

TRANSLATION IN LIGHT OF THE RELEVANCE THEORY AND SPEECH ACT THEORY**ASSISTANT LECTURER, MUHANNAD HADI ALTAIQANI.****DEPARTMENT OF TRANSLATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF WASIT.****١. Introduction.**

Both speech act theory and relevance theory have their own pragmatic programmes to utterance understanding. Articulating a linguistic property in different contexts may yield different meanings, e.g., a declarative might be intended to communicate the force of a question. Then, does a theory like speech act explain how the hearer can recover the intended interpretation? The present study tries to reveal;

١. the relevance theory view of whether the assumption, which the speech act account of utterance interpretation is based on, is always justified and whether it is fundamental to pragmatics, and

٢. if speech act theory cannot always press ahead to resolve some indeterminacies in interpretation, how does relevance theory justify the assumption its account offers in bridging this gap?

٢. Machinery of speech act theory and Relevance-Theoretic View.

١,١. Communicated and Non-communicated acts.

١,٢. Speech act theory is both taxonomic and explanatory in that it classifies speech-acts (illocutionary forces) and explains the way they are assigned to utterances. Under the umbrella of its pragmatic proposal to communication, it is assumed that speech-act type recovery is the essential analytical lens in understanding utterances (Searle, ١٩٦٩). That is, to be analyzed, the utterance should be assigned to the communicatively intended speech act. Words in (١) are used not only to describe the world [a state of affairs where there is a creature, (١.a)], but also to do things with them (e.g., warn). Hence, the speech act theory machinery to this declarative utterance recognition is to be assigned to either direct (e.g., assertion) or indirect speech-act [e.g., warning, (١.b)]. By itself, the proposition, (١.a), cannot communicate warning etc. (Searle, ١٩٦٩, p.٢٢; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٣-٤).

There's a snake in the grass: The speaker is X-ing (asserting/warning/claiming/guessing/expressing his surprise/his relief) that there's a snake in the grass. Speech act theory

enlightens how context is utilized to select one of these potential illocutionary forces (Searle, ١٩٧٦, pp.١٦;٢٤; Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.٩١-٢;١٠٢.

In the relevance-theoretic view, is it always essential to communicate this speech-act description? Sperber and Wilson demonstrate that the successful performance of some communicative acts relies on just having S's intentions (١.a) recognized, and others, e.g., (٢), on a combination of both having S's intentions (I will be there on time) recognized, and having his intention to perform a specific speech-act (promise) recognized. The former speech-acts are called non-communicated-acts, i.e., if an utterance is intended as a warning, the proposition expressed needs not to be supplemented with the speaker's description of himself as warning because it is the proposition, not the speech act description, that has the main point which guides H to derive the right kind of inferences (about the dangerous consequences of the described state of affairs). The latter are called communicated-acts because the utterance is interpreted only by means of the recovery of a speech-act type being communicated (promise). Communication does fail and H will not say 'How much?' if he just expresses the proposition of (٣) (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.٩٢-٤).

I will be there on time; I am promising to be there on time.

Jane will leave the room; The speaker is betting that Jane will leave the room.

They argue that what was essential to speech act theory project, (the link between utterance and speech-act types like warning and between utterance and speech-acts like promise), is of no importance for linguistic communication because the former is non-communicated and the latter are social-institutional-acts, using language on the institutional level, not the communicative level, which have more to do with a social institutional theory than with a pragmatics theory (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.٩٢-٤; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, pp.٢٤٤-٥).

Nevertheless, they argue that what is really fundamental to pragmatics is the three SAs which mood correlates to declaratives, imperatives and interrogatives (Austin, ١٩٦٢, pp.٧٣-٧٦; Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٠-١; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٦).

٢,٢ Direct literal speech act and Sperber and Wilson's argument:

٢,٢,١ Performatives:

In speech-act terms, performative verbs (e.g., predict) in explicit performatives, e.g., (٤), do not explicate a truth-conditional proposition for not having descriptive meanings. They rather encode a direct evidence to the speech act force being performed (predication, e.g., (٤.a)) (Austin, ١٩٦٢, pp.٦١,٧٠,١٣١):

I *predict* that Mike will pass the test.

Again, on Sperber and Wilson's account, speech act recovery is not necessary since H will derive more cognitive effects from the embedded proposition, not the verb (speech act description). Rather, the point in saying that S is making a prediction is similar to the point in saying the question which is not eliciting information, but reminding H of information necessary to interpret the subsequent utterance; similar to the cook's utterance (٦) uttered while physically adding the milk where the linguistic communicative act is relevant as a comment on the simultaneous non-linguistic communicative act, and thereby gears H's interpretation towards it. That is, all have two different communicative acts. The first act's relevance highlights the second's relevance. S communicates two distinct bits of information, 'he is making a prediction' and 'Mike will pass the test', where the first direct H to derive the right type of inferences from the second as a representation of a future event for which S has no more than indecisive evidence (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, p.٩٥-١٠٠).

