Politeness Theory and the Classification of English Speech Acts

by

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Abstract

The field of speech act theory has seen increasing attention in recent years, as determining the illocutionary force of an utterance, or what its speaker means to accomplish by uttering it, has become important in the design of computational systems that process human speech. Many scholars of language, including J. L. Austin and John Searle, have proposed systems of classifying speech acts by their illocutionary features. However, these schemes are often non-hierarchical, and thus cannot fully describe the similarities between categories; and they tend not to consider the politeness features of utterances, an aspect of illocution which can have a great impact on a speaker's choice of utterance. In this thesis, I develop a hierarchical taxonomy of English-language speech acts based on existing literature, and lay out the politeness-related features that differentiate speech act categories, with the aim of producing a classification system useful in computational applications.

Keywords: Linguistics; pragmatics; speech act; politeness; dialogue act

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to everyone who has ever endured or will ever endure a graduate degree program. The worst part is the week before the defense; the best part is actually giving the defense.

And to my teachers, for giving me the opportunity to teach them.

Acknowledgements

The twelfth-century philosopher Bernard of Chartres is credited with comparing the scholars of his day to dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants: "we see more and farther than our predecessors...because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature" (Salisbury, 1955, p. 167). If I, in writing this thesis, have stood on the shoulders of giants, it is thanks to the many people who have helped me with the climb:

Dr. Nancy Hedberg, my advisor, who oversaw the development of my theory during our weekly meetings; Dr. Maite Taboada, whose Discourse and Pragmatics class inspired my thesis and who helped me stay on the right track; Dr. Fred Popowich, my external committee member, and Dr. Keir Moulton, my defense chair; Dr. Cliff Goddard, who advised me on the NSM definitions in my appendix. Any errors therein are my own. Lisa Eisen and Sheryl Zentner of the SFU Health and Counseling Centre, who taught me to be mindful; Lisa Shorten and Irina Presnyakova, who attended my practice defence and helped me improve my presentation; Matthew Brown, who kept me sane in the last few weeks with endless love and an equally unending series of Mythbusters episodes; and finally, my parents, Barb and Dr. Seth Katz, who have encouraged my love of learning all my life.

"And we must at all costs avoid over-simplification, which one might be tempted to call the occupational disease of philosophers if it were not their occupation". –Austin (1962, p. 38)

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Speech acts are acts performed through speaking—that is, through performative utterances. Before the 1960s, the concept of performative utterances was not widely recognized among philosophers of language, who held that the meaning of an utterance was to be found in its truth conditions, the set of situations that made it true (Frege, 1892; Tarski, 1944). For example, the truth condition of sentence (1) is that rain be falling at the time the sentence is uttered. Speech act theory acknowledges that all utterances also have a performative dimension, and that some utterances, such as (2), are only performative and cannot be described through truth conditions.

(1)   It is raining.

(2)   I hereby christen this ship the *Millennium Falcon*.

Under what set of circumstances can (2) be uttered and make sense? There must be a ship, of course; and a person with the authority to name that ship and the sincere desire that it be called *Millennium Falcon*; the construction of the ship must be recently completed, and the proper witnesses and ceremonial tools (official forms, a bottle of champagne, etc.) must be on hand. But meeting all these conditions, according to speech act theory, cannot make (2) true in the same way that (1) can be true. The aforementioned set of conditions is what is required to make the act of naming the ship go off without a hitch, and to provide sensible context for the utterance that performs the act; these are called the act's *felicity conditions* (Austin, 1962, p. 14; Goddard, 2011, p. 131).

Austin (1962), an early proponent of speech act theory, drew a distinction between *constative utterances*, which have truth conditions, and *performative utterances*, which have felicity conditions. However, Austin later determined

that constative utterances also have a performative aspect: for example, (1) can be paraphrased as "I assert that it is raining" and requires as a felicity condition that the speaker believe that it is raining.

1.1. Components of a speech act

The following components of a speech act are used most often to distinguish between speech act types: the *locutionary act*, the act of producing a grammatical and meaningful utterance; the *illocutionary act*, the speaker's purpose in performing the speech act; and the *perlocutionary act*, the effect the speech act has on the person or people it is addressed to, which may or may not be the effect the speaker intends to produce (Austin, 1962). The best-known classifications of speech acts rely most heavily on the illocutionary component to classify speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976), though they often also use the locutionary component to some degree, since many speech acts, including (2) and the first part of (3), are marked by the inclusion of a verb that makes clear what act is being performed (Austin, 1962, pp. 32, 61).

Speech acts also require *uptake* (Austin, 1962, pp. 36, 138), a response from an addressee confirming that the addressee has heard and understood the speech act. Sometimes, as in (3), uptake also signifies that a particular perlocutionary act has resulted from the performance of the illocutionary act.

(3)   A: I bet you five dollars it's going to rain tomorrow.
        B: You're on.

Previous research has attempted to classify speech acts by their *illocutionary force*, the intended effect of the illocutionary component of the speech act. However, many of these attempts do not classify speech acts completely, and some rely on the locutionary form of an utterance to indicate the illocutionary act it performs, a method which can be misleading. In addition, the existing research on speech acts does not account for politeness effects as a feature of a speech act's illocutionary force. In this thesis, I endeavor to classify speech acts

based on their illocutionary force, prioritizing the function of a speech act over its phonological or orthographic form. My discussion of speech acts and the history of speech act theory will continue in Section 2.1 and inform my analysis in Chapter 3. I will also show that politeness and impoliteness effects are important illocutionary features of speech acts, and I will integrate politeness considerations into my classification of speech acts. Other attempts have been made to link politeness theory and speech act theory, but the best known of these (Fraser, 1990; Leech, 1983) lack important nuances. Successful integration of these two theories will allow for a more detailed classification of speech acts than speech act theory alone, since different formulations of the same speech act can be used to produce different politeness or impoliteness effects. In addition, the combination of politeness theory with a function-based classification of speech acts will allow for more accurate and detailed classification of indirect speech acts which can be used to improve the fluency of communication between programs that use computational speech act classifiers, such as digital assistants, and their human users.

1.2. Speech act behaviour: the Hereby Test and the Participial Test

Early iterations of speech act theory recognized some utterances as performative and others as non-performative. While it has since been determined that all types of utterances are performative, two tests which have been used to determine whether an utterance is performative may still be used to distinguish between types of speech act. The first test, proposed by Austin (1962, p. 57), is referred to as the "Hereby Test": if the adverb "hereby" can be placed before the main verb of the utterance, that utterance does not fall under the scope of truth-conditional semantics. Sentences (4)–(8) show the Hereby Test in action.

(4)   I hereby accuse you.

(5)   I hereby vow to slay the dragon.

(6)   I hereby apologize for offending you.

(7)   I hereby assert that this is important.

(8)   I hereby request your assistance.

The effectiveness of the Hereby Test used in this way is limited to explicit speech acts, whose wording makes clear that the speaking of the utterance constitutes an action. It rejects indirect speech acts such as (9)–(11), in which the speaker's intention is not obvious from the form of the utterance (Levinson, 1983), but can be inferred from context or conversational convention.

(9)   You (#hereby) did it. [see (4)]

(10)   I'm (#hereby) sorry I offended you. [see (6)]

(11)   Could you (#hereby) give me a hand? [see (8)]

But indirect speech acts are still speech acts, so it would be useful to have a test that recognizes both. Austin (1962, p. 121) proposed another test: if an utterance can be described after the fact as in (12), it is a speech act.

(12)   "In saying *x*, I was doing *y* (or 'I did *y*')".

Goddard (2011, p. 130) elaborates on the test as in (13), suggesting that the "I was doing *y*" part of the test can always be completed using a present participle. I will therefore refer to this test as the *Participial Test*. (13a) and (13b) show the application of the Participial Test to basic speech act verbs and verb phrases. (13c) shows that the test also applies to speech acts that do not correspond one-to-one with specific verbs (since many attitudes and mental states can be *shown* through indirect speech acts).

(13)   In saying that, I was _____-ing (Goddard, 2011, p. 130).

        (13a) In saying that, I was apologizing.

        (13b) In saying that, I was making a promise.

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(13c) In saying that, I was showing humility.

(13d) #In saying that, I was yelling (Goddard, 2011, p. 130).

(13e) #In saying that, I was breaking the law.

(13f) #In saying that, I was forgetting something (Austin, 1962, p. 123).

Austin found the Participial Test too broad to be useful: in his analysis, it permitted sentences like (13d)–(13f), which do not describe the illocutionary force of an utterance. However, I agree with Goddard's conclusion that sentences (13d)–(13f) are invalid, and that this shows that only verbs (and verbs plus complements) that describe an illocutionary act can pass the Participial Test (Goddard, 2011, p. 130).

Using the Participial Test, a single speech act can be described at a number of levels. For example, a promise can be described as "I was making a promise" as in (13b), or as "I was promising". The use of verbs which describe multiple speech acts, such as "show" and "make", can reveal the groupings into which speech act types naturally fall. I will discuss this further in Section 4.4.1.

1.3. Goals and structure of this thesis

The study of speech acts has recently come to prominence in the field of computational linguistics, where it is an important part of the dialogue processing done by artificially intelligent programs (AI) such as the digital assistants in smartphones and the chatbots that have begun to appear in instant messaging programs (Greenfield, 2016). However, an informal survey of responses by Siri, the digital assistant in Apple's iOS versions X and beyond, suggests that commercial AI does not consistently account for the variance in speech act forms that results from different conversational contexts. For example, her responses to input (14) are most likely to sound sarcastic as in (14a), rather than sympathetic (14b) or helpful (14c), suggesting that she has

not been designed to account for the variety of contexts in which (14) might be uttered. A model of speech act theory that includes face effects would improve the appropriateness of Siri's responses, as well as those of other digital assistants such as Microsoft's Cortana and Amazon's Alexa.

