SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH PERFORMATIVE VERBS

(with the collaboration of Kenneth MacQueen)

Contrary to what Saussure tried to establish with his distinction between *langue* and *parole,*[1] the nature of the primary speech acts that are performed in the use of a natural language is determined by the semantic structure of that language. Actual natural languages such as English and French have in their lexicon a large number of speech act verbs whose meanings serve to determine the possible illocutionary forces of the utterances of their sentences. The purpose of this chapter is to apply the illocutionary logic of general semantics to English and to proceed to the lexical analysis of about three hundred important speech act verbs which have an illocutionary point as part of their meaning. As I have not presented in this volume the ideal object-language of general semantics, I will proceed here to a *direct semantic analysis* of these verbs. I will describe their logical form and identify the actual components of the illocutionary forces or acts which they name without translating them into an artificial conceptual language. The rules of translation which are needed for a more precise and systematic application of general semantics to English will be *stated* in the second volume.

In analyzing English speech act verbs, my first aim is to study how the set of illocutionary forces is *lexicalized* in the English vocabulary. As is the case for the set of truth functions, the set of illocutionary forces is not lexicalized in the same way in different actual natural languages. Each human language has its own *genius* in the ways in

[1] See chapter 3 of F. de Saussure, *Court de linguistique générale,* Paris: Payot, 1966.

which it categorizes the actual illocutionary kinds of use to which its sentences can be put in the world of speech, and that categorization is appropriate to the natural environment and the social forms of life of the linguistic community of speakers who speak that language. The second aim of this lexical analysis of speech act verbs is to predict and explain the semantic relations of entailment and of incompatibility that exist between English performative sentences in virtue of the meaning of their main performative verbs.

As Searle and I pointed out in *Foundations,* it is necessary to make a few theoretical distinctions in the analysis of English speech act verbs. Some of these distinctions derive from the fact that there is no one-to-one correspondence between actual illocutionary forces and speech act verbs. Others are relative to linguistically important aspects of utterances.[2]

(1) Many performative verbs do not name an illocutionary force, but rather a kind or a set of illocutionary act. For example, there is no illocutionary force of forbidding. A speaker who forbids someone to do something just orders that person not to do it. Moreover, certain performative verbs like "answer" or "reply" name sets of speech acts that can have any illocutionary point. Some questions like "Are you sure?" expect assertive answers, others like "Do you invite me too?" and "Do you accept?" expect directive or commissive answers, and so on for the other illocutionary points. Thus there is no specific illocutionary force of answering.[3]

(2) Some performative verbs like "state" and "assert", which name the same illocutionary force, are not synonymous. Their difference of meaning derives from *conversational features* which are independent of their logical forms. Thus, in ordinary speech, to make a statement is to make an assertion in a conversation where one gives a full account of something or where one takes an official position. In this sense, a statement is generally made within a conversation consisting of a sequence of several assertive utterances.

(3) Some speech act verbs which name illocutionary forces do not

2 See the last chapter of J. R. Searle and D. Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic,* Cambridge University Press, 1985

2 Many speech act verbs like " announce ", " interject", and " shout" do not name an illocutionary force because they do not carry any restriction as to the illocutionary point or refer only to the features of the utterance act. Many authors on the subject mistakenly confuse such speech act verbs with performative verbs. General semantics is only concerned with proper performative verbs and should not be criticized on the basis of such confusions.

have a *performative use.* For example, one cannot use performatively the verb "insinuate" in order to insinuate that a proposition is true. 'The reason for this is that an assertive insinuation must somehow be concealed or implicit.

(4) Many speech act verbs have *several* uses and can name different illocutionary forces. For example, the verb "swear" has both an assertive and a commissive use. A speaker can swear that a proposition is true (assertive) and he can also swear to a hearer that he will do something in the future (commissive).

(5) Some performative verbs are *systematically ambiguous* between several illocutionary points. For example, an alert is the conjunction of an assertion that some danger is imminent and of a directive suggestion to the hearer to prepare for action in order to avoid misfortune.

(6) One must distinguish between speech act verbs like " order" and "promise " that are *essentially hearer directed* and others like "assert" and "conjecture" which name illocutionary forces of speech acts that are not necessarily aimed at someone in particular. An order is always by definition an order to someone, even when the speaker gives an order to himself.

(7) One must also distinguish between speech act verbs like "accuse" which name illocutionary acts which can only be performed *in public* and those like "blame" which can be performed *in thought* alone and in silent soliloquy. When a speech act is essentially directed at a hearer who is different from the speaker, the speaker must have the intention to *communicate* his intention to perform that act to the hearer. Consequently, that speech act requires a *public* performance.

(8) Some illocutionary verbs like "bet" and "contract" name speech acts which cannot be performed by the speaker alone but which require a *mutual joint performance* by both a speaker and a hearer. Thus, for example, in order for a bet to be successful, it is not sufficient that the speaker make a wager with a hearer; it is also necessary that the hearer accept that wager. Such speech acts like betting and contracting require a creative relation of *interlocution** between the speaker and the hearer, who then also becomes a speaker for the purpose of making his contribution to the joint speech act. They are the result of a *collective intentionality* of two or more speakers.

4 A very important relationship for the logic of conversation is the relation of *interlocution* that exists between the protagonists of the speech act, the speakers, and the hearers in a context of utterance. See F.Jacques, *Dialogiques,* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979 and L'*Espace logique de l'interlocution,* Pans: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

(9) Finally, performative verbs can have *non-illocutionary meanings*. For example, the verb "allow", which has performative uses, can also name events which are not speech acts. I can, for example, allow someone to do something without saying anything, just by letting him do it. Such verbs will be called hereafter *hybrid verbs*.

I will only be concerned here with the *paradigmatic central illocutionary meanings* of speech act verbs, and I will have to idealize even these meanings somewhat in my semantic analyses. The important thing, from a logical point of view, is to get the relations of comparative strength between English illocutionary forces correctly ordered so as to predict actual illocutionary entailments and incompatibilities between performative sentences. Some performative verbs that I will analyze in what follows have already been directly analyzed in *Foundations*. In these cases, I will in general simply briefly reformulate the previous analysis (and I refer the reader to *Foundations* for more explanation). About two hundred speech act verbs are here analyzed for the first time. I am most grateful to Kenneth MacQueen for his collaboration in the analysis of these new verbs and in the reformulation of previous analyses. This chapter is the result of collaboration between us.

I ENGLISH ASSERTIVES

Our list of assertives contains: assert, reassert, negate, deny, correct, claim, affirm, state, disclaim, declare, tell, suggest, guess, hypothesize, conjecture, postulate, predict, forecast, foretell, prophesy, vaticinate, report, retrodict, warn, forewarn, advise, alert, alarm, remind, describe, inform, reveal, divulge, divulgate, notify, insinuate, sustain, insist, maintain, assure, aver, avouch, certify, attest, swear, testify, agree, disagree, assent, dissent, acquiesce, object, recognize, acknowledge, admit, confess, concede, recant, criticize, praise, blame, accuse, calumniate, reprimand, castigate, denounce, boast, complain, lament.

(1) *assert*

The primitive assertive in English is "assert", which names the force of assertion. It is sometimes used in the stronger sense of positively asserting as opposed to denying, in which case it is a strong assertive relative to its primitive use.

(2) *reassert*

To reassert is to assert for a second (or subsequent) time, often in response to hesitation or denial.

(3) *negate*

To negate a proposition is simply to assert the truth functional negation of that proposition. The negation of the assertion that Johnny is good is the assertion that Johnny is not good.

(4) *deny*

"Deny" is systematically both assertive and declarative. In the assertive sense to deny a proposition is to negate that proposition by asserting the contrary or opposite proposition. There is generally, perhaps always, a preparatory condition to the effect that the denial is a denial of something that has been affirmed. Further, while virtually any claim may be negated, denial seems to be related to matters of some importance and perhaps also related to accusation (further preparatory conditions). I may *negate* a claim that it is snowing outside by saying that it is not snowing, but it would take special contextual factors for me to want to *deny* it. On the other hand, I would naturally deny a (false) assertion that I had neglected to inform you of a contractual deadline.

(5) *correct*

To correct someone, maybe myself, is to presuppose that a mistake has been made in a previous assertion, and to assert a slightly different propositional content to replace it. For example, "Judy is not 19 years old, she is 20."

(6) *claim,* (7) *affirm,* (8) *state*

"Claim" also names the illocutionary force of assertion inasmuch as it has the same illocutionary point, mode of achievement, degree of strength, propositional content, preparatory and sincerity conditions. There are differences of conversational nuance in that "claim" tends to connect the assertion to the speaker by way of right or " ownership ". Similarly, "affirm" names the same force but has conversational

overtones of being or rendering "firm". "State", while naming the same force as well, has a nuance of entering into a larger or more formal discourse as a "statement". In many uses of these verbs, there is an additional preparatory condition to the effect that what is asserted is a matter of some importance.

(9) *disclaim*

The act of disclaiming is the illocutionary denegation of a claim. We might conversationally pair "assert" in its primitive use with "negate", "assert" in its less primitive and stronger use, as well as "affirm" with "deny", "claim" with "disclaim", and "state" with, perhaps, "retract".

(10) *declare*

The verb "to declare" while being the primitive declarative, also has an assertive use very like that of "assert". This is why grammar calls *"declarative sentences"* those that are in the indicative mood and which generally serve to make assertions. In its assertive use, to make a declaration is to affirm publicly a proposition that directly concerns the speaker with the perlocutionary intention of making this known. So we commonly say of a politician that he has made a declaration when he has publicly asserted his electoral intentions. In the same sense, we declare our sins, our feelings or our love. In this use, declaration is an assertion with a public mode of achievement having the perlocutionary intention of rendering public something to which the speaker has direct and privileged access (in the first person).

(11) *tell*

The verb "tell" in English has both an assertive and a directive use. One can tell someone that something is the case (assertive), or tell him to do something (directive). To tell in the assertive sense that something is the case is generally to make a strong assertion in a rather peremptory way (mode of achievement) that presumes (preparatory condition) virtual certitude and hence implies no reasonable option of critique. This peremptory mode of achievement is recurrent in the performative uses, as in "He is there, I tell you."

(12) *suggest*

"Suggest" also has a directive and an assertive use. I can suggest both that you do something and that something is the case. In the assertive use, to suggest something is to bring it to the mind of the hearer without necessarily explicitly affirming it and without a strong commitment to its truth. Hence, to suggest is to assert with a weak degree of strength. There is often an implicit mode of achievement as well, but it is sometimes explicit as in " I suggest that you are in error."

(13) *guess*

"Guess" has an illocutionary use in which it means to assert a proposition weakly without a high level of commitment to its truth but rather with the preparatory condition that one presupposes its probability. There is no strong sense that there is proof or evidence that can be called upon. I might guess, for example, that "it will take about five minutes to get to the ball field" or to "print out a few pages".

