A new model of illocutionary force

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Introduction

In a series of lectures delivered in the early 1950s and later compiled and released in print as *How to do things with Words*, J.L. Austin elaborated on the idea that the capacity of language to describe the world was, despite the pre-eminence habitually granted to it by philosophy, really just one among several capacities and that, more generally, language endows its users with the tool to perform certain kinds of acts, called *illocutionary acts* or, later, *speech acts*. Speaking, Austin argued, was really a form of action; to *say* something is always just as much to *do* something. In the course of the lectures, Austin introduced some relatively well-known theoretical ideas, such as the category of *performative* utterances. The final lecture describes a taxonomy of utterances according to their *illocutionary force*. This taxonomy has for most thinkers proven less interesting than some of the moves he makes to get there. Comparatively few thinkers (Searle is the obvious exception, and there are a few others) have shown any interest developing, applying or criticising Austin's taxonomy. The initial isolation of the class of performative utterances, on the other hand, despite the fact that it turns out to be for Austin essentially no more than a piece of intellectual scaffolding, has provoked an ongoing debate and numerous elaborations in fields as diverse as sociology, literary criticism and gender theory, as well as analytic philosophy.

This paper has three chapters. Chapter One comprises a summary of *How to do things with Words*, followed by a brief discussion of some issues arising from it. The summary is expository, although rather than being comprehensive it focusses on matters relevant to the following chapters. The brief discussion that closes the chapter looks at a question in analytic philosophy (whether someone who makes a promise simultaneously states that they are promising), raises the question of the precise sense in which illocutionary acts are acts at all, and how illocutionary acts are related to the existence of conventions.

Chapter Two describes the work or several writers who have been influenced by Austin, and *How to do things with Words* in particular. John Searle was a student of Austin's and the first writer to produce a substantial critique of Austin and an elaborate the theory of speech acts. Searle's most enduring contribution is probably his taxonomy of speech acts, which became a more or less standard point of reference, in contrast to Austin's, which faded into

obscurity. The lack of interest in Austin's taxonomy since Searle published his is not especially surprising, since the latter is presented with a great deal more confidence. It has not been without its critics, however: anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, for example published an influential critique of it in which she argued that it presented features of contemporary American culture as if they were universals, when in fact other cultures have completely different ways of organising speech acts (Rosaldo 1982). In this chapter I also look at Jacques Derrida's reading of Austin (Derrida 1988), which picks up on the aspects of language that Austin and Searle excluded from their theories and raises some important problems in the relationship of speech acts and personal agency to which Austin and particularly Searle seem to be committed. I then look at what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1992) made of certain Austinian ideas in his explorations of language and power, and end with a brief outline of one way in which speech acts have been analysed by empirical researchers (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984), to illustrate that a very different breakdown of the speech act may be appropriate for different purposes.

Apart from Searle, the volume of whose output on the topic makes his inclusion in this chapter uncontroversial, the selection of writers presented in Chapter Two probably seems eclectic, not to mention uneven. Where for example are Kent Bach and Robert Harnish? Though Bach and Harnish are no doubt significant scholars in the field, their interest seemed to me too narrowly philosophical. I have chosen theorists who have raised questions about speech act theory at an arguably more fundamental level, pointed out gaps in its coverage or brought in insights from other disciplines. The reason for this is that Chapter Three presents a new classification of speech acts, partly as a way of re-examining the foundations of speech act theory, and partly with the aim of modifying it to extend its coverage to a greater range of communication phenomena. It is a model of illocutionary *forces,* instead of illocutionary *acts,* that aims to meet some (if not all) of the challenges to the classification of speech acts presented by the theorists covered in Chapter Two. This is done, principally, through an integration of Searle's taxonomy, modified in several important ways, with Roman Jakobson's model of the functions of language (Jakobson 1960, 1980).

Chapter 1: Austin

In this chapter I introduce the concepts that formed the basis of speech act theory. It consists of a summary of *How to do things with Words*, the famous and influential compilation of J.L. Austin's famous and influential 1955 William James lectures, followed by discussion of various aspects of that work that will be important for the chapters that follow. Joseph, Love & Taylor 2001 contains a similar summary of Austin's work. This summary differs from theirs in that it focusses almost exclusively on *How to do things with Words*, Austin's most systematic elaboration of his ideas about (what would later come to be known as) speech acts. I also have less to say about his philosophical method ("ordinary language philosophy") and its application to traditional philosophical problems, and more to say about the significance of his analysis for the traditional and more recent concerns of linguistics, such as semantics, pragmatics and indexicality.

1.1 Performatives and constatives

In the first lecture, Austin introduces a category of sentences whose utterance do not seem to be straightforwardly true or false, despite apparently having the same grammatical form as sentences used to make ordinary statements of fact, like 'the cat is on the mat' or 'water is H_2O.' These sentences do not appear to describe a state of affairs in the world, but rather, uttered in the appropriated context, act on or form part of an action in the world. He calls these sentences *performatives* and gives some examples[1]:

E.*a* 'I do (. . . take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)' – as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.

E.*b* 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth' – as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.

E.*c* 'I give and bequeath my watch to my brother' – as occurring in a will.

[1] Later, sentences such as these will be redefined as *explicit* performatives.

E.*d* ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.’[2]

(Austin 1962, 5)

In the appropriate context, the utterance of sentences like these effects some change in the social world, unlike a statement, which simply mirrors the world: after the utterance, some people become married or gain the rights to a watch, for instance. Austin asserts as obvious that these utterances are neither true nor false (Austin 1962, 6).[3] But there is nevertheless, he continues, a corresponding distinction that can be drawn among utterances of these sentences. Depending on various factors, things can go wrong, causing the utterance to be *infelicitous*. E.*a* might be uttered when the groom or bride is already married to someone else, or by an actor in a play, E.*b* when I am not the person authorised to perform the ceremony, E.*c* when the watch does not belong to me or when I don't have a brother, E.*d* when I plan to leave town in the evening. Some performative utterances may go wrong in a slightly different way: someone might say ‘I promise to do X’ who has no intention of doing X, or ‘I apologise for doing Y’ when they feel no remorse for having done Y.

In summary, various features of the context of utterance, physical, social and/or psychological, must be right for performatives to function in the expected way. Austin gives the following list (which I have condensed slightly) of necessary conditions for a performative to be felicitous:

A. The must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words, and the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure.

B. The procedure must be executed correctly and completely by all participants.

Γ. If the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of consequential conduct by any participant,

[2] Austin gives several lists like this in *How to do things with Words*. When quoting them, I'll use the original numberings/letterings.

[3] This assertion will turn out to have surprisingly long philosophical legs (see 1.6.1 below).

> then that participant must (i) have those thoughts or feelings, or (ii) must intend to conduct themselves in the way indicated by the procedure and actually so conduct themselves.
>
> (Austin 1962, 14-5)

If I violate conditions A or B, for example if I approach someone in the street and say 'I bequeath to you this lamppost' or 'I pronounce you guilty and sentence you to life imprisonment,' my utterance fails *as a performative*: It does not act on the world in the way it would have if I had been invested with the appropriate powers and been in the appropriate locations (wearing, perhaps, the appropriate dress, etc.). Such violations result in a *misfire*. Violating condition Γ, on the other hand, does not cause the utterance to fail as a performative. If I make a promise without any intention of keeping it, I have still made a promise: the promisee may still reasonably be upset if I don't do what I said I would. Austin calls such violations *abuses*. Austin refines the classification of infelicities further, but the distinction between misfires and abuses is sufficient for the purpose of this summary. In any case, much of his discussion of these finer distinctions (Lectures III and IV) shows that they are blurred.

Austin points out that we can sometimes do the same thing by saying something different, or even without saying anything (Austin 1962, 8). We can bet by pushing forward a stack of tokens, for example. The notion of infelicity, too, applies to any conventional act, regardless of whether it involves language (Austin 1962, 19) (sports are full of examples: foot-faults in tennis, handball in soccer, forward passes in rugby, no-balls in cricket, etc). But where language is involved, performatives are also vulnerable to kinds of "failure" that affect all speech (Austin 1962, 21-2). Like all sentences, performative sentences uttered by actors in a play, or muttered to oneself, are "in a peculiar way hollow or void." Austin considers such utterances to be "parasitic"[4] upon their "normal" counterparts and to form a category which he calls "etiolations" of language (Austin 1962, 22). Though he acknowledges that a more general account might include these kinds of utterance, these exclusions sparked a heated debate which will be touched on in Section 2.3. Similarly, performatives can fail if

[4] An unfortunate choice of word perhaps (see Section 2.3 below).

the language used is not understood by the relevant people. My own purpose in this paper is in part to address this second exclusion, which has been taken over by much subsequent writing on speech acts.

1.2 Performatives and constatives?

Although performatives are not themselves true or false, there are nevertheless sentences that will be true if a performative has been felicitously uttered. If someone has promised, for example, then it is true (trivially) that she has promised; it is also true that she has committed herself to some future course of action. Conversely, there are certain well-known relationships between *constatives* (Austin's word for utterances that are traditionally analysed according to their truth value) which suggest that they are subject to criteria of felicity just as much as performatives are (Austin 1962, 46). Consider Moore's Paradox; the absurdity of the statement 'It is raining, but I don't believe that it is raining.' There is no logical contradiction; it may well be raining even though I do not believe that it is raining, and considered alone, the two clauses seem as straightforwardly constative as any. Austin argues that Moore's Paradox is parallel to the case of uttering a promise without intending to keep it. It is not true or false but simply insincere; an infelicity of type Γ, i.e. an abuse (Austin 1962, 50). Similarly, Austin draws a parallel between cases where a presupposition of a sentence is not fulfilled (as in the famous 'the present king of France is bald,' uttered when France does not at that moment have a king) and cases where a performative is infelicitous because some part of condition A is not satisfied (for example, attempting to name a ship in the absence of any ship) (Austin 1962, 50-1).[5]

In short, the intuitively clear distinction between constatives, that reflect the world and are evaluated in terms of their truth value, and performatives, that act on the world and are

[5] Contradictions between statements, such as 'the cat is on the mat and the mat is not under the cat', Austin suggests, might be comparable to cases such as 'I promise to X but I ought not to X,' although he is less confident of this relationship than the others (Austin 1962, 54). I think the parallel holds. A contradiction between statements could be true if there were two material universes, one in which each statement could be true. 'I promise to X but I ought not to X' can be felicitous if there exist two moral "universes." The existence of multiple conflicting moral universes is not even unusual. Consider a soldier in war whose commander orders him to do something that violates his sense of right and wrong. He might say something like 'I obey, but only because I must.' Similar conflicts can arise in more everyday situations too: I might promise to meet you for a drink even though I really ought to be finishing an assignment, for example.

evaluated in terms of their felicity, seems to be in danger of disappearing. Like performatives, constatives are vulnerable to forms of infelicity, and like constatives, performatives are required to stand in a relation to facts. This leads Austin to consider some other possible criteria for isolating the class of performatives. He rejects a grammatical criterion, that performatives are sentences in the "first person singular present indicative active" form (for example, 'I warn you that the bull is dangerous') since these grammatical features are neither necessary nor sufficient (see 56-61); but he does note that sentences in this form make explicit what type of act the utterance constitutes, and refers to them henceforth as *explicit performatives*, in contrast with *primary performatives*. Perhaps performative sentences are those that are in some way reducible to this form (Austin 1962, 62).[6] This too is rejected for various reasons; for example, Austin is not convinced that 'I am sorry' is exactly the same as its explicit counterpart 'I apologise' (Austin 1962, 66). And most damagingly, any ordinary constative, such as 'the cat is on the mat,' can be "reduced" to the form 'I state that the cat is on the mat (Austin 1962, 66).' The criterion seems to miss the mark entirely. Further criteria are considered, but Austin ultimately elects to put the search on hold and to make a "fresh start" (Austin 1962, 91), by considering again from first principles the sense or senses in which to say something is to do something.[7]

1.3 Locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts

Any vocal utterance is an act insofar as it involves the creation and manipulation of sound.[8] There is always this basic physical sense, then, in which speech is an act, and Austin, concentrating on speech rather than writing or any other mode of communication, calls this a *phonetic act* (Austin 1962, 92). In performing a phonetic act conforming to the structure and using the units of a particular language, a speaker performs a *phatic act*. And in performing a phatic act with 'a certain more or less definite "sense" and a more or less definite "reference," (which together are equivalent to "meaning")' (Austin 1962, 93), the

[6] This criterion is reminiscent of Searle's Principle of Expressibility (see Section 2.1.1).

[7] Sbisa (2007) argues convincingly that the performative-constative distinction was in a sense set up to fail from the outset. *How to do things with Words* is, she argues, structured as a "proof by contradiction" of the thesis that there are pure constatives.

[8] Similarly, writing is always an action involving the creation of physical (possibly electronic, etc.) marks.

speaker performs a *rhetic act*. Approximately, 'Mary said [ðəkʰætɪzɒnðəmæt]' reports a phonetic act, 'Mary said "the cat is on the mat"' reports a phatic act, and 'Mary said that the cat is/was on the mat' reports a rhetic act (Joseph Love & Taylor 2001, 101). Austin draws a Saussurian *langue/parole* distinction between the phatic and rhetic acts; the former is a unit of language, the latter a unit of speech (Austin 1962, 98). Phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts together constitute a *locutionary act*. The locutionary act is the act *of* saying something.

A performance of a locutionary act is generally at the same time a performance of another act – it may be a threat, a promise, an announcement etc. – which Austin calls an *illocutionary act*. The illocutionary act is the most enduring of Austin's contributions to linguistics. It is the act one performs *in* saying something. As locutionary acts are distinguished by their meaning, illocutionary acts are distinguished by their *illocutionary force* (or in certain contexts, simply *force*). Extending the example above, we can say that 'Mary announced/swore/suggested/denied that the cat was on the mat' reports an illocutionary act with a force that varies according with the choice of verb. The performance of a successful illocutionary act requires the securing of *uptake* from the hearer(s), which is defined as the understanding of the meaning (sense + reference) and the force of the utterance (Austin 1962, 117).

