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**Students' Awareness of Felicity Conditions and Their
Attitudes towards the Application of Felicitous Speech Acts**

The Case of Master One English Students
University of Constantine

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master degree in languages sciences**

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Dedication

To my dear and precious parents

To all my sisters, especially my little sister: Imane

To All My Brothers: Othman, Saad, Ibrahim and Mohamed

To all my family...

To my friends: Yahia, Ismail and Najib

To all who know me ...

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates a crucial issue in speech acts theory. It examines the ways students use the rules of felicity conditions to produce felicitous speech acts. Throughout this study, we tackle the problem of students' ignorance of felicity conditions, which will effect negatively on their performance of felicitous speech acts. The aim of this research work is to raise the students' awareness of these felicity conditions and to see to what extent this consciousness contributes to the improvement of students' production of felicitous speech acts. Accordingly, we believe that if the students are conscious of felicity conditions, they will be able to produce felicitous speech acts effectively. In attempting to raise the students' awareness of felicity conditions, we have directed a questionnaire to Master One English students. The results from the analysis of this questionnaire have confirmed the research hypothesis. These results reveal that the majority of the students become aware of felicity conditions, and that this awareness enables them to produce felicitous speech acts effectively.

1. List of Abbreviations

I. FID: Illocutionary Force Indicating Device.

V. P: Performative Verb.

2. List of Tables

Table 01: Examples of locutions, illocutions and perlocutions.....	12
Table 02: The common verbs in expressing the different classes of speech acts.....	14
Table 02.1: The different classes of infelicities.....	25
Table 03: Felicity conditions on the acts of promising and warning.....	35
Table 04: Felicity conditions on the acts of questioning and apologizing.....	36
Table 05.1: Students' definitions of speech acts.....	40
Table 05.2: Students' definitions of infelicities.....	41
Table 05.3: Students' classification of infelicities.....	41
Table 05.4: Students' perceptions of felicity conditions.....	42
Table 05.5: Students' perceptions of the role of felicity conditions.....	43
Table 05.6: Students' perceptions of felicitous speech acts.....	43
Table 05.7.1: Students' perceptions of the propositional content condition.....	44
Table 05.7.2: Students' perceptions of the preparatory condition.....	45
Table 05.7.3: Students' perceptions of the sincerity condition.....	45
Table 05.7.4: Students' perceptions of the essential condition.....	46
Table 05.7.5 : Student's familiarity with all types of felicity conditions.....	47
Table 05.7.6 : Students' responses in section one.....	48

Table 06: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions for promising and ordering.....	48
Table 07: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of requests.....	49
Table 8.1: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of promises.....	51
Table 8.2: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of apologies.....	51
Table 8.3: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of greets.....	52
Table 8.4: Students' awareness about requests, promises, apologies and greets.	52
Table 8.5: Students' familiarity with all types of speech acts in section two.....	53
Table 9: Students' examination of felicitous and infelicitous speech acts.....	53
Table 10: Students' production of felicitous requests, commands and promises.....	54

3. List of Graphs

Graph 01: Students' awareness of felicity conditions.....	47
Graph 02: Description of the students' awareness about all the aspects of speech acts.....	55

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.....	01
1. Statement of the problem.....	01
2. Aim of the study.....	02
3. Research questions and hypothesis.....	02
4. Tools of research.....	03
5. Structure of the study.....	03

Chapter One

Speech Acts Theory

Introduction.....	6
1. Speech acts	6
1. 1 History of speech acts.....	8
1.1.1 Early studies:.....	8
1.1.2 From Austin to Searle.....	8
1. 2 Types of word- forces.....	10
1.3 Classes of speech acts.....	12
1.3.1 Austinian classifications.....	12
1. 3.2 Searlean classifications.....	14
1.4 Explicit and implicit speech acts.....	16

1.5 Direct and indirect speech acts.....	17
Conclusion.....	19

Chapter Two

Infelicitous and Felicitous Speech Acts

Introduction.....	21
2.1 Infelicitous and Felicitous Speech Acts	21
2.1.1 Infelicitous speech acts.....	22
2.1.1.1 Misfires.....	22
2.1.1.2 Abuses.....	24
2.1.2 Felicitous Speech Acts.....	25
2.1.2.1 Austinian rules	26
2.1.2.1.1 Austinian solutions to Misfires.....	26
2.1.2.1.2 Austinian Solutions to Abuses.....	29
2.1.2.2 Searlean Felicity Conditions.....	31
2.1.2.2.1 Propositional Content Condition.....	31
2.1.2.2.2 Preparatory Condition.....	32
2.1.2.2.3 Sincerity Condition.....	33
2.1.2.2.4 Essential Condition.....	34
Conclusion.....	36

Chapter Three
The Students' Questionnaire

Introduction.....	38
3.1 Description of the questionnaire.....	38
3.2 Analysis of results.....	40
3.2.1 Section one : Students' familiarity with speech acts theory	40
3.2.2 Section two: Students' application of felicity conditions on widespread categories of speech acts.....	48
3.2.3 Section three: The impacts of students' familiarity with felicity conditions on their production of felicitous speech acts.....	53
Conclusion.....	56
Conclusion	57
Bibliography	59
Appendix	62

Introduction

1. Statement of the problem.....	01
2. Aim of the study.....	02
3. Research questions and hypothesis.....	02
4. Tools of research.....	03
5. Structure of the study.....	03

Introduction

1. Statement of the problem

Speech acts enable speakers to perform actions through uttering words. Yule (1996: 47) points that actions executed by means of utterances are technically called “speech acts”. In various languages, the widespread actions in expressing speech acts are apologies, orders, complaints, promises, commands and requests. For example, a priest says: “I now pronounce you husband and wife”, this utterance conveys the performance of declaring a marriage rather than describing a given situation.

Performing speech acts is not a matter of uttering words arbitrarily, yet, there are some rules or what is technically called ‘felicity conditions’ that aim to provide the appropriate circumstances for the application of these actions. Hence, the problem we are confronting by this study is the students’ unawareness of these felicity conditions, which will prevent them from the use of felicitous speech acts. For instance, if a student ignores that the main condition of expressing a ‘promise’ is that the speaker must intend to do the act promised, this student will not be able to use a felicitous promise. In general, students face problems in performing felicitous speech acts because they ignore the rules of felicity conditions.

2. Aim of the study

Through this study, we aim to raise the students’ awareness of using felicity conditions. To achieve this objective, we will rely on directing the students’ attention to ‘infelicities’ or to the common problems which face them during their application of speech acts. Additionally, we will state the felicity conditions that have been established by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) as solutions to avoid falling in these

problems. So the general aim behind this study is to help students develop their use of felicitous speech acts by using the appropriate rules of felicity conditions.

3. Research questions and hypothesis

Since felicity conditions are regarded as important tools to achieve felicitous speech acts, students should be aware of using these rules appropriately. Departing from what precedes, we will address the following questions:

1. What are the possible problems or ‘infelicities’ which face students when performing speech acts?
2. What are the felicity conditions that can help students to perform speech acts felicitously?
3. Are all the students aware of using these felicity conditions appropriately?

Accordingly, we hypothesize that if we raise the students’ awareness of using felicity conditions, they will be able to perform speech acts felicitously.

4. Tools of research

Concerning data collection, we have directed a questionnaire to thirty-three students of Master One of language sciences to check their awareness of using felicity conditions. We will also see the impacts of the consciousness of these conditions on students’ abilities to produce felicitous speech acts.

5. Structure of the study

This research work is divided into three chapters. Chapter one and chapter two are devoted to the literature review, while the third chapter is designed for the analysis of learners’ performance on the questionnaire.

The first chapter provides a historical overview of speech acts theory. First, we will examine the origin of the term ‘speech acts’ in ancient linguistic studies. Then, we will mention the important developmental stages in the history of this area of study, from the ‘old studies’ until the period of ‘from Austin to Searle’ stage. After that, we shall talk about the different classifications of speech acts: we will see the classification which have been established based on ‘word-forces’. Then, we shall discover the Austinian and Searlean categorizations of speech acts based on general functions performed by these actions. Finally, we will discuss the different ways of expressing speech acts implicitly vs. explicitly and using speech acts directly vs. indirectly.

In the second chapter, we will deal with the notion of felicity conditions, where we will present the ‘infelicities’ or the possible shortcomings that face learners during their performance of speech acts. After that, we will state the felicity conditions that are divided into two main directions: ‘The Austinian rules of felicitous speech acts’ and ‘The Searlean felicity conditions’.

The third chapter will be an analysis of the students’ responses on the questionnaire. First, this analysis starts by a description of the students’ questionnaire, and then it shifts to the analysis of the obtained results from this questionnaire. The investigation of these results is highlighted by three distinct sections.

In section one, we will discover whether the students are familiar with speech acts theory or not. After that, we will examine in the second section how students apply felicity conditions on widespread categories of speech acts such as promises, apologies, requests and orders. Finally, the analysis of the third section of the questionnaire presents the impacts of students’ awareness of felicity conditions on the

production of felicitous speech acts; in other words, we will see if this awareness of felicity conditions will help them achieve felicitous speech acts or not. The main purpose behind the analysis of these results is to test out the research hypothesis.