(14)   Siri, I don't feel well.

(14a) I suppose you don't.

(14b) I'm sorry to hear that.

(14c) Okay, here's a list of nearby doctors.

While there is extensive research on both politeness theory and speech act theory, which I will discuss in Chapter 2, the two have not been combined in a way that accounts for the politeness effects of all types of speech acts. In this thesis, I will construct a combined theory of speech acts and politeness based on the existing literature and a definition of politeness that I will develop in Section 2.2. I outline the development of my theory in Chapter 3, and in Chapter 4 I discuss different types of speech acts and their potential politeness effects in detail. In Chapter 5, I discuss the theoretical implications and a possible application of my work, and I conclude in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2. Speech act theory and politeness theory

In this chapter, I review the existing literature on speech acts and politeness theory and explain the ways in which I will relate the two through my analysis. I also provide a working definition of politeness.

2.1. History of speech act theory

The study of speech acts began with Austin's (1962) realization that some utterances were neither true nor false. Under truth-conditional semantics, a sentence that could be neither true nor false was considered meaningless (Birner, 2013, p. 147; Goddard, 2011, p. 131), but Austin noticed that sentences like (15) and (16) had meaning in spite of being neither true nor false.

    (15)   I take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife.

    (16)   I bet you sixpence that it will rain tomorrow (Austin, 1962, p. 5).

In fact, these sentences represent a type of utterance outside the scope of truth conditions, since they can be used to perform actions instead of simply describing aspects of the world. In the right situation, speaking sentence (15) causes the speaker to become married to the woman the sentence refers to; and in the right situation, speaking (16) causes the speaker to pledge a sum of money to the outcome of tomorrow's weather. Austin called utterances of this type "performatives" (Austin, 1962, p. 6), and referred to sentences which can be analyzed using truth-conditional semantics as "constative utterances" (Austin, 1962, p. 6).

Austin further classified performatives according to his understanding of their illocutionary force, creating the following five categories.

- *Verdictives* are judgements, appraisals, or evaluations (Austin, 1962, p. 150), such as "I pronounce that…" "I hold that…" (Austin, 1962, p. 88) or "I find the accused guilty" (Austin, 1962, p. 42).

- *Exercitives* are utterances that represent an exercise of power or influence, such as "appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning, etc". (Austin, 1962, p. 150)

- *Commissives* commit the speaker to a future action (Austin, 1962, p. 150). Examples include "promise, covenant, contract…intend, declare my intention…plan" (Austin, 1962, p. 156), etc.

- *Behabitives* address "attitudes and social behaviour" and include "apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging" (Austin, 1962, p. 151).

- *Expositives* "make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words, or in general, are expository" and include "'I reply', 'I argue', 'I concede', 'I illustrate', 'I assume', 'I postulate.'

Austin acknowledges that not all his categories are clearly distinguished from each other; in particular, his category of expositives contains speech acts which also belong to other categories, such as "interpret", which may also be verdictive, and "accept", which may also be commissive (Austin, 1962, p. 160). In later lectures, he also abandons his distinction between constatives and performatives, instead describing acts of assertion or of description in which constatives are uttered (Austin, 1962, p. 149).

Searle (1976) criticized the indistinct boundaries between Austin's categories and set out to develop his own classification of speech acts, with more clearly defined categories based on what he considered the most salient features of speech acts. He identified twelve features that distinguish speech acts from

each other; this discussion will only include the three that he relied on most heavily for the construction of his categories. They are as follows:

- *Illocutionary point*, the purpose of a speech act from the point of view of its speaker (equivalent to *illocutionary force* for the purposes of this thesis);

- *Direction of fit*, whether the speech act is intended to describe the world (word-to-world fit) or to change the world (world-to-word fit);

- *Expressed psychological state*, the mental state a speaker must be in to perform a particular speech act sincerely (Searle, 1976).

Based on these features, Searle produced the following categories of speech acts, which he considered more internally consistent than Austin's (Searle, 1976).

- *Representatives* are the class of utterances that can be described as true or false. Their illocutionary point is to commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition, their direction of fit is word-to-world, and their expressed psychological state is belief in a proposition. Examples include *state*, *suggest*, and *insist*, as well as verbs like *boast* and *deduce* that add nuances of illocutionary force.

- *Directives* have the illocutionary point of persuading a listener to perform some action. Their direction of fit is world-to-word, and their expressed psychological state is the desire that the listener do the action. Examples include *ask*, *order*, *invite*, *permit*, *advise*, and *challenge*.

- *Commissives* are borrowed from Austin with little modification. Their illocutionary point is to commit the speaker to some future action, their direction of fit is world-to-word, and their expressed psychological state is intention to do the action. Examples include *promise* and *vow*.

- *Expressives* have the illocutionary point of expressing the speaker's psychological state regarding a past event. They have no direction of fit, and their expressed psychological state depends on the individual speech act. Examples include *thank*, *congratulate*, *apologize*, and *deplore*.

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- *Declarations* are speech acts that cause a change in the state of the world by virtue of being uttered. Their illocutionary point depends on the act, they have both word-to-world *and* world-to-word direction of fit, and they express no psychological state.

Bach and Harnish (1979) add an extra layer of detail to Searle's theory. Their speech act categories include *constatives* (analogous to Searle's representatives), *acknowledgements* (Searle's expressives), *directives,* and *commissives* (both c.f. Searle). In each category, they elaborate on a number of speech act types, a representative sample of which appear in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected speech act types from Bach and Harnish

Category	Type	Example verbs
Constatives	Assertive	Affirm, allege, claim, deny, say
Constatives	Predictive	Forecast, predict, prophesy
Constatives	Retrodictive	Recount, report
Constatives	Descriptive	Appraise, assess, classify, describe
Directives	Requestive	Ask, beg, implore, insist, invite
Directives	Question	Ask, inquire, interrogate, question
Directives	Requirement	Bid, command, demand, instruct
Directives	Prohibitive	Forbid, prohibit, proscribe, restrict
Commissives	Promise	Promise, swear, vow
Commissives	Offer	Offer, propose
Acknowledgements	Apologize	Apologize
Acknowledgements	Condole	Commiserate, condole
Acknowledgements	Congratulate	Compliment, congratulate
Acknowledgements	Greet	Greet

2.1.1. Classifying speech acts

I have a number of criticisms of Austin, Searle, and Bach and Harnish's approaches to classifying speech acts, which I will elaborate on in Chapter 3. Here I will outline the two most salient of these criticisms. First, Austin relies heavily on the main verb of a speech act to determine the act's illocutionary force, and so while he recognizes the existence of indirect speech acts, which do not include a verb explicitly describing the speech act as in (17a), or may not even acknowledge the illocution of the speech act in their locution, as in (17b),

he has no way to classify them. Searle's (1975) explanation of the structure and function of indirect speech acts is more comprehensive, but he limits himself to indirect instances of his class of directives, and provides only a little guidance for explicating indirect speech acts of other categories.

(17)   I apologize for stepping on your toe (Searle, 1976).

(17a) I'm sorry I stepped on your toe.

(17b) Was that your toe I stepped on? (Rundquist, 2007)

Bach and Harnish (1979) do a better job of defining their categories by illocutionary force, but their theory is vague in other areas, including in the application of politeness to speech acts. My discussion of politeness as a feature of illocutionary acts will serve as a complement to their category descriptions.

In my classification, I focus on the illocutionary force of speech acts and define direct and indirect acts of the same type [such as (17), (17a), and (17b)] as having different politeness characteristics that call for different levels of directness in their locution. To describe the contribution of politeness to illocutionary force, I will rely on the more complete politeness theories developed by Lakoff (1973) and Brown and Levinson (1987), which I will discuss in detail in Section 2.2.

My second major criticism of Austin, Searle, and Bach and Harnish's classifications of speech acts is that they each use a flat structure which does not acknowledge the similarities between different speech act categories. In Chapter 4, I will use a hierarchical structure to classify speech acts into six categories based on Austin and Searle's ideas, and show that certain categories bear important relationships to each other.

2.2. History of Politeness Theory

Since it is a goal of this thesis to integrate politeness theory with the study of speech acts, it is important to understand the history of politeness theory and the variety of linguistic definitions of politeness before any of these definitions can be applied to specific speech acts. The linguistic study of politeness began in response to Grice's (1975) work on conversational pragmatics, in which he laid out a framework for studying conversations. According to this framework, a rational speaker in a conversation obeys the Cooperative Principle:

> "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975).

Speakers obeying the Cooperative Principle rely on the following four maxims of conversation to convey information efficiently. This is, according to Grice, the main goal of conversation.

1. **Maxim of Quantity**: "Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)".

   a. "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required".

2. **Maxim of Quality**: ""Try to make your contribution one that is true".

   a. "Do not say what you believe to be false".

   b. "Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence".

3. **Maxim of Relevance**: "Be relevant".

4. **Maxim of Manner**: "Be perspicuous".

   a. "Avoid obscurity of expression".

b. "Avoid ambiguity".

c. "Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)".

d. "Be orderly" (Grice, 1975).

Grice goes on to show how speakers may employ conflicts between these maxims to implicate more information than is literally said; for example, a speaker may use irrelevant-sounding figurative language to convey more information, or say less than is asked of him or her in order to avoid lying (Grice, 1975). He does not discuss politeness in his theory; however, he does acknowledge that conversation may serve other purposes, such as influencing the actions of listeners, and that there is room in his framework for "aesthetic, social, or moral" maxims (Grice, 1975).

