A Speech Act Analysis of some English and Arabic Proverbs

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Abstract

The present paper is furnished to analyze the speech acts of the English and Arabic proverbs. Proverbs refer to culture- specific matters and they imply metaphorical meanings. They might offer an advice or give a warning, threatening or promising. Some speakers tend to use a proverb implying warning, for the purpose of brevity, instead of giving a long or short explanation about the danger of the situation. This, in fact, proves that the proverbs do not convey the literal meanings of their constituents rather they just convey messages such as warning, advising, threatening, promising, etc. Thus, this paper seeks to classify these metaphorical / indirect meanings in terms of types of speech acts.

Introduction

Proverbs deal with social situations and they are used to strengthen our argument, express certain generalizations, influence or manipulate other people, satirize ills (Gramley and Patzold, 1992:81). The problem which should be tackled in this paper is that both English and Arabic proverbs formally express the literal meanings of their lexis, while, they bear indirect metaphorical meanings which are not, when uttered, explicit for the hearers. As a result, this paper aims at discovering these metaphorical meanings

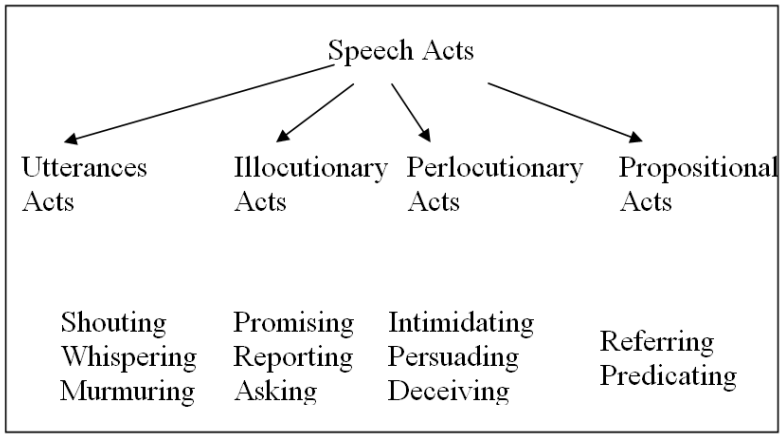
which almost endure threatening acts, warning acts, promising acts or advice acts throughout analyzing the speech acts of these proverbs . This paper depends on the hypothesis which is set by Bukallia (1985 as cited in Hussein and Khalaf , 2002:3) who assures that proverbs can be used for various ends, they can summarize life experience and express general truths. They can give warning, advice, threatening and promising. The procedure to be followed in this paper includes an ample explanation to the proverbs which depends on Searle's model (1979) of speech acts by selecting some proverbs. The analysis of the speech acts of the proverbs depends on the analysis of proverbs from both English and Arabic cultures. In fact, this model is very suitable for it includes all the speech acts that the proverbs might imply. The present paper will be limited to the analysis of (59) English and Arabic proverbs by adopting some types of speech acts including commissive acts, representative acts, declarative acts, expressive acts or directive acts.

1. The Pragmatic Theory of Speech Acts

"Speech acts" is a term derived from the work of the philosopher J.L Austin. He (1962:61) defines speech acts as "it refers to a theory which analyzes the role of utterances in relation to the behavior of speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication." It is not an act of speech in the sense of parole, but a communicative activity which is called locutionary act, which is defined with reference to the intentions of the speaker while speaking the illocutionary force of his utterances and effects he achieves on his listener, .i.e., the perlocutionary effect of his utterances. Several categories of speech act have been proposed. Directive, for example, means the speaker tries to get the listener to do something

such as begging, commanding, action, promising and guaranteeing. The expressions mean the speaker expresses his feelings such as apologizes, welcomes and sympathies. The declarations mean the speaker's utterance brings about a new external situation including christening, marrying and resigning. The representatives mean the speaker conveys his belief about the truth of proposition like asserts, hypotheses. The verbs which are used to indicate the speech act intended by the speaker are sometimes known as performative verbs (Crystal,1985:285).

