

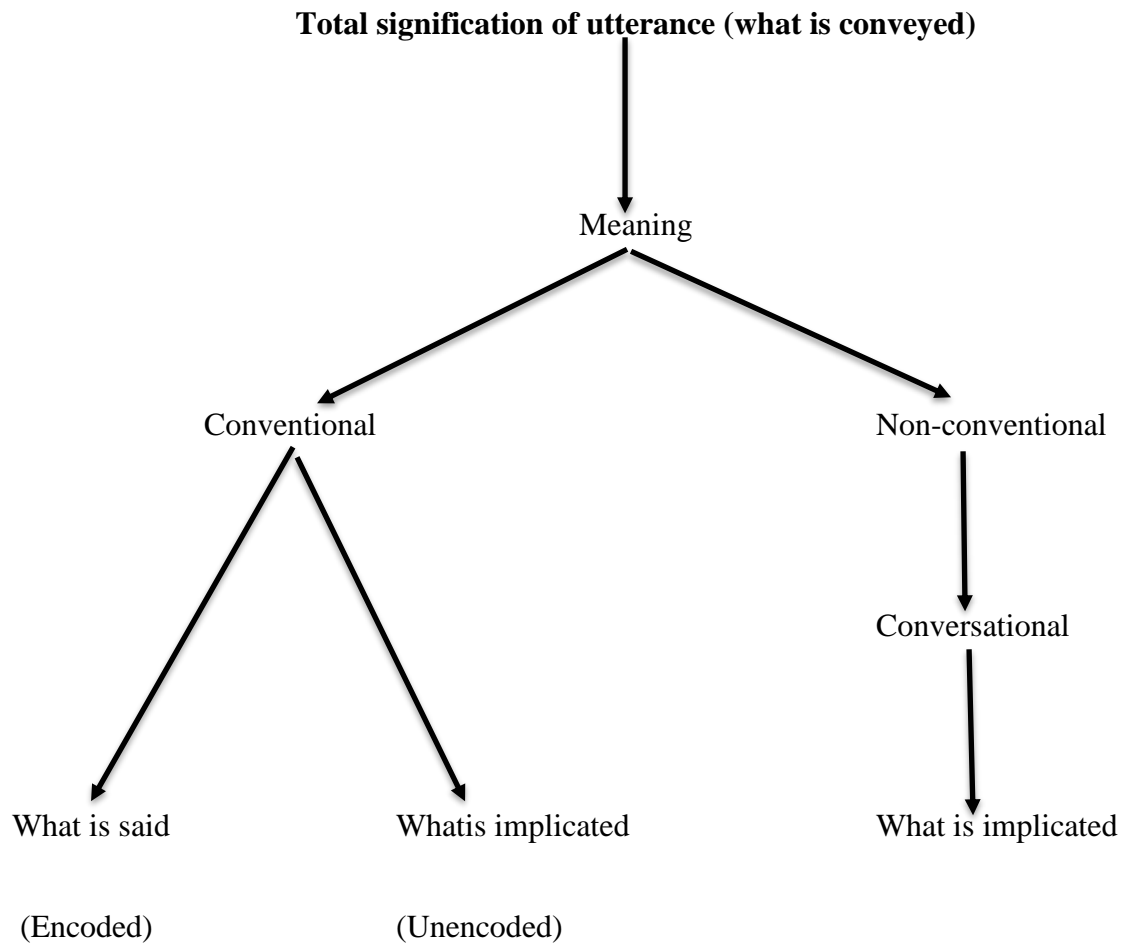
a. The Speech Acts Theory

Many linguists examined and analysed meaning in terms of the relationship between the linguistic rules, the context in which an interaction takes place, and the speaker's intention. The philosopher of language Austin made the most concrete step towards the explanation of the relationship between saying and doing by introducing the concept of speech acts which was developed later by his student Searle. Thus, speech act theory was first initiated by Austin and developed by Searle. Austin's lecture series in 1955 later published in the book *How to Do Things with Words*, proposes that people do things with words. According to him, actions such as apologizing, complaining, promising, complimenting, requesting ... etc. can be performed via utterances. The essential insight of speech act theory is that language performs communicative acts. Speech act theory, then, is basically concerned with what people "do" with language. Austin sees that a speech act is an act performed by a speaker when producing an utterance in order to communicate with hearers. Communication is a series of communicative acts or speech acts. Speech acts are considered the minimum functional unit in communication such as giving commands, asking questions, and making statements (Austin, 1962). "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" (Yule, 1996: 47).

b. Speech Acts Dimensions/Components (Locutionary act, Illocutionary act, Perlocutionary act)

Austin (1962) identifies three distinct levels of action beyond the act of utterance itself. When someone says something, s/he performs three acts simultaneously: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act.

The locutionary act is the act of saying something. According to Yule (1996) the locutionary act is the first and the basic act of an utterance; it is the production of meaningful linguistic expressions. “Locutionary act is the act of using words as belonging to a certain vocabulary... and as conforming to a certain grammar... with a certain more or less definite sense and reference” (Austin, 1962: 92). Yet, Yule (1996) sees that people generally do not just produce well-formed sentences that are grammatically correct with no purpose. People utter sentences with a function and intention; this is the second level of speech acts called the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is what one does in saying something. At this level, the speaker expresses his/her intentions according to a number of conventions shared in his speech community. To know what is meant by the illocutionary act a distinction should be made between two aspects, what is said and what is meant. The following diagram explains this type of meaning (Kitis, 2009).



What is Conveyed (Kitis, 2009:76).

Consider the following example

It's getting late (a husband says to his wife at a night party).

In the case of uttering or producing the utterance itself, the speaker performs a locutionary act. It is the simple reference or statement at the lateness of hour. The intention of the husband is a suggestion of a proposal of it's late so let's go home, which is here the illocutionary act. When the wife understands her husband's intention and his intended meaning from saying it's late, and

accepts to leave, in this case the perlocutionary act is performed. Interestingly, a *perlocutionary act* refers to the effects a speaker's utterance has on hearers or readers. After performing the locutionary and illocutionary acts, the utterance has a third dimension (the perlocutionary act) which includes the results of the speaker's utterance on the hearer/reader.