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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Are explicit performatives assertions?

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Abstract This paper contributes to the study of explicit performative utterances in the following ways. First, it presents arguments that support Austin's view that these utterances are not assertions. In doing so, it offers an original explanation of why they cannot be true or false. Second, it puts forward a new analysis of explicit performatives as cases of showing which act one is performing, rather than of instances of asserting or declaring that one is performing a particular act. Finally, it develops a new account of the role of the performative prefix in signalling performative intentions that shows how the prefix can play a special role in the interpretation of performative utterances.

Keywords Explicit performative utterances · Showing · Pragmatics

1 Introduction

Explicit performative utterances are made of the same stuff as non-performatives: the same sentence can be used, for example, both to assert that a promise

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is made and to make a promise. In other words, (1) could be taken as a promise or, perhaps if uttered in response to (2), as an assertion:

(1) I promise never to drink again

(2) What do you do when you wake up with a terrible hangover?

The ambiguity can, of course, be removed by adding 'hereby', which has the effect of forcing a performative interpretation:

(3) I hereby promise never to drink again

Nevertheless, the similarity in form between assertions and explicit performatives has led a number of authors to argue that the best way to analyse the latter is as a species of the former. Such authors argue that, despite appearances to the contrary, the speaker who utters (1) as an assertion in response to (2) and the speaker who utters (1) (or even (3)) to make a promise both assert that they promise never to drink again. The difference is, they argue, that in the latter case, the speaker does something else too: she promises never to drink again. This additional act has been characterised as an indirect one parasitic on the direct act of asserting (see Bach and Harnish 1979: ch. 10, 1992), despite Austin's (1962/1975) insistence that explicit performatives are not statements.

In this paper, I examine the grounds for this claim and argue that, beyond identity of linguistic form, there is very little evidence that an assertion is being made in the performative case. I then suggest that, rather than being viewed as assertions, explicit performatives are best analysed as acts of showing. This view is not wholly novel, having been suggested also by Green (2005). However, the account developed here differs from Green's in two ways: first, it does not rest on performatives being simultaneously acts of showing and asserting; second, the claim is that speakers are showing what they are doing (and thereby doing it), whereas Green sees the speaker of an explicit performative as showing the sort of commitment she is undertaking. In addition, a new argument for why explicit performatives are best analysed in this way is developed. This centres on the observation that while the content of a felicitous assertion will fail to modify the common ground if the hearer rejects it, the content of a felicitous explicit performative unavoidably becomes part of the common ground.

Accounts which treat explicit performatives as indirect speech acts have the advantage of not having to explain the special role of the so-called 'performative prefix' (i.e. the 'I promise' in (1)) in indicating illocutionary force. According to such explanations, the prefix makes the same contribution to interpretation as it would in a straightforward assertion. It is a challenge for any account which denies that explicit performatives are derived indirectly from assertions to explain how, and under what conditions, the performative prefix indicates performative force, and to do so without making the implausible move of positing that it has a different semantics in these cases. This challenge is taken up in Sect. 6 of this paper, where an account relying on

the character/content distinction of 'I' is presented. Finally, the performative-as-showing account presented here is compared with other accounts that also deny that explicit performatives are fundamentally assertoric in nature: Searle (1989) and Recanati (1987).

2 Characterising explicit performatives

The term 'performative' originates, of course, from Austin's (1962/1975, 1979) work, which was directed at emphasising the fact that language can be used to do much more than describe the world. Explicit performative utterances are characterised by the fact that the main verb describes the act being performed by the utterance. Thus (1) spoken to make a promise both constitutes the act and explicitly names the act being performed, as does (3). Explicit performatives can be contrasted with what are sometimes called 'implicit performatives', which are cases in which the act performed by the utterance is not named. Thus (4) could be a promise even the though it does not have the performative prefix 'I promise', an utterance of (5) could be employed to give an order even though it does not have 'I order you' as a prefix, while an utterance of (6) could be used to transfer ownership of, say, a car from one person to another.[1]

(4) I'll come

(5) Stand up!

(6) It's yours

In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin begins his discussion by contrasting performatives with what he terms 'constatives'. Whereas performative utterances aim at changing the world in some way, constatives aim at describing it, and assertions are the paradigmatic constative. Famously, by the end of his seminal work, Austin rejects this contrast, arguing that constatives are subject to felicity conditions in the same way as those utterances he had been discussing under the performative label. More recently, the term 'constative' has been employed by speech-act theorists such as Recanati (1987) and Bach and Harnish (1979). However, as their theories differ from Austin's, so does the significance of the term in their frameworks.

Structurally, prototypical explicit performatives are characterised by the following features: the first-person pronoun, the simple-present tense and the possibility of inserting the adverb 'hereby'. As Austin (1962/1975: 57) and

[1] Note, though, that explicitness need not equate with directness. Recanati (1987) characterises explicit performatives as direct declarations that the act described is being performed, but indirect performances of the act described. On this view, (3) is a direct declaration and an indirect promise, while (4) is a direct promise. See Sect. 8 for further discussion of Recanati's account.

Searle (1989: 537) point out, though, there are exceptions to the first of these two characteristics: the plural 'we' can be used in some cases:

(7) We pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour

And the first-person pronoun can be omitted in certain passive constructions:

(8) Passengers are hereby advised that all flights to Phoenix have been cancelled.

The ultimate test of explicit performativity, then, is whether 'hereby' can be inserted to distinguish a performative reading from a purely assertoric interpretation: as was noted above, (3) could not be uttered as a response to (2).

The speech-acts that explicit performatives describe are often divided between those that rely on extra-linguistic conventions for their successful performance and those that do not (Bach and Harnish 1979: chs. 3 & 6; Millikan 2005: ch. 8; Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 246–254; Strawson 1964). For example, pronouncing a couple husband and wife is something that can only be done according to the conventions that define a religious or civic institution. Warning, on the other hand, requires no such extra-linguistic conventions to be successfully performed. This distinction will not receive much attention in this paper, as the issue of ambiguity between performative and assertoric interpretations largely cuts across it. For example, an utterance such as (9), which relies on extra-linguistic conventions for its performative potential, could be uttered either performatively or assertorically, an assertoric interpretation following in response to (10) if a priest were explaining the order of events in a wedding, say.

(9) I pronounce you husband and wife

(10) What do you do next, Father?

3 Performative utterances as assertions

The view that explicit performative utterances, such as promises made by uttering sentences such as (1), are best analysed as cases of assertions which licence the inference that a promise, say, is being made has been endorsed by a number of authors, including Ginet (1979), Bach and Harnish (1979, 1992), García-Carpintero (2004) and Green (2005). The main attraction of this view, as indicated above, is that essentially the same linguistic resources used in a performative utterance can be used to perform an assertion. This is how Ginet makes the case:

> The sentence 'She thereby promises to be there' can be used to state of another person's current act that by it she promises to be there, and 'I thereby promised to be there' can be used to state of one's own past act that in performing it, one promised to be there. Why cannot 'I hereby promise to

> be there' be used to state of one's own current act that in performing it one promises to be there? Why should a mere shift in person or tense, and from 'thereby' to 'hereby', deprive such a sentence of its power to state that a certain (indexically referred to) act is of a certain sort? (1979: 246)

Bach and Harnish (1979: 208) suggest that in interpreting an explicit performative a hearer could reason as follows:

1. He is saying "I order you to leave."
2. He is stating that he is ordering me to leave.
3. If his statement is true, then he must be ordering me to leave.
4. If he is ordering me to leave, it must be his utterance that constitutes the order. (What else could it be?)
5. Presumably, he is speaking the truth.
6. Therefore, in stating that he is ordering me to leave he is ordering me to leave.

