**Theory of speech act.**

By John Langshaw Austin

Three types of utterances (things that people say)

| Constative : true or false | Ethical propositions : emotion or suggestions to conduct or influence | Performatives : words equivalent to performing actions |
| --- | --- | --- |

PERFORMATIVE EXAMPLES :

I name this…

I christen this…

I declare this…

I pronounce you …

Rules to qualify as performative:

1. Appropriate person
2. Appropriate utterance
3. Appropriate time
4. Hereby test

* Appropriate utterance : saying I divorce you three times isn't the same as saying talaaq talaaq talaaq,
* Appropriate person : audience yelling ‘out’ is different from the umpire yelling ‘out’
* When in a wedding you have to say ‘I do’, not ‘yeah sure’.
* Idioms are similar but they do not signify performance, so *idioms are not speech acts*
* Hereby test : if a statement is still a performance after adding hereby, then it is performative
* Performatives needn't be predetermined. *Warnings, apologies and promises* are also performatives as they pass the hereby test
* RULE : I + verb (first person singular present). Ex. i declare, i promise
* But then phrases like “you are ugly”, “tomorrow is tuesday” become performative as they pass the hereby test, even though they are constative, which makes it being that there are just no constatives at all
* Hence, “all utterances are performances”, but with each utterance, there are three acts being performed

What is said

What is intended

What actually happens next

All three acts have names :

| Locutionary act : act of saying something |
| --- |
| Illocutionary act : Act performed in saying something |
| Perlocutionary : Act performed by the result of something said |

Locutionary Acts :

* Simplest, most basic form of speech act
* Basic language use : words, phrases, grammatical structures
* It is the literal meaning of spoken or written words

Illocutionary Acts :

* Intention or implication of what was said
* The subtext
* Ex, saying “im so hungry”, IMPLIES that you want food, which is not what you directly said, but was the implication of what you said
* They can be direct (request or promise) or indirect (suggestion or expressing an emotion)
* John Searle subcategorized illocutionary acts into

Assertives

Directives

Commissives

Expressives

Declaratives

Prelocutionary acts :

* The actual effects that the locutionary or illocutionary acts had on the listener or situation
* Consequences of what was said
* Interpretation
* Ex, “you're beautiful” > intention of giving a compliment > listener feels happy
* Other examples, persuasion, scared, happy, enlightened, reluctance

Summary :

Locutionary : thing that was actually said

Illocutionary : what the speaker intended to say

Perlocutionary : what listener understood/gained/felt

**Meaning**

Carl Sanders Peirce defines it as

Meaning : 3 things -thing

-understand

-representation

There must a *motif/icon* associates to words in order to give them meaning

Cohesion

* The connection of words with each other
* The links that connect the parts of a text
* Using pronouns : we cannot use pronouns in a text if we don't specify somewhere within said text what the pronouns are referring to
* When using multiple pronouns, we must use them in such a way that a reader can comfortably understand what pronoun refers to what noun.
* I.e. in order to use pronouns, you must provide *context*
* Context leads to cohesion

We have some terms to combat the issue of safely using pronouns and still being cohesive

Reference

* a word that has a meaning of its own but has more specific meaning coming from somewhere else in the text
* Ex. Here’s a lovely farm house. John doesn't own it, he only lives in it.
* Here, the meaning of ‘it’ is very clear.
* The word ‘it’ by itself refers to any third person singular inanimate object, but IN THIS CONTEXT ‘it’ refers to this specific farmhouse.
* To understand the meaning of ‘it’, we look for words in the text that most perfectly fit the narrative of the text.
* The word for things like ‘it’ is *reference*
* And the word for things like (in the example above) is *referent* or *antecedent*
* You look for the “antecedent” of a “reference” elsewhere in a text, which is called *referencing* (the process)

Referencing

Connecting different parts of a text (or conversation) by referencing a different set of words, phrases or ideas in the same text.

