

On the Speech Acts of Dog-Related Proverbs in Jordanian Arabic

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Abstract—This study examines the speech acts of dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic through the lens of the Speech Act Theory. To this end, the researchers compiled an initial list of situations that include dog-related proverbs based on their exposure to them and their familiarity with the contexts of the proverbs in Jordanian society. They then identified the illocutionary force and illocutionary act performed by each dog proverb in each situation. The identified illocutionary forces were subjected to a validation process by two Arabic professors who suggested amendments to certain situations and functions. The revised version was further tested for acceptability through the linguistic intuition of 50 native Jordanian speakers. The analysis revealed that Jordanian dog-related proverbs fall under four speech acts: expressives, commissives, directives, and representatives. It also revealed that they perform ten illocutionary forces, namely criticizing, scolding, scorning, insulting, ridiculing, expressing disappointment, threatening, advising, warning, and asserting. The study concluded that dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic are predominantly used for negative rather than positive functions.

Index Terms—Speech Act Theory, context, dog-related proverbs, Jordanian Arabic

I. INTRODUCTION

Dog-related proverbs are proverbs that typically use dogs as symbols to convey wisdom, life lessons, or observations about human characteristics or behaviour. According to Farghal (2021), proverbs, including those about dogs, hold a central place in Jordanian and Arab culture, addressing themes relevant to various walks of life. He further noted that although many of these proverbs originally started as literal utterances, they soon acquired proverbial status and came to be used metaphorically in a wide range of contexts.

People frequently use dog-related proverbs in their daily interactions, drawing on them as culturally embedded expressions to comment on behavior and social situations. When uttered, these proverbs can serve a variety of pragmatic functions, including criticizing, scorning, ridiculing and more. Their meaning is not fixed or strictly tied to their literal wording; rather, it is the context in which they are used that shapes their intended function and interpretation. This context-dependent nature makes dog-related proverbs a dynamic and powerful tool in everyday communication.

As of the time of writing, while dog-related proverbs are commonly used in Jordanian Arabic, they appear, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, to have received no prior examination within the framework of the Speech Act Theory. Accordingly, this study seeks to fill that gap by providing a pragmatic analysis of these proverbs. Specifically, the present study aims to identify the illocutionary acts and illocutionary forces performed by dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic, using the Speech Act Theory as a guiding framework to explore their pragmatic functions in context.

A. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in communication in everyday life. It explores the link between language and its users. Pragmatics also analyzes language in use as well as examining the purposes and functions of linguistic forms (Brown & Yule, 1983). Moreover, it focuses on the study of language in both spoken and written modes (Yule, 2010). Yule (1996, p. 3) defined pragmatics as "the study of meaning communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or reader". Therefore, its focus lies on what people mean by their utterances, rather than on what words and phrases mean by themselves (as cited in Al-Hanaktah & Hamdan, 2024). Furthermore, Levinson (1983, p. 9) defined pragmatics as "the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language". This indicates its focus on the crucial role of context in shaping meaning, highlighting how linguistic structures are inherently designed to reflect and encode these contextual relationships.

Furthermore, Newmark (1988) argued that pragmatic research does not only try to understand written and spoken forms of words, but it also intends to help people grasp the intended meaning of the writer and speaker because users do not always tend to say what they mean in a direct and explicit way (as cited in Al-Hanaktah & Hamdan, 2024). Therefore, the same message may have different interpretations when it is used in different contexts. Speakers of a language often

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imply something beyond the words they say in their daily interactions, and what determines the exact meaning of a word is the context itself (Lieber, 2009). Fraser (1990) made a clear distinction between two types of sentence meaning: content meaning and pragmatic meaning. The former refers to the literal, propositional meaning, while the latter relates to the speaker's intention (illocutionary force). A theory that goes beyond the literal meaning of words and focuses on the speaker's intention is the Speech Act Theory.

B. The Speech Act Theory

The Speech Act Theory, initially introduced by Austin (1962) and further refined by Searle (1969, 1975, 1976, 1979), posits that language is used not only to convey information but also to perform actions. Austin (1962) drew a distinction between direct and indirect speech acts, where direct speech acts have a clear relationship between form and function, while indirect speech acts involve a more complex relationship between form and function (Yule, 1996).