(14) *hypothesize,* (15) *conjecture,* (16) *postulate*

To hypothesize is to make a weak assertion with the presuppositions that although it is not certain, it is nonetheless reasonable (reasons can be given to substantiate it), and that it might prove useful to further discussion or investigation. The mode of achievement may or may not be more or less formal. To conjecture and to postulate are to strengthen, progressively, the degree to which reasons can be given in support of the propositional content. In the case of conjecture, the speaker presupposes that he has evidence for the truth of the propositional content. Thus an arithmetical conjecture like Goldbach's conjecture is a weak assertion of a proposition about all even numbers for which one has no proof as yet, but for which one has much evidence. It is true of all even numbers to which it has been applied to date. A postulate is stronger than a conjecture, because the speaker presupposes that the propositional content is self-evident and consequently requires no proof (e.g. Euclid's postulates). This preparatory condition increases the degree of strength.

(17) *predict,* (18) *forecast,* (19) *foretell*

The illocutionary force of a prediction is that of an assertion with a special condition to the effect that the propositional content represents a state of affairs future to the time of utterance, and a preparatory condition such that the speaker is expected to have good reasons and evidence for believing what is predicted. To forecast is to make a special kind of prediction in that it is based on relatively clear signs of how something (the weather, for example) seems to be shaping up (additional propositional content conditions). To foretell is to "tell" in advance, often something rather vague (propositional content condition). There is a preparatory condition to the effect that the authority (of certitude or of relevation) is purported to be strong. So one might have good reasons to predict an eclipse, or to predict that George will be late. One can with some confidence forecast tomorrow's weather. And there are those who will foretell the coming of a new era of peace.

(20) *prophesy,* (21) *vaticinate*

These two verbs, only the first of which is commonly used, have the illocutionary force of a prediction with an additional, particularly authoritative mode of achievement. The latter has to do with the authority of an oracle, the former with the authority of God or of divine revelation. In either case, the speaker presupposes that he has good reasons for the belief to the point of certitude.

(22) *report*

To report is to assert with the propositional content condition to the effect that the propositional content is about either the past in relation to the time of utterance, or, in some cases, the present. One reports on what has happened or on what is happening now, and one predicts with regard to the future.

(23) *retrodict*

Although "retrodict" is not a word in standard English, it can be used to name assertions whose propositional content is about the past. As in the case of a prediction, a speaker who makes a retrodiction presupposes

(preparatory condition) that he has evidence for the truth of the propositional content and this increases the degree of strength of his assertion.

(24) *warn,* (25) *forewarn,* (26) *advise,* (27) *caution,* (28) *alert,* (29) *alarm*

"Warn" is systematically ambiguous between an assertive and a directive use. In the assertive use, I can warn that *P* where the proposition is future to the time of utterance as in the case of a prediction (propositional content condition) but where there is the additional presumption both that it somehow bodes badly for the hearer and that there is still some possibility of avoiding the misfortune (with appropriate action on the hearer's part) which brings us to the systematic presence of the directive. Thus, to warn the hearer that P is to assert *P* with the directive purpose of suggesting that he do something about it. So, one might say "I warn you that this part of town is dangerous at night." To forewarn is to do the same, with the added propositional content condition to the effect that considerable "lead time" is involved. "Be forewarned that if you move here you will find winters much colder than you are used to." To caution is to warn the hearer of a possible future danger that he should pay attention to (e.g. the bad state of the road). To advise is like to warn, except that the additional presupposition is to the effect that what is advised is good for the hearer. An alert, on the other hand, is a warning whose propositional content condition is that some danger or concern is imminent (e.g. a military alert). Finally, an alarm (e.g. a fire alarm) is a warning of immediate danger (special propositional content condition).

(30) *remind*

To remind someone of something is to assert it while presupposing (preparatory condition) that he knew it and may have forgotten. Generally there is the additional assumption that *P* bears some pertinence or import (conversationally) that it may not have had when it first came to the hearer's attention. Reminding is essentially hearer directed.

(31) *describe*

To describe something is to make an assertion or a series of assertions about it, in general in the context of a conversation where that thing is the subject of some discussion and more complete information on it is deemed relevant. Thus, often, a description is a speech activity that involves more than a single isolated assertive illocutionary act.

(32) *inform,* (33) *reveal,* (34) *divulge,* (35) *divulgate*

To inform is hearer directed in that it is to assert with the preparatory condition that the hearer does not already know P. To reveal is to inform with the added preparatory condition that the information has been hidden, and that the revelation is removing the veil or cover that has hidden it from view. To divulge is to reveal with the added preparatory condition that what was hidden was purposely hidden, whereas to divulgate adds the perlocutionary intention that what is becoming known becomes broadly known (adding to the mode of achievement).

(36) *notify*

To notify is to assert with the added mode of achievement to the effect that the hearer be put "on notice" with regard to *P.* That is, whether or not the hearer already knows *P,* it may be important that this mode of achievement be invoked in order, for example, that the hearer should not be able to have or feign ignorance of *P* for legal or other reasons (part of the preparatory condition). So we say "You are hereby notified" of the terminating of a contract or a convocation to a meeting, etc.

(37) *insinuate*

To insinuate is to assert by gradual and/or informal means, thereby invoking an implicit mode of achievement. Generally, to insinuate has the additional propositional content condition to the effect that *P* be negative - perhaps that the hearer or another party might have competence or integrity in question.

(38) *sustain,* (39) *insist,* (40) *maintain*

To sustain a proposition is to assert it publicly, generally with a high degree of strength, making it clear that one has reasons to support it. To insist is to sustain with "insistence", and a yet higher degree of strength. To maintain P is to assert P with a sense of continuity and persistence. "Sustain", then, adds to "assert" the preparatory condition to the effect that the speaker is in a position to give reasons for his belief in P. "Insist" adds to "sustain" the mode of achievement of persistence. "Maintain" adds to "sustain" both the preparatory condition that the assertion of P is a repeated assertion and the mode of achievement of persistence. "Insist" can also have a directive use ("I insist that you do it!"), and "maintain" can have a declarative use ("I hereby maintain your right to inherit").

(41) *assure,* (42) *aver,* (43) *avouch*

"Assure" has both a commissive and an assertive use. In the commissive, I can assure you that I will do something. In the assertive, I assure the hearer that a proposition is true. In this use, it is to sustain with the perlocutionary intention of convincing the hearer (to the point that he feels "sure") of the truth of P. This perlocutionary intention is part of the mode of achievement, and goes hand in hand with a preparatory condition to the effect that the hearer has doubts about the truth of P. To aver is to assure positively, with either proof or an offer of proof, such that the "assurance" is strengthened to certitude. To vouch or avouch is to assure with the added strength of "aver", but the added strength comes from the mode of achievement not of one's offering "proofs" but of one's being personally convinced and of the assurance on personal authority.

(44) *certify*

In the assertive sense, to certify is to assure that a proposition is true, in a formal way with the perlocutionary intention of having the hearer feel "certain" of the truth of the proposition (e.g. a school certificate or a certificate of good conduct). As with "assure", "certify" can also be commissive, as when one certifies that a task will be completed on time.

(45) *attest,* (46) *swear,* (47) *testify*

To attest to *P* is to assert P with a serious mode of achievement and with a preparatory condition to the effect that *P* is in question. "Swear" has a commissive use ("I swear that I will do it") but also an assertive use in which to swear is to attest with a high degree of solemnity to the mode of achievement — particularly high if one has already sworn (commissive) to tell the truth. To testify is to attest to something that (as a preparatory condition) one oneself has witnessed. This adds to the degree of strength. Often, an additional mode of achievement is present, namely, when one testifies in the capacity of legal witness-thus further augmenting the degree of strength. "Swear " therefore is derived from "attest" by the increased solemnity (mode of achievement), perhaps religious **or** legal (preparatory conditions). "Testify" is derived from "attest" by the addition of the preparatory condition to the effect that the knowledge is first hand, and perhaps also of the mode of achievement as a legal witness.

(48) *agree,* (49) *disagree*

The verb "agree" is both a propositional attitude and a speech act verb. One can be in the mental state of being in accord or agreement with someone without uttering any words. One can also agree verbally with someone by making the speech act of agreeing. In this illocutionary sense, to agree is to assert a proposition *P* while presupposing (the preparatory condition) that other persons have previously put forward that proposition and while expressing (sincerity condition) one's accord or agreement with these persons as regards *P*. The person(s) with whom the speaker agrees may, but need not, be the hearer(s). One can say "I agree with him that P" as well as "I agree with you that P." The contrary of "agree" is "disagree". To disagree is to assert a proposition with the preparatory condition that other persons have previously put forward the negation of that proposition and the sincerity condition that one is in a state of disagreement with them.

(50) *assent,* (51) *dissent,* (52) *acquiesce*

To assent is to agree, with the added preparatory condition that there has been some persuasion to agree and the consequent added mode of

achievement of some reluctance. On the contrary, to dissent is to disagree -while resisting this pressure or effort of persuasion. To acquiesce is to assent under still more pressure and with yet more reluctance.

(53) *object*

To make an objection is to assert a proposition with the additional preparatory condition that some other proposition incompatible with it has been put forward in the context of discussion. Whenever a speaker objects that *P,* he disagrees with someone else as regards a proposition Q that is implied by P. Moreover, he also has the perlocutionary intention of rebutting *Q* (additional mode of achievement). In a legal context, an objection to a testimony need not be a denial of its propositional content. It can also be a denial of the admissibility of that testimony.

(54) *recognize,* (55) *acknowledge,* (56) *admit,* (57) *confess,* (58) *concede,* (59) *recant*

Acquiescence (above) seems to fall on a scale with other verbs of "concession". To recognize is to assert that a proposition is true with a preparatory condition to the effect that it has been proposed by someone else and may run against what the speaker would otherwise have thought. To acknowledge is to recognize openly (mode of achievement). To admit to a state of affairs (e.g. a failure or an error) is to recognize it openly while presupposing that it is bad and is in some way connected to the hearer. To confess is to admit one's responsibility for a state of affairs (propositional content condition) while presupposing that this state of affairs is bad (usually very bad, e.g. to confess one's sins). To concede something (e.g. an opponent's victory) is to acknowledge it with a certain reluctance (mode of achievement) while presupposing concession to pressure. To recant is to be forced to go back upon one's most cherished beliefs, perhaps in the face of threat of death.

(60) *criticize,* (61) *praise*

"Criticize" has two distinct assertive uses, one implying value judgment and the other not. In the latter use, to criticize is simply to make a series of assertions about the subject in question in an attempt

to discern features judged relevant (as with literary criticism, but also in common parlance). This sense is close to the etymology of the verb. In Greek, κριvειv means to judge. In the other use, to criticize is to make an assertion about someone or something that highlights his or her faults. So there is a propositional content condition to the effect that the state of affairs represented is bad, and a sincerity condition to the effect that the speaker disapproves of that state of affairs. On the one hand, to praise someone or something is to assert that a state of affairs that concerns him or it is good (propositional content condition) while expressing approval of that state of affairs (sincerity condition). Thus "praise" forms a minimal pair with "criticize" in the second sense.

