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An Interactional Account of Illocutionary Practice

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ABSTRACT: The paper aims to develop an interactional account of illocutionary practice, which results from integrating elements of Millikan's biological model of language within the framework of Austin's theory of speech acts. The proposed account rests on the assumption that the force of an act depends on what counts as its interactional effect or, in other words, on the response that it conventionally invites or attempts to elicit. The discussion is divided into two parts. The first one reconsiders Austin's and Millikan's contributions to the study of linguistic practice. The second part presents the main tenets of the interactional account. In particular, it draws a distinction between primary and secondary conventional patterns of interaction and argues that they make up coherent systems representing different language games or activity types; it is also argued that the proposed account is not subject to the massive ambiguity problem.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to develop an interactional model of illocutionary practice. The main idea behind the proposed account is that the force of an act depends on the response that it conventionally invites or attempts to elicit; in other words, to perform an illocutionary act means to initiate a reproduction of an interaction pattern that involves the speaker's utterance and the hearer's cooperative response to it. This account makes use of elements of Austin's theory of speech acts and builds on Ruth G. Millikan's idea of conventional patterns of social interaction.

Unlike Millikan's model, however, the account offered in this paper is free from the so-called massive ambiguity problem and presupposes a more fine-grained account of cooperative linguistic practice.

In the remainder of this paper, I proceed as follows. In section 2, I make a preliminary presentation of the interactional account; in particular, I reconsider Austin's and Millikan's contributions to the study of illocutionary practice, thereby setting the stage for the subsequent discussion. In section 3, I address two objections that can be raised against the interactional model and argue that they can be resisted by modifying in certain ways the account presented in section 2. In section 4, I present the main conclusions of this paper and the perspectives for future works.

2. Preliminary Presentation of the Interactional Model

My aim in this section is to make a preliminary presentation of the interactional account. Roughly speaking, this account results from integrating elements of Millikan's biological model of language within the framework of Austin's theory of speech acts. In subsection 2.1, then, I offer a short presentation of Austin's account of linguistic practice; next, in subsection 2.2, I discuss Millikan's model of language conventions and the role they play in illocutionary communication; finally, in subsection 2.3, I integrate Millikan ideas within Austin's theoretical framework.

2.1. The Interactional Model as a Neo-Austinian Account of Speech Acts

The main idea behind Austin's account of linguistic practice is that of speech acts as "context-changing social actions" (Sbisà 2002, p. 421). As Gazdar (1981, p. 68) puts it, a "speech act is a function from contexts into contexts"; in other words, to make a speech act is to bring about a series of changes in one's social environment: locutionary acts produce linguistic representations of worldly states, illocutionary acts modify the commitments and entitlements of the participants in social life, whereas perlocutionary acts bring about changes in their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions. It should be stressed, however, that locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts have no independent existence. In fact, they are nothing but abstract aspects of "the total speech act in the total speech situation" (Austin 1975, p. 147). To illustrate this idea, let us consider John who utters sentence (1).

(1) I will come to your seminar.

Uttering sentence or pheme (1), John performs a certain phatic act, *i.e.*, "the act of uttering certain vocables or words (…) conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar"(Austin 1975, p. 92). At the same time, he produces a locution that represents his coming to the addressee's seminar as

a future event; in short, he says that he will come to the addressee's seminar. Let us assume, next, that in saying this, John performs a certain illocutionary act, *e.g.*, the act of making a promise. (Of course one can use sentence (1) to perform other acts, such as *predicting*, *warning*, *making a threat*, and so on; the actual force of an illocutionary act made in uttering (1) depends on certain contextual factors singled out by the conventional procedure invoked by the speaker; see Austin 1975, p. 14.) What is more, by saying that he will come to the addressee's lecture tomorrow, he can perform a perlocutionary act, *e.g.*, the act of convincing, alarming, amusing, astonishing, or intimidating his interlocutor. It is instructive to stress, however, that the following four acts made by John — his phatic act of uttering sentence (1), his locutionary act of saying that he will come to the addressee's seminar, his promising that he will come to the addressee's seminar, and his intimidating the addressee — are nothing but abstract aspects of the total speech situation that John and his interlocutor have found themselves in. More precisely, they correspond to four different senses of the phrase "saying or doing the same". As Austin noted, ""The same" does not always mean the same" (Austin 1950, p. 114). For example, two phatically equivalent acts — *e.g.*, John's utterance of sentence (1) and Mary's utterance of the same pheme — are not locutionary equivalent; by analogy, locutionary equivalent acts can differ with respect to their illocutionary forces as well as their perlocutionary effects.

Let us have a closer look at the effects of illocutionary acts. According to Austin, the successful performance of an illocutionary act involves, first, the *securing of uptake*, which normally amounts to the hearer's recognition of the meaning and force of the speaker's utterance. Second, the act "takes effect in certain ways, as distinguished from producing consequences in the sense of bringing about sates of affairs in the "normal" way, *i.e.* changes in the natural course of events." (Austin 1975, p. 117) In other words, successful illocutions are *binding* in that they succeed in bringing about changes in the domain of normative or institutional facts such as commitments, obligations, rights, entitlements, and so on. A binding promise, for example, creates the speaker's obligation to perform a certain action as well as the hearer's right to expect the action to be performed by the speaker; the normative or institutional effect of naming a ship *Queen Elizabeth* is, in turn, that "certain subsequent acts such as referring to it as the *Generalissimo Stalin* will be out of order" (Austin 1975, p. 117). Third, "many illocutionary acts *invite by convention a response or sequel*. Thus an order invites the response of obedience and a promise that of fulfilment" (Austin 1975, p. 117). In short, there are three types of effects that a successful illocutionary act has on the context of its production: (e_1) the securing of uptake, (e_2) the taking of effect, and (e_3) the inviting of a response or sequel.

Correspondingly, one can distinguish between three accounts of the nature and structure of illocutionary acts, each of which seems to result from a one-sided interpretation of Austin's theory of illocutionary practice (see Witek 2013). According to the *intentionalist* or *Gricean tradition*, as developed by Strawson (1964) and Bach and Harnish (1979), most illocutionary acts are

communicative rather than conventional, *i.e.*, they consist in uttering words with communicative intentions rather than in behaving in accordance with illocutionary rules or conventions; more specifically, to produce a *communicative* illocutionary act, *e.g.*, a statement, a request, a promise, a warning, and so on, is to utter a sentence with the intention to produce the effect of the (e_1) type or, in other words, with the intention to get the hearer to recognize the force and meaning of one's utterance. According to Gricean theories of speech acts, therefore, the force of the utterance is determined by the content of the intention with which it is made. Bach and Harnish — who in their *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* develop an elaborated version of the Gricean theory — observe that the intentions underlying the performance of communicative illocutionary act are *reflexive* in that "their fulfilment consists in nothing more than their recognition" (Bach and Harnish 1979, p. xv; cf. Witek 2009). The proponents of the *institutionalist* or *Austinian* approach, *e.g.*, Alston (2000), Cameron (1970), Sbisà (2007, 2009) and Searle (1969, 1979), claim, in turn, that the central function of illocutionary acts is to produce the effects of the (e_2) type, *i.e.*, to bring about changes in the normative or institutional structure of social reality. They also assume that our linguistic acts can play such a norm-producing or institution-creating function only against the background of illocutionary conventional procedures that can be, following Searle, represented as systems of linguistic constitutive rules of the form "uttering *X* counts as *Y* in context *C*" (Searle 2005, 2009); consistently, it is claimed that the force of an act made in uttering *X* in context *C* depends on what counts as its normative or institutional effect *Y*. Finally, according to the interactional approach, the proper function or purpose of an illocutionary act is to produce the response that it *invites by convention*, where "by convention" means "in agreement with the conventional pattern of interaction invoked by the speaker". From the interactional perspective, then, the force of the act is to be defined in terms of the effect of the (e_3) type; more specifically, it depends on what counts as the response that the act conventionally invites or attempts to elicit. One example of the interactional account of speech acts comes from Millikan, who in *Language: A Biological Model* proposes to define the force of an act by reference to its conventional outcome, *i.e.*, by reference to "what can happen later under the convention" (Millikan 2005, p. 149) invoked by the speaker.

