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The speech Act of Offer: A Theoretical Review*

Abstract

As the speech act of offer neither falls within a clear illocutionary act nor has an explicit performative verb unlike other speech acts e.g. requests, advice, or warning, it is likely to be theoretically tricky. Based on this fact, offers will have mixed characteristics, which in turn, combine characteristics of different speech acts into one speech act. Since the investigation of offers is still very much in its infancy, this article is considered a theory-oriented one. It thus broadens the knowledge of prospective researchers for research purposes in the speech act of offer in different languages.

Since this article reviews the speech act of offer theoretically, it is devoted to knowing how offers can be distinguished from other speech acts. It not only seeks to present an overview of how language philosophers, pragmatists and discourse analysts looked at offers as a speech act, but also adds a new aspect to the offering act pertaining to the potential arrangement of the offer characteristics by virtue of the two concepts 'salience' and 'performance'.

Keywords: speech acts, offers, politeness, salience, performance.

1   Introduction

Speech acts are regarded as one of the basic topics of inquiry in contemporary pragmatics, on a par with implicature, presupposition, and deixis. Herein began the Speech Act theory to engender, which basically came as a reaction to one of the central doctrines of the philosophical school 'logical positivism' in the 1930s. It has issued its doctrine of descriptive fallacy which isolated language in that it functions only to make true or false statements. Even though Wittgenstein was one of the first pioneers to the version of the descriptive fallacy 'verificationist thesis of meaning', he challenged it by the claim "meaning is use" (Wittgenstein 1958: 43). The thesis views that "unless a sentence can, at least in principle, be verified (i.e., tested for its truth or falsity), it was strictly speaking meaningless" (Levinson 1983: 227). Based on this view, utterances used to make a request, offer, advice, promise, thank, and so forth get meaningless. For instance, the ordinary question *'can I help you?'* is considered meaningless because it is not used to make a statement and as such it cannot be judged as true or false.

In his lectures, Austin pointed to the fact "the total speech act in the total speech situation is the only actual phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating" (Austin 1962: 147). Austin's lectures were then reformulated and best systemized by his American pupil, the second pioneer of speech act theory, John Searle.

2   Speech Act

> "All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act." (Searle 1969: 16)

2.1   Theory

The essence of speech act theory is the notion of doing rather than just saying something while a speaker is producing an utterance. Put it simply, speech is actually deeds. The basic motive giving rise to the discovery of the theory is the limitation of semantic analysis based on a truth-condition tradition (Mey 2001) because there exist declarative sentences requiring that a sentence be verified as true or false depending on both linguistic knowledge and real-world knowledge. For instance, in case a young boy tells us, *'it's snowing outside'*, if we wish to test the truth or falsity of this sentence, we can go outside and check whether it is true or not. However, this investigation cannot be done so in, *'have a nice evening!'* because Adams (1985) confirmed that we could not talk about the truth or falsity of such a statement. This is because a speaker expresses his/her feelings towards a particular person in a particular occasion.

Language philosophers paid much attention to statements and neglected the insight that language produces speech acts. Accordingly, Austin developed a constative-performative dichotomy whereby constatives tend to be utterances performed to make an assertion saying anything true or false about some states of affairs in the world. By contrast, performatives are utterances used to perform acts as in the following explicit performative, '*I promise to meet you tomorrow*'. Such performatives can be either explicit ones that contain the performative verb naming the act or implicit ones whereby the performative verb is missing.

Soon the constative-performative dichotomy was abandoned and then replaced by another taxonomy of illocutionary acts consisting of five groups: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives (Austin 1962: 150–163). Since then, the Austinian taxonomy was challenged for six difficulties, and the two most noticeable difficulties that the taxonomy was criticized for are the following: there is a persistent confusion between illocutionary verbs and acts, and there is no consistent principle or a set of principles by which the taxonomy was constructed (Searle 1979: 8–12).

Austin pointed to the fact that it makes no sense to call performatives as true or false, and thus proposed a set of conditions i.e. felicity conditions that must be met to judge if the performative is successful. Then, Searle (1969) squared with Austin's notion of being felicity conditions as constitutive rules of the action itself. Therefore, he developed the Austinian conditions and systemized them into four types: preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, propositional content conditions, and essential conditions.