Bach and Harnish go on to say that, because it has ample precedence, this sort of inference will be 'short-circuited' in most cases through a process of standardization. However, the issue here is not the elaborateness of the inference but the grounds for the introduction of the second premise. What justifies, one must ask, categorising an utterance of 'I order you to leave' or 'I promise never to drink again' as a statement?[2] The work of theorists such as Ginet and Bach and Harnish suggests a two-stage answer: first, use structural similarity to warrant the hypothesis that explicit performatives are also assertions; then, try to show that an elegant and parsimonious explanation of how explicit performatives are interpreted as such can be derived from this assumption.

In order to argue against this view, it is necessary to do two things. First, a case needs to be made to show that explicit performatives are not assertions. This can be done by highlighting a number of asymmetries between the two. Second, an alternative account of their interpretation needs to be given. The next section of this paper is devoted to the first of these tasks.

4 Symmetries and asymmetries between assertion and explicit performatives

Assertions clearly have two things in common with explicit performatives: both employ the indicative mood and both can communicate the proposition expressed.[3] However, there are also important differences, the most crucial being that explicit performatives cannot be true or false.

[2] I will use the terms 'statement' and 'assertion' and their variants interchangeably. Cf. Austin (1950/1979: 120).

[3] In this paper, I take propositions to be functions from possible worlds to truth-values. I make no claim that they are structured entities. In saying that an utterance 'communicates the proposition expressed', I mean that it communicates a proposition derived from the linguistically encoded information in that utterance. The close relationship between linguistically encoded meaning and the proposition expressed distinguishes this proposition from others communicated by the utterance (i.e. its implicatures), and is the justification for considering it the explicit content of the utterance. This proposition has been labelled different things by different theorists: Bach calls it an 'impliciture' (1994); Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) and Carston (2002) call it the 'explicature' of the utterance; Recanati (2004) terms it 'what is said'.

That both clear-cut assertions and explicit performatives employ the indicative mood is an empirical fact. However, it does not follow from this that performatives are also assertions. All that can safely be said about the relationship between assertion and the indicative mood is that if one wants directly, explicitly and categorically to assert that P, one must do so using an indicative sentence which expresses P. This is not to say that the indicative is a fail-safe marker of assertoric force, for, as is well known, there are many cases when the proposition expressed by an indicative sentence is not asserted, clear examples of this being supposition, jokes, pretence, fiction and the like (Davidson 1979/2001; Frege 1918–19/1997; McGinn, 1977). Thus the fact that assertions and explicit performatives share a common sentence-type is not a very compelling argument for the latter being parasitical on the former.

The second feature uniting the two types of speech-act is their ability to communicate the proposition expressed. A felicitous explicit performative results in the content of that utterance being added to the interlocutors' mutual beliefs, i.e. those which provide the basis for their co-ordinated behaviour. Similarly, the content of an assertion can also be adopted as mutual belief and serve to co-ordinate behaviour. There is, though, an important difference between the two cases: a felicitous explicit performative necessarily results in the proposition expressed becoming part of the common ground, whereas a felicitous assertion will only do so if it is judged true by the hearer.

This point can be illustrated in terms of Stalnaker's (1978) model of assertion as an attempt to modify the common ground, though it is not necessary to accept this view of assertion to grant the point being illustrated. Stalnaker identifies two ways in which the common ground can be altered by an assertion, one avoidable, the other not. The first is by adding the proposition expressed by the assertion to the common ground. This will only happen if the hearer accepts the assertion as true, and can thus be avoided by the hearer judging it false. Stalnaker points out, though, that the fact that an assertion has been made (even if it has been judged false) will have been witnessed by all participants in a conversation: it is a "manifest event" (2002: 708), and, consequently, will necessarily alter the common ground. In other words, for every assertion that P, it is a fact that P has been asserted, and this latter fact will be added to the common ground regardless of whether the assertion is accepted. Thus, of the two ways an assertion can modify the common ground, one is avoidable, the other is not.

Now consider this in relation to an explicit performative such as (3). If this is uttered felicitously, then it is a fact that the speaker has promised never to drink again. Moreover, this fact must be accepted by all participants: it cannot be rejected by being judged false. There is a clear asymmetry here with straightforward assertions, for, as has just been noted, a felicitous assertion can fail to result in its content being added to the common ground. This point is nicely captured by Barker (2004: 44), who describes assertions as "democratic": they require acceptance before they can become the basis of co-ordinated behaviour (linguistic or otherwise). Explicit performatives require no such acceptance: they are unavoidable context changers, just as is any other event mutually witnessed by the interlocutors. What is notable about them, in contrast to other

manifest events, is that they express the proposition that gets added to the common ground. In this way they are similar to assertions, but they differ in the conditions under which they alter the common ground: only assertions must be judged true to have this effect.[4]

In the case of assertoric explicit performatives, such as (11), what requires acceptance before it can be added to the common ground is the proposition expressed by the embedded clause. The proposition expressed by the whole sentence, by contrast, is automatically added. Thus the asymmetry still holds in these cases: whereas the proposition expressed by (11) is unavoidably added to the common ground, the proposition expressed by (12) (a straightforward assertion) will only be added if accepted.

(11) I hereby claim that three is a prime number.

(12) Three is a prime number

In other words, assertoric explicit performatives, such as (11), do involve judgement. What is being judged true or false, though, is the content of the embedded indicative clause. Assertion-based accounts of explicit performatives, though, claim that it is the proposition expressed by the complete performative sentence that is asserted. The fact that one can respond to (11) by judging it true or false thus provides no support for such accounts.

When explicit performatives are discussed in relation to truth and falsity, it is sometimes suggested that if certain felicity or sincerity conditions are absent, then it is acceptable to describe that performative utterance as false. The sort of example that is usually given is of a subordinate attempting to issue an order to a superior, as would be the case if (13) were uttered by a private to a general.

(13) I hereby order you to clean the latrines

There are two points that need to be made about this. The first is that the general cannot respond to the corporal by saying, 'That's not true'. What she can say is, 'You can't order me: you don't have the authority'. The difference can be captured by employing the language-games metaphor: judging something as true or false is part of the language game of assertion, in the sense that it is a permissible move of that game. The general responds to the private, though, not by making a move in the game the private has attempted to initiate, but by denying that the private's move was permissible in the first place. The

[4] It might be responded that this argument makes the error of distinguishing speech acts in terms of their perlocutionary, rather than illocutionary effects, for the acceptance of an asserted proposition is a possible perlocutionary consequence of assertion. In other words, the success of an assertion as an illocutionary act does not rely on its content being accepted. Explicit performatives could then be seen as assertions which necessarily have a certain perlocutionary consequence. However, this objection fails: in judging an assertion true or false, the hearer demonstrates her sensitivity to the speaker's illocutionary intention to assert. That she cannot respond in these terms to an explicit performative (even by saying 'That's true') suggests that the speaker is not asserting.

fact that the general cannot respond to the private's utterance by denying its truth is thus further evidence that it is wrong to characterise that utterance as an assertion.

The second point is that an objector to the view that explicit performatives are assertions can accept that it is false that the private ordered the general to clean the latrines by uttering (13) while still denying that this is so because (13) is an assertion. Agreeing that it is false that the private ordered the general does not commit one to the view that (13) is an assertion: what one is agreeing with is an assertion about the private's act.

Explicit performatives, then, are unavoidable context changers, whereas assertions only modify the common ground (by the addition of the proposition expressed) if they are accepted by the audience.[5] Later, this observation will be employed to argue that explicit performatives are best characterised as acts of showing, rather than as assertions. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to consider the relationship between assertion and inference, for the supposed ability of explicit performatives to serve as premises in inference might be offered as support for the view that they are assertions.

