reveals a functional complementarity between speech acts and institutional intentionality. Speech acts perform the legal act, whereas institutional intentionality confers legitimacy, authority, and legal effectiveness upon it. This complementarity produces a direct legal effect, making the publication of a text in the Official Gazette a decisive moment in the transition of a legal rule from the drafting stage to the stage of entry into force and binding application. On this basis, this section examines the mechanisms through which the illocutionary force of legal utterances and institutional intentionality complement one another, investigating their respective roles in constructing legal authority and producing legal effects within the legal discourse of the Algerian Official Gazette.

Subsection One: Speech Acts and the Construction of Legal Discourse

Legal discourse is one of the most prominent forms of institutional discourse in which the performative function of language becomes evident. Legal utterances go beyond informing and describing to perform acts that produce binding legal effects, establish rights and obligations, and modify legal statuses in accordance with the frameworks prescribed by the legal system. Consequently, the analysis of this discourse requires a pragmatic approach that examines the functions performed by legal formulations and the ways in which they are transformed from linguistic structures into institutional acts possessing binding force.

Speech Act Theory provides an appropriate explanatory framework for understanding this function because it views language as a means of performing acts and links the value of an utterance to the effects it produces within its context of use. The illocutionary force of an utterance is therefore connected to the authority of the issuing body and to the institutional context that grants it legitimacy and enforceability. Legal language thus becomes an instrument for constructing legal reality and regulating relationships within society.

First: Speech Acts and the Construction of Legal Authority

1. Speech Acts in Pragmatic Studies

Speech acts constitute the core of pragmatic analysis and one of the theoretical foundations that redirected linguistic studies from examining language as a formal structure towards investigating it as a performative activity through which acts are carried out within specific social and institutional contexts. Following this shift, linguistic utterances came to be viewed as acts that achieve communicative purposes and produce effects extending beyond the transmission of information to influencing the addressee and changing reality. Speech Act Theory consequently became a fundamental approach to understanding language in use, identifying speakers' intentions, and analysing the interactions that emerge between participants in discourse in light of the contexts in which utterances are produced.

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This perspective contributed to a decisive turning point in linguistic studies. Attention shifted from phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels towards examining the illocutionary force of utterances, the functions they perform in use, and the relationship between linguistic structure, pragmatic intentions, and the resulting effects. Language consequently came to be studied as an instrument of action and influence and as a means of constructing social and institutional relationships and producing the facts that contribute to their organisation.

Speech Act Theory is founded on the fundamental principle that linguistic communication performs acts that extend beyond the transmission of meanings to the achievement of specific communicative intentions and purposes. Understanding an utterance is therefore linked to identifying the act it performs and the intention it conveys. The value of discourse is consequently associated with its capacity to produce an effect on the recipient, which has given this theory a central position in pragmatic studies.

In this context, **Mohammed Mohammed Yunus Ali** states:

"Speech Act Theory views the process of communication as an interaction connected to a situation that it expresses. A request expresses a desire for something, praise expresses approval, gratitude expresses appreciation, and an apology expresses regret. According to this theory, the success of communication is measured by the extent to which the recipient identifies the situation expressed through understanding the speaker's intention."[1]

This conception demonstrates that a speech act derives its value from the relationship between the utterance and the intention directing it, as well as from the effect it produces on the recipient when that intention is understood. This principle becomes particularly significant in legal discourse, where intentions extend beyond the individual dimension and take the form of institutional intentionality expressing the will of the legislative authority. Consequently, a legal utterance becomes a performative act that produces a binding legal effect, while the effectiveness of the legal text depends on the combination of linguistic illocutionary force and the institutional intention that confers legitimacy and enforceability upon it.