Tragoutt and Pratt (1980:229) point out that different frameworks have been proposed for describing the language use in context. The 'speech act theory' treats an utterance as an act performed by a speaker in a context where the theory treats an utterance as an act performed by a speaker in a context with respect to an addressee. Performing a speech act involves performing a locutionary act, the act of producing a recognizable grammatical utterance in the language. The illocutionary act attempts to accomplish some communicative purpose including promising, warning, greeting, reminding, informing and commanding are all distinct illocutionary acts. While phonology, syntax, and semantics focus on the perlocutionary act, pragmatics focuses on the illocutionary act which means the aspect of the speech act which specifies what the language is being used for on a given occasion (Ibid). Akmajian et al (1995:376-377) state that speech acts are acts performed in uttering expressions when they began exploring speech acts. Akmajian et al (Ibid) classify types of speech acts as shown in the below figure :



Theorists found no appropriate terminology already available for labeling different types, so they had to invent one. The terminology used here comes in large part from the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).

According to the speech act theory, there are four important categories of speech, illustrated in figure (1). Utterance acts are simply acts of uttering sound syllables, words, phrases, and sentences which form a language (Ibid.). Trudgill (1992:69) indicates that speech act is a term used in discourse analysis, ethnography of speaking and pragmatics for minimal unit of analysis of conversational interaction. A number of speech acts include greetings, summonses, jokes, commands, apologies and introductions (Ibid.).

1.1. Indirect Speech Acts

Crystal (1987:121) declares that some speech acts directly address a listener , but the majority of acts in every day conversation are indirect.

For example, there are a very large number of ways of asking someone to perform an action. The most direct way is to use the

imperative construction (shut the door), but it is easy to sense that this would be inappropriate in many everyday situations, it might be a burst or rude.

Alternatives stress such factors as the hearer's ability or desire to perform the action, or the speaker's reasons for having an action done.

These include the following utterances:

(1)- I would be grateful if you'd shut the door.

(2)- Could you shut the door?

(3)- Would you mind shutting the door?

(4)- I would help to have the door shut.

(5)- It is getting cold in here.

(6)- Shall we keep out the draught?

(7)- Now, Jane, what have you forgotten to do? Burr! (Ibid.).

Any of these could, in the right situation, function as a request for action, despite the fact that none has the clear form of an imperative. But of course, the hearer might misunderstand an indirect request either accidentally or deliberately. Let us consider the following examples:

(8)- Teacher: Johnny, there is some chalk on the floor.

(9)- Johnny: Yes, there is , sir

(10)-Well, pick it up, then!

Therefore, the above utterances show that there is an indirect request to give the teacher a piece of chalk.

Trask (1993:141-142) states that the reporting of what someone else has said without using her/his exact words, as in:

(11)-Lisa said: she would come.

If this were expressed indirectly, the result would be Lisa, I will come.

Cutting (2002:19) believes that indirect speech acts indicate that a speaker using a direct speech acts he wants to communicate

the literal meaning that the words conventionally express. There is, in fact, a direct relationship between the form and the function of the utterances. Thus, a declarative form should not be confused with declaration speech acts such as:

(12)- I was going to get another one. The sentence has the function of a statement or assertion but the interrogative form includes.

(13)- Do you like the tuna and sweet corn ones? This sentence has the function of a question while the imperative form includes:

(14)- Get me one.

It has the function of a request or order. On the other hand, Cutting (2002:19) explains that someone using an indirect speech act wants to communicate a different form, i.e., the form and function are not directly related.

There is an underlying pragmatic meaning, and one speech act is performed through another speech act. Thus, a declarative form such as, (12) I was going to get another one.

(13)- you could get me a tuna and sweet corn one.

It might have the function of a request or order which means:

(14) Get me one .

Similarly, an interrogative form such as:

(15)-Could you get me a tuna and sweet corn one, please?

It has the function of a request or order, and

(16) Can I get you one while I am there?

It can be taken as an offer (Ibid.).

Tsohatzidis (1994: 350) stresses that the topic of indirect speech acts raises a number of important methodological issues for speech act theory. The first level is concerned with the features of utterances, such as mood and modality, whereas the second with a distinctive class of acts such as the illocutionary acts. The levels are,

of course, quite distinct, yet if the theory is correct, it must be possible to give a systematic description of how they are connected.

May (1993: 143) discovers that the problem of indirect speech acts seems like those problems in the epistemological analysis how a perceiver recognizes an object on the basis of imperfect sensory input. The question, how do I know that he has made a request when one asked someone else a question about the abilities? Saeed (1997:215) assures that Searle (1975:62) argues that the speaker does indeed have access to both, he terms the direct use of the words as the literal use of speech act and the indirect use as the nonliteral use.

