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Performativity and Speech Act Theory

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Performativity

Introduction

Performativity is a concept that originated in philosophy and linguistics, and it refers to the power of language to perform actions in the world. In other words, language is not only a tool for describing reality, but also a tool for shaping and creating it.

The term was first introduced by the philosopher J.L. Austin in his 1962 book "How to Do Things with Words." Austin argued that some utterances are not merely descriptive statements, but are actually "performative" in nature, meaning that they perform an action or bring about a change in the world. For example, when a judge says "I hereby sentence you to five years in prison," the sentence is not just a description of what is happening, but is actually a performative act that has legal consequences.

Performativity has since been expanded beyond the realm of language to encompass a wider range of social and cultural practices, including gender, race, and sexuality. In these contexts performativity refers to the ways in which individuals perform and embody social identities through their behaviors, gestures, and language use. For example, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity argues that gender is not a fixed biological category, but rather is something that is constantly being performed and enacted through social interactions and cultural norms.

Austin and his Speech Act Theory

Austin criticizes the view that the main purpose of sentences would be to state facts or to describe some state of affairs as either true or false. In addition, He argues against the view that the only meaningful statements are those that are verifiable (Austin 1976: 2). Instead, he claims that such truth-evaluable sentences constitute only one type of utterance, pointing out that there are other types of utterances which are neither true nor false, but nonetheless meaningful. He calls this second type of utterance "performative", Performatives are used to carry out an action. In that they differ from other types of declarative sentences (constatives) which only describe the world in systematic ways.

Austin revises his theory considerably in the course of his lectures and eventually replaces the dichotomy 'performative' vs. 'constative' with a more general theory of speech acts where every utterance is a type of action. This theory of speech acts is later elaborated by his student Searle.

Constative - Performative Distinction

Austin makes a clear distinction between **constative** and **performative utterances**. In which, Constative utterances describe states of affairs which are either true or false. Constatives refer to the act of saying something, and, as mentioned above, they are truth-evaluable or at least purport to describe reality. (Petrey 1990:4)

- Snow is white. (true)
- Snow is red. (false)

On the other hand, in Performative utterances the speaker does not describe the world like constatives but changes it via performing an action denoted by some performative verbs like promise, declare etc. Besides, Austin's performatives are not 'true or false', (Austin 1976:5) For instance, in the following example, the speaker actually makes an apology, he does not describe himself apologizing for his behavior.

- I apologize for my behavior.

Performative Verbs

The type of verbs used to make performative utterances are called *performatives* or *performative verbs*. They are: *promise, name, bet, agree, swear, declare, order, predict, warn, insist, declare or refuse*. **These performative verbs have the following characteristics:**

1. Performative verbs are verbs that **describe actions** carried out by speakers.
2. They are used in **1st person singular, simple present, indicative, active**.
3. They can be **combined with "hereby"**. (Bublitz 2009:75)

Structure of Performatives

Performatives may **have two grammatical forms**. The **first form** comprises the first person singular 'I' plus a verb in the simple present indicative active, with or without an indirect object 'you':

I (hereby) V per you (that) S'

where **V per** is a performative verb and **S'** is a complement sentence, The **second form** uses verb in the passive voice as in the following example (Austin, *ibid.*:57):

- Passengers are warned to cross the track by the bridge only.

Types of Performatives

In the theory of speech acts, performative utterances can be further divided into two types:

1- **Explicit performatives**: These are utterances in which the speaker explicitly signals their intention to perform a speech act. Examples include "I promise to do it," "I apologize for my behavior." or "I hereby name you as my executor."

2- **Implicit performatives**: These are utterances in which the speaker's intention to perform a speech act is not explicitly stated, but can be inferred from the context or the words used.

Examples include "Can you pass the salt?" (a request), "I wonder if you could lend me some money" (a request), or "It's getting late" (an implicit suggestion that it's time to leave).

Implicit performatives can sometimes be more difficult to identify because the speech act is not explicitly stated. In these cases, it is necessary to consider the context, the tone of the speaker, and the words used to determine the intended meaning. (Lyons, 1977; 728)

Felicity Conditions

In the lecture "*Conditions for happy performatives*" (1976.12-24), Austin identifies a set of rules which govern the felicitous or 'successful' use of performative utterances. Thus, the following **conditions** must be met for a performative sentence to be successful:

- **A.1** "There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances.
- **A.2** The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- **B.1** The procedure must be executed by all participants correctly.
- **B.2** And completely.
- **C.1** Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, 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 of feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves.
- **C.2** and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently." (Austin 1976: 14)

Misfires

The conditions under A and B are essential to the first group of infelicities which Austin calls "**Misfires**". (Austin: 1976: 16) Not observing these rules makes the act invalid, so that it does not take effect. For example, if a husband says to his wife 'I divorce you', this is an infelicitous speech act because one cannot get divorced by oneself, so the utterance does not have a conventional effect. Another example occurs if speaker A says: "I bet you sixpence' but speaker B doesn't say 'I take you on."

