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## The Tripartite Structure of Speech Act

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### Abstract

*The speech act theory, introduced by J. L. Austin in 1962, claims for a third level of language in use analysis which is analysing utterances as linguistic acts (i.e., speech acts). By focusing on the non-literal meaning that arises in language in use, a given speech act is contextualized within a tripartite structure of: utterance, intention (speaker), and purpose (hearer) which correspond respectively to: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. This article attempts to trace this tripartite structure of speech act, with much focus on addressing potential gaps, then, calling for important refinements. This takes place as the main aim of this paper is to call for a contextualization of language in use within a larger context of action, within which the illocutionary act is but a level of language action potential. In doing so, referring to some scholars' contribution, especially that of van Dijk and Searle, is a necessary step to go through.*

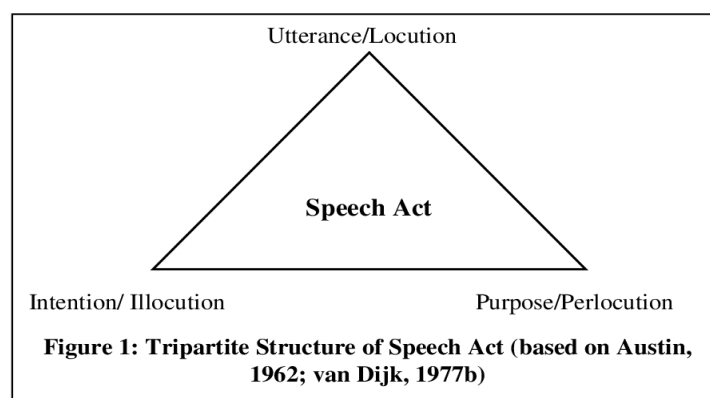
**Keywords:** *Speech act; locution; illocution; perlocution; Form-Meaning-Action.*

### Introduction

Initially, the analysis of a given utterance has focused on considering the dichotomy *Form-Meaning*, where form is understood as a linguistic structure and meaning is understood as naming a given entity. With the advent of speech act theory (hereafter SAT), a given utterance is assigned *force* as it executes a given act, a linguistic one (Austin, 1962). As a matter of fact, the shift from *Form-Meaning* to *Form-Meaning-Action* (van Dijk, 1977b) doesn't refute old assumptions. Yet, it adds a further level of language in use analysis, that is, language as action. As such, it contextualizes language within a broader level of actions. Somehow, understanding language as an action is the result of a thorough investigation in the second part of the dichotomy (Meaning) as speech act is defined as nothing but another function of language in use.

Austin (1962), thanks to whom understanding language as an action has taken

place, claims that the analysis of an utterance as a speech act reveals a tripartite structure of: locutionary act (*locution*), illocutionary act (*illocution*), and perlocutionary act (*perlocution*). These three acts are claimed for based on a triangle of: *utterance*, *intention*, and *purpose*, each of which denotes an important aspect in speech act analysis (see Figure 1). Moreover, a further analysis of speech act mechanism has revealed a number of other acts at both sub and upper levels (Austin, 1962; van Dijk, 1977b). It is now important to find out how a given utterance reflects a range of speech acts at different levels. Also, how these acts relate to *utterance*, *intention*, and *purpose*, how they relate to each other, and whether they depend on each other for their existence and interpretation are important questions. However, we do claim that much of the work presented in this paper is meant to raise issues rather than presenting definite answers to the above questions.



## 1. Overview of Speech Act Dichotomy: Constatives vs Performatives

One of the main earlier claims of SAT (Austin, 1962) is the classification of meaningful utterances into *constatives* and *performatives*. This took place as a reaction to philosophers' classification of utterances into *statements* and *pseudo-statements*. Philosophers based their classification on whether or not a given utterance is meant to describe a given reality. As such, statements are the utterances which describe reality. They are either true or false. Whereas, pseudo-statements are the ones which do not stand for a given fact. Austin claims that many of these pseudo-statements are not meant to be statements at all. They are *performatives*. That is, Austin classifies utterances into *constatives* which describe, assert, report, or state a given fact and *performatives* which perform a given speech act (a linguistic act). Threaten, argue, agree, insist, etc. are examples of speech acts. Speech acts do not respond to truth-falsehood dimension; they respond to felicity conditions. That is, they are either felicitous (successful) or infelicitous (unsuccessful). However, at the end of his book, Austin has refuted this dichotomy claiming that all utterances respond to both: truth-falsehood dimension and felicity conditions.

