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Locutionary, Illocutionary, Perlocutionary

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Abstract

J. L. Austin's three-prong distinction between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts is discussed in terms of D. Davidson's theory of action. Perlocutionary acts refer to the relation between the utterance and its causal effects on the addressee. In contrast, illocutionary and locutionary acts are alternative descriptions of the utterance. The possibility of conceiving of locutionary acts as expressing propositions under a certain mode of presentation is discussed. Different ways to define illocutionary acts without encroaching on the locutionary or perlocutionary territory are considered.

> . . . he oftener commands us than endeavors to persuade.
>
> *Moby Dick*, H. Melville

1. *Introduction*

Austin's (1975) notions of *perlocutionary acts*, *illocutionary acts*, and – perhaps to a lesser extent – *locutionary acts* belong to the most ubiquitous terms of art in pragmatics. Yet, the locutionary/illocutionary/perlocutionary distinction can be easily blurred with all the insidious theoretical consequences such confusions entail. In this article, I shall not attempt an historical exegesis; rather, I shall try to show how these distinctions can be thought of today, and why they remain important for linguistic theorising.

Austin's work is also the beginning of the contemporary study of the illocutionary status of utterances. But, of course, the topic of illocutionary acts is vast and deserves at least one essay on its own, and my aim here is not to review different ways these can be defined. I shall focus instead on the question how the locutionary, the illocutionary and the perlocutionary aspects of language use should be distinguished, and why these boundaries really matter. An intuitive understanding of what an illocutionary act (or a speech act) is should suffice to kick off. Very roughly, illocutionary acts are acts we do by uttering sentences; below we shall attempt to see what this means more precisely. Assertions, guesses, orders, requests, suggestions, questions, threats, promises, offers, baptisms, bids, etc. are among many examples of illocutionary acts.

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In order to understand the subject matter of this essay properly, it is also important to get clear about the theoretical commitments the locutionary/illocutionary/perlocutionary trichotomy calls for from the standpoint of the philosophy of action. This is the aim of the next section where it is argued that Davidson's (2001) theory of action provides the right sort of background. Section 3 explores the idea that perlocutionary acts should be seen as descriptions of the link between the utterance and some of its causal effects. Section 4 is an attempt to shed some light on the notion of the locutionary act. In Section 5, I shall present different directions along which the illocutionary level of meaning could be analysed without encroaching upon the locutionary or the perlocutionary territory.

2. Austin's Levels of Meaning and Davidson's Philosophy of Action

As emphasised recently by Sbisà (2007), Austin's distinctions can profitably be viewed as an analysis of levels of meaning in terms of the philosophy of action. More precisely, there is a strong, but seldom appreciated, connection between Austin's views on language use and Davidson's (2001) theory of action.[1] Davidson's ontology includes, in addition to individuals and objects, events, which are conceived of as unrepeatable particulars. The variables assigned to events act as arguments for action predicates. Crucially, action predicates come in two different ways.

First, a single event can receive several alternative descriptions; in such cases, the same variable *e* stands as an argument for several different predicates. The stock example here is voting by a show of hands. At a basic, 'bodily' level, the corresponding event can be described as raising one's hand; the logical form would be something like (1).

(1) *Raise-hand*(x, e)

In (1) x stands for the agent, and e for the event.[2] But the same event e can also be described as voting: the logical form being now (2).

(2) *Vote*(x, e)

Note that the availability of the description in (2) depends on institutional or conventional facts; if I raise my arm in the middle of a supermarket, most probably (2) will not be an accurate description of what happens – I do raise my arm, but I do not vote. We can say that, in certain circumstances, I can vote by way of raising my arm, that is by way of provoking the event e (see Searle 2001: 51–2).

Second, some action predicates actually describe two causally linked events. Consider the murder of Archduke Ferdinand (AF) by Gavrilo Princip (GP). Gavrilo Princip's action can be described as (3), and the death of the Archduke as (4).

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(3) *Pull the trigger*(GP, *e*)
(4) *Die*(AF, *e'*)

Yet, there is no single event corresponding to the murder of the Archduke; the underlying logical form of *Gavrilo Princip killed the Archduke* is rather something along the lines of (5).

(5) *Pulling the trigger*(GP, *e*) $\wedge$ *Die*(AF, *e'*) $\wedge$ *Cause*(*e*, *e'*)
(see Davidson 2001: 299–301).