According to the interactional approach, then, the force of an act should be defined by reference to its conventionally determined effect. In this respect, the approach under discussion can be likened to the institutionalist one. Unlike the latter, however, it avoids classifying illocutionary acts in terms of their normative effects, *i.e.*, in that of the effects of the (e_2) type. The proponents of the approach in question emphasize that speech acts are inherently interactional or, in other words, that (nearly) every illocutionary act is situated in the context of a certain interactional event within which it has certain predictable conventional consequences. The force of an act, therefore, should be defined by reference to what counts as its conventionally determined *interactive effect*. Roughly speaking, the act's interactive effect is the response it invites under the

conventional pattern of interaction *invoked* by the speaker or, more appropriately, negotiated by the participants in speech situation (for a discussion of the idea of interactional negotiation, see subsection 3.2 below); the pattern consists of two complementary parts: the speaker's act and the hearer's cooperative response to it.

For the reasons presented above, the interactional approach can be called *neo-Austinian*. Like the Austinian or institutionalist approach, it classifies illocutionary acts in terms of the effects they have on social life. What is more, it acknowledges that one of the effects in question are normative states of affairs construed as the commitments and entitlements of the participants in linguistic interaction. Nevertheless, it does not take the normative effects of illocutionary acts to be definitionally and explanatory basic. To define illocutionary act types and explain their functioning, as the proponents of the neo-Austinian approach claim, one has to refer to the interactive effects of speech acts.

2.2. Millikan's Biological Model of Language

The account offered in this paper draws on Millikan's biological model of language (Millikan 2005), the central part of which is her conception of natural conventions (Millikan 1998; cf. Witek 2010). Before presenting the development of the interactional model of illocutionary acts, therefore, it is instructive to discuss selected ideas put forth by Millikan in her works on linguistic practice.

According to Millikan (1998), natural conventions are patterns of activity that proliferate, first, by reproduction and, second, due to weight of their cultural precedents rather than due to their capacity to produce certain results. For example, wearing black or white to a funeral, decorating Christmas tree in December, keeping a certain distance while speaking to others, greeting others by shaking right hands, driving on the left or right side of the road, using forks or chopsticks as eating utensils, and so on, are all *conventional* patterns of behaviour because their forms, first, have been copied and, second, are arbitrary relative to their functions. It is instructive to note that the "weight of precedent" requirement is necessary to distinguish conventional patterns of activity from technologies: the forms of the latter, unlike those of the former, are not arbitrary with respect to their functions; as the corollary of this, the proliferation of technologies is to be explained by reference to their capacity to perform their functions rather than to the weight of their cultural precedents.

A reproduction of a conventional pattern involves either direct copying of certain aspects of one's behaviour, following one's explicit instructions, or fitting in with what one's partner is doing. The latter form of proliferation is what Millikan (1998, p. 164) calls *counterpart reproduction*. Within every counterpart-reproduced pattern one can distinguish two complementary parts or aspects, where the reproduction of one part is constrained by the need to fit in with the other. This is what takes place, for example, when we keep an appropriate distance while conversing, drive on the left

side of the road while visiting Scotland, or greet our friends by shaking their right hand. As Millikan (1998, p. 164) notes, counterpart reproduction "easily results in standardization of forms, more easily than by direct copying. Copies of copies easily drift away from the original; the need to fit counterparts retards drift."

Some of the counterpart-reproduced patterns perform *coordinating function*. That is to say, their job is to ensure coordination between cooperating agents and thereby help them achieve their common goals. For example, the (*a*) left-hand driving convention helps achieve coordination between drivers who want to avoid head-on collisions and the (*b*) conventional pattern of the form "the original caller calls back and the original receiver waits" ensures coordination between agents whose common aim is to restore a disconnected telephone conversation (these two examples come from Lewis 2002, pp. 5-6). The coordination achieved by means of patterns (*a*) and (*b*) is *blind* in that each agent involved in their reproduction "must act before having any evidence concerning the other's action(s)" (Millikan 1998, p. 170). However, there are also *half-blind* or *half-sighted* forms of coordination, whose achievement involves the reproduction of leader-follower patterns: one of the agents (*i.e.* the leader) behaves "in a manner either wholly or partially observable" (Millikan 1998, p. 171) to the other, and the other (*i.e.* the follower) responds by producing his complementary part of the pattern. Let us consider, for example, an interaction between a man who stands outside a truck and a driver who wants to back the truck into a tight space: the man outside the truck (the leader) produces signals that are immediately followed by the driver (the follower). A signal produced by the man outside the truck and the driver's immediate reaction to it are complementary aspects of a leader-follower conventional pattern, call it pattern (*c*), whose function is to ensure coordination between what the leader can see and the moves made by the follower or, more accurately, between the way the leader transforms his perceptions into signals and the way the follower transforms the signals into his action. Consider, by analogy, two engineers defusing a pair of interconnected bombs (let us assume that to defuse them they have to simultaneously cut certain wires of the same colour); being unable to see each other, they coordinate their moves by explicitly saying what they are currently doing: one of them (the leader) says, for example, "Now I am cutting the red wire" and the other (the follower) responds by cutting the red wire in his bomb. In short, the pattern they reproduce, call it pattern (*d*), results in coordinating their actions and help them achieve their common goal.

Patterns (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) help interacting agents achieve their extra-linguistic common goals: avoiding head-on collisions, restoring interrupted conversations, parking a truck in a tight space and diffusing a pair of interconnected bombs, respectively. In short, the function of the patterns in question is to solve extra-linguistic coordination problems. It must be noted, however, that patterns (*c*) and (*d*), unlike (*a*) and (*b*), involve communication between cooperating agents. More specifically, they succeed in ensuring extra-linguistic coordination in virtue, in part, of their ensuring *linguistic coordination* between the meaning with which the leader produces a given sign,

a gesture, a linguistic form, etc., and the way the follower reads such a sign. In short, linguistic coordination is achieved if the leader and the follower reproduce parts of the same conventional pattern. Generally speaking, our interest in linguistic coordination derives from our common interest "in being able to control one another's beliefs and actions, to some extent, by means of sounds or marks" (Lewis 2002, p. 181). More specifically, it derives from our changing interests in solving specific extra-linguistic coordination problems that we happen to have, *e.g.*, our interest in backing a truck in a tight garage or in diffusing a pair of interconnected bombs.