Masoud Sahrawi identifies the general framework within which speech acts operate. He argues that contemporary pragmatists do not study speech acts in isolation from their verbal and situational contexts or independently of the speaker's purpose. Rather, they "study the performativity of these acts and do not consider them speech acts unless their performative identity is realised in context through use. We should not be misled by the fact that some contemporary scholars attempt to establish a list of speech acts without always mentioning their verbal or situational context. The ultimate reference for these pragmatists in determining the semantic and pragmatic scope of such acts remains the verbal context, the situational context, and the speaker's intentionality. The speaker's intention is therefore one of the most important indicators for understanding the purpose and meaning of an utterance. Accordingly, we emphasise here the inclusion of stylistic phenomena studied by Arab scholars within an explicitly pragmatic framework."[2]

2. The Illocutionary Force of Legal Discourse in Light of Speech Act Theory

A. Illocutionary Force in Light of the Criterion of Truth and Falsehood

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Illocutionary force is one of the central concepts that brought about a fundamental transformation in the study of language. It shifted attention from examining whether an utterance corresponds to reality towards investigating the effects that the utterance produces upon reality itself. This transformation constituted one of the most significant features of contemporary pragmatics, which reconsidered the positivist and logical conception of language that had restricted its function to representing or describing facts and evaluating its value according to the criterion of truth and falsehood. This shift broadened the scope of linguistic analysis to include utterances that perform social and institutional acts merely by being uttered, without being amenable to evaluation according to the criterion of correspondence with reality.

In its in-depth epistemological examination of the structure of legal utterances, the pragmatic approach establishes a decisive and radical epistemological break with the classical positivist and logical legacy that dominated the philosophy of language for decades, restricting the dynamics of language and its function to narrow descriptive, informative, and static representational dimensions.[3]

Ordinary everyday conversations and general declarative statements are necessarily subject, within formal logic, to the criterion of "correspondence" between the spoken structure and external reality. This makes them amenable to rational evaluation and logical analysis according to the dichotomy of "truth or falsehood."[4]

Within this framework, pragmatics distinguishes between descriptive utterances, which can be judged true or false, and performative utterances, whose value derives from their capacity to produce a legal or social effect within a specific institutional context. Statements such as "The weather is rainy" or "The meeting took place yesterday" can be tested against reality. By contrast, expressions such as "I declare the session open," "I sentence you to imprisonment," or "I pronounce you married" perform institutional acts that become effective when issued by an authority possessing the requisite power, provided that the conditions for their pragmatic success are fulfilled. This principle is particularly important in legal discourse, especially in texts published in the Algerian Official Gazette, where language manifests its performative capacity in a particularly pronounced form.

B. Legal Texts and Performative Utterances

Legal texts do not merely inform their addressees about previously existing legislative facts. Rather, they establish legal facts themselves and confer legal existence upon rights, obligations, institutions, and legal statuses. Publication in the Official Gazette therefore represents a crucial stage in the completion of a legal act, as the text acquires binding force and becomes enforceable against all those to whom its provisions apply.

This perspective is consistent with **J. L. Austin's** distinction between constatives and performatives. Austin demonstrated that many utterances do not aim to describe the world but instead perform acts in the world when uttered under specified contextual conditions. **John Searle** subsequently developed this conception by reconstructing Speech Act Theory and demonstrating that the pragmatic value of an utterance is determined by the relationship between intentionality,

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authority, institutional context, and the social rules that confer illocutionary force upon the speech act.

These principles are clearly manifested in Algerian legal discourse, where texts published in the Official Gazette contain linguistic formulations that directly perform legal acts, such as "Mr. X is appointed," "A public institution is established," "The provisions of Article X are repealed," "It is hereby brought to the attention of," and "This Law is hereby issued." These formulations do not merely describe decisions; they perform the corresponding functions. Appointment, repeal, establishment, or promulgation is legally effected through the issuance of the text by the competent authority and the completion of the legally prescribed procedures, particularly publication in the Official Gazette.

Second: The Official Gazette as a Pragmatic Space for Performing Legal Acts

The study of legal discourse moves beyond examining whether a text corresponds to reality towards analysing the conditions that enable a legal utterance to produce its binding effect. Austin therefore proposed replacing the criterion of truth and falsehood with the criterion of success and failure, known as **felicity conditions**. A performative utterance is neither true nor false in the ordinary descriptive sense. Instead, it succeeds when issued by a competent authority, within a legally appropriate context, and in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the legal system. It may be defective or fail to produce the intended effect if any of these conditions is absent.

