

An Indirect Speech Acts Analytic Study of Some Episodes of The Simpsons Animated Television Series

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Abstract:

The present study investigates indirect speech acts in The Simpsons TV animated series. Five episodes, in which social, political, and some other various issues are dealt with, are chosen for the analysis. The conversations made by the characters are analyzed according to Searle's speech act theory. This is followed by an interpretation of the indirect speech acts experienced by the utterances. The study also investigates how the Gricean maxims are violated in all of the utterances of indirect speech acts by the characters, and how this type of utterances is used to make the speech more polite. Among the most important findings of the study is that there are hidden political, social, and other messages in The Simpsons.

Key words: Indirect speech acts, The Simpsons, Gricean maxims, politeness theory

دراسة تحليلية لأفعال الكلام غير المباشرة في بضع حلقات من
المسلسل التلفزيوني الكارتوني (آل سمبسونز)

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المخلص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى استخراج و تحليل افعال الكلام غير المباشرة في المسلسل الكارتوني (آل سمبسونز). تم اختيار خمس حلقات من هذا المسلسل، و التي فيها يتم التطرق الى بعض المواضيع السياسية، والاجتماعية، و مواضيع مختلفة اخرى. تعتمد الدراسة في تحليلها للمحادثات بين الشخصيات في المسلسل على نظرية جون سيرل. يُتبع هذا بتفصي عن افعال الكلام غير المباشرة في الحوارات. تتقصى الدراسة ايضاً كيفية كسر قواعد جرايس في كل حوارات افعال الكلام غير المباشرة بواسطة الشخصيات، و كيف ان هذا النوع من المحادثات تُستخدم لجعل الكلام اكثر تهذيباً. من بين اهم استنتاجات الدراسة الحالية هي ان هنالك انواع من الرسائل من ضمنها السياسية و اجتماعية، مضمنة داخل حلقات المسلسل الكارتوني (آل سمبسونز).
الكلمات المفتاحية: افعال الكلام غير المباشرة - آل سمبسونز - قواعد جرايس - نظرية التهذيب .

1. Introduction

When a person produces utterances, the information conveyed by these utterances is not only limited to their literal meaning, but also to other aspects. Linguists state that we cannot understand these aspects of language without understanding how language is used to convey information. Pragmatics, as Leech (2014, p.xi) defines, is "the study of how utterances have meaning in situations". It differs from semantics in that semantics is the study of the linguistic meaning while pragmatics is the study of how this linguistic knowledge is used in context.

One of the basic components of pragmatics is the speech act theory. This theory was introduced by the British philosopher J.L. Austin in his book 'How to do things with words' and was later on developed by the American philosopher J.R. Searle. These two philosophers believe that language is not only used to refer to the truth and falseness of statements, but rather to do things. Yule (1996, p.47) defines speech acts as "actions performed via utterances", such as promising and marrying.

Austin (1962, p.108) believed that speaking is doing things with words, and that all the utterances are speech acts. He classifies the acts that happen when someone uses language into three kinds: Locutionary acts, which are acts of speaking, Illocutionary acts, which are acts done in speaking, and perlocutionary acts, which are acts performed by speaking. Searle (1985, p.12-16), in his attempt to show how these illocutionary acts work, presents a taxonomy in which he classifies illocutionary acts into: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

Speech acts are also distinguished with regard to their structure into two types: direct and in direct speech acts. In the case of direct speech acts there is a match between a sentence type and an illocutionary force. Indirect speech acts, on the other hand, occur when there is no direct relationship between a sentence type and an illocutionary force, or as Searle (1985: 31) describes it "one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another".

2. Literature review

Studies of different kinds on speech act theory are conducted by researchers using various types of data. Some of these studies concentrate on analysing indirect speech acts to reach to the purposes this indirectness may serve in particular situations. Maghfira (2014) analysed direct and indirect speech acts between Higher and Lower Social Class in the Titanic movie, believing that understanding direct and indirect speech acts helps understanding the implicit and explicit meanings the speakers want to convey. The speaker, as the author believes, may use a direct speech act to deliver an information directly to the others, while he may use an indirect speech act to refine the message he wants to convey and to maintain modesty. Nagane (2015) analysed the indirect speech acts in Khushawant Singh's Train to Pakistan, and concludes that the analysis he made, offer a new perspective to the study of literary discourse.

Eroukhmanoff (2018) studied indirect securitisation of Islam made by politicians in the United States, and concluded that the analysis of the indirect speech acts elaborates how presidents like Bush, Obama and Trump can say speeches about how peaceful Islam is; yet, through these speeches, they convey securitizing messages which are not literally said and are communicated indirectly. The researcher also concluded that securitising indirectly gives an emotional cover for the speakers, freeing them from any responsibility on securitizing any minority.

3. Speech act theory

John Langshaw Austin, who is a British philosopher of language, is considered as the founding father of the theory of speech acts. He presented the notion of speech acts in his lectures at Harvard University which were eventually published in his book 'How to Do Things with Words' in 1962. Through this book, Austin explains the relationship between language and act. He believes that people, when uttering sentences, are also performing an action (Collavin, 2011).