Chapter One

Speech Acts Theory

	Page
Introduction.....	6
1. Speech acts	6
1. 1 History of speech acts.....	8
1.1.1 Early studies:.....	8
1.1.2 From Austin to Searle.....	8
1. 2 Types of word- forces.....	10
1.3 Classes of speech acts.....	12
1.3.1 Austinian classifications.....	12
1. 3.2 Searlean classifications.....	14
1.4 Explicit and implicit speech acts.....	16
1.5 Direct and indirect speech acts.....	17
Conclusion.....	19

Chapter One

Speech Acts Theory

Introduction

In attempting to express speech acts, people produce powerful utterances having various communicative effects on their audiences. In this chapter, we will present the reader with speech acts theory in general, including the various definitions, most influential linguists in this field and an exploration of the main foundations of this theory. This chapter also deals with an examination of the historical progression of speech acts theory. We will start by stating the early researches that have been done by the ancient sociologists until we arrive to the recent studies in this theory. In addition to the exploration of speech acts history, this chapter examines the different classifications of speech acts that have been made by Austin and Searle. At the end of this chapter, we shall discover the various ways of expressing speech acts, either explicitly or implicitly and directly vs. indirectly.

1 Speech Acts

It was assumed, for many years ago, that the main purpose behind uttering words is to describe a certain state of affairs or what is technically called by Austin (1962) 'constatives'. However, this view was defeated by the recent findings which have been derived from various philosophical investigations in languages, such as: *De Interpretatione* by Aristotle, *Essay on the Active Powers of Man* by Ried (1788), *Philosophical Investigations* by Wittgenstein (1953), *Intention and Convention in Speech Acts* by Strawson (1964) and *Some Grammatical Correlates of Felicity Conditions* by Heringer (1972). All these researches have arrived to the assumption

that the process of uttering words is a kind of performing actions, generally known as ‘Speech Acts’.

Yule (1996: 47) points out “Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request”. In line with this, Austin (1962: 05) notes that a performative utterance is such an utterance that can be found to satisfy the following conditions:

- a) They do not describe or report anything at all (they are not true or false).
- b) The uttering of the sentence is a part of doing an action, which also would not be described as stating something.

Moreover, Searle (1969: 24) claims that the articulation of an utterance without performing a propositional act would be to utter words without saying anything. Hence, the idea we draw from the previous definitions is that speech act is the procedure of performing actions through uttering words. For instance, in a marriage ceremony a priest says: “I now pronounce you husband and wife”. In this case, the priest performs an act of declaring a marriage rather than describing a giving situation.

However, to perform a speech act appropriately is not an easy task, since the application of actions requires a great deal with conventional procedures and the ways of using words. In addition, there are some specific conditions that should be met in order to perform speech acts correctly; we will discuss this issue in detail in the next chapter.

1.1 History of Speech Acts

1.1.1 Early Studies

Jaszczolt (2002: 309-310) claims that The first studies in speech acts were derived from the sociological activities, such as Aristotle in *De Interpretatione* who limits the study of speech acts to sentences with truth conditions . In a similar vein, Smith (n.d: 03) claims that Aristotle has proved the existence of ‘language uses’ which are different from describing a state of affairs. Schuhmann and Smith (1990) point that Reid calls these different uses of language ‘ social operations’ as opposed to ‘solitary acts’. In line with this, Jaszczolt (2002: 309) adds that Ried (1788) proves the importance of an array of acts such as promising, asking, giving commands and threatening. He claims also that Ried (1788) discussed in detail the appropriate conditions concerning the act of promising, which were not very different from ‘felicity conditions’ nowadays. Jaszczolt (*ibid*) concludes the examination of this period of study by mentioning that all these works on speech acts were after discussed in the philosophical tradition of Brentano (1874) and Hurssel (1900-1901) in addition to Reinach, who gave an organized analysis of the following actions : promising, questioning, requesting and commanding. In sum, all the previous research works on ‘social acts’ are seen as raw materials to the recent studies on ‘speech acts’ by Austin, Searle and their followers.

1.1.2 From Austin to Searle

This period of study is typified by the appearance of the two Anglo-American philosophers Austin and Searle, who have brought new sights to the area of philosophical investigations in speech acts. They have established important rules to help people get successful or happy speech acts, commonly known as ‘felicity conditions’. The concept of ‘act and proposition’ was discussed in the Searlean

classification of speech acts, as Jaszczolt (2002: 310) demonstrates: “The concept of an act and a proposition appears in Searle's later classification of speech acts founded on how words fit the world”. In line with this, Starr (2008: 19) explains that the Searlean analysis of speech acts theory is highlighted by the following procedures:

1. The speaker tends to produce a performative utterance.
2. The speaker tends that his performative utterance will be recognized as he intends.
3. The speaker expects that his performative utterance will have various effects on the hearer.

It is worth mentioning that the Austinian examination of speech acts begins through his paper of *Others Mind* (1946), which had been reprinted in his book *Philosophical Paper* (1961) in which he discussed the notion of the Aristotelian conception of ‘true vs. false’ utterances. The most known Austinian work in this field is *How to Do Things with Words* published by the ‘Clarendon Press’ in (1962). The Austinian foundations in this book are:

1. The fact that performative utterances are not like the descriptive ones.
2. The assumption that there are shortcomings that can arise during the performance of speech acts, technically called ‘infelicities’.
3. The establishment of six rules that will help language users to organize the application of speech acts.

Austin (1962) claims that in speech acts we have the notion of happy and unhappy performatives as opposed to true and false statements in constatives. He

argues that unhappy performatives are utterances that infected by infelicities. In contrast, happy utterances are actions that meet felicity conditions; we will talk about this issue in detail in the next chapter.

1.2 Types of Word-Forces

Austin (1962: 98-108) distinguishes three dimensions of speech acts based on word-forces: Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary acts:

a) Locutionary Acts: Austin (1962: 108) points out:

We first distinguished a group of things we do in saying something, which together we summed up by saying we perform a locutionary act, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to meaning in the traditional sense.

In a similar vein, Yule (1996: 48) sees that the Locutionary act is a fundamental concept in performative utterances, because the articulation of 'locutions' involves the creation of certain words having determine sense and reference. According to Perrault and Allen (1980: 169), "A locutionary act is an act of saying something: it is the act of uttering sequences of words drawn from the vocabulary of a given language". Overall, the articulation of Locutionary acts will not have powerful effects on the addressees. (See e.g.: 1)

1. He said to me "shoot her!" [Locutionary act].

b) Illocutionary Acts: These are actions that by uttering them we produce certain communicative forces. According to Austin (1962: 99),: "I explained the performance of an act in this new and second sense as the performance of an 'illocutionary' act, i.e. performance of an act ' in saying something' as opposed to performance of an act of

‘saying something’.” Austin (*ibid.*) claims that the Illocutionary act is a matter of performing actions through uttering particular words in specific circumstances. Similarly, Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 109) see that the articulation of illocutions represents the production of word-forces for the minimal unit of human communication. In a similar vein, Alston (1971: 35) believes that the articulation of an illocutionary act requires specific rules and conditions to be hold, such as appropriate persons and contexts. In sum, expressing Illocutions requires the ability to produce powerful utterances having various communicative effects on addressees. (see eg: 2).

2. He ordered me to shoot her. [Illocutionary act]

c) Perlocutionary Acts: these are the effects of the articulation of illocutions on the addressees; Austin (1962: 101) argues that:

Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them...we shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a perlocutionary act or perlocution.

Correspondingly, Yu (2002: 04) and Wiggins (1971: 20) see that the perlocutionary act is an act of bringing about or achieving some consequences by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring or surprising. Moreover, Yule (1996: 48) claims that the main purpose behind uttering illocutions is to see the effects or the perlocutions of these acts on the addressees. For instance, when I say:

“There is a hornet in your left ear” The perlocutionary of my utterance is when you start scratching your ear. (see.e.g: 3)

3. He persuaded me to shoot her. [Perlocutionary act]

This table includes examples of the previous types of speech acts:

Locutions	Illocutions	Perlocutions
He says to me: “This table is dirty”	He orders me to clean this table.	He obliges me to clean this table.
He says to me:“ You cannot do that next time”	He warns me that I will be punished next time.	He prevents me from doing that next time.
They asked: “ Is tomorrow your birth day?”	They promised to give me a present in my birthday.	They enjoyed me by their promise to give me a present in my birthday.
He states: “There is a trip tomorrow.”	He informs us that we will go in a trip.	He pleasures us to go in a journey.

Table: 01: Examples of locutions, illocutions and perlocutions

1.3 Classes of Speech Acts

1.3.1 Austinian Classification

Verdictives: These acts provide us with findings and results. Hence, they can be an estimate, reckoning, or appraisal. According to Austin (1962: 152), “Verdictives consist in the delivering of a finding, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons as to value or fact, so far as these are distinguishable.” The most common used verbs in expressing ‘verdictives’ are: to reckon, to place, to put in and to grade (see e.g.: 4).

4. The Algerian Ministry of Economics declares that the proportion of swags this year is more than ten percent.

Exercitives: These actions characterize by the description of powers, rights, and influences. Thus, they are used to express personal views whether for or against toward a given issue. The common used verbs in uttering ‘exercitives’ are: to appoint, to vote, to order, to argue and to warn. (see e.g.: 5)

5. The students of English department appoint George to be their responsible.

Commissives: These actions lead to the commitment of speakers to do something, such as promising, committing, and pledging. According to Yule (1996: 54), “Commissives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends”. (see e.g.: 6)

6. I hereby promise you that I will visit your family.

Behabitives: They are actions that have to do with ‘social behaviors’, examples of ‘behabitives’ are apologizing, congratulating, commending, challenging and condoling. (see e.g.: 7)

7. Helen says: “Congratulations on passing your driving test”

Expositives: Austin (1962: 160) confirms that the main aim of ‘Expositives’ is to develop views, conduct arguments and to clarify the use of references. The appropriate verbs that go with expressing ‘expositives’ are: to affirm, to deny, to state, to inform and to identify. (see e.g.: 8)

8. Scientists affirm that sunrays are beneficial for the strength of human babies’ bones.

This table represents the most common verbs in expressing the different classes of speech acts:

Classes	Verbs
Verdictives	To reckon, to place, to grade, to assess, to calculate, to measure
Commissives	To promise, to undertake, to propose, to adopt, to espouse, to plan
Behabitives	To apologize, to condole with, to sympathize, to greet, to hope
Expositives	To affirm, to deny, to state, to identify, to testify, to classify
Exercitives	To appoint, to choose, to bequeath, to warn, to proclaim, to dismiss

Table: 02: The most common verbs in expressing the different classes of speech acts

1. 3.2 Searlean Classification

Declarations: Yule (1996: 53) points that declarative speech acts serve to change a given reality in the world via their utterances. In line with this, Pratt (1977: 81) sees that declarative speech acts are: “Illocutionary acts that bring about the state of affairs they refer to”, examples of declarative speech acts are.

9. Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife.

10. Teacher: I inform you that the holidays will be annulled.

Representatives: Yule (1996: 53) sees that the representative utterances state what the speaker thinks to be the case or not. Therefore, they convey statements, assertions, conclusions and descriptions, as in the case of the following examples.

11. Ahmed says: “It was a warm day”.

12. Death is something hopeless.

Expressives: Pratt (1977: 81) believes that expressive speech acts have to deal with the psychological states of speakers. Hence, they report persons' emotions and attitudes, such as pleasures, pains, likes and dislikes. These are examples of expressive speech acts.

13. A student says to his teacher: "I am sorry to be late".

14. I am suffering from these injuries for a long time.

Directives: Hurford *et.al.* (2007: 294) claim that: "A directive act is any illocutionary act which essentially involves the speaker trying to get the hearer to behave in some required way". Therefore, the performance of directive speech acts entails the addressee to do what the speaker wants like ordering, requesting, commanding and suggesting. These are some illustrations of directives.

15. Could you lend me your pen, please?

16. I order you to shoot her!

Commissives: Hurford *et.al.* (2007: 294) point out "A commissive act is any illocutionary act which essentially involves the speaker committing himself to behave in some required way". Consequently, this category of speech acts is related to future actions such as promises, threats, and pledges. These are some suggested illustrations of commissives.

17. Ahmed says to his friend: "I will be back in few minutes".

18. David talks to his son: "I warn you that you will be punished next time".

1.4 Explicit and Implicit Speech Acts

On the one hand, Trask (2007: 210) points out:

The existence of explicit performative utterances was first pointed out by the British philosopher J.L. Austin in the 1960 s. Austin's work has been continued by several linguists and philosophers, and it has led to the development of the theory of speech acts".

In a similar vein, Lyons (1995: 238) explains that an explicit performative utterance is one that contains an expression which makes an action explicitly performed. He also claims that Austin suggests the following conditions that should be satisfied by each utterance to be an explicit performative one.

- a) The utterance should not be a constative or descriptive one.
- b) It should contain an explicit performative verb.
- c) The speaker who performs the act upon this utterance should be in first-person subject 'I', and his verb should be in the present indicative form.

These conditions were reformulated under the heading of what is technically called 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Device', or in short 'IFID'. According to Yule (1996: 49), "The most obvious device for indicating the illocutionary forces...where there is a slot for a verb that explicitly names the illocutionary act being performed. Such a verb can be called a performative verb (VP)". This performative verb is a key word that determines the notion of the whole performative utterances, as Allan (1997: 458) believes: "Definitions of illocutions are an extension of the semantics of the key verb naming the illocution, for example, assert, deny, boast, suggest, promise, threaten, offer, command, baptize, etc. Such a verb is just one kind of illocutionary force-indicating device or IFID". These are examples of explicit performatives.

19. I hereby warn you that you will be punished next time. [explicit warn]

20. I am sure you that you will not have a session tomorrow.[explicit assertion]

On the other hand, Palmer (1976: 162) believes that the implicit performatives are utterances that do not contain an expression that names their actions. In line with this, Austin (1962) calls these kinds of performatives ‘primary performatives’, and claims that these utterances do not have an explicit performative verb. People tend to use the implicit performative utterances to express actions that have to deal with great politeness such as requesting, demanding, and apologizing. Let us see these examples of implicit performative utterances.

21. A boy said to his friend: “I shall be there.” [Implicit promise].

22. A student talks to his teacher: “I am sorry to be late.” [Implicit apology]

1.5 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Another classification of speech acts has been done by various linguists, who divide the performative utterances into direct and indirect speech acts. Yule (1996: 54) claims that this classification is based on ‘structural distinction’; in other words, it involves the comparison between ‘structural forms’ such as declarative, interrogative or imperative and ‘communicative functions’ like requests, demands, or promises.

On one side, direct speech acts are found in utterances that have a homogeneous relationship between structural forms and communicative functions. According to Yule (1996: 54-55), “Whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function, we have a direct speech act”.

On the other side, Searle (1975: 61) points out:

In indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer.

In a similar vein, Allan (1997: 402) believes that the following performative utterance “Can you open the window” is an indirect speech act of requesting, because it expresses a communicative function (request) by means of another structure (question). Hence, we assume that the indirect speech acts are said to be found in performatives that contain a heterogeneous relationship between structural forms and communicative functions, or when we have an indirect relationship between structures and functions in general. Yule (1996: 56) claims that these indirect speech acts are usually associated with topics that have to deal with greater politeness. These are examples of direct and indirect speech acts.

Direct speech acts:

- 23. “It is a warm day” [Direct declaration]
- 24. “I order you to revise your lessons!” [Direct order]
- 25. “I warn you that if you cheat in the exams you will get zero [Direct warn]

Indirect speech acts:

- 26. A child says to his mother “I am hungry”. [Indirect demand for eating]
- 27. “It is very cold in here” [Indirect request to close the windows]
- 28. A says, “Do you like ice cream?”

B replies: “Is the pope catholic?”

[Indirect answer by saying yes]

Conclusion

We have discussed through this chapter the origins of the term speech acts in old studies and its developmental stages in the recent researches. In addition, we have seen that this term is not an invention of the eighteenth century, but it is rather than an extension of different studies on ‘social acts’.

Austin (1962) has made two important divisions of speech acts. The first is based on word- force (Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary) and the second is grounded on the basis of the general function performed by these speech acts. It is worth mentioning that a speech act can be expressed either ‘explicitly’ or ‘implicitly’. The first mode requires the use of performative verbs, or what is called ‘IFID’. However, in expressing implicit speech acts this performative verb is not needed. Since speech acts theory has to deal with ‘social interactions’ such as politeness, apology, and demand, it is assumed that the performed actions should be adapted to these social behaviors. Hence, in some cases we tend to use an indirect speech act to express a request to a person who is in a superior status, although in some other cases we use direct speech acts to make our performative utterance more explicit.

Despite the fact that speech acts theory has been developed through various studies, many problems appear and prevent the application of these actions. These shortages are technically called by Austin (1962) ‘infelicities’. In the next chapter, we will discuss these problems in detail.

Chapter Two
Infelicitous and Felicitous Speech Acts

Introduction.....	21
2.1 Infelicitous and Felicitous Speech Acts	21
2.1.1 Infelicitous Speech Acts.....	22
2.1.1.1 Misfires.....	22
2.1.1.2 Abuses.....	24
2.1.2 Felicitous Speech Acts.....	25
2.1.2.1 Austinian rules	26
2.1.2.1.1 Austinian Solutions to Misfires.....	26
2.1.2.1.2 Austinian Solutions to Abuses.....	30
2.1.2.2 Searlean Felicity Conditions.....	31
2.1.2.2.1 Propositional Content Condition.....	31
2.1.2.2.2 Preparatory Condition.....	32
2.1.2.2.3 Sincerity Condition.....	33
2.1.2.2.4 Essential Condition.....	34
Conclusion.....	36

Chapter Two

Infelicitous and Felicitous Speech Acts

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the major shortcomings or infelicities that can face people during the application of speech acts. The analysis of these infelicities deals with the internal factors or ‘misfires’ and the external features of infelicities or what Austin (1962) calls ‘abuses’. This chapter also deals with a presentation of the felicity conditions that aim to provide the appropriate circumstances for the application of felicitous speech acts. In this presentation, we start with the Austinian rules of felicitous speech acts. After that, we will state the Searlean felicity conditions that include propositional content, preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions.

2.1 Infelicitous and Felicitous Speech Acts

Infelicitous speech acts are the performative utterances that do not meet the conditions of Felicitous speech acts; in other words, they are performative utterances that are uttered inappropriately. In a similar vein, Robson and Stockweel (2005: 11) point out: “Performatives may fail if certain conditions are not met”. Accordingly, Austin (1962: 14) calls these performatives’ shortcomings ‘infelicities’ or ‘unhappy speech acts’.

Whereas felicitous speech acts are actions that meet the appropriate circumstances or ‘felicity conditions’ of performative utterances; in other words, felicitous speech acts are actions that are expressed by means of utterances correctly or felicitously, as Pratt (1977: 81) points that:

To perform a speech act correctly, however, it is not enough merely to utter a grammatical sentence. Speech acts, like all behavior, are correctly or felicitously performed only if certain conditions obtain. The illocutionary act of promising, for example, is only felicitously carried out if the speaker is able to fulfill the promise, sincerely intends to do so, and believes that what he is promising to do is something the hearer would like him to do.

Since Austin (1962: 15) claims that in performative utterances we have the concepts of ‘felicitous’ and ‘infelicitous’ speech acts; we will discuss the characteristics of these two types separately.

