Communication and the Evolution of Society

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The diagram sums up the viewpoints from which I have delimited the class of speech acts basic for analysis.

Derivation of the Analytic Units of the Theory of Speech Acts

Instrumental Actions — Social Actions

Symbolic Actions — Communicative Actions — Strategic Actions

Not Propositionally Differentiated

Proportionally Differentiated

Nonverbal — Verbal

Nonverbal (Illocutionarily abbreviated speech actions)

Institutionally Bound — Institutionally Unbound

Implicit — Explicit

Context-dependent — Context-independent

Analytic Units

I have not explained the embedding of communicative action ("oriented to reaching understanding") in other types of action. It seems to me that strategic action ("oriented to the actor's success")—in general, modes of action that correspond to the utilitarian model of purposive-rational action) as well as (the still-insufficiently-analyzed) symbolic action (e.g., a concert, a dance—in general, modes of action that are bound to nonpropositional systems of symbolic expression) differ from communicative action in that individual validity claims are suspended (in strategic action, truthfulness, in symbolic action, truth). My previous analyses of "labor" and "interaction" have not yet adequately captured the most general differentiating characteristics of instrumental and social (or communicative) action. I cannot pursue this desideratum here.

On the Double Structure of Speech

I would like to come back now to the characteristic double structure that can be read off the standard form of speech actions. Obviously the two components, the illocutionary and the propositional, can vary independently of one another. We can hold a propositional content invariant vis-à-vis the different types of speech acts in which it appears. In this abstraction of propositional content from the asserted proposition, a fundamental accomplishment of our language is expressed. Propositionally differentiated speech distinguishes itself therein from the symbolically mediated interaction we can already observe among primates. Any number of examples of the speech-act-invariance of propositional content can be provided—for instance, for the propositional content "Peter's smoking a pipe" the following:

"I assert that Peter smokes a pipe."
"I beg of you (Peter) that you smoke a pipe."
"I ask you (Peter), do you smoke a pipe?"
"I warn you (Peter), smoke a pipe."

In a genetic perspective, the speech-act-invariance of propositional contents appears as an uncoupling of illocutionary and
propositional components in the formation and transformation of speech actions. This uncoupling is a condition for the differentiation of the double structure of speech, that is, for the separation of two communicative levels on which speaker and hearer must simultaneously come to an understanding if they want to communicate their intentions to one another. I would distinguish (1) the level of intersubjectivity on which speaker and hearer, through illocutionary acts, establish the relations that permit them to come to an understanding with one another, and (2) the level of propositional content which is communicated. Corresponding to the relational and the content aspects in which every utterance can be analyzed, there are (in the standard form) the illocutionary and the propositional components of the speech act. The illocutionary act fixes the sense in which the propositional content is employed, and the act-complement determines the content that is understood “as something...” in the communicative function specified. (The hermeneutic “as” can be differentiated on both communicative levels. With a proposition “p” an identifiable object, whose existence is presupposed, can be characterized as something—e.g., as a “red,” “soft,” or “ideal” object. In connection with an illocutionary act, that is, through being embedded in a speech act, this propositional content can in turn be uttered as something—e.g., as a command or assertion.) A basic feature of language is connected with this double structure of speech, namely its inherent reflexivity. The standardized possibilities for directly and indirectly mentioning speech only make explicit a self-reference that is already contained in every speech act. In filling out the double structure of speech participants in dialogue communicate on two levels simultaneously. They combine communication of a content with communication about the role in which the communicated content is used. The expression communication about might be misleading here because it could be associated with metalanguage and would then bring to mind an idea of language levels according to which at every higher level metalinguistic statements about the object language of the next lower level can be made. But the concept of a hierarchy of language was introduced for formal languages, in which just that reflexivity of ordinary language is lacking. Moreover, in a meta-

language one always refers to an object language in the objectivating attitude of someone asserting facts or observing events; one forms metalinguistic statements. By contrast, on the level of intersubjectivity one chooses the illocutionary role in which the propositional content is to be used; and this communication about the sense in which the sentence with propositional content is to be employed requires a performative attitude on the part of those communicating. Thus the peculiar reflexivity of natural language rests in the first instance on the combination of a communication of content—effected in an objectivating attitude—with a communication concerning the relational aspect in which the content is to be understood—effected in a performative attitude.

Of course, participants in dialogue normally have the option of objectifying every illocutionary act performed as the content of another, a subsequent speech act. They can adopt an objectivating attitude toward the illocutionary component of a former speech act and shift this component to the level of propositional contents. Naturally they can do so only in performing a new speech act that has, in turn, a nonobjectified illocutionary component. The direct and indirect mention of speech standardizes this possibility of rendering explicit the reflexivity of natural language. The communication that takes place on the level of intersubjectivity in a speech act at $t_n$ can be depicted on the level of propositional content in a further (constative) speech act at $t_{n+1}$. On the other hand, it is not possible simultaneously to perform and to objectify an illocutionary act.  

This option is sometimes the occasion for a descriptivist fallacy to which even pragmatic theories fall prey. We can analyze the structures of speech, as every other object, only in an objectivating attitude. In doing so, the actually accompanying illocutionary component cannot, as we saw above, become uno acto the object. This circumstance misleads many language theorists into the view that communication processes take place at a single level, namely that of transmitting content (i.e., information). In this perspective, the relational aspect loses its independence vis-à-vis the content aspect; the communicative role of an utterance loses its constitutive significance and is added to the information content. The pragmatic operator of the statement, which in formalized
presentations (e.g., deontic logics) represents the illocutionary component of an utterance, is then no longer interpreted as a specific mode of reaching understanding about propositional contents but falsely as part of the information transmitted.

As opposed to this, I consider the task of universal pragmatics to be the rational reconstruction of the double structure of speech. Taking Austin's theory of speech acts as my point of departure, [in the next two sections] I would like now to make this task more precise in relation to the problems of meaning and validity.