Austin pointed to the three interrelated acts that any utterance consists of. They simply summarize the process of producing any speech act as follows: the utterance starts from a

locution uttered by a speaker and ends with a perlocution recognized by a hearer. What mediates the two acts is an illocution where the speaker attaches a purpose issuing what bears in his mind on the form of speech attached by an effect on the hearer. Consequently, Searle (1979: 12–20) advanced his new taxonomy of illocutionary acts constructed on three basic dimensions, namely direction of fit; illocutionary point; and the psychological expressed state i.e. the sincerity condition. His new taxonomy encompasses five types of illocutionary acts as follows:

1. Directives: speech attempts by which the speaker makes the hearer do some future act as requests, orders, suggestions, and etc. Questions are codified with members of the directive type by virtue of the fact that the speaker achieves his/her desire when the hearer tells an answer (Bach & Harnish 1979: 47–49).
2. Commissives: utterances by which the speaker commits him/herself to do some future act for the sake of the hearer as promise, vow, offer, and etc.
3. Assertives: utterances by which the speaker commits him/herself to the truth of the expressed proposition as definition, description, conclusion, assertion, and etc. Notice that assertives are also called 'representatives'(Mey 2001).
4. Expressives: utterances that express the speaker's psychological state as congratulations, apology, compliment, and etc.
5. Declaratives: kinds of speech act that bring immediate changes in some current state of affairs such as excommunicating, declaring war, divorcing, and etc.

Most of the speech acts are expressed by their explicit performatives that help realize what speech act it is and what illocutionary act it belongs to. For instance, the utterance *'I promise to meet you tomorrow'* is directly stated as a promise speech act because of its explicit performative verb *'promise'* which belongs to commissive illocutionary acts.

2.2 Directness vs. Indirectness

All speech acts are realized either directly or indirectly. Untrue to say, direct speech acts are principally dependent on the literal meaning, since the literal meaning of a sentence is constructed regardless of the context (Searle 1979: 117). Otherwise, Searle claimed that the easiest cases of meaning are those whereby the speaker utters a sentence and means literally what s/he says. Applying to the speech act of advising as in utterance (1) below, the advisor must achieve the intended effect on the advisee by allowing him/her to recognize the intention to achieve that effect. Let's compare the following utterances produced by a speaker to his colleague who is suffering from a frequent lack of sleep:

1. I advise you to sleep early,
2. Sleep early, or
3. Sleeping early is useful for health.

According to Austin, the implicit performative like utterances (2, 3) may or may not be advice without context, but it can't be argued for utterance (1) due to the performative verb. Unlike explicit performatives, Austin went on to argue that constructions like utterances (2,3) are affected by context in the sense that the context is the only determinant which contributes to the interpretation of such utterances as advice or not. For utterance (3) above, it was realized as indirect advice not assertion because it both violates the Searlean felicity condition for the speech act of assertion and queries the Searlean preparatory condition for that of advising.

It is actually easy to realize the intended illocutionary act of an utterance, especially in an explicit performative as in utterance (1). The explicit performative corresponds to Searle's

(1969) notion of Illocutionary Force Indicating Device as the most direct form of illocutionary act. On the contrary, it is far from easy to realize the illocutionary act presented in an implicit performative as in utterances (2,3), since it may hold many illocutionary forces simultaneously. However, Sadock and Zwicky (1985) argued that many world languages have three basic sentence-types, namely declaratives; interrogatives; and imperatives. The three basic sentence types are typically associated with the three basic illocutionary forces, namely making statement; asking; and requesting, respectively.

Following Levinson's 1983 Literal Force Hypothesis, namely, the hypothesis that there is a direct structure–function relation in speech acts and that sentence types are by default direct reflexes of their underlying illocutionary forces. Since then, this hypothesis has been challenged by some difficulties; the most important one is that most usages of speech acts, and particularly of requests, are indirect (Huang 2007). The direct-indirect distinction isolated a number of scholars (Searle 1975; Morgan 1978; Gordan & Lakoff 1975; Sadock 1974) to suggest several models that help realize the illocutionary act of indirect speech such as the conventional model, the inferential model, and the idiom model. For instance, the conventional model proposed by Searle is based on the notion that speaker's performing and hearer's understanding of an indirect speech act always require some kind of inference. Searle defined conventionalized indirect requests as motivated by the felicity conditions of the speech act of requesting, as clearly shown by the following familiar question '*can you pass some salt?*'.

