

How to do things with words 3: Integrated speech act theory (Eckardt)

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ESLLI 2009, Bordeaux

- 1 Where we are
- 2 Explicit performatives as propositions about future options
 - General idea
 - Case studies in explicit performatives
- 3 Merits of compositional semantics
 - The progressive puzzle
 - 'Hereby'
- 4 Conclusion

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- from Searle 1995, Truckenbrodt 2008: **institutional/social facts** are constituted by (or: follow from) **agreement**
- reconsider the meaning of the performative sentences
- reconsider under what circumstances it will cause an update of the context set \Rightarrow narrow down the set of possible futures

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- some of Searle's preparatory and propositional content conditions come back as presuppositions induced by the lexical items
- aspectual properties play a role as they contribute to the proposition expressed and indicate a point of view

Social vs. brute facts

- (1)
 - a. *I promise to come to the party on Friday.*
 - b. *The Eiffeltower is in Bordeaux.*

- (2) Truckenbrodt 2008: The content of any performative sentence S can be paraphrased as a fact about mutually joint agreement: there is a p , such that $\llbracket S \rrbracket \Leftrightarrow CB_A(p)$.

Architecture Eckardt: (i) Explicit performatives express propositions that specify possible future courses of events.

(ii) Speech acts are events that (possibly under preconditions) cause changes in what are considered possible future options. Different speech acts: different type of disjunctive options and preconditions.

(iii) A proposition p is a social fact proposition iff with A the p -relevant group, $CB_A(p)$ entails p . (Does not follow from lexical meaning!)

PROMISE, a typical commissive

(3) utterance context c where a to b at t_c in w_c :
I promise you to stop smoking.

- ① b (the hearer) computes propositional meaning
 (future orientation of infinitival: e.g. Portner 1997)

$\llbracket I \text{ promise you to stop smoking} \rrbracket^c =$

$\lambda w. \text{PROMISE}(a, b, p, t_c)(w),$

with $p = \lambda w. \neg \exists t' [t' > t_0 \wedge \text{SMOKE}(a, t')(w)]$

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- presupposition check: lexical (e.g. *stop*); *promise*: **some felicity conditions** for PROMISE
- proposition itself: objectionable? (**content?**)

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- ③ if yes: $CB_{w, \{a, b\}}^{new} = CB_{w, \{a, b\}}^{old} \oplus \lambda w. \text{PROMISE}(a, b, p, t_c)(w)$

The *promise*-proposition

$$(4) \quad \llbracket I \text{ promise you to stop smoking} \rrbracket^c = \\ \lambda w. \text{PROMISE}(a, b, p, t_c)(w), \\ \text{with } p = \lambda w. \neg \exists t' [t' > t_0 \wedge \text{SMOKE}(a, t')(w)]$$

Update by PROMISE constrains what are considered possible future courses of events (simplification: utterance event is missing):

$\lambda w. \text{PROMISE}(a, b, p, t_c)(w)$ describes union of:

- $\{w \mid p(w)\}$
- $\{w \mid \neg p(w) \wedge a \text{ is sanctioned in } w \text{ by } b/\text{the community}\}$
- $\{w \mid \text{'something different' happens in } w\}$

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\Rightarrow eliminates worlds where a goes on smoking, nobody sanctions him, and nothing 'different' happens

PROMISE: class 3 worlds 'something different'

$\{w \mid \text{'something different' happens in } w\}$:

- PROMISES can become irrelevant in case of external disaster
- PROMISES can become impossible to keep (e.g. death, illness, . . .)
- cases, where a **defective PROMISE has come about** (e.g. violation of Searle's preparatory conditions)
e.g. *b* replies: *Thanks, but I don't care at all.*

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Shouldn't Searle's conditions be presuppositions? - Try description test:

(5) *a promised to stop smoking, but b said he didn't care.*

if this is faithful description of the situation, the lexical item *promise* should not introduce a presupposition 'H prefers p'