Universal-Pragmatic Categories of Meaning

Austin's contrasting of locutionary and illocutionary acts set off a broad discussion that also brought some clarification to the theory of meaning. Austin reserved the concept meaning for the meaning of sentences with propositional content, while he used the concept force only for the illocutionary act of uttering sentences with propositional content. This leads to the following constellations:

meaning: sense and reference, locutionary act
force: attempt to reach an uptake, illocutionary act

Austin could point to the fact that sentences with the same propositional content could be uttered in speech acts of different types, that is, with differing illocutionary force. Nevertheless, the proposed distinction is unsatisfactory. If one introduces meaning only in a linguistic sense, as sentence meaning (in which either sentence meaning is conceived as a function of word meanings or, with Frege, word meanings are conceived as functions of possible sentence meanings), the restriction to the propositional components of speech acts is not plausible. Obviously their illocutionary components also have a meaning in a linguistic sense. In the case of an explicitly performative utterance, the performative verb employed has a lexical meaning, and the performative sentence constructed with its help has a meaning similar in a way to the dependent sentence with propositional content. "What Austin calls the illocutionary force of an utterance is that aspect of its meaning which is either conveyed by its explicitly performative prefix, if it has one, or might have been so conveyed by the use of such an expression."78

This argument neglects, however, the fact that force is something which, in a specific sense, belongs only to utterances and not to sentences. Thus one might first hit upon the idea of reserving "force" for the meaning content that accrues to the sentence through its being uttered, that is, embedded in structures of speech. We can certainly distinguish the phenomenon of meaning that comes about through the employment of a sentence in an utterance from mere sentence meaning. We can speak in a pragmatic sense of the meaning of an utterance, as we do in a linguistic sense of the meaning of a sentence. Thus Alston has taken the fact that the same speech acts can be performed with different sentences as a reason for granting pragmatic meaning a certain priority over linguistic meaning. In accordance with a consistent use theory of meaning, he suggests that sentence (and word) meanings are a function of the meaning of the speech acts in which they are principally used.79 The difficulty with this proposal is that it does not adequately take into account the relative independence of sentence meanings in relation to the contingent changes of meaning that a sentence can undergo when used in different contexts. Moreover, the meaning of a sentence is apparently less dependent on the intention of the speaker than is the meaning of an utterance.

Even if a sentence is very often used with different intentions and in a context that pragmatically shifts meaning, its linguistic meaning does not have to change. Thus, for example, when certain social roles prescribe that commands be uttered in the form of requests, the pragmatic meaning of the utterance (as a command) in no way alters the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered (as a request). This is an additional reason for singling out the standard conditions under which the pragmatic meaning of an explicit speech action coincides with the linguistic meaning of the sentences employed in it. Precisely in the case of an explicit speech act in standard form, however, the categorial difference between the meaning of expressions originally used in propositional sentences and the meaning of illocutionary forces (as well
as of expressed intentions) comes into view. This shows it does not make sense to explicate the concepts meaning versus force with reference to the distinction between the linguistic meaning of a sentence and the pragmatic meaning of an utterance.

The linguistic analysis of sentence meaning abstracts from certain relations to reality into which a sentence is put as soon as it is uttered and from the validity claims under which it is thereby placed. On the other hand, a consistent analysis of meaning is not possible without reference to some situations of possible use. Every linguistic expression can be used to form statements. Even illocutionary phrases (and originally intentional expressions) can become part of propositional sentences. This suggests that we might secure a certain unity for the linguistic analysis of the meanings of linguistic expressions by relating it in every case to their possible contribution to forming propositions. But that makes sense only for such expressions as can appear exclusively in propositional components of speech. The meaning of performative expressions should, on the contrary, be clarified by referring to their possible contribution to forming illocutionary acts (and the meaning of originally intentional expressions by referring to their possible contribution to forming first-person sentences expressing wishes, feelings, intentions, etc.). The linguistic explication of the meaning of "to promise" should orient itself around its contribution to forming the sentence,

1) "I hereby promise you that . . ."

and not,

2) "He is promising him that . . ."

Correspondingly, the explication of the meaning of "to hate" should refer to the sentence,

1') "I hate you."

instead of to the sentence,

2') "He hates him."

Only because and so long as the linguistic analysis of meaning is biased in favor of the propositionalized forms (2 or 2') is it necessary to supplement the meaning of propositional sentences with the meaning of the illocutionary force of an utterance (and the intention of a speaker). No doubt this circumstance motivated Austin to draw his distinction between meaning and force. To my mind, it would be better to differentiate the linguistic meanings of expressions according to their possible contribution to forming different types of speech acts (and different components of speech acts). Let us consider two examples:

3) "I'm notifying you that father's new car is yellow."

4) "I'm asking you, is father's new car yellow?"

Understanding the two (different) illocutionary acts is tied to other presuppositions than understanding their (concordant) propositional content. The difference becomes perceptible as soon as I go back to the conditions that must be fulfilled by situations in which someone who does not know English might learn (i.e., originally understand) the meanings. A hearer can understand the meaning of the sentence with the propositional content: "the yellow of father's new car" under the condition that he has learned to use the propositional sentence correctly in the assertion:

5) "I'm telling you, father's new car is yellow,"

in order, for example, to report the observation that father's new car is yellow. The ability to have this or a similar experience must be presupposed. A proper use of the propositional sentence in (5) demands (at least) the following of the speaker:

a) The existence presupposition—there is one and only one object to which the characteristic "father's new car" applies.

b) The presupposition of identifiability—the (denotationally employed) propositional content contained in the characterization "father's new car" is a sufficient indication, in a given context, for a hearer to select the (and only the) object to which the characteristic applies.

c) The act of predication—the predicate "yellow" can be attributed to the object that is denoted.

Correspondingly, understanding the meaning of the propositional sentence contained in (5) demands of the hearer that he
Share-the-speaker presupposition (a).

b) Fulfill-the-speaker presupposition (b), that is, actually identify the object referred to,

c) Undertake for his part the act of predication (c).

It is otherwise with the illocutionary components of utterances (3) and (4). A hearer can understand the meaning of notifying or asking under the condition that he has learned to take part in successful speech acts of the following type:

6) "I (hereby) notify you that . . ."