Austin (1962) claimed that a speech act can be analyzed on three consecutive levels: the locutionary act, which refers to the actual words spoken; the illocutionary act, which is the force of the utterance or the intended meaning or purpose behind it; and the perlocutionary act, which is the effect the utterance has on the listener/hearer. These three acts work together to explain how language functions in communication, from the words used to the effect they have on the recipient.

Searle (1976) proposed a set of illocutionary speech acts. His set includes: assertives (representatives) which commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition, such as claiming and reporting; directives in which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something such as asking, requesting and advising; commissives which commit the speaker to some future act, such as promising and offering; expressives in which the speaker expresses his attitude about a proposition such as thanking, apologizing, and congratulating (Alshorafat, 2019); and finally declaratives which bring about correspondence between the propositional content and the reality, such as naming and appointing.

Searle's taxonomy of speech acts is considered superior to that of Austin because it provides a more structured and systematic classification, clearly distinguishing between different types of illocutionary acts such as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. While Austin's theory was more general, Searle's approach emphasizes the speaker's intentions, allowing for a better understanding of the communicative purpose behind utterances. Additionally, Searle's focus on perlocutionary acts helps clarify how speech affects the listener. His theory is more consistent and applicable across various linguistic and cultural contexts, making it easier to analyze speech acts in diverse settings. Furthermore, Searle's categorization captures a wider range of communicative acts, offering a more precise and practical tool for analyzing language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lawal, Ajayi and Raji (1997) analyzed the illocutionary acts of twelve Yoruba proverbs through the lens of the Speech Act Theory, aiming to understand why and how these proverbs are used. The data were collected from literary texts and native speakers of the language. Each proverb was analyzed pragmatically by identifying both its direct and indirect illocutionary acts. The study revealed that the direct performative illocutionary force of Yoruba proverbs tends to be "assertive". The indirect illocutionary forces vary, including the "expressive act of blaming" (Alshorafat, 2019).

Ali and Makhlef (2011) investigated the speech acts in English and Arabic proverbs. The findings revealed that the most frequent types of speech acts are commissive and representative. The commissive acts are the most common, followed by the representative acts. Additionally, the study showed that warning acts occur more frequently than others, with asserting acts coming second and advising acts ranking third. Other types of speech acts, such as threatening, requesting, and wisdom acts, appear less often, making up a smaller percentage of the proverbs.

In her study, Yan (2006) examined English proverbs within the framework of the Speech Act Theory. The study focused on how the Speech Act Theory can be applied to the understanding of English proverbs and how the illocutionary forces performed by proverbs function in different contexts. The findings revealed that most proverbs are "directive", "expressive" and "representative" (Alshorafat, 2019).

Lutfi (2007) applied the Speech Act Theory to weather proverbs, aiming to demonstrate that these proverbs are often intended as speech acts rather than mere statements about the weather. The study revealed that weather proverbs are typically used indirectly to perform speech acts, such as warning, advising, urging, or prophesying (Alshorafat, 2019). These proverbs are special cases of indirect speech acts tied to atmospheric conditions, usually urging listeners to act based on weather patterns, such as enjoying good weather or avoiding bad weather.

Abdul Jabbar (2008) applied the Speech Act Theory to American English proverbs and analyzed them in a way similar to that used in conversational speech acts in spoken language. The study concentrated on the speech act of advice to determine if it is governed by specific rules and distinctive semantic features that prevent it from failing pragmatically. The analysis showed that the highest score recorded is the *suggest* speech act, followed by the *recommend* speech act. No score is given to the speech act of *consult*. All other speech acts: *advice1*, *advice2*, *advocate*, *propose*, and *counsel* are equally scored (Alshorafat, 2019).

Dairo (2010) scrutinized thirty different Yoruba proverbs through the lens of the Speech Act Theory. The researcher classified these proverbs according to their illocutionary acts and examined how proverbs are used to perform various acts. The study concluded that any utterance made by language users, in whatever form, constitutes a speech act; therefore, a proverb, as a rhetorical device, is used to perform specific acts. The analysis showed that proverbs are used to achieve

acts of adjudication, expression of facts, warning or admonition, giving advice, issuing caution and giving directives (Alshorafat, 2019).