Unlike voting by show of hands, the performance of an action like the murder of Archduke Ferdinand does not depend on some institutional or conventional factors; what is required, instead, is that a certain causal relation obtains. We can thus say that Gavrilo Princip killed the Archduke by means of pulling the trigger (Searle 2001: 51–2).

Under a Davidsonian view, the accuracy of describing an utterance as a locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act depends on the availability of a certain description either of this utterance or of the causal link between the utterance and some of its causal effects. In the next section, we shall see that the opposition between doing something by way of an utterance and doing something by means of an utterance helps us to distinguish perlocutionary acts from locutionary and illocutionary acts.[3]

3. Perlocutionary Acts and Causal Effects

According to Austin (1975: 107), 'perlocutionary act[s] always include some consequences'; perlocutionary acts are 'what we bring about or achieve by saying something' (Austin 1975: 109). In the terms distinguished above, perlocutionary acts should thus be understood as causal relations between two events, the cause being the production of an utterance by the speaker.

It is worth emphasising from the outset that an utterance can have perlocutionary, namely, causal, effects independently of its illocutionary force. For instance, the production of some sounds – a *phonetic act* (Austin 1975: 92) – can have perlocutionary effects independently of its linguistic meaning, its locutionary status and its illocutionary force (Davis 1979). For instance, even without understanding what I said, you can understand, by the tone of my voice, that I am angry; the way I pronounce certain sounds can trigger in you the belief that I am not a native speaker of English etc.

In some circumstances, the phonetic act may have a structure that conforms to a natural language; in such a case, by way of producing a phonetic act, the speaker will also perform what Austin (1975: 92–3) calls a *phatic act*. It is easy enough to imagine a context where an utterance has

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causal effects because of its linguistic structure, that is, qua a phatic act. For instance, during World War II, there were plenty of circumstances where (over)hearing a sentence in German caused fear independently of what was said; being frightened was, in such cases, a perlocutionary effect.

An utterance can also have causal effects because of the propositional content it conveys. As will be clear from the next section, this means that it can have perlocutionary effects because of its locutionary status. For instance, suppose you blush, or feel embarrassed every time Mary is mentioned; any utterance whose propositional content you grasp and which includes Mary (whatever the way she's being referred to) would then produce this perlocutionary effect on you independently of its illocutionary force.

And finally, an utterance can trigger causal effects because of its illocutionary force:

> You may, for example, deter me [. . .] from doing something by informing me, perhaps guilelessly yet opportunely, what the consequences of doing it would in fact be; [. . .] you may convince me [. . .] that she is an adulteress by asking her whether it was not her handkerchief which was in *X*'s bedroom, or by stating it was hers. (Austin 1975: 111)

To be sure, the speaker does not necessarily intend to produce every perlocutionary effect her utterance turns out to have. A given utterance has infinitely many potential effects on the addressee (Austin 1975: 106). Following Bach and Harnish (1979: 16–17), we can assume that the effects of perlocutionary intentions form a subset of all perlocutionary effects. In other words, whether a perlocutionary effect is intentional or not has no bearing on the speaker's performance of the corresponding perlocutionary act.

The important point is that as long as an event is caused by an utterance, it can be described as a perlocutionary effect, and the causal relation as a perlocutionary act (see Dominicy 2008). However, this claim must be qualified if we wish to exclude from the class of perlocutionary effects some purely physical consequences of the utterance, for instance, the production of a stream of air; the relevant effects must then be restricted to human persons. Arguably, perlocutionary effects should also be restricted to the effects that obtain because the affected person perceives the utterance as a phonetic, phatic, locutionary and/or illocutionary act; imagine that, in producing an utterance, I frighten a blind and deaf person because she perceives a stream of air on her face – one is reluctant to classify such an effect as a perlocutionary effect of my utterance (Davis 1979). And even then, the intuitions can become fuzzy when it comes to the admissibility of certain causal relations into the class of the perlocutionary acts performed by means of the utterance. For instance, I can wake you up just by shouting *Don't sleep* or by clapping my hands. Should we classify the former, but not the latter case as a perlocutionary act (see Sadock 1974: 153; Bach and Harnish 1979: 153; Gu 1993)?