2.3 Indirectness-politeness Tradition

The issue of indirectness has paid attention of many scholars to account for politeness which helped engender what the so-called 'universal principles of politeness' (Lakoff 1973; Gordon & Lakoff 1975; Brown & Levinson 1978, 1987; Leech 1983; Spencer-Oatey 2000; Watts 2003). It has become a controversial issue because some scholars carried out studies in different cultures and languages arriving at the conclusion that speech acts vary in conceptualization and verbalization among languages and cultures, since socio-pragmatic knowledge reflects cultural norms (Chen et al. 2011). Thus, the realization of politeness was claimed to be culture-specific and language-specific by several scholars (Wierzbicka 1985; Blum-Kulka 1987; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Kecskés 2014). In light of universality, it is made clear that human languages are regulated by certain general mechanisms such as a categorization of communicative acts and conversational maxims. As a consequence, Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987) constructed an effective model that accounts for politeness called 'the face-saving model'.

The face-saving model is constructed on the notion of Model Person being a fluent speaker of a natural language who is endowed with two special characteristics, namely 'rationality' and 'face'. The notion of face and its relevant English expressions seem to originate from the two Chinese expressions 'mianzi' and 'lian' (Mao 1994). Brown & Levinson developed their model within a framework based on the assumption that any rationally model person has 'face', which is the Goffman's (1967) sociological notion. They thus viewed face as the "public self-image, that every member [of a society] wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61).

Face is regarded to be a universal notion in any human society. It is something that can be maintained, enhanced, threatened, lost, or damaged during a verbal interaction. As a result, any rationally conversational participant is expected to ideally save both his/her own face and interlocutors' face during an interaction. Face has two aspects characterized in terms of

participants wants rather than social norms (1987: 62): negative face refers to the want of having freedom of action and positive face tends to the want of being desired by others.

Brown & Levinson (1987: 24) put the founding principle for their face-saving model which states "some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening…". They (1987: 65–68) then divided these acts which are intrinsically face-threatening to the speaker, hearer, or both into four groups as follows:

1. Acts threatening to the hearer's negative face such as requests, advice, compliments, etc.
2. Acts threatening to the hearer's positive face such as complaints, disagreement, challenges, criticism, etc.
3. Acts threatening to the speaker's negative face such as accepting thanks, unwilling promise, and accepting an offer, etc.
4. Acts threatening to the speaker's positive face such as offer refusal, apologies, accepting compliments, etc.

The second half of this article is devoted to knowing how offers can be distinguished from other speech acts. It not only seeks to present an overview of how language philosophers, pragmatists and discourse analysts looked at offers as a speech act, but also adds a new aspect to the offering act pertaining to the potential arrangement of the offer characteristics by virtue of the two concepts 'salience' and 'performance'.

3   The speech act of offer

In accordance with the two steps of recognizing illocutionary acts advocated by Cohen and Levesque (1992: 245): the first concerns determining which effects the speaker intended with his utterance whereas the second is associated with the hearer's recognition of which illocutionary act was performed. Applying these two steps to the speech act of offering, the offeror must achieve the intended effect on the offeree by allowing him/her to recognize the intention to achieve that effect. By that means, offers are likely to fall within a certain illocutionary act. The upcoming discussion reviews the speech act of offer theoretically.

Offer was first categorized as a commissive illocutionary act by (Searle 1976; Bach & Harnish 1979; Edmondson & House 1981), that is, a speech attempt within which the offeror commits him/herself to do some future act for the sake of the offeree. Because of the commitment emanated from the offering utterance, Fraser (1975) noticed that only the offeror is liable to perform that commitment, and thus labelled offers under the acts of committing. According to the three dimensions of Searle's (1979) proposal, the offeror intends to create a change in the world by his/her word. In this regard, offers belong to both directives and commissives because the three dimensions could no longer differentiate between commissives and directives due to the prominent similarity resulted by the direction of fit. In details, the requester also desires the world to be changed in order to fit his/her own words. As a result, Mey (2001: 165–166) argued for the assumption that promises are to be a particular kind of requests. His claim is based on the principle, that is, promises manage a change in the world by means of creating an obligation but this obligation is created only in the part of the speaker. Hence, Mey suggested lumping these two overlapping speech acts together into one category of 'obligatives'.

