I. Introduction

speech act theory (SAT) is one of the core issues of modern pragmatics. The speech acts of any language provide its speakers with culture-specific categories of verbal interaction. Speech acts can shed a great deal of light on broader cultural themes, but equally the importance of any particular speech act category can only be understood in a broader cultural context (cf. Goddard, 2004).

Further, cultures may differ in the rules when certain speech acts can be appropriately performed (Benthalia and Davies, 1989:102).

A. The Concept of Offer

People tend to cooperate with each other and help one another, for example, one individual does things for the sake of others to express a friendly and cooperative attitude. An example of a cooperative attitude is offer. Offer is a common word in everyday usage of language for the purpose of presenting something to be accepted or refused or to express one's willingness or intention to do something and leave the offeree free to accept or refuse that offer (Oxford Modern English Dictionary, 1992: 739). offer is altruistic in nature since what is offered is for the offeree's benefit. Therefore, the basic components of the concept of offer are voluntary aid by the speaker, the potential need of the addressee and altruism. The offered, in conversation, sets

up a sequentially possible next place for the offered to be a response, presumably an acceptance, which is the reference sequence, but also other responses such as refusal which are not preferable sequence (Davidson, 1984:104, and Hatim & Mason, 1990: 77), e.g. -Have another piece of cake.

1. -No, thank you. I'm satisfied.

   philosophical, social and cultural. In what follows, we will shed some light on these perspectives to provide a better understanding of the concept of offering.

B. Offer as a Commissives Act

Searle (1979) has another classification of illocutionary Acts and this classification is considered to be the most influential one and the most widely adopted by many scholars for further investigations (Cf.Mey, 1993: 170). Searle categorizes illocutionary acts into:

1. Assertive

2. Directives

3. Commissives

4. Expressive

5. Declartives

Following the previous classification, the speech act of offering is regarded as an act in which the speaker commits himself to a certain future action. we have to fit world-to-words i.e., the speaker wants the world to be changed to fit his words. (Searle, 1979: 14), e.g.:

- Can I help you?

Fraser (1975: 193) refers that in making an offer, the speaker suggests placing themselves under an obligation to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition. This type of speech act is being titled under "acts of committing" as Fraser argues. Hickey's argument is that the commitment is independent of the hearer and his reaction to it is irrelevant because the hearer may accept or refuse the offer as in:

-The doctor: I would like to take you to your hostel.

- No, thanks

For Hickey, the doctor is ready for commitment and if the offer is accepted by the hearer, the doctor's commitment comes into effect. By making an offer then, the speaker's commitment becomes bound with the hearer's wish for doing the act. Bach & Harnish (1979: 42) seem to accept the

basic frames of Searle's taxonomy and classify the acts in terms of types of expressed attitudes;

1. Connotatives.   2. Directives   3. Commissives   4. Acknowledgments

What is crucial in this paper is that of Commissives which compromise two subcategories; the first one means obligating oneself to do something whereas offers are proposals to obligating oneself to do something (Bach and Harish, 1979: 42).

Edmondson (1981: 492-496) views the difference between promises and offers terms of the potential placing of such acts relative to other illocutionary acts, or in terms of the absence of the S's belief that the hearer wishes or is willing that the speaker do an act by making an offer, the speaker undertakes the responsibility for doing future act which benefits the hearer. Following Bach & Harbish, Allan (1986) points out that promises and offers are the only classes of Commissives offering include:

Offer, propose, and volunteer.

E.g. You need my help, brother.

In this context, the speaker should do something for the social obligation provided the cooperative principle is being observed (Allan, 1986: 195, 206).

Making an offer means giving the other something to choose (of acceptance or refusal). Allan (1986: 195) thinks that Commissives involve only promises and offers. Additionally, a promise means obligating oneself to do something for the benefit of the hearer. While an offer is a promise that is conditional upon the hearer`s acceptance (for further details, see Al-Sulaiman, 1997, 97). The following example is relevant:

- If you need paper, I can get what you want.

When making an offer, the offeror promises to give the hearer something. Often, an offer is bound by a definitive time frame, when the time has expired , it has not been accepted the offer expires and the speaker is no longer bound by it. The hearer's response can be an acceptance or refusal or to make a counter-offer. A counteroffer is an offer that is made in response to the previous offer of the hearer (preparatory condition) and modifying the terms there. (Vanderveken, 1990: 185).