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Gu (1993) objects to the causal analysis of perlocutionary acts on the following grounds. Some of the perlocutionary effects are themselves actions of the hearer's. For instance, by telling you that you should leave room, I persuade you to leave the room. Now, persuading you to leave the room is clearly a perlocutionary act; by producing a certain illocutionary act – telling you to leave the room I provoke a certain response – you leave the room. But, objects Gu, as this response is an action of yours, how can I, qua the speaker, claim agency for persuading you to leave the room? Recall that perlocutionary acts are performed by means of producing a certain utterance. In other words, there must be a causal relation between two events. But nothing hinges on whether the second event can be described as an action of the hearer's or not. Gu's mistake is a general one: when two events are causally related, the availability of a single actional description depends on the possibility to describe the first event as an action, not on the impossibility of providing an actional description of the second one. Gavrilo Princip's pulling the trigger caused World War I; this is so because we can say that Gavrilo Princip's bodily movement provoked World War I – and the events constituting a war are actions.

To sum up, there are two difficulties with the notion of perlocutionary acts; an apparent one and a real one. The first is that perlocutionary acts seem to be causal effects of other actions – phonetic, phatic, locutionary or illocutionary acts. In order to avoid the confusion here, it is sufficient to endorse the Davidsonian view that perlocutionary acts, as many other action predicates, describe a causal relation between events and not a relation between their actional descriptions (see Dominicy 2008). The second difficulty is to restrict the perlocutionary acts to a relevant class of effects.

Perlocutionary acts are the only acts that the speaker performs by means of her utterance. We have already seen that, in some contexts, a phonetic act can be a way to produce a phatic act. In the next section, we shall see how a phatic act can, in turn, constitute a locutionary act.

4. From Phatic to Locutionary Acts

As a phatic act, the utterance is still deprived of any speaker meaning – a standard example of a phatic act is the recitation of some sentences in a foreign language – but has a syntactic structure, whose components can be assigned semantic values. According to one dominant view, such an interpretation does not necessarily deliver a complete proposition (most notably Recanati 1989, 2004; Bach 1994; Carston 2002; Soames 2005). For instance, in the absence of a contextually supplied class of comparison, it is impossible to assign truth-conditions to (6), that is, to determine the proposition expressed – we cannot determine the proposition expressed by (6) unless we know, from the context, whether John is tall for an 8-year-old boy, for a basket-ball player, for an American, etc.

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(6) John is tall.

But there is a second position, dubbed 'semantic minimalism', which maintains that the compositional assignment of semantic values to the syntactic form suffices to yield the propositional content of any well-formed sentence (Soames 2002; Cappelen and Lepore 2005). For instance, the proposition expressed by (6) would be that Johnny is tall, period, no matter of what this means exactly (for critical discussions, see, for example, Bach 2006; Montminy 2006; MacFarlane 2007; Kissine 2007b; Recanati 2007). While the debate is still raging, which approach proves ultimately to be successful matters little for our purpose. What we are concerned with in this section is the level of meaning that constitutes illocutionary acts. Now, the crux of the second, minimalist position is that, while the 'semantic' content of (6) is that John is tall, period, the content of any speech act performed by (6) is that John is tall with respect to a contextually determined class (and standard) of comparison. So, everyone agrees that the content of illocutionary acts is not determined by a blind assignment of semantic values to the syntactic form.

Austin notes that producing a phatic act, which is a pheme, is

> generally to perform the act of using that pheme or its constituents with a certain more or less definite 'sense' and a more or less definite 'reference' (which together are equivalent to 'meaning'). This act we may call a 'rhetic' act, and the utterance which it is the act of uttering a 'rheme'. (Austin 1975: 93)

The first conclusion to be drawn from this quotation is that rhetic acts are performed by way of phatic acts. Second, the interpretation of Austin's talk about 'a certain more or less definite "sense" and a more or less definite "reference"' that is most in tune with his theory of truth (Austin 1950; 1975: 140–7) is that the rheme emerges from the association between the pheme and a certain situation of the world (Forguson 1973; Recanati 1987: 238–41). The content conveyed by the rhetic act results from the contextual interpretation of sentence-meaning:

> it is important to remember that the same pheme [. . .] may be used on different occasions of utterance with a different sense or reference and so be a different rheme. (Austin 1975: 97–8)

A natural reading of Austin's position seems to be that a rhetic act is performed by way of a phatic act when the context allows the assignment of a propositional content to the pheme. (But see Sbisà 2006 who argues that the introduction of propositions in Speech Act Theory is incompatible with Austin's own views.)