However, other linguists argued for a different categorization after Aijmer (2014) had claimed that offers have fuzzy characteristics investigated by an in-depth analysis of offers in the London-Lund Corpus. It was found that offers are realized by a range of commissive and

directive strategies (Barron 2005). On the one hand, Wunderlich (1977) added a new class of speech acts, namely conditional speech acts and placed offers under this class. Wunderlich stated so, since the execution of an offer basically depends on the offeree's response in which he indicates his wish towards the offeror to carry out the action. Wunderlich (1977: 43) went on to argue that offers can be applied to the standard conditional form '*if you want it, I shall do it*'. For instance, the surface offering utterance '*have another piece of cake*' can be paraphrased by the deep structure to the conditional form '*if you want to take another piece of cake, I will give you one*'. This example motivated at examining the semantics of offer as presented by propositional idealized cognitive models (Lakoff 1987 as cited in Hernández 2001). The below-mentioned cognitive semantic pieces of information make offers overlap with promises, requests, and invitations:

1. Agent type: offers present the offeror and/or offeree as the agent of an action. Regardless of the offer agent, the offeree is considered the beneficiary taking advantage of the action while the offeror is regarded as the benefactor granting the advantage to the beneficiary,
2. Time of the action: all the actions included in offers refer to present or future,
3. Offeree's will: the offeror has reasons to believe that the offeree's will is supposed to be high,
4. Offeror's will: nothing forces the offeror to make an offer and there will be reasons in case he is obliged to make an offer,
5. Cost-benefit: the offeror either knows or intends to do an action being beneficial to the offeree,
6. Optionality: the offeree's freedom to accept/reject is usually not so constrained due to the fact that he is the first goal of the action.
7. Mitigation: offers are not recommended to be highly mitigated. In few cases, the degree of mitigation depends on the power and social distance between the interactants,
8. Power: making an offer is not restricted to any features of power, and
9. Social distance: the production of offers is not limited either to any degrees of social distance.

Leech (1983), on the other hand, took the (un)conditional feature as a mark for describing some speech acts as promises, requests, invitations and offers, hence revealed that promises are unconditional whereas the others (i.e. requests, invitations and offers) are conditional speech acts.

Unlike Wunderlich and Leech, who regarded offers as conditionals, Hancher (1979) highlighted the significance of involving the offeree with the offeror in the realization of offers. Hancher challenged Searle's evaluation of offers because Searle's evaluation is principally built on speaker's authority and ignorance of the hearer's role. Hancher considered offers to be an attempt done by the offeror to make the offeree declare his ability to engage in the proposed action. Hence, the offeror seeks to persuade the offeree to accept the act to be performed. In case the offer is accepted by the offeree, the offeror's commitment comes into effect (Hickey 1986). As a consequence, Hancher (1979) categorized offers as hybrid speech acts having directive and commissive illocutionary forces in parallel and thus suggested adding a new class to Searle's taxonomy coined 'commissive-directives'. Hussein et al (2012) arrived at the same conclusion when examining offers in cross-cultural encounters.

Hancher (1979: 7) pointed to the obvious nature of offers that their directive aspects can be hidden, for either offeror and/or offeree, behind the appearance of the generosity of commitment on the offeror's part. This is what makes offers as 'a potentially manipulative act', since they can be clearly recognized to be commissive and their directive nature remains ambiguous. However, Hernández (2001) uncovered that Hancher's views about being offer's illocutionary forces in parallel should be criticized by virtue of her conclusion that offers are closer to prototypical commissive than to prototypical directive illocutionary acts. Hernández also challenged Hancher's suggestion of adding a new category to Searle's illocutionary acts named 'commissive-directives'. Even though I square with Hernández's (2001) above-mentioned claim, I do not totally support her opinion because she ignored the conditional nature of offers, which in turn, lies between commissive and directive. The conditionality of offers can be asserted by Wierzbicka (1987: 191) "the one who offers leaves the addressee the freedom to decide whether to accept or decline the proposed action to take place". As for me, the nature of offers still requires much clarity, thus I will do my best by the end of this section to suggest a more organized picture of offers.