According to Millikan, most language conventions consist of leader-follower or, more accurately, *speaker-hearer* patterns that proliferate by counterpart reproduction. Their proper function is to solve linguistic coordination problems and thereby help interacting agents achieve their extra-linguistic common goals. Within every speaker-hearer pattern one can distinguish two complementary aspects: one produced by the speaker (*i.e.* the leader) and the other produced by the hearer (*i.e.* the follower). The speaker's part of a pattern initiates its reproduction, whereas the hearer's part complements it. The general pattern for assertive acts involves, for instance, the speaker's utterance of an indicative sentence and the hearer's coming to believe what the speaker says; by analogy, the general pattern for directive acts involves the speaker's production of an imperative sentence and the hearer's complying with what he is told to do.

By saying that the coordinating function of a given pattern is its *proper* function, Millikan means that the pattern has been *selected for* in a given language community because of its capacity to solve coordination problems of a certain type (and, of course, due to the weight of its cultural precedent, since it is a conventional pattern). If the pattern ceased to ensure coordination between interacting agents, as a result, for example, of a dramatic change in their cultural or physical environment, it would disappear from their repertoire of language conventions. It is worth stressing, however, that in order to survive it has to succeed in performing its coordinating function in sufficiently many cases, where "in sufficiently many" does not mean "in the majority of"; in general, for an evolutionary solution to be stable it has to function properly in sufficiently many cases. The proper function of a grammatical mood, in turn, is to elicit the hearer's cooperative response: his believing what the speaker says if the speaker utters an indicative sentence, and his complying with what he is told to do if the speaker utters an imperative sentence. In general, the hearer's cooperative response to an act can be identified with the act's interactive effect. In general, the linguistic devices that people use, such as moods, grammatical structures, lexical phrases, and so on, have *cooperative proper functions*. If hearers systematically failed to comply with directives made, for example, in uttering sentences of the shape "Do *A*!", this form would disappear from the linguistic repertoire of the community to which they belong; consistently, in order for it to be a stable element of the repertoire, it has to succeed in eliciting the hearer's cooperative responses in sufficiently many cases.

It remains to be discussed which of the three functions, the extra-linguistic coordinating

function of a pattern, its linguistic coordinating function, and the cooperative function of the linguistic device the pattern involves, is *primitive* and which ones are *derived* (see Millikan 1984); it is also worth considering what are the mechanisms underlying the *normal* performance of these function. Detailed discussion of these topics goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

In summary, every language convention can be represented as a lineage of reproduced items that perform the same proper function: lineages of individual speaker-hearer interactions, lexical phrases, grammatical structures, moods, intonations, and so on. (Strictly speaking, a linguistic lineage can acquire new functions, one of which can become its proper function; what makes two items belong to the same lineage is their evolutionary history rather than their function.) In other words, every natural language is a huge web of criss-crossing lineages. As Gandalf observes while talking to Bilbo Baggins, the phrase “Good morning” is ambiguous between at least a few readings. That is to say, it belongs to more than one lineage and, in this connection, there are a few alternative proper functions with which it can be attributed; to interpret it is to recognize the lineage from which it comes.

2.3. Integrating the Biological Model and Austin’s Theory of Speech Acts

Let us have a closer look, first, at the structure of speaker-hearer patterns and, second, at the idea of language conventions as lineages of solutions to linguistic coordination problems.

The basic assumption is that normally the structure of speaker-hearer patterns consists of at least four elements. In the case of a direct, literal and sincere assertion that *p*, for example, the pattern under which it is made involves (*i*) the speaker’s belief that *p* as well as her intention to get the hearer to share this belief by means, in part, of his or her recognition of this intention, (*ii*) the speaker’s utterance of the indicative sentence “*p*”, (*iii*) the hearer’s recognition of the speaker’s mental states listed in (*i*), and (*iv*) his coming to believe that *p*. By analogy, in the case of a direct, literal and sincere directive act made in uttering the sentence “Do *A*!”, the relevant pattern normally involves (*i*) the speaker’s desire that the hearer does *A* as well as the speaker’s intention to get the hearer to do *A* by means, in part, of his recognition of this intention, (*ii*) the speaker’s utterance of the imperative sentence in question, (*iii*) the hearer’s recognition of the speaker’s intention, and (*iv*) his doing *A*. In general, the reproduction of a speaker-hearer pattern normally involves (*i*) the speaker’s having certain mental states, one of which is required by the sincerity of her act and the other is her communicative intention, (*ii*) the speaker’s utterance of a certain linguistic form, (*iii*) the hearer’s recognition of the states listed in (*i*), and (*iv*) the hearer’s cooperative response.

The main idea behind the interactional account of illocutionary practice is that producing element (*ii*) of a linguistic leader-follower pattern the speaker performs an illocutionary act whose force can be defined by reference to element (*iv*) of the pattern, which is the *interactive effect* of the speaker’s act and can be called, using Austin’s idioms, a *conventionally invited response*. To say

that the speaker's act invites *by convention* a certain response, therefore, is to say that the act and the response are, respectively, parts (*ii*) and (*iv*) of the same conventional pattern of verbal interaction. The proper function of an illocutionary act, hence, is to elicit its interactive effect construed as the hearer's cooperative response.

Normally, the structure of a pattern reproduced by the speaker and the hearer involves elements (*i*), (*ii*), (*iii*), and (*iv*). I use the adverb "normally" to allow for pattern tokens that, despite being defective in some ways, involve the production of illocutionary acts. First of all, I want to allow for interactionally successful, though insincere or unintended illocutionary acts. For example, an utterance of an indicative sentence is an insincere assertion that *p* if it forms element (*ii*) of an appropriate pattern token whose element (*i*) involves no belief that *p*; it is an unintended assertion, in turn, if its corresponding element (*i*) involves no intention to get the hearer to believe that *p* by means, in part, of getting him to recognize this intention. Next, I want to allow for pattern tokens that involve no element (*iii*): consider, for example, a worker who automatically complies with an engineer's directive acts by producing elements (*iv*) of the patterns invoked by the engineer, where "automatically" means "without forming occurrent thoughts about the engineer's desires and intentions". Finally, I want to allow for interactionally unsuccessful, though recognized illocutionary acts; an utterance is an interactionally unsuccessful illocutionary act, if it forms element (*ii*) of a certain pattern token, secures uptake on the part of the hearer, but fails to elicit its interactive effect (*iv*).

One can assume that element (*iii*) amounts to the securing of uptake on the part of the hearer. For example, Origgi and Sperber would call element (*iii*) "an intermediate level in the process of comprehension" (Origgi and Sperber 2000, p. 161) and claim that its production amounts to the fulfilment of the proper function of the speaker's act. In my view, however, uptake is secured if the hearer recognizes the pattern invoked by the speaker or, more precisely, identifies both the lineage from which the pattern comes and, for reasons discussed in subsection 3.1 below, the type of language game that is currently being played. I am far from saying that securing of uptake never involves the production of element (*iii*); my point, rather, is that *at least* in some cases one's recognition of the pattern invoked by the speaker does not have to involve one's recognition of the speaker's beliefs, desires and intentions. Let us consider once again the engineer-worker interaction: the engineer's commands can be taken to secure uptake on the part of the worker even though the worker fails to produce occurrent mental representation of the engineer's mental states; what matters is the fact that the worker recognizes the type of activity in which he is involved and, as a result, activates dispositions to act in accordance with the patterns that are characteristic to this type.