Austin (1975: 96–7) also claims that, by making an indirect report of the utterance of a declarative sentence, of the form 'S said that *p*', one transmits the rhetic act S performed by way of her utterance. But, in the following pages, he is worried by the fact that it is not always possible to make indirect reports without using an illocutionary verb:

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> We cannot, however, always use 'said that' easily: we would say 'told to', 'advise to', &c., if [S] used the imperative mood, or such equivalent phrases as 'said I was to', 'said I should', &c. (Austin 1975: 97)

It is no coincidence that the notion of a locutionary act is defined on the next page as what constitutes the illocutionary act:

> To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform an *illocutionary act* . . . (Austin 1975: 98)

Strawson (1973) suggests that while the rhetic act constitutes a potential assertive illocutionary act, the locutionary act constitutes a potential non-assertive illocutionary act. Note that Strawson himself does not use the terms 'rhetic' and 'locutionary' interchangeably due to his Fregean reluctance to attribute a truth-conditional, propositional content to non-indicative sentences. Thus, according to him, while the rhemes, constituting assertive speech acts, are propositions, the locutionary acts which constitute directive speech acts, like orders and requests, are what he calls without further details, 'imperatives'. Not that such a choice is inevitable; one can think of the imperative mood as encoding a certain attitude towards a propositional content (Wilson and Sperber 1988; Clark 1993).

Thinking of locutionary acts as propositions being under the scope of an attitude or a mode of presentation allows an interesting parallel with Speech Act Theory, developed by Searle (1969) and formalised by Searle and Vanderveken (1985; Vanderveken 1990, 1991). The main tenet of Speech Act Theory is that any propositional content p can be combined with any illocutionary force F. We can thus say that the propositional content of an illocutionary act is the one of the corresponding locutionary act. Now, for reasons that cannot be assessed within the scope of this essay, Searle (1968) discards the notion of locutionary acts. However, Searle and Vanderveken (1985: 32–5; Vanderveken 1990: 159) state that any illocutionary act $F(p)$ commits the speaker to the expression of the mental state the speaker should entertain if her illocutionary act is sincere; if $F(p)$ is an assertion, then the speaker expresses the belief that p; if $F(p)$ is an order, then the speaker expresses the desire that p; if $F(p)$ is a promise, then the speaker expresses the intention to p. Since mental states can be themselves thought of as propositional contents under the scope of a psychological mode of presentation (Searle 1983; for a discussion, see Kissine 2007a), Searle and Vanderveken's view amounts to saying that an illocutionary act is constituted by – performed by way of – the expression of a proposition under a certain mode of presentation.

Wilson and Sperber (1988) point out that the utterance of some grammatically imperative sentences, like (7) and (8), does not correspond to the performance of a directive speech act (i.e. an order, a request, a command, etc.):

(7) [Mary visiting Peter at the hospital:]
Get well soon!

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(8) [Mary looking by the window:]
Please, don't rain!

Dominicy and Franken (2002) claim that Speech Act Theory in fact predicts that (7) and (8) are mere expressions of volitive states. Every directive speech act commits the speaker to the expression of the corresponding desire. As world-knowledge prevents us from interpreting (7) and (8) as directive speech acts, we can resort to the weaker reading, that is, to the expression of a desire (or of a wish). Note that, in Austin's terms, every illocutionary act is a locutionary act, but the converse is not true. It is an interesting theoretical possibility that in (7) and (8) only a locutionary act has been performed.

To be sure, at least two problems have to be solved before assimilating locutionary acts to the expression of mental states. First, the mental states expressed must be those with the content corresponding to the contextual interpretation of the sentence meaning. Second, and more importantly, the notion of expression thus used must allow the possibility that the speaker expresses (represents) a mental state without committing herself to entertaining this mental state (see also Davis 2003: 46). This is so because the main reason for singling out a locutionary level is the existence of ironical utterances (Bach 1994, 2005; Recanati 1987: 228–45). Imagine that I utter 'This paper is excellent' ironically; clearly, no literal assertion or speech act has been performed. Yet, there is a sense according to which I said that this paper is excellent; simply, I did not mean it.[4] We can thus describe my utterance as a locutionary act deprived of any direct and literal illocutionary force.