7) "I (hereby) ask you whether . . ."

that is, has learned to assume both the role of the (acting) speaker as well as that of the (cooperating) hearer. The performance of an illocutionary act cannot serve to report an observation as the use of a propositional sentence can; and the ability to have perceptions is also not essentially presupposed here. Rather, conversely, the execution of a speech act is a condition of possibility of an experience, namely the communicative experience that the hearer has when he accepts the offer contained in the attempted speech action and enters into the requested connection with the speaker.

Whereas understanding (5) presupposes the possibility of sensory experiences (experiences of the type: observation), understanding (6) and (7) itself represents a communicative experience (an experience of the type: "participant observation").

The difference between originally illocutionary and originally propositional meanings (force and meaning in Austin's sense) can be traced back to differences in possible learning situations. We learn the meaning of illocutionary acts only in the performative attitude of participants in speech actions. By contrast, we learn the meaning of sentences with propositional content in the objectivating attitude of observers who correctly report their experiences in propositions. We acquire originally illocutionary meanings in connection with communicative experiences that we have in entering upon the level of intersubjectivity and establishing interpersonal relations. We acquire originally propositional meanings in reporting something that happens in the world.

This difference notwithstanding, meanings acquired in a performative attitude can, of course, also appear in sentences with propositional content:

8) "I assure you that he notified me yesterday that . . ."

9) "I'm reporting to you that he asked me yesterday whether . . ."

This fact may explain why the indicated difference between the two categories of meaning is often not noticed. In sentences of propositional content, however, we can distinguish the meanings of expressions that can be used in a performative attitude from the word meanings that are permitted only as meaning components of sentences with propositional content. In utterances like (8) and (9), "notify" and "ask" bear a shade of meaning borrowed from the power that they have only in illocutionary roles—as in (6) and (7).

We can retain Austin's distinction between force and meaning in the sense of these two categories of meaning. Force then stands for the meaning of expressions that are originally used in connection with illocutionary acts, and meaning for the meaning of expressions originally used in connection with propositions. Thus we distinguish force and meaning as two categories of meaning that arise in regard to the general pragmatic functions of the establishment of interpersonal relations, on the one hand, and the representation of facts, on the other. (The third category of meaning, which corresponds to the function of expression, that is, to the disclosure of the speaker's wishes, feelings, intentions, etc. in first-person sentences, I shall leave to one side here, although reflections similar to those carried through for illocutionary acts apply to them as well.)

I would like to hold fast to the following results:

a. It is not advisable to reserve the concept of semantic content for the propositional component of a speech action and to characterize the meaning of the illocutionary component only by a pragmatic operator (which designates a specific illocutionary force).

b. On the other hand, it is also unsatisfactory to reconstruct the meaning of a performative sentence in exactly the same way as the
meaning of a sentence with propositional content; the illocutionary component of a speech act neither expresses a proposition nor mentions a propositional content.\textsuperscript{79}

c. It is equally unsatisfactory to equate illocutionary force with the meaning components that are added to the meaning of a sentence through the act of utterance.

d. From a universal-pragmatic point of view, the meanings of linguistic expressions can be categorically distinguished according to whether they can appear only in sentences that take on a representational function or whether they can specifically serve to establish interpersonal relations or to express intentions.\textsuperscript{80}

Thematization of Validity Claims and Modes of Communication

Austin's contrast of locutionary and illocutionary acts has become important not only for the theory of meaning; the discussions about basic types of speech action and basic modes of language has also fastened on to this pair of concepts. At first Austin wanted to draw the boundary in such a way that "the performatives should be doing something as opposed to just saying something; and the performatives are happy or unhappy as opposed to true and false."\textsuperscript{81} From this there results the following correlations:

- Locutionary acts: constatives, true/untrue.
- Ilocutionary acts: performatives, happy/unhappy.

But this demarcation of locutionary and illocutionary acts could not be maintained when it became apparent that all speech actions—the constative included—contain a locutionary component (in the form of a sentence with propositional content) and an illocutionary component (in the form of a performatory sentence).\textsuperscript{82} What Austin had first introduced as the locutionary act was now replaced by (a) the propositional component contained in every explicit performatory utterance, and (b) a special class of illocutionary acts that imply the validity claim of truth—constative speech acts. Austin himself later regarded constative speech acts as only one of the different classes of speech acts. The two sentences:

1) "I assert that . . . ."

2) "I'm warning you that . . . ."

equally express illocutionary acts.\textsuperscript{83} But this has the interesting consequence that the validity claim contained in constative speech acts (truth/falsity) represents only a special case among the validity claims that speakers, in speech acts, raise and offer for vindication vis-à-vis hearers.

In general we may say this: with both statements (and, for example, descriptions) and warnings, etc., the question of whether, granting that you did warn and had the right to warn, did state or did advise, you were right to state or to warn or advise, can arise—not in the sense of whether it was opportune or expedient, but whether, on the facts and your knowledge of the facts and the purpose for which you were speaking, and so on, this was the proper thing to say.\textsuperscript{84}

In this passage Austin emphasizes the claims to be right, or validity claims, that we raise with any (and not just with constative) speech acts. But he distinguishes these only incidentally from the conditions of the generalized context that typically must be fulfilled if a speech act of the corresponding type is to succeed (that is, from happiness/unhappiness conditions in general). It is true of assertions, in the same way as it is of warnings, advisings, promissing, and so forth, that they can succeed only if both conditions are fulfilled: (a) to be in order, and (b) to be right.

But the real conclusion must surely be that we need . . . to establish with respect to each kind of illocutionary act—warnings, estimates, verdicts, statements, and descriptions—what if any is the specific way in which they are intended, first to be in order or not in order, and second, to be "right" or "wrong"; what terms of appraisal and dis appraisal are used for each and what they mean. This is a wide field and certainly will not lead to a simple distinction of true and false; nor will it lead to a distinction of statements from the rest, for stating is only one among very numerous speech acts of the illocutionary class.\textsuperscript{85}

Speech acts can be in order with respect to typically restricted contexts (a); but they can be valid only with respect to the
fundamental claim that the speaker raises with his illocutionary
act (b). I shall be coming back to both of these classes of con-
ditions that must be fulfilled in order for speech acts to succeed.
At this point I am interested only in the fact that the comparison
between constative and nonconstative speech acts throws light on
the validity basis that manifestly underlies all speech actions.

