How to do things with words 1: Classics

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Outline

1. Observation: 'change'. Some classics.

2. Classifications of speech acts

3. How does the act come about?

4. Conclusion

Wittgenstein 1958: *Philosophical Investigations*

- Lists numerous different ways of using language:
  COMMANDS, QUESTIONS, NARRATIONS, SOLVING
  QUIZZES, TELLING JOKES, GREET, PRAY,...

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- Lists numerous different ways of using language: COMMANDS, QUESTIONS, NARRATIONS, SOLVING QUIZZES, TELLING JOKES, GREET, PRAY,. . .
- A language game is a rule-driven activity in some language community, in which each utterance has a conventional function.

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- A language game is a rule-driven activity in some language community, in which each utterance has a conventional function.

- Assumption: There is an unlimited number of language games.

Austin 1962: *How to do things with words*

- besides asserting information about what the world is like, utterances can 'change the world'

  (1)   *I hereby declare you man and wife.*

  (2)   *You are hereby fired.*

  (3)   *I hereby promise to no longer send out greeting cards.*

  (4)   *I hereby accuse the North American empire of being the biggest menance to our planet.* (Hugo Chavez)

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Explicit performatives: contain V that names change in question (1st, present simple)
Implicit performatives: (imperatives, modalized declaratives)

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- *hereby* enforces 'action' (test; Jary 2007), but is not needed

  (5) *I promise to take out the recycling, even though I think you're way better at it.* (chemistry.com)

  (6) *What are you doing? - I am just firing my secretary, it requires a lot of paperwork.*

Constative vs. performative

Austin (1962) tentatively distinguishes:

constative speech acts saying something which can be true or false

performative speech acts doing something (rather than just saying
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Problem: Stating or describing are just particular types of acts.

Saying so can fail to make it so

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     crowned Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mex-
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- locutionary acts without illocutionary acts:
    - speaker/hearer 'of the wrong kind' (cf. (7))
    - circumstances are of the wrong kind
    - just practising for actual performance: *I hereby dismiss you.*
    - testing a microphone
    - play (?)

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- e.g. perloc. acts for *Get me a hammer!*   REQUEST
  - intended perlocutionary act: addressee fetches the hammer
  - further possible perlocutionary acts: addressee fetches the
    first-aid kit

- no corresponding explicit performatives: #*I hereby worry you.*

Felicitous and infelicitous acts: Austin

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      ii. The circumstances and the persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.

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Example

I hereby divorce you.

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Example

??I hereby arrest you.

Example

MARRIAGE (Church of England): *Will you. . .*✗-
a.✗ *Yes.*
b.✗ *I am.*
c.✓ *I will.*

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- Wedding annulments (Britney Spears)
- BETS: unwillingness to exchange goods

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Consequences of violation:

       A/B: Misfires (act not achieved)

         C: Abuses ('some sort of the act')

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propositional content:

<u>time</u>: many speech acts have to be about a proposition that concerns what has happened (e.g. THANKING) or future actions (e.g. ADVISING, REQUESTING)

<u>person</u>: act of the speaker (e.g. PROMISE); act of the addressee (e.g. REQUEST)

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propositional content:

propositional content $\neq$ output of computational semantics, e.g.
Thanks! - 'that you showed me the way'
I promise to come to the party. - 'I will come to the party.'
Don't go there! - 'over there, you might get robbed'

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ASSERTION: S <u>has evidence</u> for truth of propositional content;
but: REQUEST

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preparatory conditions:

(i) evidence w.r.t. status of propositional content
(ii) institutional facts (MARRY: are both parties unmarried,
COMMAND: does S have authority over H)

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sincerity conditions:

speakers have the relevant intentions and feelings (e.g.
ASSERTION: <u>S believes p</u>; QUESTION: S wants the information,
ADVISE: S believes A will benefit H)

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essential

society must have a convention that utterances that meet propositional content rules, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions for an illocutionary act 'count as' achieving that illocutionary act, and thus, as long as all these other rules are met, the speech act comes about

Some Examples (from Levinson, 1983)

Conditions	REQUESTS
prop. content	

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essential	Counts as an attempt to get H to do A	Counts as an undertaking that E is not in H's best interest

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  e.g. why is there no speech act of BOTTING exactly like BET
  but about past propositions with known truth-value?