Lakoff (1973) fills this gap by introducing a Politeness Principle that operates in conflict with Grice's Cooperative Principle. Just as a speaker must weigh Grice's maxims and decide which is most important in a given situation (Grice, 1975), the Cooperative Principle itself, which Lakoff summarizes as "be clear", must be weighed against the Politeness Principle, summarized as "be polite", and the speaker must decide which is more appropriate to follow. In Lakoff's opinion, it is usually more important in conversation to be polite, in the form of avoiding offense to others, than it is to convey information clearly (Lakoff, 1973). To do this, a speaker must strike a balance between the following Rules of Politeness:

1. "Don't impose".

2. "Give options".

3. "Make [your interlocutor] feel good—be friendly" (Lakoff, 1973)

In general, use of Rule 1 corresponds to formal situations in which social distance must be maintained, and use of Rule 3 corresponds to informal situations in which participants are intimate. Rule 2 can be followed to produce either formal or informal politeness, as giving your interlocutor conversational

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options does not force them to respond or react a certain way (obeying Rule 1), or it may allow an interlocutor to feel that he or she has power over the direction the conversation takes (obeying Rule 3) (Lakoff, 1973).

Lakoff's rules of politeness may have inspired Brown and Levinson's (1987) understanding of politeness, which they base on the concept of social *face* (Goffman, 1955). A person has two types of face: *negative face*, the desire to not be imposed on (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which corresponds roughly to situations in which Lakoff's Rule 1 applies; and *positive face*, the desire to feel good about oneself (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which corresponds roughly to situations in which Rule 3 applies.

Certain types of speech act, such as requests, are inherently threatening to the listener's negative face because they impose the speaker's will on the listener, constraining his or her freedom to act. Brown and Levinson observed a set of strategies used by speakers to mitigate this threat, thereby making it more likely that the listener will do what they want. These strategies include *negative politeness*, which boosts the listener's negative face by making the request seem like less of an imposition as in (18a); *positive politeness*, which boosts the listener's positive face by making them feel good about fulfilling the request as in (18b); and *indirectness*, to give the addressee the option of not responding as in (18c). Use of one or more of these strategies is called *facework*. Requests made directly as in (18), without politeness strategies, are characterized as *bald on record* (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

(18)　　Help me with my math homework!

(18a) If it's not too much trouble, could you help me with my
　　　 math homework?

(18b) You're good at math; could you help me with this?

(18c) I can't figure out this math problem!

It is interesting to note that each of Brown and Levinson's strategies corresponds to one of Lakoff's maxims. Negative politeness is most useful in Rule 1 situations, to avoid imposing on one's interlocutors; positive politeness is most useful in Rule 3 situations, to make listeners feel good about doing what the speaker wants; and indirectness is an appropriate strategy for following Rule 2, giving listeners a choice of how to respond.

Brown and Levinson's theory of face explains why speakers follow Lakoff's maxims: all humans want their negative face to be respected and their positive face acknowledged by others, and this desire has led to the development of cultures that value respect for other people's face wants, with the relative valuation of positive and negative face wants varying between cultures. These values are acted on through the following of social norms of politeness such as Lakoff's maxims.

2.2.1. Impoliteness

Brown and Levinson's theory of face is also useful in describing impoliteness. Culpeper et al. (2003) elaborate on this, describing impoliteness as a deliberate threat to a listener's face. They present a set of impolite facework strategies that mirror Brown and Levinson's polite facework strategies:

- *Negative impoliteness* attacks the listener's negative face by restricting his or her freedom to act;

- *Positive impoliteness* attacks the listener's positive face by making him or her feel disvalued or disrespected;

- *Bald on record impoliteness* is direct and involves no particular impoliteness strategy;

- *Indirect impoliteness* uses sarcasm or simply an absence of expected polite utterances (Culpeper et al., 2003).

In later work, Culpeper (2011) acknowledges that impoliteness is not always the result of a deliberate face attack, and modifies his theory to include

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situations of *accidental impoliteness*, in which utterances not intended to be impolite by the speaker are judged as impolite by a listener. This listener judgement shows that accidental impoliteness is a perlocutionary act, not an illocutionary one. Since my theory focuses on the classification of illocutionary acts, I will not rely heavily on Culpeper's descriptions of accidental impoliteness; however, I will include them in the definitions of politeness and impoliteness that I construct in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.2. Normative accounts of politeness

The theories of politeness examined so far create a good explanatory account of politeness. Together, Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1987), and Culpeper (2003) not only describe the rules that politeness and impoliteness seem to obey, but suggest a mechanism rooted in both basic human desires and the beliefs and behaviours valued by specific cultures. Other theories of politeness do the former but not the latter; these theories tend to stop at describing politeness as arising from social norms without looking for either universal or cultural reasons for those norms to arise. This makes them less useful as explanations of politeness, and less applicable to a classification of speech acts. In this section, I will summarize a few of these accounts which are considered significant in the literature on politeness.

Fraser (1990) frames a conversation as a contract between interlocutors, both (or all) of whom come into a conversation with their own goals, which are the main purpose of the conversation, and expectations of the other participant(s), which may be based on social norms or previous experience with other participants in the conversation. Fraser treats politeness as "intended deference", and suggests that "politeness gestures" in conversation are mainly used to show appreciation (Fraser, 1990). Not only does Fraser give no reason for conversational contracts to occur, but his equation of politeness with deference is problematic. While negative politeness may be summarized as a speaker deferring to the desires of an addressee, this definition is harder to pin on positive politeness. Nonstandard politeness gestures like teasing, which may

sound impolite to an outsider, may be calculated to make the intended addressee feel like a valued member of a group, which boosts his or her positive face. Even ritualized politeness gestures may not be deferential: specific instances of greeting, for example, may acknowledge that the speaker is of lower status than the addressee, but nothing about the act of greeting requires the acknowledgement of a status difference.

Culpeper (2011) also focuses on the role of social norms in the judgment of behaviour as polite or impolite, without exploring the possible origins of such norms. In doing so, he takes a step back from his earlier (2003) position that impoliteness is performed using the reverse of politeness strategies. His new theory still incorporates face, but subordinates it to community judgments of whether an utterance follows unwritten and unexplained social rules. However, his account is useful in that he does highlight the existence of accidental impoliteness, as discussed in Section 2.2.1.

Leech's (1983, 2014) accounts of politeness are somewhat less useful. In his earlier analysis, Leech devises an Irony Principle which he believes parallels Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and Lakoff's (1973) Politeness Principle, as follows:

> If you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which doesn't overtly conflict with the [Politeness Principle], but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of implicature (Leech, 1983, p. 82).

The Irony Principle would apply in situations similar to B's utterance in (19) ([3] in Leech's discussion).

(19)   A: Geoff has just borrowed your car.
          B: Well, I like *that*! (Leech, 1983, p. 83)

Setting aside the question of whether what this principle describes is really irony or sarcasm, it adds nothing new to the discussion of politeness. It simply describes a situation in which the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness

principle conflict, as Lakoff (1973) predicts, and in which the Politeness Principle wins: B's response has a polite form, and the information B wishes to convey, which would be considered impolite if expressed directly, is relegated to implicature.

Leech's (2014) reanalysis of politeness attempts to add unexplained social norms to his theory. He also retains aspects of his older theory which are not explanatorily adequate, including his description of certain speech acts as inherently polite or impolite (Leech, 1983), a view contradicted by both Lakoff (1973) and Brown and Levinson (1987), who show that the classification of an utterance as polite or impolite depends on contextual factors such as the facework strategies used and the relationship between interlocutors. Fraser (1990) also criticizes Leech's characterization, pointing out that ordering, a speech act which Leech considers a source of conflict and therefore impolite, can be polite or impolite depending on the context in which it is uttered: "a teacher ordering a student to put her prize-winning solution on the board for the class would appear to have just the opposite effect" (Fraser, 1990, p. 227). While the performance of a speech act can be evaluated as polite or impolite based on the facework strategies with which it is performed, the speech act itself is not inherently polite or impolite (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1990).

2.2.3. Working classification of politeness

After removing normative models of politeness from consideration, actually defining politeness becomes a straightforward matter. However, there are still a few pitfalls to be aware of. For example, Brown and Levinson have been repeatedly criticized for using an individualistic definition of face in a politeness model they claim applies universally, even to cultures such as mainstream Chinese and Japanese culture which prioritize group harmony over the individual freedoms and achievements valued by North American and some European cultures (Fraser, 1990; Leech, 2014). I cannot abandon Brown and Levinson's concept of face, as it is the best explanatory account I have found of

politeness behaviour in English, but since not even Anglophone culture is wholly individualistic (Leech, 2014), I will adapt their definitions as follows.

- *Positive face* represents a person's desire to feel good about his or her personal status, attributes, or achievements, or about his or her membership in a group or participation in that group's achievements.

- *Negative face* represents a person's desire to act unimpeded, either to accomplish personal goals or to accomplish the goals of a group he or she belongs to.

The group these definitions refer to are anything a person can claim to be a member of. Examples include nuclear family, extended family, ethnic or cultural groups (whether majority or minority), nations, governing bodies, academic or work environments, labour unions, and communities of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 464) such as social clubs, activist groups, or religious communities.

My working definitions of politeness and impoliteness relate behaviours commonly judged polite or impolite to interactions between speaker face and listener face. Polite behaviour is generally associated with a desire on the part of the speaker either to make the listener feel good (Lakoff, 1973), boosting the listener's positive face, or to make the listener not feel bad (Brown & Levinson, 1987), boosting the listener's negative face.