Searle (Ibid.) shows that the examples below, all of which, can be a request, but none of which has the form of imperative, none of which has interrogative and declarative:

(18) a. Can you pass the salt?

b. please pass the salt.

(19). a. I wish you would not do that.

b. please do not do that

(20) a. Are not you going to eat your Cereal?

b. please eat your Cereal.

Searle (1975:63) argues that in the cases above, two speech acts are available to the hearer: the literal act which is a background or secondary while the nonliteral act is primary, when one of these sentences is uttered with the primary illocutionary act is also performed.

The question that Searle raises is: how will these but not all non literal acts work, i.e., why is it stating that the salt is made of sodium Chloride will not work as a request like can you pass the salt?

1.2 Direct Speech Acts

Trask (1993: 83) shows that "direct speech act" refers to the reporting of what someone has said by quoting her/his exact words, as in :

(21) what time is it?

She asked and:

(22) There is a wasp on your back.

She said quietly (Ibid.).

Crystal (1985:100-101) explains that when someone usually knows how a speaker intends the hearer to take or interpret the function of what someone says. Generally speaking, one can usually recognize the type of act performed by a speaker in uttering a sentence. The use of the term "speech act" covers actions such as requesting, commanding, questioning and informing.

Typically, it is the case that one uses the following linguistic forms with the following functions. The forms would be described in the syntactic analysis of a language and the functions as what people use language for. Consider the following examples which show the difference between the form and function of each sentence.

Forms	**Functions**
(23) I promise I will be there.	Promise
(24) Have some more coffee.	Offer
(25) Have a nice day.	Wish
(26) Look out.	Warning

(Cited in Akmajian et al, 1995:238).

When a form such as: (27) "There is a dog in the field" , uttered by the speaker, the hearer understands that there is an underlying indirect speech act behind this sentence which is be careful, there is a dog in the field'. So that this sentence means implicitly , do not go to the field. This, in fact, proves that the form of the sentence is different from its function.

In other words, the direct speech act of the sentence is different from the indirect speech act of the sentence because the former is concerned with the forms while the later is concerned with the functions, (Akmajian et al, 1995:238).

Searle (1979:72) illustrates that declarative utterances can have a considerable variety of forces. It is possible to formulate a generalization about some of the exceptions including:

(A) One can perform a directive act by either asserting that one of the preparatory conditions, obtains, or by questioning whether it does.

(B) One can perform a directive by asserting its sincerity condition.

(C) One can perform a directive by asserting or questioning its content conditions. These generalizations seem correct. However, since utterances of one of the explanations above sometimes have the force of a directive and sometimes that of a representative . The generalization, as such do not determine what force it has in any given case.

2. Searle's Model (1979)

The classification of illocutionary acts as divided by Searle (1979) are:

(1) Assertives commit to the truth of the expressed proposition. For example, stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming and reporting. Such illocutions tend to be neutral as regards politeness, i.e, they belong to the collaborative category. But

there are some exceptions: for example, boasting is generally considered to be impolite.

(2) Directives are intended to produce some effect through action by the hearer, ordering, commanding, requesting, advising and recommending are examples.

They frequently belong to the competitive, and, therefore, comprise a category of illocutions in which negative politeness is important. On the other hand, some directives such as invitations are intrinsically polite.

(3) Commissives commit the speakers to such cases, promising, vowing, and offering. These tend to be convivial rather than competitive, being performed in the interest of someone other than the speaker.

(4) Expressives have the function of expressing, or making known, the speaker's psychological attitude towards a state of affairs which the illocution presupposes: including examples such as congratulation, blaming, praising and condoling (Leech:1981,105-106).

Leech (Ibid:106) enforces that the expressives tend to be convivial, and; therefore, they are intrinsically polite. The reverse is true, however, expressive acts include 'blaming' and 'accusing'.

(5) Declarations are illocutions whose 'successful performance, brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality; such as resigning, dismissing, christening, naming, excommunicating, appointing and sentencing. These actions, as Searle says ' a very special category of speech acts: they are performed, normally speaking, by someone who is especially authorized to do so within some institutional framework. Classical examples are judges, sentencing

offenders, ministers of religion, christening babies; dignitaries and naming ships (Ibid.).