C. Offer as a commissive-directive Act

In a response to Searle's and Austin's classification, Hancher (1979: 7) refers that Searle's system is better than Austin's. Hancher proposes that both Commissives and directives involve cooperation and could be combined in one group named conditionals. The idea of combining the two categories

(commissive & directives) into one group stated by Hancher is somehow similar to Searle's proposal (1979: 14) to combine these two categories and relate them under a unified category (through directives are hearer-centered and commissive are speaker-centered)

2-1 How to perform the speech act of offering

An offer is sincerely performed when certain holding conditions are fulfilled (Alston, 1964: 40). The speaker takes for granted the hearer`s permission to make an offer. The speaker thinks he is willing and able to perform the act and assumes that the addressee is also willing to permit the speaker to carry it out.

Alston concludes that if any of these conditions is simultaneously denied, the speaker commits a pragmatic contradiction in performing this illocutionary act. Searle (1975; 1979: 32) draws a distinction between the direct and indirect speaker acts. Searle claims that in indirect speaker acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than the literal meaning by virtue of Grice"s cooperative principle and the mutually shared knowledge of the speaker and the hearer together with ability by the hearer to make inferences about the act performed. The richest mine to the performance of indirect speech acts is that of Commissive as Searle himself states. Searle then

proposes the following sentences, any of which can be uttered to perform an indirect offer:

A. Sentences concerning the propositional conditions:

I will do it for you.

Shall I give you the money now?

B. Sentences concerning the preparatory conditions:

1. S is able to do A

Can I help you?

I can do that for you.

I could get it for you.

2. H wants S to do A

Would (wouldn't) you like some help?

C. Sentences concerning the sincerity condition:

I intend to do it for you.

Searle (1979:56) argues that these examples suggest the following generalizations:

1- S can make an indirect commissive by asking whether or stating that the preparatory conditions obtain.

2- S can make an indirect commissive by asking whether or stating that the propositional content condition obtains.

3- S can make an indirect Commissive act by stating that the sincerity condition obtains. Bach and Harnish (1979: 51) point out that a speaker offers an act to a hearer if the speaker expresses:

1. The belief that the speaker`s utterance obligates him to act on the condition that the hearer indicates he wants the speaker to act.

2. The intention to act on condition that hearer indicates he wants the speaker to act

3. the intention that hearer believes that speaker`s utterance obligates speaker to act and that speaker intends to act on condition that hearer indicates he wants the speaker to act.

In making an offer, the speaker communicates to the hearer that s/he is not against carrying out a future action which is assumed by the speaker to have a positive sequence for the hearer but the speaker is not sure whether the hearer wants his action carried out (Trosborg, 1995: 9).

From what has been mentioned, it seems that there is an overlap in the whole or part of the felicity conditions proposed. This is due to the fact that an offer is considered a Commissive act. A commissive illocutionary act (Tsohatzidis, 1994: 220) is an act where the speaker commits himself to make actual state of affairs represented by the propositional content. Our argument is that in making an offer a speaker commits a hearer to act, or even both the speaker &hearer will be engaged in that accomplishment of an act. Consider:

a. Can I help you?

b. Won`t you sit down?

c. We`ll have another drink

In (a) the speaker will do some act on condition that the hearer accepts the offer and the speaker expresses his willingness and ability to do an act. In (b) the speaker expresses his wish that the hearer do the act, i.e., to sit down. As for (c) the speaker expresses his desire that he and the hearer will do the act on condition that the hearer expresses acceptance of that offer. An offer then is treated in this study as a commissive-directive act. Our next step then is to sit the felicity conditions for the performance of the speech act of offering in the light of the previous studies with some modifications.

2-2 The speech act analysis

A. The Propositional Content Conditions

a. Speaker expresses the proposition of his offer by saying"Have another piece of cake."

b. He predicates that the hearer would have a piece of cake if he accepts speaker"s offer.

B. The preparatory Condition

a. The hearer may accept or refuse to have another piece of cake.

b. Speaker assumes that the hearer is willing to have another piece of cake.

C. Sincerity Condition

Speaker wishes to give another piece of cake to the hearer

2-3 . Text Analysis

Offers are realized by using various linguistic constructions. Imperatives are one of these constructions. The grammatical criteria of this speech act are as follows:

1. Mood: Imperative.

2. Agent: 2rd person singular (implicit).

3. Subject: 3rd person singular (explicit).

4. Tense: Present.

5. Voice: Active.

6. The type of speech: Direct.

2-4 Consequences for cross-culture communication

This paper is an attempt to examine the possible structures that lead to the realization of the speech act of offering. It is through this paper that we shall continue to expand our awareness of language function and improve our understanding of crosscultural communication. The current paper is of interest to Arab learners in order to maintain socially appropriate equivalence of offers in the target language (English). The present study then goes beyond the philosophical tradition put forth by Austin (1962: 150-163) and Searle (1979: 23-24) where talk dealt with a static product rather than dynamic process. This paper leads us to question some of the assumptions in the literature. While Searle and many other philosophers considered offer as a commissive act in which a speaker commits himself to do a future act, we have found that offers

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are pre-events commissive directive acts in which a speaker commits himself and/or hearer to do an action on condition of hearer"s acceptance. We may classify offers according to orientation into:

A. Speaker-Oriented Offers

In making such offers, the speaker commits himself to do certain future act. The effect of this act is assigned by the speaker himself and the hearer in this case plays the role of an observer.