Explaining impoliteness is slightly more complicated: a close reading of Culpeper suggests that there are three types of situation in which an utterance may be judged as impolite. First is deliberate impoliteness, in which conventionalized insults or a calculated absence of politeness gestures are used to make the listener feel bad, threatening his or her positive face, or to restrict his or her freedom to act, threatening negative face (Culpeper et al., 2003). This is the type of impoliteness I will refer to most often in my analysis. The second and third types of impoliteness are unintended as impolite by the speaker, and judged as impolite by a listener (Culpeper, 2011). One kind of accidental impoliteness is related to a desire on the speaker's part to make him or herself

feel good (boosting his or her own positive face) or accomplish some goal (boosting his or her own negative face) without regard for the listener's face wants; that absence of attention to the listener harms the listener's positive face by making him or her feel that the speaker doesn't care about his or her face. The final type of impoliteness is politeness that has gone wrong: a speaker makes some utterance that would normally be judged as polite, but his or her intentions are misinterpreted by the listener, or the speaker misinterprets the listener's face wants, or the felicity conditions of the polite act are not met, and a judgment of impoliteness results.

Utterances are not, as Leech (1983, 2014) claims, inherently polite or impolite; instead, following Brown and Levinson (1987), I believe that different types of speech act have different inherent face effects—some speech acts boost the speaker's positive face, some threaten the listener's negative face, and so on. However, these face effects can be affected by the social context of the speech act. The face threat of a request, for example, can be mitigated through the use of politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987), but to determine what politeness strategy is best suited to a situation, a speaker must consider a variety of contextual factors, such as the formality level of the conversation and the speaker's social distance from the listener. I will elaborate on these factors as I describe the politeness characteristics of each type of speech act in Chapter 4.

2.3. Focus on English

It is important to note that my work makes no claim to represent speech acts or politeness in non-English-speaking cultures. Sources which I cite in this paper, particularly Searle (1976) and Brown and Levinson (1987), have been criticized for claiming falsely to represent human universals of conversation while representing only English-speaking cultures (Culpeper, 2011; Leech, 2014; Wierzbicka, 1997). Since English has a much wider variety of verbs describing speech acts than most other languages (Goddard, 2011), and the

elements of politeness defined by English-speaking cultures are often specific to those cultures (Wierzbicka, 2014), key elements of my classification necessarily describe only English uses of speech acts and politeness.

I have attempted to define politeness more broadly than Brown and Levinson, and may in future work associate speech acts in other languages with their facework characteristics, or attempt to explain the differences between the politeness norms of different cultures based on the degree to which people within those cultures value different types of face. It may even be possible to create a truly universal classification of speech acts, building on Wierzbicka's (1987, 1997, 2014) framework for cross-cultural speech act description as well as Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) cross-cultural studies of requests and apologies.

2.3.1. Natural Semantic Metalanguage

The scope of this thesis is limited to the language and culture with which I am most familiar. I acknowledge that not all readers of this thesis will share my familiarity with North American English and the cultural practices of its speakers, and I would like to make my thought process and conclusions as clear as possible to readers whose experiences are significantly different from my own. To that end, I have included an Appendix in which I break down key terms such as *politeness* and *indirectness* into their components in Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), a system developed by Wierzbicka (2014) for expressing complex culture-specific concepts as combinations of a small number of concepts believed to be cultural universals. These universals, referred to as "semantic primes", are shown in Table 2.

It is my hope that the use of NSM will clarify my arguments for future discussion, open that discussion to speakers of languages other than English, and help me avoid the pitfall of assuming cultural universals where none may exist.

Table 2. Semantic primes in Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Goddard, 2014)

Category	Semantic Primes
Substantives	I, YOU, SOMEONE, PEOPLE, SOMETHING~THING, BODY
Relational substantives	KIND, PART
Determiners	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE
Quantifiers	ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW
Evaluators	GOOD, BAD
Descriptors	BIG, SMALL
Mental predicates	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR
Speech	SAY, WORDS, TRUE
Actions, events, movement	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE
Location, existence, specification	BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)
Possession	(SOMETHING) IS (SOMEONE'S)
Life and death	LIVE, DIE
Time	WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT
Space	WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE, TOUCH
Logical concepts	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF
Intensifier, augmentor	VERY, MORE
Similarity	LIKE~AS~WAY

Chapter 3. A new taxonomy of speech acts

As mentioned in Chapter 1, while Searle (1976) provides useful criticism of Austin (1962) and a more structured classification of speech acts than Austin does, his theory is inconsistent in its descriptions of speech act types, and the role of direction of fit in particular, and it does not explain the similarities between different types of speech act. The gaps in Searle's theory motivate an even more formalized and structured speech act classification system. In this chapter, I discuss these gaps and formulate an improved classification.

To clarify my argument, I will modify some of Searle's terminology. The phrases "word-to-world" and "world-to-word", which he uses to describe the direction of fit of speech acts, are easily confused in both writing and speech. For reasons that will become clear in Section 3.2, I will borrow Austin's category labels and refer to word-to-world utterances such as representatives as having a *constative* direction of fit, and to world-to-word utterances such as commissives as having a *performative* direction of fit.

Searle's theory contains a number of inconsistencies, some of which he acknowledges but makes no attempt to correct. Most of these stem from his assignment of a unique direction of fit to each class of speech act (Searle, 1976). As explained in Section 2.1, Searle gives representatives constative (word-to-world) fit; commissives and directives, performative (world-to-word); expressives, neither; and declarations, both.

Table 3. Searle's categories and their directions of fit

Speech act type	Direction of fit
Representative	Constative
Commissive	Performative
Directive	Performative
Expressive	Neither constative nor performative
Declaration	Both constative and performative

In this section, I will show that it is not necessary to assign unique directions of fit to each category, and that direction of fit can be better used to highlight similarities between categories.

3.1. Commissives and Directives

Commissives and directives share a direction of fit; this conflicts with Searle's aspiration to give each type of speech act its own direction of fit. He describes two suggestions from colleagues who believed he could easily combine commissives and directives into one category, either by redefining commissives as "requests to oneself" or by redefining directives as "placing the hearer under an obligation" (Searle, 1976, p. 12), but he rejects these suggestions, commenting that he was "unable to make them work" (Searle, 1976, p. 12) but giving no further explanation. Later in the article, he is ambivalent about the utility of direction of fit, using it as a defining characteristic of each of his categories, but not fully explaining the direction of fit values he has chosen. I will explore this further in Section 3.2.

In light of Brown and Levinson's (1987) analysis of requests as restricting the negative face of the addressee, it is clear that the second suggestion Searle received is correct: directives do place an obligation on the addressee to carry out the requested actions. Commissives and directives form a class of speech acts with performative direction of fit whose illocutionary force is that of committing a person, the speaker in one case and the addressee in the other, to

some future action. This class will be referred to as *obligatives* in future discussion.

3.2. Expressives and Declarations

Combining commissives and directives into a class of obligatives leaves us with four categories of speech act, each with its own direction of fit. However, these unique directions of fit, especially those assigned to expressives and declarations, still pose a problem. While Searle explains very well what it means to have constative or performative direction of fit, his descriptions of what it means to have both or neither are unconvincing.

"In performing an expressive", Searle says, "the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world, rather the truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed" (Searle, 1976, p. 12). This is the whole of his argument that expressives have no direction of fit. I accept his claim that expressives do not have constative fit, and that the reason for this is that the propositional content of an expressive is presupposed. For example, sentence (20), one of Searle's example expressives, does not describe the act of the speaker stepping on the addressee's toe; instead, it expresses the stepper's reaction to the unfortunate step, which is assumed to have happened.

(20)   I apologize for stepping on your toe. (Searle, 1976, p. 12)

However, I disagree with Searle's claim that expressives do not have performative direction of fit. One way in which Searle distinguishes constative from performative direction of fit is in the ways in which utterances with different directions of fit are negated. He describes the situation of a man in a grocery store buying items from a shopping list, and of a detective following that man and writing down everything he puts in his cart. The shopping list has performative direction of fit; the detective's list, constative direction of fit. But what happens if either person makes a mistake?

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If the detective gets home and suddenly realizes that the man bought pork chops instead of bacon, he can simply erase the word 'bacon' and write 'pork chops'. But if the shopper gets home and his wife points out he has bought pork chops when he should have bought bacon he cannot correct the mistake by erasing 'bacon' from the list and writing 'pork chops' (Searle, 1976, p. 3).

The detective's list functions as a representative: it describes the shopper's actions and can do so in a way that is true or false, and it can be corrected if it is false. The shopping list functions as an obligative: the writer places an obligation on the reader (who may or may not be the same person as the writer) to buy the listed items. If the list is followed unfaithfully and the wrong item is bought, it is the fault of the reader, not of the list itself. An obligative cannot be false.

Expressives are much more like the shopping list than the detective's list. Let's return to the apology for stepping on someone's toe. If the toe was not stepped on (negating the embedded clause), or if the apology is insincere (negating the matrix clause), the problem is not that the apology is false, since it is not false, and it cannot be corrected to be true. The fault lies in the speaker's understanding of the situation in the first case, and in the speaker's intentions in the second. Apologies have performative direction of fit, and not constative direction of fit. Their performance changes the world by adjusting the balance of the relationship between speaker and addressee (Rundquist, 2007).

Like expressives, declarations have only a performative direction of fit and not the combination of constative and performative fit that Searle attributes to them (Searle, 1976, p. 15). Again, this can be shown using Searle's own grocery shopping analogy: like the obligative shopping list and the expressive apology, a declarative speech act cannot be falsified. For example, consider sentence (21), a repeat of sentence (2).