Verschueren (1987:28-29) presents the Searle's taxonomy of speech acts which includes:

(1) Assertives (e.g., statements) express a belief, making words fit the world, and committing the speaker to the truth of what is asserted.
(2) Directives (including requests, and orders) express a wish, making the world fit the words, and counting as an attempt to get the hearer to do something (Ibid.).
(3) Comissives (e.g., promises, and offers) express an intention, making the world fit the words, and counting as a commitment for the speaker to engage in a future course of action.
(4) Expressives (e.g., apologies and thanks) express a variety of psychological states, having no directions of fit between words and world, and simply counting as expressions of a psychological state.
(5) Declarations (e.g., baptizing, abdicating and declaring war) do not express any psychological state, making both the words fit the world and the world fits the words, and the point of which is to bring about a change in situational reality.

There are two brief remarks about this classification of speech acts, which is without a doubt the most influential one ever proposed.

First, the categories are by no means mutually exclusive. Actual language contains many types of acts which, would have to be called hybrids. For instance, the following utterance bears a threat:

(28) If ever see you with my sister again, I will kill you.

Which is at the same time directive (intended) to change someone's behavior and commissive.

Second, the classification is entirely based on three dimensions of variation which are the psychological state, direction of fit and illocutionary point. Choosing other dimensions as a stating point such as relative strength, as between suggesting and insisting, or differences in status relations between speaker and hearer as in the differences between asking and ordering would lead to different classifications Verschueren (Ibid.).

3. Pragmatic Meaning

Meaning is the basic notion used in linguistics both as a datum and as a criterion of analysis. Linguistics studies meaning, and uses meaning as a criterion for studying other aspects of language especially throughout such notions as contrastivity and distinctiveness. The topic of meaning in the context of language, however, necessitates reference to non- linguistic factors such as thought, situation, knowledge, intention and use (Crystal : 1985:190).

The study of speech acts is closely related to pragmatics .This means that the illocutionary force of an utterance which is its pragmatic meaning , is the particular speaker's use of that utterance in a given context .The meaning of speech act is performed rather than something constitutes an independent static entity . Pragmatics is considered as an extralinguistic level of language. Meanwhile , pragmatic meaning is extralinguistic for meaning is captured in pragmatics depending on ecological and cultural cognition which is part of the extralinguistic level of language . Moreover , problems of meaning rank among the most significant controversies of how addressers and addressees deal with meaning in communication with each other (Blakemore,1987:1).

4- Proverbs As Fixed Expressions

Proverbs are traditional which express general ideas and show non-literal meaning (metaphorical or metonymic meaning). They can be added to, transformed and abbreviated. Proverbs are equivalent to a sentence and are also prototypically characterized by certain metrical, structural and prosodic features (Gramley and Patzold, 1992: 77).

Collections often list a number of variant forms, which shows that variability is a characteristic trait of proverbs. Transformations such as the cleft – sentence construction do not change proverbs out of all recognition. “It is while the iron is hot that it should be struck” in contrast to most idioms which are treated the same way, would become meaningless or allow only a literal reading. Proverbs sometimes tend to be ungrammatical in order to be more effective such as "like father, like son," meaning a son will resemble his father in his action. Proverbs make a claim to a wide level, but perhaps not universal level. Validity of proverbs are; therefore, sometimes semantically restricted, which comes through modifications such as relative clauses "people who live in glass houses should not throw stones," or "he who pays the piper calls the tune". Several proverbs are metaphorical and may pose problems for understanding proverbs also show other features such as hyperbole, metonymy and paradox (Gramley and Patzold, (1992: 76).

Proverbs are traditional sayings having fixed general sentential forms, alluding to a common truth general wisdom, with some rudimentary literary value used to guide action, explain a situation, or induce a feeling or attitude, for example, suppose Sheila has a wasp nest that she wants to remove from the garage, and she is approaching it with a broom . Harry has communicated something – what and how? first Harry advised Sheila not to whack the nest with the broom. Second, he did this by alluding to a

common truth or general wisdom associated with the words , something like ((sometimes it is better to leave things alone)) . Sheila is expected to equate "sleeping dogs" in the proverb with the wasp's nest , and " let lie " in the proverb without hitting the nest with the broom is better to leave it alone. It seems that proverbs are not used literally and directly, and they are often used indirectly. If a proverb is used literally , it is used indirectly as well , and if a proverb is used directly it is not also used literally (Akmajian et al ,1995: 367- 368).