Lastly, Austin observes that by performing a locutionary and therein an illocutionary act, one can sometimes intentionally 'produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons' (Austin 1962, 101). What do report when we say 'Mary persuaded/warned/convinced me that the cat was on the mat'? We report that Mary's illocutionary act had a "certain consequential effect" on us. She changed our mind. An act having such an effect Austin calls a *perlocutionary act*. It is an act one can perform *by* saying something. We may achieve the effects of many perlocutionary acts nonverbally (for example, we can warn someone by swinging a big stick), and many illocutionary acts have nonverbal equivalents (in the right context we can promise by nodding).[9]

[9] The characterisation of these categories as "acts" can be misleading. I discuss this below.

The distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts is an especially delicate one. After all, if one has secured the understanding of a hearer, have we not thereby produced a consequential effect on them? The illocutionary act, and even a nonverbal equivalent, Austin stresses, is conventional. Perlocutionary acts like convincing or persuading someone, on the other hand, are a matter of more than the deployment of conventions; there is no conventional procedure for persuading someone, no list of boxes that, if ticked, enact a persuasion.[10] Austin explores several criteria for distinguishing illocutionary from perlocutionary acts, but finds none to be completely adequate (Austin 1962, 121-32). He then considers the relationship between illocutionary acts and his initial dichotomy.

1.4 Revenge of the constative?

When utterances are analysed in this way, it emerges as fairly obvious that there is nothing particularly special about so-called constative utterances as regards their status as acts. A statement of fact comprises a locutionary act (made up of a phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts), it has a certain kind of force which distinguishes it from, for example, questions and promises, and it may have consequential effects on the hearer (for example, concerning the reputation of a third party, or on a judge in court). Thus, to make a statement is just as much to perform an illocutionary act as to make a promise, place a bet or issue a warning (Austin 1962, 133-4). This is not to say that the truth value of a statement or description is redundant or irrelevant or that truth has nothing at all to do with the state of the world, only that their illocutionary forces are just two among many (Austin 1962, 140, 148-9).

Some of the ideas worked out with reference to performatives are reapplied to illocutionary acts. The categories of performative and constative are not entirely discarded, but they are no longer applied to sentences. Instead they are analysed as the poles of a continuum of interpretation: The performative or constative aspects of an utterance may be more or less salient depending on the context (Austin 1962, 145-6). The felicity conditions A, B and Γ are

[10] Austin acknowledges that there is no solid boundary where semiotic conventions end and become some other sort of sign (Austin 1962, 119). For instance, if I draw my finger across my throat, is that a threat by conventional means? And what of iconic signs? Perlocutionary acts have posed significant problems for speech act theory.

carried over (Sbisa 2007, 464), and explicit performatives are utterances which make their illocutionary force explicit (Austin 1962, 115).

1.5 Classifying illocutionary forces

Having thus established that all utterances transmit an illocutionary force, Austin ends the lectures with a peculiarly unwieldy though admittedly tentative taxonomy of types of illocutionary force (Austin 1962, 149ff). The biggest problem is that taxonomy does not seem to be related in any principled way to the theoretical speculations that have preceded it (Sadock 1994, 393). Five basic categories are delineated: *verdictives* ('an exercise of judgement'), *exercitives* ('an assertion of influence or exercising of power'), *commissives* ('an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention'), *behabitives* ('the adopting of an attitude') and *expositives* ('the clarifying or reasons, arguments and communications'). Each is discussed alongside a list of verbs that describe typical examples and a comparison with the other categories. I'll illustrate with reference to the verdictive category.

A verdictive 'consist[s] in the delivering of a finding, official or unofficial' (Austin 1962, 153). In a political metaphor, Austin describes them as judicial, as opposed to legislative or executive acts, which are exercitive. Some examples are 'estimate,' 'find' (as in 'I find the defendant guilty'). A verdictive may have exercitive qualities if delivered by the proper authority; a soccer referee may indicate that the ball has crossed the goal-line and a goal is thereby awarded (even if the ball didn't really cross the line and it therefore wasn't "really" a goal).[11] It may have commissive qualities; a judge's guilty verdict commits him or her to passing a sentence, or may commit him or her to certain other innocent verdicts. It may have behabitive qualities; to judge someone competent or attractive is certainly to adopt an attitude to them. And it may have expositive qualities; saying 'you were supposed to RSVP before last Thursday!' clarifies a verbal matter.

Austin ends the lectures by indicating (rather vaguely, it must be said) how the theory of illocutionary forces might help to solve problems in ethics (or at least, clarifying ethical

[11] Consider also the contrast between the innumerable judgements that will be and have already been passed on Oscar Pistorius, and the judgement of Thokozile Masipa. Both are equally verdictive, not equally exercitive.

concepts) (Austin 1962, 163-4). In the next section I will discuss some issues with Austin's theory. I will dispose of a philosophical problem, look at his technical terms, and discuss the idea of perlocutionary acts. It will not be a comprehensive commentary nor will it be my final word on Austin in this paper; his work will continue to be relevant in the chapters that follow.

1.6 Discussion

Austin begins his first lecture with the following claim: 'What I shall have to say here is neither difficult nor contentious; the only merit I should like to claim for it is that of *being true*, at least in parts' (Austin 1962, 1, my emphasis). This straightforward claim to truth reminds us to ask a question of applied pragmatics: 'What is the illocutionary force of *How to do things with Words*?' That it is in Austin's terms a primarily verdictive speech act is obvious once we ask the question, but it is something worth bearing in mind. Though philosophy (and remember that Austin was a philosopher, not a linguist) is exhorted to pay more attention to nonrepresentational aspects of language use, and a theory of truth is elaborated that stresses its relative unimportance, Austin does not question that the business of philosophy is to make statements, and this assumption is reinforced, by virtue of remaining unexamined. On the other hand, we must remember that this does not entail that it has a "pure" constative status, and that a straightforward claim to truth is not necessarily a claim to straightforward truth; after all, one of the main philosophical conclusions of *How To Do Things With Words* is that truth and falsehood are 'dimension[s] of assessment' (Austin 1962, 148), not relations between signifiers and signifieds.

1.6.1 Is a promise a statement?

That a constative-centric view of language has prevailed in analytic philosophy of language is proven by the amount of attention that has been paid to a question concerning explicit performatives that is marginal at best unless such a view of language is adopted. Austin remarks in the first lecture that it is obvious that utterances like 'I promise to be there on Saturday' are neither true nor false, despite having the grammatical form of declarative sentences, but should be evaluated instead according to whether they are felicitous or infelicitous. This was the basis for his original distinction between performatives and

constatives, and remained an important assumption of the theory of illocutionary acts. But several authors (most recently Garcia-Carpintero 2013)[12] have put forward versions of an argument that explicit performatives are in fact statements, as their grammatical form suggests, that are *self-verifying*; that is, they are made true by being uttered, like 'I am speaking' or 'I just referred to myself.' Some authors argue that a sentence like 'I promise to be there . . .' is simultaneously a statement and a promise, whose success as promise depends on its success as a statement (e.g. Bach 1975). Others argue that such sentences are *indirect speech acts* (that is, utterances whose illocutionary force is different from what the literal meaning of the sentence suggests) (e.g. Garcia-Carpintero 2013). These arguments have been met by authors defending the supposedly Austinian position (Schiffer 1972, Searle 1989). Other authors have claimed that the solution lies in considering performatives in terms of their indexicality or what the utterance "shows" as opposed to "says" (Spielmann 1980, Johansson 2003).

The question has taken on a life of its own in analytic philosophy, and though Austin is usually mentioned in connection with the question, no-one seems to have considered it in terms of his own theory of types of illocutionary force. This is unfortunate because the question practically evaporates if we do. Recall that in the theory of illocutionary acts the performative-constative distinction was reanalysed as a gradable feature of the context rather than a categorical feature of the sentence (see 1.4 above). Austin does not insist that a sentence be one or the other. Austin's taxonomy of illocutionary forces confirms this: 'I promise to be there . . .' can have at the same time a commissive and a verdictive illocutionary force. Furthermore, we are not obliged to say that one element of its illocutionary force is primary and the other derived from it in some way. As an example, suppose I am in a public place with someone and I say them 'I promise to be there.' But they look at me skeptically so I stand up and say loudly 'I promise to be there!' so that everyone nearby becomes a witness of my promise. By this second utterance I state that I promise, but it is not purely a statement. The idea that more than one force may be transmitted by a single utterance will be important for the model described in Chapter 3 below.

[12] See this reference for further references to earlier proponents of the position.

1.6.2 Austin's terminology

Some doubts have been raised about the status of the rhetic act and its relation to the illocutionary act. Austin doesn't seem to have been overly clear about the difference between them; he uses the same device, direct versus indirect quotation, in one place (Austin 1962, 95) to distinguish the rhetic from the phatic act and in another (Austin 1962, 101-2) to distinguish the illocutionary from the locutionary act (Searle 1968, 410-11). Searle argues that this is not necessarily inconsistent if we recognise that, in Austin's examples, the meaning of the sentence (i.e. the rhetic act) determines what illocutionary act is being performed (Searle 1968, 411). He argues that all sentences contain at least some indication of illocutionary force, and concludes that there are no rhetic acts; there is no way of uttering a sentence with sense and reference without performing an illocutionary act (Searle 1968, 412). Black (1963, 225) makes exactly the same point, and Austin himself admitted that 'to perform a locutionary act is . . . *eo ipso* to perform an illocutionary act' (Austin 1962, 98), so he clearly regarded the distinction as an abstract one. These authors have not done enough, I think, to show that the distinction fails *as an abstraction*. Nevertheless in his theory, which will be considered more fully in the next chapter, Searle replaces what is left of the locutionary act with what he calls the *utterance act* and *propositional content*.

Some authors have claimed that describing perlocutionary acts as 'acts' is misleading for various reasons. It has been pointed out a particular illocutionary act might or might not be a perlocutionary act without the speaker knowing. For example, I might make some arguments without knowing whether my audience accepts them or merely understands them. It seems strange that the speaker should be in the dark about what type of act they have performed. Gu (1993) argues that a perlocutionary act is a "transaction" between speaker and hearer, and several other authors have advanced theories that emphasise the co-operative nature of even illocutionary acts (e.g. Hancher 1979, Attardo 1997, Reich 2011). After all I may say something in English without knowing whether my hearer understands English, and therefore without knowing whether I have secured the uptake of my utterance (which recall is a requirement for the performance of an illocutionary act). Sbisa claims that Austin had a somewhat unorthodox ontology of action based on the ascription of responsibility. Unlike orthodox theories of action, according to which acts are

'gestures of an individual, intentionally performed,' Austin's theory would describe anything for which an individual can be held even partly responsible as an act of that individual (Gu 1993, 467). Whatever independent merits this theory has, attributing it to Austin explains why he was comfortable talking about perlocutionary acts; a speaker may perform an illocutionary act (in the orthodox sense of 'act'), and through this act he could become partly responsible for certain non-conventional effects following from it (such as convincing a judge of a defendant's guilt), which makes his act a perlocutionary act (in Austin's sense of 'act').

Lastly as regards terminology, the significance of Austin's classification in the final lecture is somewhat unclear. Is it a classification of forces (as it seems to be, since a particular utterance may belong to more than one class), or a classification of acts, which is what Austin says (Austin 1962, 151)? Attributing to him the unorthodox theory of action that Sbisa does suggests that it is in more conventional terms a classification of forces.

1.6.3 Perlocutionary acts and "conventions"

Austin describes the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts as being, respectively, an act performed *in* saying something and an act performed *by* saying something (see Section 1.3, page 10 above). Notwithstanding the fact that Austin devotes almost an entire lecture to discussing this way of distinguishing them, it is he concedes 'at best a very slippery test' (Austin 1962, 131). Austin elsewhere described the effects of illocutionary acts as being conventional, distinguishing these effects from perlocutionary acts (we have already noted the difficulties in characterising these as 'acts'), which depend on more than the existence and deployment of conventions. Precisely what it means for effects to be conventional is not very clear. After all, I may convince someone of some fact only through using sentences, which are bound by linguistic conventions, but being convinced is not a conventional effect. Sbisa (2007) makes an interesting suggestion, according to which the conventionality of the effects of illocutionary acts is a matter of their being "defeasible," i.e. 'liable to turning out null and void under certain conditions' (Sbisa 2007, 465). Defeasibility is not the property of being repealed or cancelled by further illocutionary acts. I might persuade someone of some fact, and then someone may come along and persuade them of the opposite fact; but persuasion is a perlocutionary act, and everyone would still agree that I had at the earlier

time persuaded them, even if I had been using faulty arguments. Similarly an act of parliament may be repealed, but we still acknowledge that the act was, at an earlier date, passed. A defeasible act is one that can subsequently be declared not to have happened if it turns out there was some infelicity in the performance (Sbisa 2007, 466). If someone writes in their will that they bequeath their watch to their brother, but we find out that he didn't actually have a watch, we would probably say that he had not bequeathed his watch to his brother.[13] The property of defeasibility thus serves to pick out conventional effects, which can be in a certain sense undone, from perlocutionary acts, which like ordinary physical movements, cannot be undone.

[13] The distinction thus made should not be confused with the distinction between misfires and abuses, although there are some interesting similarities.

Chapter 2: Speech acts after Austin

Considering speech as a variety of action does not begin or end with Austin. *How to do things with Words* was highly influential in subsequent philosophy and linguistics. The most prolific writer on the topic was John Searle. This chapter will therefore open with an examination of some important aspects of Searle's theory of speech acts. I will also briefly discuss a critique of Searle's taxonomy of speech acts from an anthropological point of view (Rosaldo 1982). Since Searle's taxonomy forms the basis of the theory I outline in Chapter Three, it is necessary to be clear about its structural limitations.