Even though Wierzbicka (1987: 192) claimed that offers represent a directive nature through an attempt performed by the offeror to influence the offeree's recognition, she disagreed with the insight stating that offers fall within a directive illocutionary act. Wierzbicka stated two different illocutionary purposes concerning offers: the first expresses the offeror's willing to do something for the sake of the offeree, while the second regards the offeror's bid to make the offeree accept or refuse the offer and accordingly the offeror can act. I believe that the Wierzbicka's former purpose squares with Searle's commissives as well as Haverkate's (1984) non-impositive directive purpose, and the latter purpose corresponds to Searle's directive as well as Haverkate's purpose of the permission-seeking impositive directives. Haverkate divided directives into two major sub-classes: impositives carried out by the hearer for the sake of the speaker such as requests, and non-impositives where the hearer is performing the act for his favor as invitation and advice. He then classified impositives into: permission-seeking and proposing acts. As for me, it appears to say that offers as a speech act have mixed characteristics as opposed to what Barron (2017b: 336) terms "the blurred nature of offers".

Like other human interactions, making an offer and responding to the offer either by acceptance or by refusal might be motivated by social factors that may involve politeness. Compared to other speech acts as requests, apologies, and compliments, offers uncover a dearth of research. Some research (Barron 2017 b; Leech 2014; Hussein et al. 2012; Curl 2006; Schneider 2003) was conducted only on the English language. However, much of the research on offers fall within variational and cross-cultural pragmatics. On the one hand, variational research (Barron 2017a, 2011) used the International Corpus of English data as a data source while Barron's (2005) study was carried out by the help of a questionnaire. Here is some research carried out on offers in other languages other than English. This research is regarded as evidence of how native speakers of different languages express offers including Arabic (Haddad 2019, 2020), Persian (Allami 2012; Koutlaki 2002), Chinese (Hua & Yuan 2000; Zhu et al. 1998; Feng et al. 2011), and Greek (Bella 2019, 2016; Terkorafi 2001). Eventually, moving to the much more investigated research on offers, namely cross-cultural pragmatics, such research includes for English–Arabic (Grainger et al. 2015; Alaoui 2011); English–German (Barron 2003), English–Chinese (Yongbing 1998), English–Persian (Babaie & Shahrokhi 2015), English–Korean (Min 2019; Chun 2003), English–Greek (Sifianou 1992), and English–Japanese (Fukushima & Iwata 1987).

By means of previous research on offers, Barron (2017b: 336–337) strongly contended that offers are characterized by three aspects, namely conditional; commissive; directive. Barron also asserted that these three characteristics are clearly reflected in linguistic strategies of offers through which offers are conventionally expressed i.e. preference, execution, and directive strategies. As for me, having reviewed several empirical research articles, it is Anne Barron who can be regarded as the pioneer of research on offers (Barron 2017a, 2017b, 2011, 2005, 2003). Yet, Barron did not present a relatively organized order of offer characteristics. So, I will add a new aspect to the offering act pertaining to the potential arrangement of the offer characteristics by virtue of salience as well as performance. Kecskés (2014: 177) viewed salience as the relative prominence of signs and differentiated between the so-called cognitive and linguistic salience in that "The former pertains to the mental representation and the latter to the possible observable effects on language at the structural and semantic level."

I have chosen the two concepts 'salience' as termed by Kecskés (2014) and 'performance' to help give priority to the most predominant offer characteristic in light of the interactional roles of both the offeror and offeree. The notion of salience refers to the most prominent characteristic of the offer by order, whereas the notion of performance refers to the interactant who will be the primary performer or the first to begin doing the action involved in the offer.

The speech act of offer considers salience to be both stored (inherent salience) and emergent (actual situational salience). On the one hand, inherent salience gives rise from the individual's prior experience with lexical experience, so that inherent salience can be governed by linguistic salience. On the other hand, actual situational salience gives rise from specific objects and linguistic elements in the context of language production, so that it can be governed by perceptual salience. This is due to the fact that linguistic salience relates to the observable effects on language at the structural and semantic level while perceptual salience is associated with the mental representation. In sum, salience in offers can be a result of the interplay of inherent salience and actual situational salience.