He concluded that there were three kinds of actions associated with spoken utterances: the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts:

1. Locutionary Acts are the acts of actual uttering and producing the meaningful expressions. These acts include phonetic acts represented by pronouncing sounds, phatic acts represented by the utterance of words according to the phonological and syntactic rules, and 'rhetic' acts which are acts of uttering a sentence with sense and more or less definite reference. (Oishi, 2006, p.3-4)

2. Illocutionary acts, as Yule (1996: 48) describes, are the function in mind behind producing well-formed utterances. A person may by uttering a sentence make a statement, an offer, an explanation, or any other communicative purpose. There is, as Cruse (2011, p.332) mentioned, a relation between locutionary and illocutionary acts, since whenever a locutionary act is performed, an illocutionary act would be performed too. For example, by uttering the words 'I promise to buy you a ring', the speaker has performed the illocutionary act of promising.

3. Perlocutionary acts are concerned with the acts which follow an utterance (Saeed, 2015, p.228). The perlocutionary act, as Hurford, et al. (2007, p.271-272) defined, is "the act of causing a certain effect on the hearer and others".

The illocutionary act, which is the action intended by the speaker, has become Austin's main concern and his successors who are interested in speech acts (Saeed, 2016, p.228). John R. Searle, one of Austin's pupils, developed ideas in the theory of speech acts. Searle (1985, p.12) after considering the dimensions and differences in speech acts, presents a taxonomy for what he considers as the basic categories of illocutionary acts, which are listed below:

1. Assertives: The point behind the use of this type of speech acts, as Searle (1985, p.12) expressed, "is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition". The utterances that belong to this type of category could be assessed as being either true or false. This type of speech acts includes acts like concluding and deducing (Searle, 1985, p.12-13).

2. Directives: Searle (1985, p.13) declared that by using this type of speech acts, the speaker attempts to make the listener to do something. These attempts may be modest ones as when inviting somebody, or fierce ones as when insisting on somebody to do something.

3. Commissives: Searle (1985, p.14) agreed with Austin's definition of the commissive speech acts and considers it as an unexceptionable one, though Austin listed some verbs to this category which does not really belong to this type of speech acts. Austin (1962, p.156) explains that "the whole point of a commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action".

4. Expressives: these are the type of acts that express "the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content" (Searle, 1985, p.15). In this type of speech acts, the speaker neither asserts nor presupposes, rather he expresses his feelings and attitudes about something (Abood, 1999).

5. Declaration: Searle (1985, p.16-17) notices that this category should be added to the taxonomy in order for it to be complete. The special thing about this category, as he explained, is that "the successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality, successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world". So, declaratives are different from the other categories in that, as Abood (1999, p.22) explained, by uttering them, the speaker changes the condition of an object, like changing the world.

4. Politeness theory

It is known that what a speaker says and how the listener interprets what is said, would lead to some type of evaluation of the utterance, for example to evaluate it as being rude, polite, arrogant, humble, friendly, or other kinds of evaluation. This evaluation affects the meaning of what is said and is discussed under the term of politeness (Yasmeen et al., 2014). Politeness, as Hill et al. (1986, p.349) defined, is "one of the constraints on human interaction, whose purpose is to consider others'

feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport". Basically politeness in speech is used to lessen friction, roughness and the rudeness of the utterances between the speaker and the hearer in their interactions (Yasmeen et al., 2014).

Brown and Levinson's theory (1978) has been considered as one of the prominent theories regarding politeness. This theory illustrates that in conversations, people's self-image is often taken in consideration. Linguists use the term 'face' as a representation to this self-image which reflects a person's emotions and senses of society. Politeness, then, is considered as a means by which people show their awareness of others' faces in interactions (Yule, 1996, p.60).

Brown and Levinson's theory basically focuses on three notions which are: face, face threatening acts, and politeness strategies. A person's face in his interactions with others could be classified into two kinds: positive face with which a person would desire to be accepted and approved by the others in the conversation, and negative face with which a person would not want to be imposed on by others and likes to be independent (Ji, 2000). The theory that Brown and Levinson introduce, affirms that some types of speech acts such as requests, offers and compliments can threaten either the speaker or the hearer's face and that politeness can interfere in these situations to fix these problems (Fahad, 2015).

5. Gricean maxims

The cooperative principle is a principle presented by the philosopher of language Paul H.P. Grice in 1975. He (as cited in Tsojon and Jonah, 2015, p.43-44) argues that there is some basic principle that all speakers, whatever culture they belong to, follow in their conversations and he names it the cooperative principle. This principle reflects the way language could be used to be efficient and effective enough for an interaction to be rational. Grice subdivides the co-operative principle into a number of maxims which are classified into four categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner.

The category of Quantity, as Grice (1989, p.26-27) illustrates, is about the amount of information which should be as informative as is required. The Quality category is about making contributions that are true and not to say what is believed by the speaker to be false. The relevance category is about being relevant, while the manner category is mostly about being perspicuous.

Grice presents these maxims which he believes participants in conversations would follow. He nevertheless admits that these maxims can be unfulfilled in ordinary conversations for different reasons. This could be done intentionally for the purpose of misleading the hearer or some other purposes. The violation may also happen when the speaker is in a situation where there have to be a choice of violating one maxim or another (Lindblom, 2006).

6. Indirect speech acts

Indirect speech act is introduced by John Searle, and it refers to the act of communicating more than what is spoken, by depending on the mutual knowledge that both the speaker and the hearer share. Searle introduces indirect speech acts and defines them as "cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another" (Searle, 1985, p.31). Givón (1993, p.269) defined an indirect speech act as "a construction used to perform one speech-act even though its grammatical form is more commonly associated with another speech-act". Yule (2016, p.131-132) defines an indirect speech act as "an action in which the form used (e.g. interrogative) does not directly match the function (e.g. request) performed by a speaker with an utterance, in contrast to a direct speech act".