Let us summarize the above discussion. Normally, the structure of a pattern token reproduced by interacting agents involves elements (*i*), (*ii*), (*iii*), and (*iv*). Elements (*ii*) and (*iv*) are explanatorily fundamental. Element (*ii*) counts, under the pattern invoked by the speaker, as a

performance of a speech act with a definite illocutionary force; the force, in turn, depends on what counts as the pattern's element (*iv*), *i.e.*, the act's interactive effect. What is more, we refer to the latter to describe the proper function of the act and thereby explain why the linguistic devices by means of which it is performed are stable components of our linguistic repertoire. We refer to elements (*i*) and (*iii*), in turn, if our aim is *either* to examine the sincerity and rationality of the speaker's act *or* to describe it as a recognized though interactively unsuccessful illocution, respectively. Following Grice, I assume that the rationalization of an agent's behaviour consists in ascribing to the agent mental states that are causally, in the sense of intentional causation, responsible for producing this behaviour.

In the remainder of this paper, I limit my analysis to assertive and directive acts. I believe, however, that the above-presented analytical schema can be employed to account for other types of illocutionary force. According to the interactional model, for example, to make a sincere and direct commissive act is to initiate the reproduction of a pattern that starts with (*i*) the speaker's intention to perform certain action *A* as well as his or her communicative intention of an appropriate kind, moves thorough (*ii*) the speaker's utterance of a sentence of the form "I will do *A*" and (*iii*) the hearer's recognition of the speaker's mental states listed in (*i*), and ends with (*iv*) the hearer's strong expectation that the speaker will do *A*. In short, to make a commissive act is to reproduce element (*ii*) of the above pattern. (To distinguish between promises, threats and other types of commissive force, one would have to take into account other aspects of the interactional situation under consideration.) It seems to me that at least some expressive acts can be analysed along the same lines. For example, to make a sincere and direct apology for doing *B* is to initiate the reproduction of a pattern that involves (*i*) the speaker's regretting having done *B*, (*ii*) his uttering a sentence of the form "I apologize for doing *B*", (*iii*) the hearer's recognition of the speaker's mental states listed in (*i*), and (*iv*) the hearer's being ready to continue her interaction with the speaker despite his having done *B*. I am also inclined to say that at least some declarative acts — especially those that form parts of complex ritualized procedures: wedding ceremonies, parliamentary debates, and so on — can be accounted for as interactive acts that "invite by convention a response or sequel". A detailed analysis of this topic, however, is outside the scope of the present paper.

Now let us focus on the idea of language conventions as *criss-crossing* lineages of linguistic precedents (Millikan 1998, p. 176; cf. Origgi and Sperber 2000, p. 150). In my view, this idea can be spelled out in terms of phatic, locutionary and illocutionary aspects of speaking. According to Millikan, conventional behaviour involves doing what others have done before; in particular, to perform a speech act by following a convention — or, more accurately, by following a number of conventions — is to reproduce certain aspects of previously made or interpreted acts; roughly speaking, it is to "say the same". According to Austin, however,

> "The same" does not always mean the same. In fact it has no meaning in the way that an "ordinary" word like "red" or "horse" has a meaning: it is a (the typical) device for establishing and distinguishing the meanings of ordinary words. Like "real," it is part of our apparatus in words for fixing and adjusting the semantics of words. (Austin 1950, p. 114)

Individual utterances, therefore, can be judged as equivalent or different either with respect to their phatic, locutionary or illocutionary properties. Strictly speaking, then, to follow a language convention is to reproduce certain aspects of what have been said before. For example, one can make an utterance that is phatically equivalent to some model or source utterances and thereby to contribute a new element to an appropriate *phatic lineage*. In fact, phatic equivalence can be analysed into few other abstract aspects: equivalence with respect to mood, syntactic structure, lexical elements, intonation, and so on. It should be noted, however, that two phatically equivalent acts can come from two different *locutionary* lineages, as it takes place in the case of two utterances, one made by John, and the other by Mary, of sentence (1) (see subsection 2.1 above). In other words, sentences of the same type can be used to produce different locutions. Strictly speaking, it would be better to speak here of *rhetic* rather than *locutionary* lineages: the locutionary content of an utterance is a hybrid construct that involves not only "a certain more or less definite "sense" and a more or less definite "reference"" (Austin 1975, p. 93) — that jointly make up the utterance's rhetic content — but also a certain linguistically specified illocutionary force potential (for a discussion of this topic, see Witek 2015). For the sake of simplicity, however, in this paper I use the term "locutionary content" to refer to the referential content of an utterance (cf. Korta and Perry 2007, 2011).

It is instructive to note that two utterance that comes from different phatic lineages can be equivalent with respect to their representational properties and as such belong to the same *locutionary lineage.* This will be the case, for instance, when John utters sentence (1) and someone else utters sentence (2) (provided these two utterances are addressed to the same person).

(2) John will come to your seminar tomorrow.

In short, phatic and locutionary lineages run criss-cross. By analogy, two phatically different utterances can contribute to the same *illocutionary lineage*, *e.g.*, that of statements, warnings, orders, etc., provided that they are equivalent with respect to what counts as their interactive effects. For example, John's utterance of sentence (1) and his alternative utterance of "I do" in response to a question "Do you promise to come to my seminar tomorrow?" can be regarded as two acts of promising.

To say that language conventions are criss-crossing lineages of linguistic precedents, then, is to say that there are more than one method that can be used to group individual utterances into equivalence classes. In fact, there are at least three methods that correspond to three different senses of the phrase "saying the same". As a result, we can keep track of lineages of three types: phatic, locutionary (or rhetic) and illocutionary. The places where they intersect produce linguistic underdeterminacies: utterances equivalent with respect to their phatic meanings can differ with respect to their locutionary or representational contents and constitute illocutionary acts of different types.

3. Elaborating the Interactional Account

In this section I discuss two *prima facie* objections that can be raised against the neo-Austinian model outlined in section 2 and argue they can be met by developing a refined version of the interactional account. These objections are likely to point that the neo-Austinian interactional account (*a*) assumes an oversimplified model of cooperation as well as (*b*) presupposes an extremely unreliable version of the code model of communication and, as the corollary of this, suffers from the problem of massive ambiguity. In subsection 3.1, I address objection (*a*) and argue that it can be met by drawing a distinction between primary and secondary patterns of verbal interaction; I also claim that the patterns in question are best understood as local conventions that make up coherent systems representing different language games or activity types. In subsection 3.2, I discuss objection (*b*) and argue that the interactional account presented in this paper is not committed to the code model of communication, but presupposes a view that can be called *force eliminativism*. According to the eliminativist position advocated in this paper, what a natural language sentence is associated with is not a *set* of alternative forces, but its *force potential* construed as a collection of its past uses in illocutionary interactions; consistently, it is claimed that the actual force of an utterance of the sentence is not determined by the pragmatic process of disambiguation, but by a mechanism of contextual construction that takes elements of the sentence's force potential as its inputs.

3.1. Convention and Cooperation in Illocutionary Interaction

According to the interactional account, the force of an utterance depends on what counts as its conventionally determined interactive effect. The latter, in turn, is defined as the hearer's cooperative response to the speaker's act which *normally* amounts to the hearer's believing what the speaker says (then the utterance is an assertive act) or the hearer's doing what he is told to do (then the utterance is a directive act). Recall that "normally" does not mean "in the majority of cases", but refers to the normal conditions under which a given speaker-hearer pattern has

performed its coordinating proper function.