One author who has argued that performatives can indeed serve as premises in inference is Green (2005). In doing so, Green is arguing against the view that a performative prefix, such as 'I claim that' in an assertive performative such as (14), is semantically transparent, contributing nothing to the truth-conditions of 'what is said' by (14).

(14) I hereby claim that it is going to rain[6]

The case for transparency goes as follows: if it does not rain, the speaker cannot defend herself against the accusation that what she said was false by saying "What I said was that I claim it is going to rain, and that's true." Rather, the fact that it is not raining is enough to make it the case that the speaker of (14) said something false. It can therefore be argued that the performative prefix makes no contribution to the semantic content of the utterance.[7]

Green presents the apparent validity of the inference (15) as evidence against the alleged semantic transparency of 'I hereby claim that':

[5] As noted above, one does not need to accept Stalnaker's characterisation of assertion to grant this point: anyone who views linguistic communication as providing a basis for co-ordinated behaviour will need to admit this. It might be asked, though, (and one anonymous referee does ask) what all this has to do with communication: all that matters for communication to succeed, it could be argued, is that the hearer understand the speaker, not that he believe what she says. While this is correct on one view of what counts as successful communication, what we are trying to get at is why explicit performatives cannot be judged true or false. To do this, we need to consider the function of such judgements, and to do this we need to consider their consequences. The common-ground model helps us to do just this.

[6] Green does not include 'hereby' in his examples. I do so here to avoid any apparent validity of the inferences to be discussed being a result of the illocutionary ambiguity of 'hereby'-less explicit performative sentences.

[7] Green discusses this in relation to what Lycan (2000: 181–184) terms 'Cohen's problem'.

(15) If I claim that it is going to rain, then someone does
I hereby claim that it is going to rain
Someone claims that it is going to rain

The argument is that because 'I claim that' is not semantically transparent in the antecedent of the conditional premise, and the inference is (it is claimed) valid, then the prefix in the second premise must make a contribution to the truth-conditions of (14). Otherwise, the 'validity' of the inference could not be explained. As the soundness of an argument rests on its premises being true, it could be alleged that the second (performative) premise in (15) is open to judgement in terms of truth and falsity and hence possibly an assertion. However, this argument rests on an equivocation between assertions *qua* speech acts and what can be termed 'Fregean assertions', i.e. propositional forms judged as true and marked as such in a system of inference such as Frege's *Begriffsschrift*.[8]

The confusion stems from the fact that assertions *qua* utterances are not, in themselves, premises; rather, an assertoric utterance can warrant the introduction of a premise in an inference, a fact that gets obscured when natural-language indicative sentences are used to represent premises.[9] Assertion comes with a commitment to truth. Therefore, if one has no reason to doubt a speaker who asserts that P, one is warranted in introducing P as a premise in an inference. Note again the asymmetry with explicit performatives: if a speaker explicitly and felicitously promises that P, then one is warranted to introduce the premise that the speaker has promised that P on quite different grounds to those which licence the introduction of an asserted proposition. As was seen above, an explicit performative utterance is a manifest event, and one is licensed to introduce the proposition it expresses as a premise on grounds of having witnessed that event.

Two further arguments might help convince the sceptic who wants to hold on to the view that utterances can serve as premises. First, consider the now widely accepted position that what is linguistically encoded by an utterance greatly underdetermines the proposition explicitly communicated by that utterance (Bach 1994; Carston 2002; Recanati 2004; Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995). A consequence of this is that any proposition explicitly communicated by an assertion and to which, for inferential purposes, we assign a truth-value cannot be thought of as identical to, or isomorphic with, that utterance. Rather, this proposition is communicated by virtue of the fact that the utterance provides

[8] I will call an assertion a 'Fregean assertion' if it is to serve as a premise or a conclusion in an argument, regardless of whether or not it is written in natural language or a logical symbolism (Frege's or anyone else's).

[9] When indicative sentences are used as means of expressing propositions employed in inference, there is a determinacy about the mood–force relationship which is not present in everyday linguistic communication. In such semi-formal logics, the indicative mood serves as failsafe marker of assertoric force (unless, for example, it is embedded or marked by some other convention as supposition), whereas in linguistic communication the situation is, of course, far less straightforward.

good evidence that the speaker intends to communicate it. It follows from this that we do not assign the truth-value to the utterance *per se*, but to the proposition communicated by that utterance.[10]

The second argument is aimed directly against the view that explicit performatives, as opposed to utterances in general, can serve as premises. Consider the 'argument' in (16), and imagine it spoken as a monologue (as we must do for (15)):

(16) If I assert a falsehood, then someone does
The Earth is flat
So, someone asserts a falsehood

(16) consists in an initial premise, grounds for affirming the antecedent of that premise and a conclusion. The conclusion is justified given the evidence (the speaker has clearly asserted a falsehood) and the initial premise, but the second premise (that the speaker has asserted a falsehood) is left implicit: the second line of (16) is not a premise, and it is certainly not assigned a positive truth-value. Now consider (17):

(17) If I assert a falsehood, then someone does
I hereby assert that the Earth is flat
So, someone asserts a falsehood

A defender of the view that the explicit performatives in (15) and (17) are serving as premises, not as evidence, in these inferences, needs to explain how they differ from the case in (16), where the second utterance is obviously not a premise. How are we to be sure that the apparent validity of these arguments is not due to the second premise providing justification for affirming the antecedent, rather than its confirmation, as in (16)? Moreover, there is clearly an asymmetry between the second line of (15) and the corresponding line in (17), on the one hand, and their initial premises and conclusions, on the other: we don't have to treat the initial premises and conclusions as utterances for the inference to go through, whereas we must view the performative 'premises' as utterances. If we do not, then the 'premise' is false and the inference invalid, for no claim or assertion will have been made. This strongly suggests that these 'premises' are in fact warrants to introduce a premise, the confusing factor being that these warrants are utterances that express the same proposition as the premise they licence.

The fact that assertions as speech acts and Fregean assertions both have what Geach (1965: 457) calls "assertoric character" (and hence result in assertoric commitment) should not blind us to the fact that assertions *qua* speech acts do not themselves serve as premises: rather, they licence them.

[10] It is likely that judging an assertion true entails ascribing a positive truth-value to this proposition, though assigning truth-values to propositions and judging assertions true or false should not be considered identical acts. For discussion of this issue see Barker (2003: 21), Dummett (1959/1978, 1981, 1993), and García-Carpintero (2004: 152–153).

Nor should we make the mistake of thinking that any speech act which licenses a premise of the same propositional content as that explicitly communicated by the speech act is an assertion. An explicit performative, as has been seen, can licence the introduction of a premise expressing the same proposition on the grounds that it has been witnessed. The two acts involve different means of knowledge acquisition: testimony and perception. Consequently, 'inferences' such as (15) cannot be employed to defend the view that explicit performatives are assertions.[11]

In this section, it has been argued that there are important asymmetries between explicit performatives and assertions. To be sure, they both employ the indicative mood and both can communicate the proposition expressed. The crucial difference lies in how (and the conditions under which) that proposition becomes the basis for co-ordinated behaviour: asserted propositions only do so if they are judged true by the hearer, but such judgments don't come into play in relation to an explicit performative. Rather, when one is felicitously performed, the proposition expressed automatically becomes part of the common ground due to the fact that the act has been witnessed by those participating in the speech event. Accounts of explicit performatives in terms of assertion rarely confront the question of why they cannot be true or false. Yet it the ability to be judged in these terms is clearly central to any realistic notion of assertion. The fact that explicit performatives cannot be so judged, even when infelicitous, thus casts serious doubt on such accounts.