Since offers in Jordanian Arabic neither have an explicit performative nor may be expressed by a particular linguistic pattern unlike other speech acts e.g. requests (*imperative constructions*); advice (*if I were you, I would…*); suggestion (*how about…?*); warning (*be careful!*), the offeree basically depends on both inherent salience and actual situational salience. Inherent and actual situational salience are intertwined to a significant extent that inherent salience helps the offeree realize the illocutionary act that the offeror's utterance belongs to while actual situational salience makes the offeree recognize how the true communicative intention is triggered and shaped as well how the offer can be distinguished from other speech acts belonging to the same illocutionary act. I think inherent salience is dominated by actual situational salience in the speech act of offer, and this might change in accordance with the assumption that the interpretation of offers is highly culture-specific. This can be actually vindicated by Kecskés (2006) insight that salience is language/culture-specific.

Put it more simply, offer salience is more associated with how the offering utterance may be gradually recognized whilst offer performance is with what is intended to do by the offering utterance. On the one hand, with reference to offer salience, I propose that the offering utterance is firstly recognized by the offeree as a non-impositive directive illocution, then it is turned to be as a commissive illocution on condition the offeree's acceptance. On the other hand, with reference to offer performance, it is firstly intended by the offeror to be as a commissive illocution, then it is turned to be as a non-impositive directive illocution on condition the offeree's acceptance. The following table is designed to simplify the potential arrangement of

the offer characteristics. Keep in mind that the three asterisks (***) in the table stands for *nothing happens to the act after rejection*.

Offer salience	Recognition-successful non-impositive directive	*Accept*	Purpose-successful commissive
	Recognition-successful non-impositive directive	*Reject*	***
Offer performance	Intention-successful commissive	*Accept*	Purpose-successful non-impositive directive
	Intention-successful commissive	*Reject*	***

Table (1)

As clearly shown in the table, offer is successfully achieved in case of its acceptance so that politeness can be a purpose-oriented issue lying between offer acceptance/refusal in both cases, viz salience and performance. That is to say, offer is a Face-Threatening Act (FTA) in a bid to persuade the offeree to accept performing the offer for the offer acceptance is the decisive means to achieve the "purpose-successful" offer (Van Dijk 1977: 176).

In light of theory-based politeness, offers are inherently face-threatening to both the offeror and the offeree (Brown & Levinson 1987). In details, offers threaten the offeree's negative face due to the directive characteristic they hold. The offeror intrudes into the offeree's freedom by the reaction which embraces what the offeree should respond to. Unlike the requester, the offeror's negative face is threatened due to the commissive characteristic of the offer, since he reduces the freedom of action by committing himself to engage in the action included in the offer. Turning to the conditional characteristic of the offer, if the offer is accepted by the offeree, the offeror's positive face will be enhanced. The offeror's positive face is also claimed to be enhanced by (Bella 2019; Sifianou 1992) because it allows the offeror to show himself as a considerate and helpful member. In addition to this, the offeree's positive face will be enhanced only if he wishes the offer to be done. On the contrary, the offeree's negative face will be somewhat threatened because the offeree places himself under the offeror's debt (Brown & Levinson 1987: 66). In the case of offer's refusal, the offeror's positive face will be threatened because the offeror expects the offeree not to respond negatively to an action whose benefit goes back to him and thus his positive face will be prone to threaten. However, Koutlaki (2002) rejected Brown & Levinson's judgement about treating offers as FTAs, and she revealed that offers in Persian are face-enhancing acts.

Besides, Brown & Levinson (1987: 247) argued for offers as falling between debt-sensitive cultures and nondebt-sensitive cultures. They have explicated how the offering behavior is seen differently in the two cultures through the British, American, and Japanese cultures. In England and America, offers are not seen as very threatening FTAs. By contrast, Japanese consider the offer even, as small as a glass of water can cause a massive debt and could be accepted as heavily as a mortgage in western society (Benedict 1946 as cited in Brown & Levinson 1987). As far as I am aware of being a Jordanian Arabic, the Arab culture (especially in Jordan, Saudi

Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, and Yemen) tend to be debt-sensitive cultures, and therefore the Jordanian Arabic offeree's negative face will be surely threatened in case he accepts the offer and puts himself under the offeror's debt.