I'll then look at Jacques Derrida's engagement with Austin. Derrida did not write all that much about Austin, but his reading was influential and also expresses some of my own misgivings about Searle's theorising. Derrida also represents an approach to Austin which takes seriously some of those aspects of language that he, for whatever reason, excluded, and is therefore in some ways a precedent of mine, even if the outward form of our essays differs considerably.

I'll look briefly at the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who has discussed Austinian ideas in his investigations of the relationship between language and forms of power. Finally, I'll give a short outline of one way in which speech act theory has been developed for empirical research, which differs in some interesting ways from more speculative treatments of the subject.

2.1 Searle

The study of speech acts was for Searle, as it was for Austin, initially supposed to be a means to a philosophical end, and in this chapter as in the last, this philosophical end will be to a great extent ignored. I focus on the picture of communication that is painted, what it owes to and in what particulars it diverges from Austin's thought as outlined in Chapter 1, and its relevance to meeting the challenge of multilingual pragmatics. It is neither a comprehensive discussion of Speech Act Theory nor a comprehensive discussion of Searle's philosophy. My sources for Searle's views are primarily his *Speech Acts* (Searle 1969) and the papers collected in *Expression and Meaning* (Searle 1979), and a few other articles.

2.1.1 The principle of expressibility

In Chapter One I mentioned that Searle was unsatisfied with Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary act on the grounds that there was not really a gulf between the meaning and force of an utterance, as Austin supposed there was. Searle suggested that the reason for this was that Austin had overlooked what he calls *the principle of expressibility* (Searle 1968, 418). In condensed form, the principle of expressibility (PoE) states that 'whatever can be meant can be said' (Searle 1968, 415). A slightly more elaborated version of the formula is: 'For every possible speech act there is a possible sentence or set of sentences the literal utterance of which in a particular context would constitute a performance of that speech act' (Searle 1969, 19). Leaving aside for the moment the truth of the principle, which Searle does not even attempt to prove (later I will consider a situation described *Speech Acts* which proves it false), it allows Searle to make two far-reaching claims. (a) That many "imperfect" or "indirect" uses of language, such as 'nonliteralness, vagueness, ambiguity and incompleteness – are not theoretically essential to linguistic communication' (Searle 1969, 20). (b) That the study of a speech *act* can be reduced to the study of the *sentence/sentences*, whose literal utterance would in the appropriate context constitute a performance of that speech act (Searle 1969, 20-1). Claim (a) performs roughly the same function in Searle's theory that Chomsky's 'ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech-community' (see Chomsky 1965, 3-4) performs in his, substituting a predictable and bounded object of study for one that is unpredictable and open-ended. Like Chomsky's principle, it results in the exclusion of much that is interesting and worthy of investigation if observed slavishly.[14] Claim (b) seems to me to be an attempt to construe a speech act as something formal as opposed to functional. Searle does not deny that speech acts are units of communication (in fact, he suggests that they are the elementary units of communication (Searle 1969, 16) and therefore inherently functional. But he maintains that there are formal data in some sense isomorphic with the

[14] It is actually far stronger than Chomsky's principle. As Searle explains, in using the principle we must imagine not just a speaker who knows a language perfectly, but also a language that contains expressions and constructions for saying anything a speaker might want to say (Searle 1969, 19-20); that is, a perfect language. With its significance spelled out like this, the principle becomes vacuously true, but only of a fictional world that is very different from our own in important ways.

functional data, and elects to make the former the object of his study. This may be a legitimate move if the PoE is true; but importantly, it is not an obligatory one.[15] I will not in general follow it, though I will frequently illustrate speech acts by writing sentences.

The PoE does not seem to me a very robust principle. I have discussed it here because in many ways it embodies Searle's project. Searle claims that it is an analytic truth (Searle 1969, 17), like 'a bachelor is an unmarried man,' where as soon as one understands it one can no longer doubt its truth.[16] The trouble with this is that the sentence contains words whose significance cannot be taken as obvious in the context. Perhaps on some definitions of 'meant' and 'said,' the sentence 'whatever can be meant can be said' is analytic; but that is not of much use in the foundations of an investigation intended to clarify just what saying and meaning amount to.

2.1.2 Reanalysing the illocutionary act

Searle's alternative analysis of the structure of illocutionary acts is slightly more abstract than Austin's. He considers the utterance of the following sentences:

1. Sam smokes habitually.
2. Does Sam smoke habitually?
3. Sam, smoke habitually!
4. Would that Sam smoked habitually.[17]

(Searle 1969, 22)

In each of these simple utterances, some words are used. In each, the same thing, Sam, is *referred* to, and also the same thing, habitual smoking, is *predicated* of him. The combination of reference and predication constitute the *proposition* or *propositional*

[15] To adapt an image from Jerrold Sadock (1994, 406), to suppose that we are obliged to follow it is like supposing that we are obliged to substitute the study of living insects with the study of insects that have been squashed with a hammer, just because we can still tell the squashed insects apart.

[16] This is a more-or-less standard scholarly non-technical example of an analytic sentence. I am leaving aside, for the sake of simplicity, any questions about whether it is truly analytic.

[17] As in the preceding chapter, the numbering of lists is taken from the source.

content. But these sentences are nevertheless different illocutionary acts. In each utterance, the speaker expresses a different relation to this propositional content. In (1) it is asserted, in (2) it is queried, in (3) it is ordered and in (4) it is wished for.

The form of the utterance can be altered without changing the propositional content or the illocutionary force (Searle 1969, 24): 'Mr Samuel Martin is a regular smoker of tobacco' has the same propositional content and illocutionary force as (1), but is a different utterance. The propositional content may also be varied without changing the utterance or illocutionary force: an utterance of 'I am waiting at the station' can express as many different propositions as there are stations, but in each case it will be the same utterance and have the same illocutionary force.[18] Thus it seems like the utterance, proposition, and illocutionary force are logically, if not in the actual performance of speech, more or less but not completely independent. This leads Searle to make a three-way distinction between *utterance*, *propositional* and *illocutionary acts*, to which he adds Austin's perlocutionary act without any change (Searle 1969, 24-5). Searle proposes that the general form of most illocutionary acts is *F*(*p*), where *F* represents an 'illocutionary force indicating device,' and *p* represents a proposition (Searle 1969, 31). Notice that in this analysis the utterance act is part of the illocutionary act only insofar as it expresses the propositional content and indicates the illocutionary force.

Searle is careful to avoid any mention of meaning in presenting this analysis, though he does make a clear assertion about the status of reference. Recall that one his reasons for rejecting Austin's notion of locutionary act what that the rhetic act seemed to him sometimes to determine the illocutionary force. This is a recurring theme in Searle's writing on speech acts. He is impressed by the way force sometimes seems to be determined by meaning, as in explicit performatives (e.g. Searle 1968; 1969 30-1), and is generally content to relegate those instances in which it is not so determined to the margins of his theory (cf

[18] Similarly, though importantly Searle doesn't say this, since he hadn't yet worked out how he was going to handle indirect speech acts, the illocutionary force may arguably be varied without changing the utterance or propositional content: 'It's hot in here' may be an assertion, a request to open a window, or an attempt at seduction.

Searle 1979, 58-75). Significantly, Searle generally prefers to talk about *speaker meaning*[19] rather than illocutionary force, a terminological choice which conveniently blurs the distinction between meaning proper and force (Searle 1969, 42-4).[20] However, it also leads him to a very strange conclusion about a hypothetical multilingual communication situation. Searle describes the situation as follows:

> Suppose that I am an American soldier in the Second World War and that I am captured by Italian troops. And suppose also that I wish to get these troops to believe that I am a German soldier in order to get them to release me. What I would like to do is to tell them in German or Italian that I am a German soldier. But let us suppose that I don't know enough German or Italian to do that. So I, as it were, attempt to put on a show of telling them that I am a German soldier by reciting those few bits of German I know, trusting that they don't know enough German to see through my plan. Let us suppose I know only one line of German which I remember from a poem I had to memorize in a high school German course. Therefore, I, a captured American, address my Italian captors with the following sentence: *Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen?*
>
> (Searle 1969, 44-5)

Searle then poses the question of what the American soldier *means* by his utterance. Since speaker meaning is supposed to be determined by sentence meaning, Searle must conclude that he means what the sentence means; in English, this meaning is (to the best of my knowledge) expressed by the sentence 'Do you know the land/country where the lemon trees bloom?' This conclusion has the unfortunate consequence of severing speaker meaning from the communication situation, since this meaning has as much relevance to the communication as does the number of syllables in the utterance, or the number of lemon trees visible at the moment of utterance; that is, none whatsoever. The American soldier need not know what the sentence means; in fact the sentence need not mean

[19] Paraphrased as 'intends to convey,' 'wishes to communicate in an utterance' (Searle 1969, 20).

[20] I will only use 'meaning' to refer to 'sentence meaning.' Meaning is a property of (some) signs, force is a property of (some) acts.

anything at all: ‘die Zitronen du Land wo das Kennst blühen’ would have done just as well. Also significant in its absence from the analysis is any consideration of what the sentence *means to* the hearer, in other words the nature of the uptake. Is this also to be determined by sentence meaning?

2.1.3 Searle’s taxonomy of illocutionary acts

Searle’s taxonomy of illocutionary acts is arguably his most enduring contribution to the theory of speech acts. It is not fatally affected by the difficulties he encounters when trying to reduce the illocutionary act to a kind of speaker’s meaning, and despite some misplaced criticisms of the earlier taxonomy as well as some new problems of its own, it is more robust and better motivated than Austin’s rather sketchy offering. In this section I will present the outline of Searle’s taxonomy. I will defer most of my criticism until Chapter Three, where I will present some amendments to the taxonomy, some general and some with the aim of accommodating multilingual communication phenomena.

Searle’s taxonomy is built around three principal variables, which he calls *illocutionary point*, *direction of fit* and *expressed psychological state* (Searle 1979, 2-5). Illocutionary point is basically the purpose of the act, what it is for: commands are for trying to get someone to do something, promises are for committing speakers to certain actions, apologies are for registering one’s sorrow or regret, and so on. This is the most important dimension of the illocutionary act. Direction of fit has to do with how the act (precisely, its propositional content) relates to the rest of the world. Searle illustrates this with an example from Elizabeth Anscombe which captures the idea excellently (Anscombe 1957, cited in Searle 1979, 3). A man goes to a shop with a shopping list given to him by his wife. He is followed by a detective who writes down every item the man puts in his trolley. When the man leaves the shop, the detective’s list will look exactly like the man’s shopping list, but they will have been constructed differently. The man has fitted the contents of his trolley to the pre-existing list, whereas the detective has fitted his list to the contents of the man’s trolley. The shopping list has a *world-to-word* direction of fit; the detective’s list has a *word-to-world* direction of fit. Expressed psychological state is the mental state of the speaker associated with the illocutionary act. For assertions, it is belief; for promises, intention; for requests, desire. In addition, some illocutionary acts will have restrictions on the

propositional content they may be used with; for example I cannot promise to have done something in the past, or congratulate you for the fact that ice is less dense than water.

Using these variables, Searle proposes that there are five basic illocutionary act types: *Assertives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives* and *declarations* (Searle 1979, 12-20). Assertives are generally assessable in terms of their truth value. Directives are things like commands and requests which attempt to get the hearer to do something. Questions (yes-no and wh-) are placed somewhat uneasily in this category, on the grounds that they are attempts to get the hearer to say something (Searle 1979, 14). Commissives are things like promises which commit the speaker to some future action. Expressives are things like apologies, congratulations and thanks, which are expressions of the speaker's psychological state. Declarations are utterances, like 'I find the defendant guilty' as uttered by a judge, that bring about some change in the status of someone of something by their very utterance in the appropriate context. I condense Searle's description of these types in the following table.

Illocutionary point	**Class symbol**	**Direction of fit**	**Expressed psych. state**	**Propositional content**
Assertive	⊢	↓	Belief B	*p*
Directive	!	↑	Wish/desire W	*H* does *A*
Commissive	C	↑	Intention I	*S* does *A*
Expressive	E	Ø	(P)	*S*/*H* + property
Declaration	D	↕	Ø	*p*

Table 1. Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts[21]

This table requires some explanation. The down arrow indicates word-to-world and the up arrow world-to-word direction of fit. The Ø in the third column indicates that the propositional content of expressives is in a sense presupposed; if I apologise for stepping on your toe, it is assumed that I did step on your toe (Searle 1979, 15). The double arrow in the final row indicates a double direction of fit. Searle argues that declarations generally require

[21] Searle says that, for example, declarations have the form D↕Ø(*p*). This seems redundant to me; rather he should say that declarations, D, have the form ↕Ø(*p*), or D = ↕Ø(*p*).

an extra-linguistic institution to be effective (word-to-world fit); but their successful performance brings about some change in the status of some parts of the world (world-to-word fit) (Searle 1979, 18-9). The bracketed P in the fourth column indicates that the psychological state expressed by an expressive is dependent on the propositional content. The Ø in the fourth column indicates that declarations do not usually depend on the speaker expressing a psychological state; he or she simply executes a procedure. *p* in the final column indicates that there is no special condition on the propositional content of assertives and declarations.