It is worth mentioning that the account of locutionary acts sketched here is not universally accepted. Bach (1994, 2005; also Bach and Harnish 1979) claims that the locutionary level of meaning corresponds to the assignment of semantic values to the syntactic form, that is, to the pheme. Crucially, thus conceived the locutionary act does not necessarily correspond to a proposition, and, allowances made for indexicals, does not depend on the context. Not only does such a conception contrast with Austin's view, it is also, to my mind, highly counter-intuitive (but see Terkourafi forthcoming). In order to understand that in saying that p the speaker has been ironical, the hearer must infer that the speaker could not have seriously and literally asserted that p; hence, that the speaker has expressed the proposition p – that she performed the locutionary act with the content p – is a necessary premise to the derivation of the ironical meaning. But in Bach's view, what the speaker says when she is ironical is not necessarily a proposition.

Note also that if it is true that locutionary acts express contextually determined propositions, semantic minimalists should state their position more carefully. It is not the case that if a propositional content is contextually determined, then this propositional content is the content of an illocutionary

act. Some locutionary acts express such context dependant propositions, even though they do not constitute any illocutionary act.

5. Illocutionary Forces

Defining illocutionary forces is a difficult task, and previous sections give a hint why. On the one hand, qua an illocutionary act an utterance is something more that a sentence endowed with a propositional content (and a certain mode of presentation and/or an illocutionary potential), but, on the other hand, illocutionary acts are not perlocutions.

Austin famously attempted to draw the perlocutions/illocutions divide with the help of conventionality; while the effects of perlocutionary acts belong to the realm of physical causation, the effect that endows an utterance with its illocutionary force – the uptake – is only conventional (for a discussion, see Sbisà 2007). This appeal to conventions was criticised by Strawson (1964) on the grounds that while the successful performance of illocutionary acts such as bidding five no trumps or baptising depends on the interlocutor's awareness of certain conventions being in force, in order to recognise that an utterance is, for instance, a warning, one does not need any convention. Following Strawson's lead, illocutionary acts are often divided into institutional illocutionary acts whose study requires to take into account intra-cultural conventions and non-institutional illocutionary acts whose analysis can be laid out in general, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural terms.[5]

According to Strawson (1964), illocutionary forces belonging to the second, non-institutional category must be analysed in Grice's (1957) terms. A speaker performed an illocutionary act, if, and only if,

- the speaker has the intention (i_1) to produce a certain effect on the addressee;
- the speaker has the intention (i_2) that the addressee recognises i_1;
- the speaker has the intention (i_3) that the recognition of i_2 causes the satisfaction of i_1; and
- the speaker has the intention (i_4) that the addressee recognises i_3.

In short, a locutionary act would constitute an illocutionary act if, and only if, from its performance, the addressee can infer that the speaker had complex intentions of the kind of i_1–i_4. Bach and Harnish (1979) provided a systematic account of speech act interpretation in these inferential terms.

The first difficulty faced by such Gricean approaches is an empirical one. Analysing the attribution of illocutionary forces in Gricean terms entails that the mastery of the illocutionary dimension of language use requires the cognitive ability to attribute second-order and fourth-order intentions. Take i_1; it is an intention to produce an effect of the hearer's mind – it is an intention to cause a belief or a desire. To be able to

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attribute i_1, one has to be able to attribute a mental state whose content includes another mental state. Even more difficult; take the intention i_2. Here the hearer must attribute to the speaker the intention that the hearer recognises that the speaker has the intention to produce a certain effect in the hearer's mind. To attribute an intention like i_2, one must be able to attribute mental states about mental states about mental states. Now, it has been experimentally established that children below the age of 7 are unable to attribute second-order beliefs and intentions (Perner and Winner 1985; Leekam and Prior 1994). The problem is that, in contrast, children below 3 attribute illocutionary forces to utterances on contextual grounds (Reeder 1978; Shatz 1978), and adapt their illocutionary acts to the addressee (Read and Cherry 1978; O'Neill 1996). These data indicate that children below 3 master the illocutionary dimension of the language use in spite of being unable to attribute second-, let alone fourth-, order intentions.