5 Explicit performatives as acts of showing

In this section, it is argued that explicit performatives are best characterised as linguistic acts of showing. In order to do this, it is necessary to identify the sense of 'showing' that is intended. Green (forthcoming-a) suggests that there are at least three types of showing, differing in terms of whether the object or state of affairs that you show is made perceptible, and in terms of the type of knowledge that results from that act of showing. If you were to show, for example, through extensive calculations that a black hole existed at the centre of the universe, then you would have achieved this act of showing without making what you have shown perceptible. Green labels this kind of showing 'showing-that'. The knowledge acquired is propositional. Alternatively, one can show by making an object or state of affairs perceptible, such as when I show you I have an injured ankle by raising my trouser leg so that you can see a bandage. Green calls this 'showing-α', where 'α' is a singular term referring to a perceptible object or state of affairs. It results in perceptual knowledge. Finally, there is showing what

[11] Given this, it is somewhat surprising that Williamson, who views assertion as warranted only by knowledge, appears to support the view that explicit performatives are also assertions (1996: 512). Surely we do not want to argue that the reason one knows that someone who utters 'I promise that P' promises that P is that the utterance is an assertion and therefore warranted by speaker-knowledge. It seems far more reasonable to say that one knows that the speaker promised that P because one witnessed her doing so.

something is like, whereby you show someone how something looks, feels, sounds etc. in order to provide that person with qualitative knowledge.

Explicit performatives achieve their effect because they are an instance of Green's second type of showing: they make perceptible a state of affairs. The state of affairs they make perceptible is that which is picked out by a description of the illocutionary act. In the case of a promise, this would be 'The speaker promises to P'; in the case of an order, 'The speaker orders the hearer to P', and so on. However, as we saw in the discussion of assertion in the previous section, speech acts performed non-explicitly result in a description of the illocutionary act performed unavoidably being added to the common ground, and this is by virtue of the fact that they create a perceptible state of affairs, or a 'manifest event'. How, then, does the claim that explicit performatives show this state of affairs distinguish them from their implicit counterparts?

To answer this question, we need to consider a little more carefully the notion of showing with which we are working.[12] This can be broken down into two crucial elements: a state of affairs and a means of intentionally drawing someone's attention to that state of affairs, so that it becomes perceptible to that individual. In the example given above, it is my raising my trouser leg, and perhaps directing my gaze towards my ankle, that constitutes the second element of that act of showing, while the bandaged ankle constitutes the first. Let's call this intention-directing element 'pointing', regardless of whether it is done with an extended index finger, gaze direction, or by other means. Showing, of the type we are interested in here, thus consists in a state of affairs and a means of pointing at that state of affairs.

Language, of course, has a range of expressions designed for pointing. Deictic expressions, such as demonstratives, are often used to direct our attention to elements of the context. Explicit performatives, as we have seen, contain, in their most explicitly explicit form, such a deictic element: the 'hereby' adverbial. Consider now a promise, performed using either (18) or (19). Both of these would make perceptible the state of affairs described by (20). However, only (19) points to this state of affairs, as evidenced by the fact that (18) cannot take the 'hereby' adverbial.

(18) I'll be there

(19) I hereby promise to be there

(20) The speaker promises to be there

Clearly, then, not all cases of making perceptible are cases of showing-α. If, by baking a cake, I incidentally also make it perceptible to you that I am baking a cake, I do not thereby show you that I am baking a cake. What must be

[12] Here we depart from Green.

understood by 'making perceptible' in relation to cases of showing-α, is that some means of attention direction makes the state of affairs to be shown perceptible.[13] If I promise by uttering, (18), it does not follow that I have shown that I have promised, even though you are correct to describe my utterance as an act of promising. The reason I have not shown that I am promising is that no element of my behaviour is aimed at pointing to my illocutionary act.[14] Just as in the example above my aim is not to show that I am baking a cake but merely to bake a cake, my aim in uttering (18) is not to show that I promise but merely to promise.

In 'hereby'-less cases, the self-referentiality that constitutes the pointing element is part of the meaning of the performative utterance, even though it is not explicit. That this is the case is clear from the fact that there is no discernible difference in meaning between a performative with a 'hereby' and one without. The key difference, rather, is that a 'hereby'-less performative sentence is ambiguous between a performative utterance and an assertion about habitual behaviour. How this ambiguity is resolved is discussed in the next section.

It might be argued that, although you don't show what you are doing when you perform a speech act using an non-performative construction, in uttering such a sentence, you nevertheless show that you have an illocutionary intention, and perhaps even that you have a particular desire, belief or other internal state. This is not 'showing-α', though, but 'showing-that', for you do not make that intention or other internal state perceptible. Rather, you give evidence for that state of affairs. Green (forthcoming-b) claims that it is by this type of showing that speech acts express psychological states. The present work, then, differs from Green's both in terms of the type of showing being discussed and what is thereby shown. Whereas he is concerned with how we show internal states, I am concerned with how we show what we are doing with words.[15]

As well as pointing to itself, an explicit performative refers to itself by use of the performative verb: it is this that identifies the act performed.[16] However, it

[13] An anonymous referee wonders how it could be the case that some means of attention direction make perceptible the state of affairs to be shown. To see how, consider the case of a dancer asked, at an audition, whether she can pirouette. She responds by pirouetting, thereby showing a pirouette and licensing the inference that she can indeed pirouette. The pirouette in this case is designed both to direct the observer's attention and count as a pirouette. It can thus be said to direct attention to the state of affairs that it makes perceptible, and to constitute that state of affairs.

[14] The use of the term 'pointing' suggest that the element of this species of showing that directs the addressee's attention towards the state of affairs to be made perceptible is overt. This is clearly correct in the case of explicit performatives. However, I would not want to deny that showing need not be overt in this sense. There may well be acts aptly describable as showing where the speaker covertly makes the state of affairs or object shown perceptible.

[15] This is not to deny, though, that, as Green suggests, one act cannot show in more than one of the ways he identifies. Indeed, if Green is correct that some illocutionary acts 'show-that' the speaker has a particular psychological state, then, if I am also right that explicit performatives 'show-α', this must be the case.

[16] This is not to say that there is anything inherently self-referential about performative verbs, which is what one anonymous referee thinks my position suggests. The word 'statement' can be used to refer to itself in 'This statement is in English' or not, as in 'That statement is in English'. The case of performative verbs is parallel.

would be wrong to argue, on these grounds, that it makes an assertion about itself. If I ask you to give me a rose by uttering 'Give me that rose', I 'point' to an object using 'that' and refer to it as a rose, but these elements of my act do not constitute further illocutionary acts performed in addition to my request. In particular, I do not assert that the object is a rose. In the case of an explicit performative, I do not assert that my utterance is, say, a promise; rather, I promise and, in that same utterance, refer to my utterance as a promise. To refer to my utterance in this way is rational only if it is indeed intended as a promise, and this intention is essential to my utterance constituting a promise. In other words, my referring to my utterance as a promise can only be explained on the assumption that I intend it to be taken as one.

Explicit performatives, then, are acts of showing consisting in a state of affairs and an act of pointing. What is special about them is that the utterance constitutes both the state of affairs and the act that points to it: it is both the act of showing and the event being shown. I show that I am promising by pointing to my utterance and referring to it as a promise. In showing that I am promising, I necessarily promise. Performing the illocutionary act that one refers to when showing that one performs that act is an unavoidable consequence of that act of showing.