(62) *blame,* (63) *accuse,* (64) *calumniate*

To blame someone is to criticize him in asserting that he is responsible for something (propositional content condition), while presupposing that that something is bad (preparatory condition). Whereas negative criticism may be laid upon products (a book or a play) or states of affairs ("new mess we find ourselves in") and so on, blame is laid upon people. We can blame people, of course, without saying so. An accusation differs from blame in that an accusation is necessarily public. The degree of strength is increased by this public mode of achievement. To calumniate is to accuse falsely with the perlocutionary intention to mislead and "misaccuse".

(65) *reprimand,* (66) *castigate*

To reprimand (reproach, admonish, etc.) is to accuse with the special mode of achievement of adding personal displeasure as a punishment for the wrongdoing. Generally this reprimand comes out of a position of authority (a feature of the mode of achievement), although this may be a presumed sense of moral authority. To castigate is to reprimand strongly with the additional preparatory condition that the error represents significant moral error.

(67) *denounce*

To denounce is to accuse a third party (special propositional content condition). Often the speaker who denounces purports to be a high

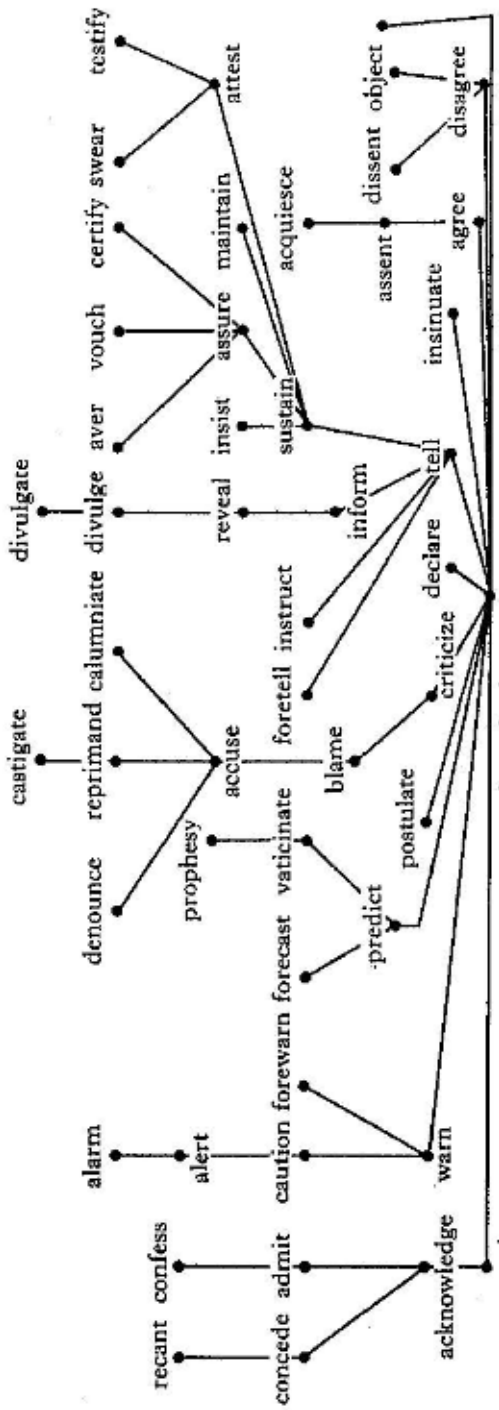

Figure 1. Semantic tableau for assertives

moral authority attributing grave error to a moral inferior (special mode of achievement).

(68) *boast,* (69) *complain,* (70) *lament*

These words, and many others ("approve", "applaud", etc.), have both an expressive and an assertive use. To boast is to assert a proposition *P* while expressing pride that P (sincerity condition), and with the preparatory condition that *P* is good. On the contrary, to make a complaint is to assert a proposition P while expressing dissatisfaction with P (sincerity condition), and with the preparatory condition that the state of affairs represented is bad. "Lament" adds to "complaint" the additional sincerity condition of an element of great sadness which is characteristically expressed in English by the adverb "alas".

The relations of comparative strength that exist between English illocutionary forces in virtue of semantic definitions of English performative verbs can be exhibited in *semantic tableaux* by constructing logical trees in accordance with the following rules:

First, all nodes of a semantic tableau are speech act verbs naming illocutionary forces with the same designated illocutionary point.

Second, a verb is the immediate successor of another verb in a semantic tableau if and only if the force that it names can be obtained from the force named by the other verb by adding new components or increasing the degree of strength. One can indicate the nature of the operation that is applied by writing the symbol of its type at the left of the branch that connects these two verbs in the semantic tableau.

As the same illocutionary force can sometimes be obtained from two different weaker forces by the addition of different components, the same semantic analyses can lead to the construction of several illocutionary trees. The possible alternatives can be exhibited in a semantic tableau by drawing additional dotted branches.

The semantic tableau shown in figure 1 represents the relations of comparative strength that exist between English assertive illocutionary forces in virtue of the semantic definitions of this section.

ENGLISH COMMISSIVES

Our list of commissives contains: commit, pledge, undertake, engage, promise, hypothecate, guarantee, threaten, vow, avow, swear, assure, certify, accept, agree, consent, acquiesce, abide, reject, refuse, renounce, offer, counter-offer, bid, rebid, tender, dedicate, bet, wager, contract, covenant, subscribe.

(1) *commit*

The performative pronominal verb "commit" names the primitive commissive force.

(2) *pledge*

To pledge is to commit oneself strongly to doing something. Thus, the illocutionary force of a pledge is obtained by increasing the degree of strength of a commitment. In some cases, a pledge can be solemn, as in a pledge of allegiance.

(3) *undertake,* (4) *engage*

To undertake, in the commissive use, is to commit oneself to perform a clearly defined task that is at hand (propositional content condition). I might undertake to do something on your behalf, and if so, the action is "pending." To engage oneself in a task or direction is to commit oneself to immediate action (as a propositional content condition). The beginning of the engagement is the beginning of the enactment of the commitment.

(5) *promise,* (6) *hypothecate*

"Promise" is considered the paradigm of commissive verbs. It does, however, have particular traits that distinguish it from the primitive. First, it is always made to someone (it is essentially hearer directed) and has the special preparatory condition to the effect that it is good for the hearer. Second, it involves a special kind of commitment, namely the explicit undertaking of an obligation that may remain tacit in other types of commitment. This explicit undertaking of an obligation increases the degree of strength of the sincerity conditions. To hypothecate is conditionally to promise some sort of security for credit,

debt or liability (propositional content condition). The mode of achievement is more or less formal. So to hypothecate something (a house, for example) is to promise to give it should one fail to meet financial obligations (the repayment of a mortgage).

(7) *guarantee*

To guarantee is to perform a complex speech act that is both an assertion and a conditional promise. A speaker who guarantees a proposition P both asserts *P* and promises simultaneously some (moral or other) compensation in the event that his statement turns out not to be true (or some commitment is not carried out, etc.).

(8) *threaten*

To threaten is to commit oneself to doing something to someone with the perlocutionary intention of intimidating the hearer (mode of achievement) and with the presupposition (preparatory condition) that it is bad for him. Threatening need not be a speech act. Neither does the person doing the threatening have the obligation he would have in the case of a promise actually to carry out the threat. Since one can threaten without using words (by making threatening gestures, for example), "threaten" is a hybrid verb.

(9) *vow,* (10) *avow,* (11) *swear*

A vow is not essentially hearer directed as is a promise or a threat. I may vow to do something good for myself or someone else. There is an earnestness to vowing that verges on the solemn and may in fact be solemn (e.g. a vow of chastity or of obedience). To avow is to vow solemnly. This earnestness and solemnity are modes of achievement. The commissive "swear" is obtained from the primitive commissive in the same way in which the assertive "swear" **is** obtained from the primitive assertive. To swear is to commit oneself to future action in virtue of a solemn, public evocation of a sacred or revered person, object or institution. There is thus both a more heightened degree of strength and a more restricted mode of achievement than in the case of "avow."

(12) *assure,* (13) *certify*

To assure (in the commissive use) is to commit oneself to something with the perlocutionary intention of convincing someone who has doubts. The presupposition of these doubts is a preparatory condition and the attempt to try to have the hearer "feel sure" of the commitment is, as in the assertive use, a special mode of achievement in giving assurance. Similarly, to certify is to commit oneself to doing *P* (or seeing to it that *P* gets done) with the heightened degree of strength such that the hearer feels "certain" that *P* will be done. Formal attestations (as a special mode of achievement) may be "certificates" of commitment, authenticity, etc.

(14) *accept*

To accept, in the relevant sense, is to respond favorably to an offer, an invitation, a request, etc. in committing oneself to a desired course of action. We can accept a suggestion or challenge (to combat, for example), we can accept a present or a gift or we can accept an offer on the part of the other to do something. In the latter instance, we commit ourselves to tolerating the action we have accepted. In general, to accept P is to commit ourselves to do P (or to permit that P be done) while presupposing (as a preparatory condition) that the hearer or some other person has requested P in previous conversation. In the special case of P representing a future action on the part of the hearer, accepting it is committing ourselves to allowing it while presupposing (as a further preparatory condition) that he has offered to do it.

(15) *agree*

To agree, in the commissive use, is to accept with the added sincerity condition to the effect that one is "in agreement with" the content of P. One can accept P with or without being in agreement that it is a good idea, but to agree is to accept with that sincerity condition being expressed.

(16) *consent,* (17) *acquiesce,* (18) *abide*

To consent is to accept to do something with the additional preparatory condition that one has apparent reasons for not doing it and therefore

would not be likely to do it were it not for some degree of persuasion in the request. To acquiesce is to consent with deep reluctance (mode of achievement and sincerity condition). To abide is to "put up with" a request of a very high degree of strength, generally in the sense of "abiding by" a ruling, and accepting a course of action or a decision. This is usually, but not always, with deep regret (sincerity condition). This latter depends on whether the ruling is general (in which case I may abide by it without much personal feeling at stake) or specially "ruled" in order to force my consent (in which, case the feelings of regret will be present).

(19) *reject,* (20) *refuse*

The negative counterparts of acceptances and consents are rejections and refusals. A rejection is the illocutionary denegation of the acceptance of an offer, while a refusal is the illocutionary denegation of the acceptance of a request. Like acceptances, rejections and refusals have the additional preparatory condition that one has the option of accepting or rejecting/refusing.

(21) *renounce*

"Renounce" is a hybrid verb. One can renounce something simply by no longer seeking it or trying to get it. One might also renounce something that one already has, simply by giving it up without a word. But here, in the commissive use of renouncing, to renounce something in an appropriate context is to commit oneself to pursue no longer certain activities — as in renouncing alcohol, "the Devil and all his works", etc. Renunciation therefore requires a propositional content condition to the effect that it is a negative commitment.

(22) *offer,* (23) *counter-offer*

An offer is a promise that is conditional upon the hearer's acceptance. To make an offer is to put something forward for another's choice (of acceptance or refusal). To offer, then, is to perform a conditional commissive: to offer *P* is to promise *P* on condition that the hearer accept *P*. Often an offer is bound (propositional content condition) by a definitive time frame. When this time has expired (as in the offer to

purchase a house), if it has not been accepted, the offer "expires" and the speaker is no longer bound by it. The hearer's response can be to accept, to refuse or to make a counter-offer. A counter-offer is an offer that is made in response to a previous offer of the hearer (preparatory condition) and modifying the terms thereof.

