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CHAPTER 3

Coordination and Norms in Illocutionary Interaction[1]

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Abstract

My aim in this paper is to develop a model of the coordinative function of language conventions and, next, use it to account for the normative aspect of illocutionary practice. After discussing the current state of the philosophical debate on the nature of speech acts, I present an interactional account of illocutionary practice (Witek 2015a), which results from integrating Ruth G. Millikan's (1998; 2005) biological model of language conventions within the framework of Austin's (1975) theory of speech acts. Next, I elaborate on Millikan's idea that the proper function of illocutionary conventions is

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coordinative and put forth a hypothesis according to which conventional patterns of linguistic interaction have been selected for the roles they play in producing and maintaining mental coordination between interacting agents. Finally, I use the resulting model of coordination to develop a naturalistic account of the so-called sincerity norms. Focusing my analysis on assertions and directives, I argue that the normative character of sincerity rules can be accounted for in terms of Normal conditions for proper functioning of speech acts understood as cooperative intentional signs in Millikan's (2004) sense; I also discuss the possibility of providing a naturalistic account of the normative effects of illocutionary acts.

1 Introduction: Three Accounts of the Nature of Illocutionary Acts

According to Gerald Gazdar, "a speech act is a function from contexts into contexts." (Gazdar 1981, p. 68) In a similar vein, Marina Sbisà claims that speech acts are "context-changing social actions," (Sbisà 2002, p. 421) thereby capturing a central idea behind John L. Austin's conception of linguistic practice. In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin put forth a hypothesis according to which most of our utterances are speech acts that can be typed by reference to the effects that they have on the context of their production: *locutionary* acts create linguistic representations of states of the world, *illocutionary* acts affect the domain of conventional facts, whereas *perlocutionary* acts "produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons." (Austin 1975, p. 101) It is worth stressing that locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts normally have no independent existence: they are abstract aspects of what Austin called "the total speech act in the total speech situation."(*ibid*, p. 147) We distinguish them, however, to account for the three types of effects — representational, conventional, and consequential, respectively — that our utterances can have on our social environment.

In this paper I focus on the illocutionary aspect of linguistic interaction. Following Austin, I assume, first, that to issue an illocutionary act is to utter a sentence with "a certain (conventional) force" (Austin 1975, p. 109) — *e.g.*, with the force of informing, warning, ordering, requesting, promising, offering, and so on — and, next, that the *force* or *type-identity* of the act is to be defined by reference to how it affects the context in which it is made. According to Austin, the issuing of a felicitous illocutionary act involves the production of the following three effects: (e_1) the *securing of uptake* on the part of the audience, which normally "amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution," (Austin 1975, p. 117), (e_2) the *taking of effect*, *i.e.*, the bringing about of normative facts construed as the rights and commitments of interacting agents, and (e_3) the *inviting of a response or sequel*, *e.g.*, the response of obedience, if the act is an order, or that of fulfilment, if the act is a promise. It remains to be examined, however, which one of these three effects plays a central role in determining the force of an act (for an extensive discussion of this issue, see Witek 2013).

According to the *intentionalist* or *Gricean approach* (Strawson 1964; Bach and Harnish 1979; Harnish 2005), most illocutionary act types — *e.g.*, statements, warnings, requests, promises, offers, and so on — are communicative rather than conventional and as such are to be defined by reference to Gricean intentions with which they are made. More specifically, the proponents of the Gricean approach maintain that to make a communicative illocutionary act is to utter a sentence with the intention to induce a certain response on the part of the hearer by getting him to recognize *this* intention; in other words, the success of the act — *i.e.*, the fulfilment of its force-determining intention — necessarily *involves* (Strawson 1964) or even *consists in* (Bach and Harnish 1979) the achievement of the effect of the (e_1) type, *i.e.*, the securing of uptake on the part of the hearer. They also claim that the force of the

