

A Speech Act Analysis of Abu Ubaidah's Statements on Gaza Events

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the speech acts used in *Abu Ubaidah's* statements on Gaza events. Drawing on Seale's (1969) theory of speech acts, the study carefully investigates how speech acts in these statements provided effective and significant messages, intentions, and meanings. To this end, a few statements delivered by Abu Ubaidah on Gaza events were selected, supported by some previous studies. The study finds that Referring to the preliminary fact, this paper is certainly not aimed at resisting and responding to the distressing stories in Gaza. Being aware of the limitations of this paper, the major goal of this study is, however, to expose the mental and social mechanisms of the participants when they conveyed the actual enunciation openly to others. This study, based on a socio-linguistic approach, attempts to investigate the pragmatic values of Abu Ubaidah's statements. To account for the above ideologies, this study is dedicated to uncovering the mental and social mechanisms of Abu Ubaidah's by employing a speech act analysis. The Arab-Israeli conflict, now spread in Gaza Strip, has become the main theme that receives much public attention.

Keywords Speech acts, Illocutionary force, Pragmatics, Political discourse.

1.Introduction

Of course, it is not just the literal meaning that matters. People don't always or even most of the time mean what they say. Speakers' words can mean something completely different from what the speaker intended. For instance, I say, "What a beautiful day it is!" Here, the informative meaning of the word "beautiful" is the exact opposite of the communicative meaning of "nice". So, how do we know what the speaker meant? How do we work out a particular local interpretation of a word that carries so many meanings? This is an important question that can be answered within the domain of linguistics called speech act. The main goal of this section is to give a brief overview of this part of analysis as well as its background. It is also intended to reflect the importance of this domain as a multidisciplinary field for almost all domains of language description as well as to provide a thorough analysis of the formation of meaning. It is clear that the concept of meaning or to mean can be interpreted in a variety of ways, even if we confine ourselves to the field of linguistics. Lyons (1977:1-4) argues that there are no fewer than ten different uses of the terms to mean and meaning. He goes on to argue that although these meanings can be distinguished, they are not mutually exclusive, but the relationship between them is complex and controversial.

2.Research Statement

To formulate the topic of this paper into a researchable perspective, two research questions have been proposed:

- 1.What are the speech acts used in *Abu Ubaidah's* statement?
- 2.How are these speech acts conveying certain messages, meanings, and intentions?

3.Objective

This study aims at:

- 1.Uncovering the speech acts used in *Abu Ubaidah's* statements
- 2.Interpreting how pragmatic devices used in these statement serve the Palestinian cause
- 3.Demystifying how implicated meanings contribute to the formulation of certain ends

4.Previous Literature

The significance of speech acts in discourse in general, and in political discourse in particular has been widely investigated from different perspectives.

5.Literature Review

Obviously, the significance and seriousness of speech can by no means be ignored. Speech is the means of communication, the tool of prosperity, the door of change, the way of development and the path of success.Hudson (1996) proclaims that “the function of speech is more than just the plain meaning of words.” Wardaugh (1976) argues that a basic assumption behind any attempt to understand the functions of discourse is that utterances have a performative function; they are spoken with an intent to perform an act. Hence, utterances are no longer studied as merely composed of sounds; they are now studied as actions. Clark (1996) asserts:Language is used for doing things. People use it in everyday conversation for transacting business, planning meals and vacations, debating politics, gossiping. Teachers use it for instructing students, preachers for preaching to parishioners, and comedians for amusing audiences. Lawyers, judges, juries, and witnesses use it in carrying out trials, diplomats in negotiating treaties. the writers, reporters, and scientists rely on the written word to entertain, inform, and persuade. All these are instances of language use-activities in which people do things with language. (P.12)

6.Gaza Events

The events described in the report are conversations among thirty Gaza refugees who are always gathered in Abu Ubadah's tent in the Rafah camp. The purpose of these conversations is to expand on the chats they used to have when they were still in Gaza. It is said that the conversations with *Abu Ubadah's* are very interesting to observe and analyze. *Abu Ubadah's*, a former PNA official, always tells stories in his own unique style, which makes the listeners highly interested in hearing his chats.The theoretical basis of this content is pragmatics, which is the study of language use that focuses on the users' intended meaning in their utterances, taking into account the language and its role in society and culture. According to Yule (1996:3), pragmatics studies the speaker's intended meaning and the interpretation of what the speaker says, making assumptions about the listener's understanding of the utterance. Additionally, the Speech Act theory by Searle states that a speech act is any act that has a perlocutionary effect, which is the effect on the listener after hearing an utterance. Searle argues that a speech act is located in the illocution and is intended to manipulate the listener to do something.Initially, the content of the fourth work above, which presents a remarkable analysis of speech acts in the *Abu Ubadah's* Gaza events, is the Linguistics. This content has succeeded in selecting types of speech acts very precisely and accurately. This research presents a clear difference between the earlier study and the types of speech acts used. By using elaboration from contextual and cultural perspectives, this research categorizes the types of speech acts, locution, and illocution in such a manner that the differences between them are sharp and distinct.