In the Algerian legal system, the Official Gazette forms part of these performative conditions because it constitutes the institutional framework through which legal texts move from the drafting stage to the stage of entry into force. Publication is not a merely formal procedure detached from the content of the text; rather, it is a pragmatic element involved in the constitution of the legal act itself. It connects legislative intention with the field of application and enables the persons addressed by the text to become aware of it and invoke its provisions. For this reason, the entry into force of most legal texts is linked to their publication date or to a date specified in the text itself, making publication an integral component of the illocutionary force of legal discourse.

1. Illocutionary Force and Its Role in Constructing Legal Reality

Legal discourse published in the sovereign official publication of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria moves, structurally, functionally, and semantically, into a distinctive pragmatic domain: that of "performative speech acts," theorised by the English philosopher J. L. Austin and subsequently developed by John Searle.[5]

This performative domain derives its constitutional legitimacy, sociological intelligibility, and concrete existence from its status as an exclusive foundational linguistic instrument through which legal reality is brought into existence, created from a state of legal non-existence, and subsequently granted legitimacy and enforceability through the issuance of its formulations and their reaching the threshold of official publication.[6]

The "illocutionary force" of legal language is the latent and operative semantic, pragmatic, and contextual force that imbues a sentence with an authoritative institutional character. It releases the

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sentence from the confines of static syntactic structures and opens it to effective procedural operation capable of changing the real world.[7]

The distinctive nature of legal language derives its value from its syntactic structure, lexical meaning, the authority behind it, and the legal framework that empowers it to produce binding effects. Accordingly, the illocutionary force of legal texts results directly from the interaction of three interdependent elements: the authority of the issuing body, the institutional intentionality directing the legal act, and the procedural context that confers legitimacy and enforceability upon the utterance.

Thus, when a presidential or executive decree in Algeria contains a specific formulation such as "Mr. (X) is appointed to the position of …," "A national observatory is hereby established," or "A committee is established under the Minister of State …,"[8] the text, from a purely linguistic perspective, does not merely perform an informative function or report an appointment or establishment as an external event that took place behind the scenes of the administration and is subsequently communicated to the public. Rather, issuing the formulation and inscribing it in the official text constitutes the act of appointment or establishment itself within a specific, regulated, institutional, and procedural context.[9]

In this context, the legal expression becomes pragmatically "successful" when the required contextual conditions are satisfied. Once the official issue has been printed and the requirements of publication and public accessibility have been fulfilled, the person dismissed becomes legally dismissed, the appointee becomes appointed, and the institution acquires a binding legal existence that produces financial and administrative effects in reality. No independent proof of the truth or falsehood of a report is required to establish these effects.

2. The Illocutionary Force of Speech Acts and the Mechanisms Through Which It Is Formed

Legal language has entirely shed its conventional role as a "medium of communication" that transfers ideas from one mind to another, becoming instead a form of "generative and constitutive authority" possessing its own institutional foundation. In this sense, the written word becomes an instrument of authority, while structural grammar becomes a silent form of institutional coercion that regulates the functioning of the State and society and manages their interactions.[10]

Legal discourse thus represents an advanced form of performative language in which legislative formulation becomes a means of producing legal facts and regulating social relations. The legal sentence becomes an instrument through which the State exercises its regulatory authority within society. From this perspective, legal language does not merely express legislative intention; it also embodies that intention in the form of enforceable rules that establish rights and obligations, determine legal statuses, and regulate the operation of public institutions. This gives legal discourse its distinctive pragmatic character as discourse that performs acts through words and produces legal reality through language.

Within this framework, the performativity of a speech act results from the interaction between the utterance, its context, and the intentionality of its producer. Understanding discourse therefore requires consideration of these elements collectively. This principle is particularly important in

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legal discourse, where the institutional context becomes decisive in determining the illocutionary force of a text, while the speaker's intention assumes the form of institutional intentionality expressing the will of the legislative authority. Accordingly, speech acts in the Algerian Official Gazette acquire their legal value through the integration of linguistic formulation with the institutional context that confers binding force upon them and transforms them into legal acts producing enforceable effects once their pragmatic and institutional conditions have been fulfilled. On this basis, speech acts can be understood as possessing an institutional dimension that makes them instruments for producing and embodying legal authority. The legal formulations contained in the Algerian Official Gazette perform acts that establish rights, impose obligations, prescribe sanctions, and modify legal statuses, deriving their force from the legislative authority from which they originate. Consequently, publication of a legal text becomes an institutional act that confers enforceability and binding force upon the legal rule and transforms legal language into an instrument for producing legal reality.