➡ systematically test the conditions

PROMISE Searle 1969: Prep., Prop. Cont., Sincerity

propositional content condition: future act *A* of *S*

(6) *I promise it had nothing to do with me.*

- proposal: the English verb *promise* is underspecified in how it changes future courses of events (PROMISE, involving a future event) and a strong assertive (SWEAR?, involving a settled proposition, cf. Thomason 1984)
- plus: natural link assertive - commissive: difference can be described in what kind of change the future options undergo; triggered by one and the same lexical item
- compare: THREATS

(7) *If you don't hand in your paper on time I promise you I will give you a failing grade in the course.* Searle 1969

rather: indirect

PROMISE Searle 1969: Prep., Prop. Cont., Sincerity

preparatory conditions:

- (i) H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A,
- (ii) S believes H would prefer his doing A to his not doing A,
- (iii) It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events.

- Searle: if (i, ii) are not met, defective PROMISE (for us: still a PROMISE. This fits above assumption that violations of (i) are 'something different'-worlds).
- (iii): good candidate for a **presupposition**:
proposal: replace by **presupposition** 'S assumes H prefers p to not p' (accommodated easily)

(6) *Hey, I just told you that I did not want you to do that!*

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- (ii): more like a sincerity condition
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PROMISE Searle 1969: Prep., Prop. Cont., Sincerity

sincerity condition:

S intends to do A.

- Searle (1969:62): 'insincere PROMISES are promises nevertheless'
- status of the sincerity condition: maybe covered by **type 2-worlds** ($\neg p + \text{sanctions}$) plus a missing preparatory condition as **presupposition**: 'S can do A.'

Putting together *promise*

(6) $\llbracket \textit{promise} \rrbracket(a, b, p, t_0)(w) =$
 $\lambda w. [p(w) \vee [p(w) \wedge a \text{ is sanctioned in } w]] \vee [\textit{something}$
 $\textit{different happens in } w]],$

and **presupposes**:

'it is not obvious to both a and b that p '

' a assumes b prefers p to $\neg p$ ',

' p is possible'.

missing: (i) *promise* is an eventive predicate; (ii) the split of future options should be caused by some speech event can be added in analogy to *order*

ORDER, a typical directive

$$\llbracket \text{order} \rrbracket(a, b, p, t_0)(w) = \lambda w. \text{ORDER}(a, b, p, t_0)(w)$$

The worlds in $\lambda w. \text{ORDER}(a, b, p, t_0)(w)$ are

- worlds where at some time after t_0 , b brings it about that p is true, or
- worlds where b fails to bring about p in due time, and a or community in general reacts in some way, or
- worlds where b fails to bring about p , because something really different happened

social agreement: interlocutors agree about specific range of future courses of events (more realistically: ranked according to likelihood)

perlocutionary effect: interlocutors will take action corresponding to their beliefs about the future

ORDER, a typical directive

(7) A to B: *I order you to close the window.*

$\lambda w. \text{ORDER}(a, b, p, t_0)(w),$

where $p = \lambda w. \exists t' [t' > t_0 \wedge \text{close-the-window}(b, t')(w)].$

preparatory and propositional content conditions of ORDER and the lexical item *order*:

- complement is about a future action (grammar, control verb; Portner 1997)

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preparatory and propositional content conditions of ORDER and the lexical item *order*:

- complement is about a future action (grammar, control verb; Portner 1997)
- H is able to do A. S believes H is able to do A. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of his own accord. to be tested in detail

Still ORDERS (**class 3 worlds**, authority is not a presupposition)

- (8) private to colonel: *I hereby order you to wash the dishes!*
- (9) a. *The private did not order the colonel to wash the dishes.*
 b. *The private ordered the colonel to wash the dishes, and the colonel imposed a sanction on him.*
- (10) *Opening the window is ordered/requested.*

sideremark: felicitous orders verify deontic modals, infelicitous ones don't

- (11) (8) \nrightarrow *The colonel has to wash the dishes.*

Decomposing after all

lexical entries for performative verbs so far: stative, lack of link between event and futures