Abuses

The conditions listed under C-when violated-make the professed act an abuse of the procedure. Austin states that such performances are not void but "**unhappy**." (Austin 1976: 15, 43) For example, when the speaker says "I congratulate you", although the speaker does not have the requisite feelings. (Austin 1976: 41)

Expanding on Austin's basic idea, Searle presents a set of conditions that must be met in order for a speech act to be successful. According to Searle there are five felicity conditions that must be fulfilled for a speech act to be considered valid or appropriate:

1. The speaker must have the intention of performing the act. This means that the speaker must have a specific goal in mind when making the utterance, such as making a promise, giving an order, or asking a question.
2. The speaker must have the appropriate authority or status to perform the act. For example, only someone with the authority to do so can issue a legal verdict or declare war.
3. The appropriate conditions must exist for the act to be performed. For example, a wedding ceremony can only take place if the bride and groom are present, and the necessary witnesses and officiant are available.
4. The words used must be appropriate and understandable to the audience. If the words used are unclear or ambiguous, the speech act may not be successful.
5. The utterance must be sincere. This means that the speaker must actually intend to perform the act they are claiming to perform. For example, if someone says "I promise to pay you back tomorrow" but has no intention of doing so, their utterance is not a genuine promise.

The 'hereby' Test

Austin (1962: 57), explains that:

'Hereby' is a useful criterion that the utterance is performative. If 'hereby' is not inserted, the utterance could be taken to be "the description of what usually happens" (Austin, 1962)

- I hereby name this ship the King George.
- *I hereby drive a red car. (Coulthard, 1996: 13)

Problems with Performatives

Austin modified his theory, he replaces his performative/constative distinction with a more general theory of speech acts, stating that "the traditional 'statement' is an abstraction, an ideal. (Austin 1962: 148) Thus, in saying something, the speaker can perform three acts simultaneously:

- locutionary or constative (the ostensible meaning of the utterance)
- illocutionary (the intent of an utterance)
- perlocutionary (the actual effect of an utterance, whether intended or not). For example, saying: "there's a bull in the field is a locutionary act (the speaker is describing a fact about the scenery); it might also be intended as a warning (an illocutionary act); and its effect could be that listeners change their minds about entering the field (a perlocutionary act).

Austin's Taxonomy

Austin wanted to make his work more comprehensive. Thus, he distinguishes **five general classes of utterances** which are classified **according to their illocutionary force**:

- 1. Verdictives** (used to judge from something. examples: estimate, reckoning, appraisal)
- 2. Exercitives** (used to exercise powers, rights or influence. Examples: appointing, voting, ordering)
- 3. Commissives** (used to commit yourself to doing sth. example: promising)
- 4. Behabitives** (used to express attitudes or social behaviour towards someone. examples: Congratulating, challenging)
- 5. Expositives** (used in the Act of exposition. Austin gives many examples of these, among which are: affirm, deny, emphasize). (Austin 1976: 151)

Limitations of the Performative Hypothesis

Although the performative hypothesis has been influential in linguistics and philosophy, it has also faced significant challenges and limitations. leading some scholars to argue for more nuanced and context-sensitive approaches to language and action.

► **Performatives sometimes do the wrong things:**

There is not always a clear relationship between the form of a performative and what it actually means. For instance, "I promise I'll come over there and hit you if you don't shut up!" is not a promise, it is a threatening to stop speaking.

► **Utterances that don't look like performatives can still do things:**

A-Is it raining? B- I hereby ask you if it is raining.

These utterances do the same thing (ask a question) without any difference between them. Therefore, lots of utterances without any obvious performative in them can still be used to perform speech acts.

► **Even constatives do things**

If I am having a phone conversation with you and you don't know where I am, and I say "I'm just now leaving my office", then I have changed something about the world which may seem a trivial change like a performative that causes someone to be fired. But ultimately, performatives create a social situation in which everyone agrees that that person is fired. Besides, Performatives don't directly change the physical world (cause a tree to grow or cause a person to turn into a bird); what performatives really do is change the interpersonal context, then maybe that's not so different from what constatives also do above.

► **Constatives can be infelicitous, too**

Although "The cat is on the mat" is a constative which can be true or false, still it implies that you **BELIEVE** the cat is on the mat. Thus, it would sound quite weird to say "The cat is on the mat, but I don't believe the cat is on the mat." It's not exactly false, but in either case, we would feel that the person who said this sentence does not behave properly, or not meeting the conditions needed to utter the sentence which is not so different from uttering a performative like "I promise to" when they do not actually intend to do the thing.

Constatives that are true can still be "inappropriate for a situation as when I tell you something that you already know, and that I already know you already know, then what I have said may not be false, but it might be weird and inappropriate, i.e., infelicitous. Thus, constatives can fail in the way that performatives can fail. There seem to be conditions on when it's appropriate to say certain things, regardless of whether those things are "performatives" or "constatives".

► **The contribution of performatives to truth conditions**

- I state that I have never seen that man.

Someone might say the above example in a court to show that he is innocent. But imagine that he actually has seen the man. Now, Is the speaker lying? The utterance itself is it is performatives: it is indeed true that I am stating that thing. But the thing that I'm stating is not true. The important thing here is that we need to distinguish between the utterance itself, and the act that I am committing in making that utterance.