Two categories of referencing :

1. On basis of location of referent with respect to the reference
2. On the basis of the type of referent/reference

**Category 1**.

On the basis of location i.e. *where* the *reference* occurs with respect to the *antecedent*

1. Anaphoric reference
2. Cataphoric reference
3. Endophoric
4. Exophoric

| Anaphoric   * Backward looking reference * Finding the antecedent in the previous part of the text * Ex. *Revati* went to the store. *She* bought *chocolates*. *They* were bad. |
| --- |
| Cataphoric   * Forward looking * Referring to a future element in the text * The word/phrase is provided later in the text. * Ex. Although *she* loves John, *Mary* doesn't know how to tell him. * Cataphoric referencing helps build suspense in story writing * The word is presented first, and the meaning becomes clear later. |

* For ana- and cataphoric references, the antecedent is supposed to be defined within the text
* But it is possible for an antecedent to be understood in other ways
* Eg, “what is that” \* proceeds to point in a distance \*

“Who are those people” \* pointing at the people in question \*

* On this basis, references can be *endo or exophoric*

| Endophoric  These are the references where the antecedent is found  -inside / is internat to / within the same text  Ex. All ana and cataphoric references |
| --- |
| Exophoric references  These references have antecedents  -outside or external to the text  -or rely on the listener’s knowledge of elements outside the text  Ex. The difficulty level is that of Mount Everest !  Exophoric references are typically used in speech and not in writing. |

Things to remember about referencing :

* Some languages require person, number and gender agreements of references and antecedents
* Some languages may require culturally correct pronouns, ex. “Aap” and “tum”
* Some languages have agreed upon verb conjugations with the antecedent (hindi, french)
* Some languages use odd pronouns, ex. The british monarch refers to herself as “we” or hindi using “hum” as a singular pronoun out of respect
* In ASL, the gaze is part of speech and is very important

Uses of referencing

* Helps avoid repetition
* Helps identify complexity. The more pronouns, the more complex
* Avoids confusion and ambiguity
* Allows to change narrative perspective

Example : When I said that he is a fool, he said to me, “I may be a fool, but you are the boss of fools”

* Provides insight on socio cultural realities

**Category 2.**

Halliday and Hasan : theory of referencing 1974

Personal referencing

* Use of pronouns to refer to people or things
* They can be

Personals :

Subjects : you, I, he , she, they

objects

Possessives

Possessive modifiers : my

Possessive pronouns : mine

* We can’t simply call these pronouns as pronouns are grammatical categories
* Whereas personal referencing is a function or role
* As in “they” is a pronoun, but WHY are we using it. We are using it for personal reference, to refer to persons
* Man (grammatical category) -> son, father

Husband -> role

* An important subcategory : ‘generalized exophoric reference’.

Generalized exophoric reference

* **He** must feel terrible for not getting birthday gifts

**One** must feel terrible for not getting birthday gift

* Here, ‘one’ refers to everyone who hasn’t received a birthday gift. We cannot find any referent anywhere in the text
* We are referring to general people, whose reference is made outside the text
* Recalling, *exophoric* references are those made outside the text
* *Personal* references means referring to people/ things
* *General* means non specific
* Examples of generalized exophoric references

They say two’s company, three’s a crowd and four’s a party

They say no good deed goes unpunished

Extended text reference

* There was a song playing on the radio. It was melodious

The dog was chewing the bone someone gave it earlier

* In the above two we used ‘it’ for personal referencing as usual
* You ate an extra slice of ice cream when I wasn't looking ! I knew it all along.
* Here, ‘it’ refers to the entire act of eating the ice cream when the speaker wasn't looking
* So here, the reference is not for just text, but for extended text

Exercise

1. Outside of a dog, a book is a man’s best friend. Inside of it is too dark to read

Personal - endophoric - anaphoric - dog

1. They say a day without laughter is a day well spent

exophoric - generalized

Demonstrative reference

* Use of demonstrative pronouns to refer to people/things that are present in immediate context
* Identify a referent by means of location
* Use a scale of proximity (here vs. there)
* A form of verbal (i.e. using words) pointing in space
* Examples : this and that, these and those, here and there, now and then etc.
* In the pairs, the first refers to closer while the second is farther
* *Proximal* and *distal* references respectively

Using ‘the’ as demonstrative reference

* It however doesn’t refer to proximal or distal
* Ex. hindi doesnt have a ‘the’
* I bought a book. *The* book was nice

Meine kitaab khareeda. *Voh* kitaab acchi thi.

I bought a book. *That* book was nice

* A book -> voh kitaab -> that book

The three ‘that’s

1. Relative pronoun : the book that/which I bought (test to see if the ‘that’ used in a sentence is a relative pronoun, replace with which. If the sentence still means the same then it is being used as a relative pronoun)
2. Conjunctive/complementizer : I told you that I hate you ! (joining ‘i told you’ and ‘I hate you’)
3. Demonstrative pronoun

Two types of ‘there’

1. The demonstrative reference
2. The one used to show existence
3. *There* was a king

That went missing

They looked everywhere

Except under the chair

*There* was hiding

The king !