While the self-referential, showing element of explicit performatives is evidenced by the 'hereby' adverbial, this element is often implicit,[17] and, in such cases, it is not immediately clear how the performative formulation indicates that the speaker's intention is to show that he thereby promises, say, rather than to assert that he habitually does so. The intuition is that the so-called 'performative prefix' has a role to play here, but in suggesting what this role might be, one has to be careful not to posit a linguistic anomaly such that 'I' and 'promise…' make a distinct contribution to the meaning of a performative utterance to that which they make to a straightforward assertion. As Bach and Harnish caution:

> To suppose that the self-referentiality of performative utterances is a consequence of the semantics of performative sentences would be to posit a linguistic anomaly, whereby the first person present tense form "I order" would have a semantic feature different in kind from other forms, such as "You order" or "I ordered", indeed one that is not compositionally determined by the meanings of the words "I" and "order" (1992: 100, fn. 14).

In what follows, an account is developed that, while it does not argue that the self-referentiality of performative utterances is a *consequence* of the semantics of 'I' plus a performative verb, does claim that the semantics of the performative prefix is such that it plays a central role in indicating that a self-referential interpretation is intended.

[17] In saying that the 'hereby' element is implicit, I mean so say no more than that successfully interpreting a 'hereby'-less explicit performative requires grasping its self-referential nature. I make no claims about these sentences being elliptical or having an unarticulated 'hereby'-constituent at any level of linguistic representation.

6 Interpreting explicit performatives

A problem for any account that seeks to explain explicit performatives as indirect speech acts derived from direct assertions is that it predicts that, in a minimal context,[18] a sentence such as (1) should be interpreted as a straightforward assertion, not as a promise. However, it seems clear that, in such a context, the most likely interpretation is the performative one, thus creating a problem for the indirect speech-act view of performatives. In Bach and Harnish's case, the problem arises whether one applies the full rational reconstruction of the reasoning that leads, on their account, to the derivation of an indirect promise or the short-circuited, standardized interpretation that this is claimed to warrant.

Consider the full-blown case first:[19]

1. He is saying "I order you to leave."
2. He is stating that he is ordering me to leave.
3. If his statement is true, then he must be ordering me to leave.
4. If he is ordering me to leave, it must be his utterance that constitutes the order. (What else could it be?)
5. Presumably, he is speaking the truth.
6. Therefore, in stating that he is ordering me to leave he is ordering me to leave.

It is hard to see why, with no contextual reason to do so, the listener should go beyond the second premise. The form used by the speaker is clearly one that can be used to make statements (this is what licences the second premise), so why not just assume that this is all the speaker is aiming to do? Nothing, in a minimal context, warrants going any further. On the standardization story, things are a little more complicated. The claim is that the full-blown inference gets compressed by precedent, so that a form can come to have a force associated with it that is distinct from what Bach and Harnish term its 'literally determined force'. Illocutionary standardization is defined as follows:

[18] I.e. a context "without more information than that derived from the presumption that the participants know the language" (García-Carpintero 2004: 155) plus the assumption that the speaker is engaged in performing some illocutionary act or other (in other words, Bach and Harnish's Communicative Presumption (1979: 7)). This last qualification is designed to deal with objections that Bach and Harnish (1982) make towards the idea that there could be such a thing as a truly null context.

[19] Notice that in this argument, there is a shift in linguistic aspect between the first and second premise: from 'I order…' to 'He is ordering…'. This is important because it makes the introduction of the third premise more reasonable: if the second premise is rendered 'He is stating that he orders me to leave', the hypothesis that he is ordering the speaker to leave has a weaker basis, for the speaker could well be stating that he habitually orders the listener to leave. A better way to render the second premise would be 'Either he is stating that the orders$_{\text{habitual}}$ me to leave or he is stating that he orders$_{\text{dramatic-present}}$ me to leave' ('dramatic present' being the term Searle (1989: 540) employs to describe the tense of explicit performatives). Contextual considerations could then be argued to make one of the disjuncts more likely to be true.

> [Sentence form] *T* is standard used to [perform illocutionary act] *F* in a group *G* if and only if:
>
> i. It is mutually believed in *G* that generally when a member of *G* utters *T*, his illocutionary intent is to *F*, and
>
> ii. Generally, when a member of *G* utters *T* in a context in which it would violate the communicative presumption to utter *T* with (merely) its literally determined force, his illocutionary intent is to *F*. (1979: 195)

On this definition, assigning the standardized force instead of (or as well as) the literal force must be warranted by contextual considerations: it must be the case that contextual considerations are such that to utter *T* with its literal force would undermine the presumption that the speaker had a definable illocutionary intention. But, in a minimal context, there are no such contextual considerations and so the prediction must be that, in the case of explicit performative sentences, a non-performative interpretation is most likely. This, though, is intuitively wrong: if we hear (1) in a minimal context we assume that a promise is being made, despite the absence of 'hereby'.

In what follows, an account of how explicit performatives are interpreted is presented that predicts that, in a minimal context, the performative reading will be most likely. This is done by arguing that 'I' makes a special contribution to the interpretation of such utterances. However, no linguistic anomaly is posited.

It is important to be clear about the task at hand. The aim is not to identify a feature of the performative prefix that determines performative force. Rather, given that an explicit performative sentence without 'hereby' is ambiguous between a straightforward assertion and a performative interpretation, what needs to be explained is why the performative interpretation is so likely, even in a minimal context. In order to do this, two initial (and relatively non-controversial) points need to be made.

The first of these is that a speaker of an explicit performative necessarily presents himself under a particular mode of presentation, *viz*. as the speaker of that sentence (cf. Austin 1962/1975: 60–61). If I utter (1) as a promise, what commits me to not drinking again is that I am the speaker of that sentence, not any other fact about me. In institutional cases, such as when a priest pronounces a couple husband and wife, the fact that he is a priest is, of course, relevant, but more relevant is the fact that he is *a priest who is uttering that sentence*. Now, recall that Kaplan (1978) distinguishes between the character and content of 'I' (and other indexicals), character being the information encoded by 'I' that allows it to pick out its content in any context. Thus, if George Bush utters (1), the character of 'I' is 'the speaker of (1)', while its content is George Bush. The important point here is that the character of 'I' matches precisely the mode of presentation under which George Bush must be represented if he is to be taken to be performing the act described.

Before the full implications of this can be spelled out, a second observation must be highlighted. It is well known that the cognitive significance of a proposition can vary according to its mode of presentation. To take Kaplan's

famous example, a man who sees a reflection in a window of a man whose trousers are on fire (who happens to be that man himself) will behave very differently according to how he represents that situation. If he represents it as 'My trousers are on fire', then he will act to put out the fire; if he fails to realise that it is he himself whom he sees and represents that situation as 'That guy's trousers are on fire', he may not. In both cases, though, the proposition expressed will be the same: what will differ is its mode of presentation and consequent cognitive significance.

It has recently been suggested by Korta and Perry (2006) that the Kaplanian character of a term, rather than its content, can play a role in implicature derivation. Korta and Perry do this by employing Perry's (2001) contrast between 'reflexive' and 'referential' propositions. The reflexive truth-conditions of an utterance are those that are derived by making explicit all the constraints placed on determining contextual values without actually determining them. The truth-conditions of an utterance can therefore be established more or less reflexively, depending on how much one knows about the utterance. Perry employs the schema in (21) to capture this insight:

(21) Given…, what the speaker said is true iff…

Applying this to an utterance of (22) uttered by King Harold in 1066, one can derive the following:

(22) I have an arrow in my eye

(23) Given that (22) is in English and uses the sentence 'I have an arrow in my eye', what the speaker of (22) says is true iff **the speaker of (22) has an arrow in the speaker of (22)'s eye at the time (22) is spoken**

(24) Given (23), plus the fact that King Harold is the speaker, what the speaker says is true iff **King Harold has an arrow in his eye at the time (22) is spoken**

(25) Given (24), plus the fact that the sentence was spoken in 1066, what the speaker says is true iff **King Harold has an arrow in his eye in 1066**

The clauses in bold in (23) to (25) are versions of the truth-conditions of Harold's utterance of (22). What is notable about (25), compared with (23) and (24), is that the bold section of (25) does not mention the utterance (22), while the bold sections of (23) and (24) do. It is this reference to the utterance for which they detail the truth-conditions that leads Perry to dub these 'reflexive' truth-conditions. The truth-conditions in (25), by contrast, are purely referential and constitute the proposition expressed by (22).