Performative adverbs

There are a number of adverbs which seem to modify performative verbs and which LEVINSON (1983: 255) calls «performative adverbs». It is possible that the semantic meanings of these adverbs are not the same in the explicit performative, the implicit performative and the reported performative usages. According to Levinson, the semantic meaning of some of these adverbs (for example, 'frankly'), should be the same for all three usages: the explicit performative, the implicit performative and the reported performative. However, it does not seem to be so because the modification produced by the adverb varies for the different usages, as can be proved by the following examples found in LEVINSON (1983: 255):

- I tell you frankly you're a swine.
- Frankly, you're a swine.
- John told Bill frankly that he was a swine.

Levinson claims that the adverb 'frankly' should modify the verb 'tell' equally in all three sentences. Nonetheless, in the second sentence it seems to warn the addressee that a criticism is forthcoming, as LEVINSON (1983: 255) points out. In the first sentence it appears to modify the verb 'tell', while in the third example "it modifies the manner in which the telling was done".

Thomas's Categorization of Performatives

1- Ritual performatives constitute a fairly special class of utterances which, as Thomas (1995: 37) claims, "are highly culturally dependent". These utterances are very much subject to felicity conditions, since rituals involve extremely specific conditions as regards procedures, circumstances and participants.

- I sentence you to ten years (by a judge in a court of law)
- I absolve you from your sins. (by a priest)

Thomas (1995: 37) clarifies that: "Each of these can only appropriately and successfully be uttered by the specified person in a specific situation.

2- Group Performatives

Thomas (1995: 41) explains that performatives:

[...] are either commonly or necessarily produced by more than one person, e.g. a communiqué from a summit conference, a report from a committee and most obviously, a verdict from a jury (in the high court the judge responds to the statement by the foreman or forewoman of the jury by asking: 'And is that the verdict of you all?").

He explains that group performatives may belong to either the metalinguistic, the ritual or the collaborative categories.

- We do not judge you to be guilty of professional misconduct.

3- Metalinguistic performatives

Thomas (1995:33) argues that performative utterances:

[...] are self-referential (the verb refers to what the speaker of the utterance is doing), self-verifying (they contain their own truth-conditions) and non-falsifiable (they can never be untrue). Thomas goes on to explain that the set of metalinguistic performatives in any language is usually quite small and finite. A number of examples are provided in Thomas (1995: 33):

- I say I withdraw (my complaint)
- I protest I declare (the meeting open)

Culturally specific performatives

This category refers to a range of performatives which are particular to each individual culture and are, thus, very much linked to rituals belonging to and occurring within those cultures. As Thomas (1995: 43) expounds: Obviously, if you live in a country/culture which does not have baptism, there will be no performative form I baptize you... Or the verb may exist, but cannot be used performatively. This is the case with the verb to divorce: in Britain divorce exists, and we have a verb to divorce, but (no matter what your religion) you cannot felicitously use the utterance I divorce you to separate yourself legally and permanently from your spouse. And even in countries where Sharia law operates, its interpretation may vary.

The following example, provided by Thomas (1995: 43) illustrates how a divorce came into being in an Islamic soap opera in Pakistan, when one of the characters: [...] divorced his television wife in traditional Muslim style, pronouncing Talaq-I divorce thee-three times. The trouble was that his TV spouse was played by his real wife, Samina. Now the ulemas are saying that the divorce is binding, even though the formula was spoken in the interests of art. Their decree maintains that the Prophet ordained that in three matters (marriage, divorce, and the freeing of slaves) words uttered unintentionally or even in jest cannot be withdrawn. [...]

Thomas also comments on the fact that the felicity conditions which govern a performative in one language or culture may not govern it in another.

Thesis and Antithesis Levinson performatives

Levinson characterizes the Theory of Speech Acts as the study of the illocutionary force of utterances. He distinguishes two opposite approaches to such a study: an anti-reductionist and allegedly Austinian approach, which he refers to as "Thesis," and a reductionist and definitely anti-Austinian approach, which he refers to as "Antithesis."

According to the supporters of Antithesis, illocutionary force is reducible to matters of truth-conditional semantics. When I utter a sentence containing an explicit performative verb "I promise that I'll come to the meeting." I am expressing a proposition that is true or false. The proposition in question has the "peculiar property," as Levinson puts it, of being always true, given that the appropriate conditions for promising are in place, As Levinson remarks, according to this approach the utterance of sentences containing explicit performative verbs can be compared to the utterance of sentences such as "I am here," which are, it is assumed, verified by their use.

According to Antithesis, the so-called "felicity conditions" of utterances individuated by Austin are really part of the semantic meaning of the performative verb contained in the uttered sentence and can be captured in terms of entailment or semantic presupposition. Austin pointed out that in order, say, to successfully promise, certain conditions must be in place: for example, there must be an established institution of promising. For Antithesis, these conditions are simply part of the truth-conditional meaning of the verb "to promise." Thus, the existence of the institution of promising is simply entailed by the truth of the proposition that I express by saying "I promise that I'll be there"-or, alternatively, semantically presupposed by the truth or falsity of that proposition.