Searle expresses some dissatisfaction that the directive and commissive categories have the same direction of fit, but is unable to find a way of assimilating them. In order to do this, he assumes, 'one would have to show that promises are really a species of requests . . . or alternatively . . . that requests placed [sic] the hearer under an obligation' (Searle 1979, 14-5). This seems to me like assuming that in order to place lions and tigers in the same animal category one would have to show that lions are actually tigers or tigers are actually lions. One of Searle's main criticisms of Austin's taxonomy was that many illocutionary acts fell into more than one category (Searle 1979, 12). However, by his own admission, his system suffers from overlaps too. Some declarations have assertive properties; a judge's guilty verdict may be "false" in a certain sense if the defendant is actually innocent (Searle 1979, 19-20). An apology may be a declaration if, for example, it has been demanded by an authority. And questions are only indirectly directives, since the action they seem to demand on the part of the hearer is not contained in the proposition: the propositional content of the question 'does Sam smoke habitually?' is not of the form 'H does A.'[22] It seems to me that the best (perhaps only) way out of this problem is to interpret it as a classification of *forces* rather than *acts*, as I did with Austin's taxonomy.[23] Then we simply admit that the illocutionary force of any actual speech act is typically multidimensional and composed of several elementary forces with varying levels of strength. We also do not have

[22] Austin's system is completely silent on the classification of questions, as far as I can make out.

[23] Sadock (1994) devised a system that implies elementary forces rather than acts. In his system, speech acts are analysed according to their position on *affective*, *effective* and *informational* axes.

to insist that this or that set of elementary forces is the one true set (just as in describing a point in physical space we may use various co-ordinate systems).

2.2 An anthropological critique of Searle's taxonomy

A small, finite and universal set of elementary speech act types, expressed in metaphysically neutral terms and motivated independently of the grammatical structure of any one language – in short a universal pragmatics – would be of much value to anthropology since it would provide a sound basis for the comparison of different linguistic cultures in much the same way that biological kinship relations provide a stable basis for the comparison of kinship terms, or the way that universal grammar would provide linguistics with a sound basis for the comparison of languages. Some writers have used Searle's taxonomy as a first step towards this universal pragmatics. However, in *Speech Acts* Searle seems explicitly to disavow *any* claims to applicability for his theory:

> . . . the mistakes I shall make in linguistic characterizations in the course of this work will be due to such things as not considering enough examples or misdescribing the examples considered, not to mention carelessness, insensitivity, and obtuseness; but . . . they will not be due to over-hasty generalization from insufficient empirical data concerning the verbal behavior of groups, for *there will be no such generalization nor such data*.
>
> (Searle 1969, 14, my emphasis)

It is not unusual for theories to be presented with an implicit or explicit statement of their limitations. Certainly, we can heed such warnings, and refrain from applying a theory to certain situations. But it seems to me much more interesting and productive to push a theory beyond its limits, to confront it with real empirical data (as Rosaldo does) or more complex hypothetical situations (as I will do), even if in doing so we so to speak void our warranty.

Anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo presented ethnographic data on the speech acts of the Ilongots of the Philippines, amongst whom she spent more than two years doing fieldwork,

that raised questions about the universality of Searle's five basic categories. The core ideas of her critique are captured in the following quotes:

> [T]he difficulty with such categories as "assertion" and "expression" when applied to Ilongot acts of speech is that they do not help us comprehend the common Ilongot understandings of the designated acts . . . Ilongot notions lead, instead, to my proposal that Ilongot speech acts be distinguished as "declaratives" and "directives."
>
> Searle uses English performative verbs as guides to something like a universal law. I think his efforts might better be understood as an ethnography - however partial - of contemporary views of human personhood and action as these are linked to culturally particular modes of speaking.
>
> (Rosaldo 1982, 228)

Rosaldo argued that, despite being described in such apparently culturally neutral terms as psychological state, direction of fit and propositional content, Searle's five-fold classification of illocutionary act types in fact relies on culturally specific notions of language and personhood (Rosaldo 1982, 204). Whereas Searle defined his categories in terms of speakers' states, this would be an inappropriate structuring principle for categorising the speech acts of the Ilongots. It would be more appropriate, she claimed, to classify their speech acts according to whether they correspond to a social situation characterised by "sameness" and autonomy, or continuity and hierarchy, and therefore[24] whether they demand some sort of response from their audience (Rosaldo 1982, 222). In Searle's terms, this divides speech acts somewhat arbitrarily into directives and "others"; but it is precisely Rosaldo's point that such a division reflects Ilongot language practices and ideologies more naturally.

Ilongot directives are further divided into *tuydek* ("commands"), *bēge* ("requests") and *tengteng* ("orders, warnings") (Rosaldo 1982, 224-6). *Tuydek* typically require the recipient to move somewhere and/or interrupt what they are doing and are generally restricted to

[24] This implication follows from features of the structure of Ilongot society Rosaldo explains in some detail. In general, my abbreviated exposition is likely to make Rosaldo's work (and hence Ilongot society) seem more cryptic than it really is.

easily accomplished, proximate tasks ('go and fetch water for me,' 'pour it out') (Rosaldo 1982, 224-5). *Bēge* require less movement or interruption and are also restricted to proximate tasks ('give me some betel, supplies,' 'eat this') (Rosaldo 1982, 225-6). *Tengteng*, finally, deal with more open-ended, contingent affairs; they 'focus less on finite tasks to be performed within a circumscribed social context than to chart a course of future action with still undetermined limits' ('when you are in the lowlands, buy me . . . ,' 'ask uncle for a pencil') (Rosaldo 1982, 226).

As readers will no doubt recognise when they read Chapter Three, Rosaldo's critique of Searle's taxonomy will apply to my model as well. It is in the end only an elaboration of that taxonomy. But I do think that a classification of forces is more flexible than a classification of acts because it doesn't require one to assign a particular speech act to a single category. My purpose has been to capture a wider range of language phenomena, and I believe it attains that objective successfully, even if it is not entirely culture-neutral.

2.3 Austin, Searle and Derrida

The contrast between the theory of Derrida and Searle could hardly be more stark. Where Searle is economical, systematic and unambiguous, Derrida is rich, literary and above all suggestive. Given their contrasting styles, one often gets the impression that they would not even realise if they were saying the same thing. It is therefore hardly surprising that they came into conflict over the interpretation of *How to do things with Words*. It might reasonably be expected that this section will contain some analysis of this conflict, culminating, perhaps, some statement of affiliation with one of two theoretical traditions which the disputants are supposed to stand for. In fact, I will have little to say about the exchange of veiled and unveiled insults and misunderstandings that goes by the name of "the Searle-Derrida debate." My representation of Derrida's position is drawn from *Limited Inc* (Derrida 1977), primarily *Signature Event Context* in that volume.

Derrida begins *Signature Event Context* by noting various problems arising from the very extensive polysemy of the word 'communication' (Derrida 1977, 1). Although in practice, context usually helps to limit the ambiguity of the word, Derrida claims that the context of speech action can never be exhaustively described (Derrida 1977, 2-3). He suggests that 'a

certain generalisation and a certain displacement of the concept of writing' follows from this that will invert some traditional philosophical assumptions about communication (Derrida 1977, 3). The structure of this argument is interestingly similar to that of Austin's argument for the abandonment of the rigid distinction between performative and constative utterances and the traditional privilege accorded to the latter. As will be seen, Derrida seems in some ways to be trying to do for writing what Austin did for performatives. In outline, both arguments have the structure of a proof by contradiction of a received philosophical position: a position P is assumed; it is argued that this assumption leads to an untenable position Q, which obliges one to reject the position P. In both cases this is followed by an inversion of traditional priorities.

The essential characteristics of the classical concept of writing are, according to Derrida, that it is *iterable*; that is, it continues to function as writing in the absence of its producer:

> For a writing to be a writing it must continue to "act" and to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed, be it because of a temporary absence, because he is dead or, more generally, because he has not employed his absolutely actual and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his desire to say what he means, in order to sustain what seems to be written "in his name."
>
> (Derrida 1977, 8)

This fact complicates the determination of the communicative context in the case of writing. Writing can be separated from the context of its production, and can be read and reread, whole or in part, in an open and unfixable range of contexts. The original producer abandons his written text to its "essential drift," during which the original connections between signifier and signified may loosen or be remade, and it may be cited and/or *grafted*[25] onto another text, by whoever chances to read it (Derrida 1977, 9).

[25] Note: for obvious reasons, the convention I have adopted elsewhere in this paper of introducing technical terms (i.e. words given a special significance by the author concerned) by italics will function in a slightly different way in this section. I leave it to the reader to interpret the italics here.

Having thus described the essential characteristics of the classical concept of writing, Derrida argues that that these characteristics are not, in fact, restricted to written communication but can be generalised to all linguistic communication.[26] Spoken utterances, too, can be heard and overheard, repeated in various ways, combined with new utterances, and are no more securely attached to their signifieds than written texts are (Derrida 1977, 10). The context of a spoken utterance is therefore no more exhaustively determinable than that of the written utterance. This is a problem for Austin's discussion of performatives, Derrida contends, because that discussion relies throughout on the existence of fixed, fully determinable contexts, which are typically required for performatives to be felicitous (Derrida 1977, 14). This reliance is particularly pertinent in the case of the consciousness (including the intentions) of the speaker, which as Derrida points out is always in a special way *absent* from the context (Derrida 1977, 7, 14). This leads Austin to overstate the significance of the distinction between success and failure of speech acts, and as a consequence also the distinction between "ordinary, serious" speech and various "etiolations" of language (Derrida 1977, 15-6).

Derrida's most influential criticism of Austin concerns his dismissal of language use he considers "non-serious" (such as citation, the speech of actors in a play, and so on) as an *ill* that can *infect* speech acts, *etiolated*[27] and most notoriously *parasitic* (see section 1.1, page 7 above). Derrida wonders whether Austin was right to have cast off this sort of language, and argues that the possibility of being used in such a way is one expression of a general property of iterability shared by all language (Derrida 1977, 17). There could be no effective performatives, he claims, that are not in a certain sense citations or performances that conform to a model (Derrida 1977, 18). Rather than oppose these kinds of utterance with so-called serious utterances, Derrida suggests that one might 'construct a differential typology of forms of iteration' (Derrida 1977, 18). In such a scheme, the speaker's intention (and hence the dimension of success and failure) would no longer be the most important

[26] In fact, Derrida claims that they are generalizable to all "experience." I confess I'm not quite sure how this is supposed to work.

[27] 'Deprived of strength, vigour, or effectiveness; weakened, enfeebled' (http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/64848?redirectedFrom=etiolated#eid).

organising principle. This suggested demotion of intention, with its implicit recognition of difficulties of interpretation and the importance of the receiver in interaction, is the axis around which Derrida's conflict with Searle turns. The model I will describe in Chapter Three brings into focus instead the nature of what is transmitted between sender and receiver. There is no communication without both sender and receiver, and it seems to me generally senseless to argue about which of two indispensable contributions is the more important.

One can argue that Derrida's idea of the essential characteristics of the classical concept of writing is off the mark. For example, most people will agree that writing is essentially visual, yet Derrida's characterisation says nothing about the medium or channel of writing. And as Judith Butler points out, they also clearly have a very different relationship with the body (Butler 1997, 152). But since his point about the absence of the sender's intentions from the context is supposed to apply to all linguistic communication, this is not such a serious problem. My main reason for not pursuing his idea of a typology of forms of iteration is that Derrida has not taken any steps toward constructing such a typology himself, and it is not clear that it would reveal anything interesting about pragmatics. Searle has at least made a start towards a typology.

Austin's separation of "serious, literal" utterances from fictional ones was wholeheartedly taken over by Searle, who did however make an attempt to account for fictional speech acts (Searle 1979). It is not my purpose here to present an account of the illocutionary force of fiction, so I haven't examined all of its implications. Suffice to say that though his account may be in some way true, it is not very illuminating. It may account for the fact that fictional speech acts do not have the same illocutionary force as ordinary speech acts, but it does not account for the illocutionary force that they *do* have – it does not account for the fact that people may die over fictional representations.[28] And like Derrida I am not convinced that the relationship between fictional and nonfictional speech is adequately represented as a relationship of parasitism. It is not implausible that one could learn how to promise by observing fictional promises. And is there any reason to assume that the first promise in history was not a fictional promise? Searle claims that the relationship is one of "logical

[28] Searle does show some awareness of this. His rather banal suggestion is that it has something to do with 'the crucial role that shared products of imagination play in human social life' (Searle 1979, 74).

dependence," (Searle 1977) but this is not a clearly defined relation, which would seem to depend on superficial features of the expressions 'promise' and 'fictional promise.'

2.4 Speech acts and power: Pierre Bourdieu

In this section I will look at the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a theorist who developed Austin's ideas in the course of an investigation of the relations between language and power. His criticisms of Austin concern the social basis of illocutionary force. Because it focusses on criticisms, my account may exaggerate the differences between Austin and Bourdieu, and make the relationship between them seem perhaps more adversarial than it really is. I have drawn from *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu 1992), especially the essay *Authorized Language* in that volume, for my account of Bourdieu's theorising.

In *Language and Symbolic Power* Bourdieu argues that all modern linguistic theory, from Saussure to Chomsky, is haunted by an 'illusion of linguistic communism' (Bourdieu 1992, 43) which prevents it from adequately accounting for the capacity of language to represent and reproduce relations of power between people. In a memorable example of the way language is embroiled in relations of power, Bourdieu describes how the mayor of the French provincial town of Pau, addressed an assembly of residents in Béarnais, the local language. A local French-language newspaper reported that '[t]he audience was greatly moved by this thoughtful gesture.' Bourdieu points out that in order to interpret the mayor's language choice in this way, the newspaper must subscribe to the 'unwritten law' according to which French is the appropriate language for formal occasions. Furthermore, the mayor gains a symbolic 'profit' from his 'strategy of condescension'; he *gains* solidarity with the residents by symbolically disavowing the social hierarchy that exists between them, but *without losing* any of the prestige that comes from being a fluent speaker of French, because other features (not least the fact that he is the mayor) attest to this fact (Bourdieu 1992, 68-9).

Bourdieu does not insist that linguistic theory must incorporate a general account of social power; in fact he seems to suggest that its absence is a result of limitations that actually *constitute* linguistics as a science. But he does insist that if these limitations are ignored, we risk embarking on a wild goose chase for the source of illocutionary force: '[A]s long as they

are unaware of the limits that constitute their science, linguists have no choice but to search desperately in language for something that is actually inscribed in the social relations in which it functions' (Bourdieu 1992, 39).