7.Searle's Speech Act Classification

Searle's Speech Act Classification			
Speech Act	Illocutionary Point	Direction of Fit	Examples
Assertives	To commit the speaker to something being the case (truth value)	(↓)	Assertions, statements, claims, hypothesis
Directives	Attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something	(↑)	Commands, requests, invitations
Commissives	Commit the speaker to some future course of action	(↑)	Promises, pledges, vows

Expressives	Express a psychological state	It is presupposed	Congratulations, apologies, condolences
Declarations	These speech acts, they create new states of affairs by representing them as being the case.	(↓)	Baptisms, marrying, hiring/firing, terminating a contract

8.A pragmatic of Searle's Speech Acts in Gaza Events

In Searle's view, language is an intentional act, and therefore should be treated as an act. Searle calls statements "speech acts". Speech acts are the fundamental units of language that express meaning. In reality, an expression expresses an intent. Speech acts are not just used to select something, but essentially do something. Most speech acts are sentences, but they can also be words or phrases as long as they follow the necessary rules. Thus, speech act places the emphasis on the intention of the act. Searle argues that understanding the speaker's intention is essential for choosing the meaning of an expression. Without the intention of the speaker, the words cannot be understood as speech act. Therefore, Searle views the intention, i.e., the power of an expression, as a key component for classifying utterances into various categories. Searle argues that there are five types of illocution: Assertive Commissive Directive Declaratory Expressive. As assertors, we represent how things work in the world. As Commissive, we commit to doing something. As Directives, we try to get people to do something. As Declarants, we express our attitudes about things and facts in the world. The following section of the study is mainly designed to provide different examples from Abu Ubadah's Gaza Events according to Searle's classification of speech acts into five classes.

8.1. Assertive Speech Acts in Gaza Events

An assertive speech act, according to Searle's classification, means to affirm something as committing to something being true. An assertive speech act has a truth value, and states what the speaker believes to be true or not true. The instrumental point of an assertive speech act is to present true representations of the facts. An assertive statement has a word to world direction. For example, an assertive statement "It's too hot" has success of fit if it's really hot. Types of assertive statements: Suggestion Putting forward Swearing Bragging Closing Declarative Declarative statements are most commonly expressed in declarative forms. But declarative isn't the only form. Examples of declarative statements include imperative statements and interrogative statements. Assertive speech acts in this class include statements, statements, assertions, complaints, assertions, assertions, allegations, accusations, refutations, refutations, presumptions, suppositions, conclusions, responses, etc. All of the rhetorical questions fall into this category because they do not ask for an answer but rather ask for an amplification of your ideas, beliefs, opinions etc. Take a look at the following examples from Abu Ubadah's Gaza Events: The Aqsa Flood was not the beginning of history of our resistance to the occupation's aggression. Rather, it was an explosion in the face of enemy crimes that culminated in the systematic cleansing and extermination of the West Bank, Jerusalem, occupied territories, and the Gaza Strip. After 9 months of aggression, independent polls show how our people are turning behind their resistance. The assertive is an exploration into the persuasive nature of assertiveness in political discourse in the context of the Israeli assault on Gaza in 2008, both from the perspective of Ehud Olmert, then serving Prime Minister of Israel, and Ismail Haniyeh, Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority. The events in question are ongoing, and as such it is obvious that the world is yet to see their conclusion. Nevertheless, they remain an important issue with respect to many different facets of international political and legal theory, especially with regard to the laws of war, making them a pertinent case study for the analysis of assertive speech acts. Though the nature of the conflict is deeply complex, for the purposes of this essay, I will simplify the situation by considering Haniyeh to be the leader of a legitimate government, and the actions of Israel to be a war against that government. My aim is to demonstrate that assertive speech acts are a vital, if often overlooked, political tool, and that by analyzing their nature we can gain valuable insights into the ways in which political leaders attempt to shape and influence the course of events. It is hoped that this provides impetus for further similar analysis into many other conflicts in the international arena.

8.2. Commissive Speech Acts in Gaza Events

The term "commissaries" refers to the speaker's promise to do something in the near future. The various types of promises are: promise, plan, promise, promise, bet, and opposition; for example, "I'll be in Paris tomorrow".