The utterance of sentences that do not contain explicit performatives is then handled by recourse to the distinction between the surface and the deep syntactic and semantic structure of sentences. When I promise to come to meeting by saying, quite simply, "I'll be there," the sentence that I utter is taken to contain, in its deep structure, the performative verb "I promise," which contributes to determine the truth-conditions of the actual sentence that I utter. Proponents of Antithesis maintain therefore that there is no need of an independent study of illocutionary forces as a proprietary domain of pragmatics; all the relevant phenomena can be fully explained, as they are fond of saying, by "garden variety semantics."

The funny thing about this reductionist approach, as Levinson points out, is that it runs into peculiar problems in accounting for the very case that would seem to be more congenial to it: namely, assertion. Suppose I say, "It is snowing outside." According to Antithesis, in order to semantically evaluate the sentence that I uttered, we must bring out its deep structure, which would be something like "I state that it is snowing outside." But this sentence, according to Antithesis, is true if and only if /in fact state that it is snowing outside. The sentence expresses a proposition about me-not about the current state of the weather, and, moreover, a proposition that is verified by its use, given that the conditions for stating are in place. It turns out, therefore, that it is actually a very hard thing to say anything false, and that all the statements we can ever make, whether true or false, are auto-biographical.

Austinian way to think about illocutionary forces. Thesis, the position according to which illocutionary forces and felicity conditions are irreducible to semantic meaning and truth-conditions. Let's consider, with Levinson (245), the following sentences:

- a. I predict that you will go home.
- b. Go home!
- c. Are you going home?
- d. I advise you to go home.

Thesis, as Levinson describes it, maintains that all these sentences express the same proposition, namely "that the addressee will go home." Where they differ is in their illocutionary force. Propositional content and illocutionary force are conceived as two "detachable aspects of meaning" (245). The former is specified by semantics in terms of truth-conditions; the latter, on the other hand, can only be specified by a pragmatic theory of speech acts in terms of felicity conditions. Felicity conditions, as Levinson puts it, are here understood as "specifications of appropriate usage" (246) that "jointly define and constitute the nature of any specific speech-act" (245). Thus, semantics tells us what proposition we express by uttering a sentence, whereas the theory of speech acts, which is part of pragmatics, tells us, in the first place, what we are doing in expressing that proposition—whether we are asserting something, issuing an order, asking a question, and so on. Moreover, the theory of speech acts identifies the conditions that must be in place for the successful performance of each speech act (successfully issuing an order, for example, requires the relevant authority). Finally, a theory of speech acts specifies what counts as "correctness" or "satisfaction" for each speech act (an order, for example, is satisfied if and only if the addressee renders true in the appropriate way the proposition expressed by the utterance with which the order is issued; an assertion is "correct" if the proposition expressed in it is true; and something analogous is supposed to hold for all the other kinds speech acts).

The subject matter of the theory of speech acts, according to Thesis, is the realm of human action. The subject matter of semantics is truth-conditional meaning. The two subjects matters are conceived as conceptually independent of one another, in Levinson's terminology, they are conceived as mutually "detachable." We have here a straightforward

exemplification of what I wanted to call an aggregative understanding of the relation between locution and illocution. It is indeed assumed that the propositional content expressed by a sentence can be fully specified without drawing in any way on our understanding of the illocutionary force with which the sentence is uttered. The theory of speech acts is a merely external supplementation to semantic theory; it must appear in a full account of language, but only for the sake of completeness: a theory of language that lacks a theory of illocutions is merely incomplete, as opposed to internally incoherent. In this

picture, the fact that language is used-that is, the fact that words are used by competent speakers to perform intelligible speech acts is only externally related to the meaningfulness of words and to the truth-conditions of the "propositions" that they express; it is an extra feature, as it were, tacked onto an independently given layer of truth-conditional meaning.

Speech Act Theory (SAT)

Introduction

To utter something - either orally or in writing - is to do something. The act of speaking is, first and foremost, an act. This is the central insight behind the theory of speech acts, and although it seems relatively straightforward, it raises important question about how the addressee is able to determine what sort of act the speaker intended to perform. The theory of speech acts, then, is inherently a pragmatic theory, since it involves an intention on the part of the speaker and an inference on the part of the hearer. (Briner 2013: 175).

In our daily interactions, we use sentences like he came from heaven to save my life, a car came from nowhere and hit mine, etc, but we do not judge them as false or meaningless; we try to make sense of them and respond properly. This fact was observed by Austin (1962) who believed that people manage to communicate easily and successfully even with imperfect or illogical language. In his lectures which were published posthumously as 'How to do things with words', Austin refuted the logical positivist view which based understanding language on truth conditions. Speech acts can be defined as a unit of language that is produced in order to achieve a particular purposes command, question, reply, request, apology, complaint, etc. this is what Yule (1996) means when he defined it as actions performed via utterances".

Austin's Theory of Speech Acts:

J. L. Austin's Theory of Speech Acts emerged in the 1960s against the backdrop of theories focused on language structure and individual sentences which were mainly analyzed according to their descriptive qualities. In his well-known book "**How To Do Things With Words**". Austin made three distinctions:

Performatives Vs. Constatives

Explicit Performatives Vs. Implicit Performatives

Locutionary act, Illocutionary act and Perlocutionary act.