Indirect speech acts, in English, are mostly associated with interrogative sentences. This type of sentences, however, does not ask a question, and when uttered, does not expect an answer from the listener (Poghosyan, n.d.). An example of one of this type of indirect speech acts is found in a scene in The Simpson in which Mr. Burns, a businessman, who is miserable most of the time, speaks to a character who reflects a real life celebrity, Steve Ballmer, a successful and happy American businessman. Mr. Burns says "can you teach me to do that?". This is an indirect speech act by which Mr. Burns is not asking a 'yes / no' question. This, instead, counts as a request. Mr. Burns requests Steve Ballmer to teach him how to have a happy life.

Such utterances and the speech acts they present, need to be done in special conditions to achieve their effect. These conditions are called Felicity Conditions. Pratt, as cited in Toumi (2015, p.21-22), explained that a sentence cannot perform a correctly formed speech act by only having a well formed grammatical structure, but it is essential for it to obtain certain conditions. For example, the speech act of promising is correctly performed only if the speaker is able to fulfil the promise and intends to really do it, and that the listener would like him to do it.

7. The Simpsons

The Simpsons is the longest-running animated television series in the U.S. history, and is broadcasted around the world in different languages. This TV show is believed to have a big influence on the animated TV shows that have followed it. It is a sitcom which reflects the American life and society, by representing them in different characters who live in a fictional town called Springfield (McNamee, 2020).

The beginning of the appearance of The Simpsons dates back to the spring of 1987 as a brief animated short clips which were played before and after commercial breaks of the Tracy Ullman show. These short cartoons showed yellow-skinned, boggle-eyed characters who represented The Simpsons family which is intended to reflect the American

family life. These limited timed cartoons, yet, attracted the audience's attention when they included some of the sensitive subjects, like religious topics, that the other shows do not dare to bring up. These characters were presented by the comic artist Matt Groening, who was invited by the television comedy writer, director, and producer James L. Brooks, to broadcast his cartoons for the first time (Alberti, 2014, p.xi).

After being a cartoon of around thirty seconds long, The Simpsons gained popularity and the love of people. This led the show to be broadcasted as a full animated series on December 17, 1989, on FOX channel, with its first episode entitled: 'Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire' (Basile, 2019). James L. Brook, the executive producer of the show, explains in an interview, how The Simpsons began to be broadcasted as its own independent show. He states that The Simpsons began as a 'one-minute little cartoon', and that the love he had for the people who he was meeting through making these shows and the spirit he saw they brought to the work, made him think that it was a good idea for this cartoon to have its own show (Mostly Simpsons, 2016).

The Simpsons, when broadcasted, was seen to be providing a show with a new phenomenon by presenting a cartoon that looks to be for children, but is aimed at discussing adult's problems. The show worked on two levels: one which represents a comic show about family, while the other reflects people's behavior and refers to cultures (Donnelly, 2015). Matt Groening reveals in an interview that he began as an underground cartoonist with an unknown future, yet he always had the fantasy in his mind of making cartoons that would be liked by people someday (Preston, 2010). He explains that when he produced The Simpsons, he made the episodes 'very cartoony'. These episodes try to elevate the show to a level of emotions "that make people forget they are watching a cartoon... and get caught up in the show and in the stories of these characters" (Mostly Simpsons, 2016).

There has been 684 episodes of The Simpsons broadcasted since its first appearance on TV in 1989. It is considered as the longest American television series ever made. The success of the series resulted in producing The Simpsons Movie in 2007, and a video game in the same year. The thirty-first season of the series started to be aired in September of 2019, while the thirty-second season is planned to launch the episode number 700 of the series. The Simpsons, through its history, has gained a lot of awards. The Time magazine considered the series as the best series in the 20th century, and in 2000 The Simpsons family gained a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, while the Emmy Awards awarded the series 34 times. The catchphrase "D'oh!", that the series has created, has been added to Oxford Dictionary of Language, and was defined as a phrase used to express frustration (wikipedia.org).

While the series witnessed success in the USA, it has also gained popularity around the world and is broadcasted in more than seventy countries, like Canada, The United Kingdom, and Spain (Lorenzo, Pereira, & Xoubanova, 2003: 270). The series was banned from showing in certain other countries. Myanmar, for example banned the show because of the red and yellow colours which stick with the characters, and which are the colours of the rebels in there. Venezuela refused to broadcast the show because of its inappropriateness for children (Hodges, 2017).

8. Speech Sample Analysis

In this study, five episodes of The Simpsons television series are chosen for analysis. The episodes that are chosen mix humor with subjects that discuss certain social, political, or other issues that are related to America and other parts of the world. The analysis of each episode begins by showing the numbers and percentages of each type of speech acts according to Searle's taxonomy in the episode's utterances. The numbers and percentages of the indirect speech acts are also revealed in the same way. The utterances of indirect speech acts in each type are extracted and their form and meaning are analyzed, taking into consideration the context they occur in, and the characters who utter them. These utterances are also discussed in relation to politeness theory, in case the speaker uses indirect speech acts to save the listener's face. The utterances are also discussed in case they break one of the four Gricean Maxims of conversation.