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- epistemic uncertainty: either b will make true p , or b will be sanctioned, or something unforeseen happens
- stative proposition - event argument needed anyways (cf. end of draft). e has to warrant link between speech act and split of futures
- rule out: Regine and I are jointly assigning homework. We are jointly responsible for sanctions. Regine puts online that the students are to file before the end of July. At the same time, I say *I order you to file before the end of July.*

Causal link between utterance event and split of future options

- (12) $\lambda w. \exists e [\text{UTT}(a, e, t_0)(w) \wedge \text{CAUSE}(e, \lambda w'. p(w') \vee \neg p(w') \wedge A \text{ is sanctioned in } w' \vee \text{ something unforeseen in } w')]$

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problem: does not rule out direct CAUSATION of one of the disjuncts

- (13) *Did he order you to close the door? - Yes, he shouted out loudly and the door went to pieces.*
- (14) *John shouted at Mary and she died of a heart-attack.*

➡ ultimately: move to metaphysical alternatives of world w (Thomason 1984, Condoravdi 2002)

Self-verification and update à la Eckardt

Why does the update happen (nearly) automatically?

- sanctions are up to S/H (matter of agreement)
- some violations of felicity conditions are covered by the type 3-worlds
- only few felicity conditions are presuppositions (could give rise to rejection)

Self-verification proper

- does update constitute an actual ORDER (a social fact in the world)?

ORDER is a social fact, hence we want that for all w :

$$CB_{A,w}(\text{ORDER}(a, b, p, t_0)(w)) \rightarrow \text{ORDER}(a, b, p, t_0)(w)$$

if S manages to make everyone believe that he's giving an order, then he is giving that order

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- but: nothing ensures that actual world is in one of the three classes. ORDER is any speech act that causes the described split in what the participants consider to be possible future courses of events. But the lexical semantics of *order* is different and could fail to describe events that pass as ORDERS. (- only, that speakers may never be able to tell.)

Schwager: Eckardt needs to add a meaning postulate to ensure that ORDER has the social fact property.

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Progressives don't perform

- (15) a. *I hereby declare the meeting closed.*
 b. *I am (#hereby) declaring the meeting closed.*
- (16) a. *I hereby fire you from the company.*
 b. *I am (#hereby) firing you from the company.*
- (17) a. *Ich eröffne hiermit das Meeting.* German
 b. *Ich **bin** (#hiermit) das Meeting **am** Eröffnen.*
 c. *Ich eröffne (#hiermit) **gerade** das Meeting.*

But: English exceptions (Google search, cf. draft Eckardt, p. 25)

- (18) *I **am hereby promising** my friends here that I will not eat chips at the Mexican restaurant today.*
- (19) *This is America and I **will hereby** offer to smooch whosoever needs smooching out front of whatever tattoo parlor they want.*

Problem for accounts that work via underlying statements

(20) *I hereby congratulate you./I am hereby congratulating you.*

Searle (1989): [1] S uttered the sentence *I hereby congratulate you./I am hereby congratulating you.*

[2] The literary meaning of the sentence is such that by very utterance, the speaker intends to make it the case that he congratulates me. [3] Therefore, in making the utterance S manifested an intention to make it the case by that utterance he congratulates me. [4] Therefore, in making the utterance S manifested an intention to congratulate me his watch by that very utterance.

[5] Congratulations 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. [6] We assume that those other conditions are satisfied. [7] S congratulates me his watch by that very utterance. [8] S both said that he congratulated me and made it the case that he congratulated me. Therefore, he made a true statement.