act depends on the response that the speaker intends to produce. The proponents of the *institutionalist* or *Austinian approach* (Searle 1969; 1979; Alston 2000; Williamson 1996; García-Carpintero 2004; Sbisà 1992; 2002; 2009; 2013; 2017; Ball 2014a; 2014b; 2017), by contrast, claim that illocutionary acts are to be classified by reference to their normative effects of the (e_2) type: every felicitous assertion takes effect by bringing about the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition she asserts,[2] every binding directive act, in turn, takes effect by creating the hearer's commitment to comply with what he is told, and so on. As Marina Sbisà puts it, the normative effect of an illocutionary act is conventional in that "it comes into being by being agreed upon by the relevant members of a social group." (Sbisà 2009, p. 49) Finally, according to the *interactional approach* (Millikan 1984; 1998; 2004; 2005; Witek 2015a; Corredor 2017), the force of an act should be defined in terms of its interactional effect of the (e_3) type.[3] For example, Ruth G. Millikan claims that speech acts are conventional moves "classified by conventional outcomes." (Millikan 2005, p. 151) Roughly speaking, the conventional outcome of an act can be identified with the response that it invites "by convention," (Austin 1975: 117) where the Austinian phrase 'by convention' can

2 See Ball 2017 for an extensive discussion of the role the notions of commitment and obligation play in speech-act theoretic accounts of assertion.

3 It is instructive to note that what Cristina Corredor calls in her contribution to this volume the 'interactionalist view of communication' combines elements of the institutionalist and interactional approaches presented above. She defines the interactionalist view as claiming that "the characteristic conventional effect of illocutionary acts is to create, cancel or change deontic states of affairs in the domain of commitments, obligations, rights, entitlements, and the like that articulate the intersubjective relations of the interactants in the ongoing interaction. This view is thus internally related to a normative conception of communication. Conversations are considered to be forms of joint action, in which the interactants negotiate meaning to eventually agree upon the fact that a particular speech act has been performed, thus bringing about its conventional effect in virtue of this very agreement." (Corredor 2017, p. ##)

be explicated as 'in accordance with a pattern of cooperative interaction that the speaker and the hearer jointly reproduce'. More specifically, every pattern of the type under discussion consists of two complementary elements: the speaker's part, which involves her uttering a certain linguistic form (*e.g.*, an indicative or imperative sentence), and the hearer's part, which consists in his cooperative response to what the speaker says (*e.g.*, in believing or complying with what he is told, respectively).

In my view, it is the interactional model that provides the best understanding of the mechanisms of illocutionary practice and the essence of its constituent moves. Most crucially, it does justice to the idea that illocutionary acts necessarily form parts of joint activities and "have their origins in social practices." (Clark 1996, p. 139) In other words, it allows for what Sbisà (1992; 2002) takes to be Austin's basic insight into the nature of linguistic practice, *i.e.*, his recognition of the indispensably social and bilateral character of speech acts construed of as constitutive parts of discourse (see Fetzer 2013; 2017). According to the interactional model illocutionary acts form a subclass of what Millikan calls *cooperative intentional signs*:

> Cooperative intentional signs are produced by systems designed to make natural signs [→ CUES] for use [→ COERCION] by cooperating interpreting systems. That is, the sign-maker system and the sign-using system must have evolved or been designed to function symbiotically. Cooperating intentional sign-makers must be designed to cooperate with interpreting systems that have been designed, in turn, to cooperate with them. (Millikan 2004, p. 73)

Illocutionary acts *qua* cooperative intentional signs, then, are produced and interpreted by agents who, as part of their adaptation to their social environment, are disposed to cooperate with each other in accordance with certain conventional patterns of interaction:

> Speakers in the language community are adapted to an environment in which hearers are responding, sufficiently often, to the forms speakers produce in ways that reinforce these speaker productions. And

> the hearers in the community are adapted to conditions under which speakers, sufficiently often, produce these language forms in circumstances such that making conventional responses to them aids hearers. (Millikan 2004, p. 105) [i.e., there is a preferred correspondence between the circumstances in which sign-producers produced int. signs and the responses produced by sign-consumers]

One can ask why it is beneficial for speakers and hearers to reproduce conventional patterns of verbal interaction or, to put it in Millikan's (1984; 2004; 2005) technical terms, what is their *proper function* or *proper purpose*, *i.e.*, the function that is responsible for their continuous and stable use. According to Millikan (1998), the proper function of language conventions is coordinative: conventional patterns of speaker-hearer interaction proliferate because they help achieve coordination between conversing agents. In my view, this answer is true as far as it goes. I would like to go further, however, and consider what type of coordination problem language conventions are designed to solve. My hypothesis is that the proper function of conventional patterns of verbal interaction is to help achieve *mental coordination* between conversing agents, *i.e.*, to help them produce and maintain a preferred correspondence between their individual representations of their shared mental states: beliefs, desires, intentions, expectations, and so on. [see Simons 2003 on keeping the interlocutors' presuppositions aligned and Stalnaker 2014 on the norm of agreement]