8.1 The first episode

The first chosen episode of The Simpsons for the analysis is the fourteenth episode of the seventh season, which is entitled 'Scenes from The Class Struggle in Springfield'. Its first broadcast was on the fourth of February, 1996. This episode, as Henry (2012, p.151) believed, "focuses more on social class and the problem of classism in American culture". The episode also attempts to reflect certain superficial thoughts that some groups of societies have. It shows how inanimate objects, especially clothes, could affect and influence the power that people have (Adams, 2014).

The analysis of this episode shows that there are 351 utterances uttered by different characters. Marge's share of these utterances is 109, which confirms that she is the central character in this episode. The episode's plot mostly focuses on Marge's persuasion on fitting in with the upper-class community. Accordingly, Homer and the kids have a minor role, together they utter 105 utterances. One of the guests in this episode, Evelyn, utters 31 utterances and appears in many scenes representing the high-class people, while the remaining utterances are uttered by the other minor characters in the episode. The utterances in the episode include all five types of Searle's speech acts taxonomy, while some types occur more frequently than the others.

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The two types of speech acts, the direct and indirect, are also found in these utterances. The direct speech acts are found more in 91% of the utterances while the indirect ones are 9% of them, which is a normal thing, since The Simpsons series reflects the real-life, and people in daily life prefer to use direct speech acts more for many reasons such as being easy to be understood by listeners. Twelve of the indirect speech acts are spoken by Marge and are mostly directed to her family. Marge utters these sentences in an attempt to persuade her family to act in a classier way and to try to fit in with the high-class community. She uses indirect speech acts in most of her pieces of advice to her family, in order to be polite and not to threaten their faces.

The assertive speech acts occur in 194 utterances, which are more than half of all of the sentences. Indirect speech acts occur in eight of these utterances. One of them is when Marge gives all the credit of her successful blending into the rich families, to her dress. This happens after Homer shows his appreciation for her work that led them to earn a guest pass for the club. Marge answers by saying "Don't thank me. Thank my beautiful new suit". These two sentences, despite being in the form of an imperative sentence, reflect a different illocutionary act. By uttering these two sentences, Marge is not commanding Homer to do these things, but is asserting the fact that they earned the pass because of the elegant dress she wears and which made the rich ladies think of her as a classy lady.

The directive type of speech act occurs in 100 utterances which represent 29% of the utterances. Sixteen of the utterances of indirect speech acts in the episode belong to this type of utterances. In one of the scenes, Lisa continues to bother Marge with questions at a time Marge needs to concentrate on sewing her dress. Marge tells Lisa that "mommy has to alter her suit" and "I really need to concentrate on this", which are utterances of indirect speech acts which Marge uses, to politely ask Lisa to stop bothering her with more questions. Marge uses indirect speech acts to save her daughter's positive face and to avoid making her feel offended.

Expressive speech acts are found in 43 utterances presenting a percentage of 12% of the utterances in this episode. Indirect speech acts also appear in some of the expressive utterances of this episode. One of them is uttered by Marge as she speaks to Lisa and says "Why do you always have to question everything I do?". This utterance is in the form of a question, yet has a different function mainly that of complaining. Marge utters this utterance to complain of Lisa's repeated questions.

Thirteen utterances in the episode represent the commissive type of speech acts, one of which reflects an indirect speech act. This is when Homer discovers that Mr. Burns was cheating to win in his golf matches. He threatens to expose him by saying "wait till I tell everyone about this". This sentence, in spite of having the form of an imperative sentence, holds the function of threatening and promising to reveal a secret. There is only one declarative speech act in this episode, and it represents a direct speech act. Homer's utterance of "Sold!", after discussing the properties of one

of the televisions with the TV store owner, makes him obliged to pay the TV's price and to be its owner.

All the utterances of indirect speech acts in this episode violate the maxim of relevance, since the utterances' forms are different from what is discussed in the conversations they occur in. For instance, Marge cannot understand Lisa's utterance "who are they?" unless there is a mutual knowledge about what is said. Beside the maxim of relevance, some of the indirect speech acts in this episode, violate other maxims. Some of the utterances, for instance, also break the maxim of manner. Bart's utterance "don't be a sap, Dad" is an ambiguous one. Homer does not understand what Bart means by it until Bart goes on with further explanation. This ambiguity leads for this and some other similar utterances to flout the maxim of manner, since this maxim demands the speakers to say clear and understandable utterances.

The previous utterance, beside some other utterances in this episode, also flout the maxim of quantity since these utterances are not as informative as required. The previous utterance by Bart violates the maxim of quantity because of the shortage of information it provides. Marge's utterance "Homer, I don't think you should wear a short sleeved shirt, with a tie", on the other hand, violates the maxim of quantity, since the instructions that Marge gives to Homer could have been delivered by fewer words if they were uttered directly. Some of the utterances, like Homer's utterance "what's the point of going out?", break the maxim of quality. Homer by saying that there is no point of going out is not uttering what he believes to be true. Homer by uttering what he knows is a false fact, flouts the maxim of quality which demands the speaker to tell the truth.