In the essay *Authorized Language* (Bourdieu 1992, 107-116) and elsewhere in *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu criticises Austin in this vein, for mistakenly attributing to the symbolic systems of languages a power which actually inhabits social relations (Bourdieu 1992, 107-9). Though illocutionary acts (and especially explicit performatives, for an interesting reason) may seem to transmit, by their mere utterance, a force that alters the social world, this force is really only the *delegated authority* of the speaker (Bourdieu 1992, 107). This becomes evident when one considers such cases as a soldier attempting to give orders to a superior officer: 'Only a hopeless soldier (or a 'pure' linguist) could imagine that it was possible to give his captain an order' (Bourdieu 1992, 75). Bourdieu goes further: if the speaker delegates authority to his or her words, this is in fact not even the speaker's own authority. His or her speech only acts on the world (including other people), he claims, to the extent that in his utterances the speaker expresses the delegated social power of a group, of which he/she is the authorised spokesperson (Bourdieu 1992, 109-11). The power of the group is, in turn, ultimately guaranteed by its material wealth, through which it gains access to a certain amount of *symbolic capital* (of which a certain kind of language, of accent, style, vocabulary, is only one type).

The exercise of power through symbols is, however, not as straightforward as the exercise of power through, for instance, possession of a gun or knife (though it should be noted that the greater part of the power granted by the possession of a gun, everything apart from the ability it imparts to kill or injure, is in fact symbolic in Bourdieu's sense). The power of language, for Bourdieu, is in some ways like the power of a *toy* gun, insofar as it depends and is founded upon an act of *misrecognition* that takes an arbitrary and contingent relationship between "real" power and certain symbols for a natural and necessary one (Bourdieu 1992, 170).[29] It depends on a degree of 'collaboration' and 'complicity' (Bourdieu 1992, 113) on the part of the dominated and on a degree of *recognition* more than

[29] The image of the toy gun is my own.

understanding (in fact it may even operate in the absence of understanding) (Bourdieu 1992, 111-3). Explicit performatives are implicated in this misrecognition because they, more than any other type of utterance, conceal the sociological sources of their power by making it appear to originate *within* the utterance itself (Bourdieu 1992, 111). Performatives are really nothing other than a 'particular case of the effects of symbolic domination' (Bourdieu 1992, 72). Austin, in locating the source of the illocutionary force of performatives in utterances, is seen by Bourdieu therefore to have fallen into a trap set by symbolic capitalists who control the means of symbolic production and are interested in concealing their power: he is perhaps like the diligent working class man who won't disrupt the factory and believes meekly in the benevolence of his employer.

Of course, as we saw in Chapter One, limitations on the efficacy of language, as exemplified in Bourdieu by the 'hopeless soldier' ordering his captain about, were not ignored by Austin, who considered them under the heading of infelicities; Bourdieu claims that in doing so Austin is adopting 'a sociological point of view' (Bourdieu 1992, 74). This seems to me an unnecessary piece of disciplinary border-policemanship. Bourdieu's attribution to Austin of the belief that the source of the power of language was inside the linguistic system is perhaps too strong – his search for formal grammatical criteria of performativeness was designed to fail from the start, as Sbisa has argued convincingly. But it is arguably true that Austin does not inquire very deeply into the social conditions behind the power of language, and it is also reasonable to suggest that starting from a consideration of the words themselves is to start at the wrong end.

Surely one must agree with Bourdieu that the relationship between symbolic power and its instruments (prestigious accents, languages etc) is arbitrary, and to search for power in the expressions themselves, considered abstractly as elements of a symbolic system, is as misguided as searching for the source of the meaning of 'cat' in the sound or spelling of the word. The way that, as speakers, we delegate our social power to language is similar to the way we assign meaning to expressions. But there is nevertheless something very interesting about the act of delegating authority, for *delegated power is power*, no less than undelegated, 'direct' power. If I delegate power to my words, then *my words become powerful*, my power in a certain way "goes into" those words, even if that power originated

outside them, or even, originally, outside of me. I do not therefore think it is too great a stretch to talk about the illocutionary force of utterances (if not of symbols), or of authority residing 'in the set of prosodic or articulatory variations which define distinguished pronunciation' or in the other elements of a prestigious style (Bourdieu 1992, 113), all the while acknowledging that this force is not a spontaneous effect of autonomous symbols, and that it may depend on the consent of the recipient.

A fuller account of the sources of symbolic power would need to probe their origin more thoroughly. For many kinds of power turn out on inspection to be largely symbolic. The power derived from the ownership of land, for instance, is symbolic in the sense that the relation of *ownership* is essentially to be in possession of certain symbols (title deeds, the appearance of autochthony, etc.). Even the power of arms, as I pointed out earlier, is to a large degree and in its most productive forms, symbolic. Such an investigation might uncover certain problems with Bourdieu's account. For example, I am not willing to promote without qualification his vision of symbolic power (and by extension, those who "collaborate" and are "complicit" with it) as something malignant, perhaps even evil. If as he sometimes seems to suggest symbolic power is ultimately traceable to a *natural* kind of power ('the laws of social physics only apparently independent of the laws of physics' (Bourdieu 1992, 111)), then it is in my view basically *a*moral, and it becomes unfair to characterise those who comply with it as "collaborators."

2.5 Empirical pragmatics

The theory I have looked at so far may have given the impression that the study of speech acts is a purely speculative or deductive enterprise. Fine distinctions have been made, and their validity has been defended or disputed on the strength of their internal, logical coherence or incoherence, or with reference to some broader sociological theory. Examples of actual speech acts are infrequent, and where they do appear they are usually either "classic" examples from the existing literature, or anecdotes from the author's own experience which are analysed according to his or her own intuitions.

To a certain extent this picture is accurate. Nevertheless, since the early 1980s there has been a strong tradition of *empirical* research into speech acts, which is the subject of this

section. Since the focus of this paper is theoretical, I will look at the way in which speech act variables were operationalised for empirical research. For reasons of space, I will not discuss the various ways in which speech act data is gathered, or look at any actual studies (of which there are many), and I will also omit consideration of the large body of very interesting work that has been done in developmental pragmatics.

A significant proportion of work in empirical pragmatics has looked at speech acts in a cross-linguistic perspective. Of particular interest are the studies undertaken as part of or inspired by the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project (see Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984). This influential project began as an attempt to discern 'rules that govern language in context,' and to determine the extent to which such rules were universal across cultures/languages (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 196).[30] Initially, it focussed on two speech acts, requests and apologies, of native and non-native speakers of eight different languages/varieties, and utilised *discourse completion tests* (DCTs) to elicit tokens of the desired speech act type (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 197-8).

The original participants in the CCSARP project devised a 'coding scheme' for requests and apologies, on the basis of 'general theoretical considerations' and existing empirical work (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 199). Though they called it a coding scheme, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain acknowledged that it embodies substantive hypotheses about the internal structure of these speech acts, and is thus more than a simple labelling convention, as the name might be taken to suggest (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 209). Initially, the scheme was worked out in detail for requests and apologies only, but other speech acts, such as complaints, have been similarly analysed (e.g. House & Kasper 1981).

[30] It is particularly difficult and probably futile in the context of pragmatics to make a definite distinction between language and culture.

In outline, the CCSARP project analysis of a request divides it into an Address Term, Head Act and Adjunct:

Adr.	**Head**	**Adjunct**
Danny /	could you lend me £100 for a week /	I've run into problems with the rent for my apartment

(Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 200)

The distinction between Head Acts and Adjuncts is complicated by the fact that requests can be and very often are made indirectly. The first organising principle for requests is thus a scale of directness with three major levels: conventionally direct ('please pass the salt'), conventionally indirect ('can you pass me the salt?') and nonconventional indirect ('this food is rather bland') (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 201). Further dimensions of variability captured in the coding scheme are *point of view* (hearer-oriented, as in 'could *you* tidy up the kitchen soon?' vs. speaker-oriented, as in 'do you think *I* could borrow your notes from yesterday's class?'), the presence and quantity of *upgraders* ('clean up this *disgusting* mess') and *downgraders* ('*do you think* I could…') within the Head Act, and the nature of any Adjuncts (*cost minimizers* such as '… if it's not too much trouble,' *grounders* such as giving reasons for the request, and so on) (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 201-5).

The first organising principle of apologies in the coding scheme is whether or not they include an explicit *illocutionary force indicating device* (IFID; cf Searle 1969, 62), such as 'sorry' or 'I apologise' in English (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 206). Instead of or in addition to an IFID, an apology may include any number of the following *semantic formulas*: some kind of explanation of the event *E* that necessitated the apology ('I didn't see you there'), an expression relating to the speaker's responsibility for *E* ('I should have been more careful'), an offer of reparation ('let me buy you a new one'), and/or a promise of forbearance ('I will be more careful in the future') (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, 206-7).

Speech act taxonomies such as Searle's attempt to compare different speech acts within the same language, and are constructed with an eye to formal consistency, economy and elegance, rather than their application to a corpus of data. The purpose of the CCSARP coding scheme, by contrast, was to establish a basis for comparison of request and apology

strategies in different languages, in a way that lent itself to use with empirical data. It resulted in a breakdown of different speech act types according to their dimensions of variability, but it does not imply comparability among different speech act types. It assumes that there is cross-linguistic/cross-cultural comparability of individual speech act types instead. The theory put forward in the next chapter is of the first kind, although it does attempt to do away with some of the assumptions about homogeneous speech communities usually associated with this type of theory.

Chapter 3: A model of illocutionary forces

This chapter will outline a model of illocutionary forces based on Searle's taxonomy of speech acts. As will become clear, Searle's taxonomy is really just the starting point; I introduce several changes, inspired by Roman Jakobson's model of the functions of language, and motivated by problems raised by the theory discussed in Chapter 2 and the challenge of accounting for a wider range of language-characteristic phenomena in an elegant way.

Throughout this chapter, when I refer to 'common' or 'shared' code I mean a situation in which two or more individuals have the same or very similar associations with a particular signal, say 'cat' or [kʰæt] or, as in the myth of Theseus, the colour of a ship's sails. Sharing a large number of such signal associations, along with associations with patterns of their combination, is what is in layman's terms known as sharing a language. We only ever encounter the code(s) of another person indirectly, and thus can never be entirely certain of how much code we share with them at any given moment. In many instances, however, we can in the course of interacting with them get a rough idea of the similarities and differences between our codes that is sufficient to enable us to achieve communicative ends dependent on the existence of common code. This happens when the evidence of commonality is enough to overwhelm our skepticism about the contents of other minds. Importantly, a common or shared code is not necessarily a fixed code (cf Harris 1998). The only limit on its ephemerality and idiosyncrasy arises from the fact that it must be shared, so it cannot be a completely private code.

Two closely-related characteristics of multilingual societies will figure prominently in the changes I introduce. First, multilingual societies produce situations in which there is a dearth of code shared by interlocutors: we don't share a language, or we have different cultural backgrounds, etc. with the result that we are unable to communicate fully with some other members of the society. Second, multilingual societies produce situations in which there is an excess of code shared by interlocutors, an over-abundance of expressive options that allows speakers to load many layers of significance into their speech acts. Admittedly, these two types of situation would be present (albeit to a lesser extent) even in a completely monolingual society (supposing for the sake of argument that such a thing exists) – in any

society, actually, in which there was less-than-complete uniformity among its members. But I think it is fair to say that they are characteristic of multilingual societies; their prevalence would even serve as a measure of the degree of multilingualism in a society, if it were possible to measure them.

3.1 Jakobson's model of the functions of language[31]

Jakobson based his model on an earlier model by Karl Bühler, the Organon Model, which delineated three functions: Representational, Expressive and Conative. These reappear more or less unchanged in Jakobson's model, which adds three further functions – phatic, poetic and metalingual. Jakobson's model was also based on the idea of a correspondence between distinct functions of language and the elements that constitute any speech event:

> The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to an ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to ("referent" in another, somewhat ambiguous nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and the addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling them both to enter and stay in communication.
>
> (Jakobson 1980, 81)

The different functions are essentially different orientations of an utterance toward these elements of the speech event. An orientation toward the context constitutes the *referential* function. 'Context' here is not limited to the immediate environment of the speech event, but includes anything that an utterance can be about. A pure constative would be the exemplary instance of the referential function. An orientation toward the addresser in the speech event constitutes the *emotive* or *expressive* function, which conveys information about the speaker's attitude to something. The *conative* function is an orientation toward

[31] Almost identical descriptions of the model can be found in Jakobson 1960 and Jakobson 1980. Both were originally lectures delivered in the late 1950s. The references in this essay are to Jakobson 1980 because it is more concise, although the other is more frequently cited.

the addressee, exemplified by vocatives and imperatives. An orientation toward the contact is the *phatic* function. This function is clearly evident in utterances intended to initiate, maintain or discontinue communication, such as greetings and minimal responses, and is the first function acquired by infants. An orientation toward the message, 'a focus on the message for its own sake' (Jakobson 1980, 84), is the *poetic* function. Rhyming, alliteration and assonance are all examples of the poetic function. Finally, the *metalingual* function is an orientation toward the code. Its use is exemplified by expressions querying and explaining meanings, or translating words.

Central to Jakobson's model is the idea that several functions are typically present in any one speech event, even if certain utterances exemplify one function more obviously than another. This property is also important the model described below.