2.1.1 Infelicitous Speech Acts

In his book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), Austin determines two main categories of infelicitous speech acts or in short ‘infelicities’: “Misfires” and “Abuses”.

2.1.1.1 Misfires

Misfires are infelicitous performatives that are due to external factors. Austin (1962: 16) points out: “...when the utterance is a misfire, the procedure which we purport to invoke is disallowed or is botched: and our act (marrying, &) is void or without effect”. Austin claims that there are two types of misfires: ‘misinvocations’ and ‘misexecutions’ (*ibid.* 17).

Misinvocations: These are performative utterances that meet the appropriate conditions for the execution of speech acts, but they have not been applied as purported. Austin (1962: 17) believes that “in both of the cases labeled... there is misinvocation of a procedure – either because there is, speaking vaguely, no such

procedure, or because the procedure in question cannot be made to apply in the way attempted”. These are some examples of misinvocations:

29. A soldier says to his chief “I hereby order you to stop moving!”

30. I offer a gift and no one accepts it.

The performative utterance in (eg: 29) is infected by misinvocation, because the act of ‘ordering’ cannot be executed by a soldier who is not entitled to give orders to his chief. This type of misinvocation speech act is due to what Austin (1962: 17) calls ‘misapplications’. However, in (eg: 30), Robson and Stockweel (2005: 11) claim that this situation is unhappy, since the offered gift is not accepted by any person.

Misexecutions: Austin (1962) points that in the case of ‘misexecutions’ actions are vitiated or aborted by means of ‘flaws’ and ‘hitches’, which are due to the use of wrong formulas and implicit references; as in the case of the following examples .

31. Ahmed says: “I inform you that the race will not be run”, uttered when there is more than one arranged race.

32. John points: “I am staying in front of my house”, uttered when he has more than one house.

Austin (*ibid.*) suggests that ‘hitches’ refer to the performative utterances which are not fully carried out. For instance, a person bets that the race will not run, and his friend refuses to complete the act of betting. Austin (1979: 238) claims that this action falls in ‘hitches’, because the conventional procedure of betting has not been executed completely. These are some illustrations of hitches:

33. My attempt to marry by saying “I will” is abortive if the woman says “I will not”

34. My attempt to challenge you by saying “I challenge you” is failed if you say “No, I cannot”

2.1.1.2 Abuses

Abuses are infelicitous performative utterances that are due to intentional or internal factors or circumstances. Austin (1962: 39) believes that actions performed without the ordinary or expected thoughts and feelings are said to be infected by abuses. In line with this, Lyons (1977: 734) points out: “If the person performing the act does not insincerely (i.e. without the appropriate beliefs or feelings) his illocutionary act will not be nullified, but he will be guilty of what Austin calls an abuse”. Insincere promises, mendacious findings and unfelt congratulations, all these factors lead to abuse speech acts. Accordingly, Austin (1962: 16) argues that abuse speech acts can be ‘insincerities’ and ‘non-fulfillments’; let’s consider the following examples:

35. Helen says to me: “congratulations on passing your driving test”, said when Helen believes that I only got my driving test by bribing the examiner.

36. “I promise that I will give you a present”, uttered when I am not intending to give him a present.

The act of ‘congratulating’ expressed in (eg: 35) is an abuse, since it is uttered without the sincere feelings. Similarly, the act of ‘promising’ expressed in (eg: 36) is an abuse, because it is executed without intending to do the promised act.

To conclude the discussion of infelicitous speech acts or infelicities, this table represents the different categories of infelicities based on Austin (1962: 18):

Infelicities	
Misfires	Abuses
1. Misinvocations	1. Insincerities
a. No plays: no suitable convention b. Misapplications: convention misapplied	The appropriate intentions are lacking.
2. Misexecutions:	2. Non fulfillments:
a. Flaws: conventional procedure is partly rejected b. Hitches: conventional procedure is not completed	The appropriate intentions are not fully carried out.

Table 02.1: The different classes of infelicities

2.1.2 Felicitous Speech Acts

Felicitous speech acts are performative utterances that meet felicity conditions or the appropriate circumstances of happy speech acts. Hurford *et.al.* (2007: 282) sees that:

The felicity conditions of an illocutionary act are conditions that must be fulfilled in the situation in which the act is carried out if the act is to be said to be carried out properly or felicitously. One of the felicity conditions for the illocutionary act of ordering is that the speaker must be superior to, or in authority over, the hearer. Thus, if a servant says to the Queen ‘Open the window’, there is a certain incongruity,

or anomalousness, or infelicity in the act (of ordering) carried out, but if the Queen says ‘Open the window’ to the servant, there is no infelicity.

In a similar vein, Austin (1962: 14-15) suggests six rules to formulate felicitous performative utterances, and he claims that: “Now if we sin against any one (or more) of these six rules, our performative utterance will be (in one way or another) unhappy”. Another classification of felicity conditions has done by Searle (1969), who determines the following types of felicity conditions: propositional content, preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions.

Although the Austinian and Searlean examination of felicity conditions have the same purpose, they have not agreed on establishing the same pattern of felicitous speech acts. Accordingly, we will examine the two classifications separately.

2.2.1 Austinian Rules

In his famous book, Austin (1962: 27- 40) states six rules that aim to organize the application of speech acts; in other words, he suggests six rules that serve to get felicitous speech acts. These rules are divided into two parts: the first four rules are devoted to defeat the external infelicities or misfires, whereas the last two rules tend to overcome the internal infelicities or abuses.

2.2.1.1 Austin’s Solutions to Misfires

In attempting to solve the problem of ‘misfires’ or the internal infelicities, Austin (1962: 26-36) suggests four rules that aim to provide the appropriate conventional procedures and circumstances for the execution of speech acts. In addition, he argues that avoid falling in ‘flaws’ and ‘hitches’ requires the ability of

participants to execute the performative utterances completely and correctly as well (ibid.).

Rule 01: Appropriate conventional procedures

Austin (1962: 26) believes that a felicitous speech act is a performative utterance that has conventional procedures and a certain conventional effects on the addressees. Therefore, he points that:

There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain participants in certain circumstances. (*ibid.*)

Austin (1962: 26) claims that the second part of this rule is not very important, since it is devoted to restrict the numbers of utterances' cases. However, the first part of this rule indicates that avoid falling in misfires, requires the condition that your performative utterance should have an accepted conventional procedure having certain conventional effects on your addressees. To clarify this issue, we consider the following situation which is derived from Austin (1962: 28).

At a party (when picking sides), John says "I pick George", but George replies "I am not playing". Here we say that this situation is unhappy, because the conventional procedure of picking George is not accepted, or because George is an inappropriate object for the procedure of picking. Hence, we deduce that a felicitous performative utterance should have an accepted conventional procedure, which will also have an appropriate conventional effect on the addressees. Another situation that illustrates this rule is the following:

Ahmed says: “Go and pick up wood!”, but Omar replies: “I do not take orders from you”. In this case, Omar refuses Ahmed’s obligation, because he believes that Ahmed is not entitled to give him instructions. In this case, the act of ‘order’ will not have an accepted conventional effect, since the procedure is not appropriate.

Rule 02: Appropriate participants and circumstances

To perform a speech act correctly means that the participants and the circumstances, in which the actions take place, should be suitable for the execution of the performative utterance. In line with this, Austin (1962: 34) says: “The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate to the invocation of the particular procedure invoked”.

Austin (1962: 34) believes that this rule tends to overcome the problems of ‘misapplications’ and it distinguishes two conditions to perform a felicitous speech act, such as appropriate persons and suitable circumstances. For instance, to perform an act of ‘ordering’, the speaker should have an authority on his addressee. To clarify more this rule, let’s consider the following situation.

Steven asks “Can you lend me your pen, please!” and his friend replies “I’m sorry, it is not mine”. Here the act of ‘demanding’ meets the condition of appropriate participants. However the appropriate circumstances are not achieved, because the pen asked for is not of Steven’s friend

Rule 03: Correct execution of the procedure

Since ‘flaws’ speech acts are performative utterances that are not correctly carried out, Austin (1962: 35) claims that: “The procedure must be executed by all participants correctly”. And he believes that this rule serves to defeat the problem of

these flows' shortcomings. Austin (1962: 35) adds that executing the procedure correctly means that we should avoid using implicit formulas, vague sentences and uncertain references. To illustrate this issue, we consider these examples:

37. David says "I will visit my friend", said when he has more than one friend.

38. David says "I will visit my dear friend George".

The first utterance is infelicitous, because it is uttered using uncertain references, while the second utterance is felicitous, since it has been executed by all participants correctly.

Rule 04: Complete execution of the procedure

Austin (1962: 36) suggests the following condition of felicitous speech acts: "The procedure must be executed by all participants completely", and claims that this condition is devoted to solve the problem of 'hitches'. To execute the procedure completely requires from both speakers and addressees to joint their efforts to carry out the action totally. The most common examples of this situation are:

39. David attempts to marry by saying "I will", but Helen says "I will not".

40. David attempts to marry by saying "I will", and Helen says: "yes, I will".

The first utterance is infelicitous or abortive, because the procedure is not fully carried out by both participants. In contrast, the second utterance is felicitous, since its procedure is completely performed. Finally, we assume that we should take these four rules into consideration during the application of speech acts; otherwise these performatives will be infected by misfires.

2.2.1.2 Austin's Solutions to Abuses

Rule 05 and 06: Appropriate persons have certain thoughts, feelings and intentions

In attempting to defeat the problem of 'abuses' or the 'internal infelicities', Austin (1962: 39) believes that:

The procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts feelings, or intentions, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts, feelings, or intentions, and the participants must intent so to conduct themselves... and the participants must so conduct themselves subsequently.