## 2. The Tripartite Structure of Speech Act

As stated above, speech act theory is set around a tripartite structure: *Utterance*, *intention*,

and *purpose*. Each one reveals the accomplishment of a given act: Locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. However, the one to which Austin (1962) assigns a great importance is that of illocutionary act as it refers to the *force* of an utterance which answers the question why or what is the intention of the speaker uttering a given utterance, "Our interest in these lectures is essentially to fasten on the second, illocutionary act and contrast it with the other two" (p. 103). He also explains his passing over the locutionary act, claiming, "Our interest in the locutionary act is, of course, principally to make quite plain what it is, in order to distinguish it from other acts with which we are going to be primarily concerned" (pp. 94- 95). By other acts, he means illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. However, as not all illocutionary acts result in perlocutionary ones, SAT's main concern becomes the illocutionary act or *force*.

we perform a *locutionary act*, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense. Second, we said that we also perform *illocutionary acts* such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, &c., i.e. utterances which have a certain (conventional) force. Thirdly, we may also perform *perlocutionary acts*: what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading,

detering, and even, say, surprising or misleading. (1962, p. 108)

One of the examples given by Austin (pp. 101-102, my underlining) is:

### **Locutionary Act**

He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by 'shoot' shoot and referring by 'her' to *her*.

### **Illocutionary Act**

He urged (or advised, ordered, &c.) me to shoot her.

### **Perlocutionary Act**

He persuaded me to shoot her.

## **2.1 Utterance vs Locutionary Act (of Saying Something)**

An analysis of a stretch of discourse is based on the analysis of utterance(s). As such, it is very important to understand what such term stands for in order to claim for or against the assumptions of a given language theory, including the one in question (SAT). Hence, although it is not the main focus of this paper, a consideration of the nature of such term is crucial in order to claim for refinements in SAT, or even against some of its assumptions.

A skim through some literature reveals the following:

- An utterance can be a word or a sentence, spoken or written (Jabri, 2017).
- It can be natural or artificial.
- It can be grammatical or ungrammatical (vocabulary, grammar, word-order, etc.).
- It can be meaningful or meaningless.
- It can be uttered by a human being or mimicked by an animal or a machine "Utterances that would be meaningful in the mouth of a person are meaningless in the mouth of a parrot because the bird

is psychologically deficient" (Sorensen, 1993, p. 97).

- In case there is more than one utterance, "Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91).

Accordingly, an utterance is defined as a piece of *language* (i.e., meant to serve a communicative task) that can be successful (meaningful) or unsuccessful (meaningless), spoken or written, natural or artificial. Hence, expressions like:

'wow', 'I love you', 'get out', even incomplete or meaningless words or expressions are considered as utterances.

For what concerns SAT, the act of uttering corresponds to carrying out a locutionary act. A locutionary act, defined by Austin (1962, p. 94), is an utterance that makes sense in a given context, "The act of 'saying something' in this full normal sense I call, i.e. *locution*, the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances thus far and in these respects the study of locutions, or of the full units of speech". Hence, meaningless utterances are totally ignored. This is shown in the choice of well-formed meaningful utterances to stand for examples of different speech acts.

Not ignoring the fact that some expressions like that of 'good' can stand for different speech acts, Austin prefers not to engage in such perplexing cases stating that

Philosophers have long been interested in the word 'good' and, quite recently, have begun to take the line of considering how we use it, what we use it to do. It has been suggested, for example, that we use it for expressing approval, for commending, or for grading. But we shall not get really clear about this word 'good' and what we use it to do until, ideally, we have a complete list of those illocutionary acts of which commending, grading, &c., are isolated specimens. (1962, p. 162)

### 2.1.1 Phonetic, Phatic, and Rhetic Acts

Austin subdivided the locutionary act into three acts: A phonetic act, a phatic act, and a rhetic act. A phonetic act produces a '*phone*', a phatic act produces a '*pheme*', and a rhetic act produces a '*rheme*'

The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the uttering of certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar. The rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference. (1962, p. 95)

He (1962) presents the following examples (my underlining):

(1) He said "The cat is on the mat" reports a phatic act.