(21)   I hereby christen this ship the *Millennium Falcon.*

The act of naming cannot be considered false; it either happens, or it does not happen. The namer could perform the naming ceremony insincerely, but his

or her audience will probably interpret it as sincere (or insincere), not true or false (Austin, 1962, pp. 10–11). Naming, and by extension, other performatives, therefore do not have constative fit. They do, however, have performative fit, based on Searle's expectation that speech acts with world-to-word fit (which, as a reminder, we are calling "performative") change the world to make it more in line with the speech act. If (21) is uttered at a time when all its felicity conditions are met, the ship in question *becomes* the *Millennium Falcon*, and will be thought of as such not only by its captain and crew, but even by people who will never personally encounter the ship and have no idea how many parsecs are in the Kessel Run. The world changes to fit the utterance; therefore, declaratives have performative direction of fit.

The speech act categories remaining at this point are summarized in Table 4, along with their directions of fit.

Table 4. First modification of Searle's categories

Category	Description	Direction of fit
Declaration	Performs an action by being uttered	Performative
Obligative	Commits a person to a future action	Performative
Expressive	Expresses speaker's mental state	Performative
Representative	Descriptive utterances with truth values	Constative

The distribution of constative and performative fit among these categories matches Austin's assignment of speech acts to constative and performative categories. The set of all speech acts can therefore be divided into a constative class and a performative class, with each class subdivided into functional types.

Figure 1 shows a first pass at this hierarchical classification, which improves on Searle and Austin's systems by clearly displaying the similarities between speech act types.
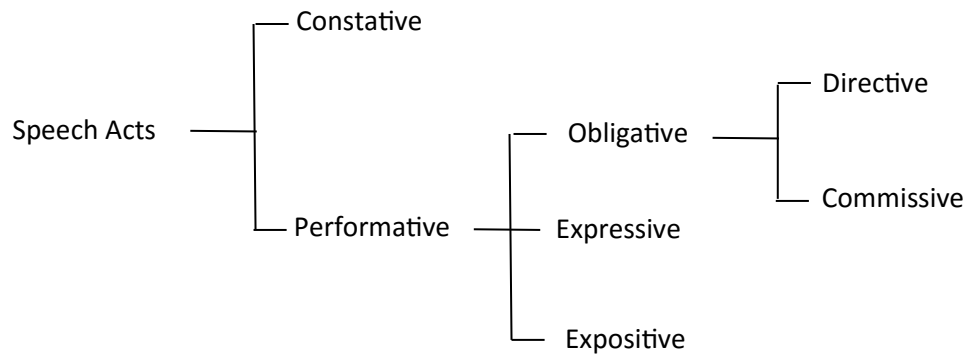
Constative

Speech Acts

Performative

Obligative

Expressive

Expositive

Directive

Commissive

Figure 1. A first-pass hierarchical classification of speech acts

3.3. Exercitives and Expositives

One more change to Searle's categories is necessary to represent the full spectrum of speech act functions. Searle acknowledges that his class of declarations contains two subcategories, one for declarations that affect the state of the world, and one for declarations that affect the state of a conversation (Searle, 1976, p. 15). These subcategories function differently enough that they should be individually represented.

I will call the category of performative speech acts which change the state of the world simply by being uttered *exercitives*, borrowing Austin's title because these speech acts require as a felicity condition that the speaker be playing an official role or exercising some authority. To declare a couple married, in most places, one must be a justice of the peace or the leader of a religious community; to deliver a verdict in court one must be a judge or jury foreperson; to enact a law one must be a head of government; etc. These utterances place an obligation on their audiences, as well as people beyond their immediate audiences, to treat certain people and objects in certain ways; they therefore form a third subclass of obligatives along with commissives and directives. What remains of Searle's declarations are the category of speech acts with performative fit that affect the state of a conversation, including acts such as

stating, insisting, denying, and agreeing. Following Austin (1962), I will call members of this category *expositives*.

The existence of expositives as a separate category raises an interesting question about the nature of constative utterances. Are they, as Austin initially believed, something separate from performatives, fitting the world in a unique way as proposed by Searle? Or do they have performative qualities, as Austin concluded?

(22)   It's raining.

(23)   I don't like it.

(24)   You're right.

(25)   I assert that it is raining.

(26)   I express my displeasure.

(27)   I concede that you are right.

Comparison of the constative utterances in (22)–(24) to the expositives in (25)–(27) suggests that constatives are indeed performative utterances, and that they are non-explicit forms of expositives. These examples can be divided into pairs of one constative and one expositive that share felicity conditions; for example, successful utterances of both (22) and (25) require the speaker to believe that rain is falling at the time the utterances are made.

Further support for folding constatives into the performative category of expositives comes from the Hereby and Participial tests. It has been established that expositives can take "hereby", while constatives cannot. However, the Participial Test shows that both can be spoken with the same illocutionary force, as utterances like (28), (29), and (30) can all be described retroactively by (31) or (32).

(28)   You're wrong.

(29)   I (hereby) disagree.

(30)   I hereby express my disagreement.

(31)   In saying that, I was disagreeing.

(32)   In saying that, I was expressing disagreement.

I will discuss the illocutionary features of expositives, including their politeness and impoliteness effects, in 4.3.

3.4. Incorporating politeness

The classification of speech acts can be given further depth and nuance by including a consideration of the politeness effects of speech acts. Brown and Levinson's (1987) analysis of requests (Searle's directives) forms the basis of my approach; it shows that not only does the class of directives have an overall face effect of reducing the negative face of the addressee, but individual directive acts can also be structured in ways that add politeness effects such as boosting the addressee's positive face to counteract the potential loss of negative face. This analysis need not be limited to directives: all types of speech act can be shown to have specific face effects (Culpeper et al., 2003), and these effects can be modified using politeness or impoliteness strategies that are appropriate to the social context of the speech act and the nuances of illocutionary force the speaker wishes to convey.

3.4.1. Indirectness

Including politeness in the description of speech acts allows a tidy way of dealing with indirectness by treating it as a politeness strategy as Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest. To explain why this is effective, I turn to Searle's (1975) discussion of indirect speech acts, in which he notes that many indirect speech acts, especially indirect directives, reference some felicity condition of the intended act. For example, sentence (33) is generally understood as a

request, instead of, as its locutionary form would suggest, a question about the addressee's physical ability to move a salt shaker from one place to another.

(33) Can you pass the salt?

Uttering (33) instead of simply ordering your addressee to pass you the salt is polite because it obeys Lakoff's (1973) second maxim of politeness, giving the addressee the option to either correctly interpret your request and fetch the salt, or to take the question literally and reply in the negative (which is generally considered deliberate impoliteness, but that's another story.)

There are, however, more degrees of indirectness than Searle alludes to in his article. It is possible to be even more indirect than (33), as in (34), which can be used to convey the same request as (33) but provides a greater opportunity for the addressee to, either deliberately or accidentally, misinterpret the utterance.

(34) Don't you think this needs some salt?

Searle notes that it is nearly impossible for a hearer of (33) to interpret it as something other than a request (Searle, 1975, p. 60), since native speakers of English are taught from a very young age that (33) and similar utterances carry the illocutionary force of a request. These utterances are therefore *conventionalized* speech acts, an intermediate category between direct and indirect speech acts. As I describe my speech act categories in Chapter 4, I will give examples of direct, conventionalized, and indirect speech acts as well as the politeness strategies that use conventionalized or indirect forms of each speech act type.

In the case of directives, giving options through indirectness acts as a form of negative politeness, limiting the imposition of the speaker's request on the addressee's freedom to eat without interruption. Indirectness can also be used as a positive politeness strategy, though, appropriately, a less direct one than most positive politeness strategies. Consider expressive utterances (35)–(37).

(35)   I apologize for stepping on your toe.

(36)   I'm sorry I stepped on your toe.

(37)   Oops.[1]

(35) is a direct apology, (36) is conventionalized, and (37) is indirect. The less direct acts reference a felicity condition of the direct act, namely that the speaker regret performing the action for which he or she is apologizing. By emphasizing this regret, the speaker expresses knowledge that he or she has done a bad thing, decreasing his or her positive face and hoping that the person wronged will take this decrease in face as a sign that the speaker considers his or her problem worth spending energy on to rectify. This makes the addressee feel cared about and boosts his or her positive face.

It should be noted that indirectness is most useful as a politeness strategy in informal speech contexts, that is, those governed by Lakoff's (1973) third maxim, in which speaker and addressee have little social distance between them and making one's addressee feel good takes priority over not imposing on him or her. In contexts of greater social distance, when Lakoff's first maxim takes priority, indirectness can be interpreted by an addressee as imposing familiarity or breaking with the structure of a formal situation, and is therefore considered less polite.

Having laid out the development of my own classification system from those devised by Searle and Austin, and elaborated on the incorporation of politeness and indirectness into the classification of speech acts, I will present my classification in detail in the following chapter.

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[1] One of my proofreaders noted that, being at a Canadian university, I should have included the Canadian "sorry" as an example of an apology. There was no room for it. Sorry.