1. The first ‘there’ simply tells us about the existence of this king fellow
2. The second ‘there’ is used as a location, under the chair. Hence a demonstrative reference

Exercises

Cata-,ana- or exophoric

1. Listen to this : “everything sucks”; cataphoric (this comes before what we define this to actually be)
2. Huh, i've already heard that ; anaphoric (that has already been defined in the text)
3. Come over here if you want to save your salary ; exophoric (the referent is outside the dialogue)

**Tall taller tallest**

Comparative referencing (taller)

1. Comparative form of adverbs/adjectives to establish connection between referent and reference
2. Ex. Mary is as tall as dave
3. With respect to

Superlative (tellest)

Qualitative (tall)

Substitution

1. Nominal substitution : replacement of a noun or phrase with one

Clausal Substitution

Using not and so to replace phrases

Ellipses

1. Means omission
2. John went home and (john) cried
3. Three types

Nominal Ellipsis

1. Omitting the noun phrase
2. John went home and slept (john)
3. I have big plans not small (plans)

Verbal Ellipses

1. Loss in verbal phrase

Clausal Ellipsis

1. Removing clause

Conjunctions

1. Temporal then : i came and then i slept
2. Casual so : i came so i could sleep
3. Adversative but : i came but fell asleep
4. Additive and : i came and slept

Lexical cohesion

1. Words related to each other
2. You expect one after the other is mentioned
3. Rancid cheese
4. Open an account, do the dishes
5. Antonyms
6. Synonyms
7. Meronyms : relationship between part and whole

Ex. my life is a book and she is the most important chapter

Connotation

I am not your doll

—------------------------------------------------

Turn Taking

rules

1. Current speaker selects next speaker
2. Current guy can speak however long he wants
3. No interruptions
4. Next turn starts immediately

Structure of turns

1. TRANSITION RELEVANT PLACES TRPs
2. Turn construction unit

Linguistic cues

1. Pauses
2. Rise and fall in tone
3. Lexical terms
4. grammar

Non linguistic cues

1. Body language
2. Eye gaze

Rules of turn allocation

1. Current assigns next speaker
2. If not assigned, anyone can choose to be next
3. If no one says anything the current speaker may continue

Types of overlap

1. Simultaneous speech : non malicious, out of excitement or eagerness, supportive, collaboration; are cooperative
2. Interruptive : intentional overtaking, to cut off, to assert speaker role ; disagreement, urgency, impatience, competitive, aggressive

Backchanneling

Adjacency Pairs

1. Related and follow a specific order
2. Set up expectation and fulfill expectation
3. First pair part FPP : leads, initiates, triggers, opens
4. Second pair part SPP : follows, responds, reactions, closure
5. Preferred and dispreferred

Dispreferred :

1. Hedged response : uncertainty
2. Account : using a reason
3. Dispreferred : disagreement through acknowledgement
4. apologetic

Repairs and corrections

1. Speaker initiated
2. Listener initiated

Politeness maxims

1. Tact
2. Generosity
3. approbation
4. Modesty
5. Agreement
6. Sympathy

Post mids

Politeness tools (linguistic tools)

1. Indirectness : “would you mind closing the door” instead of “please close the door”. Allows to save face by giving a choice and not a compulsion
2. Hedging : softening language, sounds less demanding. Making it clear that you're not imposing a demand. Uncertainty + question. “Could you perhaps give me the phone”
3. Politeness formula : using the fixed words. Please, thank you, excuse me. But they are taken for granted, ritualistic, so they are less effective

What are politeness strategies : ways of using language to avoid offending or hurting others. Taking into account that what you have to say might upset the listener

Used when the response is dispreferred.

Thank you for the invitation but I have prior commitments. I’d have loved to make it though.

Politeness is a guide. In the form of behavior and language. The way you act or speak.

Politeness strategies according to social situation

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Off the record

Positive politeness strategy

1. Make other feel good, respected, included
2. Build rapport, make conversation warm
3. Avoids disagreements
4. Protects positive face
5. Compliments : uplift through exaggeration and congratulations
6. Seeking agreement : showing you are on the same side, solidary
7. Seeking shared experience : create common ground through shared interests
8. Including yourself and them into a same ‘group’
9. And the use of exaggeration

Negative politeness strategies

1. Appeal to negative face
2. Respecting personal space, setting boundaries
3. They can say no
4. Avoiding offense
5. Respecting their wishes
6. Be indirect (“so whats the plans for tonight” instead of asking what dinner is)
7. Apologize for requesting
8. Offer a favor in exchange (“please turn off one light, you can turn it back on after i sleep”)
9. Be modest (“sorry im a light sleeper but could you …”)
10. Use formal language

Off the record strategies

1. No direct statements
2. Hints or implications
3. Sarcasm “idk why i cant concentrate right now huh” instead of “turn down the music”
4. Humor “i totally believe heroes fall down stairs” when someone falls down
5. Understatements “hitler was a political leader” instead of saying genocidal dictator

Sarcasm = opposite of what is being said/done

Understatement = downplaying the events deliberately

When to use which strategies ?