To be sure, this does bring out the special position of constative
speech acts. Assertions do not differ from other types of speech
actions in their performativ/propositional double structure, nor
by virtue of conditions of a generalized context, for these vary
in a typical way for all speech actions; but they do differ from
(almost) all other types of speech actions in that they prima facie
imply an unmistakable validity claim, a truth claim. It is unde-
niable that other types of speech actions also imply some validity
claim; but in determining exactly what validity claim they imply,
we seldom encounter so clear and universally recognized a valid-
ity claim as "truth" (in the sense of propositional truth). It is
easy to see the reason for this: the validity claim of constative
speech acts is presupposed in a certain way by speech acts of
every type. The meaning of the propositional content mentioned
in nonconstative speech acts can be made explicit through trans-
forming a sentence of propositional content, "that p," into a
propositional sentence "p"; and the truth claim belongs essen-
tially to the meaning of the proposition thereby expressed. Truth
claims are thus a type of validity claim built into the structure of
possible speech in general. Truth is a universal validity claim; its
universality is reflected in the double structure of speech.

Looking back, Austin assures himself of what he originally had
in mind with his contrast of constative and nonconstative speech
actions (constatives versus performatives):

With the constative utterances, we abstract from the illocutionary...aspects of the speech act, and we concentrate on the locutionary; moreover, we use an oversimplified notion of correspondence with the facts... We aim at the ideal of what would be right to say in all circumstances, for any purpose, to any audience, etc. Perhaps this is sometimes realized. With the performative we attend as much as possible to the illocutionary force of the utterance, and abstract from the dimension of correspondence with facts.55

After he recognized that constative speech acts represent only
one of several types of speech action, Austin gave up the afore-
mentioned contrast in favor of a set of unordered families of
speech actions. I am of the opinion, however, that what he in-
tended with the contrast constative versus performative can be
adequately reconstructed.

We have seen that communication in language can take place
only when the participants, in communicating with one another
about something, simultaneously enter upon two levels of com-
unication—the level of intersubjectivity on which they take up
interpersonal relations and the level of propositional contents.
However, in speaking we can make either the interpersonal rela-
tion or the propositional content more centrally thematic; cor-
respondingly we make a more interactive or a more cognitive use
of our language. In the interactive use of language, we thematize
the relations into which speaker and hearer enter—as a warning,
promise, request—while we only mention the propositional con-
tent of the utterances. In the cognitive use of language, by con-
trast, we thematize the content of the utterance as a proposition
about something that is happening in the world (or that could
be the case), while we only indirectly express the interpersonal
relation. This incidental character can be seen, for example, in
the fact that in English the explicit form of assertion ("I am
asserting (to you) that..."), although grammatically correct,
is rare in comparison to the short form that disregards the inter-
personal relation.

As the content is thematized in the cognitive use of language,
only speech acts in which propositional contents assume the ex-

...
timate (or illegitimate) interpersonal relation between the participants, is borrowed from the binding force of recognized norms of action (or of evaluation); to the extent that a speech act is an action, it actualizes an already-established pattern of relations. The validity of a normative background of institutions, roles, socioculturally habitual forms of life—that is, of conventions—is always presupposed. This by no means holds true only for institutionally bound speech actions such asbetting, greeting, christening, appointing, and the like, each of which satisfies a specific institution (or a narrowly circumscribed class of norms). In promises too, in recommendations, prohibitions, prescriptions, and the like, which are not regulated from the outset by institutions, the speaker implies a validity claim that must, if the speech acts are to succeed, be covered by existing norms, and that means by (at least) de facto recognition of the claim that these norms rightfully exist. This internal relation between the validity claims implicitly raised in speech actions and the validity of their normative context is stressed in the interactive use of language, as is the truth claim in the cognitive use of language. Just as only constative speech acts are permitted in the cognitive use of language, so in the interactive use only those speech acts are permitted that characterize a specific relation that speaker and hearer can adopt to norms of action or evaluation. I call these regulative speech acts.87 With the illocutionary force of speech actions, the normative validity claim—rightness or appropriateness [Richtigkeit, Angemessenheit]—is built just as universally into the structures of speech as the truth claim. But the validity claim of a normative context is explicitly invoked only in regulative speech acts (in commands and admonitions, in prohibitions and refusals, in promises and agreements, notices, excuses, recommendations, admissions, and so forth). The truth reference of the mentioned propositional content remains, by contrast, merely implicit; it pertains only to its existent presuppositions. Conversely, in constative speech acts, which explicitly raise a truth claim, the normative validity claim remains implicit, although these too (e.g., reports, explications, communications, elucidations, narrations, and so forth) must correspond to an established pattern of value orientations—that is, they must fit a recognized normative context—if the interpersonal relations intended in them are to come to pass.

It seems to me that what Austin had in mind with his (later abandoned) classification into constative versus performative utterances is captured in the distinction between the cognitive and the interactive uses of language. In the cognitive use of language, with the help of constative speech acts, we thematize the propositional content of an utterance; in the interactive use of language, with the help of regulative speech acts, we thematize the kind of interpersonal relation established. The difference in thematization results from stressing one of the validity claims universally inhabiting speech, that is, from the fact that in the cognitive use of language we raise truth claims for propositions and in the interactive use of language we claim (or contest) the validity of a normative context for interpersonal relations. Austin himself did not draw this consequence because, on the one hand, he took only one universal validity claim into consideration, namely, propositional truth interpreted in terms of the correspondence theory of truth; but he wanted, on the other hand, to make this single validity claim compatible with many types of speech acts other than constative speech acts. In his words: “If, then, we loosen up our ideas of truth and falsity we shall see that statements, when assessed in relation to the facts, are not so different after all from pieces of advice, warnings, verdicts and so on.” 88 This loosening of the concept of truth in favor of a broad dimension of evaluation, in which an assertion can be just as well characterized as exaggerated or precise or inappropriate as true or false, results somehow in the assimilation of all validity claims to that of propositional truth. “We see that, when we have an order or a warning or a piece of advice, there is a question about how this is related to fact which is not perhaps so different from the kind of question that arises when we discuss how a statement is related to fact.” 89 It seems to me that Austin confuses the validity claim of propositional truth, which can be understood in the first instance in terms of a correspondence between statements and facts, with the validity claim of normative rightness, which does not fit the correspondence theory by truth.