Now, let us consider objection (*a*) to the interactional account. One can argue, namely, that the definition of interactive effects in terms of the hearers' cooperative responses is either too broad or assumes an inadequate conception of cooperation; the interactional account seems to primarily assume that the hearer's cooperating with the speaker consists in *coming to believe* what the speaker asserts or *doing* what he tells the hearer to do. Nevertheless, cooperation cannot be reduced to straightforward trust and direct compliance. In fact, as objection (*a*) also indicates, one can be taken to cooperate with one's interlocutor even though the response that one produces is neither that of believing what the interlocutor says, nor that of doing what one is told to do.

I do agree that cooperating goes beyond trusting and complying. In my view, however, the interactional model is capable of allowing for those forms of cooperation that cannot be reduced to one's believing what one's interlocutor states and one's doing what the interlocutor tells one to do. Before justifying my standpoint, *i.e.*, before developing a refined version of the interactional account, let me discuss two examples that illustrate the fact that at least in some cases cooperating with one's interlocutor takes the form of neither trust nor compliance. It is worth stressing that in the discussion below I adopt the idea of *local* or *game-specific* conventional patterns of interaction. With this idea in hand, we can show that at least some of the allegedly indirect speech acts — *i.e.*, acts performed at the level of what is conversationally implicated rather at the level of what is conventionally communicated — are in fact direct and conventional illocutions.

Let us consider a boy who runs into a kitchen and utters or, more accurately, shouts sentence (3a).

(3) a I'm hungry!
b' There is a piece of pizza in the fridge.
b'' Wait for dinner.

Let us also assume that his father, who was sitting at a chair reading a newspaper, stands up, puts the newspaper aside and makes his son a ham sandwich. On the Gricean reading of this example (see Bach 1987, p. 73), the boy performs two illocutionary acts: he *directly states* that he is hungry and *indirectly requests* something to eat, where the latter act is conversationally implicated by the former and evokes the father's cooperative response. Let us adopt an alternative perspective, however, and assume that in uttering sentence (3a) the boy performs a direct and conventional directive act or, more specifically, that he initiates the reproduction of a speaker-hearer pattern whose complementary part involves the addressee's complying with what he or she is told to do. The crucial point here is that the pattern is a local or game-specific convention followed by the father and his son in their numerous interactions. In other words, the father's compliance, *i.e.*, his

giving his son something to eat is the interactive effect of the boy's act made in uttering (3a).

Let us assume, by contrast, that instead of giving his son a ham sandwich, the father utters sentence (3b). Is this response cooperative? I am tempted to say that it is, even though it cannot be regarded as compliance with what the father said. By analogy, let us assume that the father responds by uttering sentence (3b'); in my view, this response is cooperative, too. Roughly speaking, what makes these responses cooperative is the fact that in uttering sentences (3b) and (3b'), the father adopts the conversational goals behind his son's initial act *or* at least that there is no serious reason to believe that he refuses to adopt them. By default, we take our interlocutors to be cooperative or, more specifically, we take them to observe the Gricean Cooperative Principle. This is what happens, for example, in the famous garage-scenario analysed by Grice in his "Logic and Conversation" (Grice 1975, p. 51):

(4) a I am out of petrol.
b There is a garage round the corner.

According to Korta and Perry (2006, p. 169-170), in uttering (4a) the driver makes two illocutionary acts: he directly states that he is out of petrol and indirectly asks for help. On the interactional model, however, the utterance of (4a) can be regarded as a direct and conventional request for help. To justify this claim, it suffices to assume that the utterance of (4a) and the utterance of (4b) are two complementary parts of a local conventional pattern of interaction. It is evident that the passer-by who utters sentence (4b) makes his "conversational contribution such as it is required" (Grice 1975, p. 45) by the accepted purpose of the talk-exchange into which he is engaged, *i.e.*, by the goal that, first, lies behind the driver's opening remark and, second, is cooperatively adopted by his interlocutor. The same can be said of the father who responds to his son's request by uttering sentence (3b) or (3b'): he recognizes and adopts the goal behind his son's act and, as the corollary of this, provides his son with clues that he can use to achieve his goal. Recall that on the Gricean model of comprehension the general assumption that speakers obey the Cooperative Principle guides pragmatic inferences whereby hearers arrive at what speakers conversationally implicate. One can ask, however, whether the cooperation between the father and his son, as well as the cooperation between the driver and the passer-by, is achieved at the level of what is conventionally communicated or, rather, at the level of what is conversationally implicated or inferred. I am inclined to say that the former is the case. In my view, the utterances of (3a) and (4a) are conventional requests. I take the utterance of (3b) or (3b') to be a *conventional* and *cooperative* response to the request made in uttering (3a), and the utterance of (4b) to be a *conventional* and *cooperative* response to the request for help made in uttering (4a). What is more, my contention is that the above claims can be easily accommodated within the interactional model enriched with the idea of locally operating, primary and secondary conventional patterns.

In my view, the best way to overcome objection (*a*) — or, in other words, to accommodate the idea that the utterances of (3b), (3b') and (4b) are cooperative and conventional responses to the acts made in uttering (3a) and (4a), respectively — is to develop a more elaborate account of interactive effects. Sticking to the idea of the interactive effect of an act as a cooperative response that the act *invites by convention*, I propose to distinguish between the primary interactive effect of an act and its secondary interactive effects. We refer to the former to account for the cooperative proper function of the act and, by the same token, to explain the coordinative proper function of the pattern of which it forms part. We refer to the latter, in turn, if our aim is to account for those forms of conversational cooperation that do not involve the production of the primary effects of their constituent acts. For example, the primary interactive effect of the boy's request made in uttering sentence (3a) is his father's giving him something to eat. The father's utterances of sentences (3b) and (3b'), in turn, are two alternative secondary interactive effects of the boy's act. By analogy, the utterance of sentence (4b) is one of the possible secondary interactive effects of the driver's act of asking for help performed in uttering sentence (4a).

Corresponding to the distinction between primary and secondary interactive effects is the difference between primary and secondary speaker-hearer conventional patterns. For example, the boy's utterance of sentence (3a) and his father's making him a ham sandwich are two complementary aspects of a primary speaker-hearer pattern, whereas the descriptions "the boy's utterance of (3a) followed by the father's utterance of (3b)" and "the boy's utterance of (3a) followed by the father's utterance of (3b')" identify two different secondary speaker-hearer patterns.

With the above distinctions in mind, we can say that only primary interactive effects consist in acts of trust and compliance. Secondary effects, by contrast, occur when one of the interlocutors wants to maintain conversational cooperation with the other, but for some reasons cannot respond by producing primary interactive effects. Let me formulate and discuss three further claims about primary and secondary interactive effects and primary and secondary speaker-hearer patterns. First, the secondary effects of an act can be defined only by reference to its primary effect. Second, many primary and secondary speaker-hearer patterns can be represented as rhetorical relations postulated by the Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (henceforth, SDRT) developed by Asher and Lascarides (2001, 2003). Third, the patterns operate locally rather than globally or, in other words, they are game-specific templates of verbal interaction. Let me discuss these claims one after another.

Note, first, that the proper function of the boy's act made in uttering sentence (3a) is to get his father to give him something to eat. More generally, the goal behind this act is to obtain some food and thereby to get rid of the feeling of hunger. Viewed from this perspective, the function of the father's utterances of sentences (3b) and (3b') is to provide his son with clues as to how to achieve his conversational goal. Due to this function we can call these utterances, or, more accurately, the acts made in issuing them, the secondary interactive effects of the boy's act. What

makes them *interactive* is the fact that they are cooperative: the father would not be interested in giving his son the clues in question unless he recognized and adopted his son's conversational goal; what makes them *secondary*, in turn, is the fact that they cannot be described as acts of direct compliance with what the son wants his father to do. It is worth stressing, however, that even though secondary interactive effects do not reduce to trusting and complying, they cannot be accounted for without reference to primary interactive effects or, in other words, without any reference to conversational goals.

