

It may be possible to treat the so-called different 'meanings' of 'and' in English (discussed in Chapter 1) as instances of conventional implicature in different structures. When two statements containing static information are joined by 'and', as in [26a.], the implicature is simply 'in addition' or 'plus'. When the two statements contain dynamic, action-related information, as in [26b.], the implicature of 'and' is 'and then' indicating sequence.

- [26] a. Yesterday, Mary was happy
and ready to work. (p & q, +> p plus q)
b. She put on her clothes and left
the house. (p & q, +> q after p)

Because of the different implicatures, the two parts of [26a.] can be reversed with little difference in meaning, but there is a big change in meaning if the two parts of [26b.] are reversed.

For many linguists, the notion of 'implicature' is one of the central concepts in pragmatics. An implicature is certainly a prime example of more being communicated than is said. For those same linguists, another central concept in pragmatics is the observation that utterances perform actions, generally known as 'speech acts'.

6 Speech acts and events

In attempting to express themselves, people do not only produce utterances containing grammatical structures and words, they perform actions via those utterances. If you work in a situation where a boss has a great deal of power, then the boss's utterance of the expression in [1] is more than just a statement.

[1] You're fired.

The utterance in [1] can be used to perform the act of ending your employment. However, the actions performed by utterances do not have to be as dramatic or as unpleasant as in [1]. The action can be quite pleasant, as in the compliment performed by [2a.], the acknowledgement of thanks in [2b.], or the expression of surprise in [2c.].

- [2] a. You're so delicious.
b. You're welcome.
c. You're crazy!

Actions performed via utterances are generally called **speech acts** and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request.

These descriptive terms for different kinds of speech acts apply to the speaker's communicative intention in producing an utterance. The speaker normally expects that his or her communicative intention will be recognized by the hearer. Both speaker and hearer are usually helped in this process by the circumstances surrounding the utterance. These circumstances, including other utterances, are called the **speech event**. In many ways, it is the

nature of the speech event that determines the interpretation of an utterance as performing a particular speech act. On a wintry day, the speaker reaches for a cup of tea, believing that it has been freshly made, takes a sip, and produces the utterance in [3]. It is likely to be interpreted as a complaint.

[3] This tea is really cold!

Changing the circumstances to a really hot summer's day with the speaker being given a glass of iced tea by the hearer, taking a sip and producing the utterance in [3], it is likely to be interpreted as praise. If the same utterance can be interpreted as two different kinds of speech act, then obviously no simple one utterance to one action correspondence will be possible. It also means that there is more to the interpretation of a speech act than can be found in the utterance alone.

Speech acts

On any occasion, the action performed by producing an utterance will consist of three related acts. There is first a **locutionary act**, which is the basic act of utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression. If you have difficulty with actually forming the sounds and words to create a meaningful utterance in a language (for example, because it's foreign or you're tongue-tied), then you might fail to produce a locutionary act. Producing '*Aha mokofo!*' in English will not normally count as a locutionary act, whereas [4] will.

[4] I've just made some coffee.

Mostly we don't just produce well-formed utterances with no purpose. We form an utterance with some kind of function in mind. This is the second dimension, or the **illocutionary act**. The illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance. We might utter [4] to make a statement, an offer, an explanation, or for some other communicative purpose. This is also generally known as the **illocutionary force** of the utterance.

We do not, of course, simply create an utterance with a function without intending it to have an effect. This is the third dimension, the **perlocutionary act**. Depending on the circumstances, you

will utter [4] on the assumption that the hearer will recognize the effect you intended (for example, to account for a wonderful smell, or to get the hearer to drink some coffee). This is also generally known as the **perlocutionary effect**.

Of these three dimensions, the most discussed is illocutionary force. Indeed, the term 'speech act' is generally interpreted quite narrowly to mean only the illocutionary force of an utterance. The illocutionary force of an utterance is what it 'counts as'. The same locutionary act, as shown in [5a-], can count as a prediction [5b-], a promise [5c-], or a warning [5d-]. These different analyses [5b-d-] of the utterance in [5a-] represent different illocutionary forces.

- [5] a. I'll see you later. (= A)
- b. [I predict that] A.
- c. [I promise you that] A.
- d. [I warn you that] A.

One problem with the examples in [5] is that the same utterance can potentially have quite different illocutionary forces (for example, promise versus warning). How can speakers assume that the intended illocutionary force will be recognized by the hearer? That question has been addressed by considering two things: Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices and felicity conditions.

IFIDS

The most obvious device for indicating the illocutionary force (the **illocutionary Force Indicating Device**, or **IFID**) is an expression of the type shown in [6] where there is a slot for a verb that explicitly names the illocutionary act being performed. Such a verb can be called a **performative verb** (Vp).