1. Performatives Vs. Constatives

According to Austin, performative is the term that "indicates the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action-it is not normally thought of as just saying something" (Austin 2002 cited in Zang et al 2020:824). The term "performative" is derived from "perform", the usual word with the noun "action". To issue such an utterance is to perform the action, perhaps, which one scarcely could perform, at least with so much precision, in any other way. There are strong limitations on what can be performative utterances. **First**, the subject of the sentence must be I or we. The utterance "He advises you to study hard" is not a performative utterance because it uses another pronoun subject "he". **Second**, the verb must be in the present tense. And, perhaps most important, the speaker must be recognized as having the authority to make the statement and the circumstances must be appropriate, for example the utterance "**I open this meeting by reciting basmalah**" is valid if it is spoken by an appropriate person in socially determined situations and many performatives take place in formal settings. Austin also provides the criteria for identifying those performatives. these are:

- 1) They do not "describe" or "report" anything at all, they are not "true or false".
- 2) Uttering the sentence is the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as "just", saying something. In order to clarify his idea, Austin gave several examples in his book:
 - a) "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth"-as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.
 - b) "I give and bequeath my watch to my brother"-as occurring in a will.

The performatives **cannot be said to be "true" or "false"** in that this kind of utterances is not issued to describe or to report some facts, but to do things.

Let's take the sentence "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth" for example, in saying that the speaker doesn't mean to describe or report something about the ship but to perform the act of naming the ship. Also, Austin (1962, p. 57-61) proposed the **hereby test** to differentiate performative verb from non-performative verb. The word hereby is inserted between the subject and the verb so that if it sounds acceptable, then the verb is performative, if not, it is not. For instance:

I hereby promise to help you.

I hereby confess my sins.

We hereby thank you for your patience.

The verbs promise, confess and thank refer directly to the actions (i.e.. promising, confessing, thanking) performed by the utterances above respectively, thus, they are all performative verbs. On the other hand, if the utterance does not accept the hereby test, it cannot be said to have a performative verb. For example, (I go to work every day) cannot accept this test (* I hereby go to work every day). Hence, it does not contain a performative verb.

On the other hand, assertions or statement making utterances are called constatives. The term constative denotes statements or utterances that describe or depict facts or states of affairs and so may be either true or false (Levinson 1983:227). There are different types of Constatives as Devitt and Hanley (2003 cited in Hafifah 2020:87) state. Affirming (to state something is true or correct formally or confidently), Alleging (to accuse someone), Announcing (to announce something. Answering (to answer the question), Concurring (to express agreement), Denying (to deny something). Disclosing (to make something is known), Identifying (to identify something). Informing (to give information), Predicting (to predict about something), Reporting (to make a report) and Stipulating (to state something clearly and firmly as requirement).

2. Explicit and Implicit performatives

Austin (1962) considers all utterances as performing acts when uttered in contexts. Therefore, he refers to all speech acts as performatives. He proposed a dichotomy between two types of performatives, namely, explicit performatives and implicit performatives (Huang 2007: 96). Explicit performatives are performative utterances which contain a performative verb that makes explicit what kind of act is being performed as in (I sentence you to ten years in prison). By contrast, implicit performatives are performative utterances in which there is no such a verb as in (How about going to New York on Saturday?). Austin isolated a number of syntactic and semantic properties of explicit performatives in English. They are: (i) explicit performatives contain a performative verb, (ii) the performative nature of such a verb can be reinforced by adding the adverb hereby, and (iii) (explicit performatives occur in sentences with a first-person singular subject of a verb in the simple present tense, indicative mood, and active voice. In addition, he is aware that there are

exceptions. Explicit performatives can sometimes take a first-person plural subject, as in (We suggest that you go to the embassy and apply for your visa in person.), a second-person singular or plural subject, as in (You are hereby warned that legal action will be taken) and a third-person singular or plural subject, as in (Passengers are hereby requested to wear a seat belt). There are cases as found in Levinson (1983: 260) where the explicit performative verb is impersonal", that is, it does not refer to the speaker, as in (It is herewith disclosed that the value of the estate left by Marcus T. Bloomingdale was 4,785,758 dollars).

In order to account for implicit performatives, an analysis known as the performative hypothesis was put forward in the 1970s. The basic idea of the hypothesis is that underlying every sentence there is a 'hidden' matrix performative clause as shown in the following formula 1 (hereby) Vp you (that) S where Vp is a performative verb and S is a complement clause. According to this hypothesis, the performative matrix clause in the deep or underlying structure of for example (Stand up) is shown in the following: I hereby request that you stand up. Or, I hereby order you to stand up.

There are problems at the very heart of this analysis. One such problem is that there are many cases of implicit performatives which do not have an explicit performative version, even though the relevant verb can be used in a descriptive way. As an illustration, consider the following:

a. You're a stupid cow.

b. I hereby insult you that you're a stupid cow.

c. John insulted Mary by saying that she was a stupid cow.