Third: The Architecture of Discourse in the Official Gazette

1. The Structuring of Acts and the Refinement of Formulations: Obligation, Declaration, Permission, and Perlocutionary Effect

A close and detailed examination of the corpus drawn from the Algerian Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria reveals a highly precise and controlled linguistic architecture in the selection of verbs and the construction of formulations. Morphological forms and syntactic structures are not selected arbitrarily or merely for stylistic elegance. Rather, they undergo a process of rigorous semantic and pragmatic refinement designed primarily to direct individual and institutional behaviour and achieve a "perlocutionary effect" manifested in submission, compliance, and social regulation.[11]

This performative architecture is distributed throughout the legislative text across three extended structural dimensions:

A. Forms of Obligation and Binding Force and the Structuring of Duty

A. Forms of Obligation and Binding Force and the Structuring of Duty

Forms of obligation and certainty constitute the backbone of Algerian legal discourse. The legislator employs present-tense verbs associated with expressions of imperative obligation that allow neither withdrawal nor stylistic variation, such as (must, shall, is required to, is subject to). In the pragmatics of legislative texts, these verbs do not perform an ordinary communicative function of conveying an idea; rather, they establish an "imperative binding force" that closes off the addressee's scope for behavioral choice.[12]

First Applied Example: An examination of legal provisions in Algerian legislation reveals formulations such as: "Institutions subject to this Law shall subscribe to the specifications document…" or "All commercial activities shall be subject to…"

Pragmatic Analysis of the Example: The verb shall be required to shifts the utterance, linguistically and structurally, from the level of "advisory guidance" to that of an "absolute and enforceable institutional command." The perlocutionary effect is realized in the form of a strict psychological

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and procedural state of silent compliance among those required to obey. Since the violation of this speech act is linguistically associated, within the text, with exposure to sanctions and penalties, any room for hesitation is eliminated.

B. Declarative and Constitutive Acts and the Creation of Entities

These are pragmatic acts characterized by their ability to "change external reality merely by being uttered and circulated" in an official context in which the required conditions are satisfied. Among the most prominent examples in the Algerian Official Gazette are verbs such as ratifies, establishes, repeals, and appoints.[13] These verbs do not describe administrative procedures that previously took place in the past; rather, they constitute the material act itself at the moment the text is formulated and promulgated.

- Second Applied Example: Presidential decrees contain expressions such as: "The international convention relating to … is hereby ratified," or "Mr. (so-and-so) is appointed as …"
- Pragmatic Analysis of the Example: The verb ratifies represents the constitutive illocutionary force that immediately transfers the convention from the realm of provisional diplomatic understanding into the domain of domestic law, which is enforceable and binding upon the state, its institutions, and its citizens. Similarly, the verb appoints creates the employee's legal status and establishes their financial and administrative rights and duties from the outset. This illustrates how a written utterance creates a new sovereign reality that did not exist before it was uttered.

C. Permissive Forms and the Management of Areas of Freedom

These forms are manifested through pragmatic verbs that grant addressees exceptional permissions or discretionary authority, as in expressions such as may, can, and is authorized to. Pragmatically, permission here goes beyond the notion of an absence or withdrawal of authority; it becomes an instrument for the conscious management of behavioral spaces whose boundaries are precisely defined by the legislator.[14]

- Third Applied Example: Formulations such as: "The competent judicial authority may extend the investigation period…" or "The minister may delegate their authority within the limits of…"
- Pragmatic Analysis of the Example: When the expression "The judicial authority may…" is analyzed, the verb may is found to restructure the pragmatic powers available within the judicial context, granting the judge a defined linguistic and legal discretionary authority that was not available before the issuance of this expression. Authority, therefore, creates a space for freedom while simultaneously setting its boundaries, ensuring that it does not depart from the original sovereign intentionality.[15]