(2) He said that the cat was on the mat reports a rhetic act.

(3) He said "Get out" reports a phatic act.

(4) He told me to get out reports a rhetic act.

For the phonetic act, it is obviously the vocal sounds (phones) uttered by the speakers. Austin claims: "to perform a phatic I must perform a phonetic act ... but the converse is not true" (1962, pp. 95-96). Obviously, to perform a rhetic act, we must perform both a phatic act and a phonetic one.

Austin adds that "The pheme is a unit of language: its typical fault is to be nonsense - meaningless. But the rheme is a unit of *speech*; its typical fault is to be vague or void or obscure" (1962, p. 98). Austin (1962) gave us two examples of meaningless utterances that are not speech acts: "the slighy toves did gyre" and "cat throughly the if". These utterances fail to stand for phatic acts, hence, for rhetic ones. Whereas an utterance like "John's children are all bald", where John has no

children, fails to perform a rhetic act, but, it is a phatic act.

Eventually, Austin (1962) left the door open to grammarians, phoneticians, and philosophers to add refinements to locutions as his main interest was not the act '*of Saying Something*' (locutions) but the one of '*In Saying Something*' (illocutions), "Let me add merely that, of course, a great many further refinements would be possible and necessary if we were to discuss it for its own sake- refinements of very great importance not merely to philosophers but to, say, grammarians and phoneticians" (p. 95).

### 2.1.2 Pseudo-Statements vs Locutions

Another important term in relation to the nature of the linguistic expressions which can stand for locutions is that of pseudo-statements. As mentioned above, Austin's SAT was directed against philosophers' classification of linguistic expressions into mainly a dichotomy of statements and pseudo-statements (meaningless statements). He also states that a part of what philosophers consider as pseudo-statements are either performatives or constatives. Clearly, the parameter upon which Austin and philosophers judge meaningfulness is not the same. Thus, it is important to move on to consider this latter for both philosophers and Austin.

Philosophers state that there are two types of pseudo-statements; "either they contain a word which is erroneously believed to have meaning, or the constituent words are meaningful, yet are put together in a counter-syntactical way, so that they do not yield a meaningful statement" (Carnap, 1959, p. 61). The first type of a pseudo-statement is the one which includes pseudo-concept(s). Carnap (1959, pp. 61-62) states that "A word which (within a definite language) has a meaning, is usually also said to designate a concept; if it only seems to have a meaning while it really does not, we speak of a "pseudo-concept"". Carnap explains that

the meaning of a word is determined by its criterion of application (in other words: by

the relations of deducibility entered into by its elementary sentence-form, by its truth-conditions, by the method of its verification) ... If no criterion of application for the word is stipulated, then nothing is asserted by the sentences in which it occurs, they are but pseudo-statements. (1959, pp. 63-64)

He also adds that “it also happens at times that a word loses its old sense without acquiring a new one. It is thus that a pseudo-concept arises” (1959, p. 62). Carnap states the example of the word ‘God’ which “refers to something beyond experience. The word is deliberately divested of reference to physical being or a spiritual being that is immanent in the physical. And as it is not given a new meaning, it becomes meaningless” (1959, p. 66).

In *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (2004), Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu state that

Any word or concept should have a **meaning** that allows it to pick out **objects** or other entities... Terms such as **Principle, God, the Absolute, the Infinite, Being** as Being and **Essence** are all pseudo-concepts ... these words can not be used in **sentences** to assert anything. They are merely allusions to associated **images** and feelings that ...fail to satisfy empirical criteria of meaningfulness... The sentences that contain a pseudo-concept are pseudo- sentences (p. 572).