To the extent that warnings or pieces of advice rest on predic-
tions, they are part of a cognitive use of speech. Whether those involved were right to utter certain warnings or pieces of advice in a given situation, depends in this case on the truth of the corresponding predictions. As part of an interactive use of speech, warnings and pieces of advice can also have a normative meaning. Then the right to issue certain warnings and advice depends on whether the presupposed norms to which they refer are valid (that is, are intersubjectively recognized) or not (and, at a next stage, ought or ought not to be valid). But most types of speech action can be more clearly attached to a single mode of language use. Whether an estimate is good or bad clearly depends on the truth of a corresponding statement; estimates usually appear in the cognitive use of language. On the other hand, whether the verdict of a court, the reprimand of a person, or the command of a superior to a subordinate with regard to certain behavior are justly pronounced, deservedly issued, or rightfully given depends just as clearly on whether a recognized norm has been correctly applied to a given case (or whether the right norm has been applied to the case). Legal verdicts, reprimands, and orders can only be part of an interactive use of language. Austin himself once considered the objection that different validity claims are at work in these cases:

Allowing that, in declaring the accused guilty, you have reached your verdict properly and in good faith, it still remains to ask whether the verdict was just, or fair. Allowing that you had the right to reprimand him as you did, and that you have acted without malice, one can still ask whether your reprimand was deserved... There is one thing that people will be particularly tempted to bring up as an objection against any comparison between this second kind of criticism and the kind appropriate to statements, and that is this: aren’t these questions about something’s being good, or just, or fair, or deserved entirely distinct from questions of truth and falsehood? That, surely, is a very simple black-and-white business: either the utterance corresponds to the facts or it doesn’t, and that’s that.  

In comprehending the universal validity claim of truth in the same class with a host of particular evaluative criteria, Austin obliterated the distinction between the clear-cut universal validity claims of propositional truth and normative rightness (and truthfulness). But this proves to be unnecessary if in a given speech action we distinguish among:

a. The implicitly presupposed conditions of generalized context,

b. The specific meaning of an interpersonal relation to be established, and

c. The implicitly raised, general validity claim.

Whereas (a) and (b) fix the distinct classes (different in different languages) of standardized speech actions, (c) determines the universal modes of communication, modes inherent in speech in general.

Before going into (a) and (b), I would like at least to remark that the Austinian starting point in the distinction between performative and constative utterances provides an overly narrow view; the validity spectrum of speech is not exhausted by the two modes of communication I developed from this distinction. Naturally there can be no mode of communication in which the intelligibility of an utterance is thematically stressed; for every speech act must fulfill the presupposition of comprehensibility in the same way. If in some communication there is a breakdown of intelligibility, the requirement of comprehensibility can be made thematic only through passing over to a hermeneutic discourse, and then in connection with the relevant linguistic system. The truthfulness with which a speaker utters his intentions can, however, be stressed at the level of communicative action in the same way as the truth of a proposition and the rightness (or appropriateness) of an interpersonal relation. Truthfulness guarantees the transparency of a subjectivity representing itself in language. It is especially emphasized in the expressive use of language. The paradigms are first-person sentences in which the speaker’s wishes, feelings, intentions, etc. (which are expressed incidentally in every speech act) become disclosed, that is, sentences such as:

3) “I long for you.”

4) “I wish that...”

It is unusual for such sentences to be explicitly embedded in an illocutionary act as follows:

3’) “I hereby express to you that I long for you.”
In the expressive use of language the interpersonal relation carrying the function of public self-representation is not thematic and thus need be mentioned only in situations in which the presupposition of the speaker's truthfulness is not taken for granted; for this, avowals are the paradigm:

5) "I must confess to you that..."
6) "I don't want to conceal from you that..."

For this reason, expressive speech acts such as disclosing, concealing, revealing, and the like, cannot be correlated with the expressive use of language (which can, in a way, dispense with illocutionary acts) in the same manner as constative speech acts are correlated with the cognitive use of language and regulative speech acts with the interactive. Nevertheless, truthfulness too is a universal implication of speech, as long as the presuppositions of communicative action are not altogether suspended. In the cognitive use of language the speaker must, in a trival sense, truthfully express his thoughts, opinions, assumptions, and so forth; since he asserts a proposition, however, what matters is not the truthfulness of his intentions, but the truth of the proposition. Similarly, in the interactive use of language the speaker expresses the intention of promising, reminding, refusing, and so forth; but since he brings about an interpersonal relation with the hearer, the truthfulness of his intention is only a necessary condition, whereas what is important is that the action fit a recognized normative context.

Thus we have the following correlations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Communication</th>
<th>Type of Speech Action</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Thematic Validity Claim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Constatives</td>
<td>Propositional content</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Regulatives</td>
<td>Interpersonal relation</td>
<td>Rightness, appropriateness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Avowals</td>
<td>Speaker's intention</td>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P.S.: The modes of language use can be demarcated from one another only paradigmatically. I am not claiming that every se-

quence of speech actions can be unequivocally classified under these viewpoints. I am claiming only that every competent speaker has in principle the possibility of unequivocally selecting one mode because with every speech act he must raise three universal validity claims, so that he can single out one of them to thematize a component of speech.)

The Rational Foundation of Illocutionary Force

Having somewhat elucidated the meaning structure and validity basis of basic types of speech acts, I would like to return to the question, in what does the illocutionary force of an utterance consist? To begin, we know only what it results in if the speech action succeeds—in bringing about an interpersonal relation. Austin and Searle have analyzed illocutionary force by looking for conditions of success or failure of speech acts. An uttered content receives a specific communicative function through the fact that the standard conditions for the occurrence of a corresponding interpersonal relation are fulfilled. With the illocutionary act, the speaker makes an offer that can be accepted or rejected. The attempt a speaker makes with an illocutionary act may founder for contingent reasons on the refusal of the addressee to enter into the proffered relationship. This case is of no interest in the present context. We shall be concerned with the other case, in which the speaker himself is responsible for the failure of the speech act because the utterance is unacceptable. When the speaker makes an utterance that manifestly contains no serious offer, he cannot count on the occurrence of the relationship intended by him.