One can also ask whether the interactional approach can be used to account for the normative aspect of illocutionary interaction or, more specifically, whether it provides a sufficient basis for explaining two facts: firstly, that speech acts are subject to norms and, secondly, that they produce normative states of affairs characterizable in terms of rights and commitments (for a discussion of the latter see Witek 2015c). The proponents of the interactional model can no longer take these facts to be explanatorily basic. In my view, however, they can allow for them by developing a naturalistic account of the normative aspect of linguistic interaction. My second hypothesis in the present paper is that at least some

illocutionary norms — i.e., the so-called sincerity norms — can be accounted for in terms of Normal[4] conditions for the proper functioning of illocutionary acts *qua* cooperative intentional signs.

The paper goes as follows. In section 2, I outline the interactional model of illocutionary practice. In particular, I draw a distinction between primary and secondary conventional patterns and claim that they operate locally rather than globally, *i.e.*, that they constitute the structure of local language games or activity types in Levinson's (1979) sense. In section 3, I consider the coordinative function of conventional patterns of verbal interaction and claim that it consists in producing mental coordination between conversing agents. Next, in section 4, I use the resulting model of coordination to explain the normative aspect of illocutionary practice. More specifically, I argue that the normative character of the so-called sincerity rules — *e.g.*, 'one must: assert that *p* only if one believes that *p*' — can be accounted for in terms of Normal conditions for proper functioning of conventional patterns. I also make a few remarks as to how one can use the interactional model to account for normative effects of illocutionary acts, focusing my analysis on two types of illocutionary force: assertive and directive.

2 An Outline of the Interactional Model of Illocutionary Practice

The interactional account of illocutionary practice builds on Ruth G. Millikan's biological model of language (Millikan 1984; 1998; 2004; 2005), whose underlying assumption is that we can univocally attribute *proper functions* or *purposes* to items such as genes, organs,

4 Following Millikan (2005), I use the term 'Normal' with capital 'N' to distinguish 'Normal conditions' in Millikan's technical sense from 'normal conditions' in the statistical sense.

biological mechanisms, behavioural dispositions, linguistic devices, speech acts and conventional patterns of linguistic interaction. Roughly speaking, a function *F* of item *A* is its *proper function* or *proper purpose* if "*A* originated as a 'reproduction' (to give one example, as a copy of a copy) of some prior item or items that, *due* in part to possession of the properties reproduced, have actually performed *F* in the past, and *A* exists because (causally historically because) of this or these performances." (Millikan 1989, p. 28; cf. Matczak 2016; 2017). In short, *F* is the proper function of items or traits of a certain type if it is causally responsible for their continuous reproduction and proliferation. For example, a hammer that I keep in my office is usually used as a paperweight. Sometimes I use it as a temporary rest for my projector, whose original bracket is broken. Very seldom I use this hammer for driving nails. In short, the hammer under discussion performs at least three different functions, *i.e.*, it is used as a paperweight, as a temporary rest for my projector, and as a tool for driving nails. Note, however, that only the last one is its *proper* function. It does not matter that the hammer in question is seldom used for driving nails. What matters is that it has been produced as a copy of other hammers because they, due to their possession of the properties reproduced, have been used as tools for driving nails. In general, an individual item can have many different uses, but only some of them correspond to its proper purpose or function.