(24) *bid,* (25) *rebid,* (26) *tender*

Bidding and rebidding are offers generally made under the particular conditions of an auction, which is a special form of structured offer in which goods are sold to the person judged to have offered the highest amount of money within the rules. To bid is to offer an amount of money, while to rebid is to bid again in response to a bid by another party (preparatory conditions). The rebidding may go on, with the price going higher each time. There are therefore both propositional content and preparatory conditions related to the rules of the "game" in question. When a bid is judged successful, the article is declared to have been sold (generally "to the highest bidder"). Such a declaration is called an "adjudication". To tender is to put in or submit such a bid in the formal context of tendering for a contract (as in construction, for example). Again, there are rules that determine the "winner" (preparatory and propositional content conditions).

(27) *dedicate*

In the commissive use, to dedicate is to commit oneself to such and such a task or way of life with a propositional content condition to the effect that it is for a long time. Generally, there is a mode of achievement such that the commitment comes from an ethical or divine sentiment or motivation. That condition gives it a higher degree of strength than a commitment *per se.*

(28) *bet,* (29) *wager*

To bet and to wager are ways of engaging commissives that are mutual between the speaker and hearer. In either case, the one party promises to pay the other party something if, for example, one team wins a match, while the other person pays if the other team wins. Betting can in fact be on the outcome of virtually anything, and the "payoff" can

be virtually anything. There seems to be no significant difference of nuance between the two words — unless it is that "wager" is somewhat more informal. Both are joint conditional promises that are in general performed in the course of a two step speech activity. First, one speaker makes an offer of a bet with a performative use of the verb. Second, the other speaker makes the proposed bet binding by accepting the offer.

(30) *contract,* (31) *covenant*

These are also words that engage two parties at the same interval of time. A contract is a making of mutual commitments by two (or more) parties (propositional content conditions). These commitments are related at least in the sense that the commitment is reciprocal, and that if one party fails the commitment, the other is released from his (preparatory condition). Thus, the two joint commitments are not independent in a genuine contract, as is shown by the fact that a written contract only becomes binding after the signatures of both parties. A covenant is analogous in that it is similarly reciprocal, but the obligation tends to be more moral and religious than legal (propositional content and mode of achievement). For example, a marriage contract deals with the legalities of shared property, whereas the covenant of marriage deals with the integrity of the relationship.

(32) *subscribe*

Formerly, "subscribe" meant to commit oneself to pay a certain amount of money in return for goods or services by signing a document (mode of achievement). The common use is still similar, in that one signs a "subscription" request for a magazine or something else, and that act (mode) engages the commitment. A subscription has propositional content conditions upon the sort of things one normally subscribes to (magazines, season tickets for a sporting event, etc.).

The semantic tableau shown in figure 2 exhibits the relations of comparative strength that the semantic analyses of this section predict for English commissive illocutionary forces.

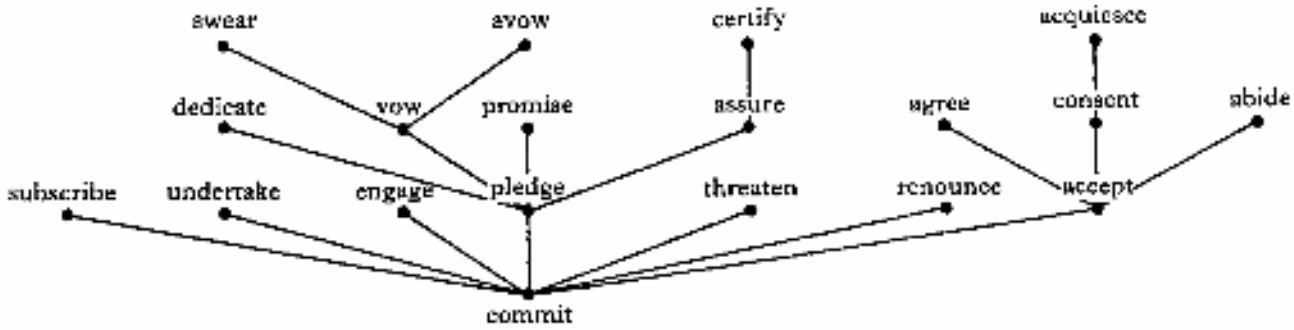

Figure 2. Semantic tableau for commissives

III ENGLISH DIRECTIVES

Our list of directives contains: direct, request, ask, question, inquire, interrogate, urge, encourage, discourage, solicit, appeal, petition, invite, convene, convoke, beg, supplicate, beseech, implore, entreat, conjure, pray, insist, tell, instruct, demand, require, claim, order, command, dictate, prescribe, enjoin, adjure, exorcise, forbid, prohibit, interdict, proscribe, commission, charge, suggest, propose, warn, advise, caution, alert, alarm, recommend, permit, allow, authorize, consent, invoke, imprecate, and intercede.

(1) *direct*

The verb "direct" names the primitive directive illocutionary force. It is generally used in the passive form as in "You are hereby directed to...".

Most actual directive forces have a special mode of achievement of their illocutionary point in that generally it is clear that the hearer either has or has not the option of refusal. So, when a speaker asks or begs someone to do something, he gives an option of refusal to the hearer. Directive illocutionary acts with such a polite mode of achievement are said to be *granted* or *refused* when their satisfaction is evaluated. On the contrary, in a command or order the speaker is more peremptory and no such option is expected. Directive illocutionary acts with such a peremptory mode of achievement are said to be *obeyed* or *disobeyed*. "Direct" in the primitive use here will be taken to be natural in this regard, and thus to have no special mode of achievement.

(2) *request*

A request is a directive illocutionary act that allows the option of refusal. It differs from "direct" only in the rather polite mode of achievement which is expressed in English by the modifier "please". "Request" is often taken to be the paradigmatic directive but, on account of this special mode of achievement, not the primitive.

(3) *ask*

"Ask" has two distinct directive uses. One can ask someone to do something or ask him questions (e.g. "ask whether", "ask why", "ask whom"). In the first use, "ask" names the same illocutionary force as "request". To ask or to request that someone do P is the same thing. In the second use, to ask a question is to request the hearer to perform a future speech act that would give the original speaker a correct answer to his question (special propositional content condition). The logical form of an answer to a question is determined by the propositional content of that question, and need not be an assertion. Thus, for example, the question "Is John in Paris?" expects an assertion or a denial that John is in Paris as possible answers. On the other hand, the question "Do you promise to come?" expects a promise or the denegation of a promise.

(4) *question,* (5) *inquire,* (6) *interrogate*

These three words are special cases of the questioning use of "ask ". To question is to ask for an answer that is often expected to include an element of explanation or even justification. I can ask you what the temperature is, for example, but I can then question your answer, and you would be expected to give more detail. To inquire is to question something with the expectation of an answer that is assertive (propositional content condition), and generally with the understanding that as a preparatory condition some reason has been given to doubt *P* and that an "inquir " is in order. To interrogate is to question someone formally on the suspicion that something important to some goal (perhaps simply the discernment of truth) has been kept hidden. Military and courtroom cases offer good examples.

(7) *urge,* (8) *encourage,* (9) *discourage*

The primary use of "urge" is as a directive which advocates a particular course of action with a mode of achievement of some strength on account of the preparatory condition that it is important, or a matter of some "urgency". A speaker who urges a hearer to do something must therefore presuppose that he has reasons for the course of action urged. To encourage, in the directive sense, is to

request that the hearer do something with the perlocutionary intention of inspiring him with courage (mode of achievement) while presupposing that the course of action advocated requires courage and that the speaker must somehow lend or inspire this needed courage. Both verbs, then, have a greater degree of strength than "request", but lack the authority of "command", and the humility of "beg". Instead there are preparatory conditions relating to apparent lethargy on the part of the hearer, and a required motivation on the part of the speaker. On the other hand, to discourage a hearer from doing something is to request him not to do it with the perlocutionary intention of depriving him of the courage that is needed to do it (mode of achievement) while presupposing that he at the moment does have that courage (preparatory condition).

(10) *solicit,* (11) *appeal,* (12) *petition*

To solicit is to request in a way that meets certain formalities. We solicit committee membership, financial support, participation in one sort of venture or another. This formality or routine counts as a special mode of achievement. An appeal is generally an earnest request for aid, mercy or support on grounds such as justice, common sense, humanity, etc. For example, we may solicit funds in a general campaign on behalf of charity, but in the case of disaster (flood, famine, etc.) we make an urgent appeal for funds. In law, to appeal is more precisely to solicit the review of a case in a higher tribunal. To petition is to solicit by addressing a written request, formal prayer, formal "petition" or the like. A petition is generally to an authority, while soliciting and appealing may very well not be. However, as in the case of an appeal, reasons are generally given. Finally, a petition is sometimes public, and may bear the written names of a number of petitioners.

(13) *invite,* (14) *convene,* (15) *convoke*

To invite is to request someone to become party to something, perhaps a group or a process, and this is a propositional content condition. Generally speaking there is a preparatory condition to the effect that it is something the hearer will be happy about and that is perceived to be good for him. There is an option of refusal in this mode of achievement. To convene is to invite someone by declaration to the activity of the

group, as in the special case of inviting members of, say, a committee to a meeting of that committee, or of inviting members of a family to a marriage. The preparatory condition is that the hearer is part of the group being convened, and in some cases the declaration is such that the option to refuse is greatly reduced. The obligations of those so convened often make it important that if the "invitation" is not accepted there should be good reasons. To convoke is formally to convene members of a body (e.g. a university) for a more formal event (e.g. a graduation). The option of refusal varies with the respective roles in the community of those who receive the convocation.

(16) *beg,* (17) *supplicate,* (18) *beseech,* (19) *implore,* (20) *entreat,* (21) *conjure,* (22) *pray*

These are all verbs that are requestive but that are of a higher degree of strength than "request", while at the same time not deriving that higher degree of strength from increased authority on the part of the speaker. The increased strength comes rather from the fact that there is a higher intensity of desire expressed, and from the more humble manner in which the speaker places himself *vis-a-vis* the hearer. The verb "beg" has two distinct uses. In one, to beg is to request politely (mode of achievement) as in "I beg your pardon." In the other use, to beg is to request humbly as in the special case of the "beggar", who is one seen to be habitually begging. In both uses, the speaker expresses a strong desire for the thing "begged for". To supplicate is to beg very humbly, usually from a superior or someone in power. We might supplicate a person in such a power role to spare the life of a prisoner, or of someone else threatened. To beseech, to implore, and to entreat are to beg earnestly that a request be granted. "Grant me this one request, I beseech you." "I implore you to spare his life." "I entreat you to bring all your power to bear on his behalf." In one sense of the word, to conjure is to beg someone very earnestly and solemnly to do something as if it were a very important thing to do (e.g. "I conjure you to hear my plea "). Finally, to pray is to beseech God or some other sacred being (propositional content), usually with much deference. In all these cases, the mode of achievement is one of humility. The preparatory conditions include those normal for requestives, such as the hearer being the one in a position to fulill the request, but also the

additional one that the sympathy of the hearer might be aroused by the expression of pleading and humility.