Austin (1962: 16) sees that these two rules are opposed to the previous ones. He adds that they are used to solve the dilemma of abuse speech acts. These rules tend to adapt the participants' intentions, feelings and thoughts to the appropriate circumstances, as the following examples illustrate.

A. Examples of having the requisite feelings:

41. "I condole with you", said when I feel really sympathized with you.
42. "I congratulate you", said when I did really feel pleasant.

B. Examples of having the requisite thoughts:

43. "I advise you to participate in this competition", said when I am sure that this participation would be good for him.
44. "I think that these clothes are suitable for you", said when I am really admired by these clothes.

C. Examples of having the requisite intentions:

45. “I promise that I will visit you next summer”, said when I’ m intending to do this promise.

46. “I declare the war”, said when I’ m intending to fight.

In sum, we say that the previous examples are felicitous performative utterances, since they have met the requisite feelings, intentions and thoughts of the appropriate participants. However, Lyons (1977: 734) points out that the absence of these requisite feelings, intentions and thoughts will not get these utterances to be void, but they can be classified as abuses.

2.2.2 Searlean Felicity Conditions

Searle (1969: 36) claims that speaking a language is performing actions according to specific rules, and he suggests four types of felicity conditions: propositional content, preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions.

2.2.2.1 Propositional content condition

Searle (1969) sees that the propositional content involves that the performative utterance components should fulfill the performed act. Hence, we cannot express a ‘command’ by the use of an utterance that performs a ‘promise’. Searle (1980: 321) suggests the following propositional content conditions for the act of promising.

1. The speaker should express that promise in his utterance.
2. In expressing that promise, the speaker should predicate a future action.

In a similar vein, Yule (1996: 50) claims that the propositional content conditions of ‘promises’ and ‘warns’ are the same, since both of them express a future action. However, in the former the speaker wants this act to happen, and in the latter he does not. All in all, this condition is not very important in view of the fact that it is evident and easy to be achieved.

2.2.2.2 Preparatory condition

Searle (1980: 322- 323) claims that the preparatory condition of performative utterances means that these utterances have clear purposes behind uttering them. For example, we cannot say that we are ordering someone to do something, when it is obvious that this person is already doing or is about to do this action. Similarly, Leech and Thomas (2005: 95) see that the preparatory rules specify conditions which are prerequisites to the performance of the speech act. For instance, for the act of thanking, the speaker must be aware that the addressee has done something of benefit to the speaker. It is worth mentioning that Yule (1996: 51) believes that to perform an act of ‘warning’, we need the following preparatory conditions:

1. It is not clear that the hearer knows the event will occur.
2. The speaker thinks that the event will occur.
3. The event will not have a beneficial effect.

Lyons (1977: 733) adds another explanation of the preparatory condition in which he claims that achieving the preparatory conditions, means that the participants have the appropriate rights or authorities to perform speech acts. For instance, to perform an act of ‘ordering’, speakers should be in superior status than their

addressees. In line with this, Pratt (1977: 82) suggests the following preparatory conditions for the act of ‘questioning’:

1. The speaker does not know the answer of the hearer.
2. It is not evident that the hearer will supply the answer without asking him.

Overall, the preparatory condition is very crucial in achieving felicitous speech acts, because it serves to meet the requirements of valid performative utterances.

2.2.2.3 Sincerity condition

Sincerity condition involves that both of the speakers and hearers tend to do the desired speech act correctly. Searle (1980: 323) and Harman (1971: 67) claim that the sincerity condition for the act of ‘promising’ implies that the speaker should intend to do the act promised. Moreover, Searle (*ibid.*) adds that: “The most important distinction between sincere and insincere promises is that in the case of the sincere promise the speaker intends to do the act promised, in the case of the insincere promise he does not intend to do the act”. In line with this, Leech and Thomas (2005: 95) believe that sincerity conditions specify conditions which must obtain if the speech act is to be performed sincerely. For instance, the sincerity condition for the act of apology requires that the speaker must be sorry for what has been done.

Additionally, Yule (1996: 51) argues that a sincere ‘warn’ means that the speaker should genuinely believe that this warned act will not have a beneficial effect on the hearer. For example, John says to his friend: “I warn you that if you do not revise your lessons, you will not pass in the exams”. Here, John’s utterance is a

sincere one because he genuinely believes that his friend cannot succeed unless he revises his lessons. Similarly, Hurford (2007: 286) points that a sincerity condition on apologizing involves that the speaker should believe that the thing which he apologizes for is morally wrong.

Departing from what precedes, we claim that the sincerity condition is associated with psychological features of participants, such as: intentions, feelings and thoughts. In addition, the misuse of this condition will not get the whole performative utterance to be void, as Lyons (1977: 734) points out: “If the person performing the act does so insincerely (i.e. without the appropriate beliefs or feelings) his illocutionary act will not be nullified, but he will be guilty of what Austin calls an abuse”.

2.2.2.4 Essential condition

Searle (1980: 323) explains that the essential condition in performing speech acts requires the commitment of speakers and hearers to do the actions which are expressed by their utterances. Similarly, he points that the essential feature for the act of ‘promising’ is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain promise. In line with this, Malmkjaer (2005: 491) argues that the essential condition of ‘promises’ is that the speaker intends that his utterance will make him responsible for intending to do the promised act. Moreover, Pratt (1977: 82) believes that the essential condition in performing ‘questions’ is the assumption that the speaker tries to elicit information from the addressee.

It is worth mentioning that Yule (1996: 51) assumes that the essential condition in performing speech acts is a combination of what should be in the

utterance content, the nature of contexts and the speaker's intentions to do these actions. Thus, he suggests that the essential condition to achieve a felicitous act of 'warning' is that the utterance changes the speaker's state from uttering general expressions to inform that there will be some bad events expected in the future. In the same direction, Lyons (1977: 734) points that the essential condition in performing speech acts means that the speaker is committed by the illocutionary force of his utterance to certain beliefs or intentions. Hence, we deduce that the act of 'promising' is said to be void if it would be broken by speakers.

In sum, we assume that the essential condition is typified by the commitment of participants to do the actions which are expressed via their utterances. To appreciate more the idea of felicitous speech acts, these tables represent the different felicity conditions on various types of speech acts.

Felicity Conditions	Promising	Warning
Propositional Content Condition	The speaker's utterance expresses a future action.	The speaker expresses a future action in his utterance
Preparatory Condition	The hearer wants the speaker to do the promised act.	The warned act should not have beneficial effects on the addressees.
Sincerity Condition	The speaker tends to do the promised act.	The speaker must not want the warned act to happen.
Essential Condition	The speaker undertakes to do the promised act	The speaker undertakes to inform a bad event.

Table: 03: felicity conditions on the acts of promising and warning

Felicity Conditions	Questioning	Apologizing
Propositional Content Condition	The speaker' utterance requires the hearer's answers.	The speaker' utterance contains polite expressions.
Preparatory Condition	The speaker does not know the answer.	The apologized act should be morally wrong.
Sincerity Condition	The speaker tends to know the answer.	The speaker must not want the apologized act to happen again.
Essential Condition	The speaker undertakes to elicit information from the hearer.	The speaker undertakes to inform a bad event.

Table: 04: Felicity conditions on the acts of questioning and apologizing

Conclusion

Since the ultimate goal of felicity conditions is to achieve felicitous speech acts, speakers and hearers should confirm that their performative utterances are adapted to these conditions. It must be recalled here that the main concern of felicity conditions is to provide the appropriate circumstances for happy speech acts to take place. Additionally, the application of these felicitous speech acts cannot be achieved if these actions are infected by some problems or what Austin (1962) calls 'infelicities'.

The Austinian examination of felicitous speech acts divides the felicity conditions into two parts. The first part is devoted to solve the problem of the external infelicities or ‘ misfires’, while the second one serves to overcome the shortcomings of the internal infelicities or ‘ abuses’. It is worth mentioning that for Austin (1962), ‘ misfires’ actions are not achieved at all. However, in the case of ‘ abuses’ these actions are achieved, but they miss the appropriate feelings, thoughts and intentions.

The Searlean examination of felicitous speech acts involves four types of felicity conditions. The first condition is the propositional content that guides the participants to fulfill the actions expressed by their performative utterances. The second is the preparatory condition which determines the appropriate settings in which a performative utterance should be uttered. The third is the sincerity condition that deals with the psychological aspects of the participants such as: feelings, intentions and thoughts. Fourthly, the last one is the essential condition which commits speakers to undertake the actions expressed by their performative utterances.

Chapter Three
The Students' Questionnaire

Introduction.....38

3.1 Description of the questionnaire.....38

3.2 Analysis of results.....40

3.2.1 Section one: Students' familiarity with speech acts theory40

3.2.2 Section two: Students' application of felicity conditions on widespread
categories of speech acts.....48

3.2.3 Section three: The impacts of students' familiarity with felicity conditions on
their production of felicitous speech acts.....53

Conclusion.....56

Conclusion57

Bibliography59

Appendix62

Chapter Three

The Students' Questionnaire

Introduction

This chapter will be devoted to the analysis and discussion of the students' questionnaire. We start with the description of the different sections in this questionnaire. In the next step, we examine the students' answers to this questionnaire through the following sections:

In the first section, we examine the students' knowledge about speech acts theory, such as definitions of speech acts, infelicities, types of infelicities, felicity conditions and their purposes. The analysis of the second section findings deals with how students employ their knowledge about felicity conditions to perform speech acts. In this section, we have selected the universal kinds of speech acts such as promises, requests, orders and apologies. The last section aims to present the reader with the impacts of the awareness about felicity conditions on the students' application of speech acts. It also deals with checking whether students are capable to decide on a given performative utterance as felicitous or infelicitous one.