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- essential rule: ✓: MARRY; does society have a 'rule' for ASSERTING, WARNING?
- coming about of non-defective act hinges on (*i*) existence of convention, and (*ii*) it is recognized that all propositional content, preparatory and sincerity conditions are met

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Austin, Searle: focus on flawless acts vs. rest

- Austin: acts that violate A/B conditions are not achieved, C conditions: some variant of the act is achieved

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e.g. PROMISES (Searle, recently Jary 2007): comes about no matter what audience says; H can only release the speaker from the obligation

(8) A: *I promise to water your flowers.*
     B: *No, thank you.*
     B': *No, don't! They will die, they only need to be watered once a month.*

(9) #*A promised to water B's flowers.*

Acceptance: Connection: rules ⇔ what H thinks of S's doing?

e.g. ADVICE:

prop. content *p* describes a future act *a* of H.

prep. rules S has reason to believe that *a* will benefit H. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do *a* in the normal course of events.

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If all conditions are met...

- ...H has little reason to doubt S's sincerity.
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Searle's rules: well-formedness conditions on the act, or conditions under which an act of intended type finds H's approval?

Do speech acts require approval?

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  (10)   *I hereby bequest you my car.*

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- acts without positive response:

  (11)   Priest: *I hereby baptize this baby 'Bambi'.*
  Audience: ✗ *Ok, agreed.*

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- Searle does not consider acceptance necessary, but ends up ensuring it:

  (12) felicitous act (according to rules) $\leftrightarrow$ no reason to object for H

Acceptance is part of the story

Integrated speech act theory

- successful speech act:
    1. utterance
    2. comprehension of the utterance
    3. update of mutual joint belief between the participants

- issue 3. rests upon approval of the addressee, be it overt/tacit/granted by earlier agreement

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What happened to feeling of immediate effect? (cf. Searle, Jary):
➥ reconsider what exactly H has to accept (- literal meaning of the sentence *I promise to water the flowers.*?)

Outline

Attempt 1: sentential moods $\approx$ speech acts?

- most languages distinguish 3-4 sentential moods or clause types (Sadock & Zwicky 1985)

  (13)   a.   *You are nice to Auntie.*   declarative
         b.   *Are you nice to Auntie?*   interrogative
         c.   *Be nice to Auntie!*   imperative
         d.   *What a nice person you are!*   exclamatives
         e.   ...

  minor moods; cross-linguistic variation (e.g. Korean: *promissive*; Portner 2007)

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- imperfect match in both ways. . .

Sentential moods $\neq\approx$ speech acts

- one sentential mood - many speech acts e.g. declaratives:
  - (14) a. *It is raining.*   ASSERTION
      b. *There is an avalanche approaching.*   WARNING
      c. *I order you to leave the room.*   ORDER
      d. *I bet the students will win the van Benthem cup.*
                                            BET

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  <u>observation:</u> interrogatives vs. declaratives/imperatives
- one speech act - realized by many sentential moods
  e.g. ADVICE:

  (14)   a.   *Enroll for ESSLLI 2010 before the early*
              registration closes.   imperative
         b.   *You should enroll for ESSLLI 2010 before the*
              early registration closes.   declarative
         c.   *The best thing to do is to enroll for ESSLLI 2010*
              before the early registration closes.   declarative
         d.   *Why not enroll for ESSLLI 2010 before the early*
              registration closes?   interrogative (ADVICE?)

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  (14)   a.   *I hereby declare the bridge opened.*
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- infinite amount of speech acts that can get conventionalized
  very limited amount of sentential moods grammaticalized.
- to be explained: impact of sentential mood on speech act $\Rightarrow$
  contribution to truth-functional meaning?

Classification of speech acts as interactions

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- providing information, e.g. ASSERTION. S takes responsibility that the things in the world are like the content of his utterance (Searle: *word-to-world*-fit)

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- Ways to change the future course of things (Searle: *world-to-word*-fit)

  Speaker responsibility OFFER, PROMISE, THREAT,...
  Hearer responsibility COMMANDS, REQUESTS, BEGGING,...
  Bilateral Responsibilities economic transactions; COMMANDS:
  > *Go to bed now!* ≈ *Either you go to bed or I will do something that is unpleasant for you.*
  > (Truckenbrodt 2008: 'or something goes wrong')
  Societal Responsibilities *I hereby fire you* (obligation to work, insurance, dole,...), MARRY

Traditional classification

S can. . .

1. state a fact,

2. commit herself to do sth,

3. press H to do sth,

4. express sth very interactional and complicated,

5. express emotion

▶▶ 5 types of acts.