(23) *insist*

To insist is to direct in a persistent way. This mode of achievement increases the degree of strength.

(24) *tell,* (25) *instruct*

To tell someone to do something is to direct him in a way that does not allow the option of refusal. Unlike a request, which has a rather polite mode of achievement of the directive point (and can for that reason be granted or refused by the hearer), an act of telling someone to do something is more peremptory. It can only be obeyed or disobeyed. To instruct someone, in the directive sense, is to tell him to do something (e.g. "I instruct you to practice your parallel parking") while presupposing that one has the knowledge or information required (perhaps as an instructor) as to what needs to be done in the context of utterance. In this case, the peremptory mode of achievement is related to a preparatory condition to the effect that the speaker himself has the relevant instruction.

(26) *demand,* (27) *require,* (28) *claim*

Demanding and requiring have a greater degree of strength than telling. To demand something (e.g. the payment of a debt) is to tell the hearer to do it, while expressing a strong will. To require something is to demand it with the additional preparatory condition that it needs to be done. Normally, the speaker presupposes that there is a specific reason to perform the required action. For example, a war can justify the requisition of goods for military purposes. To claim something is to demand it as a right or as a due (e.g. to claim an estate by inheritance or to claim the payment of a debt).

(29) *order,* (30) *command,* (31) *dictate*

The difference between ordering and telling is that the former is much stronger and this strength comes from the speaker's being in a position of considerable power over the hearer. One can give an order from a position of any kind of power (greater physical strength, for example). Unlike an order, a command requires authority or at least pretended institutionalized power. Thus to give an order is to demand of the hearer that he do something while invoking a position of authority or of power over him (special mode of achievement), while to issue a command is just to give an order from a position of authority. To dictate is to command with the highest degree of strength so that there is an obligation of obedience to what is dictated. Only the highest authority, like God, my conscience or a dictator, can dictate my conduct.

(32) *prescribe,* (33) *enjoin*

To prescribe is to order explicitly, usually in written form (as the etymology suggests), what one requires from someone else. The position of authority invoked by the speaker can be based on knowledge, as in a medical prescription, or on a claim or right. To enjoin is to prescribe a course of action with emphasis or formality, as in the case of a legal injunction, which is a written judicial order requiring the persons to whom it is directed to perform or to refrain from performing a particular action.

(34) *adjure,* (35) *exorcise*

"Adjure" has two directive senses. In the first sense, to adjure is to command solemnly, as under oath or as with the threat of a curse. In the second sense, to adjure is just to entreat someone to do something. In theology, an adjuration is always a solemn command which precludes the option of refusal. In a special case, an exorcist adjures the devil to leave a soul in peace. Thus, to exorcise is to make a special kind of adjuration: it is to adjure the devil or another evil spirit to leave a certain person (propositional content condition) that one presupposes to be under its influence (preparatory condition).

(36) *forbid,* (37) *prohibit,* (38) *interdict,* (39) *proscribe*

Forbidding is the propositional negation of ordering. Thus, to forbid a hearer to do something is just to order him not to do it. "Prohibit" differs from forbid in that prohibitions are likely to forbid an action not only here and now but also more generally at other places and over a longer period of time (special propositional content conditions). Some prohibitions are made by way of declarations. Thus to interdict something is just to declare that it is prohibited. To proscribe is formally to interdict something that is at the same time condemned or outlawed. So it adds to the above the preparatory condition that the action is not only forbidden but also "bad". As the etymology suggests, a proscription is often announced in written terms. Thus, in ancient Rome, a proscriber was someone condemned by declaration in a public notice to death and confiscation of his property.

(40) *commission,* (41) *charge*

Commissioning is commanding that a person or persons go forth on some kind of "mission" authorized by and on behalf of whoever does the commissioning (or whoever he represents). For example, members of a church may be "commissioned" to go to a council for purposes of policy setting. To charge (in its directive use) is to commission by way of invoking an effectively unquestioned authority (mode of achievement). For example, a court may charge persons to follow up on the implications of judgments rendered.

(42) *suggest,* (43) *propose*

These verbs have directive as well as assertive uses. In the directive sense, to suggest is just to make a weak attempt to get someone to do something. A proposal differs from a suggestion in that it has a special propositional content condition: to propose that a hearer carry out some action is to suggest that he accept doing that action. Like an offer, a proposal can be accepted or rejected.

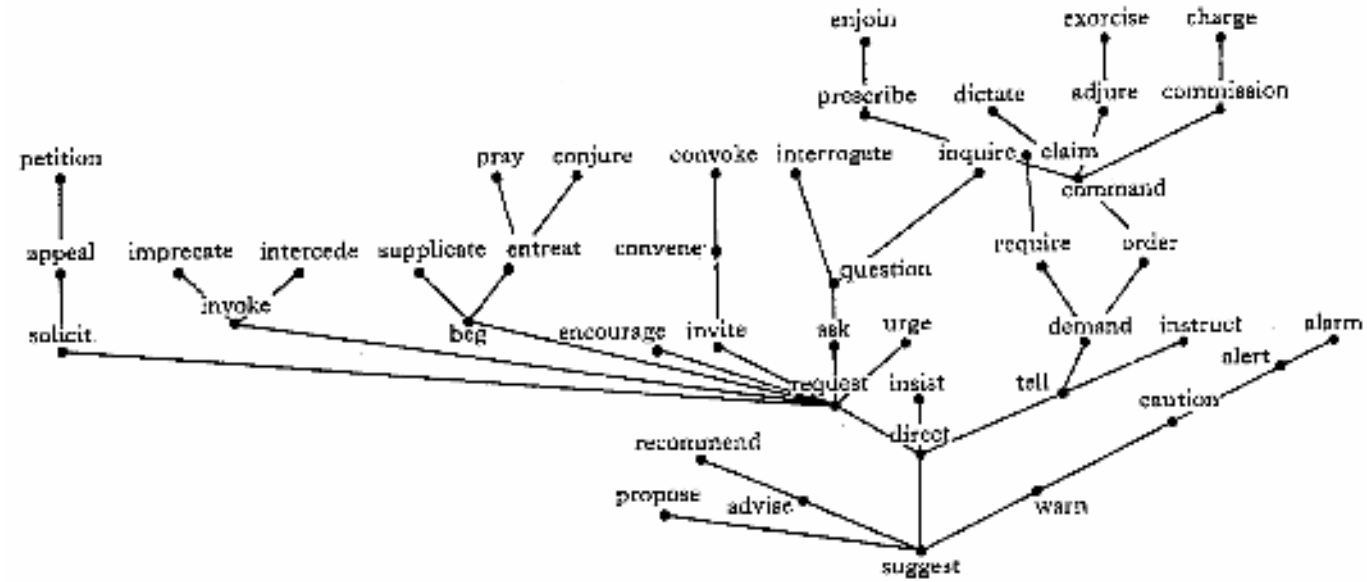

Figure 1. Semantic tableau for directives

(44) *warn,* (45) *advise,* (46) *caution,* (47) *alert,* (48) *alarm*

These verbs take infinitive as well as "that" clauses. To warn someone to do something is to suggest that he do it, while presupposing that it would be bad for him not to do it (preparatory condition). On the other hand, to advise a course of action is to suggest that someone perform that action while presupposing that it would be good for him to do it. This opposition in the preparatory conditions explains why one and the same speech act can be both a warning in the assertive sense and advice in the directive sense. For example, in warning you that this part of town is dangerous at night, I can also advise you indirectly to stay away from it. To caution is to warn or advise the hearer to take care of something (propositional content condition). An alert is a warning to prepare for action against imminent potential danger (such as the possibility of attack, "walking on thin ice", etc.). An alarm is a warning to act in the face of immediate danger (such as fire, avalanche, etc.).

(49) *recommend*

To recommend, in the directive sense, is to advise while presupposing that the future action recommended is good in general, and not only for the hearer. When one recommends a person or a thing to a hearer, one recommends that he favor that person or thing.

(50) *permit,* (51) *allow*

To permit someone to perform an action is to perform the illocutionary denegation of an act of forbidding his doing it. In granting permission, the speaker presupposes as a preparatory condition that he has the power to forbid what he permits. Unlike "permit", "allow" is a hybrid verb. There is a performative use of "allow" in which that verb has approximately the same use as "permit". But one can also allow things to happen without uttering any words - just by letting them happen.

(52) *authorize,* (53) *consent*

To authorize an action (e.g. to authorize a detective to make an arrest) is to permit someone to perform that action while also declaring his authority or official power to do it (special mode of achievement). To

consent is to permit the hearer to do something under the preparatory conditions that one need not do it, and that one in fact has reasons not to, but that the hearer (or another party) has persuaded us to do it.

(54) *invoke,* (55) *imprecate,* (56) *intercede*

To invoke is to request (to "call upon") God, or some other authority, to be present and to lend authority to a process or deliberation. To imprecate is to call upon this authority to send condemnation or evil upon someone, while to intercede is to call upon this authority to offer forgiveness or favors on behalf of someone (in general in difficulty or trouble). In each case, there is the presupposition that the invoked person has the authority to grant what is requested.

The semantic tableau shown in figure 3 exhibits relations of comparative strength between English directive forces that are consequences of the previous semantic definitions.

IV ENGLISH DECLARATIVES

The main declarative verbs in English are: declare, renounce, disclaim, disown, resign, repudiate, disavow, retract, abdicate, abjure, deny, disinherit, yield, surrender, capitulate, approve, confirm, sanction, ratify, homologate, bless, curse, dedicate, consecrate, disapprove, stipulate, name, call, define, abbreviate, nominate, authorize, licence, install, appoint, establish, institute, inaugurate, convene, convoke, open, close, suspend, adjourn, terminate, dissolve, denounce, vote, veto, enact, legislate, promulgate, decree, confer, grant, bestow, accord, cede, rule, adjudge, adjudicate, condemn, sentence, damn, clear, acquit, disculpate, exonerate, pardon, forgive, absolve, cancel, annul, abolish, abrogate, revoke, repeal, rescind, retract, sustain, bequeathi, baptize, and excommunicate.

Most declarative illocutionary verbs name declarations that require a position of authority of the speaker in an extra-linguistic institution. In general, the mode of achievement of such declarations consists in invoking that institutional position and it determines the preparatory condition that the speaker occupies effectively such a position. Thus, for example, for a speaker to be entitled to make an adjudication, there must be institutions and forms of life like auctions and special roles

enabling certain persons, like appraisers, to attribute goods for sale by declaration to the one who makes the highest bid. As Austin pointed out a large number of declarative performative verbs are more particularly related to juridical practices and institutions (e.g. to exonerate, condemn, acquit).

Some declarations, like definitions and appellations, require only linguistic competence. Others, like benedictions and curses, require supernatural powers. What is peculiar in this last case is that one is in general unable to determine effectively whether these declarations are successful or not. One can only believe that they are successful on the basis of an act of faith.

