

The distinction between a **declaration** and a **performative** lies in how they use language to change reality. A performative utterance describes an action that the utterance itself performs, while a declaration uses language to bring about a new state of affairs, often in a more formal or institutional context.

Performative Utterances

A **performative utterance** is a statement that, by being uttered, performs the very action it describes. These statements are not meant to be judged as true or false but rather as successful or unsuccessful.

- **Formula:** Usually follows the pattern "I [verb] [something]."
 - **Examples:**
 - **"I promise to be there."** The act of saying "I promise" creates the promise itself.
 - **"I accept this award."** The utterance performs the act of acceptance.
 - **Key Idea:** The utterance and the action are simultaneous. The words *do* the action.
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Declarations

A **declaration** is a type of performative utterance that changes the state of the world by making something true that was not true before. This requires a specific institutional context and authority. The speaker must have the power to make the declaration.

- **Formula:** Often uses specific verbs of declaration.
- **Examples:**
 - **"I declare you husband and wife."** This utterance, made by an officiant, changes the legal and social status of two people.
 - **"I declare war on the United States."** This utterance, made by a head of state, changes the relationship between two countries.
 - **"I now pronounce the defendant guilty."** This statement, made by a judge, changes the legal status of the defendant.
- **Key Idea:** Declarations bring about a new reality. The words *create* the action or state.

The Relationship

Declarations are a **subset** of performative utterances. All declarations are performatives, but not all performatives are declarations.

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| Feature | Performative | Declaration |
| Scope | Broader; includes promises, apologies, etc. | Narrower; specifically changes a state of affairs. |
| Requirement | The speaker must be sincere. | The speaker must have the authority and be in the right context. |
| Examples | "I apologize," "I bet you." | "You are fired," "I declare this meeting open." |

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In summary, a performative utterance is a word-as-action, while a declaration is a word-as-action that has the power to change reality, typically within a formal system