Chapter 4. Types of Speech Act

Having revised Searle's classification and addressed some ways in which politeness can be used to classify the illocutionary force of speech acts, I now present my full classification in Figure 2. In this chapter, I will present a definition for each type of speech act, along with a description of its politeness and impoliteness characteristics.
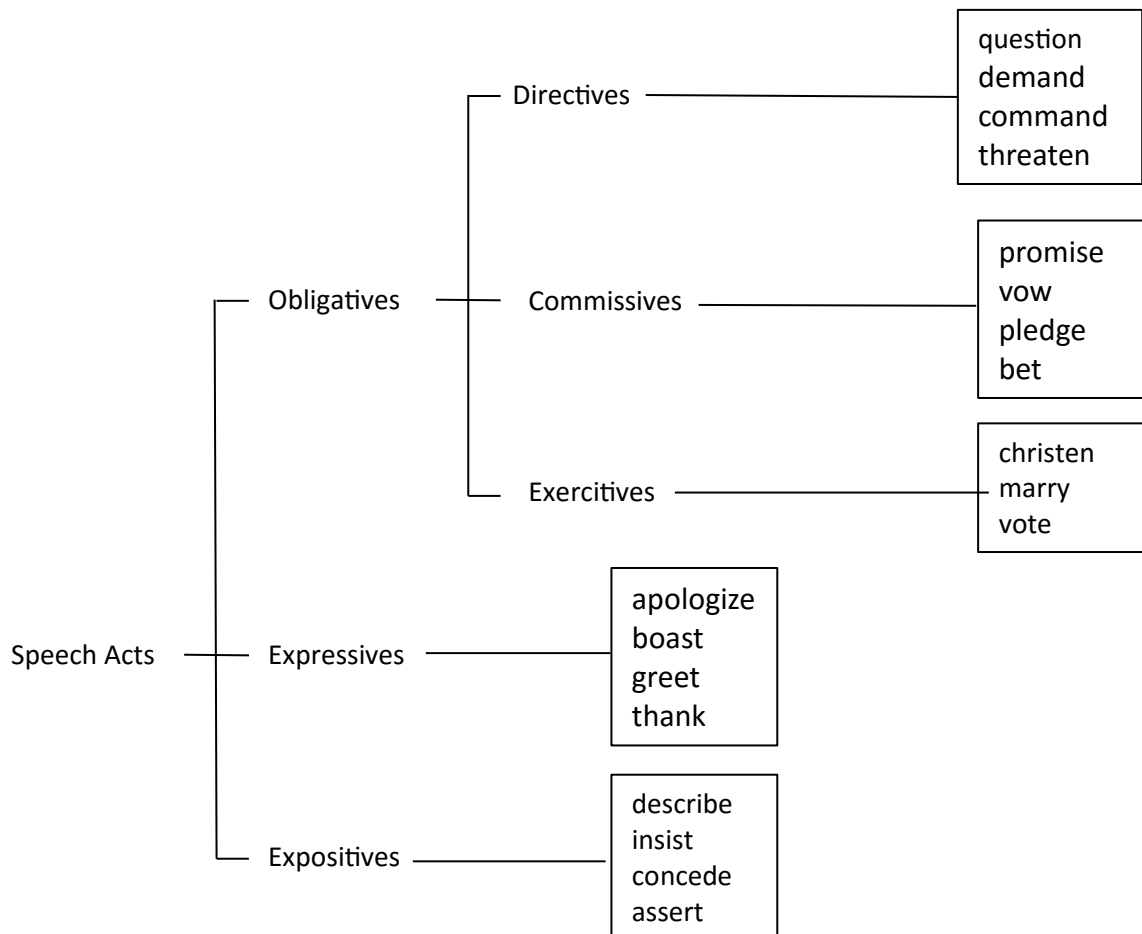

Figure 2. Classification of speech acts with examples

4.1. Obligatives

The category of obligatives contains three classes of speech acts: directives, commissives, and exercitives. Each of these place a person or group of people under an obligation to perform a future action or comply with a new state of affairs, reducing those people's negative face by reducing their freedom to not do the named action or to act as though the named state of affairs were not so. The goal of politeness strategies associated with obligatives is to mitigate the negative face threat to the addressee as described by Brown and Levinson (1987); the goal of deliberate impoliteness strategies associated with obligatives is to emphasize the face threat to the addressee as described by Culpeper (2011).

4.1.1. Directives

Directives are obligative speech acts in which an obligation is placed by the speaker on one or more addressees. The polite face effects of directives are essentially those described by Brown and Levinson (1987): to mitigate the inherent negative face threat of a directive, the speaker may appeal to the addressee's positive face to make them feel good about fulfilling the request; they may also counteract the face threat with an appeal to negative face; or they may phrase the request indirectly to give the addressee greater freedom in their response.

Direct directives include the speech act verbs *request, command, order,* or *ask,* which serve as markers of performativity. Conventionalized directives lack these markers, and can address the following felicity conditions of a directive, as described by Searle:

- the addressee's ability to do the requested action, as in "Can you pass the salt?" (Searle, 1975, p. 65)

- other reasons for the addressee to do the action, as in "You ought to be more polite to your mother" (Searle, 1975, p. 66).

They may also include the negative politeness marker *please* (Morgan, 1977, p. 3), as in "Can you please pass the salt?"

Indirect directives, as described by Searle, can address the following felicity conditions of a directive:

- the speaker's desire that the addressee do the action, as in "I would like you to go now" (Searle, 1975, p. 65).

- the addressee's willingness to do the action, as in "Would you mind not making so much noise?" (Searle, 1975, p. 65)

The deliberate impolite face effects of directives are generally the opposite of the polite face effects. To make a request impolitely, a speaker may increase the obligation on the addressee. This can be done by threatening negative consequences if the addressee does not act as expected as in (38), or by including an insult or other positive face attack as in (39).

(38)   If you don't finish your homework, I won't let you watch TV this weekend.

(39)   A real friend would help me.

One interesting class of directives is the class whose illocutionary force, generally stated, is to induce a particular perlocutionary effect in its audience. These include persuading, convincing, alarming, etc (Austin, 1962, p. 125). If a speaker felicitously persuades an audience, they are persuaded of the truth of some proposition; if he or she alarms an audience, they are alarmed, and so on. The Participial Test for these speech acts usually includes "try", as in (40), since it is possible that the expected perlocutionary effect not occur, causing the illocutionary act to fail.

(40)   In saying that, I was trying to persuade you.

Other types of directive may not fail in this way: for example, if all other felicity conditions of (41) are met, but the addressee does not think that the speaker needs salt, (41) is still performed felicitously.

(41)   Please pass the salt.

4.1.2. Commissives

Commissives are obligative speech acts in which an obligation is placed by the speaker on him- or herself. In contrast to polite directives, which show respect for the addressee by building up his or her positive or negative face and mitigating the face threat of the request, polite commissives intensify the negative face reduction, further limiting the speaker's own freedom of action by setting a time limit within which the action must be performed or otherwise indicating that the speaker considers the promise a priority. A polite commissive may also include positive politeness toward the addressee, indicating that the promise will be fulfilled because the addressee is personally important to the speaker or because they share some group identity.

Direct commissives include the speech act verbs *promise*, *swear*, or *vow*. Less direct commissives are most often used as uptake of a directive. Utterances such as (42), which references a previous directive, are conventionalized commissives. (43) is an indirect commissive.

(42)   I'll do it.

(43)   Okay.

(44)   Whatever.

The use of (44) implies that the speaker does not wish to comply with a previous directive. Like other impolite commissives, it prioritizes the face of the speaker over the face of the addressee, and seeks to either reduce the threat to the speaker's own negative face that the obligation represents or indicate that

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the addressee's positive face is not worth respecting by signaling that the obligation is not a priority.

4.1.3. Exercitives

Exercitives are obligative speech acts in which an obligation is placed by a speaker on the world in order to change the status of a person, group, or other entity. This category covers most of Austin's prototypical performatives, including marrying two people, which confers the status of "married couple" on those two people; naming a person or institution, which confers the status of "having a particular name" on the named entity; and delivering a verdict in court, which confers the status of "guilty" or "not guilty" on the defendant (Austin, 1962). Exercitives require as a felicity condition that the speaker hold and be exercising some widely recognized authority. The scope of the authority required depends on the act being performed: the prototypical exercitives mentioned above must be spoken by a clergy member, government official, or judge respectively, while a smaller-scale exercitive like voting requires a smaller-scale status such as "committee member" or "registered voter".

Since exercitives require the exercise of authority, they are generally thought of as being performed formally, and their conventionalized forms are usually the same as their direct forms. However, indirect exercitives also exist; they generally take the form of an expositive describing the effects of the performative. (45) is an indirect form of (21); it performs the same act, but without explicitly describing the act being performed.

> (45)   This ship will now be called the *Millennium Falcon.*

Exercitives are not generally associated with any politeness or impoliteness strategies. However, they do assert the status of the speaker over the addressee, since the speaker has taken on a role that allows him or her to exercise some authority which he or she believes the addressee lacks. An exercitive can also affect the face of an addressee by changing his or her social status. A judge

delivering a guilty verdict decreases the defendant's positive face by publicly labeling him or her a criminal, and decreases his or her negative face by imposing a sentence that restricts his or her behaviour. On the positive side, the knighting ceremony performed by the Queen of England increases the subject's positive face by conferring on him the positive label of knight.

4.2. Expressives

Expressives are speech acts whose illocutionary force addresses the nature of the relationship between speaker and addressee. Rundquist, in her (2007) study of apologies, calls this relationship the "social balance sheet"; she describes apologies as acknowledging an imbalance in the relative status of speaker and addressee and seeking to rectify it. This rectification usually involves a decrease of the speaker's positive face, since the speaker is acknowledging that he or she has done something bad and may be thought badly of as a result (Goddard, 2011; Wierzbicka, 1987). A felicitous apology wipes away a transgression and allows the relationship to proceed as normal.

Other speech acts that seek to rectify social imbalances include thanks and greetings. In these cases, as well as apologies, the face effects of the act are often addressed directly. In (46), the speaker boosts the addressee's positive face by showing appreciation for the effort the addressee made to attend the party, and in (47), the speaker boosts the addressee's positive face by implying that his or her presence is valued.

 (46)   Thank you for coming to my party.

 (47)   It's good to see you.

However, not all expressives seek to restore balance; in fact, some are used impolitely to increase the status difference between speaker and addressee. These impolite expressives include boasts like (48), which elevate the speaker's

positive face at the expense of other people's positive face, and insults such as (49), which attack the addressee's positive face (Culpeper et al., 2003).

> (48)   I'm the best baseball player on the team.