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Bach & Harnish (1978):

- 1 S is saying 'I hereby congratulate you.'
- 2 S is stating that he is congratulating me.
- 3 If S's statement is true, then S must be congratulating me.
- 4 If S is congratulating me, then it must be his utterance that constitutes the congratulation (what else could it be?).
- 5 Presumably, S is speaking the truth.
- 6 Therefore, in stating that he is congratulating me, S is congratulating me.

➡ progressive should work even better.

Event argument, tense, and aspect

add a classical Reichenbachian analysis of simple and progressive tense:

- R : indexical reference time of utterance u
- S : speech time
- $\tau(e)$: running time of event e

Tenses and aspects:

- present tense: $R = S$
- simple aspect: $\tau(e) \subseteq R$
- progressive aspect: $R \subset \tau(e)$

Distinguishing simple and progressive for performatives

$$(21) \quad \llbracket I \text{ order you to give me 1\$} \rrbracket = \\ \lambda w. \exists e [ORDER(S, H, p, e)(w) \wedge R = S \wedge \tau(e) \subseteq R]$$

- states existence of an ordering event
- utterance counts as an order only if the utterance succeeds in successfully issuing an order
- under which circumstances can an utterance event instantiate its own existential content?

Reference time and performativity

- (i) The semantics of sentence aspect indicates the intention of S.
- (ii) Progressive aspect indicates the speaker's intention to describe something.
- (iii) Intention to describe an act is incompatible with intention to perform an act.

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(22) Implementation of self-referentiality (SR)

Let u be an utterance with duration $\tau(u)$. Being an utterance, u has a reference time R_u . For any social agreement property ϕ : $\tau(u) \not\subset R_u \rightarrow \neg\phi(u)$.

- (23) ϕ is a social agreement property (of events) \Leftrightarrow
 $CB_A(\phi)$ entails ϕ .

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By (SR), an utterance in the progressive cannot count as an event of social agreement.

Proof (indirect) for particular social agreement property $\text{ORDER}(a, b, p)$:

$$(23) \quad \lambda w. [\exists e[\text{ORDER}(a, b, p, e)(w) \wedge R_u = S \wedge R_u \subset \tau(e)]]$$

Assume, there is a w' where the actual utterance u makes the existential statement true (replace: $[e/u]$).

$$(24) \quad [\text{ORDER}(a, b, p, u)(w') \wedge R_u = S \wedge \underline{R_u \subset \tau(u)}]$$

But then, $\tau(u) \not\subset R_u$. ORDER is an agreement property. Hence, $\neg\text{ORDER}(a, b, p, u)(w')$. So, this is a contraction and there is no such w' . *q.e.d.*

Reference time and performativity

By (SR), an utterance in the progressive cannot count as an event of social agreement.

side-remark: An event $e \neq u$ can instantiate the existential quantification and make the progressive sentence true.

First stabs at *hereby*

Truckenbrodt (2008:17-18) sketches an analysis for *hereby*, with 'CAUSE by making this very utterance'. Problem with Austin's example (baptizing the ship).

- (22) *John fixed the car by replacing the carburetor.*
 modify $\lambda e.\text{fix-the-car}(j, e)(w)$ with
 $\lambda e.$ [replacing the carburetor is the causally important part
 of e .]
- (23) $\llbracket \textit{hereby} \rrbracket = \lambda e.$ [the utterance event u in c is a/the causally
 efficient part of e .]

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To be worked out with ontology of events (e.g. Eckardt 1998); analysis of CAUSE (Lewis 1973, Dowty 1979, Collins, Hall & Paul 2004).

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➡ Integrated speech act theory provides us with discourse referents for events that interact according to compositional semantics.

- (24) *Careful, the gun is (*hereby) loaded.*
I (hereby) warn you that the gun is loaded. Tru., his
 (27/8)

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Conclusion

- integrated speech act theory can account for automatic updates and rejections
- it accounts naturally for the behavior of lexical items
- as it stands (version Eckardt draft), self-verification is not ensured
- integrated speech act theory can deal quite well with aspect and *hereby*