8.2 The second episode

The second chosen episode of The Simpsons for the analysis is the twenty-first episode of the fifteenth season, which is entitled 'Bart Mangled Banner'. This episode was broadcasted in May 2004. It deals with certain important social and political issues, one of which is the concept of nationality and patriotism in America. The analysis of the episode results in finding 362 utterances that are uttered by different characters. Most of these utterances belong to Homer who utters 74, followed by Marge with 43, while Bart and Lisa utter about 30 utterances each. The remaining utterances are uttered by the other minor characters in the episode. These utterances include all of the five types of speech acts in variant degrees.

The assertive type of speech acts is the most recurrent type in the episode, since 194 out of 362 utterances uttered in this episode are of this type. Indirect speech acts occur in six of these utterances. One of them is uttered by Homer in one of the scenes that shows the Simpsons family escaping from the underground prison, before figuring out that the prison is on an island. This makes Homer say "What genius put a prison on the middle of an island?", which is not a question he seeks an answer for, but is an ironic utterance by which Homer gives his opinion of building a prison on an island. Homer either misuses his words to express his

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opinion, or he misjudges the situation because building a prison on an island is in fact a good idea since it makes it harder for the prisoners to escape as it did with them.

There are 95 directive speech act utterances in the episode, which equals more than 27% of the total. Most of the indirect speech acts are found in this type of utterances. Nine of the assertive utterances are indirect speech acts, one of which is uttered by Marge who commands Bart to stop playing with a skeleton in Dr. Hibbert's clinic, by saying "Bart, that hobo skeleton is not a toy". This utterance is in the form of a statement but functions as an imperative utterance.

Fifty-seven of the utterances belong to the expressive type, five of which are indirect speech acts. While Marge answers to an interviewer by using a direct speech act and saying "I hate Americans", Homer expresses his amazement by saying "what did she say?", which is not a question he asks because he misses what Marge says. This utterance is another utterance of indirect speech acts that reflects the speaker's astonishment of something he hears.

Thirteen of the utterances that are uttered in the episode belong to the commissive type of speech acts, and are all direct speech acts. An example of that is the utterance which is repeated several times in one of the episode's songs saying "One way or another I'm gonna find ya". Declarative utterances occur three times, all of which are also direct speech acts, like the utterance uttered by a congress man announcing that "I declare today, December 25th, We Hate Springfield Day". The character, by just uttering the words, changes something in the world.

The indirect speech acts in this episode break the maxim of relevance since there is not a direct connection between what is said and what is meant in these utterances. Some of the utterances also violate the quality maxim since the speakers of these utterances do not say the truth. Instead, they utter what they believe to be false. For example, Dr. Hibbert's utterance "call me in the Bahamas", does not indicate where would the doctor really be if Bart's ears are not cured. The doctor here is telling a false fact, and by doing so, he breaks the maxim of quality which demands the speaker to tell the truth.

Some utterances also flout the maxim of quantity, like Marge's "Bart, that hobo skeleton is not a toy", which is more informative than required. Marge here could have used an utterance of direct speech act and simply order Bart to stop touching the skeleton. Instead, she decides to utter an indirect speech act which is more informative than required. The utterances of indirect speech act in this episode do not violate the maxim of manner since none of them cause any ambiguity for the listeners.

8.3 The third episode

'MyPods and Boomsticks' is the title of the seventh episode from the twentieth season of The Simpsons series. This episode is chosen as the third one for the analysis. This episode which discusses certain important issues was aired on November 30, 2008, about seven years after the 9/11 attacks on The World Trade Center. In this episode, the writers of the series attempt to mix humor with subjects related to one of the important American cultural issues which is criminalizing Muslims and considering them as terrorists. The episode was aired during the heated 2009 presidential campaigns, which witnessed certain accusations to Obama, as being a secret Muslim.

The episode's analysis shows that there are 315 utterances spoken by the characters. Homer utters 81 of these utterances which are more than the utterances uttered by any other character, followed by Bart who utters 50 of them. All the types of speech acts are found in these utterances in different numbers. Most of the utterances uttered in the episode are direct speech acts, while twenty-seven of them are of indirect speech acts.

The most recurrent type of speech acts in the utterances of the episode is the assertive type, since out of the 315 utterances uttered in this episode 172 of them are assertives, which equals more than 54% of the utterances. Four of the assertive utterances in the episode are of indirect speech acts. In one of the scenes, Homer invites his son's new friend, Bashir, and his family for dinner at his house. Homer, nevertheless, disrespects them when they come, just because they are Muslims. Bashir's father, Amid, then decides that he and his family should leave. While they are getting out, Homer speaks to Amid by uttering an imperative-formed utterance "ruin a perfect evening", which is an indirect speech act. By this utterance, Homer means to blame Amid and tell him that he was the reason for this family meeting to be ruined.

Directives are found in 84 of the episode's utterances, twenty-five of which belong to Homer. He utters this type of utterances either to ask questions, which is something he does a lot, or for ordering and requesting others to do things for him. Thirteen of the directive utterances in this episode reflect indirect speech acts, which is more than the other types of utterances. In one of the episode's scenes, Homer goes to Bashir's house and apologizes to Bashir's mother. The latter accepts his apology and intends to close the door. Homer tries to stop her by telling her "I read somewhere your people are hospitable to guests. Is that true?". These two utterances have two different forms, since the first is in the form of a statement while the second is formed as an interrogative sentence. The function of these two utterances yet differ from their forms since Homer utters them as a request to be invited into the house. Homer utters an indirect speech act in order not to be embarrassed if he gets rejected, and to be convincing in his attempt to make Bashir's mother let him in.