Do you remember the lady who brought you this watch? Well, she is doing a first year math course.

٢,٢,٢. Mood:

"Early speech act theorists regarded illocutionary force as a properly semantic category." (Wilson and Sperber, ٢٠١٢, p.٢١٠

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In speech-act terms, sentence-types communicate literal illocutionary forces; declaratives, imperatives and interrogatives encode assertion, order/request, and question forces respectively. This proposal faces the problem: the sentence-type (e.g., interrogative) communicates forces (e.g., request), which are different from the one (e.g., question) it traditionally encodes (i.e., does not communicate its literal illocution, but an indirect force). However, this recognition of indirect illocution starts again with the literal illocution, (but only pragmatically derived and determined by felicity conditions) (Searle, ١٩٧٥). Sperber and Wilson (١٩٩٥) and Wilson and Sperber (١٩٨٨) argued against the speech act proposal, namely, the direct link between three basic sentence-types and three specific force-types (e.g., declarative mood directly encodes assertion). They claimed that declaratives, imperatives and interrogatives differ from each other in terms of mood, not force because "the illocutionary force is a pragmatic rather than a semantic category, a property not of sentences but only of utterances" (Wilson and Sperber, ٢٠١٢, p.٢١١). That is, they

argued that mood recovery does not directly match a definite illocutionary-force recovery. They argued for “a direct semantic link between linguistic form and representations of propositional attitude” (Wilson and Sperber, ٢٠١٢, p.٢١٧). Rather, they claim that mood communicates a clue for the speaker’s intended interpretation. “Our claim is that the characteristic linguistic features of declarative, imperative or interrogative form merely encode a rather abstract property of the intended interpretation: the direction in which the relevance of the utterance is to be sought” (Wilson and Sperber, ٢٠١٢, p.٢٢٩).

٣. The relevance-theoretic machinery.

٣,١. Ostensive-inferential communication.

١. Production: a rational communicator produces a linguistic stimulus as the input to the decoding process,

٢. Decoding process (derivation of explicatures): decoding the linguistic input provides the new information as the input to the inferential process:

a. Recovery of basic explicature: decoding the proposition expressed.

b. Recovery of higher-level explicature: decoding the sentence mood, i.e.,integrating the output, (١), into larger structures, differentiated by the sentence-mood type. These higher-level assumptions (i.e.,the propositional attitude S may wish to communicate towards the embedded proposition) are integrated into the set {I} of communicative assumptions to activate the inferential process.

٣. Inferential process: H inferentially contextualizes the new information in a background of existing assumptions. After forming some hypotheses, he confirms one by means of the relevance-theoretic comprehension strategy (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, p.٦١; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, pp.١٢٦-١٦٦)

٣,٢. Higher-level Explicatures

To the establishment of an utterance interpretation, the speech-act description recovery is a must because it gives a clue to its relevance recovery (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠١-٢; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٦).

Declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives share the same propositional form; but differ from each other in the type of their higher-level explicatures. H cannot recover an interpretation unless he recovers whether the propositional logical form is a kind of ‘saying that’, ‘telling to’ or ‘asking whether’; unless he incorporates it into a higher-level proposition

(Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠١; (Noh, ٢٠٠٠, pp.٢٠٢):

- [Higher-level expicature ... [basic expicature ...]]

Thus, they may be recovered overtly by the linguistic clue (mood, performative verb) or para-linguistic clue (tone of voice);

I *predict* that she will forget to come; The declarative mood offers only a clue to the attitude which it is standardly linked to 'saying that'. Depending on intonation, it may also be interpreted as 'asking whether' or even 'telling to' leave. The optimal relevance and the contextual clues will determine the interpretation recovered (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.٦١-٢;١٠٠; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٧.

You are to leave tomorrow.

In conclusion, in speech act theory, mood links sentence-type (e.g., declarative) to illocutionary force (i.e.,assertion), in relevance theory, mood links sentence-type (e.g., declarative) to pragmatic interpretation (i.e., saying that) which are psychologically defined, i.e., "this is not a link between sentence-types and speech-act types", as they are not analyzed in traditional speech-act terms (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١٧).