I shall speak of the success of a speech act only when the hearer not only understands the meaning of the sentence uttered but also actually enters into the relationship intended by the speaker. And I shall analyze the conditions for the success of speech acts in terms of their "acceptability." Since I have restricted my examination from the outset to communicative action—that is, action oriented to reaching understanding—a speech act counts as acceptable only if the speaker not merely feigns but sincerely makes a serious offer. A serious offer demands a certain engage-
ment on the part of the speaker. But before going into this, I would like to mention additional reasons for the unacceptability of illocutionary acts.

Austin developed his doctrine of "infelicities" primarily with a view to institutionally bound speech acts; for this reason, the examples of "misfires" (that is, of misinvocations, misexecutions, misapplications) are [viewed as] typical for all possible cases of rule violation. Thus the unacceptability of speech acts can stem from transgressions of underlying norms of action. If in a wedding ceremony a priest recites the prescribed marriage formula incorrectly or not at all, the mistake lies at the same level as, let us say, the command of a university lecturer in class to one of his students, who can reply to him (with right, let us assume): "You can indeed request a favor of me, but you cannot command me." The conditions of acceptability are not fulfilled; but in both cases, these conditions are defined by a given normative context. We are looking, by contrast, for conditions of acceptability that lie within the institutionally unbound speech act itself.

Searle analyzed the conventional presuppositions of different types of speech actions that must be fulfilled if their illocutionary force is to be comprehensible and acceptable. Under the title "preparatory rules," he specifies generalized or restricted contexts for possible types of speech actions. A promise, for example, is not acceptable if the following conditions, among other, are not fulfilled: (a) H (the hearer) prefers S's (the speaker's) doing A (a specific action) to his not doing A, and S moreover believes this to be the case; (b) it is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events.22 If conventional presuppositions of this kind are not fulfilled, the act of promising is pointless; that is, the attempt by a speaker to carry out the illocutionary act anyway makes no sense and is condemned to failure from the outset.23

The generalized context conditions for institutionally unbound speech actions are to be distinguished from the conditions for applying established norms of action.22 The two sets of conditions of application, those for types of speech action and those for norms of action, must vary (largely) independently of one another if (institutionally unbound) speech actions are to represent a repertory from which the acting subject, with the help of a finite number of types, can put together any number of norm-conformative actions.

The peculiar force of the illocutionary—which in the case of institutionally unbound speech actions is not borrowed directly from the validity of established norms of action—cannot be explained by means of the speech-act-typical context restrictions. This is possible only with the help of the specific presuppositions that Searle introduces under the title "essential rules." In doing so, he appears, it is true, to succeed only in paraphrasing the meaning of the corresponding performative verbs (for example, requests: "count as an attempt to get H to do A"; or questions: "count as an attempt to elicit information from H"). It is interesting, however, that these circumscriptions include the common determination, "count as an attempt..." The essential presupposition for the success of an illocutionary act consists in the speaker's entering into a specific engagement, so that the hearer can rely on him. An utterance can count as a promise, assertion, request, question, or avowal, if and only if the speaker makes an offer that he is ready to make good insofar as it is accepted by the hearer. The speaker must engage himself, that is, indicate that in certain situations he will draw certain consequences for action. The content of the engagement is to be distinguished from the sincerity of the engagement. This condition, introduced by Searle as the "sincerity rule," must always be fulfilled in the case of communicative action that is oriented to reaching understanding. Thus in what follows I shall, in speaking of the speaker's engagement, presuppose both a certain content of engagement and the sincerity with which the speaker is willing to enter into his engagement. So far as I can see, previous analyses of speech acts have been unsatisfactory, as they have not clarified the engagement of the speaker, on which the acceptability of his utterance specifically depends.

The discernible and sincere readiness of the speaker to enter into a specific kind of interpersonal bond has, compared with the general context conditions, a pecular status. The restricted contexts that specific types of speech actions presuppose must (a) be given, and (b) be supposed to exist by the participants. Thus
the following two statements must hold: (a) a statement to the
effect that certain contexts obtain, indeed those required by the
type in question; and (b) a statement to the effect that speaker
and hearer suppose these contexts to obtain. The specific presup-
position of speaker engagement, on the other hand, should not be
analyzed in the same way, that is, so as to yield the following
two statements: (a) a statement to the effect that there is a cer-
tain engagement on the part of the speaker; and (b) a statement
to the effect that the hearer supposes this speaker engagement to
obtain. One could choose this strategy of analysis; but I regard it
as unsuitable. It would suggest that we speak of the existence of
an engagement in the same sense as we speak of the existence of
restricted contexts. I can ascertain in an appropriate manner,
through observation or questioning, whether or not conditions of
generalized contexts obtain; on the other hand, I can only test
whether a speaker engages himself in a specific way and com-
mits himself to certain consequences for action; I can ascertain
at best whether there are sufficient indicators for the conjecture
that the offer would withstand testing.

The bond into which the speaker is willing to enter with the
performance of an illocutionary act means a guarantee that, in
consequence of his utterance, he will fulfill certain conditions—
for example, regard a question as settled when a satisfactory an-
swer is given; drop an assertion when it proves to be false; follow
his own advice when he finds himself in the same situation as the
hearer; stress a request when it is not complied with; act in ac-
cordance with an intention disclosed by avowal, and so on. Thus
the illocutionary force of an acceptable speech act consists in the
fact that it can move a hearer to rely on the speech-act-typical
commitments of the speaker. But if illocutionary force has more
than a suggestive influence, what can motivate the hearer to base
his action on the premise that the speaker seriously intends the
engagement he indicates? When it is a question of institutionally
bound speech actions, he can perhaps rely on the binding force
of an established norm of action. In the case of institutionally
unbound speech acts, however, illocutionary force cannot be
traced back directly to the binding force of the normative context.
The illocutionary force with which the speaker, in carrying out
his speech act, influences the hearer, can be understood only if
we take into consideration sequences of speech actions that are
connected with one another on the basis of a reciprocal recogni-
tion of validity claims.