Jombadi and Juliana (2014) examined the validity of Searle's theory when applied within the Yoruba proverbial context. To this end, they collected twenty-five proverbs from written texts and home videos. They then classified these proverbs according to nine aspects: social relation, justice and ethics, religion, philosophy, life and death, beauty, faith, agriculture and game (Alshorafat, 2019). Their study provided an empirical account of the significance, essence and functions of proverbs within the Yoruba culture. It also showed that four proverbs have two different speech acts, while the others vary and include "assertives" and "directives"(Alshorafat, 2019).

Alshorafat (2019) scrutinized Bedouin proverbs in Jordan using the Speech Act Theory. The study sought to test the feasibility of determining the perlocutionary acts associated with these proverbs, exploring the potential effects they can have on listeners in real-life situations. The findings revealed that Bedouin proverbs in Jordan perform four illocutionary acts: representatives, commissives, expressives, and directives, and the illocutionary forces include: scolding, threatening, advising, criticizing, requesting, and asking. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that it is possible to identify the perlocutionary acts of these proverbs, which can be categorized into two levels: psychological consequences and prompting the listener to take action.

This study distinguishes itself from the previous studies in two key aspects. Firstly, it uniquely examines dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic, an area that has not been furnished yet. It validates its findings through a dual-method approach involving expert review and native speaker input. In this regard, fifty Jordanians evaluated the pragmatic functions of the proverbs using a structured Likert scale, ensuring both cultural authenticity and empirical reliability. The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the illocutionary acts performed by dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic?
2. What are the illocutionary forces performed by dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic?

III. METHODOLOGY

Drawing on their native fluency in Jordanian Arabic, the researchers initially compiled a list of situations that included dog-related proverbs based on their direct experience with and knowledge of the proverbs' cultural contexts. The researchers highlighted and explored the illocutionary force (pragmatic function/meaning) and illocutionary act each proverb performed in each scenario. To ensure the accuracy and validity of these identifications, they sought validation from a panel of two Arabic language professors, who are native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The panel reviewed the scenarios and assessed the proposed illocutionary forces for each given proverb in its context. Their judgments largely aligned with that of the researchers although they suggested more appropriate replacements for some functions they felt were unsuitable for the given contexts.

Next, the acceptability of the illocutionary forces (the pragmatic functions) was tested against the linguistic intuition of 50 native speakers of Jordanian Arabic (25 males and 25 females), aged between 25 and 45, with a mean age of 35. These participants were given the situations along with the associated illocutionary forces and asked to rate their agreement using a five-point Likert scale (*agree, strongly agree, indeterminate, disagree, and strongly disagree*). Only the situations whose functions were deemed acceptable by 50 percent or more of the participants (i.e., rated as *agree or strongly agree*) were retained for further analysis. The remaining situations and their associated functions were excluded from the present study.

IV. RESULTS

The following table displays the speech acts and illocutionary forces of the dog-related proverbs in their real contexts in Jordanian Arabic, as identified by more than 50 percent of the participants. It also highlights the number/frequency and percentage of the participants who accepted each function.

TABLE 1
THE SPEECH ACTS (ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS) AND ILLOCUTIONARY FORCES (PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS) OF THE DOG-RELATED PROVERBS AND THEIR ACCEPTABILITY JUDGMENTS

	Speech Act	No.	Illocutionary forces	No	Acceptability judgments (%)
	Expressives	1	Criticizing	42	84%
	Expressives	2	Scolding	35	70%
	Expressives	3	Scorning	32	64%
	Expressives	4	Insulting	32	64%
	Expressives	5	Ridiculing	30	60%
	Expressives	6	Expressing disappointment	30	60%
	Commissives	7	Threatening	35	70%
	Directives	8	Advising	37	74%
	Directives	9	Warning	28	56%
	Representatives	10	Asserting	25	50%

Below is a presentation of each pragmatic (illocutionary) function followed by its relevant context. A detailed qualitative pragmatic analysis and interpretation is presented, utilizing insights from Austin and Searle. For clarity, the context is provided in English, while the proverb appears in Jordanian Arabic, followed by its transliteration and literal translation.

(1) Criticizing

[Context] Salah was a very cowardly person; his courage only appeared in his neighborhood. One day Ahmed said to him:

الكلب ما ينبج غير بحارته.

alkalib ma: yanbuh ghe:yr b hartah.