3.1 Description of the questionnaire

Since the aim of this study is to raise the students' awareness about using felicity conditions to perform speech acts, it seems appropriate to direct a students' questionnaire to investigate this issue. The questionnaire aims to explore the awareness of Master One English students about felicity conditions and the way they perform speech acts in general. The main objective behind this questionnaire is to verify the research hypothesis that stipulates that if

students are aware about using felicity conditions, they will be able to perform speech acts felicitously.

In this study, we have a sample that consists of twenty three students out of a population of fifty six students. These students are selected randomly in sequence that they will be a representative sample for the whole population of Master One English students.

The present questionnaire consists of twelve questions divided into three sections as follows:

Section one (Q:1 – Q: 7): This section aims to gather general information about how do students define speech acts, infelicities, types of infelicities and felicity conditions. This section highlights how students suggest alternatives to make a performative utterance felicitously applied. The last question tends to explore students' familiarity with the roles of different types of felicity conditions.

Section two (Q:8 – Q:10): This section seeks to draw information about the correlation between knowing felicity conditions and adapting them to various types of speech acts. In the first question, the students are asked to choose among four types of felicity conditions, the prime condition which is very crucial to the performance of 'promises' and 'orders'. In the next question, students are directed to select the appropriate felicity condition which can go with expressing 'requests'. Finally, the last question is to choose from each four felicity conditions, where two conditions seem to be suitable to perform: promises, apologies and greetings.

Section three (Q:11 – Q:12): This section aims to point out the impacts of students' awareness about felicity conditions on their abilities to produce felicitous speech acts and to

avoid falling in ‘infelicities’. In question eleven, the learners are required to decide on four performative utterances: either ‘felicitous’ or ‘infelicitous’ performatives. If they have answered by ‘infelicitous’, they are also required to justify their answers. The last question of this questionnaire enables the students to improve their own capacities in performing speech acts without any assistants or instructions. Hence, they are asked to produce performative utterances that express requests, commands and promises, and to determine the appropriate circumstances in which they should be uttered.

3.2 Analysis of results

3.2.1 Section one: Students’ familiarity with speech acts theory

A) Question one:

1. How would you define speech acts?

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	15	65,21
False answers	0	0
Acceptable	08	34,79
Total	23	100

Table 05.1: Students’ definitions of speech acts

Table 5.1 shows that the majority of students have defined speech acts correctly. Since the students of Master One were taught this lecture in the previous year, they did not find any difficulty to use the appropriate expressions to define speech acts. However, there are some general definitions which cannot be classified either as false or true answers. This high proportion of correct responses is due to students’ familiarity with this pragmatic issue.

B) Question Two:

2. How would you define ‘infelicities’?

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	13	56,52
False answers	06	26,08
Acceptable	04	17,4
Total	23	100

Table 05.2: Students’ definitions of infelicities

This table reveals that more than fifty percent of students are aware about ‘infelicities’. However, it also indicates that there are some students who do not know these ‘infelicities’ at all, or they have unclear ideas about them. The proportion of twenty six percent argues that there are only six students who have answered this question wrongly. Since these wrong responses represent a minority of students, we assume that ‘infelicities’ are clear for the majority of them.

C) Question Three:

3. What are the different types of ‘infelicities’?

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	13	56,52
False answers	07	30,44
Acceptable	03	13,04
Total	23	100

Table 05.3: Students’ classification of infelicities

Table 5.3 demonstrates that the same numbers of the students who defined infelicities correctly were also able to differentiate the two types of these infelicities: ‘misfires’ and ‘abuses’ appropriately. However, the thing that should be noted here is that the proportion of the students who did not answer correctly increased from one question to another. In this question, there about ten students who did not answer this question at all, or answered it in the wrong way.

D) Question Four:

4. How would you define felicity conditions?

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	09	39,13
False answers	05	21,74
Acceptable	09	39,13
Total	23	100

Table 05.4: Students’ perceptions of felicity conditions

Table 5.4 shows that there are only about forty percent of students have defined felicity conditions correctly. However, it reveals also that the same proportion of students who have incomplete definitions about these conditions. These students have mixed the definition of felicity conditions with the description of felicitous speech acts; in other words, they are not able to distinguish between the rules of felicity conditions and the felicitous speech acts. Accordingly, we deduce from this table that the students’ perception of felicity conditions is described as a superficial awareness.

E) Question Five:

5. Could you find out the main purpose of felicity conditions?

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	14	60,87
False answers	07	30,44
Acceptable	02	8,69
Total	23	100

Table 05.5: Students' perceptions of the role of felicity conditions

Despite the fact that the students are not perfectly aware of felicity conditions in the previous question, this table affirms that the majority of students answer this question appropriately. Hence, we assume that they have benefited from the key word of this question 'purpose' to discover the fact that felicity conditions and felicitous speech acts are not the same, and to notice that these rules tend to help them in achieving felicitous performatives.

F) Question Six:

6. How, in your opinion, can speech acts be applied successfully?

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	12	52,17
False answers	06	26,08
Acceptable	05	21,75
Total	23	100

Table 05.6: Students' perceptions of felicitous speech acts

Since this question allows the students to express their personal views about the way of achieving felicitous speech acts, this table shows a diversity of expressing opinions and attitudes as well. Hence, we notice that the majority of students have suggested the right procedures to achieve felicitous speech acts. However, this table shows also that there are about eleven students

who have not answered this question correctly, or they have ambiguous ideas concerning this issue.

G) Question Seven:

7. Could you explain the role of each of the following types of felicity conditions?

7.1 Propositional Content Condition:

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	06	26,08
False answers	14	60,86
Acceptable	03	13,06
Total	23	100

Table 05.7.1: Students' perceptions of the Propositional Content Condition

Surprisingly, the results in table 5.7.1 show that the majority of students ignore the role of the propositional content condition. They also reveal that there are about sixty one percent or fourteen students who have not answered this question correctly. Hence, we notice that whenever there is a general question the students answer correctly, while in the detailed questions they do not answer very well. This supports the fact which we have stated in the previous analysis of questions that the students' perceptions of felicity conditions are of the kind of superficial or surface awareness

7.2 Preparatory Condition:

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	06	26,08
False answers	15	65,23
Acceptable	02	8,69
Total	23	100

Table 05.7.2: Students' perceptions of the Preparatory Condition

This table reveals approximately the same findings as the previous one. It represents the continuity of the students' ignorance of the roles of felicity conditions and of the detailed questions as a whole.

7.3 Sincerity Condition:

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	14	60,86
False answers	09	39,14
Acceptable	00	00
Total	23	100

Table 05.7.3 Students' perceptions of the sincerity condition

In contrast to the two previous tables, the findings obtained from this table show that the majority of students are aware of the role of sincerity conditions. These results indicate that there are fourteen out of twenty three students; in other words, there are about sixty percent of students who have determined the role of sincerity conditions appropriately. Since there are some students who do not take these questions seriously, we observe that there are eight or thirty four percent of them who have not answered this question at all.

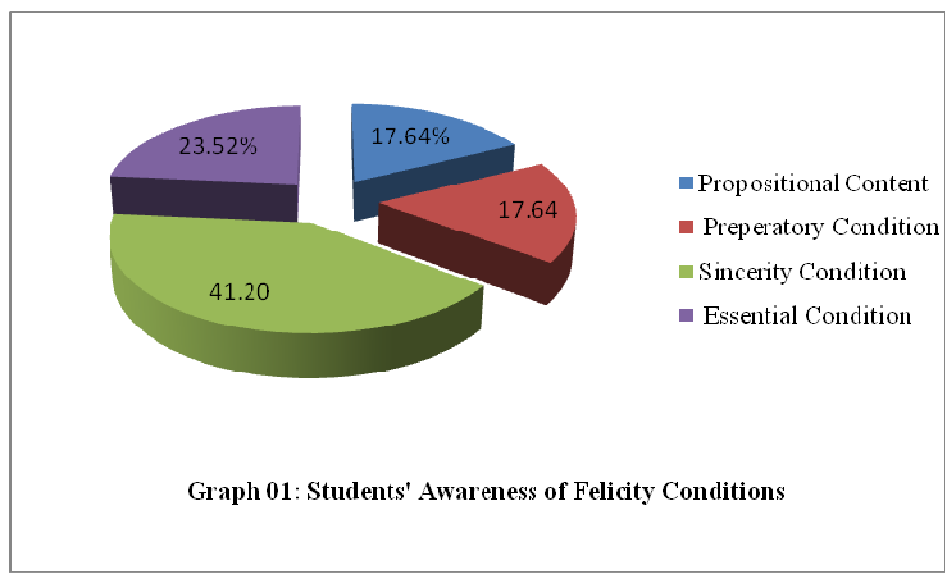
7.4 Essential Condition:

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	08	34,78
False answers	15	65,22
Acceptable	00	00
Total	23	100

Table 05.7.4 Students' perceptions of the essential condition

The results in this table show that a large number of students ignore the purpose behind using the essential condition to perform speech acts. Hence, we notice that there are more than sixty five percent of students who have not suggested any answers to this question. Despite the fact that the majority of students are not conscious about the role of essential conditions, there are nearly thirty five percent of students who have answered this question correctly.

All in all, the students' awareness about felicity conditions differs from one condition to another. For instance, we notice that the sincerity and essential conditions are clear for a large number of students; however, we observe also that most of them ignore the roles of the content propositional and preparatory conditions. The following graph represents the familiarity of students with the different types of felicity conditions.