Jacobsen (1986, p IV) clarifies the nature of pseudo-concepts claiming that “It means seeing general, not the particular, seeing the abstract, not the concrete, the absolute, not the relative ... thus having emotive meaning and lacking truth - value, must be denied or at least regarded as pseudo – concepts”. Religious, emotional, ethical words, and poetry, of which sentences (5), (6), and (7) are examples, are of this sort. This led us to consider a famous dichotomy in philosophy which is that of *universal-predicate*. Universals are defined as

abstract propositions and relations, whereas particulars are concrete objects that exemplify them (Russell, 2009). For instance, the word ‘redness’ is a *universal* whereas the word ‘car’ is a *predicate*. Relying on the above definition of pseudo- concepts, universals are considered as pseudo- concepts.

(5) Love is the essence of all life.

(6) You are the moon.

(7) Death is a harsh reality.

The second type of pseudo-statements refers to statements that are composed of meaningful words (not pseudo-concepts) but whose grammatical structure is wrong. A large variety of sentences can be formed in this context, including:

(8) broke the kid water.

(9) broke the kid the toy.

(10) he knows that because.

(11) quickly Adam is

In the same context, Carnap (1959) adds that

The fact that natural languages allow the formation of meaningless sequences of words without violating the rules of grammar, indicates that grammatical syntax is, from a logical point of view, inadequate. If grammatical syntax corresponded exactly to logical syntax, pseudo-statements could not arise. (p. 68)

Also, if we compare sentences (8) and (9), we notice that in spite of having an ungrammatical structure, sentence (9) is somehow understood. That is to say, we can, after all, guess that it is about a kid who broke a toy. Worthy of mention, the structure of this sentence corresponds to one of the sentence structures in the Arabic language, where the verb precedes the subject. As such, we do think that it is important to consider nonsensicality in terms of sub-categories that could render different typologies and degrees of this former. This might include, for instance, the

number of pseudo-concepts in a given utterance((5), (6), (7)), whether it is a problem of word-order((9)), or a word used in an unusual position (because in (10)). Eventually, we can also deduce a third taken for granted category of pseudo- statements which include pseudo-concepts within an ungrammatical structure (12).

(12) All life the essence is love.

Austin (1962, p. 2), for his part, admits the existence of nonsensical statements, claiming that

First and most obviously, many ‘statements’ were shown to be, as KANT perhaps first argued systematically, strictly nonsense, despite an unexceptionable grammatical form: and the continual discovery of fresh types of nonsense, unsystematic though their classification and mysterious though their explanation is too often allowed to remain

However, he (1962, p. 4) states that

The type of utterance we are to consider here is not, of course, in general a type of nonsense; though misuse of it can, as we shall see, engender rather special varieties of ‘nonsense’. Rather, it is one of our second class-the masqueraders. But it does not by any means necessarily masquerade as a statement of fact, descriptive or constative.

In other words, Austin wants to claim for his speech act theory using utterances that are meaningful and stand for performatives

We shall take, then, for our first examples some utterances which can fall into no hitherto recognized *grammatical* category save that of ‘statement’, which are not nonsense, and which contain none of those verbal danger-signals which philosophers have by now detected or think they have detected (curious words like ‘good’ or ‘all’, suspect auxiliaries like ‘ought’ or ‘can’, and dubious constructions like the hypothetical). (1962, pp. 4-5)

As such, he chooses utterances that satisfy three main conditions:

- 1- They are not constatives (they are not true or false).
- 2- They are not nonsensical.
- 3- They are not ambiguous like that of ‘good’ which can stand for different performatives.

## 2.2 Intention vs. Illocutionary Act (*In Saying Something*)

As stated above, the illocutionary act is the central focus of Speech Act Theory. It is at the level of illocutions that we talk about the *force* of an utterance in getting things done. It is for this reason that the expression ‘illocutionary act/force’ is often used interchangeably with that of ‘speech act’ (Wales, 2014). Austin (1962, p. 99) defines the illocutionary act, stating

I explained the performance of an act in this new and second sense as the performance of an ‘illocutionary’ act, i.e. performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something; and I shall refer to the doctrine of the different types of function of language here in question as the doctrine of ‘illocutionary forces’.