Intuitively (a) is most naturally interpretable as an insult, but contrary to the prediction of the performative hypothesis, it does not seem to have an explicit performative equivalent, as is shown by the oddness of (b). On the other hand, as (c) indicates, the verb insult can be used descriptively without any problem (Huang 2007:97).

3. Locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act

SAT theory broadly explains the utterance as having three aspects:

Locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Leech (1983: 119) defines them as:

Locutionary act : performing an act of saying something.

illocutionary act: performing an act in saying something.

Perlocutionary act: performing an act by saying something.

Locutionary act is a simple generating sounds that are linked together by grammatical conventions to say something meaningful. For example, " it is raining" performs the locutionary act of saying that it is raining. It is a simple act which refers to the surface meaning of an utterance. It is uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference.

Illocutionary act refers to the speaker's intention behind the production of an illocutionary act including its communicative point, attitudes and presupposition. For example, if someone says " it is cold in here" it could be that the person is describing the room, in which case the illocutionary act would be the description of the temperature of the room. It is possible to change the environment, say by turning up the heat or closing the window. The person intention may be to get someone else do something about the cold, in which case the illocutionary act would be the other person's action.

Perlocutionary act is a term used in SAT to refer to an utterance that has an effect upon the actions, thoughts or feelings of the listener. For example, convincing, alarming, insulting and boring. It is any speech act that amounts to persuading, convincing, scaring, inspiring or getting someone to realize something. When examining the perlocutionary act the effect of the hearer or reader is emphasized. For instance, would you close the window please?" The surface form of the utterance is a question (locutionary act). The utterance is a request from the speaker's part (illocutionary act). The speaker's desire to that the hearer should go and close the window explains the perlocutionary act.

Felicity Conditions:

There are contextual restrictions on the use of speech acts. Let's consider the following examples:

A. I now pronounce you husband and wife.

B. I apologize for stepping on your toe.

For (a) to do its intended job that is, for it to succeed as an act of marrying two people a number of contextual factors must hold: **The two people in question must intend to get married, and they must want to do it at this moment, and the person doing the pronouncing must be qualified to do so and have been asked to do so for this particular occasion, and so forth. If even one of these conditions fails to hold, the speech act will fail**, For example, if a wedding guest just happens to be an appropriately licensed member of the clergy or official of the state, they cannot stand up in the middle of the wedding and shout from their seat or at least if they do, it will not count as in fact pronouncing the (baffled) couple to be husband and wife, despite the couple's intent to become married at this time and in this place, and despite the utterer's being fully licensed to perform the act. Similarly, (b) will not constitute an apology unless certain conditions are satisfied; the utterer must have in some way harmed the addressee and intend by the utterance to express his regret for that action.

There must be conditions met for a speech act to be happy or felicitous one so Austin proposed a typology of conditions which performatives must meet if they are to succeed or be happy (Briner 2013: 184, Austin 1962: 15). The existence of an accepted conventional procedure with a certain conventional effect (certain words are uttered by appropriate persons in appropriate circumstances) is necessary.

1. The procedure must be carried out correctly and completely by all participants.
2. The participants must have the intention to conduct themselves.
3. The participants must actually carry out what they have intended.

Austin's Taxonomy of Performatives

Austin (1962: 153) proposed a taxonomy for the different types of speech acts; these are:

1) Verdictives: these are typified by delivering of a finding, official or unofficial upon evidence or reasons as to value so far as they are in other words, the name implies verdicts (judging something) which may be official in that the person who gives judgment should have a kind of official authority like judging in the court as in " I sentence you to death" or unofficial which means that anybody can value or estimate as in " I value you as a good friend". This class involves such performative verbs as assess, value, etc..

- 2) Exercitives; they are typified by exercising of power, right or influence exemplified by appointing, ordering, voting, urging, warning, or advising.
- 3) Commisives: are typified by acts which commit the speaker to do something in the future, but also include declaration or announcements of intention.
- 4) Behabitives: are the speaker's reaction to the others past or present behaviors. This class includes verbs as thank, welcome and apologize.
- 5) Expositives: an explanation of how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation. This class include verbs like agree, report and describe.

Criticism against Austin's Taxonomy:

Austin's taxonomy has been subject to criticism by several scholars for its limitations and oversimplifications.

1. Limited to the performative/constative dichotomy: Austin's taxonomy is based on the performative/constative dichotomy, which suggests that utterances can be either performative (i.e., language that does something) or constative (i.e., language that states something). This distinction, however, has been criticized for being too simplistic and failing to capture the complexity of language use. For instance, Judith Butler argues that many utterances are neither purely performative nor constative, but rather a combination of both, such as when one says "I promise to pay you back" (Butler, 1997).
2. There is no clear principle or set of principles on which the taxonomy is constructed. The verb describe is listed as both verdicative and an expositive.
3. There is a great deal of overlap from one category to another and a great deal of heterogeneity within some of the categories.
4. Overemphasis on the illocutionary force: Austin's taxonomy places a lot of emphasis on the illocutionary force of an utterance, which is the intended effect of the utterance on the listener. However, this focus on the illocutionary force has been criticized for neglecting the perlocutionary effects of an utterance, which are the actual effects on the listener. For example, J.L. Searle argues that an utterance can have unintended perlocutionary effects, such as when a joke offends someone (Searle, 197).