In sum, we assume that the majority of students are familiar with the general concepts in speech acts theory such as definitions of speech acts, felicitous speech acts, infelicities and felicity conditions. Yet, they ignore a lot of details about using felicity conditions to perform speech acts correctly. The performance of students in the first section show, theoretically speaking, that they are conscious or familiar with speech acts theory. Yet, in the next sections, we will see the impacts of this familiarity on their performance of speech acts. Before that, these tables measure the standard performance of students in the different questions of the first section.

Felicity Conditions	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Acceptable
Propositional Content	26,09%	60,87%	13,04%
Preparatory	26,09%	65,22%	8,69%
Sincerity	60,86%	39,14%	00%
Essential	34,78%	65,22%	00%

Table 05.7.5: Student's familiarity with all types of felicity conditions

Statistics	SECTION ONE			
	TRUE	FALSE	Acceptable	TOTAL
Numbers	80	43	38	161
Proportions (%)	49,68	26,72	23,60	100

Table 05.7.6: Students' responses in section one

3.2.2 Section two: Students' application of felicity conditions on widespread categories of speech acts

H) Question eight

8. Among these felicity conditions, could you identify the prime condition which can go with these two speech acts?

1. Promising

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Preparatory condition | b) Sincerity condition |
| c) Essential condition | d) Propositional content condition |

2. Ordering

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Preparatory condition | b) Sincerity condition |
| c) Essential condition | d) Propositional content condition |

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	09	39,13
False answers	05	21,74
Acceptable	09	39,13
Total	23	100

Table 6: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions for promising and ordering

Table six shows that there are nine or about forty percent of students who have selected the appropriate felicity conditions for the application of ‘promises’ and ‘orders’. However, it reveals that there are the same proportions of students who have not reached the correct answers. As far as ‘promises’ and ‘orders’ are used by all people in their daily lives, these results reflect the students’ familiarity with these two categories of speech acts.

I) Question Nine:

9. Which of the following is a felicity condition of requests?

- a) That the speaker be able to carry out the action described.
- b) That the hearer be able to carry out the action described.
- c) That the hearer wants to carry out the action described.

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	14	60,88
False answers	07	30,43
Acceptable	02	8,69
Total	23	100

Table 7: Students’ selection of the appropriate conditions of requests

The results in this table show that a greater part of students have selected the exact felicity condition on the act of requesting. This high ratio reflects the students’ familiarity with this category of speech acts. Yet, we observe that there are seven or about thirty one percent of students who have failed in guessing the appropriate condition. In general, we assume that ‘requests’ are well known for most of students, and that the way of given them choices to select the right condition is a beneficial technique to reach a high proportion of correct answers.

J) Question Ten:

10. The statement presented below are illocutionary acts, and for each act there are four suggested felicity conditions. In each case, only two of these felicity conditions are actually correct. Indicate the correct felicity conditions by circling your choices.

1. Promising:

- a) The speaker must intend to carry out the thing promised.
- b) The speaker must be inferior in status to the hearer.
- c) The thing promised must be something that the hearer wants to happen.
- d) The thing promised must be morally wrong

2. Apologizing

- a) The speaker must be responsible for the thing apologized for.
- b) The thing apologized for must be unavoidable.
- c) The thing apologized for must be morally wrong.
- d) The hearer must not want the thing apologized for to happen.

3. Greeting

- a) The speaker and the hearer must be of different sex.
- b) The speaker and the hearer must not be in the middle of a conversation.
- c) The speaker must believe the hearer to have recently suffered a loss.
- d) The speaker feels some respect or sense of community with the hearer

10.1 promises:

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	18	78,26
False answers	02	8,69
Acceptable	03	13,05
Total	23	100

Table 8.1: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of promises

As it is revealed in table eight, the majority of students have selected the appropriate felicity conditions on the act of promising. Hence, we assume that this category of speech acts is widely used by those students in their daily lives.

10.2 Apologies

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	02	08,69
False answers	11	47,83
Acceptable	10	43,48
Total	23	100

Table 8.2: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of apologies

Unexpectedly, the results in this table show that the majority of students do not know the appropriate felicity conditions for the act of 'apology'. After we have looked for the possible explanations to these results, we have arrived to the assumption that these data reflect that students do not use this category of speech acts largely in dealing with each others in every day communication.

10.3 Greets

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	17	73,91
False answers	01	04,36
Acceptable	05	21,73
Total	23	100

Table 8.3: Students' selection of the appropriate conditions of greets

The results which appear in this table state that a greater number of students know the felicity conditions on the act of 'greeting'. Statistically, there are about seventy four percent or seventeen students have answered this question correctly. Moreover, there are about twenty two percent of students who have selected only one correct condition, and they have failed in selecting the other one.

All in all, the proportions of the students' responses in the second section show that nearly fifty percent of them are familiar with the following speech acts: promising, apologizing and greeting. We notice also that those students have benefited from their mistakes in the first section, and they become more aware about using felicity conditions to achieve felicitous promises, apologies and greets. The following tables will prove these observations statistically.

Speech Acts	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Acceptable	Total
Requesting	60,88 %	30,43 %	08,69 %	100 %
Promising	78,26 %	08,69 %	13,05 %	100 %
Apologizing	08,69 %	47,84 %	43,47%	100 %
Greeting	73,91 %	21,73 %	04,36%	100 %

Table 8.4: Students' awareness about requests, promises, apologies and greets

Statistics	SECTION TWO			
	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Acceptable	Total
Numbers	34	33	02	69
Proportions (%)	49,29	47,82	2,89	100

Table 8.5: Students' familiarity with all types of speech acts in section two

3.2.3 Section three: The Impacts of Students' Familiarity with Felicity Conditions on Their Production of Felicitous Speech Acts

k) Question Eleven:

11. Could you say whether these speech acts, expressed by the following utterances, (*felicitous*) or (*infelicitous*). If your answer was (*infelicitous*), you justify.

- 1) A soldier says to his chief: "I hereby order you to stop moving!"
- 2) A boy says to his friend: "I promise you that I will go with you to the cinema"
- 3) Helen says to me "congratulations on passing your driving test"
- 4) A student says to his teacher "I'm sorry to be late"

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	09	39,13
False answers	05	21,74
Acceptable	09	39,13
Total	23	100

Table 9: Students' examination of felicitous and infelicitous speech acts

As it is revealed in this table, there are nearly forty percent or nine students who have distinguished the felicitous and infelicitous performative utterances correctly. Yet, there is the same proportion of students who have answered this question partially correct. Since this question seems somehow difficult than the previous ones, we notice that there are about twenty two percent of students have not reached the appropriate answers.

L) Question Twelve:

12. Could you give examples of felicitous utterances, for the following speech acts, and their appropriate circumstances in which they should be uttered?

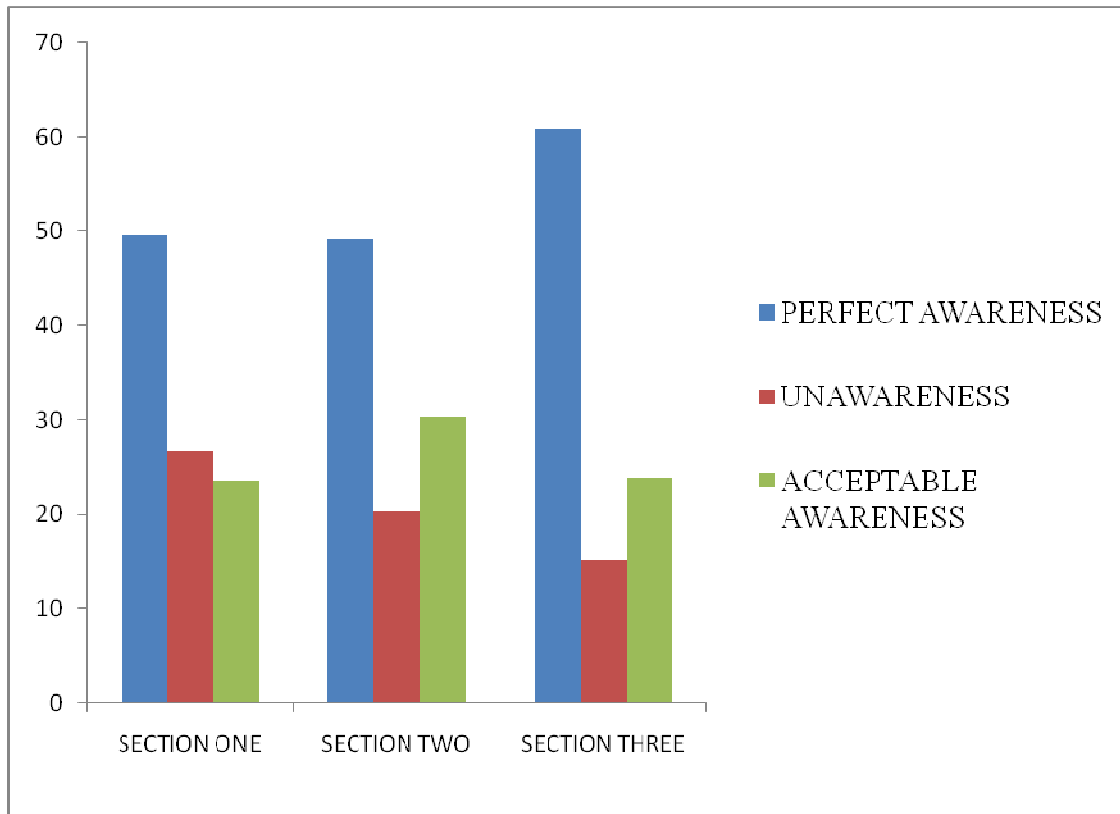
- a) Requests b) Commands c) Promises

Observations	Numbers	Proportions (%)
Excellent answers	19	82,62
False answers	02	08,69
Acceptable	02	08,69
Total	23	100

Table 10: Students’ production of felicitous requests, commands and promises

Undoubtedly, this table shows that the majority of students have expressed felicitous requests, commands and promises successfully. This high ratio reflects the positive impacts of students’ familiarity with felicity conditions on their production of felicitous speech acts. This table also proves that the majority of students have made a perfect linkage between the application of felicitous performative utterances and the determination of the appropriate circumstances in which these utterances should be expressed.