[6] I (Vp) you that ...

In the preceding examples, [5c-,d-], 'promise' and 'warn' would be the performative verbs and, if stated, would be very clear IFIDS. Speakers do not always 'perform' their speech acts so explicitly, but they sometimes describe the speech act being performed. Imagine the telephone conversation in [7], between a man trying to contact Mary, and Mary's friend.

[7] Him: Can I talk to Mary?
Her: No, she's not here.

Him: I'm asking you—can I talk to her?
Her: And I'm telling you—SHE'S NOT HERE!

In this scenario, each speaker has described, and drawn attention to, the illocutionary force ('ask' and 'tell') of their utterances. Most of the time, however, there is no performative verb mentioned. Other IFIDs which can be identified are word order, stress, and intonation, as shown in the different versions of the same basic elements (Y-G) in [8].

- [8] a. You're going! [I tell you Y-G]
b. You're going? [I request confirmation about Y-G]
c. Are you going? [I ask you if Y-G]

While other devices, such as a lowered voice quality for a warning or a threat, might be used to indicate illocutionary force, the utterance also has to be produced under certain conventional conditions to count as having the intended illocutionary force.

Felicity conditions

There are certain expected or appropriate circumstances, technically known as **felicity conditions**, for the performance of a speech act to be recognized as intended. For some clear cases such as [9], the performance will be infelicitous (inappropriate) if the speaker is not a specific person in a special context (in this case, a judge in a courtroom).

[9] I sentence you to six months in prison.

In everyday contexts among ordinary people, there are also preconditions on speech acts. There are **general conditions** on the part of participants, for example, that they can understand the language being used and that they are not play-acting or being nonsensical. Then there are **content conditions**. For example, for both a promise and a warning, the content of the utterance must be about a future event. A further content condition for a promise requires that the future event will be a future act of the speaker.

The **preparatory conditions** for a promise are significantly different from those for a warning. When I promise to do something

there are two preparatory conditions: first, the event will not happen by itself, and second, the event will have a beneficial effect. When I utter a warning, there are the following preparatory conditions: it isn't clear that the hearer knows the event will occur, the speaker does think the event will occur, and the event will not have a beneficial effect. Related to these conditions is the **sincerity condition** that, for a promise, the speaker genuinely intends to carry out the future action, and, for a warning, the speaker genuinely believes that the future event will not have a beneficial effect.

Finally, there is the **essential condition**, which covers the fact that by the act of uttering a promise, I thereby intend to create an obligation to carry out the action as promised. In other words, the utterance changes my state from non-obligation to obligation. Similarly, with a warning, under the essential condition, the utterance changes my state from non-informing of a bad future event to informing. This essential condition thus combines with a specification of what must be in the utterance content, the context, and the speaker's intentions, in order for a specific speech act to be appropriately (felicitously) performed.

The performative hypothesis

One way to think about the speech acts being performed via utterances is to assume that underlying every utterance (U) there is a clause, similar to [6] presented earlier, containing a performative verb (Vp) which makes the illocutionary force explicit. This is known as the **performative hypothesis** and the basic format of the underlying clause is shown in [10].

[10] I (hereby) Vp you (that) U

In this clause, the subject must be first person singular ('I'), followed by the adverb 'hereby', indicating that the utterance 'counts as' an action by being uttered. There is also a performative verb (Vp) in the present tense and an indirect object in second person singular ('you?'). This underlying clause will always make explicit, as in [11b.] and [12b.], what, in utterances such as [11a.] and [12a.], is implicit.

- [11] a. Clean up this mess!
b. I hereby order you that you clean up this mess.

- [12] a. The work was done by Elaine and myself.
 b. I hereby tell you that the work was done by Elaine and myself.

Examples like [11b.] and [12b.] (normally without 'hereby'), are used by speakers as **explicit performatives**. Examples like [11a.] and [12a.] are **implicit performatives**, sometimes called **primary performatives**.

The advantage of this type of analysis is that it makes clear just what elements are involved in the production and interpretation of utterances. In syntax, a reflexive pronoun (like 'myself' in [12]) requires the occurrence of an antecedent (in this case 'I') within the same sentence structure. The explicit performative in [12b.] provides the 'I' element. Similarly, when you say to someone, 'Do it yourself!', the reflexive in 'yourself' is made possible by the antecedent 'you' in the explicit version ('I order you that you do it yourself'). Another advantage is to show that some adverbs such as 'honestly', or adverbial clauses such as 'because I may be late', as shown in [13], naturally attach to the explicit performative clause rather than the implicit version.