The dependence of the secondary interactive effects of an act on what counts as its primary effect becomes clear when we represent the relevant secondary speaker-hearer patterns as rhetorical relations postulated in SDRT. Let us consider once again a few variants of the kitchen scenario:

(3) a. I'm hungry!
b There is a piece of pizza in the fridge.
b' Wait for dinner.
b'' Do you like tuna?
b''' There is no food left.

According to SDRT, the rhetorical relation that holds between utterances of (3a) and (3b) is that of *Plan Elaboration*. The relation can be represented by means of the formula "*Plan-Elab*(3a, 3b)", which means that the function of the utterance of (3b) is to help elaborate a plan to achieve the goal behind the utterance of (3a). In other words, one can use this formula to ascribe to the utterance of (3b) the illocutionary force of *Plan Elaboration* relative to the utterance of (3a). The force can be inferred with the help of the following default rule (where "*A* > *B*" means "Normally, if *A*, then *B*"):

(5) [⟨*τ, α, β*⟩ & *α:* {"I'm hungry"} & *β*: |] > *Plan-Elab*(*α, β*)

where "⟨*τ, α, β*⟩" means "*β* is to be attached to *α* with a rhetorical relation where *α* is part of the discourse context *τ*" (Asher and Lascarides 2001, p. 204), and two further components of the precedents carry information about lexical and syntactic properties of utterances labelled as *α* and *β* (symbol "|" stands for the indicative mood; the fact that utterance *α* contains the phrase "I'm hungry" allows us to ascribe to it the force of making a request and, as the corollary of this, to ascribe to the speaker of *α* a corresponding conversational goal).

From the SDRT perspective, the rhetorical relation that holds between utterances of (3a) and (3b'), in turn, is that of *Request Elaboration* or, for short, *R-Elab*. Namely, the function of the utterance of imperative sentence (3b') is to help the speaker of (3a) elaborate a plan to achieve his

conversational goal. The force of *Request Elaboration* can be inferred with the help of the following default rule:

(6) [⟨*τ, α, β*⟩ & *α:* {"I'm hungry"} & *β*: !] > *R-Elab*(*α, β*)

where symbol "!" stands for the imperative mood.

The rhetorical relation that holds between utterances of (3a) and (3b'') can be called, following Asher and Lascarides, *Question Elaboration* or, for short, *Q-Elab*. That is to say, the function of the utterance of interrogative sentence (3b'') is to help elaborate a plan to achieve the conversational goal behind the utterance of (3a). The force of *Question Elaboration* can be inferred with the help of the following default rule:

(7) [⟨*τ, α, β*⟩ & *α:* {"I'm hungry"} & *β*: ?] > *Q-Elab*(*α, β*)

where symbol "?" stands for interrogative mood.

The rhetorical relation that holds between utterances of (3a) and (3b''') is *Not Enough Ability* or, for short, *NEA*. I posit this relation by analogy to the relation *Not Enough Information* which normally holds between questions and utterances of "I do not know" (see Asher and Lascarides 2003, pp. 319-320). Note, namely, that the father who utters sentence (3b''') can be regarded as adopting the goal behind his son's opening remark, even though he communicates that he is not able to contribute to its achievement. In other words, his response is cooperative. Let us assume that the force of *Not Enough Ability* can be identified with the help of the following default rule:

(8) [⟨*τ, α, β*⟩ & *α:* {"I'm hungry"} & *β*: {"There is no … left"}] > *NEA*(*α, β*)

Note that after uttering (3b''') the father can add "Go to the grocery store", thereby performing the act of *Request Elaboration* with respect to his son's utterance (3a).

By analogy, let us focus on dialogue (4). Note that the utterance of sentence (4b) has the force of *Plan Elaboration* with respect to the request made in uttering sentence (4a). The relation, in turn, has certain truth-conditional effects on the content of the utterance of (4b), *i.e.*, it modifies or enriches the sense of the term "garage" so as it can be read as "a garage that is open and has petrol to sell". According to Grice, "the unstated connection between [the remark made in uttering (4b) and the remark made in uttering (4a)] is so obvious that, even if one interprets the supermaxim of Manner, "Be perspicuous," as applying not only to the expression of what is said but also to the connection of what is said with the adjacent remarks, there seems to be no case for regarding that supermaxim as infringed in this example" (1975, p. 51). In my view, the "unstated

connection" can be best understood in terms of the relation of *Plan Elaboration*.

Let us stop to summarise the account. It is worth stressing that all the rhetorical relations discussed above correspond to different secondary speaker-hearer patterns. The patterns, in turn, are secondary with respect to the primary one that involves the boy's utterance of sentence (3a) and his father's giving him something to eat. More specifically, what connects them with the primary pattern in question is the fact that in order to be able to call utterances of (3b), (3b'), (3b''), and (3b''') cooperative responses one has to assume that in making them the father recognizes and adopts the conversational goal behind his son's act, where the goal coincides in content with the act's primary interactive effects.

Finally, let me focus on the idea according to which speaker-hearer patterns operate locally rather than globally. What is asserted here is that primary and secondary patterns make up coherent packages representing different language games or, as Stephen C. Levinson would put it, distinct activity types: "goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded events with *constraints* on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions" (Levinson 1979, p. 368). One example of such a coherent package can be the system consisting of, first, the primary pattern embracing the speaker's utterance of sentence (3a) and the hearer's giving the speaker something to eat and, second, the corresponding collection of secondary patterns represented by the above-discussed rhetorical relations of *Plan Elaboration*, *Request Elaboration*, *Question Elaboration* and *Not Enough Abilities*, the presence of which can be identified with the help of default rules (5), (6), (7) and (8), respectively. What makes this system coherent is the fact that the interlocutor who behaves in accordance with one of the secondary patterns just mentioned can be regarded as cooperating with the speaker only on the assumption that he adopts the goal behind the speaker's initial act, whose recognition amounts to identifying the primary pattern invoked by the speaker. It should also be noted that the patterns that constitute the game-specific system *define the goal* of the activity in question and *put constraints* "on the kinds of allowable contributions" in its context. The goal of the activity coincides in content with what counts as the primary interactive effect of the initial act, whereas the corresponding collection of secondary patterns constrain the set of allowable contributions to the game.

According to the interactional model presented in this paper, utterances of sentences (3a) and (4a) are direct acts of making a request. Recall that to justify this opinion one can refer to the above-mentioned idea of activity-specific systems of locally operating patterns. The utterance of sentence (3a) can be regarded as a direct request only on the assumption that its production initiates a specific type of activity that can be called, for the lack of a better word, *kitchen child-parent interaction*. If the father responded by saying "That's interesting", he would probably be regarded as *either* misidentifying *or* renegotiating the type of the game initiated by his son: the response "That's interesting" is one of the allowable contributions to the game whose goal is to exchange information rather than to elaborate a plan for achieving certain practical goals; more

specifically, the force of this contribution can be defined in terms of the rhetorical relation of *Comment*. It should be noted, however, that sentence (3a) can be used in the context of other games that are constituted by different, though equally coherent systems of speaker-hearer patterns. For example, if my boss gets into my office at lunch time and utters sentence (3a), his speech act can be naturally interpreted as a direct suggestion that we should have a lunch break and go to the canteen. If I responded by saying "That's interesting" or by giving him a ham sandwich, I could be accused of misidentifying the type of the game we were playing; these responses are not allowable contributions to a typical *lunch time office interaction*. We may consider the following analogous example of a doctor-patient interaction: a doctor asks "How do you feel?" and her patient answers by uttering sentence (3a). In the context of this interaction, which is an example of information-gathering discourse, the patient's act made in uttering sentence (3a) can be naturally interpreted as a statement and can be followed by the doctor's comment "That's interesting". To sum up, the basic idea behind the proposed account is that phatically equivalent utterances can, depending on the types of activities within which they are produced, "invite by convention" different interactive effects and, as the corollary of this, possess different illocutionary forces.