The point of a commissary speech is to make a promise to do a certain thing. A commissary speech has a world-wide direction of fit (i.e., I will lend you 100 pounds). Success of fit is achieved when the speaker lends 100 pounds to the listener. Searle distinguishes five types of illocutionary act: commissive. Only commissive acts are directly tied to the doing of an action. An the truth of a proposition to an act, but if the act is not the uttering of the sentence such as in a perjury case, the act is not an commissive. If the act spoken of is an action in the real world, the act of making the utterance is a commissive. This is a fundamental point, for all utterances have an illocutionary point, but often the act performed is not the realization of the illocutionary point. Failure to recognize this in the case of the indirect free illocutionary act has caused much confusion about the nature of illocutionary acts. The recent events in Gaza have been the center of political controversy, with accusations of war crimes and gross human rights violations. This controversy is exacerbated by serious indirect and direct injuries/deaths to non-combatants and damage to non-combatant property. An investigation into the recent occurrences of commissive speech acts by Israeli politicians and military leaders will help to illuminate the dynamics of such violence. Since Searle's analysis of illocutionary acts as communicative conduct has wide applicability, his theory of the relationship between illocutionary acts and their effects will be used as the primary analytic tool.

8.3. Directive Speech Acts in Gaza Events

Directives are speech acts that are directed at a specific person or group of people in order to get them to do something. Declarative speech acts have the intention or purpose of getting someone to do something, while directive speech acts are focused on getting someone else to do something. Declarative speech acts are words that are asked, ordered, requested, invited, advised, or begged. For example, "Can you close the window?" These types of speech acts try to get someone to do something through words. Directive speech acts have a world-wide direction of fit. For example, an utterance "Open the door!" achieves success of fit if the listener actually opens the door. This aims to provide a pragmatic analysis of directive speech acts in the light of Face Theory (Goffman 1967, Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987) in the frequent clashes between Israeli and Palestinian representatives at Gaza news conferences. We chose this particular cross-cultural interaction as it affords many instances of aggressive behavior and face-threatening acts, where the potential for misunderstanding is great, and the consequences are often of great magnitude. Our focus is on the kind of face being offered and the way in which it is challenged. We are interested in both the face redress strategies employed and the ultimate outcome of the interaction.

8.4. Expressive Speech Acts in Gaza Events

Expressive speech acts are a reflection of the speaker's emotions towards a situation. These acts include thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and deploring. For instance, when someone says, "I am sorry that I lied to you," they are expressing their psychological state. The purpose of expressive speech acts is to convey the speaker's feelings or attitudes about a specific situation. These acts do not have a specific direction of fit. For example, when someone says "Congratulations!" it is not about the reality of the situation but rather the speaker's attitude towards it. This category encompasses actions such as apologizing, complimenting, condemning, complaining, criticizing, and more. As news is primarily focused on events, it is often presented in the form of dialogues. According to the news, the current event in Gaza took quite a large number of civilian victims. It differs from Immelt's statement which affirms the approval of using lighting to destroy tunnels and weapons in order to prevent possible attacks towards Israel. But if we analyze based on the second category of sticky contradiction, we must search for a factor that can make a contradiction become true. In a sticky contradiction, a truth condition factor is present which two contradictory statements can be true, although there is a probability of another factor. The last and most complex is the complex contradiction. This contradiction occurs if there are possibilities to switch the truth levels and the values of the truth levels of the two statements give a significant impact on a particular subject. From the explanation shown above, we know that Immelt made a contradictory statement between the real action done by the IDF in Gaza. By using a contradiction theory, there are three categories that may appear in the contradiction: simple, sticky, and complex. In the simple contradiction, it is known that one statement is different from the other.

8.5. Declarative Speech Acts in Gaza Events

Declaratives are statements that have the power to immediately change the state of the world, such as saying "You are fired." These statements are considered speech acts that rely on authority and institutional frameworks for their success. In essence, declarative speech acts are highly formal and ceremonial. As Leech (1983) notes, the successful execution of a declarative statement results in a correspondence between the statement's content

and reality. This implies that for a declarative speech act to be successful, the speaker must hold a specific institutional role within a given context. In the events of Abu Ubadah's, it is rare to come across declarations that have the ability to bring about significant changes through mere utterances. Declarative speech acts are often considered less significant in news reporting due to their immediate shift towards perlocutionary effects. The Aqsa Flood was not the beginning of history of our resistance to the occupation's aggression. Rather, it was an explosion in the face of enemy crimes that culminated in the systematic cleansing and extermination of the West Bank, Jerusalem, occupied territories, and the Gaza Strip. After 9 months of aggression, independent polls show how our people are turning behind their resistance.

9. Conclusions

This paper attempts to summarize the observations and findings of the present study in the light of the aims and objectives stated in the first paper. The different kinds of speech acts (the directive, the assertive, the commissive speech acts) in Abu Ubadah's Gaza Events have been studied, within the framework of Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) theories of speech acts. The analysis of the speech acts has been made on the basis of the interpersonal relations of the participant characters in the research. Moreover, while analyzing the speech acts, the context, in which utterances occur, is considered.

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