٢. Mood, declarative sentence, assertion force, saying that:

٣. In speech-act terms, the declarative is directly linked to the assertive-force which COMMITS S to the truth of its proposition (Searle, ١٩٧٩). It can also be used to indirectly perform acts other than assertions (e.g., warning), but still directly linked to assertive-forces, e.g., by manipulating the degree of commitment, it can communicate claim or guess. By contextual clues, H can select one of these potential illocutionary-forces associated with the declarative, (Searle, ١٩٧٩: pp.٥;١٢;٣٣;٤٢; Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, p.٩٢-١;١٠٠-٣; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٤). However, how could this proposal analyse declarative communicative express its proposition, but does not communicate it (as a belief) (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, p.٦٣;١٠١). The answer is that assertion becomes deviant, not genuine (actual) for violating the 'principle of literalness' (if accepted in speech act theory. This deviant-classification hardly describes how to recover what is communicated. Hence, speech act theory analysis is empirically inadequate and limited in application (Recanati, ١٩٨٧; Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٣; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, pp.٢٤٦-٧).

٤. This computer is mine.
٥. He is very kind.
٦. happily) He IS very kind, indeed.

Both accounts indicate that S of (١) is not just describing a state of affairs. Whereas, in speech act theory, he is performing an act, in relevance theory, he is conveying his attitude with considerations of relevance (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.٩٢-١):

relevance theory analysis compared with speech act theory analysis:

On hearing (١), S should recognize (a) and integrate it into (b) (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, p.٦١):

a. The recovery of the proposition expressed:

A description of a state of affairs where there is a snake in the grass.

b. The recovery of higher-level explicatures:

The speaker *is saying* that there is a snake in the grass.

This higher-level explicature can be relevant in different ways (e.g., asserting if relevant as a literal representation with commitment, warning if relevant as representing dangerous world etc.). Hence, speech-act set-ups are not necessary because they are non-communicated (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠١; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٨-٩; Clark, ٢٠١٣, p.٢٠٨-٩)

Thus, a declarative utterance is exploited to 'say that' P, i.e., to communicate P as a representation of an actual state of affairs, and achieves relevance thereby (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٠-١; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٦-٧). (Declarative) utterances achieve relevance by means of what they represent (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١٥), and they may represent different things, and, accordingly, they may be relevant in different ways. Metaphorically speaking, the utterance is like a mirror whose function is defined by what it reflects and it can reflect (represent) different objects. This account at least verifies these hypotheses:

١. Every utterance is an interpretation of the speaker's thought (descriptive use), (Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٨).

٢. Although 'saying that' is the broad general form of assertion, S, who intends his utterance as an example of 'saying that', does not necessarily intend to commit himself to its truth (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠١-٢; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٦). This proposal seems able to handle a richer range of utterance types which is, with Sperber and Wilson's notion of interpretive use, represents the key to interpreting the declarative, not as a deviant assertion, but as less-than-literal talk for being relevant, and as an interpretive representation, not descriptive use (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, p.٦٣; ١٠٢-١٠; Noh, ٢٠٠٠, pp.٧٣-٩).

When a communicator uses a pen to represent a sword, in virtue of some resemblance between them, he creates a representation by resemblance. Similarly, utterances are used to represent something, e.g., speakers' thoughts (mental representation). In interpretive use (representation), S exploits the degree of resemblance in propositional logical content between two representations (the original object and its representation) in a given context in

less-than-literal way, e.g., S's thought as representation another thought or utterance, which it resembles in content (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٣-٤; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٨-٢٥٢):

Declaratives exploited as a representation of S's thought need not be completely identical (literal) to his thought, and S need not be committed to the truth of declarative propositions which he presents as true descriptions of the world. Unlike assertion, it should be faithful, not truth-conditional (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٢-٤):

I worked at the computer for ١٠ hours.

The speaker may have worked for ٩,٥ hours. This does not mean that it violates any conversational norm. It is rather interpreted less-than-literally. Similarly, "I worked on the computer for ten hours" can be analysed as less-than-literally representing S's thought (it shares only some properties) with his original thought, e.g. "I spend much time with it. Thus, both instances differ in the degree of resemblance between utterance and thought (both less-than-literally represent S's thought). Sequently, one cannot claim that these instances violate any pragmatic norm, but optimally relevant without the S's commitment's to the truth. Here, a representation resembles another representation (utterance or thought) only in particular properties (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١٠; Noh, ٢٠٠٠, pp.٧٣-٩).

Declaratives are not necessarily intended to convey S's own thought. They may be relevant as representation entertained by someone else, as in reporting, but they all need to be optimally relevant interpretations (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٢-٤).

Sara: What did John say about the textbook?

Peter: a. He said that it was interesting; . The intended representation is to be inferred by means of relevance as the interpretive use (John's utterance), because it represents an answer to Sara's question (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠٥-١٠٨; Noh, ٢٠٠٠, pp.٧٦-٨٠).

Thus, these declaratives do not violate a norm of literalness, but achieve relevance in a variety of ways. 'Saying that' can be relevant as descriptive use (literal) like assertion or interpretive use. The relevance-theoretic comprehension tool can resolve such problematic interpretations, i.e., utterance representation, whether descriptive or interpretive, is determined by this strategy and contextual clues, not by mood, which is a linguistic indicator that gives only a clue to the relevance recall .