2. Strategies of Abstraction and the Transcendence of Discourse

The essential characteristic and ontological feature that distinguishes legal discourse in the Algerian Official Gazette is its abstract nature. Legislative texts are not addressed to a specific individual in their personal capacity, nor are they issued by a personalized or emotional subject. Instead, they are established as a transcendent linguistic structure that addresses everyone in terms of comprehensiveness, generality, and permanence.[16] This pragmatic abstraction is achieved through two carefully structured linguistic strategies:

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A. The Suppression of the Agent (the Passive Voice) and Absolute Sovereignty

The passive voice in the legal corpus constitutes a central pragmatic and psychological instrument for conferring authority and generality upon provisions and decisions. The omission of the grammatical agent in this context does not indicate a lack of clarity or an inability to identify the agent; rather, it represents an "excess of sovereign intentionality." The legislator seeks to conceal the direct human author of the text so that the provision appears to emanate from a greater, abstract, and absolute will: the will of the state.[17]

Fourth Applied Example: The Algerian Penal Code contains expressions such as "A penalty of imprisonment shall be imposed on anyone who…," while regulatory texts contain formulations such as "The conditions and procedures for implementing this Article shall be determined by executive decree…," without explicitly mentioning the agent.

Pragmatic Analysis of the Example: When the expressions "A penalty shall be imposed…" or "The conditions shall be determined…" are uttered, the text suppresses the direct agent—the judge who will pronounce the sentence or the minister who will determine the procedures—leaving the linguistic act itself to dominate the contextual space. This deliberate suppression protects the legal text from falling into the trap of personalization and gives it a universal scope, enabling it to apply to everyone, at all times and in all places, thereby achieving the highest aims of normative abstraction

B. The Necessity of the Performative Present Tense and Sovereign Time

In the language of the Algerian Official Gazette, the present tense is not used to indicate an ongoing present or a spontaneous or hypothetical future, as it is in everyday language use. Instead, it is employed as a "current and immediate performative present" possessing an absolute, instantaneous creative force

Fifth Applied Example: The introductory formulations of articles and decisions, such as "establishes…," "is repealed…," "is assigned…," and "applies…"

Pragmatic Analysis of the Example: Linguistically and pragmatically, these verbs indicate that the material act is realized immediately at the moment of utterance and publication. Repeal does not occur at some point in the future; rather, it takes effect immediately once the text appears in the Official Gazette and becomes public. This usage transforms grammatical tense from a mere, transient temporal indicator into a decisive pragmatic instrument for creating "procedural and temporal certainty" within the state. The present tense thus becomes the structural and ritual mechanism that transfers the text from the realm of static conceptual force into an effective material act that binds everyone.

C. The Argumentative Architecture of Algerian Legislative Texts: Cohesive Devices and Phrasal Structures as Instruments for Restricting Interpretation

The architecture of legal texts in Algeria is not limited to the selection of performative present-tense verbs or the construction of passive sentences. It also encompasses a complex network of cohesive devices and phrasal structures, including adverbial expressions and prepositional phrases, which perform a decisive pragmatic function: "confining the horizon of interpretation and directing

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the judge and the person subject to the law" toward a single argumentative orientation from which there is no deviation.

Second Section: Intentionality and Its Role in Constructing Legal Authority

Intentionality occupies a central position in pragmatic analysis. It represents the framework within which speech acts are organized and through which utterances acquire their functional and performative value. Meaning can only be formed in light of the intentions guiding the production of discourse, the context surrounding it, and the effects intended to be produced in the recipient. Intentionality is one of the foundational concepts of pragmatic studies because it reveals the relationship between language and action and explains how linguistic formulations become instruments for achieving communicative and institutional purposes.

Intentionality acquires a distinctive character in legal discourse, as it moves from the level of individual will to that of institutional will, thereby expressing the intention of the legislative authority to establish legal rules and regulate relationships within society. In this sense, legal texts do not reflect the intention of their author as an individual; rather, they embody the will of the institution from which they derive their legitimacy and authority. Intentionality thus becomes a source of the binding force of legal utterances, granting them the capacity to produce enforceable legal effects.