Lit. A dog barks only in its quarter.

In Jordanian Arab culture, the above proverb is metaphorically used to describe people who act bravely only in situations where they feel safe. Essentially, it refers to someone who may act courageous within their comfort zone but lacks the same bravery in unfamiliar environments. This proverb can be applied on several occasions to perform different pragmatic meanings. Therefore, it is the context rather than the proverb's literal meaning that shapes the precise meaning intended by the proverb user.

In the context provided above, this proverb is used to criticize Salah's bravery, which is limited to his own neighborhood, much like how a dog only barks within its territory. From a Speech Act Theory perspective, the illocutionary force of the proverb is criticizing, as the speaker (Ahmed) uses it to criticize the hearer (Salah), who only shows his courage when he is in a familiar environment. The speech act here is expressive as the speaker conveys his feelings toward the hearer.

(2) Scolding

[Context] Abu Khaled had been trying to correct his son's bad behavior, but his efforts were in vain. So, he said to him:

ذيل الكلب عمره ما يتعدل.

dhyil alkalib ŕumruh ma: yit^cddal.

Lit. A dog's tail will always be crooked.

In Jordanian Arab culture, the above proverb means that certain inherent features are irreversible and will remain constant, regardless of attempts to change them. This indicates the idea that no matter what you do or say, some things - such as dog tails being crooked - cannot be replaced because they are part of the natural or internal nature of a person. However, the pragmatic meaning of this proverb can greatly vary depending on when and where it is said, and to whom it is said. Therefore, it is essential to consider the surrounding circumstances when interpreting any given proverb.

In the scenario above, the proverb user utters this specific proverb in this particular context in order to scold his son for his bad behavior. In Searle's terminology, the illocutionary force employed by this proverb is scolding, as Abu Khaled uses it to express frustration with his son's bad behavior, suggesting that his flaws are hard to change. The speech act here is expressive, as the speaker expresses how he feels about the addressee.

(3) Scorning

[Context] Abu Omar always interferes in municipal affairs because he is a close friend with the mayor. Observing him, Abu Ahmed said to him:

كلب الشيخ شديخ.

kalib ŕŕykh ŕykh.

Lit. Like Sheikh, like dog.

In Jordanian Arab culture, this proverb is metaphorically used to mean that the follower of an important person acquires importance from his/her master, i.e. the authority transfers from the master to those around him. Essentially, it suggests that individuals or followers tend to mirror or adopt the traits, attitudes, or behaviors of their leaders or role models. This proverb can perform multiple pragmatic functions in different situations.

Based on the context above, the illocutionary force of the proverb is scorning, as Abu Ahmed uses it to criticize Abu Omar for his behavior, which he attributes to his close relationship with the mayor. The proverb implies that Abu Omar's actions reflect the mayor's influence, suggesting he is blindly following the mayor's example. The speech act is expressive, conveying Abu Ahmed's disapproval of the listener (Abu Omar).

(4) Insulting

[Context] Khaldoun always backbites people and causes problems between them. Khaled said to him, you are:

انجس من ذيل الكلب.

?njas min dhe:l alkali.

Lit: Filthier than a dog's tail.

The above proverb links the dog's tail that is full of filth to the wicked person who is full of evil and hatred. In Jordanian culture, it is commonly used to describe someone who engages in actions that are seen as dishonorable, such as backbiting, spreading rumors, or causing conflict between people. The meaning of this proverb varies depending on the context in which it is used, allowing it to serve different pragmatic functions.

Within the presented scenario above, the proverb is used by the speaker (Khaled) to insult the hearer (Khaldoun) for engaging in backbiting. According to the Speech Act Theory, the illocutionary force of the proverb is insulting, intended to demean and criticize Khaldoun's character. Khaled uses the metaphor to express strong disapproval of Khaldoun's

behavior, portraying him as morally unpleasant. The speech act here is expressive, as it conveys Khaled's feelings toward Khaldoun's deceitful behavior.

(5) Ridiculing

[Context] Sarcastically, a wife said to her husband who is good for nothing:

كلب حاييم ولا اسد نايم.

kalib ha:yim wala: ʔasad na:yim.

Lit. A roaming dog is better than a dead lion.