Thus, the higher-level explicature, e.g., 'saying that', has a central role in understanding utterance as if it converts lower level stimulations to higher-level interpretations, and achieves relevance thereby.

٤. **Mood, imperative sentence, order force, telling to:**

The imperative mood encodes directive speech-acts, which involve types differing in strength, e.g., order and request, which attempt to get H to do something (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١٠), e.g.,

Leave the room

- *S is requesting* H to leave the room.

Like declaratives, some imperative's analysis is not maintained by this speech-act proposal, because H is not required to do anything,

Please don't rain. (audienceless case,

Reach for the stars.

To analyse them, Sperber and Wilson propose that imperative utterances are used to 'tell H to' bring about P, i.e., to communicate P as a representation of a desirable state of affairs (to S or someone else), and achieves relevance thereby (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١١-٤) (Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٩-٥١):

- *S is telling* H to leave the room.

Although 'telling to' is the broad general form of order, S, who intends his utterance as an example of 'telling to', e.g., here, it does not necessarily mean an intention to get H to do something. Like declaratives, it is relevant as an interpretive interpretation of another utterance or a thought (none can reach the star) (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠١;١١١).

٥. **Mood, interrogative sentence, question force, asking whether:**

On standard speech-act account, interrogatives are understood as having the force of a request for information. However, the problem is with interrogatives that lack this correlation, which rather represent offers of information, e.g., guess questions, or exam questions, etc. Again, speech act theory is inadequate to analyze them (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١٠١;١١٤).

Are you going to leave?

Have you finished reading the novel I lent you last week?

Do you know that Iraq has defeated ISIS?

Sperber and Wilson propose an analysis without the application of the machinery of speech act theory. Interrogatives analysis can be resolved by considerations of relevance: interrogatives establish their relevance by means of what they represent (they represent their answers as relevant, i.e. desirable) (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١٥). A clue to the relevance recovery is:

١. Higher-level explication

٢. S's choice of perspective orientations:

- a. Speaker-oriented relevance (desirable to S)
- b. Hearer-oriented relevance (desirable to H)

These representations of desirability are set up by contextualization, i.e., “like imperatives, they are semantically indeterminate, and the indeterminacy must be pragmatically resolved by making some assumption about who it is that the speaker thinks would regard the thought in question as desirable. As always, the first assumption tested and found consistent with the expectation of optimal relevance is the only such assumption, and is the one the hearer should choose” (Blakemore, ١٩٩٢, pp.١١٦; Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٨; Wilson, and Sperber, ١٩٩٨, ٢٨٤).

٥,١ Speech act theory analysis:

- S intends to perform a request (getting the book) indirectly by performing a question directly (Searle, ١٩٧٦, p.٣١)
- S must communicate that ‘he *is making request*’
- This analysis sounds good, but it is not a pragmatic proposal because ‘request’ is a non-communicated act.

٥,٢ Relevance theory analysis:

To lift up the bonnet and see how the pragmatic engine works is to use the tool of the principle of relevance (Sperber and Wilson, ١٩٩٥, p.٢٤٨) to infer the request for the book:

١. Context:

- I think I should return the book if I have borrowed it.
- Utterance is not only articulated to get some information, but also to get the book back, otherwise it would be worthless. When S does not know and ‘asks H whether’ you have finished, the purpose is that he wants to request you to return the book, i.e., S is asking H to return the book.

٢. New information:

- Utterance.

٣. Contextual implication:

- Being geared to optimize relevance, I conclude that the answer is not only ‘yes’ but also the answer is to go and return the book that is most relevant to be worth S’s processing and to be compatible with S’s desirability.

Yes/no-assumption alone contradicts the new information and will be eliminated thereby as making unwanted contributions to relevance, whereas the action-answer generates greater cognitive effects and achieves relevance thereby by interacting with the context of

current assumptions.

Conclusions:

It is not necessary to analyse all imperatives as requests for actions or interrogatives as requests for information, nor is it necessary to design speech-act taxonomy to interpret utterances like warnings, exam or rhetorical question etc. What is necessary is that utterances should be optimally relevant to be analyzed in adherence to the force of their representations, not the force of speech-acts. Unlike speech act theory, relevance theory account is based on an assumption, which can be maintained. Its notion of higher-level explicatures seems to be central to pragmatics and is applied to a wider range of utterances. Mood-based 'saying that', 'telling to' and 'asking whether' are neither communicated nor non-communicated acts (i.e., not defined in speech act theory terms). They seem to direct H to eliminate some hypotheses as making unnecessary inputs to interpretation, to follow the path of the right cognitive effects to derive the inferences from the embedded proposition in the least effort-demanding way. In recovering these higher-level proposition interpretations, relevance theory plays a crucial role. Therefore, translators should give these notions a great deal of interest when committing their tasks of translating.

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