- [13] a. Honestly, he's a scoundrel.
 b. What time is it, because I may be late?

In [13a.], it is the telling part (the performative verb) that is being done 'honestly' and, in [13b.], it is the act of asking (the performative again) that is being justified by the 'because I may be late' clause.

There are some technical disadvantages to the performative hypothesis. For example, uttering the explicit performative version of a command [11b.] has a much more serious impact than uttering the implicit version [11a.]. The two versions are consequently not equivalent. It is also difficult to know exactly what the performative verb (or verbs) might be for some utterances. Although the speaker and hearer might recognize the utterance in [14a.] as an insult, it would be very strange to have [14b.] as an explicit version.

- [14] a. You're dumber than a rock.
 b. ?I hereby insult you that you're dumber than a rock.

The really practical problem with any analysis based on identifying explicit performatives is that, in principle, we simply do not know how many performative verbs there are in any language. Instead of trying to list all the possible explicit performatives, and then distinguish among all of them, some more general classifications of types of speech acts are usually used.

Speech act classification

One general classification system lists five types of general functions performed by speech acts: declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives.

Declarations are those kinds of speech acts that change the world via their utterance. As the examples in [15] illustrate, the speaker has to have a special institutional role, in a specific context, in order to perform a declaration appropriately.

- [15] a. Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife.
 b. Referee: You're out!
 c. Jury Foreman: We find the defendant guilty.

In using a declaration, the speaker changes the world via words.

Representatives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not. Statements of fact, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions, as illustrated in [16], are all examples of the speaker representing the world as he or she believes it is.

- [16] a. The earth is flat.
 b. Chomsky didn't write about peanuts.
 c. It was a warm sunny day.

In using a representative, the speaker makes words fit the world (of belief).

Expressives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker feels. They express psychological states and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow. As illustrated in [17], they can be caused by something the speaker does or the hearer does, but they are about the speaker's experience.

- [17] a. I'm really sorry!
 b. Congratulations!
 c. Oh, yes, great, mmmm, saahi!

In using an expressive, the speaker makes words fit the world (of feeling).

Directives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something. They express what the speaker wants. They are commands, orders, requests, suggestions, and, as illustrated in [18], they can be positive or negative.

- [18] a. Gimme a cup of coffee. Make it black.
 b. Could you lend me a pen, please?
 c. Don't touch that.

In using a directive, the speaker attempts to make the world fit the words (via the hearer).

Commissives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends. They are promises, threats, refusals, pledges, and, as shown in [19], they can be performed by the speaker alone, or by the speaker as a member of a group.

- [19] a. I'll be back.
 b. I'm going to get it right next time.
 c. We will not do that.

In using a commissive, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words (via the speaker).

These five general functions of speech acts, with their key features, are summarized in Table 6.1.

Direct and indirect speech acts

A different approach to distinguishing types of speech acts can be made on the basis of structure. A fairly simple structural distinction between three general types of speech acts is provided, in English, by the three basic sentence types. As shown in [20], there is an easily recognized relationship between the three structural forms (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and the three general communicative functions (statement, question, command/request).

- [20] a. You wear a seat belt. (declarative)
 b. Do you wear a seat belt? (interrogative)
 c. Wear a seat belt! (imperative)

Whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a

Speech act type	Direction of fit	S = speaker; X = situation
Declarations	words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	make words fit the world	S believes X
Expressives	make words fit the world	S feels X
Directives	make the world fit words	S wants X
Commissives	make the world fit words	S intends X

TABLE 6.1 *The five general functions of speech acts (following Searle 1979)*

function, we have a **direct speech act**. Whenever there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function, we have an **indirect speech act**. Thus, a declarative used to make a statement is a direct speech act, but a declarative used to make a request is an indirect speech act. As illustrated in [21], the utterance in [21a.] is a declarative. When it is used to make a statement, as paraphrased in [21b.], it is functioning as a direct speech act. When it is used to make a command/request, as paraphrased in [21c.], it is functioning as an indirect speech act.

- [21] a. It's cold outside.
 b. I hereby tell you about the weather.
 c. I hereby request of you that you close the door.

Different structures can be used to accomplish the same basic function, as in [22], where the speaker wants the addressee not to stand in front of the TV. The basic function of all the utterances in [22] is a command/request, but only the imperative structure in [22a.] represents a direct speech act. The interrogative structure in [22b.] is not being used only as a question, hence it is an indirect speech act. The declarative structures in [22c.] and [22d.] are also indirect requests.

- [22] a. Move out of the way!
 b. Do you have to stand in front of the TV?
 c. You're standing in front of the TV.
 d. You'd make a better door than a window.