Korta and Perry give a number of examples of cases where what is required for implicature derivation are not the referential truth-conditions of an utterance, but its reflexive truth-conditions. Here is a slightly modified version of an example they give (2006: 182): two philosophers are going through a list of possible speakers whom they could invite to a conference. B can see the list, A cannot:

(26) A: Who's next on the list?
B: He is rather unreliable, doesn't have much to say, and always takes a long time to say it.
A: Next.

In this example, A can derive B's implicature (that they should not invite the philosopher in question) even though A is unable to determine the fully referential truth conditions of B's utterance, as he is ignorant of who the referent of 'he' is. In other words the mode of presentation under which A needs to represent the referent of 'he' in order to derive B's implicatures is no more than the character of 'he' (i.e. something like 'the male individual referred to by the speaker of this utterance'). Moreover, in relation to the account of the interpretation of explicit performatives about to be put forward, it is important to note that this mode of presentation is available early in the interpretation process, as it is derived from linguistically encoded information and does not require recourse to context.

Above, it was suggested that a problem with the rational reconstruction of the interpretation of explicit performatives put forward by Bach and Harnish is that in a minimal context the inference would halt before the conclusion that a performative interpretation was intended had been arrived at. This indicates that what is needed is an account that predicts that the first interpretation, in minimal context, will be a performative one. Such an account requires a theory of utterance interpretation that takes into consideration the accessibility of interpretative hypotheses.

One such theory is Sperber and Wilson's (1986/1995) Relevance Theory. These authors argue that the hearer's aim in interpreting an utterance is to optimise relevance by maximising the effects that utterance has whilst minimising the effort that goes into deriving those effects, given what can safely be assumed about the speaker's competences and preferences. An utterance's effects can be quantified in terms of the number of implicatures it results in: for any given level of effort, the greater number of implicatures, the greater the relevance.[20] Part of what determines processing effort is the accessibility of hypotheses concerning the speaker's communicative intentions: given two equally plausible hypotheses (i.e. two that would result in similar numbers of

[20] This is not the only way effect can be characterised. Strengthening, weakening or deleting assumptions, reorganising knowledge and elaborating rational desires are other possible ways an utterance can be relevant to an individual (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 266).

implicatures), the theory predicts that the hearers should assume that the most accessible is the one intended by the hearer.

The performative prefix contains, on the one hand, a verb denoting an act which can be performed by communicating the intention to perform that act, and, on the other, a pronoun which encodes information which matches precisely the mode of presentation that an individual must be represented under if she is to be taken to be performing the act denoted, i.e. as the speaker of the sentence uttered. What is more, that mode of presentation will be highly accessible (being linguistically encoded), and the only one available in a minimal context. Thus, the association of the character of 'I' and the nature of the act denoted will make the hypothesis that the speaker does indeed intend to perform that act (and to do so by showing that he is doing so) highly accessible, so that strong contextual or linguistic clues will be needed to override this hypothesis. And this does appear to be the case: it takes a question like (2) or an adverbial like 'always' to override the performative interpretation.

A common complaint made against Relevance Theory is that no means of calculating effect and effort is put forward.[21] The case of explicit performatives shows that, while such a calculus would be highly welcome, it is not a prerequisite for the theory doing useful work. We can safely assume that, in a minimal context, the expected level of effect from an utterance of 'I promise never to drink again' to justify processing that sentence will be the same for both an assertoric and a performative interpretation. Given this assumption of no expectation of greater effect from one type of interpretation, it then follows that the greatest expectations of relevance will come from the least effortful means of achieving that level of effect. The mode of presentation made salient by the character of 'I', in association with the performative verb, will suggest that the first hypothesis to be evaluated should be a performative one. If the effects are such that they justify that interpretation, then that is the one that should be accepted. Two points need to be made here. First, there is no need in this analysis for us to calculate effect and effort: a given level of effect and the comparative effort associated with two paths of interpretation is all that is needed to determine which path is the most relevant. Second, while other theories might also make use of notions of salience or accessibility, Relevance Theory puts forward an explanation of when and why accessible interpretations should be accepted, and when and why they should be rejected. Thus, while the account of performative interpretation presented here may well be compatible with frameworks other than Relevance Theory that also make use of notions of salience and accessibility, such theories would also need to offer an explanation of the grounds on which an accessible interpretation is to be accepted or rejected. Blindly accepting the most accessible interpretation will not work in all cases.[22]

[21] This complaint was raised by an anonymous referee.

[22] For discussion of when hearers need to go beyond simply accepting the most accessible interpretative hypothesis, see Sperber (1994). For examples of how adjusting effort and effect ratios (without quantifying either variable) can make accurate empirical predictions in reasoning tasks, see Sperber et al. (1995).

Importantly, the proposals made in this section should not be taken to imply that hearers must compare 'character' and 'content' interpretations of the utterance in order to see which is most plausible. As the identification of the content of 'I' depends on first employing its character, initial hypothesis formation procedures aimed at identifying the speaker's intentions will (contextual assumptions not inhibiting such an interpretation) take as input a character reading. Should this route prove to be successful in that it results in sufficient effect to justify the effort expended, being thus optimally relevant, the interpretation process will stop. There will be no need for the hearer to compare the effect of a performative reading with the effect of an assertoric one.

But, of course, not all explicit performatives contain 'I': some use 'we', while passive cases contain no pronoun referring to the agent of the act. The plural case is one in which an institution is presented as the 'speaker' of the sentence. Whatever the character of 'we' is, it will have to share with the character of 'I' the fact that it picks out the speaker by the virtue of the fact that she is the speaker, and thus makes the mode of presentation required for the performative reading accessible. Other features of 'we' may explain how the speaker, in the appropriate circumstances, comes also to perform that act for others, or on behalf of an institution.

As regards the passive case, although there is no agent explicit in the sentence, that the act denoted by the performative verb has an agent is a fact that will be accessible to the hearer by virtue of his knowledge of English. His representation of the information garnered by decoding the linguistic form of the utterance (its 'logical form', in Relevance Theory terms) will thus include a slot for an agent. If it is an accessible assumption that the speaker of the sentence is also the agent of the performative verb denoted by the act, then the hypothesis that the speaker intends to show that she is performing that act will also be made accessible. The fact that there is no character information to push the hearer towards a performative reading, though, means that the current account does predict that in an impoverished context, a 'hereby'-less passive performative should more amenable to a non-performative reading than an active performative sentence (something which could perhaps be tested empirically). This will not hold, though, in cases such as (27), where the character of 'you' will make a performative reading more salient, as it is *qua* the addressee of an utterance that the referent of 'you' in such an utterance is obliged to leave.