5- Speech Act Analysis of Proverbs

The present study adopts Searle's model (1979)in order to analyze the speech acts of the English proverbs. This model includes five types of speech acts representatives , commissives , directives , expressives and declaratives . The study attempts to examine the applicability of Searle's model to the English proverbs and find out the occurrence of these types in the English proverbs . Below is the analysis of the English proverbs .

(Pragmatic Meaning)

No	Proverbs	Form	Function	Searle's Model Acts
1-	Quick thoughts are slippery thoughts. (AL.Mawrid Dic, 2005:79).	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
2-	Fair words slake wrath. (Ibid:40).	Declarative	warning	commissive
3-	Adversity tries friends. (Ibid:55).	Declarative	Advice	commissive
4-	Still waters run deep. (Ibid:79).	Declarative	warning	commissive
5-	A man is known by the company	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
6-	Do not count your chickens before they are hatched (Ibid:33).	Imperative	warning	Commissive
7-	Walls have ears (Ibid :91).	Declarative	warning	Commissive
8-	A secret spread between more than two is exposed (Ibid :14).	Declarative	warning	Commissive
9-	Necessity is the mother of invention (Ibid:68).	Declarative	warning	Representative
10-	Truth will prevail (Ibid 68).	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
11-	There is no rose without a thorn (Ibid 88)	Declarative	Promise	Commissive
12-	Rome was not built in day .(I bid 76).	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
13-	Prevention is better than cure .(I bid :74).	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
14-	Christmas comes but once year (Ibid :25).	Declarative	Wisdom	Commissive
15-	One man's meat is another man's poison. (Ibid:73).	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
16-	Make hug while the sun shines.(Ibid:64).	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
17-	If you want peace, be prepared for war (Ibid:52).	Declarative	Want	Threatening

18- Knowledge is power. (Ibid:57)	Declarative	Advice request for forgiving	Want
19- Deeds, not words. (Ibid: 30).	Declarative	warning	Representative
20- East or west; home is best. (bid:34)	Declarative	Expressing	Commissive
21- Let by gones be gones. (Ibid:58)	Declarative	Warning	Expressive
22- Let sleeping dogs lie. (Ibid:59)	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
23- A bad workman quarrels his tools. (Ibid:5)	Declarative	Expressing	Commissive
24- A little learning is dangerous thing (Ibid:9).	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
25- Do as you would be done by. (Ibid: 32).	Declarative	Advice	Commissive

The above analysis proves that the commissive speech act type is the most occurring one. While the representative speech act type constitutes the second rank the commissive type has (17) cases while the representative type has only (4) cases. The other cases such as declarative and expressive have one case for each.

In terms of percentage, the warning acts represent 36% as the most frequent one. The advice act represents 20% as the second frequent one. The asserting act represents 12% , while the other acts (intended meanings) such as request, excuse, threatening, invitation, promise, wisdom, declaring, and want, each represents 4% .Thus the analysis enhances that the warning , advice and asserting are the most frequent acts .

5.1 Speech Act Analysis of the Arabic Proverbs

The Arabic proverbs are not different from the English proverbs. They can express acts in terms of threatening, warning, promising and so forth. Therefore, it is possible to apply a speech

act model to the proverbs in order to uncover these metaphorical meanings. Below is the analysis of the Arabic proverbs which are taken from the Arabic folklore:

No	Proverbs	Form	Function Pragmatic Meaning	Searle's Model Acts
1.	مقتل الرجل بين فكيه Elias and Edward ;1981:218)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
2.	على قدر بساطك مد رجليك) (Ibid.)	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
3.	لأجل عين تكرم ألف عين (Ibid.)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
4.	الكسل مفتاح الفقر (Ibid.)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
5.	الحيطان لها آذان (Ibid.)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
6.	المقروص من الثعبان من الحبل يخاف (I bid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
7.	اصرف ما في الجيب يأتيك ما في الغيب (Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
8.	العاقل من اعتبر بغيره (I bid : 219)	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
9.	لا دخان بلا نار (Ibid .)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
10.	تحت السواهي دواهي (Ibid .)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
11.	الفشل يعلم النجاح (Ibid .)	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
12.	في العجلة ندامة (I bid .)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
13.	ذكرنا القط جانا ينط (Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative