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Forty-five expressive utterances are uttered by the characters of this episode, eight of which are indirect speech acts. Two of these are uttered by Homer's friends Lenny and Carl. While sitting in the bar, Lenny says "Carl, got any idea what direction Mecca's in?", while Carl answers by saying "why don't you ask Homer?". These are questions that are not uttered to elicit answers, but only to mock Homer, whose son has become a friend to a Muslim boy.

Commissive utterances occur thirteen times in this episode. Only one of these utterances belong to the indirect speech act type, and it is uttered by Homer. After the two families have dinner, Homer tells Bashir and his parents that he is going to get the dessert now; "why don't I get us dessert?". Homer says this utterance and then goes to the kitchen to bring the dessert. What he utters is not really a question, rather it has the same meaning of 'I will get the dessert now'. The declarative type of utterances occurs only once in this episode in an utterance which belongs to the indirect speech acts. This utterance is uttered by the Mapple company boss Steve Mobs during his meeting with Lisa. He speaks to Lisa and tells her "Lisa, how would you like to work for Mapple?". This is an indirect speech act utterance by means of which Mobs is hiring Lisa in his company, if she accepts it. The utterance has changed something in the world after it was uttered, since now Lisa becomes an employee in Mob's company.

All of the indirect speech acts in this episode violate the maxim of relevance since they are uttered in a way that reflects different meanings from their forms. Some of the utterances also violate other maxims. Homer's utterance to Bashir's father "don't like the taste of freedom?", for example, violates the maxim of quality, since what Homer presumes about Bashir's fathers and Muslims is false. The maxim of quality requires speakers to speak what they believe to be true, while Homer in this utterance says a false fact about Muslims being against freedom.

Some of the utterances, beside violating the maxim of relevance, break the maxim of quantity. Lisa could have asked the worker for cheap earbuds with fewer words than her utterance "Can I buy some fake white earbuds so people will think I have a MyPod?". Lisa here is more informative than required and thus flouts the maxim of quantity. The direct version of this utterance would have been uttered in less words. The utterance that the employee in Mapple store says to Homer, when the latter asks about what one of the devices do; "you should ask yourself, what can I do for it?", also violates the maxim of manner. That is because the utterance is ambiguous and Homer finds difficulty in understanding what the employee means. The employee tries to appear as a philosopher by uttering a statement-formed utterance to ask Homer to figure out the cube's use himself, which causes the violation of the maxim of manner.

8.4 The fourth episode

The fourth episode chosen for the analysis is the sixth episode of the twenty-ninth season which is entitled 'The Old Blue Mayor She Ain't What She Used to Be'. The episode was released on the 12th of November, 2017. It discusses certain social issues like feminism besides reflecting the political corruption of people in power. There are 263 utterances in this episode uttered by different characters. Marge, by uttering 76 utterances, is considered as the character with the most utterances followed by Homer who has 32 utterances. Indirect speech acts occur in 12% of the utterances in this episode.

Assertive speech acts are found in 151 utterances which is more than half of all the utterances uttered in this episode, four of which represent indirect speech acts. When Lisa complains about how sexist this world is, Homer says "Thanks, Obama!". This exclamatory sentence is uttered to reflect what Homer believes in, which is that Obama is the one responsible for ruining the world. The series here mocks the group of Americans who blame Obama for every bad thing that happens in the country even after he is not any more the United States' president.

Fifty-two directive utterances, which equals 20% of the utterances, are found in the episode. Most of the indirect speech acts in the episode occur in the directive utterances. Thirteen utterances, which are used mostly to demand others for a favor, are uttered indirectly, by the characters, mostly to give the listeners the freedom of action, and in order not to make them feel obliged to do something. Mayor Quimby utters the first utterance of this type when he tells Marge "now if you wouldn't mind serving the coffee and cake". He by uttering this statement fulfills multiple functions he has in mind. This utterance delivers an indirect message to Marge, telling her that she, being a woman, can not interfere in such important issues and that she has to head off to the kitchen to do the other marginal tasks. The utterance, despite being an indirect speech act, threatens Marge's positive face because by disrespecting her, Quimby threatens her self-image.

Expressive utterances are uttered 47 times, twelve of which are of indirect speech acts. Mayor Quimby utters series of utterances of indirect speech acts in utterances with a tinge of irony. He, in these utterances, underestimates women and Marge in particular, after she attempts to discuss his insufficiency that led to a disaster. He responds to Marge by saying "running a city is a little more complicated than getting your nails done", "don't you worry your pretty little head", "sounds like someone's girdle is pinching". These utterances are formed as imperative sentences and declarative statements but in fact are reflecting Quimby's feeling of superiority over women.

Commissive utterances occur eleven times. one of these utterances is an indirect speech act. This utterance is uttered by Moe Szyslak in his conversation with Martin Prince. This conversation starts at the

Town Hall after Marge tries to fix the misunderstanding about something she said by telling the people that it was only a metaphor. Moe then replies by saying that he only trusts similes, while Martin comments by saying that he loves metaphors and that they are "raindrops on the flower". Moe who hates metaphors tells Martin "you put in a 'like' or an 'as', or so help me you are going down". Moe here by saying "you are going down" is committing himself on hurting Martin in case the latter does not change his sentence. The utterance has the form of a statement, yet it functions as a threat to a future action. Declarative utterances occur twice in this episode and are both direct speech acts. Kent Brockman at the start of the candidates' debate speaks to two of the four candidates who are standing on the stage and tells them "so you're excluded from the debate". This utterance is a declarative speech act since Kent Brockman, by only uttering these words, excludes these two candidates from the whole elections.