5. Ignoring the context of language use: Austin's taxonomy is also criticized for ignoring the context of language use, such as the social and cultural factors that influence how language is used. For example, Talbot Taylor argues that Austin's theory does not take into account how power relations between speakers and listeners affect the illocutionary force of an utterance (Taylor, 1995).

6. Failure to account for indirect speech acts Finally, Austin's taxonomy has been criticized for failing to account for indirect speech acts, which are utterances that have a different illocutionary force than what is literally said. For example, when someone says "Could you pass the salt?" in a restaurant, the illocutionary force is not a request for information, but rather a request for salt (Searle, 1976).

Searle's Speech Acts

Searle's theory of speech acts, (1969), is just Austin's systematized, in part rigidified, with sallies into the general theory of meaning, and connections to other philosophical issues. From Austin's work, and in large part through Searle's systematization of it, there has emerged a coherent theory of speech acts that demands the linguist's attention. This position, which is a judicious selection and slight abstraction from Austin and Searle's particular views, we may call the irreducibility thesis, or Thesis for short. In brief, the position can be formulated as follows. First, all utterances not only serve to express propositions, but also perform actions. Secondly, of the many ways in which one could say that in uttering some linguistic expression a speaker was doing something, there is one privileged level of action that can be called the illocutionary act- or, more simply, the speech act.

Searle's Felicity conditions on speech acts

If illocutionary force is somehow conventionally linked with explicit performatives and other illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), then we should like to know exactly how. Searle appeals to a distinction by Rawls (1955) between **regulative rules** and **constitutive rules**. The first are the kind that control antecedently existing activities, c.g. traffic regulations, while the second are the kind that create or constitute the activity itself, e.g. the rules of a game. The latter have the conceptual form: 'doing X counts as Y, eg. in soccer, kicking or heading the ball through the goal-posts counts as a goal. Essentially, the rules linking **IFIDs** with their corresponding illocutionary acts are just of this kind: if I warn you not to touch the dog, that counts as an undertaking that it is not in your best interests to touch that animal. Of course, as Austin points out, it will only be a felicitous warning if all

the other felicity conditions are also met (Searle assimilates the 'uttering IFID X counts as doing Y' condition to the same schema, calling it the essential condition. This prompts Searle to suggest that **felicity conditions** are not merely dimensions on which utterances can go wrong, but are actually jointly constitutive of the various illocutionary forces. Searle suggests a classification into four kinds of condition, depending on how they specify propositional content, preparatory preconditions, conditions on **sincerity**, and the **essential** condition. Searle (1969) took the view that the felicity conditions put forward by Austin are not only ways in which a speech act can be appropriate or inappropriate, but they also jointly constitute the illocutionary force. Put in a different way, the felicity conditions are the constitutive rules-rules that create the activity itself-of speech acts. On Searle's view, to perform a speech act is to obey certain conventional rules that are constitutive of that type of act. Searle developed the original Austinian felicity conditions into a neo-Austinian classification of four basic categories, namely, (i) *propositional content*, (ii) *preparatory condition*, (iii) *sincerity condition*, and (iv) *essential condition*.

Searle's felicity conditions for promising

- (i) Propositional content: future act A of S
- (ii) Preparatory: (a) H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A, and

S so believes (b). It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events

- (iii) Sincerity: S intends to do A

- (iv) Essential: the utterance of e counts as an undertaking to do A

where S stands for the speaker, H for the hearer, A for the action, and e for the linguistic expression.

Searle's felicity conditions for requesting

- (i) Propositional content: future act A of H
- (ii) Preparatory: (a) S believes H can do A (b) It is not obvious that H would do A without being asked
- (iii) Sincerity: S wants H to do A
- (iv) Essential: the utterance of e counts as an attempt to get H to do A

Those conditions exemplified above are explained as follows:

1. The propositional content condition is in essence concerned with what the speech act is about. That is, it has to do with specifying the restrictions on the content of what remains as the 'core' of the utterance (i.e. Searle's propositional act) after the illocutionary act part is removed. For a promise, the propositional content is to predicate some future act of the speaker, whereas in the case of a request, it is to predicate some future act of the addressee.

2. The preparatory conditions state the real-world prerequisites for the speech act. For a promise, these are roughly that the addressee would prefer the promised action to be accomplished, that the speaker knows this, but also that it is clear to both the speaker and the addressee that what is promised will not happen in the normal course of action. In the case of a request, the preparatory conditions are that the speaker has reason to believe that the addressee has the ability to carry out the action requested, and that if the addressee is not asked, he or she will not perform the action.

3. The sincerity condition must be satisfied if the act is to be performed sincerely. Thus, when carrying out an act of promising, the speaker must genuinely intend to keep the promise. When making a request, the speaker must want the addressee to do the requested action. Notice that if the sincerity condition is not fulfilled, the act is still performed, but there is an abuse, to use Austin's term.