No	Proverbs	Form	Function Pragmatic Meaning	Searle's Model Acts
14.	لا كسب بدون تعب (I bid .)	Declarative	Wisdom	Commissive
15.	الغائب عذره معه (Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
16.	لكل جديد لذة ((Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
17.	ما لا يدرك كله يدرك جله (Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
18.	الطيور على أشكالها تقع (Ibid : 218)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
19.	لا تقول سمسم إلا تلهم ((Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
20.	تبيع الجير على أهل هيت (I bid .)	Declarative	Advice	Commissive
21.	الحاجة أم الاختراع (Ibid .)	Declarative	Asserting	Representative
22.	مو كل مدور جوز (Ibid .)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
23.	المال السايب يعلم الحرام (Ibid 219 .)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive
24.	الزيادة كالنقصان (Ibid .)	Declarative	Warning	Commissive

The analysis of speech acts of the Arabic proverbs reveals that the commissive speech acts are the most occurring type while the representative speech acts occupy the second rank. The analysis shows that the warning acts and asserting acts are the most occurring types. The warning acts represent 40%, while the advising acts represent 16% while the wisdom acts represent 40%.

Therefore, one can conclude that the Arabic proverbs almost bear metaphorical meanings such as warnings, asserting, and advices .

6- The Indirectness of Proverbs

It is possible to assume that proverbs have direct speech acts and indirect speech acts . The direct speech acts represent the forms of the expression while ,the indirect speech acts represent the metaphorical meaning that the proverbs bear .Below is the analysis of some selected proverbs from the English and Arabic folklores in terms of direct and indirect speech acts.

No	Proverb	Direct	Indirect
1.	Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.	Imperative	Warning
2.	Truth will prevail.	Declarative	Promise
3.	There is no rose without a thorn.	Declarative	Warning
4.	Prevention is better than cure.	Declarative	Wisdom
5.	Rome was not built in a day.	Declarative	Asserting
6.	تحت السواهي دواهي	Declarative	Warning
7.	الغايب عذره معه	Declarative	Asserting
8.	لا كسب بدون تعب	Declarative	Wisdom
9.	العاقل من اعتبر بغيره	Declarative	Advice
10.		Declarative	Warning

	الكسل مفتاح الفقر		

The above analysis emphasizes that the speech acts represent the forms of the expressions while the indirect speech acts represent the metaphorical meaning such as warning ,promising ,asserting or advising that the proverbs imply .

Conclusion

It has been shown that the commissive speech act type and representative speech act type are the most occurring types of speech acts. The commissive speech acts represent the first occurrence, whereas, the representative speech acts represent the second occurrence. This model of analysis paths the way to realize the metaphorical meanings that might be implied in these proverbs. To recapitulate, the speaker should not take into consideration the literal meanings or forms of the proverbs in question rather he should take into consideration the metaphorical meanings the indirect meanings which might include acts such as, warning, i.e., threatening promising or asserting that the proverbs might bear. In proverbs there is no correspondence between the form of the proverb and its metaphorical meaning. Some speakers prefer to use proverb in order to respond to a given situation with their friends. Consider, for example, the following situation: the father wants to give an advice to his son who has already failed in his study that this is not the end of the world and he can succeed next time. In brief, the father gives his advice throughout saying this proverb "failure teaches success". The proverb bears one word which is an advice although it means much, it means do not despair, do your best and sure you will succeed and this is not a bad and you can go on. In conclusion, this paper deduces that most of the English and Arabic

proverbs have occurrence of warning acts more than the others. The asserting acts have the second occurrence while the advising acts have the third occurrence. Of course, there are some scattered acts such as threatening acts, requesting acts or wisdom acts but they represent the lower percentage. Accordingly, the hypothesis which says that the proverbs can give warning, advice, promise or asserting have been entirely proved.

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مستخلص البحث

خصص هذا البحث لتحليل أفعال الكلام لأمثال انجليزية وعربية. إن الأمثال عبارة عن مواضيع تعكس ثقافات معينة. كما تعبر عن معاني مجازية ضمنية وقد تعبر عن نصيحةً أو تحذيراً أو تهديداً أو وعداً. وبهدف الاختصار، فقد يحاول بعض المتكلمون استخدام مثلاً معيناً والذي يتضمن تحذيرًا بدلاً من تقديم توضيحاً طويلاً أو قصيراً حول خطر الموقف المقصود. وهذا بدوره دليلاً على إن الأمثال لا تنقل المعاني الحرفية لمكونات الأمثال وإنما

تعمل على نقل رسائل تحذير ونصح وتهديد ووعد وهلم جراً. لذا يسعى هذا البحث إلى قولبة هذه المعاني المجازية غير المباشرة في إطار أفعال الكلام.