3.2 Subheading: Changes to Searle's taxonomy

3.2.1 Forces, not acts

The first change is to substitute a study of illocutionary *forces* for a study of illocutionary *acts*. At one level, this is a minor terminological change with the aim of making the claims of the theory more transparent. The word *act* is a technical term in the work of Austin and Searle that has a sense at variance with ordinary usage. Unfortunately, this technical sense is never defined and is also not consistently applied. Austin's use of the word is part of a special ontology of action, as was mentioned in section 1.6.2 above. Searle, though he admits that his sense of *act* is such that several acts may be performed simultaneously (Searle 1969, 24-5), later criticises Austin's taxonomy on the grounds that particular speech acts may fall into more than one category (Searle 1979, 6), which should not be a problem if the earlier sense of *act* is applied. In moving from acts to forces I am not simply replacing a label: a second effect is to shift the overall perspective of the theory from a speaker-centric one in which the addressee and the nature of the contact between addresser and addressee are assumed to be in some sort of default or normal state (which may actually be very unusual or even impossible), to one in which the variability of the contact, code and message (cf Jakobson 1980, 81), and the power of the addressee to affect the nature of the illocutionary force, are more adequately represented. I am not disputing the right of

scientists to make simplifying assumptions or focus on special cases at certain stages in the development of an idea, which is Searle's defence for the assumptions he makes; but we should not allow this to prevent us from shedding assumptions wherever possible and generalising our ideas to a wider range of phenomena, which is the ultimate aim of theorising.

My use of the word *force* is essentially the same as Austin's. It is also similar in some respects to the use of the word in physics; but whereas a physical force is something that causes a change in a physical space, an illocutionary force causes a change in a social space. It is what a particular act of speech must transmit if it is to change the social world, and since every act of speech, recognised as such, changes the social world, every particular act of speech, recognised as such, transmits some illocutionary force. It is what passes between people whenever the social world is changed as a result of a speech event. This is a much broader conception of illocutionary force than Austin's, as will become clear by the end of the chapter, but the sense of *force* is the same. A particular act of speech transmits a complex illocutionary force composed of elementary illocutionary forces, which constitute the *dimensions of illocutionary force*. These dimensions are what the taxonomy below describes, each of which may be present with a greater or lesser degree of strength. Illocutionary forces are like Jakobson's functions of language in this respect (cf Jakobson 1980, 82): though one elementary force might be the most prominent in a particular act of speech, other elementary forces will always be present alongside the most prominent one.[32]

3.2.2 The role of the hearer in the determination of illocutionary force

With the shift from a theory of acts toward a theory of forces, it no longer makes sense to talk, as Searle does, of the "expressed psychological state" of an utterance or sentence. Talking in this way implies a view of the utterance (i) as primarily an instrument for the speaker to make their psychological state public and (ii) as necessarily sufficient for this purpose. A theory of forces views the utterance as primarily the vehicle for the transmission of an illocutionary force that may or may not correspond to the intentions of the speaker

[32] It is like a piece of music, with various parts harmonising (or disharmonising, as the case may be) with the melody.

depending on the nature of the uptake of the utterance, which is to a large extent beyond the control of the speaker. The speaker, in choosing to say this and not that, in most cases places a limit on the possible forces that his or her utterance can transmit; but the precise force that ends up being transmitted is determined by the hearer. On receiving a signal from a speaker, the hearer attributes a certain psychological state to the speaker. It is this *attributed psychological state* that finally determines what illocutionary force is transmitted.

It may seem that this view unduly diminishes the authority of the speaker and makes conversation seem overly dependent on the comprehension and goodwill of hearers. But if one reflects that, in conversation, the speaker will almost immediately get an opportunity to clarify his intentions if necessary after the hearer responds, that is, when the conversational roles are exchanged, then this view becomes more plausible, and the fact that we often have coherent and mutually satisfactory conversations seems less miraculous. Though we must surely agree with Derrida that the speaker is in an important sense absent from the context of communication (see section 2.3, page 28 above), this absence does not last forever. He need not cede control of his utterance; it does not instantly and for all time become 'orphaned and separated . . . from the assistance of its father' (Derrida 1977, 8). This goes for writing as well as speech, though it is perhaps most characteristic of face-to-face interactions. When in conversation the attributed psychological state is consistently the same as the speaker's actual psychological state, communication proceeds smoothly and comfortably because interlocutors all have the same mental picture of what illocutionary forces are being transmitted. When there is a difference, then as the conversation proceeds this difference may become apparent and be ironed out, and if not, this difference may create conflict at some point; but the transmission of illocutionary forces does not stop the moment there is a mismatch between the attributed and actual psychological states of the speaker unless, perhaps, the conflict becomes a fist-fight, in which case a wholly different kind of force is being exchanged – but in any case, a conversation may become a fight even without a breakdown in communication. In fact, an illocutionary force may be transmitted even if no conversation begins because the interlocutors don't share a common language (see section 3.3.2, page 51 below).

Fig 1. Ukrainian parliament brawl, 2014 (picture from www.dailydot.com)

The importance of hearers' moment-to-moment judgments about the psychological states "behind" utterances is recognised by most naturalistic theories of communication (see for example Tomasello 2010, Millikan 2005), and accounts for the fact that conversation is more looser yet more flexible, at the same time both more and less secure, than Searle's theory implies. It is less secure insofar as it depends on acts of judgment that go beyond acts of decoding; more secure insofar as it is able to tolerate temporary conflict.

3.2.3 The effect of social status

As Bourdieu shows (see section 2.4.2), social relations also play an important part in determining when, say, a command can actually be given. As I will show below, all of the elementary forces in my model do in fact rely on a particular social status being attributed to the speaker. Speech acts are in general unable to function without some social guarantee. I will therefore add a parameter for *attributed social status* to each of the elementary forces. I will not, however, attempt to trace these social guarantees to their ultimate source, since this is a linguistic theory (cf Bourdieu 1992, 39; see section 2.4.2). One has to draw a line somewhere, even if one might easily have drawn it somewhere else.

As will become clear when I discuss the elementary illocutionary forces individually, social status as I understand it is a broad and open-ended concept. In one sentence, it is a person's state relative to other people. It may include their reputation, social networks, the offices they occupy, powers they possess, their bank balance, etc. Attributed social status is obviously limited by what the hearer can attribute to the speaker, though importantly this is limited neither by what she knows for certain about nor by the facts of the speaker's social status. There is thus a sense in which it is localised around the particular communicative episode.

3.2.4 Non-propositional effects

A third global change made to Searle's taxonomy concerns the idea of propositional content. I said earlier that illocutionary force is what a particular act of speech must transmit if it is to change the social world, and that since every act of speech, recognised as such, changes the social world, every particular act of speech, recognised as such, transmits some illocutionary force. The ways in which speaking may change the social world are not however limited to operations on propositions, a fact has been proven by a generation of sociolinguists and that is recognised by Jakobson's model. I will integrate this much wider conception of speech affecting the social world into the model of illocutionary forces. This requires replacing the "propositional content" that appears in Searle's taxonomy with something more comprehensive. For reasons which will become evident when I discuss *poetic* and *rhetorical* forces, propositional content will be expanded into a category I call

signal properties. Some but not all elementary illocutionary forces have propositional content as a signal property.

Summarising, then, the global changes made to Searle's taxonomy: (i) a theory of acts is replaced by a theory of forces. This moves the theory away from a speaker-centric to a more interaction-centric one, which entails (ii) a recognition of the relative importance of the psychological state attributed to the speaker by the hearer and the unsustainability of the notion of expressed psychological state when fewer assumptions about the speaker's environment are made. It is not by recognising an intention that a hearer understands a speech act, but by attributing an intention, by *postulating* an intention behind the signal he receives. This might or might not correspond to the intention that the speaker actually had. The speaker's intentions are not completely irrelevant to the communication, however, because he typically cedes control of the interpretation of his speech act only temporarily. (iii) Recognition of the fact that social status is just as important as psychological state for the transmission of illocutionary force; and (iv) a broadening of the category of propositional content to accommodate a more comprehensive account of the ways in which speech changes the social world.

3.2.5 Changes of detail: the question of questions and a matter of notation

Recall that Searle construed questions (yes-no and wh-) as requests for information and therefore classified them as directive speech acts (see section 2.1.3, page 25 above). I expressed some dissatisfaction with this classification on the grounds that they are only indirectly directives. If we take an uncontroversial example of a request, 'please close the window,' we find a close relationship between the action requested (that the hearer closes the window) and the propositional content. But looking at a question, we find a different relationship. Using Searle's example, 'does Sam smoke habitually?', the action called for (that the hearer gives the speaker some information) does not resemble the propositional content at all. The direction of fit between the propositional content and the world is also different. Requests have the world-to-word direction of fit, but questions actually have the same word-to-world direction of fit as assertions: the only difference is that it is the hearer

of the question who is expected to bring about the fit. Questions stand to assertions in the same relationship that directives stand to commissives: in each pair, the first calls on the hearer to implement the word-world fit (whereas the second constitutes a commitment by the speaker to the fit between word and world). In the case of directives, the fit is supposed to be achieved by some physical action (eg closing the window); in the case of questions, the fit is supposed to be achieved by confirming or disconfirming an assertion of the speaker (in yes-no questions) or by providing an assertion that fills in information missing from the speaker's question (in wh- questions) – in both cases, the hearer (of the question) is choosing words that fit the world. Questions therefore share with assertions the word-to-world direction of fit, and share with directives an orientation toward the hearer. The two binary parameters, direction of fit[33] and speaker/hearer orientation, combine to generate the four speech act types (dimensions of illocutionary force in my model), assertive, inquisitive, directive and commissive, which I will call collectively *propositional forces* because they form a set characterised by a relatively straightforward relation between a proposition and the world (direction of fit). They are summarised in the following table:

	Direction of fit	S/H orientation
Assertive	↓	Speaker
Inquisitive	↓	Hearer
Directive	↑	Hearer
Commissive	↑	Speaker

Table 2: propositional forces

The notational change I have made to Searle's taxonomy is to replace his idiosyncratic symbols for the major classes of speech acts (⊢, !, C, E, and D) with a regular set of Greek letters for the dimensions of illocutionary force. These will be introduced when each individual force is discussed. They were chosen to be suggestive of the corresponding name of the elementary force; thus the assertive and poetic forces have the symbols α and π respectively. Apart from being clearer, this change also highlights the change to a model of forces from a model of acts. I have renamed Searle's declarational class to

[33] Strictly speaking, direction of fit is a ternary parameter.

metaconventional, which brings out its reflexive character, and allows me to avoid having two elementary forces, declarational and directive, competing for the Greek letter delta. Roman capitals will reserved for attributed psychological states, and lower case Roman letters for attributed social statuses.

3.3 Three new forces: phatic, poetic, rhetorical

This section introduces three new forces to the model, called the phatic, poetic and rhetorical forces. They constitute a set characterised by its independence from propositional content. The phatic and poetic forces each correspond closely but not exactly to the Jakobsonian functions of the same name, and the rhetorical force, though novel, is in some ways an extension of the poetic force. They are thus only new to the model; they are not new to scholarship or new to the world. These three forces are prominent in multilingual contexts because their independence from propositional content allows them to be transmitted where there is a lack of shared code between interlocutors and where an over-abundance of expressive options adds layers to the communication.

3.3.1 Phatic force (*φ*)

Utterances may transmit a *phatic force*, *φ*, if they contribute to the establishment, maintenance or discontinuation of communication. The phatic force thus corresponds very closely to Jakobson's *phatic function* (Jakobson1980, 84), which is the reason for the name. Note that Jakobson took the word 'phatic' from Malinowski, rather than Austin, who used it in a different way (see section 1.3, page 9 above), and my use of the word belongs to the Malinowski-Jakobson lineage. Examples of utterances that can transmit a clear phatic force are greetings, minimal responses and vocatives. The inclusion of vocatives in this class departs from Jakobson, who considered vocatives to be examples of the conative (addressee-oriented) function. I consider them *φ*-transmitters because they are used to get a hearer's attention. The capacity of an utterance to set or alter the frame of an interaction is a property of its phatic force. I have a housemate who is trying to teach me French. I greet him with 'comment ça va' rather than 'hi' or 'how's it going' or whatever when I want to frame the interaction in a certain way: I want my language choice to transmit a phatic force that frames the subsequent interaction as an informal French lesson (which entails that we

will try only to speak French, he will speak more slowly, in short sentences and only about simple topics, etc.). It should be clear from this that to the extent that an utterance interpellates a subject, it does so by virtue of *φ*, because the subject positions occupied by interlocutors are part of the frame of the interaction. My 'comment ça va' attempts to impose the subject positions 'French speaker' and 'French teacher' on my housemate (but also imposes corresponding subject positions on myself).

There are no special signal properties required for the transmission of phatic force in the case of initiating and maintaining communication. *φ* can be transmitted in the absence of conventions. Just about any noise can function to get someone's attention and start an interaction: saying 'Hey Sally!' but also blowing a whistle, clearing one's throat, waving a hand, the ringing of a telephone, etc. Minimal responses are usually just grunts and murmurs, and conversation may also be prolonged merely through eye contact. Breaking off communication is usually more delicate and requires the use of special formulae, recognised as such by both parties ('bye,' 'see you,' etc.).


Fig 2. 'Amid a proposal about creating direct transport links with Mainland China, DPP deputy Wang Shu-hui snatched the written proposal and shoved it into her mouth . . . She later spat the proposal out and tore it up.' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legislative_violence#Taiwan).

Since *φ* does not require the presence of a proposition, there is no necessary relationship between a proposition and the world, i.e. no direction of fit.[34] The psychological state that the hearer must attribute to the speaker for the utterance to transmit *φ* is simply the *intent to communicate* or, in the case of *φ* that alters rather than establishes a frame, the *intent to communicate in a certain way*, which I will abbreviate C. This is in fact a social state as much as a psychological one, so the attributed social status is the same. For initiating and maintaining speech acts, then, the phatic force looks like this:

$$\varphi = \emptyset Cc(\emptyset)$$

[34] For a proposition to be present, it must be understood by both speaker and hearer.

I noted earlier that breaking off communication is more complex than initiating or sustaining it, and usually requires the use of special formulae. This aspect of phatic force does therefore have a required signal property.