Each of the indirect speech acts in this episode break the maxim of relevance, since the utterance if taken literally, is not related to what was uttered previously. Beside the relevance maxim, some of the utterances violate other maxims. For example, Quimby's expressive utterances, which are mentioned earlier, flout the maxim of quality because he has no evidence for his thoughts about underestimating women's role in society. The mayor in these utterances gives mistaken facts, which leads him to violate the maxim of quality which demands the speakers to tell the truth.

Marge's indirect speech act to Homer "Homie, you want to make out with the mayor?", violates the maxims of quantity, because Marge could have simply asked Homer to kiss her. Marge's choice to express her desires indirectly made her sentence more informative than required and violate the maxim of quantity. This utterance also flouts the maxim of manner since it is ambiguous and confuses Homer about what Marge intends to say. The direct version of this utterance would have not violated any of the maxims. However, Marge takes the risk of violating these maxims to make her utterance sound more tempting.

8.5 The fifth episode

The fifth episode chosen for the analysis is the fifteenth episode of the thirty-first season of The Simpsons. The title of the episode is 'Screenless' and was aired on the 8th of March 2020. It launches the important issue of smartphone addiction which is a subject related to families around the world. The total of the utterances that are produced in the 'Screenless' episode is 323 utterances. The episode's plot is not centered around one character, and that explains the close numbers of utterances produced by Marge, Homer, Bart, and Lisa. Marge utters 76 utterances while Homer utters 60 of them, and Bart and Lisa combined utter more than 70 utterances, while the rest of the utterances are uttered by other minor characters. An interesting note about this episode is that Maggie also communicates with her family by using sign language. All five types of Searle's taxonomy are found

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in this episode's utterances in different numbers. Indirect speech acts occur in 7% of the utterances in comparison with the 93% direct speech acts.

Assertive utterances occur 179 times in the 'Screenless' episode, which makes 55% of the whole utterances. Two of these utterances in this episode are indirect speech acts. One of them occurs in a scene in which the Simpsons family members enter the house together and then open the closet door and find Marge there. The indirect speech act is uttered by Homer who states a fact to Marge when he finds her hiding in the closet with a laptop and a phone in her hand despite that she has put a new rule that forbids the family from using their phones. Homer then tells her "who was the one who said no screen time?" and emphasizes by repeating "who?". Homer by uttering this utterance is not after an answer, rather he means to remind Marge that she is the one who has put a rule and she is the one who is breaking it now.

The directive utterances occur 91 times in the episode, five of which are indirect speech acts. While Bart was watching a video of a gamer playing a video game, the gamer's mother called him by saying "Jason, You're late for dinner". This utterance is an indirect speech act since the gamer's mother utters a statement but means to direct her son to come and eat his dinner.

Eleven out of the forty-one expressive utterances in this episode, are indirect speech acts. The opening scene of the episode shows Lisa running and sitting alone on the couch. She then says "am I the only one who remembered daylight savings time?". The utterance, though formed as a question, is uttered by Lisa to express her wonder that nobody has arrived yet and that only she has noticed that it is that time of the year in which the clock is set an hour back or forward.

Nine of the utterances in the 'Screenless' episode are of the commissive type of speech acts. One of these commissive utterances is an indirect speech act. When the police arrests Dr. Lund, Chief Wiggum tells Lou to put the doctor in the farthest cell from the Wi-Fi, to which Dr. Lund responds by saying "one bar is all I need to scramble your Spotify suggestions". This utterance is formed as a statement but is meant as a threat by the doctor to hack and ruin these policemen's music choices in the Spotify application.

The declarative utterances occur twice in the episode, both of which belong to the indirect type of speech acts. After that Marge lectures her family about the smartphones' demerits, she says "from now on, we're gonna limit the time we spend looking at our stupid phones". This utterance is formed as a statement, but by uttering it, Marge is putting a new rule which all the members of the family should follow. Marge utters a similar utterance after she fails to get rid of her addiction to

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smartphones. She then tells her family about a rehab center and says "we'll all go there starting tomorrow". Here, Marge also decides what she and her family are going to do by uttering an utterance formed as a statement.

The indirect speech acts uttered in this episode flout the maxim of relevance since the speakers say a thing and mean another. Some of the utterances also violate the maxim of quantity. One of these utterances is uttered by Homer who blames Marge for using her phone by saying "who was the one who said no screen time?". The maxim of quantity is flouted because Homer could have blamed Marge by using less words and not being more informative than it is required.

Other maxims are also found to be violated in some of the utterances. The utterance which Homer utters, "really, Marge?", also violates the maxims of quantity and manner, since Marge does not understand what Homer means by it till he explains by uttering another expressive indirect speech act telling her "you think you can give up your Pinterest?". The ambiguity of the utterance for the listener leads to breaking the maxim of manner. Bart's utterance about Maggie "when is she not gassy?" flouts the maxim of quality since Bart in this utterance says a fact that he believes to be false, while the maxim of quality demands speakers to tell the truth and not to utter any facts that they do not have an adequate evidence for.