First: Intentionality in Pragmatic Theory

Pragmatics has undergone a qualitative development, moving from a focus on speech acts as actions performed by speakers within communicative contexts toward an examination of the intention guiding those acts and conferring their pragmatic value. Discourse analysis has consequently turned toward exploring the intentions underlying utterances and identifying the mechanisms speakers employ to achieve their communicative goals. This approach is based on the premise that meaning is not determined by linguistic structure alone; rather, it extends beyond that structure and emerges through the interaction between the utterance, its context of production, shared knowledge, and the pragmatic cues surrounding it.

Intentionality plays a pivotal role in this process, as it represents the element around which the other pragmatic components are organized and through which speech acts acquire their functional direction and performative effect. Speakers do not produce utterances arbitrarily; instead, they select their linguistic forms and strategies in accordance with the purpose they seek to achieve. Understanding discourse therefore depends on recognizing the intentions governing its production and interpreting both its explicit and implicit meanings.

1. Intentionality and Its Pragmatic Foundations

Intentionality has become a central concept in pragmatic analysis because it reveals the relationship between language and action and explains how meaning is produced through the interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic elements within a communicative context. Intentionality also interacts with other pragmatic concepts, such as context, conversational implicature, presupposition, and speech acts, to form an integrated system that contributes to interpreting discourse and uncovering its intentions.

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On this basis, intentionality constitutes the organizing principle of the communicative process, directing both the production and interpretation of utterances. Meaning is determined by considering the producer's intention, the circumstances in which the discourse was produced, and the mechanisms through which the recipient infers that intention. Pragmatics has therefore come to regard intentionality as one of the most important concepts for explaining the relationship between language and use and for identifying the purposes speakers seek to achieve through discourse.

Miloud Mostafa Achour argues that intentionality (Intentionality) "is the sixth criterion of text grammar theory and a central concern of pragmatics. Pragmatic studies attach considerable importance to textual intentionality, examine the dimensions of the communicative process, and discuss how the principles guiding the sender during discourse production are understood, in ways that ensure the successful presentation of information and help the recipient identify the intended meaning. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that investigates how the listener discovers the speaker's intentions, or, in other words, studies speaker meaning. Accordingly, pragmatic studies focus on the sender, their intention and purposes, as well as the recipient, the extent to which they accept the text or message, and their interaction with it.

Intentionality thus becomes the mechanism through which the relationship between the producer and the recipient is organized. The success of communication depends on the extent to which the intention corresponds to the interpretation constructed by the recipient in light of the context and pragmatic cues. This perspective assumes particular importance in legal discourse, where intentionality transcends individual will and takes the form of institutional intentionality expressing the will of the legislative authority. Understanding a legal text therefore depends on recognizing the legislative purpose guiding its formulation, because this intentionality gives speech acts their illocutionary force, confers binding authority upon the text, and enables it to produce an enforceable legal effect as soon as it is issued and published in the Official Gazette.

The relationship between intentionality and speech act theory has led performative acts to derive their effectiveness from the purpose the speaker intends to achieve through an utterance. Pragmatic discourse analysis has consequently come to rely on examining the relationship between linguistic structure and the intention guiding it, since the pragmatic value of an utterance is determined by its ability to embody its producer's will and achieve the intended effect.

For this reason, intentionality has occupied a central position in contemporary pragmatic studies as a concept that has redirected linguistic analysis toward the dimensions of language related to use and performance. Masoud Sahrawi emphasizes that Austin introduced the concept of "intentionality" (Intentionalité) into the interpretation of speaker utterances and the analysis of linguistic expressions, and that he "employed it in the analysis of linguistic expressions. The notion of intentionality is particularly evident in the connection between linguistic structures and consideration of the speaker's purpose and the overall intention of the discourse, within a conceptual framework that encompasses the pragmatic dimensions of the linguistic phenomenon.