Now let us focus on pragmatic mechanisms responsible for determining illocutionary forces.

3.2. Determining Illocutionary Forces: Disambiguation or Construction?

The main idea behind objection (*b*) comes from Origgi and Sperber (2000, p. 149-151; cf. Sperber and Origgi 2012; Bar-On 2013; Sperber and Wilson 2002, p. 6). They claim that Millikan's account of linguistic practice is a version of the code model of communication and as such suffers from the problem of massive ambiguity: faced with the phenomenon of the richness of communicated meanings, which consists in "the fact that the same linguistic expression can convey many different meanings" (Origgi and Speber 2000, p. 151), Millikan seems to account for it by positing multiple ambiguities that have to be resolved in order to determine the force and content of an utterance. Indeed, Millikan claims that language conventions are criss-crossing lineages of linguistic precedents and places where they cross "can produce ambiguities" that are resolved by "the hearer managing to identify, by one means or another, the source of the pattern, that is, from which family it comes" (Millikan 1998, p. 176). For example, sentence tokens of the same phatic type can function within different speaker-hearer patterns and, consistently, their utterances can be taken to *invite by convention* different cooperative responses on the part of the audience. The form "Eat!", for instance, can "be interpreted as an order, a request, an encouragement or a piece of advice" (Origgi and Sperber 2000, p. 150); in other words, the form seems to encode at least four illocutionary forces and, as the corollary of this, its interpretation involves disambiguation: the selection of one of the encoded forces as the operative one. Origgi

and Sperber (2000, p. 152) claim that any model of comprehension that postulates multiple ambiguities is psychologically implausible and is to be replaced with the inferential model according to which the operative force and meaning of an utterance is *constructed* in context rather than *disambiguated*. The main reason for claiming that the disambiguation-based model of comprehension is psychologically implausible is that the number of speaker meanings that can be conveyed by an individual expression is potentially infinite, whereas the number of alternative senses that can be encoded by a linguistic form and stored in our limited minds is finite.

At first sight, the objection that Origgi and Sperber raise against Millikan's model applies to the interactional account as well. According to the latter, utterances that belong to the same phatic lineage can contribute to different illocutionary lineages or types. Recall, for example, that in uttering sentence (3a), the speaker can either *inform* his audience about his empty stomach, *request* for something to eat, or *suggest* that he and his interlocutor should have a lunch break; to identify the actual force of the utterance, the hearer has to recognize the pattern that is evoked by the speaker and thereby identify what would count as the interactive effect of his act. In short, the procedure whereby the hearer arrives at the interpretation of the force of the speaker's utterance seems to involve or even consist in disambiguation: the selection of one of the possible forces conventionally associated with the linguistic form produced by the speaker.

In my view, objection (*b*) rests on misunderstanding. The interactional account does not presuppose the code model of comprehension and, consequently, is not committed to account for the richness of meanings, or, in other words, for the phenomenon of linguistic underdeterminacy, in terms of disambiguation. To justify my standpoint, let me continue developing a refined version of the interactional account.

In my view, the interactional account, despite appearances to the contrary, does not presuppose the code model of communication. What it assumes, rather, is the view that can be likened to what Recanati (2004, pp. 146-151) calls *meaning eliminativism*. This refers to the idea according to which natural language sentences, *i.e.*, phemes in Austin's sense, are conventionally associated not with abstract entities called meanings and forces, but with semantic and illocutionary potentials construed as collections of the past situations in which they were used; consequently, what stabilizes our use of a linguistic device, *i.e.*, what makes it to be used in roughly the same way across different situations, is the fact that we ascribe to it similar semantic and illocutionary potentials.

According to the neo-Austinian model of illocutionary practice, the force of an utterance is not disambiguated but *constructed* in the context of its production. The construction process under discussion takes as its input the illocutionary force potential of the linguistic form uttered by the speaker and gives the contextualized force of its current usage as its output. The potential, in turn, is nothing but a collection of speech situations within which the form was used to perform certain illocutionary acts. What these *source situations* have in common is the fact that they involved the

use of the same pheme. For this reason one can identify the illocutionary force potential of, say, sentence (3a), with the phatic lineage to which this form belongs. The lineage, however, criss-crosses with many illocutionary lineages. For example, sentence (3a) can be used to make a move in such games as kitchen child-parent interaction, lunch-time office interaction, and doctor-patient interaction (of course this list is not complete). In other words, it can be conventionally used either to make a request, to ask for help, or to make a statement. Do these intersections produce *ambiguities*? I am inclined to say that they do not. What they produce, rather, can be better described as *alternative points of reference* for, or *alternative inputs* to the constructing processes whose function is to determine the contextualized force of the utterance produced in the *current* or *target situation*. The current proposal mirrors Recanati's model of semantic potentials and their role in constructing contextualized senses (see Recanati 2004, p. 148). Roughly speaking, the constructed force is a one-off abstract object that can be represented as a set of features that the target situation has to posses in order to be sufficiently similar to certain source situations; more specifically, the relevant features contributing to the constructed force can be described in terms of, first, the constraints put on the participants and, second, in terms of the interactive effects of the utterances that they produce: if two utterances are equivalent with respect to their interactive effects, they are of the same illocutionary type or, in other words, belong to the same illocutionary lineage. However, constructed illocutionary forces are one-off abstract objects that we use to classify individual utterances with respect to the conventional functions that they play or, more specifically, objects that we use to adopt target utterances to lineages of their illocutionary precedents. That's why we can call the neo-Austinian model of illocutionary practice *force eliminativism*: the view according to which there are no stable properties called illocutionary forces or, in other words, what linguistic forms are conventionally associated with are illocutionary force potentials construed as open collections of source situations.

The mechanism whereby the actual force of an utterance is constructed involves a discursive process that can be called, following Marina Sbisà (2013), *tacit* or *interactional negotiation*. In other words, constructed forces are one-off products that exist in virtue of being collectively accepted or agreed upon by the participants in a language game (see Sbisà 2002, p. 434). Roughly speaking, the process of interactional negotiation involves two steps: the speaker's initiating the reproduction of a certain pattern and the hearer's uptake that normally is manifested in his or her response to the speaker's utterance. For example, by uttering sentence (3a) the boy initiates the reproduction of the local conventional pattern "the son utters (3a) and the father gives him something to eat". This act can be described as an offer to play a certain language game. The father accepts this offer by behaving in agreement with one of the patterns constituting the game, *i.e.*, by giving his son something to eat (in accordance with the primary pattern invoked by his son) or by uttering sentence (3b), (3b'), (3b'') or (3b''') (in accordance with one of the secondary patterns that are available in this game). The crucial point here is that the father might also reject

the offer to play the kitchen game. For example, he might respond by uttering the sentence “That’s interesting” and thereby take his son’s utterance of (3a) to be a mere statement that invites the response of making a comment. In general, meanings and forces are subject to interactional negotiation: a discursive process that involves the speaker’s invocation of a certain pattern and the hearer’s uptake; what is more, in same cases the actual meaning and force of the speaker’s utterance depends more on the hearer’s uptake rather than on what the speaker has in mind.