(1) *declare*

The primitive declarative verb is "declare", which names the illocutionary force of declaration. "Declare", as we have noted, also has an assertive use, but in its declarative use it exemplifies the characteristic features of the set in that the speaker purely and simply makes something the case by declaring it so. Most other declarative illocutionary forces are formed by adding special propositional content conditions determining corresponding preparatory conditions.

(2) *renounce,* (3) *disclaim,* (4) *disown*

To renounce is to declare that one gives up or abandons something (special propositional content condition). One can renounce the ownership of something, as well as a right, a privilege or a claim. In particular, to disclaim something is to renounce any previous claim on it, thus making it the case by declaration that one no longer has rights to it. To disown is to renounce a relation of ownership (special propositional content condition), generally with the perlocutionary intention of terminating a responsibility, as in the case of a parent disowning a child.

(5) *resign*

To resign is to renounce one's tenure of a position, thus making it the case by declaration that it is terminated. This special propositional content condition determines the preparatory condition that one in fact occupies the position and has the power to relinquish it.

(6) *repudiate*

To repudiate something is to declare that one is terminating an earlier obligation or right relative to it. In ancient civilizations, a man could repudiate his wife by sending her away in certain ways as fixed by custom. Today, one can repudiate obligations such as debts, as well as rights such as an inheritance or a nationality. Thus a repudiation is a special kind of renunciation.

(7) *disavow,* (8) *retract*

To disavow is to declare that one is in disagreement with someone or something. For example, to disavow paternity of a child is to declare that one is not the father. To disavow a certain course of, say, violent action, is to declare that one does not approve of it. One might also disavow an opinion or a commitment to which one had previously been committed. There is a general propositional content condition to the effect that the speaker is not in agreement with something. To retract, normally, is formally to disavow an opinion previously put forward. When a speaker retracts what has previously been said, he declares (propositional content condition) that he now acknowledges the error of the former.

(9) *abdicate*

There is a general use of "abdicate" in which a person simply renounces responsibility for something he might otherwise have been held responsible for (preparatory condition). In the most common use, however, It has to do with the specific renunciation of the throne or of some other more or less supreme power. In this latter use, an abdication is a special kind of resignation that has a public and solemn mode of achievement that is required by the fact that the power that the speaker renounces is of great social importance.

(10) *abjure*

To abjure is solemnly to renounce by way of taking an oath (mode of achievement). The meaning is linked intimately with the renunciation of something judged to be of supreme importance, such as nation or religion. One takes an oath of abjuration in promising to leave the

country within a certain time, or to leave one's religion (perhaps in favor of another). Hence there is a condition on the propositional content restricting the category of those things that one might "abjure".

(11) *deny*

"Deny" has, as we have seen, a use that Is both assertive and declarative. To deny is to make a declaration, to the effect that a putative claim is void. We can therefore deny the truth of statements, access or rights to claims or to a course of action, and I can deny my faith, but in all cases with the systematic use of both assertive and declarative forces.

(12) *disinherit*

To disinherit is to deprive someone (e.g. an heir or next of kin) of an inheritance (money, property, land, etc.) that he would otherwise have had the right to inherit (usually by reason of birth). Thus, in disinheriting someone, one denies him these rights (propositional content condition).

(13) *yield,* (14) *surrender,* (15) *capitulate*

In its declarative use, to yield is to declare that one is prepared to give up at least part of what one has or is (propositional content condition) in the face of pressure of persuasion or force (preparatory condition). To surrender is to declare that one ceases to contest and therefore yields totally, acknowledging oneself to have been defeated (this being a further propositional content condition). As part of this content condition, one often expects to be able to negotiate terms of surrender. To capitulate is to surrender with the added preparatory condition that one has not even enough strength, authority or power remaining to negotiate terms. The surrender is "utter" in capitulation. Hence, the mode of achievement in the three cases becomes increasingly abject.

(16) *approve*

"Approve" has both a declarative and an expressive use. To approve something in the declarative use is to declare that it is good (or valid). In the declarative use, then, a chairman might declare "approved" a

motion that has just been carried. A boss might "approve" a chain of commands within an organization. To approve something in the expressive use is to express approbation.

(17) *confirm*

Whenever one confirms *P,* one makes "firm" or more firm a previous declaration of *P.* Thus, to confirm is to approve while presupposing that a declaration with the same propositional content has already been performed, generally in invoking less authority than in the instance of confirmation. This is how, on religious confirmation, one confirms for oneself (out of authority of one's own judgment) what has been declared on one's behalf at baptism. Or a board may confirm what an executive has done on its behalf.

(18) *sanction*

In one of its senses, to sanction is to confirm a previous declaration legally or officially, thus making it necessary (by virtue of the declaration) for someone or something to comply with legal obligations. This additional mode of achievement increases the formality and the strength of the approval. For example, the decision to engage in covert activity might be "sanctioned by the minister".

(19) *ratify*

To ratify is to confirm, officially or legally (in the required form) an important previous declaration such as a treaty, an agreement or a pact that has been formally submitted for approbation. The Canadian parliament must, for example, ratify treaties such as Free Trade Agreements that have been signed by government officials, so as to bring them into effect. A ratification differs from a sanction in that it has a special preparatory condition to the effect that what is ratified has been formally brought for confirmation.

(20) *homologate*

With regard to a record (for example, an exceptional athletic achievement), one says that it has been homologated when it has been

officially verified and confirmed. In law, however, to homologate is juridically to approve **an** act, thereby giving it executive force. So in this sense one might homologate a sentence rendered when one wishes to confirm and uphold it.

(21) *bless,* (22) *curse*

To bless is to declare tnat one accomplishes the religious act of calling God's benediction upon someone or something (propositional content condition). The person, who has thus been blessed is in a state of grace. Normally, the act of blessing is performed by a person with a special authorization, such as clergy or the head of a family, etc. To curse, on the other hand, is to call malediction (usually, of "Satan") upon someone or some thing (special propositional content condition). A curse is also declared by a person in a special position of authority, but it is less likely to be a. clergyman and more likely to be someone in command of certain kinds of ritual ceremonies in the context of which the curse is declared. The leader of such a ritual can inflict on the victim any number of "curses". Both also have common uses in which anyone may bless or curse someone or something, but these uses seem to be derivative, and only marginally declarative.

(23) *dedicate,* (24) *consecrate*

To dedicate something is to declare it to be put aside for some special purpose (propositional content condition). I may dedicate my life to the pursuit of justice, or dedicate a building for use as a library, etc. In any case, the person, performing the act must have authority relevant to the context. To consecrate is to dedicate to God, thus rendering "sacred" the person or thing thus dedicated. This rendering sacred (or "holy") is a condition upon the propositional content. Typically, this act of consecration is performed by a person with some religious authority (preparatory condition).

(25) *disapprove*

"Disapprove" is a hybrid verb which generally serves to name the psychological state of disapproval, which is the opposite of the psychological state of approval. Its other use is declarative, where it

serves to declare a denial or withholding of approval, as in disapproving someone's request for a visa or a license.

(26) *stipulate*

To stipulate is to declare the terms under which something is to be understood. That is, one can stipulate what the rules are for a debate about to begin, what the requirements of a job description might be, what are the terms of a treaty and so on.

(27) *name,* (28) *call*

To name something or someone is to stipulate either that a certain linguistic expression will apply as a designation of that person or thing (what we would call giving someone a name), or to designate someone as occupying a post or position (as in naming someone to chair an important committee, or to be a member of a Supreme Court, etc.). In one sense of the word, to call someone or something by a certain name is to give that name by declaration.

(29) *define*

To define is to declare, by way of stipulating, the meaning of a word in a certain linguistic context (e.g. a text or a conversation). From the moment of utterance, the word or phrase defined is taken to have the meaning thereby given (propositional content condition). In a derivative sense, we can define a course of action, or define limits or boundaries to an argument, etc. A definition can fix the sense as well as the denotation of a linguistic expression. In law, definitions serve in general to fix the denotation of terms in such a way as to determine fully the parameters of the application of the law. In science, definitions also serve to fix the senses of terms such that theoretical analysis of concepts may proceed. Thus, as Carnap pointed out, certain definitions also play the role of explications.

(30) *abbreviate*

To abbreviate is to declare that one expression (a shorter one) will be used in the place of another (a longer one) in a certain linguistic context. The expression that has such a use, perhaps in an ongoing way (as in the case of Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.), is called an abbreviation of the longer expression. From a logical point of view, to make an abbreviation is to make a special kind of verbal definition.

(31) *nominate*

To nominate is to declare that someone is a candidate for a position that is to be filled by a person chosen from nominees by a process of selection, appointment or voting. There is a preparatory condition to the effect that such a process is under way and a propositional content condition to the effect that the person's name be put forward. The successful candidate is declared successful after the appropriate process, and in some way or other (appointment, installation, licencing, etc.) authorized to fulfill the function in question.

(32) *appoint*

To appoint is to name someone to a position of status of some authority. It alone may transfer the authority, but generally the appointment is followed by an "installation."

(33) *authorize*

To authorize is systematically both declarative and directive. It is directive in that it is the granting of permission, while its declarative force comes from its mode of achievement. That is, one declares (from a position of appropriate authority) that a person or a group of persons has the granted authority to exercise power in a way pertinent to the context. For example, "I authorize you to sign these documents on my behalf."

(34) *licence*

To licence is to give a limited authorization often related to specific activities such as driving a vehicle, using firearms, etc. Typically, the

person licenced will carry a piece of paper (or something like that) that serves as a "license". There are then narrow propositional content conditions relating to the sphere of influence, and preparatory conditions giving "the rules of the game" for which the licence is issued.

(35) *install*

To install is to authorize a person to occupy the position of authority, usually through a more or less formal ceremony (mode of achievement). This will follow an appointment or selection or an election, and is the formal act of giving over the authority that has been granted or won.

(36) *establish,* (37) *institute*

To establish, in the declarative use, is to declare operative and "stable" certain defined principles, processes or an organization (establishment). So, for example, one might establish acceptable procedures for arriving at set goals (as, say, in the case of a committee), or establish a regular holiday on July 4, etc. Standard rules apply with regard to relevant authority being held by the person making the declaration. To institute is to establish for the purpose of furthering some specific object (legal, literary, scientific, etc.).

(38) *inaugurate*

To inaugurate is formally to begin the life of an institution or a tenure of office. In this way it is more general than "install" (propositional content conditions), and it is typically more formal as well (mode of achievement).

(39) *convene,* (40) *convoke*

To convene and to convoke are both declarations of directives. To convene is to declare that members of a committee (for example) are expected at a given time and place. There is a systematic presence of a directive in that the declaration is accompanied by the directive that they be there. To convoke is to convene with a more formal authority (mode of achievement) and for a more formal event (propositional content conditions) such as a graduation convocation.