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Accordingly, intentionality may be regarded as the link between linguistic formulation and the action performed through discourse. Understanding an utterance requires taking into account the purpose that guided its production. Linguistic structures thus become means of achieving specific intentions. This perspective is particularly important in legal discourse, where intentionality moves from the level of the individual speaker's intention to that of institutional intentionality, which expresses the will of the legislative authority.

2. Intentionality and the Mechanisms of Meaning Production

Intentionality constitutes the axis around which linguistic acts are organized and directed in accordance with the purpose the speaker seeks to achieve. The selection of linguistic forms and expressive mechanisms is an organized process governed by an intention that directs discourse toward producing a particular effect in the recipient. Intentionality is therefore a decisive indicator in identifying meaning and eliciting significance because it explains the relationship between an utterance and its intended meaning and connects linguistic structure to the function it performs within a pragmatic context.

Intentionality also derives its analytical value from its interaction with a range of pragmatic concepts, including context, speech acts, conversational implicature, and presupposition. Together, these elements contribute to determining the intended meaning and revealing the explicit and implicit dimensions of discourse. Intentionality consequently provides a principal entry point for analyzing texts and understanding the mechanisms through which they produce meaning.

Furthermore, intentionality constitutes the axis around which linguistic acts are organized and directed in accordance with the purpose the speaker seeks to achieve. The selection of linguistic forms and expressive mechanisms is an organized process governed by an intention that directs discourse toward producing a particular effect in the recipient. Intentionality is therefore a decisive indicator in identifying meaning and eliciting significance because it explains the relationship between an utterance and its intended meaning and connects linguistic structure to the function it performs within a pragmatic context. Intentionality also derives its analytical value from its interaction with a range of pragmatic concepts, including context, speech acts, conversational implicature, and presupposition. Together, these elements contribute to determining the intended meaning and revealing the explicit and implicit dimensions of discourse, making intentionality a principal entry point for analyzing texts and understanding the mechanisms through which they produce meaning.

Second: Intentionality and Its Role in Directing Legal Discourse

Intentionality acquires a more complex dimension in legal discourse, as it moves from the level of individual will to that of institutional will. It thus expresses the intention of the legislative authority rather than that of a particular individual. Legal texts derive their illocutionary force from this institutional intention, which grants them binding and enforceable authority and enables them to produce legal effects that extend beyond the utterance itself to the construction and regulation of legal reality.

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Accordingly, analyzing legal texts published in the Official Gazette requires moving beyond their explicit linguistic structure to explore the legislative intentions that confer illocutionary force and binding authority upon legal utterances and make their publication an institutional act that produces an enforceable legal effect.

1. Institutional Intentionality and the Illocutionary Force of Legal Texts

An in-depth examination of legal discourse in the Algerian Official Gazette reveals a highly significant pragmatic fact: enforceable legal force resides in the deep structure of the text, specifically in what the philosophy of language calls "institutional intention," with which linguistic structures and expressive patterns are imbued.]

Behind every legal article, regulatory clause, or executive decree lies a precisely directed "pragmatic communicative intention" that seeks to regulate social conduct, structure interactions, and manage state institutions. This pragmatic intentionality is manifested in the "rigidity of structure and normative formulation." The "individual agent," or individual speaking subject represented by the legislator or their personal formulation, disappears and is replaced by another transcendent and dominant agent: the "institutional agent," which represents the state in the highest expression of its sovereignty.

This deliberate suppression of the individual agent is an intentional pragmatic strategy designed to establish the institution's sovereignty over individuals and to clothe the text in the authority of "absolute and categorical truth," which does not admit spontaneous criticism or revision. The text thus speaks in the name of the collective and on behalf of a public authority that possesses the right to monopolize linguistic authority over decisions of fundamental importance.

2. Grammatical Structures and the Manifestations of Institutional Intentionality

In light of the foregoing, grammatical structures in the Official Gazette become linguistic containers meticulously engineered to accommodate the "weight of authority" and channel it through clearly defined procedural mechanisms. The most prominent of these pragmatic structures include the following:

A. **The Passive Voice (or Constructions in Which the Agent Is Not Named):** This construction is a distinctly pragmatic instrument in the language of law. When we encounter expressions such as "A penalty shall be imposed…" or "The procedures for implementing this Article shall be determined by…," the omission of the agent elevates the provision to the status of a universal, abstract, and general rule that applies to everyone without individualization or subjective variation

B. **Conditional Sentences with Inevitable Consequences**: These constructions linguistically connect an objective condition to a direct and automatic legal consequence, as in "If it is established that…, then…" This creates in the recipient's mind a sense of pragmatic certainty and inevitability, leaving no temporal or cognitive space for hesitation or indeterminate interpretation.