> (49)   Who cares what you think?

The study of indirectness in expressives has been most closely connected to the subcategory of apologies. Rundquist (2007) shows that an apology addresses one or more of the following felicity conditions, and suggests that indirect apologies do so without the performative markers "apologize", "pardon", or "sorry".

- The speaker has broken a social norm

- An imbalance in status exists between speaker and addressee

- The speaker feels guilt as a result of what he or she has done

- The speaker wishes to restore the social balance between him or herself and the addressee

In keeping with my analysis thus far, I will classify apologies containing "apologize" as direct; apologies containing "pardon" or "sorry" as conventionalized; and apologies containing none of these markers as indirect.

Other types of expressive can also be expressed with different amounts of directness. For example, a direct greeting includes the markers "greet" or "welcome", while a conventionalized greeting includes some form of "hello". Likewise, a direct thanking expressive includes the marker "thank", while a conventionalized one may include "appreciate".

It is important to note that not all expressives can be used at all levels of directness. Greeting and thanks do not have common indirect forms, as native speakers of English are taught to exclusively associate the direct and

conventionalized forms with polite behaviour. Insulting, on the other hand, has no direct form such as "I insult you" in English (Austin, 1962, p. 69).

4.3. Expositives

Expositives are speech acts that serve as "moves" within a conversation. Their functions include introducing propositions into a discourse, as in (50); and responding to propositions introduced by other speakers as in (51) and (52). Direct expositives such as (50) and (51) include a verb that specifies the move that the speaker is making. Conventionalized expositives such as (52) and (53) include markers such as "think", "believe", and "say". Indirect expositives such as (54) take the form of unmarked constatives, with any relationship between speaker and proposition left implicit.

(50)   I assert that the earth is round.

(51)   I concede that the earth is round.

(52)   Well, I say the earth is flat!

(53)   I believe that the earth is round.

(54)   The earth is round.

The primary facework strategies involved in uttering expositives involve directness. In general, the directness of an expositive correlates with the amount of social distance required by the conversational context. In formal situations, where social distance is expected (Lakoff, 1973), direct expositives that spell out the speaker's intentions are considered more appropriate, as use of excessively informal language would impose a sense of intimacy that is either unwanted by the addressee (reducing his or her negative face as a result), or seen as not fitting the situation. In informal or intimate situations, indirect expositives are more acceptable.

One feature of indirect expositives which speakers often abuse in impolite utterances is their ambiguity. When the speaker's relationship to the propositional content of an utterance is not made clear, it can be difficult to tell whether that utterance is an assertion about the outside world or simply a reflection of the speaker's mental state. If (55) is uttered in response to some other statement, a great deal of context may be required to determine whether the speaker intends to convey (55a) or (55b)[2].

>(55)   You're wrong.

>>(55a) I assert that other facts contradict what you have said.

>>(55b) I take a position disagreeing with yours because I don't
>>   like you and want to make you look bad.

This ambiguity can be employed to present statements of belief or opinion as if they were assertions of fact, elevating the speaker's positive face by making him or her sound right, or attacking an addressee's positive face by making him or her sound wrong.

4.4. Classifying borderline cases

Some speech acts have aspects of two or more types. Classifying these acts requires careful consideration of the speaker's priorities in uttering them; each act should be assigned to the category that represents the speaker's primary illocutionary goal. I will illustrate this by locating two seemingly ambiguous obligatives, betting and threatening, in my classification.

>(56)   I bet you five dollars it's going to rain tomorrow.

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[2] Not all languages have this ambiguity; some, including Tibetan and the Pacific Northwest First Nations language Kwakiutl, have grammatical markers of evidentiality (Dendale & Tasmowski, 2001) which may distinguish categories such as observed fact, hearsay, opinion, etc.

Betting, as in (56) [a repetition of the first part of (3)], is one of Austin's (1962) prototypical performatives. Unlike his examples of marrying and christening, however, it is not an exercitive, as no exercise of authority is required to make a bet. Betting involves commissive and directive aspects: I promise to pay if I lose, and you must pay if I win (Katz, 2015). However, the requirement that the addressee commit money to the bet does not take effect until the bet is accepted: the addressee, in taking up the bet, commits him- or herself, and is not committed to the bet by the speaker (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 50). Therefore, both the making and the acceptance of a bet are commissive speech acts.

Betting should not be confused with other speech acts which may share a verb with it. (57) is an expressive whose illocutionary force is that of agreement. (58) is an expositive that uses the locutionary form of betting to imply certainty: the speaker is so confident that it will rain that he or she would hypothetically be willing to bet money on that outcome.

(57)   You bet!

(58)   I bet it's going to rain.

Threatening also has commissive and directive aspects: I will do something bad to you if you do not do what I want. This is where the consideration of priorities comes into play—does the speaker actually intend to carry out the threat, or is his or her intention merely to scare the addressee into fulfilling their obligation? According to Goddard (2011, p. 142), it is the latter: that the speaker actually perform their threatened action is optional, but it is always the case that the speaker desires the addressee's compliance with the directive portion of the threat. Therefore, threats are directives and not commissives. This is reinforced by the possibility of following a threat with sentence (59).

(59)   That's not a threat, it's a promise.

Saying (59) shifts the focus of the speech act from what the addressee must do to what the speaker must do. The directive threat has been transformed into a commissive promise. However, this transformation is not always sincerely performed: if the speaker has no intention to carry out the threat, it remains a directive, and (59) serves as an extra degree of negative impoliteness that heightens the urgency of the directive.

4.4.1. Using the Participial Test and the Hereby Test

The Participial Test can be used to identify not only individual speech acts, but also speech act types. Just as each English speech act can be associated with a verb or verb phrase that describes it retroactively, each category of speech act can be associated with a verb that describes the general illocutionary force of the whole class.

Exercitives can be described using "declare".

> (60)   In saying that, I was declaring these two people married.

> (61)   In saying that, I was declaring that this ship is the *Millennium Falcon.*

Other obligatives can be described using "make".

> (62)   In saying that, I was making a request.

> (63)   In saying that, I was making a promise.

Expressives can be described using "show".

> (64)   In saying that, I was showing regret.

> (65)   In saying that, I was showing gratitude.

It is important to note that not all combinations of "show" and a mental state describe expressives. For example, (66) does not describe an expressive. "Boredom" does not affect the social relationship between the person showing

boredom and his or her addressee in the same way that regret or gratitude does, though a speaker announcing that he or she is bored is likely to be doing so as an insult (an expressive) to some addressee, which can be described as in (67).

(66)   In saying that, I was showing boredom.

(67)   In saying that, I was showing disrespect.

Expositives can be described using "state".

(68)   In saying that, I was stating agreement.

(69)   In saying that, I was stating a fact.

These examples show the utility of the Participial Test in not only identifying speech acts, but also classifying them. The test also provides additional support for the system of categorization I have proposed.

The Hereby Test can still be used to distinguish direct speech acts from conventionalized and indirect speech acts. The following examples show that it can be applied to all speech act types.

Directives:

(70)   I hereby request that you pass the salt.

(71)   Could you (#hereby) pass the salt?

(72)   This (#hereby) needs a little salt.

Commissives:

(73)   I hereby promise to take out the trash.

(74)   I'll (#hereby) take out the trash after dinner.

(75)   (#Hereby) Sure.

Exercitives:

(76)   I hereby charge the defendant with murder.

(77)   You (#hereby) killed him.

Expressives:

(78)   I hereby apologize for scaring you.

(79)   I'm (#hereby) sorry I scared you.

(80)   I (#hereby) didn't think you would be frightened.

Expositives:

(81)   I hereby insist that we follow the plan.

(82)   I (#hereby) think we should follow the plan.

(83)   We (#hereby) have to follow the plan.

In this chapter, I have described my categories of speech acts and elaborated on the politeness characteristics of each category. In the next chapter, I will discuss the applicability of my classification both to the study of speech acts and to the development of computational systems that automatically identify and process speech acts.

Chapter 5. Implications and Applications

My taxonomy builds on Austin (1962) and Searle's (1976) classifications of speech acts, and systematizes their categories into a hierarchical framework that clarifies the relationships among different types of speech act. It also incorporates aspects of the politeness theories developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), associating each type of speech act with the facework strategies that speakers might use it to produce, including indirectness. I have broken down my types into subcategories based on the face effects associated with different speech acts that share a type. In order to make my taxonomy maximally descriptive, I also acknowledge that appropriate facework strategies, and thus appropriate choices of speech act, depend on the formality of the speech context and the amount of social distance between speaker and addressee as described by Lakoff (1973). In the remainder of this chapter, I describe ways in which my classification system may be put to practical use.

5.1. Applications

My classification system will be useful in the computational linguistics subfield of dialogue act classification. Speech acts, often referred to by natural language processing specialists as *dialogue acts*, provide conversational information above and beyond that provided by syntactic or semantic processing, so it is important that artificially intelligent systems that are required to monitor or engage in human conversation, such as the digital assistants installed on most smartphones, be able to identify and correctly label speech acts (Clark & Popescu-Belis, 2004, p. 163). Dialogue act processing is also useful in reducing error rates in automatic translation and speech recognition programs (Fišel, 2007, p. 118).

In this section, I survey recent literature on dialogue act processing and determine that three criteria are important in the construction of a good tag system for dialogue act classifiers: the system should be non-task-specific, hierarchical, and based on the functions of speech acts rather than their forms.

5.1.1. Non-task-specific dialogue act classification

The benefit of task-nonspecificity in a dialogue act classification system is broader applicability. A task-specific tag system such as those used to analyze VERBMOBIL, a corpus of conversations related to a scheduling task (Jekat et al., 1995; Reithinger & Klesen, 1997; Reithinger & Maier, 1995), captures the corpus it was trained on in great detail, but is likely to be inapplicable to other corpora. My classification system has been designed to represent all types of spoken English, and should therefore be useful in a variety of dialogue and task contexts.