One of the most common types of indirect speech act in English, as shown in [23], has the form of an interrogative, but is

not typically used to ask a question (i.e. we don't expect only an answer, we expect action). The examples in [23] are normally understood as requests.

- [23] a. Could you pass the salt?
b. Would you open this?

Indeed, there is a typical pattern in English whereby asking a question about the hearer's assumed ability ('Can you?', 'Could you?') or future likelihood with regard to doing something ('Will you?', 'Would you?') normally counts as a request to actually do that something.

Indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness in English than direct speech acts. In order to understand why, we have to look at a bigger picture than just a single utterance performing a single speech act.

Speech events

We can treat an indirect request (for example, the utterances in [23]) as being a matter of asking whether the necessary conditions for a request are in place. For example, a preparatory condition is that the speaker assumes the hearer is able to, or CAN, perform the action. A content condition concerns future action, that the hearer WILL perform the action. This pattern is illustrated in [24].

- [24] Indirect requests
- | | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| a. Content condition | Future act of hearer (= hearer WILL do X) | 'WILL you do X?' |
| b. Preparatory condition | Hearer is able to perform act (= hearer CAN do X) | 'CAN you do X?' |
| c. Questioning a hearer-based condition for making a request results in an indirect request. | | |

There is a definite difference between asking someone to do X and asking someone if the preconditions for doing X are in place, as in

[24c.]. Asking about preconditions technically doesn't count as making a request, but does allow the hearer to react 'as if' the request had been made. Because a request is an imposition by the speaker on the hearer, it is better, in most social circumstances, for the speaker to avoid a direct imposition via a direct request. When the speaker asks about preconditions, no direct request is made.

The preceding discussion is essentially about one person trying to get another person to do something without risking refusal or causing offense. However, this type of situation does not consist of a single utterance. It is a social situation involving participants who necessarily have a social relationship of some kind, and who, on a specific occasion, may have particular goals.

We can look at the set of utterances produced in this kind of situation as a **speech event**. A speech event is an activity in which participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome. It may include an obvious central speech act, such as 'I don't really like this', as in a speech event of 'complaining', but it will also include other utterances leading up to and subsequently reacting to that central action. In most cases, a 'request' is not made by means of a single speech act suddenly uttered. Requesting is typically a speech event, as illustrated in [25].

- [25] Him: Oh, Mary, I'm glad you're here.
Her: What's up?
Him: I can't get my computer to work.
Her: Is it broken?
Him: I don't think so.
Her: What's it doing?
Him: I don't know. I'm useless with computers.
Her: What kind is it?
Him: It's a Mac. Do you use them?
Her: Yeah.
Him: Do you have a minute?
Her: Sure.
Him: Oh, great.

The extended interaction in [25] may be called a 'requesting' speech event without a central speech act of request. Notice that there is no actual request from 'him' to 'her' to do anything. We might characterize the question 'Do you have a minute?' as a

'pre-request', allowing the receiver to say that she's busy or that she has to be somewhere else. In this context, the response 'Sure' is taken to be an acknowledgement not only of having time available, but a willingness to perform the unstated action. The analysis of speech events is clearly another way of studying how more gets communicated than is said.

The usefulness of speech act analysis is in illustrating the kinds of things we can do with words and identifying some of the conventional utterance forms we use to perform specific actions. However, we do need to look at more extended interaction to understand how those actions are carried out and interpreted within speech events.

7 Politeness and interaction

In much of the preceding discussion, the small-scale scenarios presented to illustrate language in use have been populated by people with virtually no social lives. Yet, much of what we say, and a great deal of what we communicate, is determined by our social relationships. A linguistic interaction is necessarily a social interaction.

In order to make sense of what is said in an interaction, we have to look at various factors which relate to social distance and closeness. Some of these factors are established prior to an interaction and hence are largely external factors. They typically involve the relative status of the participants, based on social values tied to such things as age and power. For example, speakers who see themselves as lower status in English-speaking contexts tend to mark social distance between themselves and higher status speakers by using address forms that include a title and a last name, but not the first name (for example, Mrs Clinton, Mr Adams, Dr Dang). We take part in a wide range of interactions (mostly with strangers) where the social distance determined by external factors is dominant.

However, there are other factors, such as amount of imposition or degree of friendliness, which are often negotiated during an interaction. These are internal to the interaction and can result in the initial social distance changing and being marked as less, or more, during its course. This may result, for example, in participants moving from a title-plus-last name to a first-name basis within the talk. These internal factors are typically more relevant to participants whose social relationships are actually in the process of being worked out within the interaction.