With their illocutionary acts, speaker and hearer raise validity
claims and demand they be recognized. But this recognition need
not follow irrationally, since the validity claims have a cognitive
character and can be checked. I would like, therefore, to defend
the following thesis: In the final analysis, the speaker can illo-
cutionarily influence the hearer and vice versa, because speech-act-
typical commitments are connected with cognitively testable
validity claims—that is, because the reciprocal bonds have a
rational basis. The engaged speaker normally connects the specific
sense in which he would like to take up an interpersonal rela-
tionship with a thematically stressed validity claim and thereby
chooses a specific mode of communication.

Thus assertions, descriptions, classifications, estimates, predic-
tions, objections, and the like, have different specific meanings;
but the claim put forward in these different interpersonal
relationships is, or is based on, the truth of corresponding propo-
sitions or on the ability of a subject to have cognitions. Corre-
spendingly, requests, orders, admonitions, promises, agreements,
excuses, admissions, and the like, have different specific mean-
ings; but the claim put forward in these different interpersonal
relationships is, or refers to, the rightness of norms or to the
ability of a subject to assume responsibility. We might say that
in different speech acts the content of the speaker's engagement
is determined by different ways of appealing to the same, thema-
tically stressed, universal validity claim. And since as a result of
this appeal to universal validity claims, the speech-act-typical
commitments take on the character of obligations to provide
grounds or to prove trustworthy, the hearer can be rationally
motivated by the speaker's signaled engagement to accept the
latter's offer. I would like to elucidate this for each of the three
modes of communication.

In the cognitive use of language, the speaker proffers a speech-
act-immanent obligation to provide grounds [Bergründungsver-
pflichtung]. Constative speech acts contain the offer to recur if
necessary to the experiential source from which the speaker draws the certainty that his statement is true. If this immediate grounding does not dispel an ad hoc doubt, the persistently problematic truth claim can become the subject of a theoretical discourse. In the interactive use of language, the speaker proffers a speech-act-immanent obligation to provide justification [Rechtfertigungsverpflichtung]. Of course, regulative speech acts contain only the offer to indicate, if necessary, the normative context that gives the speaker the conviction that his utterance is right. Again, if this immediate justification does not dispel an ad hoc doubt, we can pass over to the level of discourse, in this case of practical discourse. In such a discourse, however, the subject of discursive examination is not the rightness claim directly connected with the speech act, but the validity claim of the underlying norm. Finally, in the expressive use of language the speaker also enters into a speech-act-immanent obligation, namely the obligation to prove trustworthy [Bewährungsverpflichtung], to show in the consequences of his action that he has expressed just that intention which actually guides his behavior. In case the immediate assurance expressing what is evident to the speaker himself cannot dispel ad hoc doubts, the truthfulness of the utterance can only be checked against the consistency of his subsequent behavior.

Every speech-act-immanent obligation can be made good at two levels, namely immediately, in the context of utterance—whether through recourse to an experimental base, through indicating a corresponding normative context, or through affirmation of what is evident to oneself—and mediately, in discourse or in subsequent actions. But only in the case of the obligations to ground and to prove trustworthy, into which we enter with constative and with expressive speech acts, do we refer to the same truth or truthfulness claim. The obligation to justify, into which we enter with regulative speech acts, refers immediately to the claim that the speech action performed fits an existing normative background; whereas with the entrance into practical discourse the topic of discussion is the validity of the very norm from which the rightness claim of the speaker is merely borrowed.

Our reflections have led to the following provisional results:

A Model of Linguistic Communication

The analysis of what Austin called the illocutionary force of an utterance has led us back to the validity basis of speech. Institutionally unbound speech acts owe their illocutionary force to a cluster of validity claims that speakers and hearers have to raise and recognize as justified if grammatical (and thus comprehensible) sentences are to be employed in such a way as to result in successful communication. A participant in communication acts with an orientation to reaching understanding only under the condition that, in employing comprehensible sentences in his speech acts, he raises three validity claims in an acceptable way. He claims truth for a stated propositional content or for the existential presuppositions of a mentioned propositional content. He claims rightness (or appropriateness) for norms (or values),
which, in a given context, justify an interpersonal relation that is to be performatively established. Finally, he claims truthfulness for the intentions expressed. Of course, individual validity claims can be thematically stressed, whereby the truth of the propositional content comes to the fore in the cognitive use of language, the rightness (or appropriateness) of the interpersonal relation in the interactive, and the truthfulness of the speaker in the expressive. But in every instance of communicative action the system of all validity claims comes into play; they must always be raised simultaneously, although they cannot all be thematic at the same time.

The universality of the validity claims inherent in the structure of speech can perhaps be elucidated with reference to the systematic place of language. Language is the medium through which speakers and hearers realize certain fundamental demarcations. The subject demarcates himself: (1) from an environment that he objectifies in the third-person attitude of an observer; (2) from an environment that he conforms to or deviates from in the ego-alter attitude of a participant; (3) from his own subjectivity that he expresses or conceals in a first-person attitude; and finally (4) from the medium of language itself. For these domains of reality I have proposed the somewhat arbitrarily chosen terms: external nature, society, internal nature, and language. The validity claims unavoidably implied in speech oriented to reaching understanding show that these four regions must always simultaneously appear. I shall characterize the way in which these regions appear with a few phenomenological indications.

By external nature I mean the objectivated segment of reality that the adult subject is able (even if only mediately) to perceive and manipulate. One can, of course, adopt an objectivating attitude not only toward inanimate nature but toward all objects and states of affairs that are directly or indirectly accessible to sensory experience. Society designates that symbolically prestructured segment of reality that the adult subject can understand in a nonconformative attitude, that is, as one acting communica-

...
are embedded in relations to reality in such a way that in an acceptable speech action segments of external nature, society, and internal nature always come into appearance together. Language itself also appears in speech, for speech is a medium in which the linguistic means that are employed instrumentally are also reflected. In speech, speech sets itself off from the regions of external nature, society, and internal nature, as a reality sui generis, as soon as the sign-substrate, meaning, and denotation of a linguistic utterance can be distinguished.