As such, he (1962, p. 100) distinguishes “*force* and meaning in the sense in which meaning is equivalent to sense and reference”. In other words, the illocutionary force is a second level of meaning that should be distinguished from the literal meaning (sense and reference) of a given utterance, although it is based on it in the first place.

Also, concerning the co-existence of locutionary acts and illocutionary ones, Austin (1962, p. 98) states that: “To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform an *illocutionary* act”. Clearly, to perform a locution doesn’t always mean that we perform an illocution. For instance, a person who mumbles a song or reads a sentence without understanding its meaning is performing a locution, but not an

illocution (Austin, 1962). For this reason, we do associate the performance of an illocution with the presence of an intention to carry it out.

It is our intention that makes us choose certain word(s) (locution) to perform certain illocutionary act or force. This takes place with a consideration of the context (as a whole) in which a given speech act takes place. Besides, we can use different utterances to serve different intentions or vice versa. In other words, the same illocutionary force (apologize for instance) can be performed using different locutions (different utterances with different senses and references), including: ‘*I am (so) sorry*’, ‘*Sorry*’, ‘*Please, forgive me*’, ‘*We didn’t mean to bother your daughter*’, etc. Also, an utterance like ‘*Put the vase on the large table*’ can be performed with different intentions. Hence, “It makes a great difference whether we were advising, or merely suggesting, or actually ordering” (Austin, 1962, p. 99).

### 2.3 Purpose vs. Perlocutionary Act (By Saying Something)

When we produce a given utterance (locution), we generally have an intention to perform an illocutionary act as well as a *perlocutionary one* (or *perlocution*). Austin (1962, p. 101) defines this act stating that “Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them”. For instance, a person can argue (an illocution) to *convince* (a perlocution) his interlocutor. Of course, not all illocutions have perlocutions. An utterance like ‘Salaam’ or ‘Hello’ meant to greet someone (illocution) may not be intended to perform any perlocutionary act (Searle, 1969).

Austin (1962) refers to perlocutions as the acts of ‘*by saying something*’ as opposed to locutions ‘*of saying something*’ and illocutions ‘*in saying something*’. Perlocutions are associated with having a certain purpose behind performing a given

illocution. For instance, a person’s purpose behind warning someone else (illocution) is to alarm him (perlocution) about the existence of a danger. In this context, Van Dijk (1977b) refers to perlocutionary act as P-successful illocutionary act i.e., purpose-successful illocutionary act.

Also, as opposed to locutionary and illocutionary acts that are conventional, the perlocutionary one is not conventional

Certainly we can achieve some sequels of perlocutionary acts by entirely nonconventional means (or as we say ‘unconventional’ means), by acts which are not conventional at all, or not for that purpose; thus I may persuade some one [*sic*] by gently swinging a big stick or gently mentioning that his aged parents are still in the Third Reich. (1962, p. 118)

Furthermore, there are two types of consequence (Austin, p. 101) as “reference is made either (C. a), only obliquely, or even (C. b), not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act,” as shown in the example (Austin, 1962, p. 102) below

#### Act (A) or Locution

He said to me, ‘You can’t do that’.

#### Act (B) or Illocution

He protested against my doing it.

#### Act (C. a) or Perlocution

He pulled me up, checked me.

#### Act (C. b)

He stopped me, he brought me to my senses, &c.

He annoyed me.

Analysing utterances into a tripartite speech act, Austin (1962) is totally aware of three main facts. The first states that some illocutionary acts can be performed using non-linguistic behavior (gestures, facial expressions, shrugging, etc.) just

like using utterances. Second, he admits that too much is still to be uncovered in relation to this tripartite structure as these claims are but “some general comments on these three classes, leaving them still fairly rough” (1962, p. 103). Third, as SAT is set first and foremost to claim for the *force* of language in doing things, Austin (1962, p. 104) believes that the use of language goes beyond three acts

For example, we may speak of the ‘use of language’ *for* something, e.g. for joking; and we may use ‘in’ in a way different from the illocutionary ‘in’, as when we say ‘in saying “p” I was joking’ or ‘acting a part’ or ‘writing poetry’; or again we may speak of ‘a poetical use of language’ as distinct from ‘the use of language in poetry’. These references to ‘use of language’ have nothing to do with the illocutionary act.