The above proverb compares somebody we may benefit from (a roaming dog) and another that is useless (a sleeping lion), advising us to adopt the former and reject the latter. In the Jordanian setting, it is cited in many situations to tell us that a person/thing we benefit from is better than another that surpasses it in value but does not serve us well (Farghal, 2021). This proverb can be explained differently in different contexts. Therefore, it is the context that shapes its pragmatic meaning.

In the context at hand, the wife uses this proverb in order to ridicule her husband because he is lazy and unproductive. Thus, the illocutionary force performed by the proverb is ridiculing, highlighting the husband's inactivity and failure to utilize his potential. The speech act is expressive as the speaker (the wife) conveys her disapproval and frustration.

(6) Expressing disappointment

[Context] Abu Ali had been taking care of his neighbor's orphaned children, but when they grew up, they hurt him. One day, he said to them:

ربي جريو ياكلك.

rabby jrayiwin ya:klak.

Lit. Raise a puppy. It eats you.

In Jordanian Arab culture, the above proverb means to act in a way that is ungrateful or harmful toward someone who has helped or supported you. It suggests betraying, hurting, or showing ingratitude toward a person that has provided you with care, assistance, or sustenance. This proverb can be used in different situations to perform different pragmatic meanings.

In its given context, the illocutionary force of the proverb conveys disappointment, as the speaker uses it to express his disappointment and anger toward the orphaned children for their perceived ingratitude. The speech act is expressive because it reflects the speaker's emotional state (disappointment) toward the addressee's behavior.

(7) Threatening

[Context] Khaled threatened his neighbour, Thamer, saying that if he came back and disturbed him again, he would file a complaint. Khaled then said to him:

والى يحطك عند اثم الكلب حطه عند ذيله.

w ʔilly yħk ʕind ʔthum alkalib ħuħ ʔnid ghayluħ.

Lit. The one who places you at the dog's mouth, place him at its tail.

In Jordanian Arab culture, the above proverb metaphorically advises us not to respect those who do not respect us. Therefore, if a person puts you in a lowly position (represented by the dog's head), put him in a lowlier one (represented by the dog's tail). When used in different contexts, it can implement several pragmatic meanings. Thus, it is the context that shapes the proverb's meaning, rather than its fixed meaning.

In this particular context, the proverb user says this proverb to perform the illocutionary force of a threat, emphasizing retaliation for any continued disturbance. It conveys Khaled's intent to reciprocate Thamer's actions with similar or harsher ones. The speech act here is a commissive speech act, as the speaker commits to a future course of action if provoked.

(8) Advising

[Context] A stranger always comes to the neighborhood and causes a lot of problems, so Salem told his father that he intends to hit this stranger. His father said to him:

هوم الكلب ولا تضربه.

ho:m alkalib wla: tħrubuħ.

Lit. You had better pretend to hit the dog than actually hit it.

The literal meaning of the proverb is that, when a dog is attacking you, it is better to pretend to hit it rather than actually striking it. In the context of Jordanian culture, it is metaphorically used to advise people that sometimes it is better to act in a way that avoids direct confrontation or harm by pretending to take a certain action. In this sense, this strategy helps prevent the situation from getting worse. When said on different occasions, this proverb can serve different pragmatic functions.

In its given context, the proverb is used to advise the hearer not to retaliate when you are hurt—just give the impression that you might. Thus, the illocutionary force performed by the proverb is advising, aimed at advising the hearer (Salem) to avoid unnecessary confrontation with the stranger. The father uses the proverb to recommend a more cautious, non-violent approach. The speech act in this context is directive, encouraging Salem to take indirect action rather than direct one.

(9) Warning

[Context] A man moved into a Bedouin neighborhood, and one of the locals warned him, saying:

إذا ودك تزعل جارك اضرب كلبه.

ʔidha: wdak tizʕl ja:rk ʔdrub kalbuh.

Lit. If you want to upset your neighbor, hit his dog.

The meaning of the proverb is that in Bedouin culture, causing harm or disrespect to a neighbor's property or animals—like hitting their dog—will inevitably upset the neighbour. It highlights the importance of respecting others' belongings and their relationships. When contextualized, this proverb can convey multiple pragmatic functions. Therefore, it is the context itself that determines the meaning of a given proverb, rather than its fixed meaning.