Austin 1962, Lecture 12

1. verdictives (type ASSERTION)

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I distinguish five general classes: but I am far from equally happy about all of them. They are, however, quite enough to play Old Harry with two fetishes which I admit to an inclination to play Old Harry with, viz. (i) the true/false fetish, (ii) the value/fact fetish. (Austin 1962:151)

Searle, mainly relying on Searle & Vanderveken 1985

'4 directions of fit $\Rightarrow$ 5 illocutionary points' (dics. Sadock 1989)

1 assertives

ASSERT, CLAIM, AFFIRM, STATE, DENY, DISCLAIM, ASSURE, ARGUE, REBUT, INFORM, NOTIFY, REMIND, OBJECT, PREDICT, REPORT, RETRODICT, SUGGEST, INSIST, CONJECTURE, HYPOTHESIZE, GUESS, SWEAR, TESTIFY, ADMIT, CONFESS, ACCUSE, BLAME, CRITICIZE, PRAISE, COMPLAIN, BOAST, LAMENT

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2 commissives

COMMIT, PROMISE, THREATEN, VOW, PLEDGE, SWEAR, ACCEPT, CONSENT, REFUSE, OFFER, BID, ASSURE, GUARANTEE, WARRANT, CONTRACT, COVENANT, BET

illocutionary force: subtype of an illocutionary point

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COMMIT, PROMISE, THREATEN, VOW, PLEDGE, SWEAR, ACCEPT, CONSENT, REFUSE, OFFER, BID, ASSURE, GUARANTEE, WARRANT, CONTRACT, COVENANT, BET

3 directives

DIRECT, REQUEST, ASK.1, ASK.2, URGE, TELL, REQUIRE, DEMAND, COMMAND, ORDER, FORBID, PROHIBIT, ENJOING, PERMIT, SUGGEST, INSIST, WARN, ADVISE, RECOMMEND, BEG, SUPPLICATE, ENTREAT, BESEECH, IMPLORE, PRAY

Searle, mainly relying on Searle & Vanderveken 1985

'4 directions of fit $\Rightarrow$ 5 illocutionary points' (dics. Sadock 1989)

1. assertives

2. commissives

3. directives

4. declaratives

   DECLARE, RESIGN, ADJOURN, APPOINT, NOMINATE, APPROVE,
   CONFIRM, DISAPPROVE, ENDORSE, RENOUNCE, DISCLAIM,
   DENOUNCE, REPUDIATE, BLESS, CURSE, EXCOMMUNICATE,
   CONSECRATE, CHRISTEN, ABBREVIATE, NAME, CALL

illocutionary force: subtype of an illocutionary point

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'4 directions of fit $\Rightarrow$ 5 illocutionary points' (dics. Sadock 1989)

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5. expressives APOLOGIZE, THANK, CONDOLE, CONGRATULATE,
   COMPLAIN, LAMENT, PROTEST, DEPLORE, BOAST, COMPLIMENT,
   PRAISE, WELCOME, GREET

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Searle & Vanderveken 1985: illocutionary forces

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Searle: each force: full specification of at most these 7 parameters; difference in at least one parameter: different force

Comments on S&V's 7 parameters

- individuation of the 7 parameters:
  not motivated by a more general theory of human action or
  communication
  criteria overlap: mode of achievement - degree of strength
  (linguistics vs. non-linguistic?)
  specific + leftover

Comments on S&V's 7 parameters

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  specific + leftover
- left out: both PERMISSION and REQUEST are directives: but one releases H from, one imposes an obligation
- acts that require substantial interaction and agreement of two or more parties are hard to categorize
  first utterance: looks like REQUEST; if the full interaction is a BET (commissive), what are the intermediary parts?

  (15) *I bet that the students will win. - Accepted, I bet 10$ that the teachers will win.*

Bach & Harnish 1979, Ch. 3: Classification

1. Constatives Assertives, predictives, retrodictives, descriptives, ascriptives, informatives, confirmatives, concessives, retractives, assentives, dissentives, disputatives, responsives, suggestives, suppositives

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Searle's declaratives are missing: they go into two extra classes which are 'conventional not communicative'

- **Effectives** linguistic rituals by which certain social facts are established by convention

- **Verdictives** officially acknowledged propositions which from a

Bach & Harnish: Hybrids

interactional acts with mutual commitments; acknowledgments
that 'ride' on other acts

(16)   *I hereby reward you with a golden watch.*
        acknowledgment + commissive (B+H: effective)

(17)   *I hereby sell you my car for 400$.*
        bilateral commitment (B+H: effective)

(18)   *I bet the students will win. - Ok.*
        (B+H: commissives + H commitment; why not effectives?
        (as for economic transactions)

(19)   *I testify that Bob was with me all night.*
        (constative, but puts legal commitment on speaker)

every speech act is one of i-iv/1-5, or consists of acts in class i-iv?
(we go for the latter)

Hybrids and compositional semantics

- two dimensional linguistic meaning:

  (20)   *Regrettably, I lost my keys.*   sorrow + constative

  linguistics: expressive vs. at issue level of meaning (cf. syntax, prosody, semantics)
  e.g. Potts 2005.