Austin calls these uses “parasitic uses of language, which are ‘not serious’, not the ‘full normal use’. The normal conditions of reference may be suspended” (1962, p. 104).

### 3. Indirect Speech Act

Sometimes, the illocutionary force of an utterance is referred to indirectly in what is called ‘Indirect Speech Act’. Searle (1975, p. 60) refers to “cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another”. Austin (1962) gave the example of the utterance of “I bid three clubs” (in a game bridge) which is used to perform the act of informing a partner that the speaker has no diamonds. Also, in an utterance like ‘Could you lend me some money?’, the speaker is not asking whether the hearer can or cannot lend him money. This utterance is performed as a request. The same thing can be said about an utterance like “You’re standing on my foot” (Searle, 1975), where the speaker doesn’t intend to inform the hearer about the situation. Rather, he is ordering him to move his foot.

### 4. Criticism to Austin’s Work

In spite of being a very credible work, Austin’s SAT can be criticized on different grounds:

- Austin has focused on analysing *complete*, *meaningful*, and *non-ambiguous* utterances; leaving hence much to be said about other sorts of utterances. First, we can refer to incomplete utterances that draw on the non-linguistic context to perform a given act. Also, interjections like ‘Ouch’, ‘Wow’, ‘Shh’, ‘Aha’, ‘Eww’, etc. can stand for speech acts, the analysis of which might not respond to all types of acts within Austin’s tripartite structure. Moreover, considering a part of what philosophers consider as pseudo-statements as utterances doing other things than describing reality, then assigning truth-condition to them (all utterances are assigned truth/falsehood dimension) is contradictory. That is to say, Austin doesn’t explain, for instance, on which basis an utterance formed with pseudo-concepts is assigned truth-condition. In this context, much can be said in relation to the meaning of ‘meaningfulness’.

- Although he talks about the possibility to perform certain speech acts (threaten for instance) using non-linguistic behaviour, he doesn’t tackle these cases, nor does he compare them with those performed by utterances. He also doesn’t consider cases where a fusion of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviors takes place to perform a given speech act.

- Referring to phonetic acts, Austin focuses on the spoken discourse with no reference to the written one. As such, a similar study of written discourse can reveal that writing graphemes can represent a preliminary act in the list of acts, followed by that of writing words and vocables, then that of writing meaningful utterance with those words and vocables to stand for certain sense and reference.

- It is necessary to reconsider the rhetic acts defined as using utterances with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference, especially in puzzling cases like that of “all triangles have three sides” (p. 97) where there is no reference. In the same context, speech acts performed using direct

quotes and indirect quotes should also be reconsidered as they are defined especially by reference to the aforementioned concepts (i.e., sense and reference).

- Austin also claims for the possibility of performing a phatic act without a rhetic one. The question to be asked is whether, in this case, the utterance is still considered as locution, illocution, and/or perlocution; and if yes, on which basis.

- Considering phonetic, phatic, rhetic acts at the sub-level structure, Austin is criticized for neglecting upper-level structure (macro-structure) where two or more speech acts form composite speech act(s) (van Dijk, 1977a), especially as sentences depend, formally and functionally, on the surrounding ones. Also, Cerf (1969, p. 357) adds, "if phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts are mere aspects of the locutionary act, why call them acts?" In this respect, we do claim that phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts are not mere aspects of locutionary act, they are also speech acts of a lower-level, the performance of which necessitates considering both the co-text and the context (who says what to whom, where and when). So, their performance doesn't take place at random, it is a systematic operation that should be reconsidered perhaps using other analytical tools.

In the same context, Pandey (2008, p. 108) states that

The phonetic act means a certain sound without sense and reference. However, we should not forget that a certain sound may perform some act. Let me suppose that a person is merely crying. This sound, however, may perform some act by creating some hurdle to others or it may be an indication of something. In such a situation it must be treated as an *act*. Likewise, the phatic act must be *act* to the extent that grammatically correct vocables without knowing its real sense and reference may be important from hearer's point of view. In this regard, it may perform some act and thereby it may be meaningful.