Concerning the face-saving model, offer can be regarded both FTAs and positive politeness whose function is to establish solidarity between the offeror and offeree. Offer was indicated by Brown & Levinson (1987: 125) as a natural outcome of conveying that the offeror and offeree are cooperators, since the offeror may choose to highlight cooperation with the offeree by claiming a kind of reflexivity between the offeror's and offeree's wants "[W]hatever H wants, S wants for him and will help to obtain", keeping in mind that H stands for *hearer* and S for *speaker*. However, in case the offer appears false, it remains to show offeror's good intentions in satisfying offeree's positive-face wants. Hence, offers can be claimed to be a positive-politeness action not only concrete or abstract but also "human-relations wants such as those…the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to, and so on" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 129).

In light of what Wolfson & Manes (1980) considered solidarity, it develops upon offering when the offeror does something good and beneficial to the offeree in order to make him feel appreciated, who in turn, may negotiate that offer of harmony. Such negotiation serves basically as a social lubricant in interpersonal communication. Haddad (2020, 2019) argued for the perlocutionary effects of offers announced by Jordanian travel agencies on Facebook as well as Open Market for real estate. Persuasion is being claimed to be the implicitly main motive of producing a polite offer. Also, Khalik and Supatmiwati (2016) examined the pragmatic function of politeness in 91 English and Indonesian ads and revealed that politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson are designed to be persuasive tools. Apart from establishing solidarity, offers can function to replace other speech acts as request, promise, and invitation. Another function of offers is to end a conversation (Mazid 2006) as well as admittedly opening a conversation using the familiar expression '*can I help you?*'.

Leech (2014: 183) claimed that offers can be "[F]ace-threatening as well as face-enhancing speech events, and the Pos-polite and Neg-polite forces can work against one another". He argued that offers enhance the offeree's positive face due to the offeror's high estimation of offeree's needs and thus the offeror is likely to go up more favorably in the offeree's estimation. However, this multifaceted nature helps offers to be as "an ambivalent social act…which, on the one hand, favours rapport and cordial relations between the participants, but which, on the other hand, can be invasive for the receiver" (Ruiz de Zarobe 2012: 173, cited in Bella 2019: 29).

4   Summary

In a nutshell, I see an offer being an FTA regardless of its response. On the one hand, the offer will threaten the offeror's as well as offeree's negative face with reference to the reduction of the freedom of action to both. On the other hand, in case of its decline, it will threaten the offeror's as well as offeree's positive face because of feeling disappointed to show familiarity with the offeree's needs. Such aspects of face affect linguistic realizations of offers (Barron 2005, 2011, 2017) and maybe in any language.

Centrally focused on the aforementioned theoretical background, I am currently entitled to present my own definition of the offer as a speech act. I can confidently define offer as a face-threatening speech act holding an equally dual force conditioned on the offeree's consent to let the two participants (i.e. the offeree himself and offeror) begin performing the action included

in the offering utterance. Now, what I mean by 'face-threatening speech act' is that it threatens the two aspects of participants' faces (i.e. positive and negative). It can never appear the two directive-commissive illocutionary forces in parallel only after the offeror's consent. Let's consider an instance when an offeror offers another bar of chocolate to an offeree by saying, '*have another piece of chocolate*'. It presents the offeree as the agent but basically involves two participants because it is based on the give-take approach. This approach is accomplished only by the offeree's consent to take another piece of chocolate (the directive aspect). In the case of consent, the offeror gets committed to give the other piece of chocolate (the commissive aspect).

Relative to empirical studies on speech acts, offers reveal a dearth of research. Thereby, this paper provides a comprehensive picture about the speech act of offer as a theoretical implication as it helps fill the research niche about speech acts in communication and maybe a theoretical framework for a large-scale study conducted on offers in any language and culture. By the end, it will provide a useful source of information on the basic conceptions of speech acts, offers, and politeness.

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