Jakobson's aim is to describe functions of language, and this allows him to subsume initiating, maintaining and discontinuing signals under a single function. Since signal properties distinguish dimensions of force in my model, however, a qualitative distinction such as this cannot be ignored: it is taken to suggest that the elementary illocutionary force responsible for breaking off communication is different from that which is responsible for initiating and maintaining it. I will therefore define two forms of phatic force. The first, unmarked form of φ was described above: it is a kind of social gravity, something necessarily attractive, or social glue, something necessarily creative or supportive of social bonds. Like physical gravity, this social gravity can be opposed – conversations do, after all, sometimes end. The force that opposes social gravity, or dissolves social glue, I will call φ^-. The signal property requirement is that it is a φ^- formula recognised by both/all relevant parties. The attributed social/psychological state is *intent to discontinue communication*, which I will symbolise C^-. The formulation of φ^- is therefore:

$$\varphi^- = \emptyset C^- c^- (\varphi^- \text{ formula})$$

Phatic force incorporates something very like Judith Butler's concept of *performativity* (see Butler 1997) (which was itself derived from Austin's concept of performative utterances). In the case of naming, the effect of the performativity of an utterance is to conjure up or reproduce a category and simultaneously to confer membership of this category on the person named. This idea was influenced by Louis Althusser's idea of interpellation, according to which "hailing" a person (the well-known example he gives is of a policeman trying to get someone's attention in a crowded street) automatically brings a particular (typically subordinate) subject-hood into existence and simultaneously foists it on the person who responds (Althusser 1971, 163). Naming is thus like a Searlian declaration in the

kind of change to the social world it brings about, but unlike a Searlian declaration insofar as it is not required to fit into any pre-existing structure of conventions.[35]

3.3.2 Poetic force (π)

In Jakobson's model, the poetic function of language 'promot[es] the palpability of signs' and despite its name is not confined to, though it is characteristic of, verbal art (Jakobson 1980, 85). All signs have some palpable, physical form, which can carry an illocutionary force in and of itself. If this physical form is patterned in some way, it can transmit *poetic force*, π. The relevant sense of 'pattern' is difficult to define; even the Oxford English Dictionary entries are little more than suggestive phrases: 'a regular or decorative arrangement,' 'a natural or chance arrangement of shapes or markings having a decorative or striking effect,' 'a discernible order or arrangement in some branch of language, esp. phonology,' 'an arrangement or relationship of elements, *esp.* one which indicates or implies an underlying causative process other than chance.'

Not every use of the physical form of a sign transmits illocutionary force: signs can be used *as physical objects*, but they can transmit illocutionary force only when they are used *as signs*. But deciding precisely where to draw the line is a delicate matter. A puzzle from the literature on perlocutionary acts brings us closer to the boundary: it concerned what kind of act is performed in waking someone by shouting 'don't wake up!' at them (Gu 1993, 409). Insofar as the sleeper wakes up as a result of the physical force of the sound, no π is transmitted – it is essentially the same as if one had woken them by throwing a book at them. Insofar as they wake up because of an association of loud noises with danger, perhaps there could be some phatic force, since waking someone is a species of getting their attention, but there is no poetic force because the patterning of the signal is irrelevant. Searle's American prisoner (see section 2.1.2, page 22 above), on the other hand, *does* transmit poetic force, and he would do even if he said 'Ich bin ein amerikanischer Soldat,' or

[35] According to this view, calling someone particular name takes away from them any response that does not at some level imply an acceptance of the name. The performativity of the name is unaffected by such linguistic subtleties as negation, reported speech, scare quotes, "mention" versus "use," etc. If someone calls out 'hey moron!' and I turn around to respond, then even if I respond with 'I am not an moron!' or 'don't call me an moron!' the theory goes, I have accepted at some level that 'moron' referred to me – otherwise, why did I respond to the call?

if the guard understood the German sentence ‘kennst . . . bluhen’ and realised what the prisoner was trying to do. It is only the success of the prisoner’s intentions, and not the transmission of illocutionary force, that depends on his hearer having a particular level of familiarity with the German language (not too familiar with German, or he will see through the prisoner’s ruse; but familiar enough that it does not fall on deaf ears, as it were).

In these examples the process of association (loud noise – danger, sound pattern – German citizen) introduces a gap between the intent of the sign (possibly non-existent, e.g. if the noise was caused by the wind) and its interpretation. This gap is responsible for the defeasibility of illocutionary force. I will assume therefore that what distinguishes signs used as signs is that they involve such a process of association by the hearer. It is not important whether the association is natural or conventional, learned or instinctive, conscious or unconscious. It is also not important for there to be an association that speaker and hearer share, because the transmission of illocutionary force is not a matter of transmitting speakers’ meanings or intentions, but a matter of altering the social world. Where does the social world end, and the rest of the world begin? Where does “social physics” become physics? Perhaps there is ultimately no clear boundary to be drawn here; at any rate I have no interest in policing one, so I will simply leave this as a line in the sand.

Poetic force is mostly responsible for making some speakers and writers seem elegant and convincing, while making others seem clumsy and laboured, even as they make identical arguments. It can communicate doubt or belief, distance or intimacy, admiration or contempt, or simply produce a peculiar kind of semiotic pleasure. The quotability of the political slogan ‘I like Ike’ derives from its poetic force (Jakobson 1980, 85). The call ‘amandla!’ and response ‘awethu!’ have conventional meanings, but their rousing effect is at least partly dependent on syllabic and prosodic structure, which contribute to poetic force: call and response both have three syllables and begin with the same sound; the final sound of the call links it to the first sound of the response. Consider also the way it is usually rapidly repeated.

Anyone who has lived in a multilingual society or has spent time among people who speak a language they don’t understand will be familiar with the experience of “other languages”: the experience of hearing sounds (or reading words or gestures) to which they can attach no

meaning, while at the same time having no doubt that other speakers and hearers do attach meaning to the sounds. We hear the particular music of the language. In such situations poetic force is the only illocutionary force that may be transmitted to the uncomprehending hearer apart from phatic force.[36] π is salient not only when there is a lack, but also when there is an excess of common code. Code-switching, which takes advantage of such an excess, is equally characteristic of multilingual contexts. It transmits π when this or that code is chosen on the basis of its sound.

There is no direction of fit associated with π because it doesn't require the presence of a proposition. The signal properties required for the transmission of π is that it should be patterned. The attributed psychological state is hard to describe, but it includes the ability to recognise and produce patterns, so I will call it P. This is the *minimum* psychological state that needs to be postulated by the hearer to allow the transmission of π. It is really more of a mental capacity than a psychological state. π is perhaps the only dimension that requires no social status to be attributed – the ability to process patterns in the required way seems purely neurological to me. Note that π excludes natural patterns; the universe throws up some beautiful patterns and we can find striking regularities in the physical world, but they are not transmitted to us through poetic force. The formulation of poetic force is:

$$\pi = \text{ØPØ(patterned)}$$

3.3.3 Rhetorical force (ρ)

This force has no direct counterpart in Jakobson's model. Consider another American political slogan, 'a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage.' There is a phonetic pattern of short and long vowels in the stressed syllables, [tʃɪkən pɑt kɒː gærɑːʒ] that transmits poetic force. But there is also a pattern in the *meanings* of the words that is independent of the phonetic pattern and that would persist even if the words were replaced with different-sounding synonyms ('a small, domestic bird in every cooking vessel and a motorised carriage in every personal automobile hangar'). The figure contained:container is

[36] A faint phatic force is transmitted in this situation to the extent that the possibility of translation is recognised.

repeated, combining with the phonetic patter to give the slogan a memorable symmetry. This kind of *pattern in meaning* transmits *rhetorical force*, *ρ*.

In his discussion of the poetic function, Jakobson claims that it is 'not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant, determining function' (Jakobson 1980, 85). Rhetorical force is another prominent aspect of verbal art and is arguably just as dominant as poetic force in poetry, and even more so in prose. Here's an example of a pattern in meaning from *The Trial* by Franz Kafka. K, the protagonist, is exploring a mysterious room at his office:

> It was, as he had correctly assumed, a lumber room. Bundles of useless old papers and empty earthenware ink-bottles lay in a tumbled heap behind the threshold. But in the room itself stood three men, stooping because of the low ceiling, by the light of a candle stuck on a bookcase. 'What are you doing here?' asked K., in a voice broken with agitation but not loud. One of the men, who was clearly in authority and took the eye first, was sheathed in a sort of dark leather garment which left his throat and a good deal of his chest and the whole of his arms bare. He made no answer. But the other two cried: 'Sir! We're to be flogged because you complained about us to the Examining Magistrate.' And only then did K. realise that it was actually the warders Franz and Willem, and that the third man was holding a rod in his hand with which to beat them.
>
> (Kafka 1953, 94-5)

In this passage, Kafka begins with incidental details and ends with human drama. There is a reversal of the sequence in which the elements of the scene would probably be noticed that creates a peculiar rhetorical force.[37]

I've used political slogans and examples from literature to illustrate rhetorical force because they typically make heavy use of it in order to be suggestive; but of course ordinary utterances also transmit *ρ*. It may also be transmitted unintentionally, as in so-called Freudian slips or when the speaker is simply unaware of meaning patterns he is producing. In *Excitable Speech* Judith Butler analyses how the image of fire is repeated and transformed

[37] There are actually several reversals like this in *The Trial*.

in a particular Supreme Court Judgment (Butler 1997), and we saw earlier (see Section 2.3, page 30 above) how Derrida traced the image of disease in his criticism of Austin's treatment of fictional speech acts. The rhetorical forces uncovered by analyses like these are transmitted independently of what the writer's intention. ρ does not necessarily "elevate" the utterance, as it is usually intended to do in literature, or make it more persuasive, as it is usually intended to do in political and advertising slogans. It simply adds another layer of significance to the speech event.

Like π, ρ is salient in multilingual contexts where there is a shortage of common code, since it can be transmitted when the hearer understands the meaning of single words without understanding whole sentences. ρ is salient where there is an abundance of common code, too, because of the greater lexical choice such a situation creates. Speakers may draw from the resources of different languages to express nuances and contrast.

Like the phatic and poetic forces, the rhetorical force does not require the presence of a proposition, so there is no direction of fit. The only required signal property is that it should contain meaning accessible to speaker and hearer. The psychological state attributed to the producer is that he/she understands and uses symbols: I'll abbreviate this state with S. The social status attributed to the speaker is that he/she belongs to a symbolic community that includes the hearer, that is, they should share some common code. I'll abbreviate this with 's.' The formulation of rhetorical force is as follows:

$$\rho = \emptyset Ss(\text{meaningful})$$

3.4 The propositional forces revisited

The four propositional forces were mentioned in section 3.2.5 (pages 46-7), but it remains to see precisely how they fit into the model of illocutionary force under construction. They were distinguished among themselves by combining two parameters: speaker/hearer orientation and direction of fit (see Table 2 on page 47). Direction of fit has appeared in the formulations of the phatic, poetic and rhetorical forces presented so far (although it has not been relevant to these proposition-independent forces), and it will appear in the formulations given here for the propositional forces. Readers will notice that S/H orientation

does not appear explicitly. It is represented implicitly by the values for attributed psychological state.

Before discussing the propositional forces, a remark on the concept of *proposition* will be necessary, because I will use the term in a wider sense than it is normally used in philosophy. Recall from Section 2.1.2 (pages 24-5 above) that Searle drew a distinction between propositions and utterances, to account for the constant in 'Sam smokes habitually' and 'Mr Samuel Martin is a regular smoker of tobacco' – while they are different utterances, with different illocutionary forces, they express the same proposition. The same goes for utterances in different languages: 'I live in Cape Town,' 'ek woon in Kaapstad' and 'ndihlala eKapa' all contain the same proposition – the proposition itself is independent of the means of its expression. This is a completely standard use of the term in philosophy. However, even while acknowledging that they are distinct from particular languages and/or particular utterances, the possibility of expressing a proposition by entirely other means does not fall under the standard philosophical use of the term. In my usage, a raised hand, a conspicuous cough, or a raised eyebrow can all express the same proposition as 'I am here.' Probably the most important implication of this novel usage for my model is that it allows multiple propositions to be expressed simultaneously – the fact that a particular dimension of illocutionary force depends on the presence of a particular type of proposition does not imply that another dimension, depending on a different type of proposition, cannot be transmitted at the same time.

Bearing in mind these remarks about the definition of the term 'proposition,' it is in most cases fairly straightforward to translate Searle's assertive, directive and commissive classes of speech acts into dimensions of illocutionary force. The symbol for the assertive and inquisitive forces are α and χ respectively. As already noted, they both have the word-to-world ($\downarrow$) direction of fit. The assertive and inquisitive forces require the presence of a proposition (in simple cases, referent + predicate: see Section 2.1.2, pages 21-2 above) to be asserted or queried, and any proposition may be asserted or queried. The required signal property for α and χ is therefore that it expresses a proposition accessible to both speaker and hearer, which I will symbolise p. Different propositions may be present to different hearers of the same utterance – imagine a Cold War spy sitting down next to someone on a

bench in a public place and saying ‘the snow is good in Stalingrad this year, isn't it?’ To another spy, this might express the same proposition as ‘are you a spy?’ To anyone else it will express a proposition about snow. The attributed psychological state for α is that the speaker believes the proposition, symbolised B. There are two important points to be made here: (i) This does not imply that one must believe what one asserts; but if, as a hearer, one does not think that the speaker believes what they is saying, then their utterance is likely to appear “in a certain way hollow or void” (cf Austin 1962, 22). This hollowness is captured in my model as a lack of assertive force. (ii) α is not the only channel through which we come to believe facts: we can come to believe, for example, facts about a person’s social history on the basis of her accent (π) or lexical choices (ρ), or simply by inspecting the world (no illocutionary force). What distinguishes α (and accounts for its defeasibility) is its dependence on this attributed belief, not the speaker’s actual beliefs and not its truth or falsity. The attributed psychological state for the transmission of inquisitive force is uncertainty about some element (in simple cases, the referent or the predicate) of the proposition, and the desire that the hearer remove this uncertainty. This will be symbolised U. Both the assertive and commissive forces depend upon the speaker having a favourable reputation, which is an element of the social status attributed to them. Consider the fable of the boy who cried wolf, and a child who pesters a parent by asking ‘why?’ after every thing they say soon stops getting answers, because they have gained a (short-term) reputation for “asking stupid questions.” The formulations for assertive and inquisitive force, therefore, are as follows:

$$\alpha = \downarrow \mathrm{Br}(p)$$

$$\chi = \downarrow \mathrm{Ur}(p)$$

The symbols for the directive and commissive forces are δ and κ respectively. They both have the world-to-word ($\uparrow$) direction of fit and also require the presence of a proposition. δ requires a proposition of the form ‘H does A’ and κ requires a proportion of the form ‘S does A’ (see section 2..1.3, page 24 above). The more restrictive signal properties of these two forces mean that the sets of propositions which they define are subsets of the set of propositions that may be asserted or queried. Thus, for example, a signal containing a proposition of the form ‘H does A’ can be simultaneously queried and requested (‘could you

fetch me at 5?'). The attributed psychological state for the transmission of the directive force is that the speaker desires that the hearer do the action specified by the proposition. This will be symbolised D. The attributed psychological state for the transmission of the commissive force is that the speaker intends to do the action specified by the proposition. This will be symbolised I. The commissive force, like α and χ, depends on the reputation of the speaker, so the attributed social status is 'r'. Politicians as a group have a reputation for making empty campaign promises: Jacob Zuma promises free healthcare for all, Helen Zille promises six million jobs in the Northern Cape, and civil society yawns.

