

# HG2002: Solutions to Tutorial 8

## Speech Acts

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1. The ability to insert *hereby* appropriately is a test for performative utterances. For each of the following sentences below, use this as test to decide which of the following sentences would count as a performative utterance when uttered.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) <i>I acknowledge you as my legal heir.</i>                       | Y |
| (2) <i>I give notice that I will stand down as chairman.</i>         | Y |
| (3) <i>I'm warning you that it won't end here.</i>                   | N |
| (4) <i>I think you're taking this press attention too seriously.</i> | N |
| (5) <i>I deny all knowledge of this scandal.</i>                     | ? |
| (6) <i>I promised them there'd be no fuss.</i>                       | N |

2. Identify some direct illocutionary acts for the following utterances.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (7) <i>Do you know what time it is?</i> | Asking the time   |
| (8) <i>Hello!</i>                       | Greeting someone OR gaining their attention                                   |
| (9) <i>What a beautiful day!</i>        | Greeting someone  |
| (10) <i>Accept the award!</i>           | Telling someone to accept an award OR telling them to stop protesting already |
| (11) <i>Stop!</i>                       | Telling someone to stop OR asking people to stop someone                      |

3. Below are some examples of indirect speech acts. For each one try to identify both the direct and the indirect act.

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|--|---|
| (12) [Travel agent to customer]<br><i>Why not think about Spain for this summer?</i>                           | D: Asking a reason<br>I: Suggesting Spain as a vacation destination         |
| (13) [Mother to child coming home from school]<br><i>I bet you're hungry.</i>                                  | D: Offering a bet<br>I: Offering to make food                               |
| (14) [Bank manager to applicant for an overdraft]<br><i>We regret we are unable to accede to your request.</i> | D: Informing of their state of mind: regretful<br>I: Refusing their request |

- (15) [Someone responding to a friend's staying late]  
*Why don't you leave?*  
 D: Asking for a reason as to why they don't leave  
 I: Asking them to leave
- (16) [Doorman at a club to aspiring entrant]  
*Don't make me laugh.*  
 D: Requesting someone not to cause laughter  
 I: Refusing someone entry

4. What are the felicity conditions that Searle has identified for requesting? Form different indirect requests with the following strategies below.

- (a) By querying the preparatory condition of the direct request  
*H is able to perform A*  
*Can you make me a sandwich?*
- (b) By stating the preparatory condition of the direct request  
*H is able to perform A*  
*You can make me a sandwich.*
- (c) By querying the propositional condition of the direct request  
*S predicates a future act A of H*  
*Are you going to make me a sandwich?*
- (d) By stating the sincerity condition of the direct request.  
*S wants H to do A*  
*I want you to make me a sandwich.*

5. Cross-cultural differences in the use of direct versus indirect speech acts can lead speakers of one language to stereotype speakers of another language as impolite. Discuss any experience you may have had of such misunderstandings. Also reflect on how requests and other speech acts might differ in their directness in the languages that you speak. Try to come up with specific examples of differences.

- When ordering food at the food court, I feel impolite if I don't say *Please*. But I normally wouldn't use an addressee term (like *uncle* or *auntie*). I notice many Singaporean speakers are more direct in the request, but start with an addressee term
  - Me: *rice please*
  - Overheard: *Uncle, rice*
- Similarly in a taxi
  - Me: *turn left here please*
  - Singapore speaker: *Uncle, turn left here*
  - Hong Kong speaker: *turn left here, Sir*

It still sounds weird without a *please* to me, but maybe I sound rude because I don't say *uncle*?

**Acknowledgments** These questions are partially based on exercises from Saeed (2003).