Overall, we notice that the students' awareness about felicity conditions increases in the second and third sections. Certainly, this high degree of consciousness is due to the students' familiarity with the different categories of speech acts expressed in these sections. The previous results also show that students are not very conscious about speech acts theory in the first section; however, they become more knowledgeable in the practical sections. The following graph sums up the development of students' awareness about speech acts theory throughout the three sections.



Graph 02: Description of the students' awareness of all the aspects of speech acts

Conclusion

Results from the analysis of the students' questionnaire support our research hypothesis which stipulates that if the students are aware about using felicity conditions, they will be able to perform speech acts felicitously or effectively. Accordingly, we have seen in the first section that the majority of students are familiar with felicity conditions or speech acts theory in general, and we have also observed, in the second and third sections, the positive effects of this awareness on the students' abilities to achieve felicitous speech acts. These results prove the crucial role of knowing felicity conditions in performing felicitous performative utterances.

The results of the students' questionnaire which are presented in Graph: 02 reveal that the proportion of the learners who have a perfect awareness about performing felicitous speech acts in section three is greater than the other one in the previous sections. Certainly, the improvement of the students' performance in the third section reflects the increase of their awareness about using felicity conditions throughout the previous sections. In sum, all these tables and graphs confirm that the students are familiar with felicity conditions and speech acts theory in general, and that the majority of students are capable to perform felicitous speech acts effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study of speech acts theory has become one of the main interests in the field of pragmatics and of linguistics as well. Since this theory plays a crucial role in expressing various situations of talk, teachers and students have to be aware of the possible difficulties that may face them when expressing these performatives. Certainly, it is necessary for teachers to know the level of their students' awareness about the use of the felicity conditions in performing speech acts. The present study was conducted in order to examine whether the awareness of the students of the English Department at Mentouri University, Constantine about the use of the rules of felicity conditions is likely to help them acquire felicitous speech acts. Accordingly, we hypothesized that the students' consciousness of these conditions enables them to produce felicitous speech acts effectively.

The results of the present research work reveal that the majority of students are aware of the use of felicity conditions, and they also show the positive effects of this awareness on their ability to apply felicitous speech acts as well. Since these students have not been taught speech acts theory from the first year, they faced a lot of difficulties when answering this questionnaire.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations seem to be appropriate:

1. Teachers should give more importance to the study of pragmatics, and they should provide their students with exercises to be done in classroom and home works.
2. The administration of English department should include the study of pragmatics

as an independent module from the first year of the study at the university.

3. Students should not rely on what they have been taught in the classroom only; yet, they should rely on practicing and using speech acts in real life communication.

Further research in this area would have to:

- a) examine more aspects of speech acts theory,
- b) rely on further research tools, such as recordings, visuals, tests,
- c) expand the area of study to include the real life communication.

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Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

You are kindly asked to fill in this questionnaire to express your knowledge about using 'Speech Acts'. How should we use them? , what are the most common problems which can face students in using them? And what are the felicity conditions which will help students to use them? Your answers are very important for the validity of the research we are undertaking. We hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

SECTION ONE:

1-How would you define speech acts?

.....
.....
.....

2- How would you define 'Infelicities'?

.....
.....
.....

3- What are the different types of 'Infelicities'?

.....
.....
.....

4- How would you define 'Felicity Conditions'?

.....
.....

.....
.....

5- Could you find out the main purpose of felicity conditions?

.....
.....
.....

6- How, in your opinion, can speech acts be applied successfully?

.....
.....
.....

7- Could you explain the role of each of the following types of felicity conditions?

1-Content propositional conditions
.....
.....

2-Preparatory conditions
.....
.....

3- Sincerity conditions.....
.....
.....

4-Essential conditions.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION TWO

8- Among these felicity conditions, could you identify the prime condition which can go with these two speech acts? (*Circle your choice, if you think that there are more than one condition, order your choices with numbers from the most important to the least important*)

1. Promising

a- Preparatory conditions

c- Essential conditions

b-Sincerity conditions

d- propositional content conditions

2. Ordering

a- Preparatory conditions

c- Essential conditions

b-Sincerity conditions

d- content propositional conditions

9- Which of the following is a felicity condition of requests? (*Circle your choice*)

a) That the speaker be able to carry out the action described

b) That the hearer be able to carry out the action described

c) That the hearer wants to carry out the action described

10- The statements presented below are illocutionary acts; and for each act , there are four suggested felicity conditions. In each case, only two of these felicity conditions are actually correct. Indicate the correct felicity conditions by circling your choice.

(1) Promising:

(a) The speaker must intend to carry out the thing promised.

(b) The speaker must be inferior in status to the hearer.

(c) The thing promised must be something that the hearer wants to happen.

(d) The thing promised must be morally wrong.

(2) Apologizing:

- (a) The speaker must be responsible for the thing apologized for.
- (b) The thing apologized for must be unavoidable.
- (c) The thing apologized for must be morally wrong.
- (d) The hearer must not want the thing apologized for to happen.

(3) Greeting:

- (a) The speaker and the hearer must be of different sex.
- (b) The speaker and the hearer must not be in the middle of a conversation.
- (c) The speaker must believe the hearer to have recently suffered a loss.
- (d) The speaker feels some respect /or sense of community with the hearer.

.....

SECTION THREE

11- Could you Say whether these speech acts, expressed by the following utterances, (*Felicitous*) or (*Infelicitous*)?. *If your answer was (Infelicitous), you justify.*

1-A soldier says to his chief: "I hereby order you to stop moving!"

[.....]

Why.....
.....
.....

2- A boy says to his friend: "I promise you that I will go with you to the cinema"
[uttered when the boy does not intend to go to the cinema] [.....]

Why.....
.....
.....

3-Helen says to me: “congratulations on passing your driving test”
[Said when Helen, believes that I only got through my driving test by bribing the examiner]

[.....]

Why.....
.....
.....

4- A student says to his teacher: “I’m sorry to be late.” [.....]

Why.....
.....
.....

12- Could you give examples of felicitous utterances, for the following speech acts, and their appropriate circumstances in which they should be uttered?

a) Request

e.g:.....

Circumstances:.....

b) Command

e.g:.....

Circumstances:.....

c) Promise

e.g:.....

Circumstances:.....

THANK YOU.

La Conscience des Etudiants Concernant les Conditions de Félicité et leurs Attitudes en Vue de L'application des Actes des Paroles Féliciteurs

Le cas des Etudiants de Première Année Master

-Université de Constantine-

Résumé

Ce travail s'inscrit dans le cadre de la pragmatique et de la philosophie de la langue, particulièrement la théorie des actes des paroles ou des actes performatifs. Il analyse comment les étudiants utilisent les règles des conditions de félicité pour produire des actes de paroles féliciteurs. Cette recherche vise à promouvoir la conscience des étudiants concernant l'utilisation des règles des conditions de félicité et d'examiner leurs attitudes en vue de l'utilisation des actes des paroles tels que : assertions, promesses, excuses et commandes.

Le problème nous affrontons par cette recherche indique que les étudiants ignorent les manières d'appliquer correctement les règles des conditions de félicités, et nous proposons que les étudiants d'Anglais à l'Université de Constantine peut produire des actes de paroles féliciteurs d'une manière appropriée, afin d'activer leurs consciences programmatique des actes de paroles performatifs et des conditions de félicité.

L'hypothèse de ce travail est prouvée grâce à l'analyse de ce questionnaire dont il détecte le degré de la conscience quant a les manières d'utilisation de félicité conditions a partir d'un groupe des étudiants du Département Anglais à l'Université de Constantine.

إدراك الطلبة لشروط لباقة أفعال الكلام و موقفهم

من تطبيق أفعال الكلام اللابقة

- دراسة حالة طلبة الأولى ماستر بجامعة قسنطينة-

ملخص

يندرج هذا العمل ضمن دراسة علم التداولات و بصفة أخص نظرية أفعال الكلام. و من خلال هذه الدراسة نحاول رفع مستوى الإدراك لدى طلبة قسم الإنجليزية لشروط لباقة أفعال الكلام . هذه الشروط التي تهدف إلى توفير الظروف المناسبة للتعبير عن أنواع متعددة من أفعال الكلام مثل: الأوامر، الوعود، الطلبات، التحذيرات وغيرها. الهدف الأساسي من وراء هذا العمل الأكاديمي هو تقييم وعي الطلبة تجاه هذه الشروط. وعلى هذا الأساس كانت فرضية هذا البحث أن طلبة للإنجليزية بوسعهم أن يعبروا على أفعال الكلام بطريقة صحيحة إذا ما أدركوا جيدا كيفية استعمال هذه الشروط. و قد أكدت نتائج الاستبيان المقدم لطلبة الانجليزية صحة هذه الفرضية .

و بهذا تكون هذه الدراسة قد بينت الأهمية القصوى لإدراك الطلبة و وعيهم الكامل بلباقة و لباقة

استعمال الأفعال الكلامية و ضرورة احترام شروطها المتعارف عليها في اللغة الإنجليزية.