(41) *open,* (42) *close*

In the declarative sense, these two words are typically used in the context of opening and closing a meeting. To open a meeting or a similar assembly is to declare that, as of the moment of utterance, the activities appropriate to the committee, group, etc. can commence (propositional content condition). A meeting or process (balloting, for example) will similarly be declared closed at the appropriate time, generally by the person presiding over the group or process.

(43) *suspend,* (44) *prorogue,* (45) *adjourn*

To suspend proceedings is to declare a temporary halt (propositional content conditions) to a process or deliberation (perhaps legal) or a meeting, generally so that some necessary and related activity can be accomplished (preparatory conditions) before resuming. To prorogue is to suspend a session or meeting (of the Parliament or similar body) and to fix by declaration for a future date the next session or meeting. To adjourn is to call an end (a full halt) to the proceedings of a full meeting or a day's activity of the meeting. It is to "call it a day".

(46) *terminate,* (47) *dissolve,* (48) *denounce*

To terminate is to declare that a committee, a process or the like is "ended" or has "come to its term". One "terminates" something that has previously been "established". To dissolve (usually a committee or a task force, etc.) is to declare that their life (as a committee) is terminated (propositional content conditions). Generally a group is dissolved at the end of its mandate, but there may be other (preparatory) conditions such as its ineffectiveness. "Dissolve" is therefore a special case of termination. To denounce, in its declarative use, is to terminate a special kind of contract (such as a treaty or a cease-fire, etc.) by virtue of the declaration. It is generally used along with "denounce" in the assertive sense where one strongly accuses the hearer of some morally unjustifiable action.

(49) *vote,* (50) *veto*

To vote is to declare, in a formal and rule-governed way (including both preparatory conditions and mode of achievement) one's support for one of two or more persons, proposals, processes, etc. (propositional content condition). Where there is only one person or process in question, one's vote can be for or against. To veto is to declare a process, proposed bill or enactment defeated by virtue of one's own singular vote. This is a case of a very special context and mode of achievement unique to persons of great power, such as a president. A veto is therefore a special kind of vote.

(51) *enact,* (52) *legislate*

To enact is to declare a proposal or a bill to be "activated". Generally the word is used in conjunction with legal or political powers (preparatory conditions) whose enactments (through the special mode of achievement of their status) become binding. To legislate is to enact in one's capacity as a legislature.

(53) *promulgate,* (54) *decree*

To promulgate is to declare publicly (mode of achievement) an enactment of some legal status (propositional content condition). To decree is to pronounce publicly an edict or law with an incontestable authority (additional preparatory conditions and mode of achievement).

(55) *confer,* (56) *grant,* (57) *bestow*

To confer is to declare a status or title, etc., as given to someone. This is taken to be an honour (propositional content condition), and is usually more or less formally done (mode of achievement). To grant is to confer with the (usual) preparatory condition that it has been sought or requested and that one grants the request. To bestow is to confer something of great worth, e.g. a trophy (propositional content condition) from a position of great eminence.

(58) *accord,* (59) *cede*

To accord is to confer, usually a right (propositional content condition), and often with the nuance (preparatory condition) that it has been in some measure earned or negotiated, and that the resulting "accord" (agreement) has been "accorded" (conferred). To cede is to confer as a result of moral, military or other pressure.

(60) *rule,* (61) *adjudge,* (62) *adjudicate*

To rule is to declare a ruling or a decision on behalf of one party where there are two or more seeking favour. A ruling is based on the power and the discretion (preparatory conditions) of the person making the ruling (like a "ruler") and a clear authority in the mode of achievement. To adjudge is to rule with the added preparatory condition to the effect that "judging" has become the prevalent mode and that "justice" will be a significant factor in the propositional content. To adjudicate is to adjudge in the limited case of a contest (preparatory conditions), usually talent as with a piano competition. In the special context of an auction, the auctioneer has the power to make an adjudication to the effect that property or goods are sold to the highest bidder.

(63) *condemn,* (64) *sentence*

To condemn is to declare someone to be guilty of some offence (propositional content condition). In some condemnations, there is a penalty to pay (in addition to "suffering the condemnation"). In such cases, the penalty to which the man declared guilty is condemned will be imposed in "sentencing" (in offering a "ruling" or a "judgment"). Thus, a sentence presupposes a previous condemnation. In another use of "condemn", it is actions rather than people that are condemned.

(65) *damn*

To damn is to condemn morally (propositional content condition) for an offense or a series of offenses judged to be "sin" (offenses against a moral law). The penalty, or sentence, is typically part of the damnation and involves the person's being separated from God or the moral law and cast aside (e.g. to Hell).

(66) *clear,* (67) *acquit,* (68) *disculpate,*
(69) *exonerate*

To clear is to declare someone to be free of suspicion. One can, for example, clear someone of charges laid (propositional content conditions) and therefore free them from the burden of (further) proof of innocence. One can also, more generally, declare someone to be cleared of suspicion that has arisen by way of innuendo. *To* acquit is to declare (with a formal mode of achievement) that someone is cleared because charges have been "quit" or "dropped". A judge might effectively declare, for example, "I hereby acquit you of all charges." *To* disculpate (although it is not commonly used as a verb in English) means to clear someone by way of declaring him "innocent", or "not guilty", or "not culpable" of charges laid or implied. *To* exonerate is to acquit someone of charges (again, with a formal mode of achievement), with an additional propositional content condition to the effect that the accused is innocent of all charges.

(70) *pardon,* (71) *forgive,* (72) *absolve*

To pardon is to declare that someone is released from the burden of payment of some moral or other debt (propositional content condition). It does, However, remain the case that the debt has been incurred. *To* forgive is to pardon with the additional preparatory condition to the effect that forgiveness has been requested or humbly "begged". *To* absolve is to forgive in, generally, a religious context. In the Catholic religion, the sins of the sinner are pardoned (propositional content condition) as absolution is given by God or in God's name at the end of his confession.

(73) *cancel,* (74) *annul,* (75) *abolish,* (76) *abrogate*

To cancel an order or an authorization or any other speech act is to declare it to be no longer in effect. There is a preparatory condition to the effect that an act had been made and is in effect, and a propositional content condition to the effect that this is terminated. To annul is to cancel a formal agreement (such as a contract or a marriage, for example), and thereby render it "null" and void. Since it is a formal agreement, there is added formality in the mode of achievement of its

being annulled. To abolish is to cancel laws, sentences, rights, or other more general institutions (propositional content conditions). To abrogate is to abolish a particular law.

(77) *revoke,* (78) *repeal,* (79) *rescind,* (80) *retract*

This group of words declares the formal, usually legal, calling back or drawing back of a former decision or enactment. There is a preparatory condition to the effect that this reality is in place, and a propositional content condition to the effect that it be withdrawn. In history, for example, one relates the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

(81) *sustain*

To sustain is to declare that an argument or a judgment holds or still holds. There is a preparatory condition to the effect that such an argument or judgment has been made and stands to be either sustained, or not, in which case it would be rescinded.

(82) *bequeath*

To bequeath is to declare usually by will, that one's goods or inheritance are to become the property of a person or persons (usually family members, relatives, etc.) in the event of the speaker's death. In law, one can always disinherit the person to whom one had previously bequeathed goods or property by revoking one's testament.

(83) *baptize,* (84) *christen,* (85) *excommunicate*

To baptize (or to "christen") is to declare that one is a member of the Christian community, by way of a ritual act (mode of achievement) that includes naming. There are strict preparatory and propositional content conditions, as determined by the institution. To excommunicate someone is to declare that he is no longer a member of the Christian community, on account of some particularly grievous sin (preparatory conditions). Again certain conditions, such as appropriate authority, are presumed. Only the highest ecclesiastic authority, such as the pope or a bishop, can perform an act of excommunication.

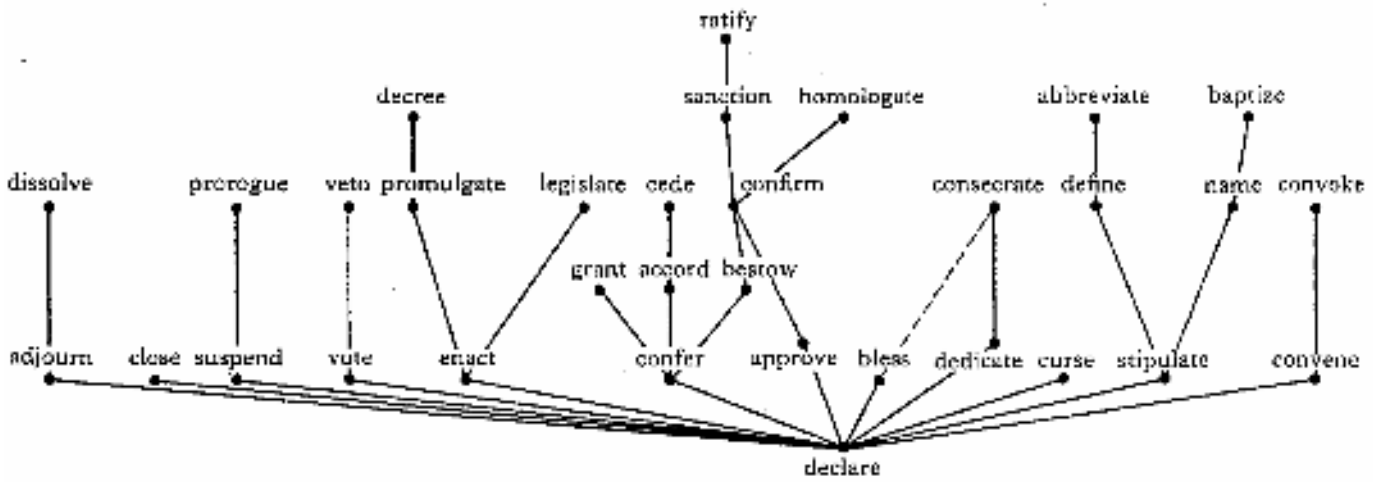

Figure 4A. Semantic tableau for declaratives

The relations of comparative strength that follow from these semantic definitions for the English declarative illocutionary verbs are visualized in the figures 4A and 4B.

V ENGLISH EXPRESSIVES

Our list of expressives is as follows: approve, compliment, praise, laud, extol, plaudit, applaud, acclaim, brag, boast, complain, disapprove, blame, reprove, deplore, protest, grieve, mourn, lament, rejoice, cheer, boo, condole, congratulate, thank, apologize, greet, and welcome.

Expressive illocutionary verbs name forces whose point is to express (that is to say, to manifest) mental states of the speaker such as joy, approbation or discontent which are important in our social forms of life. Human beings can express their mental states in non-linguistic behavior. They can, for example, express their happiness by smiling and laughing, and their sadness by crying. However, when they perform expressive illocutionary acts, it is by the use of language that they express their mental states. As I said earlier, most mental states that are expressed in the performance of expressive illocutionary acts are of the form m(P), where m is a psychological mode which determines a particular direction of fit between mind and the world, and P is a propositional content which represents the state of affairs to which they are directed.