The second difficulty faced by Gricean's accounts of illocutionary forces is that they include reference to causal, namely, perlocutionary effects (such 'perlocutionary' definitions can be found in Schiffer 1972; Bach and Harnish 1979). An illocutionary act by itself can be an effective means to achieve some perlocutionary intention: for instance, making an order is a means to make A satisfy S's desire and asserting that *p* is a means to make A believe that *p*. However, as Recanati (1987: 179) points out, we can communicate without having perlocutionary intentions (see also Alston 2000: 31; Green 2003). Imagine, for instance, that a boss knows that her employee usually does not obey her orders. Imagine that the boss needs the employee to write a letter and, that, at the same time, she intends to use the fact that the employee will not write this letter as a reason for firing her. In this example, the boss has an illocutionary intention to perform successfully (and sincerely) the order to write the letter. Yet, she has no perlocutionary intention that this order produces a causal effect on the employee (Kissine forthcoming).

One way to avoid the confusion between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts is to get back to conventions. Searle (1969; also Alston 2000) thus claims that the literal, that is, conventional, meaning of a sentence-type is the direct and literal illocutionary act to which the utterance of this sentence corresponds. In other words, to know which illocutionary act has been performed is simply to know the linguistic meaning. There are two questionable consequences to this view, which I shall only mention. First, one has to endorse Searle's Expressibility Principle, or same variant of it, which states that every illocutionary act can be expressed literally. Because Searle's position is also that any illocutionary act can take any proposition as content, it follows that every proposition can be expressed literally. The philosophical problems surrounding such a claim are considerable (see Recanati 1987: 219–24, 2001, 2003, 2004: 83–6; Carston 1988, 2002: 30–42, 64–70). Second, because, according to Searle, the

literal meaning of a sentence is the illocutionary act performed by way of uttering this sentence, and that this literal meaning is also the linguistic meaning of the sentence, we have to assume (i) that the utterance of a sentence is always, at the literal level, the performance of an illocutionary act (even if the utterance is ironical), (ii) that the literal meaning of any sentence (token) is independent from the context (see Recanati 2003).

Finally, it is important to point out that the notion of convention used by Searle is perhaps too rigid. According to Searle (1969), conventions conform to the formula *In C, X counts as Y*. With illocutionary forces, the situation would be the following. Producing certain sounds (*X*) in a context where these sounds correspond to the language L both interlocutors use (*C*) counts, by virtue of the conventions governing the use of L, as a certain illocutionary act (*Y*). Such a view implies that recognising a sequence of sounds as belonging to a certain language automatically endows this sequence with an illocutionary force. We have already seen in the former section that if the locutionary/illocutionary distinction is justified, it is precisely because some of our utterances have no illocutionary force. Besides, illocutionary forces are cancellable. Take (9) for instance.

(9) I'll come to your party.

In most circumstances, (9) will be interpreted as a promise, that is, as committing the speaker to come to the hearer's party. Such a speech act does not seem indirect or non-literal. Yet, this promissory or commissive force does not belong to the conventional meaning of (9). For instance, it can clearly be cancelled (for a discussion, see Kissine 2008).

(10) I'll come to your party. I can't promise though.

Conventions, and more especially conventions that govern our use of language, can be thought of in more flexible terms. A convention is just a pattern of activity that keeps being reproduced, because it triggers certain effects often enough for this reproduction to take place (see Millikan 2005: especially Chapter 8). In such terms, saying that a certain sentence has conventionally a certain illocutionary force does not mean that it cannot be used without this force, but that its having this illocutionary force has been robust enough to ensure that speakers continue to use it. To be sure, it remains to be shown how conventionally having an illocutionary force can be analysed without assimilating this conventional function to the production of certain perlocutionary effects. One such possibility is to define illocutionary forces in terms of the inferential potential the utterance acquires with respect to the common ground, that is, to shift the focus of attention from utterance effects to utterance status (Kissine forthcoming).

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Short Biography

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Notes

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[1] As an anonymous reviewer has emphasised, Davidson's views on action should not be ascribed to Austin.
[2] Here and below, I assume that variables are bound or have been assigned a value.
[3] For critical discussions of Austin's own suggestions about the illocutionary/perlocutionary boundary, see Davis (1979), Hornsby (1994) and Dominicy (2008).
[4] A well-known problematic feature of Grice's (1975) analysis of irony is that it entails that an ironical speaker does not say anything, but only makes as if she was saying something (for a discussion, see Neale 1992; Carston 2002: 114–16).
[5] Note, however, that the boundary is not as self-evident as it might seem; for a discussion of promises in this perspective, see Kissine (2008).

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