SPEECH ACT THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The speech act theory considers language as a sort of action rather than a medium to convey and express. The contemporary Speech act theory developed by J. L. Austin a British philosopher of languages, he introduced this theory in 1975 in his well-known book of 'How do things with words'. Later John Searle brought the aspects of theory into much higher dimensions. This theory is often used in the field of philosophy of languages. Austin is the one who came up with the findings that people not only uses that language to assert things but also to do things. And people who followed him went to greater depths based on this point.

THEORY

All sort of linguist communication are comprised of linguistic actions. Previously it was conceived that the very basic unit of communication is words, Symbols, sentences or some kind of token of all of these, but it was speech act theory which suggested that production or issuances if words, symbols are the basic units of communication. This issuance happens during the process of performance of speech act. The meaning of these basic units was considered as the building blocks of mutual understanding between the people intend to communicate.

" A theory of language is a theory of action"- Greig E. Henderson and Christopher Brown.

The theory emphasis that the utterances have a different or specific meaning to its user and listener other than its meaning according to the language. The theory further identify that there are two kinds of utterances, they are called constative and performative utterances. In his book of 'How do things with words' Austin clearly talks about the disparities between the constative and performative utterances.

A constative utterances is something which describes or denotes the situation, in relation with the fact of true or false.

Example: The teacher asked Olivia whether she had stolen the candy. Olivia replies "mmmmmm". Here the utterances of Olivia describes the event in pact of answering her teacher whether the situation was true or false.

The performative utterances is something which do not describes anything at all. The utterances in the sentences or in the part of sentences are normally considered as having a meaning of its own. The feelings, attitudes, emotions and thoughts of the person performing linguistic act are much of a principal unit here.

Example: Bane and Sarah have been dating for the past four years. One fine evening Bane took Sarah to the most expensive restaurant in town. And he ordered the most expensive wine available in the restaurant. Then he moved closer to her and asked her that " will you marry me?". Sarah burst with contentment and replied "I will". Here the "I will" of Sarah express her feelings, attitudes and emotional towards the context. This utterances have its specific meaning only in relation to it specific context.

Further Austin divides his linguistic act into three different categories.
They are,

1. **Locutionary act** – This is the act of saying something. It has a meaning and it creates an understandable utterly to convey or express
2. **Illocutionary act** – It is performed as an act of saying something or as an act of opposed to saying something. The illocutionary utterance has a certain force of it. It well well-versed with certain tones, attitudes, feelings, or emotions. There will be an intention of the speaker or others in illocutionary utterance. It is often used as a tone of warning in day today life
3. **Perlocutionary act** – It normally creates a sense of consequential effects on the audiences. The effects may be in the form of thoughts, imaginations, feelings or emotions. The effect upon the addressee is the main charactership of perlocutionary utterances

For example
The locutionary act describes a dangerous situation, the illocutionary act acts as a force of the warning and perlocutionary acts frighten the addressee.

Austin himself admits that these three components of utterances are not altogether separable."We must consider the total situation in which the utterance is issued- the total speech act – if we are to see the parallel between statements and performative utterance, and how each can go wrong. Perhaps indeed there is no great distinction between statements and performative utterances." Austin.

Searle suggested that the basic unit of linguistic communication is speech act. It can be a word, a phrase, a sentence or a sound, it should fulfil the task of expressing the intention of the user. Understanding the user's intention can lead to complete understanding of the speech act.

CONCLUSION
The context of speech act is in the context of situation than explanation. The speech act borrows it ideas from structuralism. The indirect speech act of John Searle was developed based on Austin's speech act