4. The essential condition defines the act being performed in the sense that the speaker has the intention that his or her utterance will count as the identifiable act, and that this intention is recognized by the addressee. Thus in the case of a promise, the speaker must have the intention to create an obligation to act, and for a request, the speaker must intend that his or her utterance counts as an attempt to get the addressee to do what is requested. Failure to meet the essential condition has the consequence that the act has not been carried out.

The criteria that should be available to build the taxonomy

In his work *Speech Acts*, John Searle identifies twelve significant dimensions of variation in illocutionary acts, which differ from one another in various ways. These dimensions form a basis for a taxonomy of illocutionary acts:

1- Point or Purpose: Each illocutionary act has a different purpose. For instance, a request or command aims to get the hearer to do something, while a statement is a representation of how something is.

2- Direction of Fit: This refers to how the illocutionary act's content relates to the world. Some acts, like assertions, aim to make the world match the words (word-to-world direction), while others, like requests and promises, aim to make the words match the world (world-to-word direction).

3- Expressed Psychological States (Sincerity condition of the act): The speaker expresses certain psychological states in performing illocutionary acts. For example, when making a statement, the speaker expresses belief; when making a promise, they express an intention. These expressed states form the sincerity conditions of the act.

These three dimensions seem to be the most important, which Searle's taxonomy has been built around them, but there are several others that need remarking.

4- Differences in the force or strength with which the illocutionary point is presented.

Both, "I suggest we go to the movies" and

"I insist that we go to the movies" have the same illocutionary point, but it is presented with different strengths.

5- Differences in the status or position of the speaker and hearer as these bear on the illocutionary force of the utterance. If the general asks the private to clean up the room, that is in all likelihood a command or an order. If the private asks the general to clean up the room, that is likely to be a suggestion or proposal or request but not an order or command.

6- Relation to Interests: Illocutionary acts can differ based on whether they serve the interests of the speaker or the hearer, such as boasts versus laments.

7- Relation to the Discourse: Some illocutionary acts, like "I reply" or "I object," connect the current utterance to the broader discourse context.

8- Propositional Content: Different illocutionary acts can involve distinct propositional content, such as the difference between reports and predictions.

9- Necessity of Speech Acts: Some acts, like classifying or diagnosing, may not require speech to be performed, as they can be carried out non-verbally.

10- Requirement of Extra-Linguistic Institutions: Certain illocutionary acts, such as blessings or pronouncements, require a specific institutional context and authority.

11- Performative Use of Verbs: Some illocutionary verbs, like "promise" or "order," are performative, meaning they directly perform the act when stated, while others, like "boast," do not.

12- Style of Performance: The style in which an illocutionary act is performed (e.g., announcing versus confiding) can differ without changing the underlying illocutionary point.

Searle's Taxonomy

Searle's (1975a) neo-Austinian typology of speech acts remains the most influential. Under Searle's taxonomy, speech acts are universally grouped into five types along four dimensions: (i) illocutionary point or speech act type, (ii) direction of fit or relationship between words and world, (iii) expressed psychological state, and (iv) propositional content). The five types of speech act are further explained below:

1. Representatives (or assertives; the constatives in the original Austinian performative/constative dichotomy) are those kinds of speech act that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, and thus carry a truth-value. They express the speaker's belief. Paradigmatic cases include asserting, claiming, concluding, reporting, and stating. In performing this type of speech act, the speaker represents the world as he or she believes it is, thus making the words fit the world of belief.

I verb (that) +sentence

I verb NP+NP

- *The Berlin wall came down in 1989.*

2. Directives are those kinds of speech act that represent attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. They express the speaker's desire/wish for the addressee to do something. Paradigmatic cases include advice, commands, orders, questions, and requests. In using a directive, the speaker intends to elicit some future course of action on the part of the addressee, thus making the world match the words via the addressee.

I verb you + volitional verb(NP) (Adv)

- *Put the cake in the oven.*

3. Commissives are those kinds of speech act that commit the speaker to some future course of action. They express the speaker's intention to do something. Paradigmatic cases include offers, pledges, promises, refusals, and threats. In the case of a commissive, the world is adapted to the words via the speaker him or herself.

I verb(you) (that) +I volitional verb (NP)

- *I'll never buy you another computer game.*

4. Expressives are those kinds of speech act that express a psychological attitude or state in the speaker such as joy, sorrow, and likes/dislikes. Paradigmatic cases include apologizing, blaming, congratulating, praising, and thanking. There is no direction of fit for this type of speech act.

I verb you for

- *I apologize for every thing I have done.*

5. Declarations (or declaratives) are those kinds of speech act that effect immediate changes in some current state of affairs. Because they tend to rely on elaborate extralinguistic institutions for their successful performance, they may be called institutionalized performatives. In performing this type of speech act, the speaker brings about changes in the world; that is, he or she affects a correspondence between the propositional content and the world. Paradigmatic cases include bidding in bridge, declaring war, excommunicating, firing from employment, and nominating a candidate. As to the direction of fit, it is both words-to-world and world-to-words.

I verb NP + be predicate

- *I declare the state of national emergency.*

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