Thus, for example, a regret, a belief, a hope, and an intention are mental states having different psychological modes. As every particular mental state has a characteristic psychological mode, every expressive illocutionary force has necessarily special sincerity conditions. Thus, the primitive expressive illocutionary force is only a theoretical entity and a limit case of illocutionary force in illocutionary logic. One cannot perform an expressive speech act which has only that primitive expressive illocutionary force. This is why there is no performative verb which names only that force. However, the verb "express" followed by a description of the state of mind of the speaker like "my regrets" or "my gratitude" has a characteristic performative use in sentences such as "I hereby express to you my regrets at having disappointed you" and "I hereby express to you my gratitude for your help in this matter." Such performative sentences serve to perform by declaration the expressive illocutionary acts having the special sincerity

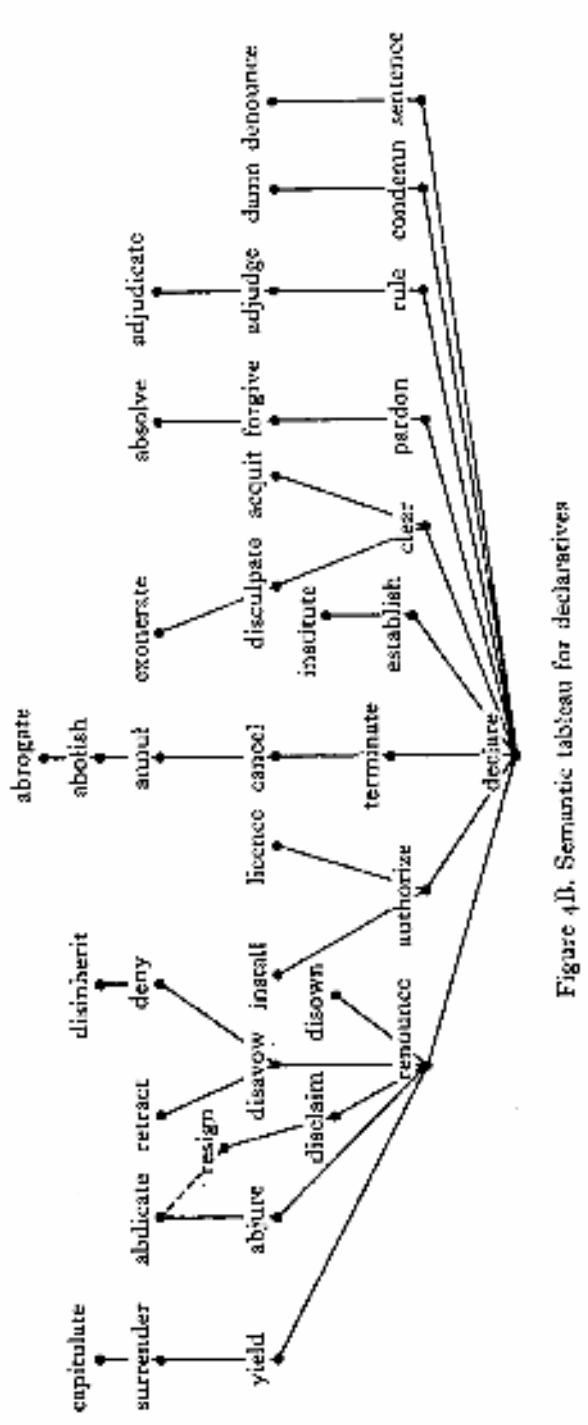

Figure 4b. Semantic tableau for declaratives

condition corresponding to the mode of the mental state named by their complex performative verb.

(1) *approve*

To approve, in the expressive sense, is to express positive feelings of approval or support (sincerity condition) for a state of affairs or an action with the preparatory condition that this is good. Insofar as what is approved of is caused by intentional action, the approval generally also extends to the person who is responsible for the action (propositional content condition).

(2) *compliment*

To compliment someone is to express approval of the hearer for something (additional propositional content condition). Complimenting does not necessarily relate to something done by the hearer, since we can compliment someone on his intelligence, musical ability, and so forth for which he is not (at least not primarily) responsible - as well as for his act of courage, etc. for which he is responsible (propositional content conditions).

(3) *praise,* (4) *laud,* (5) *extol*

To praise is to express a high degree of approval (increasing the degree of strength), while not necessarily being directed to the hearer. That is, I might praise the hearer or I might praise someone else in his absence. To laud is to praise the hearer (propositional content condition) in yet higher terms (degree of strength), verging on adulation (mode of achievement). So while one might praise someone for "a job well done", one is more likely to laud "your valor" or "your generosity". To extol is to laud in the highest terms, generally religious (propositional content condition), and with deep humility and adoration (mode of achievement) - as in the phrase " I extol Thee, my God and my King!"

(6) *plaudit,* (7) *applaud,* (8) *acclaim*

To plaudit is publicly to express praise (mode of achievement) for someone's accomplishments (propositional content condition). To applaud is to plaudit, often by clapping hands (mode of achievement) in the context of a public performance. To acclaim is to applaud highly (degree of strength) often adding vocal cries of approval (further mode of achievement).

(9) *brag,* (10) *boast*

To brag is to express approval of oneself (propositional content condition), along with a feeling of pride (sincerity condition). There is a preparatory condition to the effect that the propositional content is judged to be good for the speaker, and that it might be admired or envied by the hearer. To boast is to brag with a higher degree of strength reflecting a preparatory condition that includes a perlocutionary intention of having the hearer become deeply admiring or envious.

(11) *complain*

To complain, in the expressive use, is to express discontent. There is a preparatory condition to the effect that the situation complained about is bad (for the speaker, at least). It is not the case that the hearer is taken to be responsible for the bad situation, since one can complain about states of affairs which are independent of the hearer such as bad luck, poor health, etc., as well as something that the hearer might have done.

(12) *disapprove*

To disapprove, in the expressive use, is to express feelings of disapproval with a state of affairs (sincerity condition), while presupposing (preparatory condition) that the state of affairs is bad. It is not presupposed that the hearer is responsible for this state of affairs, but it is generally presupposed that an agent is responsible, and this is a propositional content condition that is not present in the case of "complain". "Disapprove" is the contrary of "approve".

(13) *blame*

To blame is to express disapproval with an explicit attachment of this disapproval (mode of achievement and propositional content condition) to someone, perhaps the hearer, for having done something judged to be bad (preparatory condition).

(14) *reprove*

The expressive use of "reprove" is that of expressing strong disapproval (preparatory condition) with the intentional action of an agent (propositional content condition), and with the sincerity condition of reprobation. It is this latter that distinguishes reproval from blaming, in that one may blame someone for (for example) throwing the ball through the window without necessarily reproving him for it.

(15) *deplore,* (16) *protest*

To deplore is to complain with a high degree of strength and with the preparatory condition that someone is responsible for something bad, and the sincerity condition of deep discontent or deep sorrow. To protest, in the expressive use, is to deplore in a stronger and more formal manner (mode of achievement) while presupposing that the hearer has the authority to change the state of affairs about which one protests (preparatory condition).

(17) *grieve,* (18) *mourn,* (19) *lament*

To grieve is to express deep sorrow over an important loss (propositional content condition) that may be, but is not necessarily one's personal loss. That is, one may grieve on behalf of someone else who has lost a friend or on behalf of people who are starving, etc. To mourn is to grieve deeply over personal loss, usually the death of someone close. To lament is to mourn openly and publicly (mode of achievement).

(20) *rejoice*

To rejoice is to express a high degree of joy and gladness (sincerity condition) about a state of affairs that is of course judged to be very good for the speaker.

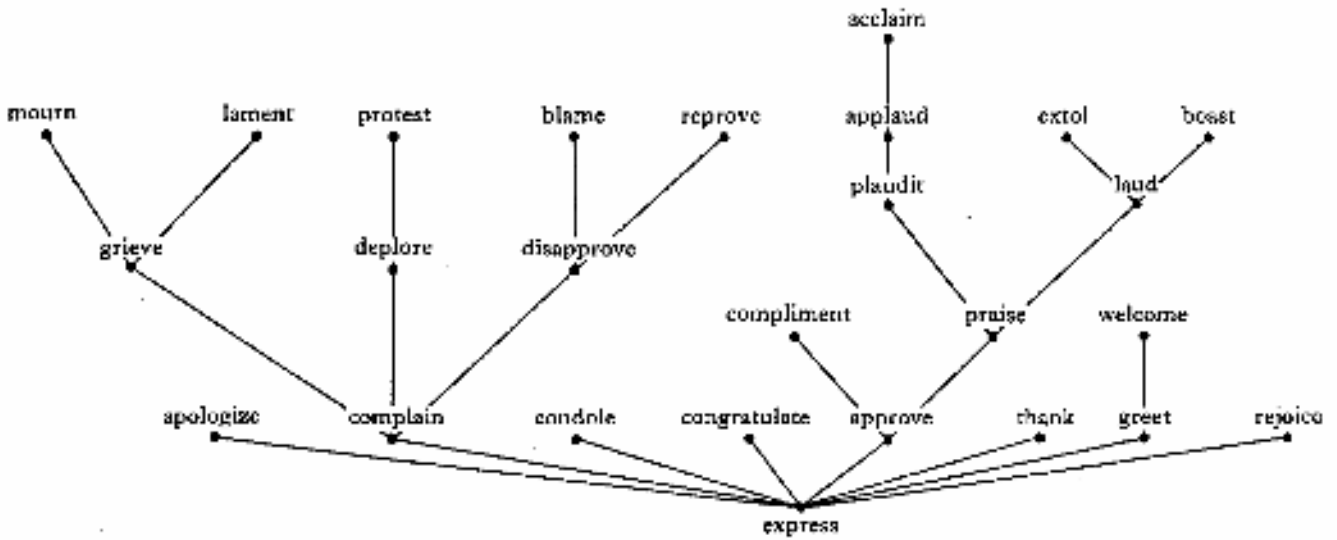

Figure 5. Semantic tableau for expressives

(21) *cheer,* (22) 600

To cheer is to call to an individual or a group/team (mode of achievement) personal or collective cries of support and encouragement (sincerity condition). To boo is to call in like manner cries of derision and/or hostility (sincerity condition).

(23) *condole,* (24) *congratulate*

Another pair is condole and congratulate. To condole is to "send one's condolences" and it is to express sympathy (sincerity condition). There is a preparatory condition to the effect that something bad (generally a bereavement, and certainly a great misfortune) has befallen the hearer. To congratulate is to express happiness for some good fortune (preparatory condition) that has come the way of the hearer.

(25) *thank*

To thank is to express gratitude (sincerity condition). There is a preparatory condition to the effect that the hearer is responsible for a state of affairs that is good for the speaker.

(26) *apologize*

To apologize is to express sorrow or regret (sincerity condition) for something judged bad and that the speaker is responsible for (preparatory condition).

(27) *greet,* (28) *welcome*

To greet someone is to express courteous acknowledgement of his presence (sincerity condition) upon encountering him (preparatory condition). To welcome is similar, except that it adds the preparatory condition that it is the hearer who has "arrived" (whereas it could be either hearer or speaker in the former case), and the sincerity condition that one is genuinely happy to see him. Both are hearer directed and both are marginal expressive speech acts since there is no propositional content.