(27) You are ordered to leave

To sum up this section, it is the character of 'I' in association with the denotation of the performative verb that allows a speaker to signal her performative intentions by using a 'hereby'-less performative sentence. In contrast to the view of explicit performatives as indirect speech acts, this makes the correct prediction about their interpretation in minimal contexts. It is important to stress, though, that the claim is not that 'I' is essential to performative force (what is essential is that the hearer represent, in interpreting the utterance, the speaker

qua speaker of that sentence), nor that the reflexive character of 'I' is at the root of self-referentiality of explicit performatives: it is the explicit or implicit pointing that ultimately explains this. Rather, the self-referential character of 'I', in association with a performative verb, allows the speaker to direct the hearer towards her intended interpretation, while at the same time, by using a performative verb to refer to her own act, being explicit about the act she intends thereby to perform. Thus, the performative prefix makes a special contribution to the identification of performative force, though not one that requires postulating any linguistic anomaly.

So, explicit performatives with 'hereby' leave the hearer in no doubt as to the speaker's illocutionary intention: she shows him that her intention is to perform the act denoted by the performative verb. In the absence of 'hereby', the hearer must infer whether or not the speaker intends to show him that she is performing the act denoted. The performative prefix facilitates this inference in the manner described above.

The contribution of the indicative mood to the interpretation of explicit performatives is merely to warrant the hypothesis that the speaker intends to communicate the proposition expressed. It seems that the indicative is unique in this ability, for neither the imperative nor the interrogative can be so used. Davidson's (1979/2001: 110) examples ((28) and (29)) do not communicate the proposition expressed by the interrogative and imperative sentences (i.e. (30)) but that expressed by the embedded clause (i.e. (31)), a fact pointed out by Dummett (1993: 208–209).

(28) Did you notice that Joan is wearing her purple hat again?

(29) Notice that Joan is wearing her purple hat again

(30) That the hearer notices that Joan is wearing her purple hat again

(31) That Joan is wearing her purple hat again

Similarly, rhetorical 'yes-no'-questions, which are often employed as examples of indirect assertion (see, for example, Pagin, 2004: 851), do not communicate the proposition expressed but its negation.[23]

7 Modified explicit performatives

As has been pointed out by a number of authors, explicit performative sentences can be modified in a number of ways yet retain their performative force.

[23] In this section, and throughout the paper, I have assumed that the speaker must be performing the act in denoted by the performative verb by means of the utterance, not some collateral act like signing a document or slamming a gavel. Not everyone accepts this (see, for example, the debate between Bach (1995) and Reimer (1995)). My own view is that the vehicle of the act might well be the utterance plus another act, but that the 'hereby' element must at least refer to a conglomerate of events that includes the utterance. I've yet to see evidence that persuades me otherwise.

For example, they can be embedded, the prefix can be adverbially modified, and the aspect can be progressive. In this section, I will consider some of these cases. I will not, though, give a detailed analysis of each type. Rather, my claim will be that if a formulation admits 'hereby' then its performative interpretation is a case of showing, as detailed above. However, the presence of additional linguistic material can indicate the speaker's intention to do more than show that he is promising, ordering, etc.

The fact that a speaker can perform more than one speech act in a single utterance is now widely accepted. It has been applied recently, for example, to the study of epithets (Corazza 2005), and previously to the study of parentheticals (see, for example, Blakemore 1990/91). In such cases, we generally have an intuition that the speaker performs a central speech act while simultaneously performing another subsidiary act. Thus, in the case of an embedded performative such as (32), the speaker simultaneously performs the act denoted by the performative verb and indicates that he is not taking pleasure in performing the act, and when the performative prefix is modified as in (33), the speaker both promises and says that he does so for the first and last time.[24]

(32) I regret to inform you that your policy is (hereby) cancelled.

(33) I (hereby) promise for the first and last time never to drink again

In these cases too, the first-person pronoun is employed with a performative verb, and the association of the character of the former with the denotation of the latter serves to make a performative interpretation highly accessible. The linguistic material that distinguishes these from prototypical explicit performatives indicates that the act denoted by the performative verb is not all that the speaker intends to do. I have no objection to the view that in these cases the speaker is both performing the act described by the performative verb and asserting that he regrets having to do so, or is doing so for the first time. Indeed, it seems plausible that this is indeed the case. My objection is to the view that she accomplishes the performative act by asserting that she is performing it. When there is additional linguistic material present that makes it possible to react to the utterance as one can react to an assertion, then there is evidence that an assertion is also being performed. This is the case in both (32) and (33): one can deny that the speaker of (32) regrets what he is doing, and that the speaker of (33) is making that promise for the first time. There is no such evidence, however, in the case of unmodified performatives.

Interestingly, when one wants both to perform an illocutionary act and assert that one is thereby performing it, one can do so by means of the progressive aspect. As Alston says:

> …whatever we say about explicit performatives, there clearly are sentences that are usable for asserting that one is currently performing a certain

[24] For discussion of embedded cases, see Bach and Harnish (1979: 209–211); Lycan (2000: 183) discusses adverbially modified cases.

> illocutionary act, namely, the progressive present-tense variant of the explicit performative, 'I am adjourning this meeting', 'I am requesting H to do D'''. (2000: 125)

Moreover, rather than provide a challenge for my account, these progressive aspect cases actually challenge advocates of the performatives-as-assertions view, for they need to explain how progressives differ from straightforward performatives. Why does the speaker need to employ progressive morphosyntax to indicate that she is asserting as well as adjourning, or requesting, if, according to the viewpoint I am challenging, she is already doing both in the non-progressive case?

Performatives are not only found in 'that'-clauses but also after certain (often modal) verbs (Bach and Harnish 1979: 211–221). Such cases have been dubbed, somewhat inappropriately, 'hedged performatives' by Fraser (1975).[25]

(34) I must (hereby) apologize to the lovely state of New Jersey

(35) I want to (hereby) publicly thank PK for making this great tool freely available

(36) I can (hereby) state that is one of the best bunches of books around

(37) I would (hereby) request that the BLM utilize the biomass from the chips

(38) I would like to (hereby) notify any persons seeking LASIK eye surgery of the wonderful experience that I had at the Providence Eye & Laser Specialists

The possibility of inserting 'hereby' here means that these can also be treated as cases of showing, for the utterance points to itself. It is not clear, though, that an assertion is also being performed. To be sure, one can see in some cases how the additional effect might be derived as an implicature if the proposition expressed were asserted. For example, an assertion of (34) could imply that the speaker is under an obligation to apologise, and that she recognises this.[26] In the case of (37), though, it is not clear that the proposition expressed could be asserted without a conditional antecedent. Like 'would like' in (38), this usage has probably become standardised as a marker of politeness.

[25] My initial reaction to these cases was that they could not take 'hereby'. Kent Bach pointed out to me that some could, and a few internet searches showed me that, in fact, most, if not all, can. Examples (34)–(38) are all attested and all contained 'hereby' when originally uttered.

[26] It does not seem to me that 'must'-cases are acts that the speaker is reluctant to perform, as Bach and Harnish (1979: 219) claim. Indeed, they can convey that the speaker is very keen to perform the act as she is under an obligation to do so. In the case of thanking, this might imply a positive view of the act for which the speaker is thanking the hearer: it was such that it is absolutely necessary that the speaker thank the hearer.

It is important to note that the fact that 'hereby'-less versions of cases such as (34) to (38) can be cancelled does not necessarily show that they are any less direct than unmodified performatives. Just as one can cancel the inference that an utterance of ('hereby'-less) (34) is an expression of gratitude by adding, 'but I never do what I must', so one can cancel the inference that 'I promise never to drink again' is a promise by adding, 'That's what I do every Monday'. As Carston (2002: 138) points out, all the cancellabilty of an interpretation shows is that it was derived by pragmatic reasoning. As the identification of illocutionary force is generally agreed to require pragmatic inference, it should be no surprise that it is cancellable. Certainly, cancellability alone cannot be taken as evidence of indirectness.