It is also instructive to note that the description “the son utters (3a) and the father gives him something to eat” stands for an open and extensible lineage of successful cooperative transactions that took place in the kitchen: at time t_1, the son uttered (3a) and his father gave him a ham sandwich; at time t_2, the son uttered (3a) and his father gave him a tuna sandwich; at time t_3, the son uttered (3a) and his father gave him a cupcake, and so on. In short, the father cooperative response to his son’s request can take different forms, depending on what is in the fridge, what the boy likes to eat, and so on. To acknowledge this, however, is not to suggest that following the pattern “the son utters (3a) and the father gives him something to eat” involves nothing but disambiguation, *i.e.*, selecting from a set of possibilities whose representations are stored in the brain. It should be stressed that the lineage in question is open and can be extended with new elements that are sufficiently similar to what have been done before. What is more, the standards of sufficient similarity are negotiable. Undoubtedly, giving his son *another* ham sandwich in response to his new utterance of (3a) is sufficiently similar to what have been done before. Can we say the same of giving him a carton of yoghurt? It is a matter of interactional negotiation.

It is worth stressing that adopting the eliminativist perspective does not force us to give up the capitalizing convention for representing phatic meanings. According to Horwich (1998, p. 11), we can use this convention and remain neutral about the nature of meanings: “e” means E no matter what kind of entity “E” stands for. For example, we can represent the phatic meaning of sentence (9) by means of formula (10):

(9) The steak is raw.

(10) ├ [A CERTAIN STEAK] IS RAW.

where “├” stands for the illocutionary force potential conventionally associated with or encoded by the indicative mood, “[A CERTAIN STEAK]” stands for the referential act potential associated with the word “he” and “IS RAW” stands for the phatic sense of the predicate “is raw”. (The idea of linguistically specified referential act potentials comes from Bach 1987, p. 186). From the eliminativist perspective, however, all these three components of the phatic meaning of (9) are to be defined in terms of potentials construed as collections of source situations; situations, let us add, that provide inputs to the pragmatic constructions.

At first sight, force eliminativism seems to face a serious problem. It must be acknowledged

that every member of a linguistic community stores in his or her memory different collections of source situations that mirror his or her individual linguistic experience. One can ask, therefore, how to account for the *interpersonal stability* of the way in which people use certain linguistic forms in their illocutionary practice. More specifically, in virtue of what do people converge in their judgements regarding the forces of the utterances they produce and interpret? This question gives rise to a serious objection against the interactional model. One can say, namely, that the picture offered by this model is too simplistic in that it ignores the fact that one and the same sentence can be used to communicate potentially infinitely many meanings and forces. I do agree that it can: there are plenty of novel situations into which tokens of, say, (3a) can be used, where "novel" means "non-reducible to any typical or game-specific use". I would add, however, that novel meanings and forces with which a given pheme can be used are planned and interpreted by exhausting certain analogies they bear to the pheme's typical or game-specific uses; what is more, these typical uses provide inputs to pragmatic constructions. As Herbert H. Clark puts it, "illocutionary acts have their origins in social practices" (Clark 1996, p. 139). More specifically, they have their origins in game types that are ubiquitous enough to stabilize our linguistic habits and, at the same time, open enough to enable the construction of novel uses. As Origgi and Sperber (2000, p. 151) note, "the same linguistic expression can convey many different meanings" and forces. Undoubtedly, this observation poses a serious challenge to any code model of communication. Nevertheless, the interactional account is not committed to the code model. Quite the contrary is the case: although it insists on accounting for the stability of language use in terms of game-specific conventional patterns of interaction, it allows for pragmatic constructions that take typical uses as their inputs and give novel meanings and forces as their outputs.

Despite appearances to the contrary, the interpersonal stability of illocutionary judgements can be accounted for within the eliminativist framework. It suffices to assume that despite some differences between the potentials that different language users ascribe to a given linguistic form, they use roughly the same source situations as reference points for the processes whereby they construct the contextualized forces of the form in a given target situation. What makes language users members of the same community is not only the fact that they use the same language understood as a recursively defined set of phemes, but also the fact that they often interact with each other or, more specifically, that they participate in the same types of activities. Within every illocutionary potential stored in an individual agent's memory, therefore, one can distinguish two parts: the centre and the periphery. The former consists of situations that usually occur in common activity types and, as a corollary of this, are likely to be found in potentials stored by the other agents; the latter, in turn, reflects the agent's idiosyncratic linguistic experience. (Of course the centre/periphery distinction is a matter of degree.) As Tomasello (1999, 2006) notes, we learn how to use conventional devices for affecting one another's attention, beliefs and actions within the context of common joint attention frames construed as goal-directed forms of collective activity

(*e.g.*, picking up toys, buying a train ticket at a railway station, and so on). Interpreting the speaker's utterance, therefore, the hearer activates situations occupying the *central* rather than *peripheral* part of the potential that he associates with the form used by the speaker.

In short, what stabilizes the interpersonal use of conventional linguistic forms is the fact that usually they are used in common activity types. To say this, however, is not to make an implausible assumption to the effect that for every instance of linguistic interaction there is an activity type under which it falls. Particularised implicatures, ironical utterances, metaphors and other loose uses of language are ubiquitous phenomena that cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, they seem to be parasitic on the conventionalized uses that form parts of common activity types. As a corollary of this, in constructing the contextualized force of a novel utterance, *i.e.*, a target utterance that does not seem to be *conventional under any known activity type*, we refer to the situations that occupy the central part of the potential with which the uttered force is associated.

4. Concluding Remarks

The interactional model of illocutionary practice does justice to Austin's idea of speech acts as context-changing social actions. More specifically, it results from elaborating Austin's observation that "many illocutionary acts invite by convention a response or sequel" (Austin 1975, p. 117) within the framework of Millikan's (1998, 2005) biological model of language. The main idea behind the proposed model is that the force of an illocutionary act depends on its interactive effect construed as the hearer's conventional response to the act, where "conventional" means "produced in agreement with a speaker-hearer pattern"; it is also assumed that Austinian phatic, locutionary and illocutionary conventions can be identified with lineages of linguistic precedents in Millikan's sense. However, the resulting account goes beyond the one developed by Millikan in at least two respects. First, it draws a distinction between *primary* and *secondary* speaker-hearer patterns, thereby developing a more fine-grained model of linguistic cooperation; second, it is not committed to the code model of comprehension and, as such, is free from the massive ambiguity problem.

The neo-Austinian model presented in section 3, however, still has a few gaps. It remains an open question, for example, what is the relation between the normative effect of an act, *i.e.* its taking effect, and the act's interactive effect. It also remains to be considered how phatic, locutionary (or rhetic), illocutionary and perlocutionary factors interact in generating the structure of discourse. One can further expect a more elaborate version of the eliminativist account of pragmatic processes that underlie the construction of contextualized one-off forces and meanings. All these question should be carefully examined before a complete version of the interactional model can be produced.

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