- Lacking a macro-level analysis, Austin's examination of the perlocutionary act didn't regard cases where a given illocutionary act is a reaction (a consequence) to another. To clarify, in a given conversation, interlocutors are performing a set of speech acts as a reaction to each other's utterances (speech acts). Hence, an illocutionary act like that of 'forgive' can be a reaction to that of 'apologize', also 'thank' as a reaction to 'warn'. In short, in a given conversation, some speech acts can be understood as both illocutions and perlocutions (consequences of other speech acts) at the same time. This pushes us to reconsider prior classification of speech acts into fixed categories that do not consider the context of performance. Meanwhile, appealing for co-textual and contextualelements, it seems vital to consider implicatures and references in order to find out which speech act is being performed.

- In relation to *intension* and *purpose*, there must be a distinction between '*Intention-Successfulness*' and '*Purpose-Successfulness*' (van Dijk, 1977b). For instance, an illocutionary act can be I- successful (intention-successful), but P- unsuccessful (purpose-unsuccessful) (van Dijk, 1977b). Van Dijk (1977b) calls P-successful illocutionary acts perlocutionary acts. Also, there must be a consideration of partial successfulness of intention. For instance, an illocutionary act is partially I-successful if the hearer understands the words but not the intention of the speaker (van Dijk, 1977b).

- The issue of intentionality is worthy to be re-examined. Austin states that one of the felicity conditions is sincerity condition where the speaker should mean what he says. In case the speaker lies, he violates sincerity condition. However, we do claim that 'to lie' is to perform a specific speech act with a concealed intention. In other words, the only difference between, for instance, 'to lie' and 'to salute' is that when the speaker lies, he doesn't share his intention with the hearer. Hence, a reconsideration of intentions as revealed and concealed ones would enrich the taxonomy of speech acts. It would also reconsider felicity conditions.

- Austin claims that both locutionary and illocutionary acts are *conventional* whereas perlocutionary ones are not. Then, how can we explain misunderstandings that arise between speech community members in spite of adhering to the same set of linguistic and social conventions? As such, this calls for a socio-cognitive approach to the study of speech acts which can consider individual and social cognition.

- Also, studying speech acts should consider discursive varieties (different social groups based on different social categories like: race, gender, ethnicity, profession, age, etc.) in order to predict and avoid interdiscursive conflicts.

- Two different utterances can be assigned the same illocutionary force. Apparently, there is no consideration of degrees of force displayed by illocutions of the same type, nor is there a consideration of factors which determine choosing one utterance rather than another (politeness for instance) to perform a given illocution (Searle, 1979).

- Indirect speech acts like: 'Could you lend me some money?' And 'You're standing on my foot!' shouldn't be taken on the same footing. They are two different situations where the relation between the illocution and the locution in the first utterance differs from that in the second utterance. To clarify, in the first utterance, the literal meaning of the utterance includes a reference to 'lending money to the speaker' (the speaker's intention is clearly expressed). Whereas, the literal meaning of the second utterance doesn't refer to the order of 'moving the foot' (the speaker's intention is not expressed).

## Conclusion

To conclude, there is an urgent necessity of explicitly linking a language action theory with grammar. This could explain how sequences of utterances are related with sequences of speech acts (van Dijk, 1977a). However, claiming for a theory of Form-Meaning-Action (van Dijk, 1981), that associates different illocutions with their corresponding locutions, is a too ambitious task.

This takes place regarding the large variety of utterances, as well as the fact that they are usually embedded with non-linguistic behavior. So, hopefully we can do that at least with a number of speech acts.

Not less important, a call for a Form-Meaning-Action theory, that takes into account: *well-formedness*, *meaningfulness*, and *appropriateness* of a given utterance in a given context, necessitates a pluri-level analysis of discourse that goes beyond a tripartite structure of speech act. As such, it requires the contribution of theories of narrative, style, conversation, rhetoric, etc. along linguistic ones (van Dijk, 1981). In other words, a more adequate linguistic theory should examine different structures of utterances, their signification, their relation, their co-existence with non-linguistic behavior, and especially how they respond to different, sometimes overlapping, functions of language in use.

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