An example of a non-task-specific tag system for dialogue act coding can be found in Stolcke et al (2000), in which dialogue act classification is performed on the Switchboard corpus. This corpus consists of telephone conversations between strangers on a variety of topics, and can be considered task-free. The tag system developed for this project is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. List of dialogue acts from Stolcke et al.

Tag	Example
Statement	Me, I'm in the legal department.
Backchannel/Acknowledge	Uh-huh.
Opinion	I think it's great
Abandoned/Uninterpretable	So, -/
Agreement/Accept	That's exactly it.
Yes-No-Question	Do you have to have any special training?
Non-Verbal	<Laughter>, <Throat_clearing>
Yes answers	Yes.
Conventional-Closing	Well, it's been nice talking to you.
Wh-Question	What did you wear to work today?
No Answers	No.
Response Acknowledgement	Oh, okay.

Hedge	I don't know if I'm making any sense or not.
Declarative Yes-No-Question	Is that right?
Quotation	You can't be pregnant and have cats
Summarize/Reformulate	Oh, you mean you switched schools for the kids.
Affirmative non-yes answers	It is.
Action-Directive	Why don't you go first
Collaborative Completion	Who aren't contributing.
Repeat-phrase	Oh, fajitas
Open-Question	How about you?
Rhetorical-Questions	Who would steal a newspaper?
Hold before answer/agreement	I'm drawing a blank
Reject	Well, no
Negative non-no answer	Uh, not a whole lot.
Signal non-understanding	Excuse me?
Other answers	I don't know
Conventional-opening	How are you?
Or-Clause	or is it more of a company?
Dispreferred answers	Well, not so much that
3rd-party-talk	My goodness, Diane, get down from there.
Offers, Options, & Commits	I'll have to check that out
Self-talk	What's the word I'm looking for
Downplayer	That's all right.
Maybe/Accept-part	Something like that
Tag-Question	Right?
Declarative Wh-Question	You are what kind of buff?
Apology	I'm sorry.
Thanking	Hey thanks a lot

While the tagset developed by Stolcke et al. (2000) covers a wide range of speech acts suitable for use in a variety of contexts, it lacks the other two important features of a good tagset. It is not hierarchical, giving a confused tagger (whether human or machine) few options for tagging dialogue acts whose functions are uncertain; and it mixes function-based tag names such as "Apology" and "Thanking" with form-based tag names like "WH-question".

5.1.2. Hierarchical dialogue act classification

The benefit of hierarchy in a dialogue act classification system is greater inter-coder reliability, since a hierarchical system shows relationships between

dialogue act types (Alexandersson & Reithinger, 1997; Bunt, 2005). Coders using a flat classification must tag every dialogue act as one type or another, and may have no way to mark an ambiguous dialogue act as accurately as they can, instead using tags such as "unknown" that remove the tagged item from consideration. A hierarchy allows fallbacks; for example, if a coder is uncertain about whether sentence (84) is directive, commissive, or exercitive, he or she may mark it "obligative" and skip the more specific tagging.

(84)   I bet you five dollars that it will rain tomorrow.

For human coders, this would better represent the coder's intuition while allowing greater agreement with a less uncertain coder who correctly tags the act of betting as both obligative and commissive. It should not be difficult for coders using my classification to agree on whether a given speech act is obligative, exercitive, or expositive; however, disagreements between coders may point to areas in which the definitions of my categories need further refinement.

The intuition used by human coders can be simulated computationally through the use of multiple classifiers, with the output of one serving as the input of another (Clark & Popescu-Belis, 2004, p. 169). For example, a set of classifiers using my speech act hierarchy could first label each dialogue act as obligative, expressive, or expositive; a second classifier running on the output of the first could classify each obligative as commissive, directive, or exercitive; a third could label each tagged dialogue act with its level of directness, a fourth with explicit politeness features, and so on.

An example of a hierarchical tag system for dialogue act coding can be found in Clark & Popescu-Belis (2004). Their tagset includes two levels of classification: a general level, at which utterances are classified as statements, questions, backchanneling, or floor-holding; and a specific level, at which the purpose of the utterance is classified.

Table 6. List of dialogue acts from Clark & Popescu-Belis (2004, p. 166)

Tag	Description	Level
S	Statement	General
Q	Question	General
B	Backchannel	General
H	Hold	General
RP	Positive response	Specific
RN	Negative response	Specific
RU	Other response	Specific
RI	Restated information	Specific
AT	Attention management	Specific
DO	Interrupted or abandoned utterance	Specific
PO	Politeness	Specific

Each utterance can be assigned multiple specific labels, allowing more classification options. It is also task-nonspecific, since it was developed from tags used by Jurafsky et al. (1997) for use on the Switchboard corpus. However, this system lacks the third feature which I consider important in a speech/dialogue act classification system: it does not classify dialogue acts purely by function, instead using a mix of form (such as "Statement") and function (such as "Backchannel").

5.1.3.   Function-based dialogue act classification

The classification systems examined in this chapter rely on the form of an utterance to determine what type of dialogue act it is. In particular, both have a category label for "question", which represents the manner of making an utterance rather than what the speaker means by it; that is, they use locutionary form as a proxy for illocutionary force. This has the drawbacks mentioned in Section 2.1, magnified by the inability of a computational classifier to second-guess itself. An utterance with the form of "question" may be intended as a directive, or an expressive showing a lack of understanding (Bunt, 2006) or an expositive containing a tag question that expresses negative

politeness. A human who notices such things, and a computer program that doesn't, will disagree on which form-based tags to assign to these utterances.

Implementing a function-based hierarchy in a computational system will likely be difficult, since computational processing of language relies on systems which recognize formal features such as the presence of certain words (Webb, Liu, Hepple, & Wilks, 2008), but it is possible that the illocutionary force of an utterance correlates with locutionary features not generally recognized by human speakers. These features, if they exist, can be found by using my classification to develop a gold-standard corpus, a corpus annotated by humans that acts as a baseline (Kilgarriff, 1998). Once a gold standard exists, classifiers can be tested against it to determine which features the machine classifiers rely on most heavily to tag dialogue acts in agreement with the gold standard. I believe that the use of my classification system, since it is function-based, hierarchical, and non-task-specific, will allow dialogue act classification that is both more reliable and more broadly applicable across corpora than existing tagsets.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

By integrating politeness theory into speech act theory, I have added a layer of detail into the study and classification of speech acts. The development of the field, from Austin's (1962) identification of felicity conditions to Searle's (1976) description of illocutionary force and Wierzbicka (1997) and Blum-Kulka's (1989) cross-linguistic studies, has led to an increasingly nuanced understanding of what speakers intend to accomplish by speaking. Politeness is a major factor affecting speakers' choice of speech acts; among English speakers, it is taken for granted that certain utterances express conventionalized politeness and must be uttered in certain contexts, and that others are impolite or rude and should be avoided. However, for most of this time, politeness has been considered a feature of only a few speech act types, and the relationship between speech acts and deliberate impoliteness has been studied almost not at all.

In this thesis, I have endeavored to round out the study of speech acts by improving on Austin and Searle's classifications of speech act types and by describing the possible politeness and impoliteness effects of each type in terms of Lakoff's (1973) politeness maxims and Brown and Levinson's (1987) facework strategies. My classification may serve as a starting point for future studies of both speech acts and politeness, as well as providing a framework for future discussion of as-yet-unexplored factors that influence speakers' conversational choices.

My classification will also be of value to the designers of computational systems that analyze or simulate conversation. As the popularity of digital assistants and chatbots (Greenfield, 2016) increases, it becomes more and more important that these programs comprehend and produce languages in a

humanlike way. The incorporation of politeness theory into the classification of speech acts allows for systems that process dialogue acts in more detail and can make more nuanced conversational choices, leading to human-computer interactions that are more natural and less frustrating to users of today's technology.

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Appendix.

Natural Semantic Metalanguage Definitions of Key Terms

The following definitions clarify the meanings of key terms in this text for the purposes of cross-cultural comparison of speech act types and politeness equivalents. They follow the Natural Semantic Metalanguage format developed by Wierzbicka (2014) for expressing culture-specific concepts in easily translated forms.

POSITIVE FACE

  a) I want people to think good things about me

  b) if I know that people think good things about me, I can feel something good because of it

  c) I know many people think this same way

NEGATIVE FACE

  a) I want to do something

  b) someone else can think like this about me:
      I do not want this person to do this thing

  c) If I know that people think like this about me, I can feel something bad because of it

  d) I know many people think this same way

INDIRECT

  a) I want to say something to someone

  b) when I say something to someone like this, I don't want this someone to think something bad about me

  c) because of this, it is good if I say this something with some words, not with other words[3]

POLITE

  a) I know that other people think some things

  b) I act like it is good that these other people think these things

[3] Phrasing from C. Goddard, personal communication March 18, 2016

c) if I do not act in this way, then these other people will feel bad.

DELIBERATELY IMPOLITE

    a) I know that other people think some things

    b) I act like it is bad that these other people think these things

    c) I do this because I want these other people to feel bad

    d) it is bad when someone does this

ACCIDENTALLY IMPOLITE

    a) I think that other people think some things

    b) these other people do not think these things

    c) I act like it is good that these other people think these things

    d) these other people feel bad because of this

FORMAL

    a) I want to say something to someone

    b) there are many ways I can say this thing

    c) people like this someone are not like people like me

    d) I want this someone to know that I know that this someone and I are not the same

    e) because of this, it is good if I say this something with some words, not with other words