The following table represents the correlations that obtain for

- a. The domains of reality to which every speech action takes up relation.
- b. The attitudes of the speaker prevailing in particular modes of communication.
- c. The validity claims under which the relations to reality are established.
- d. The general functions that grammatical sentences assume in their relations to reality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of Reality</th>
<th>Modes of Communication: Basic Attitudes</th>
<th>Validity Claims</th>
<th>General Functions of Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The&quot; World of External Nature</td>
<td>Cognitive: Objectivating Attitude</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Representation of Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Our&quot; World of Society</td>
<td>Interactive: Conformative Attitude</td>
<td>Rightness</td>
<td>Establishment of Legitimate Interpersonal Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My&quot; World of Internal Nature</td>
<td>Expressive: Expressive Attitude</td>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>Disclosure of Speaker's Subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73. Cf. the schema in footnote 2 above.
74. I. Dornbach, *Primatenkommunikation* (Frankfurt, 1975). On the relatively early differentiation of different types of speech action in the linguistic development of the child, see the pioneering dissertation of M. Miller, "Die Logik der frühen Sprachentwicklung" (Univ. of Frankfurt, 1975).
75. In a letter to me, G. Grewendorf cites the following counterexample: signing a contract, petition, etc., while simultaneously objectifying the corresponding illocutionary act. But only the following alternative seems possible: either the contract signing is legally carried out with the help of a performativé utterance—in which case there is no objectification—or the nonverbal contract signing is accompanied by a statement: "S signs contract X"—in which case it is a question of two independent illocutionary acts carried out parallelly (where normally there is a division of roles: the statesman signs, the reporter reports the signing).
76. L. J. Cohen, "Do Illocutionary Forces Exist?," p. 587.
77. W. P. Alston, "Meaning and Use," in Rosenberg and Travis, *Readings*, p. 412: "I can find no cases in which same-ness of meaning does not hang on sameness of illocutionary act."
79. B. Richards argues against this in "Searle on Meaning and Speech Acts," *Foundations of Language* 7 (1971): 536: "Austin argued that sentences such as Ra (I promise that I shall pay within one year) never assert anything that is either true or false, i.e., never assert propositions. Here we agree; but this in no way upsetting the claim that Ra nevertheless expresses a proposition . . . viz. the proposition that Ra." Richards does not equate the propositional content of the speech action, Ra, with the propositional content of the dependent sentence: "I shall pay within one year," but with the content of the objectified speech action Ra, which must, however, then be embedded in a further speech action, Rv; for example, "I tell you, I promised him that I shall pay within one year." I regard the confusion of performative sentences with propositionally objectified sentences as a category mistake (which, incidentally, diminishes the value of Richards argument against Searle's principle of expressibility, in particular against his proposal to analyze the meaning of speech actions in standard form in terms of the meaning of the sentences used in the speech acts).
86. It follows from this proposal that each of the universal-pragmatic subtheories, that is, the theory of illocutionary acts as well as the theory of elementary sentences (and that of intensional expressions) can make its specific contribution to the theory of meaning. In Austin's choice of the terms meaning and force, there resonates still the descriptivist prejudice—a prejudice, I might add, that has been out of date since Wittgenstein at the latest, if not since Humboldt—according to which the theory of the elementary sentence, which is to clarify sense and reference, can claim a monopoly on the theory of meaning. (Naturally reference semantics also lives from this prejudice.)

81. Austin, How to do Things with Words, p. 132.
82. Ibid., pp. 147-148; Searle, Speech Acts, pp. 64 ff.
84. Austin, How to do Things with Words, p. 144.
85. Ibid., pp. 145 ff. Cf. also "Performatives-Constative," p. 31:

To begin with, it is clear that if we establish that a performative utterance is not unhappy, that is, that its author has performed his act happily and in all sincerity, that still does not suffice to set it beyond the reach of all criticism. It may always be criticized in a different dimension. Let us suppose that I say to you "I advise you to do it"; and let us allow that all the circumstances are appropriate, the conditions for success are fulfilled. In saying that, I actually do advise you to do it—it is not that I state, truely or falsely, that I advise you. It is, then, a performative utterance. There does still arise, all the same, a little question: was the advice good or bad? Agreed, I spoke in all sincerity, I believed that to do it would be in your interest; but was I right? Was my belief in these circumstances, justified? Or again—though perhaps this matters less—was it in fact, or as things turned out, in your interest? There is confrontation of my utterance with the situation in, and the situation with respect to which, it was issued. I was fully justified perhaps, but was I right?

86. Austin, How to do Things with Words, pp. 144-145.
89. Ibid., p. 251.
92. On Wunderlich's analysis of advising (Grundlagen, pp. 349 ff.) the general context conditions would be as follows:

S makes it understood that (that is, S should give the advice only if these conditions obtain, and H should accordingly believe that they obtain):

1. S knows, believes, or assumes (depending on preceding communication) that:
   a) H finds himself in an unpleasant situation Z;
   b) H wants or desires to reach some other, more pleasant situation Z' ≠ Z;
   c) H does not know how Z' can be reached;
   d) H is in a position to do h.

2. S believes or assumes that:
   a) H does not already want to do h;
   b) H can reach a more pleasant situation Z' (relative optimum) with h
      than with any alternative action h'.
3. S knows or believes, the following obligations are established for H: if one of the subconditions listed under (a) through (f) does not obtain (or more precisely, if H knows, believes, or assumes that it doesn't obtain), then H will make this understood to S in a conventional manner.

93. D. Holdcroft ignores this distinction, "Performatives and Statements," Mind 83 (1974): 1-18, and thus comes to the false conclusion that only the speech actions we have called institutionally bound are subject to conventional regulations in the sense of the sentence: "A sentence type is a performative if and only if its literal and serious utterance can constitute the performance of an act which is done in accordance with a convention, which convention is not merely a grammatical or semantical one."

94. In Wunderlich's analysis of advising, his conditions B 4-6 make up the content of the obligations.