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  e.g. Potts 2005.

- <u>sideremark</u>: hybrids are real
  the same utterance can amount to different illocutionary acts on different occasions - but the mixes are observed for one particular speech act (restriction to suitable contexts does not help)

Outline

Utterances amounting to (non-assertive) acts

(21)   *Regine is in Norway.*
           ASSERTION/STATEMENT, little in classical speech act
        theory; Frege; Stalnaker 1978;

explicit performatives:

(22)   *I promise to come to ESSLLI 2010.*

implicit performatives:

(23)   *Come to ESSLLI 2010.*   imperatives
(24)   *You must come to ESSLLI 2010!*   modalized declarative

Views on the coming-about of speech acts

Classical speech act theory focuses on explicit performatives.

(25)   *I promise to come to ESSLLI 2010.*

- Conventions + manifestations of intentions (Searle 1969, Searle 1989)
- Statements + inferred indirect acts (Bach & Harnish 1979)
- establishing of social facts by agreement (Truckenbrodt 2008)

Conventions + manifestations of intentions: Searle 1989

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8. S both said that he bequested me his watch and made it the case that he bequested me his watch. Therefore, he made a true

Conventions to the rescue?

- speech acts (specifically explicit performatives) involve conventions:
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Conventions to the rescue?

- speech acts (specifically explicit performatives) involve conventions:
  about meaning, about proper execution of acts, . . .
- but what is the link between intentions and conventions? (why no conventions for INSULTING, BORING, IMPRESSING,. . .)

Self-verification à la Bach & Harnish 1982

(26)   I hereby congratulate you.

1. S is saying 'I hereby congratulate you.'

Self-verification à la Bach & Harnish 1982

(26)   I hereby congratulate you.

1. S is saying 'I hereby congratulate you.'
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3. If S's statement is true, then S must be congratulating me.

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6. Therefore, in stating that he is congratulating me, S is congratulating me.

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(26)   I hereby insult you.

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2. S is stating that he is insulting me.
3. If S's statement is true, then S must be insulting me.
4. If S is insulting me, then it must be his utterance that constitutes the insult (what else could it be?).
5. Presumably, S is speaking the truth.
6. NO:Therefore, in stating that he is instulting me, S is insulting me.

Self-verification à la Bach & Harnish 1982

(26)   I hereby ___ you.

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5. Presumably, S is speaking the truth.
6. Therefore, in stating that he is instulting me, S is insulting me.

Searle: wrong type of act; Bach & Harnish: ?

Linguistic worry: progressive for B+H

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2. S is stating that he is congratulating me.
3. . . .

Linguistic worry: progressive for B+H

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Why not in the progressive?

Linguistic worry: progressive for B+H

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Why not in the progressive?

Linguistic worry: progressive for B+H

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2. S is stating that he is congratulating me.
3. ...

Why not in the progressive?

(27) a. I am bequesting you my golden watch.
      b. I am welcoming you.

(28) a. Ich bin daran, dir meine goldene Uhr zu vermachen.
      b. Ich begrüße Sie gerade.

Linguistic worry: progressive for Searle

1. S uttered the sentence *I am hereby bequesting you my golden watch.*

2. The literary meaning of the sentence is such that by very utterance, the speaker intends to make it the case that he bequests me his watch.

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7. S bequested me his watch by that very utterance.

8. S both said that he bequested me his watch and made it the case

Linguistic worry: progressive for Searle

1. S uttered the sentence *I am hereby bequesting you my golden watch.*

2. The literary meaning of the sentence is not such that by very utterance, the speaker intends to make it the case that he bequests me his watch.

3. Therefore, in making the utterance S manifested an intention to make it the case by that utterance to bequest me his watch.

4. Therefore, in making the utterance S manifested an intention to BEQUEST me his watch by that very utterance.

5. Bequests are a class of actions where the manifestation of the intention to perform the action is sufficient for its performance, given that certain other conditions are satisfied.

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Outline

1. Observation: 'change'. Some classics.

2. Classifications of speech acts

3. How does the act come about?

4. **Conclusion**

So far

- undefined gap between ⟦*sentence*⟧ and 'propositional content' of the speech act

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- what's happening is affected by. . .
  - the situation: shared beliefs, intentions,. . .
  - the nature of ⟦*sentence*⟧ as contributed by lexical meaning, grammatical aspect (plus/minus progressive), sentential mood, person, . . .

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- recent integrations:
  Truckenbrodt 2008 for (unmodalized) performative declaratives
  Portner 2005, Schwager 2006 for ⟦*imperative*⟧
  Schwager 2006 for modalized performative declaratives