Based on the above context, the proverb user says this proverb here to warn the hearer not to hit his neighbor's dogs as doing so would upset them. Thus, the illocutionary force of the proverb is warning. It serves to convey a cautionary message, urging the hearer to be aware of the consequences of his actions towards their neighbors' dogs. The speech act performed here is a directive speech act. The proverb indirectly instructs the listener on how to avoid conflict with their neighbour(s) by suggesting they should not hurt the dog.

(10) Asserting

[Context] Amer tells his friend, Mahmoud, that their friend, Khaled, only visits him in times of interest. Mahmoud said to him: Didn't you hear the proverb that says:

وقت المصالح تجيك الكلاب مشتاقه.

waqt lmasa:lih ti:ji:k alkila:b miʕta:qha.

Lit. At the time of interest, dogs come to you with longing.

In Jordan's cultural setting, the above proverb is said to those who show affection, loyalty, or interest when they have something to get from others. It highlights the opportunistic nature of certain relationships, where affection or loyalty is more about self-interest than genuine care. This proverb can be applied on different occasions to perform different pragmatic meanings. Therefore, it is the context that determines the precise meaning of the proverb.

In the context provided above, the illocutionary force of the proverb is asserting, as the proverb user (Mahmoud) quotes it to emphasize Amer's observation about Khaled's opportunistic behavior. The speech act here is representative, as the user states something that he believes is true about human behavior, using the proverb to emphasize a truth about human relationships.

V. DISCUSSION

The data analysis reveals that dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic are categorized into four types of speech acts, namely expressives, commissives, directives and representatives. Proverbs that fall under the speech act of expressives are used to express an attitude or an inner state of the speaker, rather than conveying information about the external world. Those categorized under commissives highlight how proverbs commit the speaker to some future course of action. Proverbs classified as directives are used as an attempt by the speaker to have the hearer take some action. Finally, proverbs under representatives commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition.

The results reveal that proverbs that are related to dogs are pragmatically multifunctional in the Jordanian context since they serve ten illocutionary forces (pragmatic meanings) in different situations. These functions are: criticizing, scolding, scorning, insulting, ridiculing, expressing disappointment, threatening, advising, warning and asserting. As it is clear, Jordanian youth are aware of both functions and applications of dog-related proverbs. The study also shows that these proverbs can be applied in different walks of life, which may be attributed to the significant role dog-related proverbs play in daily conversations within the Jordanian context.

The findings show that dog-related proverbs in Jordanian Arabic tend to express rather negative pragmatic functions (e.g., criticizing, scolding, scorning, insulting, ridiculing and expressing disappointment) due to the symbolic associations and cultural connotations that dogs carry in Jordanian culture. This is in line with Alshorafat (2023), who states that dogs are used in Jordanian proverbs exclusively to deliver negative metaphorical meanings, such as cowardice, ungratefulness, and inferiority, just to mention a few.

The reported results suggest that a given dog-related proverb can be applied in many different situations and hence perform various pragmatic functions. Thus, it is the context rather than the proverb's literal meaning that shapes the precise meaning intended by the proverb user. The study also points out that Searle's classification of speech acts provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the intentions behind using dog-related proverbs in everyday speech.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study has provided a detailed speech act analysis of some proverbs that are related to dogs in the Jordanian context based on the Speech Act Theory. The analysis reveals that these proverbs fall under four illocutionary acts: expressives, commissives, directives and representatives. It also shows that they perform ten illocutionary forces (pragmatic functions). They are as follows: criticizing, scolding, scorning, insulting, ridiculing, expressing disappointment, threatening, advising, warning and asserting. Furthermore, the study reveals that dog-related proverbs are predominantly employed for negative functions rather than positive ones. It concludes that context plays an essential role in understanding and interpreting the illocutionary acts and illocutionary forces of proverbs that are related to dogs.

Since proverbs, including dog-related proverbs, are found in all cultures and languages, future research may examine the speech acts of dog-related proverbs in other Arabic dialects like Saudi Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, and many others. Thus, one could examine to what extent the illocutionary acts and illocutionary forces of such proverbs may vary from one dialect to another one.

The present study also suggests that future studies may investigate the acceptability of these situations and illocutionary functions against the linguistic intuition of older generations (speakers over the age of 50). This would help determine the extent to which these functions are recognized by this age group compared to Jordanian youth.

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