1. Positive : when we like or respect the speaker
2. Negative : when we dont know them or an authority figure
3. Off the record : friends or family, we can afford to be rude to them

Politeness is culture sensitive

Ex eye contact, pda, scolding other people’s kids

Giving bad news

1. Provide real answer
2. Provide hope
3. Be ambiguous
4. Ambiguously hopeful
5. Why face the choice ? because politeness is a spectrum
6. Depends on culture what polite is : some cultures being straightforward is polite
7. It also depends on how one wants to appear to the person receiving the bad news

Balancing politeness. How to maintain the correct and appropriate level. Taking in factors

1. Social context
2. Nature of relationship
3. Cultural norms
4. Being polite and respectful but also getting everyone's preferences recognized
5. Avoiding any extremes, like too assertive or too meek

Factors to balance politeness

1. Friendly vs aloof
2. Sharing personal information but still maintaining privacy
3. Offering advice vs respecting personal boundaries
4. Enthusiasm vs over eagerness
5. Complimenting vs over praising

The above is a spectrum, we find the ‘sweet spot’ for different conversations based on different factors

1. Social context : formal vs casual
2. Relationship : hierarchy, vs equal
3. Cultural norms : eastern vs western

Avoidance strategies : when preferences clash, protecting faces, maintain harmony

1. Evasion : avoiding sensitive topics, changing the subject, subtle withdrawal, ignoring
2. Vagueness : imprecise language to be unclear
3. Non verbal cues : body language, eye contact

How to deal with delivering bad news :

1. Acknowledge concern : I understand your pain
2. Down play negative highlight positive : vital organs are fine
3. Say you've seen worse
4. Delay response : we cant say right now
5. Defer responsibility : im only an emt ask a doctor
6. Change the topic : help me stabilize him first
7. Cautious hopeful : i have faith the staff will their best
8. Gentle and regretful in telling the truth

Topic shifting : how it happens

1. Explicitly : “speaking of…”, “so anyways”, “let's shift our gears”
2. Implicitly : gradually doing it in conversation

Maintaining the topic

1. Providing additional information
2. Asking questions

Topic nomination/ initiation

1. Direct
2. Indirect : hints and cues, excuses

Types of topics

1. Personal
2. Current events
3. Entertainment
4. work/career
5. travel/leisure
6. Food and dining
7. Family and relationships
8. Tech
9. Hobbies and interests
10. Health and wellness
11. Environmental and social issues

Institutional talk

1. Asymmetry
2. Sequential
3. contributions
4. Expected things to say
5. Formality
6. Task oriented
7. Paul drew, john heritage
8. Roles
9. Constraints on what can be said
10. Technical words
11. No colloquials
12. Institution, special language, rules, people

Topic termination

Social situatedness : you make choices when you say things depending on where you are

Take into account social and cultural settings of the statements made

Speaking a certain way and becoming a member of a community

Discourse communities by john swales

Shared language and a set of conventions, unique genres of communication

Share knowledge of a domain

Communities of practice : what we do together not where we belong

Set of practises

Both people can be from different places but if they're doing the same thing they obey the rules of the thing not where they're from

Gender is what a person practices, a performance

Sex vs gender

Gender is interaction and practise

Affinity spaces

Place to come together to share the common thing

Genre

The way people get things done through their use of language

Staged, goal oriented personal activity

Format is expected

Jim Martin

Members of a community communicate

Structure

Style

Purpose

Subject matter

Audience

Discourse on the speaker

We are a character

Dress, act, pronunciation

Dialects

Synonyms of a word depends on which country

People reveal age in the way they speak

Linguistic variables

Phonological : accents, pronunciations

Lexical : meaning of a word changes from era to era and from country to country, from just a name to a slur

Grammatical feature : grammar and syntax

Prestige

Principles of critical discourse analysis

1. Social and political issues are constructed and reflected
2. Power relations are negotiated
3. Reflects and reproduces social relations
4. Ideologies are reproduced

Linguistic features

Aim of text

Background of text