Consider:

-Do you want me to get you a chair?

B. Hearer-Oriented Offers

These offers are the act in which a speaker commits, or direct hearer to do certain future act if hearer accepts that. The assignment of the illocutionary act then will be or hearers part as in:

- Have a Pepsi.

C. Speaker-Hearer-Oriented Offers

Making an offer mostly involves two participants i.e. speaker and hearer. In such a case, the speaker commits himself and hearer to do certain act on

condition that the hearer accepts to do the act specified in the propositional content of the speaker‟s offer as in:

Perhaps, we should have another drink An important question for speech act theory is the relevance between function and form. It has been argued that an account of the force of an utterance should not be exhausted by one of its syntax and semantics otherwise; the illocutionary act would collapse into the locutionary act (Holdcroft, 1994: 350-351).

Arab learners tend to use imperatives to encode offers which is considered more polite than English, on the other hand using imperative as a direct strategy only in restricted context when the relationship between speaker and hearer is very close or in informal context whereas in formal context, an indirect strategy is preferred such as interrogative construction (Al-Sha'baan,1999; Agha, 2005).

Interrogatives are types of sentences which are typically used in the expression of questions by using inversion of the order of the subject and auxiliary as in:

Do not you want a drink?

Or by the use of interrogative particles:

-Will you have a drink?

Interrogative constructions are used for a wide range of illocutionary acts. However, what is note-worthy here is that the majority of offers are performed by using Interrogatives.

Interrogative-negative constructions in general constitute different speech acts (Sifiano, 1992: 146). In_ offers, interrogative-negative are those cases which presume a yes 'answer and function as a positive politeness device because they indicate that speaker knows the addressee's tastes, wants, habits and so on. (cf.Brown & Levinson, 1987: 127).

Declarative offers are sentences which have the form of declaratives but have been claimed not to have the force of declaratives or the so called "explicit per-formative". Thus, when making an offer by using a declarative form the hearer's inference is that the speaker was making an offer rather than assertion. These utterances are to be treated as indirect speech acts. Searle (1975, 1979) claims declarative-questions have the form of a statement in that they have no subject-operator inversion. These questions are realized by means of rising intonation, ¢.g.: -I cannot take you to your hostel?

Having discussed the possible offer constructions we shall proceed types of modifications or strategies that are available to the speaker on various levels of politeness to perform the speech act of offering:

1. Imperative Mood:

-Have a drink.

2. Hedged Per-formatives:

-I would like to take you to your hotel.

3. Interrogatives:

A-Operator Inversion (yes. no questions):

 -Is there anything I can do tonight?

B-Modals:

 -Can I help in any way?

4. Negative-Interrogatives:

 -Won`t you have an ice-cream?

5. Conditional Clauses:

 -If you are in a trouble, I can help you.

6. Making Assertions:

 -I can drive a while.

7. Making permissions:

 -You can stay here as long as you wish.

8. Elliptical utterances:

 -Just one.

9. Justifications:

 -I don`t think it will hurt you, drink it up.

10. Using Future Tense:

 -We`ll drink another cup of tea.

11. Using Past Tense:

 -Should we get a drink?

12. Intonation:

 -Another?

CONCLUSION

The present study attempts to provide a detailed analysis of the speech act of offering grounded on the theory of speech acts introduced by Austin's (1962) and which was later developed by his successor, Searle (1969) to understand the way utterances are and should be understood in a pragmatic context. It was concluded from the paper that offers are pre-event 'commissive-directive acts expressing the speaker's expectation of the hearer with regard to prospective action, verbal or non-verbal. Moreover, it is also concluded that the most typical strategy used to encode English offers includes the interrogative use of modal verbs "can, could, will, would, shall, should". 'These modals may further emphasize the addresser's recognition of the addressee's freedom of action by using softness such as "perhaps, if clauses, etc. Finally, it is believed that culture plays 'an important role in the variance of the speech act of 'offer'. Thus, the study recommends that speech acts in general and the act of 'offer' in particular should be validated in cross-cultural contexts.

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