The effect of an explicit performative with 'hereby' is to remove the need to infer illocutionary intent. When a 'hereby'-less explicit performative is uttered, the hearer must first decide whether the speaker's intention is to show that she is thereby performing the act denoted by the performative verb. If this is the case, then no inference is needed to determine her illocutionary intentions: the addressee is able to ''identify that act without any inferential fuss'' (Bach and Harnish 1992: 97). However, it is pragmatic reasoning that is required to identify the speaker's intention to show, and if this inference is cancelled by further evidence, then the conclusion that follows from it (i.e. that the speaker intends to perform the act denoted by the performative verb) is also cancelled.

The fact that all 'hereby'-less explicit performative utterances are cancellable shows why the label 'hedged performative' is an unfortunate one: it suggests that the speaker is choosing the form in order to leave open the possibility of denying that she is performing the act named by the performative verb. This seems just plain wrong: what is happening in these cases is that the speaker is communicating a certain attitude or background assumption in addition to (but related to) the performative act. The fact that one can cancel, or deny intending to have performed, the act denoted by the performative verb should not necessarily lead us to think that speakers employ these forms in order to allow themselves such a get out, especially when we have reasonably clear intuitions about the communicative effect these 'hedges' have.

I have little more to say here about these cases. However the additional effects are accomplished, the current account explains how the performative effects are achieved. The presence of other elements in addition to the first-person pronoun and the performative verb indicates that, as well as showing that she is performing the act denoted by the performative verb, the speaker is also doing something else. She may also be asserting the content of the utterance, or employing standardised devices to express regret, obligation, or for reasons motivated by politeness. These are important issues, but the various cases need analysing in detail, one by one. This is beyond the scope of this paper, for it would mean lengthy digression into issues such as the existence or not of conventional implicature, and into the correct analysis of processes of standardisation and conventionalisation.

8 Performatives and declarations

Before concluding, it is necessary to consider how the account developed here compares with others which also deny that explicit performatives are assertions. Recanati (1987) and Searle (1989) propose independent accounts of explicit performatives as a form of declaration. Their accounts are distinct in that while Searle proposes that in making a declaration one also makes a true statement, Recanati does not. Take Searle's story first.

Searle's account of performatives as declarations is illustrated by his description of the interpretation of an explicit performative from the hearer's point of view. This runs as follows:

1. S uttered the sentence "I hereby order you to leave" (or he uttered "I order you to leave" meaning "I hereby order you to leave").
2. The literal meaning of the utterance is such that by that very utterance the speaker *intends* to make it the case that he orders me to leave.
3. Therefore, in making the utterance *S manifested an intention* to make it the case by that utterance that he ordered me to leave.
4. Therefore, in making the utterance S manifested an intention to *order* me to leave by that very utterance.
5. Orders 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 those other conditions are satisfied
7. S ordered me to leave, by that utterance.
8. S both said that he ordered me to leave and made it the case that he ordered me to leave. Therefore he made a true statement. (Searle 1989: 553)

There are two particular issues that the current account raises for Searle's. The first is that Searle offers no explanation of how, in the absence of the 'hereby' adverbial the speaker recognises that the speaker has performative rather than assertoric intentions. On the model developed in this paper, by contrast, this is shown: if the hearer finds that assigning a character reading to 'I' results in an optimally relevant interpretation, then he will assume that a performative interpretation is intended and that the speaker intends to show him that she is performing the act in question.

The second point concerns the meaning of 'said' in premise 8. As has been pointed out very clearly by Wilson (1995: 202–204) in relation to Grice's Maxim of Quality, in employing 'say' in a derivation such as this one has to be careful to disambiguate between 'say' meaning 'to express a proposition' and 'say' meaning 'to assert'. If Searle's derivation is read as 'S both *expressed the proposition* that he ordered me to leave and made it the case that he ordered me to leave', then it is not clear why it follows that 'Therefore he made a true statement'. The mere expression of a proposition that happens to be true does not entail that the speaker has asserted that proposition. But surely Searle does not want his premise 8 to be read as 'S both *asserted* that he ordered me to leave

and made it the case that he ordered me to leave', for his aim in that paper is to show that explicit performatives are not derived from assertions, but *vice versa*. But if 'say' in premise 8 is read as 'assert', then explicit performatives must also be taken, on Searle's account, to be assertions (and not derived from performatives), for otherwise there is no justification for introducing this premise (cf. Bach and Harnish 1992: 108–109).

Recanati's account differs from Searle's in that, while he also treats explicit performatives as declarations, he thinks the speaker who utters an explicit performative performs the act described indirectly, though not in the usual sense of an indirect speech act derived through Gricean-style reasoning. Recanati defines a performative utterance as one which aims at bringing about the state of affairs that is its propositional content. He then divides performatives into three types: directives bestow the responsibility for bringing this state of affairs about on the hearer; commissives commit the speaker to bringing about that state of affairs; declarations, Recanati argues, are agentless performatives, as the state of affairs described is not specified as having to be brought about by any particular agent. Thus, when the chair of a meeting declares it open by saying 'The meeting is now open', she does not commit herself to bringing about any state of affairs and nor does she bestow this responsibility on her hearers: she simply opens the meeting (1987: 158–163).

An explicit performative such as 'I promise never to drink again' is a declaration, on Recanati's account, because it does not commit the speaker to bringing about the state of affairs described by the utterance (i.e. that the speaker promises never to drink again). Rather, the state of affairs that the speaker undertakes to bring about is that she never drinks again. For Recanati, a direct way of doing this would be to utter 'I'll never drink again'.

There are clearly parallels here with the current analysis. Recanati says that declaring that one performs a certain act entails also performing that act. The position in this paper is that showing that one is performing a certain act means that one performs that act, due to the factive nature of acts of showing. Whether explicit performatives are in fact declarations, though, and whether or not they indirectly (in Recanati's sense) perform the act they describe are not issues that can easily be settled here, as they depend respectively on particular methods of classifying speech-acts and on taking a stance on the relationship between particular linguistic forms (notably, sentence-types) and illocutionary force. For example, Recanati's account of explicit performatives relies on the indicative being force-neutral, for if it were specified for assertoric force, he would, by his own terms, need to class them as indirect acts. In this paper, all that is claimed about the indicative is that it is the sentence form that must be used if one wants to communicate the proposition expressed. Clearly more can be said, but the exact nature of the indicative mood, and the merits of Recanati's classification of illocutionary forces, are issues which are orthogonal to this paper. It is worth pointing out, though, that, in one respect, Recanati's account suffers from the same defect as Bach and Harnish's: both posit that more than one illocutionary act is performed, not to account for intuitions to

this effect, but in order to provide an explanation of how it is that explicit performatives come to have their effect.

9 Conclusion

Explicit performative utterances are not performed indirectly by means of direct assertion. Rather, in uttering an explicit performative, a speaker shows that she intends to perform a particular illocutionary act and thereby performs it. She does not show that she has this intention by asserting that she has it, because, by its nature, assertion does not allow showing in the intended sense: assertion allows dissent, while showing does not. This account therefore faces up to the fact that explicit performatives cannot be described as true or false, as Austin insisted. To be sure, like an assertion, an explicit performative warrants the introduction of premises in inference, but it does so not on the grounds that the speaker can be taken to be speaking the truth, but on the grounds that the state of affairs the utterance describes has been witnessed. It is a manifest, perceptible event, and, as such, that it has occurred becomes, consequentially and unavoidably, a common belief of speaker and audience.

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