8.6 Discussion of Results

The analysis of the five chosen episodes of The Simpsons according to Searle's taxonomy of speech acts and his theory of indirect speech acts lead to certain results. Each of the five episodes has a different plot in which certain issues are discussed in a satirical way. Most of the utterances in all of the five episodes belong to the assertive type of speech acts. The average of this type of utterance's occurrence in the analyzed episodes is about 55%. The second most frequent type of utterances in these episodes is the directive one, with around 26% average, while more than 14% of the utterances are expressive speech acts and 4% are commissives. The declarative speech acts, which make less than 1% of the utterances, are rare to find in these episodes.

Since The Simpsons attempts to reflect the daily conversation of people in real life, it is predictable that the majority of the utterances in the chosen episodes to be of direct speech acts. The indirect speech acts still occur in nearly 9% of the utterances in the episodes. The total number of the utterances of indirect speech acts in all of the five episodes is 129 utterances. Analyzing the types of speech acts based on Searle's taxonomy in the episodes' utterances reveals that the indirect speech acts are found in all of the types of the utterances in different percentages. Fifty-six indirect speech acts, which equals 43% of the utterances, are found in the directive ones. These utterances are produced by the characters mostly to make requests or to offer something. The utterances of the expressive type express 42 indirect speech acts, which are mostly used by the speakers to mock the other characters or to indirectly express their feelings toward something. Twenty-four of the indirect speech

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acts are found to be assertives while the other seven utterances belong to the commissives and the declaratives.

The characters of The Simpsons, as the people in the real world, use indirect speech acts for different purposes, like to be more considerate and polite in their interactions with the other characters. Indirect speech acts are mostly found in the directive utterances to save the listeners' faces by making some of the requests sound less imposing and to give the listeners the space and the freedom they need, to make out their decisions. Using indirect speech acts in this type of utterances would save the listeners' negative faces instead of threatening them. The indirect speech acts are also found in some of the other utterances to make the process of expressing feelings toward a person less offensive and to lessen the cruelty of what is said. This would lead to the listeners' positive faces to be saved in contrary to what the situation would be if direct speech acts were used.

The use of indirect speech acts by the characters is affected by the situation they are in. While speaking to people of higher classes, the characters tend to use indirect speech acts more, so that their speech would sound more elegant and polite. The opposite happens when a member of a high-class speaks to a person from lower classes. Here, most of the speakers, use direct speech acts without caring about the listener's feelings. The same character may also appear with two different personalities; one in which he speaks with high-class people in a well-mannered way to adjust with them, and the other in which he speaks to his family and friends directly without being cautious about the impression his speech would leave.

The characters of the series use indirect speech acts for different purposes. However, by doing so they end up violating some of Grice's maxims. Despite the fact that Grice presented these maxims to make people's interactions with each other successful and understandable, breaking some of these maxims in these five episodes' utterances of indirect speech acts rarely lead to a misunderstanding among the characters. This is because the context in which the utterance is uttered and the mutual understanding that the speakers and the listeners have, make the listeners understand the meaning which is not explicitly said by the speakers. The following table exhibits these findings:

Table (1.1) The numbers and percentages of indirect speech acts in the five chosen episodes

	Episode 1	Episode 2	Episode 3	Episode 4	Episode 5	All	Percentage
Assertive	8	6	4	4	2	24	19%
Directive	16	9	13	13	5	56	43%
Expressive	6	5	8	12	11	42	33%
Commissive	1	0	1	1	1	04	3%
Declarative	0	0	1	0	2	03	2%
All	31	20	27	30	21	129	100%

9. Conclusions

The researcher, after analyzing the data, has reached to the following conclusions:

1. *Speech act theory is applicable to animated TV shows.* The analysis of the five chosen episodes of the animated television series The Simpsons has shown that all the types of Searle's taxonomy occur, in different proportions, in these episodes' conversations. The utterances in these episodes, like the conversations in real life, vary in the acts they provide.

2. *Indirect speech acts are found and recognized in the conversations that are spoken by the characters of this type of shows.* There are two different types of utterances found in the episodes depending on the relation of their forms with their functions. The majority of the episodes' utterances have forms that correspond to their meanings. These belong to the type of direct speech acts. A considerable number of utterances in the episodes, however, are found to be actions which have forms that do not directly match with the functions.

3. *Analyzing indirect speech acts results in a deeper understanding of these shows.* The analysis shows that indirect speech acts are found in all of the five types of utterances in different percentages. Some of the indirect speech acts are found in utterances to have different impacts and indications than the others. They are mainly used by characters in interactions, to save others' negative and positive faces. This type of speech acts make the character's offers and requests sound less imposing and helps in expressing the feelings in a less cruel way. Indirect speech acts are also found to have different effects on other occasions, such as making jokes sound funnier, or providing a loophole for speakers to avoid being accused of hatred speeches. The analysis also shows that the usage of indirect speech acts is affected by certain factors like the social class differences amongst the characters, gender, and power.

4. *There are hidden political, social, and other messages in The Simpsons.*

In each of the five chosen episodes of The Simpsons, it appears that the writers of these episodes have tried to reflect the real world in the series. The series in some occasions attempts to mirror the small family matters and difficulties that the American families face in their daily life, while on other occasions it attempts to tackle other bigger social, political, and other issues that people in the United States and the world face. These subjects are interwoven inside the satirical plot of the episodes and represent hidden messages that the writers of the series want to deliver.

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