C. Categorical Declarative Forms: These involve the use of nominal or verbal sentences devoid of expressions of doubt or probability, through which reality is stated in categorical terms that impose silent compliance as soon as the text is issued and read.

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It may therefore be argued that a pragmatic approach to legal discourse in the Official Gazette requires moving beyond structuralist methods that confine analysis to the linguistic structure of the text and engaging with pragmatic approaches in the philosophy of language. These approaches regard the legal utterance as a social practice possessing illocutionary force and connected to authority, sovereignty, and institutional power. The actual agent in legal discourse is the constitutional institution that speaks on behalf of the state and derives the legitimacy of its acts from the legal system, which grants it the authority to establish rules and impose obligations.

A pragmatic approach to legislative discourse published in the Algerian Official Gazette first requires the establishment of a theoretical and epistemological foundation capable of accommodating the profound transformations that have taken place in contemporary philosophy of language and linguistics. These transformations followed a shift from viewing language as a closed formal system to understanding it as a social practice and an accomplished communicative act connected to context, the agent, the institution, and the recipient. From this perspective, legal language becomes an instrument for producing legal reality and generating binding effects in both individual and collective domains.

As a result of this shift, legal discourse has become an institutional act through which the authority of the state is embodied in language. Law does not merely describe rights and duties; it establishes them and confers legitimacy and binding force upon them. The true value of a legal text is therefore manifested in its capacity to bring about an actual change in legal and social reality once the conditions for its performance have been fulfilled within the competent institution.

Conclusion

This study has concluded that legal discourse in the Algerian Official Gazette represents an advanced model of institutional discourse in which language transcends its informative function to become an instrument for performing legal acts and constructing normative reality. The pragmatic analysis has demonstrated that the legal force of legislative texts derives from their integration into an institutional context that grants them legitimacy and enforceability, as well as from the institutional intentionality that embodies the will of the legislative authority and confers illocutionary force upon legal utterances.

The study has also highlighted that intentionality in legal discourse extends beyond individual will to become institutional intentionality expressing the will of the state. This explains the legislator's reliance on a range of pragmatic strategies, including the suppression of the agent, the use of the passive voice, expressions of obligation and binding force, and performative uses of the present tense. These strategies contribute to reinforcing the normative authority of the text, limiting the possibilities of interpretation, and achieving legal certainty and uniformity of application.

The study further concludes that the integration of the illocutionary force of legal utterances with institutional intentionality constitutes the foundation of effective legal discourse. In this process, linguistic structure interacts with legislative authority and the procedural context to produce discourse characterized by legitimacy, binding force, and the capacity to establish rights and duties and modify legal statuses.

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Recommendations

- Expand the application of contemporary pragmatic approaches to the study of Arabic legal discourse, given the effective tools they provide for analyzing the performative function of legislative texts.
- Encourage interdisciplinary studies that bring together linguistics, the philosophy of language, and legal sciences, thereby contributing to the development of more comprehensive approaches to legal discourse.
- Use the findings of pragmatic analysis to improve legislative drafting practices, enhance clarity and precision, and reduce interpretive ambiguity.
- Conduct comparative studies of Algerian legal discourse and its counterparts in Arab and foreign legal systems to identify similarities and differences in pragmatic mechanisms and the construction of linguistic authority.
- Expand the scope of research to include various forms of legal, judicial, and administrative discourse, such as judicial rulings, contracts, and administrative decisions, in order to identify the distinctive features of each type of legal discourse through a pragmatic approach.
- Incorporate the findings of this study into training programs for legislators and legal drafters, thereby strengthening awareness of the impact of linguistic and pragmatic choices on the effectiveness of legal texts and the achievement of their institutional purposes.

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