ANALYSING SPEECH ACTS IN SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM *XALA* BY SEMBENE OUSMANE

PATRICE CODJO AKOGBETO

Senior Lecturer, Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Abomey-Calavi University, Republic of Benin

ABSTRACT

One of the most important methods of assessing the language of works of art such as novels or plays is to study how the writer organizes his characters' conversations. This paper focuses on the analysis of speech acts in *Xala*, a novel written by Sembène Ousmane. It adopts Searle (1975)'s taxonomy to identify the main categories of speech acts which are Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, and Declarative. The analysis is carried out on two selected extracts from the novel. The findings reveal the predominance of Assertive speech acts, showing that interactants have mostly been concerned with expressing their beliefs or propositions. Direct speech acts are also predominant in the two texts. This means that most of utterances in the extracts are about giving and demanding information. The work concludes that context plays an important role in the interpretation of utterances.

KEYWORDS: Speech Acts, Taxonomy, Context, Utterances, Information