The directive force, though, presents an interesting problem. Commands and requests are very similar from the point of view of representation, which is why, following Searle, I have placed them together in the category of directives. On the other hand, from the point of view of power, the way one tries to get someone to do something is very different in commands and requests: in the former it is with reference to the speaker's symbolic power, in the latter it is with reference to the hearer's willingness/ability (cf section 2.4, page 32ff above). There seems to be an incommensurability here; a model in which power was the primary organising principle would separate commands and requests, a model in which representation is primary joins them. The model under consideration makes representation primary, but no doubt a similar model could be built that make power relations primary. I will analyse requests as directives that create a sort of "symbolic power vacuum" by interpellating their addressee as someone able to fulfil the request, i.e. as powerful.[38]

Fig. 3 Command or request?

The category of directives has two subcategories, δ and δ^-, exemplified by commands and requests respectively. Direction of fit and signal properties are the same for both, since the

[38] Though as far as I know Althusser only ever considered the process of interpellation by large-scale state apparatuses and through their agents, I see no reason why it cannot apply too in the fleeting, miniature societies created whenever people communicate, and by ostensibly less powerful actors. Call this "interpellation lite," if you like.

manner of representation is the same. The only difference is whether the hearer attributes a greater (command) or lesser (request) symbolic power to the speaker, symbolised p and p^- respectively. This power difference is in general a more important determinant of illocutionary force than the grammatical form of the utterance.

The formulations for δ and *κ* are thus similar, in appearance at least, as the corresponding speech act classes in Searle's typology:

$$\delta^{(-)} = \uparrow \mathrm{Dp}^{(-)}(p\text{='S does A'})$$

$$\kappa = \uparrow \mathrm{Ip}(p\text{='H does A'})$$

3.5 Expressive and metaconventional forces and the status of metalanguage

The expressive and metaconventional dimensions of illocutionary force are also fairly straightforward translations from the corresponding speech act classes (expressive and declaration respectively) in Searle's taxonomy. The symbol for the expressive dimension is *ε*. The direction of fit is ∅, as in Searle's system, for the same reasons (see section 2.1.3, page 24-5 above). The signal must contain a proposition of the form 'S/H + some property.' Propositions of this form overlap with propositions of other forms, which allows utterances like 'stop doing that!' to transmit *ε* (disapproval), *δ* (that H stop doing it) and *α* (to a third party, the information that H is doing it; or to H, if he doesn't realise he is doing it). The psychological state that must be attributed to the speaker is that she has some attitude (delight, disbelief, doubt, confident indifference, etc.) toward the proposition contained in the signal. I'll symbolise this A. Similar remarks apply to *ε* as applied to *α*: (i) one may apologise insincerely, and the hollowness of an apology judged to be insincere is precisely its lack of expressive force; and (ii) there are means of forming an opinion about someone's attitudes other than by transmissions of expressive force. As with *α*, *χ*, and *κ*, being able to transmit expressive force depends on a speaker's reputation. The mechanical apology of a criminal at the end of a long trial during which he has shown no remorse is unlikely to transmit expressive force.

The symbol for the metaconventional dimension is *μ*. As in Searle's system, the direction of fit for *μ* is word-to-world and world-to-word; *μ* is transmitted by signals fitting into some

conventionalised procedure, and their production then effects some change in the world; people are hired or fired, become married, score goals, words are defined, ships are named, etc. Of course, much of the world eludes the power of metaconventional force: the transmission of μ will never boil water, and one would struggle in most situations to define *fish* as 'a kind of large, furry biped' by μ. Only aspects of the world that are in a certain way higher on an (admittedly difficult-to-define) scale of conventionality (that is, in a certain way "more" conventional) can be affected by μ. The signal property required for μ is that it expresses a proposition which is "more" conventional than, and therefore subject to the power of, the means of expression. μ obviously depends on a social status being attributed to the speaker (being recognised as a judge or marriage officer, for instance). This status varies according to the procedure the speaker is attempting to carry out. This variable social status will be symbolised x. The attributed psychological state is Ø, since the correct performance on the procedure is sufficient to transmit the force if the appropriate social status is attributed.

The formulations of the expressive and metaconventional forces are:

$$\varepsilon = \text{Ø}\text{Ar}(p\text{='S/H + some property'})$$

$$\mu = \updownarrow\text{Ø}\text{x}(p\text{=+conventional})$$

A word on metalanguage will be appropriate here. As Jakobson and others (e.g. Harris 1998) have pointed out, the most ordinary verbal interactions are replete with metalinguistic formulae like 'when I said X, I meant that Y,' 'what do you mean by X?' 'can you repeat that please?' 'but yesterday you said Z!' 'P means Q,' 'I was being sarcastic' and so on. Jakobson's model has a *metalingual function* that gathers together all utterances focussed upon the code being used (Jakobson 1980, 86-7), and readers familiar with Jakobson's model might wonder why I have not translated this function into my model. One might assume that metalanguage consists of transmissions of metaconventional force, where the convention in question is a convention of the language being used. But metalinguistic utterances do not necessarily concern conventional aspects of an utterance. For example, they may concern the intention behind a remark ('did you mean that as an insult?') or physical properties of the utterance ('don't talk so loudly!'). In fact, what arguably characterises a metalinguistic

utterance is not that it transmits a particular illocutionary force, but that the utterance is in some way concerned with or "about" earlier or forthcoming utterances. So, for example, the most prominent force of an utterance of 'I was being sarcastic' is likely to be the assertive force; what makes it a metalinguistic utterance is the fact that it concerns the illocutionary force (ε in this case) of an earlier utterance; what I will call the *object force*, as opposed to *primary force*. The object force is a force name only – it undergoes a kind of illocutionary bleaching comparable to the semantic bleaching that occurs in the process of grammaticalisation. Here are some more examples:

Utterance	**Primary force**	**Object force**
'did you call me?'	χ	φ
'I define x as y'	μ	α
'go and apologise at once!'	δ	ε
'I highly doubt that'	ε	α

Table 3: some metalinguistic utterances

Finally, here is a table of the complete set of dimensions of illocutionary force.

Dimension	Symbol	Dir. of fit	Attr. psych. state	Attr. soc. status	Signal properties
Phatic	φ (φ^-)	Ø	C (C^-)	c (c^-)	Ø (φ^- formula)
Poetic	π	Ø	P	Ø	patterned
Rhetorical	ρ	Ø	S	s	meaningful
Assertive	α	↓	B	r	*p*
Inquisitive	χ	↓	U	r	*p*
Commissive	κ	↑	I	p	*p*='H does A'
Directive	$\delta^{(-)}$	↑	D	$p^{(-)}$	*p*='S does A'
Expressive	ε	Ø	A	r	*p*='S/H + some property'
Metaconven-tional	μ	↕	Ø	x	*p*=+conventional

Table 4: Dimensions of illocutionary force

Conclusion

Chapter Three described a new(ish) model of illocutionary forces intended to widen the coverage of earlier models by combining them and integrating certain criticisms. What remains to be done is to consider certain questions arising from the model that may point in the direction of further research: Is the model "applicable," to empirical research or in any other way? Can elementary illocutionary forces be detected? What is the point of the abbreviated, "formal" notation? In what way(s) could the model be developed further?

The abbreviated notation for the dimensions of illocutionary force is obviously based on Searle's taxonomy. Though it is a matter of speculation what purpose Searle's notation was originally supposed to serve, its later development (see Searle & Vanderveken's *Foundations of illocutionary logic*, 1984) suggests that he conceived of it as an extension of the notation of formal logic, standing beside modal and epistemic logic, and that he envisaged the development of an algebra of speech acts. I have more modest expectations for my notation. I consider it no more than a distillation of the information that is more comprehensively and reliably encoded in traditional sentences. The abbreviations of the different dimensions of illocutionary force are not expected to stand on their own; they are simply abbreviations.

One downside of a theory of illocutionary force that models the transmission of multiple forces in parallel is that it does not allow for speech acts to be placed in clear-cut categories. By contrast, the CCSARP coding scheme, for example, assumed that requests and apologies were categories with fairly well-defined boundaries, such that it could be established with reasonable certainty that a given utterance was, say, a request. Different ways of signalling a request could then be investigated and compared (see section 2.5, pages 35-8 above). The model presented here suggests an alternate empirical procedure that is in some ways the reverse of that employed in studies using the CCSARP coding scheme or a variation thereof. Instead of investigating the different signal forms taken by a given functional category, it suggests investigating the different functions that can be performed by a given signal form, such as 'sorry.' Determining the illocutionary force of an utterance precisely could not be an exact science: the transmission of illocutionary force, as content, to an observing third party depends after all on another transmission of illocutionary force in which the third party is in

the position of receiver (cf section 3.2.2 pages 42-4 above); and even if it was possible to exhaustively describe the state of the social space immediately before and after the utterance, one could not infer anything about what force had been transmitted because there are ways in which the social space may be affected other than by transmissions of illocutionary force – social space leaks (cf Sapir 1921, 38). For a third party to determine the mix of elementary illocutionary forces present in a particular speech act will always require a certain amount of careful, informed guesswork.[39]

Though this is a way in which the model could be applied, I don't think that applicability in this sense is the only useful outcome of theoretical work. As far as I know, neither Jakobson's theory of functions nor Austin's theory of illocutionary force have been "applied" in any classical sense; yet both must arguably be considered successful theoretical works because they have stimulated thought about a particular topic. In general, there seem to be two ways of defending a particular taxonomy. On the one hand one might defend it on the grounds of its utility. The Dewey decimal system for classifying books is a useful tool for librarians and library users, even if there is no real boundary between, say, the 300s (social sciences) and the 400s (language), and even if the universe of books could easily have been broken down in other ways. Still, not every principle of organisation is equally useful: a system that ordered books according to their weight or volume or the colour of their covers would be less useful than the Dewey system. Clearly, the utility of a classification is not completely independent of the nature of the entities being classified – a classification according to subject makes sense because of the nature of books. Thus, the second way to defend a taxonomy is on the grounds that it, as the saying goes, carves nature at its joints. The Periodic Table of the Elements, for example, organises the chemical elements into columns with similar properties. The justification sought for the taxonomy of illocutionary forces described in this essay is the second kind, though it falls outside the scope of this essay to attempt any kind of rigorous proof of a correspondence between the categories of the model and categories in nature.

[39] This is often not as big a problem as it seems since we have been practicing for almost our whole lives, but in less familiar cultural contexts it can obviously become a serious problem.

The semiotic theories of Charles Sanders Peirce have become influential in some areas of linguistics, and it would be interesting to see if the details of his theories interact in any way with the model presented here. For example, it might be possible to treat the contribution of the hearer to illocutionary force more systematically than I have done here in terms of Peirce's various typologies of *interpretants*. At first glance, π and ρ would seem to depend on *emotional* interpretants, α and κ on *logical* interpretants, and χ and δ on *logical* and *energetic* interpretants (see Rellstab 2008, 324 and references cited there). Another possible avenue of investigation is the precise relationship between the different elementary forces in the present model and Peirce's symbolic, indexical and iconic signs. Should they be added as further dimensions of illocutionary force? I am not certain of the answer to this question, but I think that symbols, indices and icons are different ways of transmitting force rather than different forces. It is possibly relevant that propositions can be expressed indexically (the proverbial smoke expresses the same proposition as 'there is a fire here') or iconically (the no-smoking sign, though not a pure icon, expresses the same proposition as 'thou shalt not smoke here'), and that the rhetorical force in the present model makes reference to *meaning* (i.e. Peirce's *symbols*).

Other possible avenues of exploration include topics mentioned but not covered in this paper. What exactly is the illocutionary force of fiction? I suspect that the crucial element here is the transmission between author and reader, not that between fictional interlocutors. There is also a great deal of fascinating research into humans' pragmatic development, from both an onto- and phylogenetic perspective. Research into the quasi-linguistic abilities of other great apes and prelinguistic infants appears to have moved on in the last twenty years from the question of whether they have a specific computational ability (syntax), to how they use signs to perform social acts (pragmatics). Reviewing the model presented here in the light of this research might suggest a sensible way of ordering the elementary forces and could reveal weaknesses and outright errors.

The most promising future for this work, therefore, is probably not empirical application but further theoretical integration. It is, after all, itself a work of theoretical integration.

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