According to Millikan, we can also attribute proper functions to linguistic devices, speech acts, and speaker-hearer patterns of verbal interaction. She claims that the proper function of a sentence — as well as the proper purpose of the act made in uttering it — is to evoke a certain cooperative response on the part of the hearer (Millikan 2005). For example, the proper function or purpose of indicative sentence '*p*' is to induce the belief that *p* in the hearers' minds. Generally, indicative sentences have been designed as conventional tools for inducing beliefs. Imperative sentences, in turn, have been selected for their use in getting

hearers to do what they are told. Consistently, the proper function of a speech act is to evoke the hearer's cooperative response. For example, the proper function of an assertion is to get the hearer to believe what the speaker asserts, whereas the proper function of a directive act is to get the hearer to do what he is told. If the acts are literal and direct, their proper functions coincide with the conventional purposes of the sentences by means of which they are performed (for a discussion of this issue see Millikan 1984, esp. Chapter 3; 2005). Next, the proper purpose of a speaker-hearer pattern — which involves the speaker's utterance of a certain linguistic form and the hearer's cooperative response to it — is to help achieve coordination between communicating agents (Millikan 1998). For example, the proper function of any pattern that involves the speaker's utterance of an indicative or imperative sentence and the hearer's cooperative response — *i.e.*, the hearer's believing or complying with what he is told, respectively — is to help achieve coordination between the speaker and the hearer.

In summary, conventional linguistic devices and speaker-hearer patterns of interaction were selected for their cooperative and coordinative functions, respectively; what makes them *conventional*, in turn, is the fact that their forms are to some extent arbitrary or, more precisely, have been reproduced due to the weight of their cultural precedents rather than due to their capacity to perform their functions. According to Millikan (1998), a behaviour is conventional if its form (*i*) has been reproduced from previous behaviours and (*ii*) is arbitrary relative to its function, *i.e.*, proliferates due to the importance of its cultural precedents rather than due to its capacity to perform its function. The performance of an illocutionary act, then, consists in reproducing the speaker's part of a speaker-hearer pattern by uttering an appropriate linguistic form; the force of the act thereby produced depends on what counts as the hearer's complementary portion of the pattern or, in other words, on what I call the

conventionally determined *interactional effect* of the act. The effect can be likened to a response or sequel that the act invites 'by convention' (Austin 1975, p. 117), where the Austinian phrase 'by convention' is explicated along the Millikanian lines, *i.e.*, in terms of speaker-hearer patterns of verbal interaction.

In short, the interactional model of illocutionary practice results from integrating elements of Millikan's model of language conventions within the theoretical framework of Austin's speech act theory. Besides drawing on the general concept of speaker-hearer conventional patterns, it identifies and explicates two other ideas that seem to be inherent to Millikan's original theory.

Firstly, the interactional model distinguishes between two types of cooperative responses — *primary* and *secondary* — that a speech act can conventionally elicit or, in other words, between the act's *primary interactional effect* and its *secondary interactional effects*. For example, the primary interactional effect of a directive act made in uttering sentence 'Do *A*!' is the hearer's complying with what he or she is told. Undoubtedly, the occurrence of this effect is partly responsible for the continuous reproduction of the sentence in question and the proliferation of the practice of using it to make directive speech acts: if hearers systematically refused to comply with what they were told, the form would be eventually abandoned by speakers. Nevertheless, one can be regarded as cooperating with one's interlocutor even though one fails to produce the primary interactional effect of the interlocutor's act. Rather than directly complying with what he is told, the addressee of a directive act can provide the speaker with information or clues from which she can elaborate a plan to achieve the conversational goal behind her utterance. For example, the addressee of the utterance of 'Give me something to eat!' can respond *either* by giving the speaker something to eat — e.g., a ham sandwich — thereby producing the primary interactional effect of the speaker's act, *or*

by uttering the sentence ‘Go to the dining room! There are a few toasts on the table’, thereby producing one of the secondary effects available in this type of verbal interaction. In the former case, the addressee can be described as completing the *primary pattern* of interaction invoked by the speaker, whereas in the latter case he can be regarded as completing one of the *secondary patterns* associated with the primary one. In both cases, however, he behaves cooperatively. The crucial point here is that conversational cooperation goes beyond straightforward trust (in the case of assertions) and compliance (in the case of directives). To allow for this fact, however, we need the distinction between primary and secondary interactional effects and the corresponding contrast between primary and secondary speaker-hearer patterns. The force of an act depends on what counts as its primary interactional effect; we refer to its secondary effects in order to explain those forms of cooperation that cannot be described as cases of straightforward trust or compliance.

Secondly, the interactional account claims that the patterns in question operate locally rather than globally; more specifically, they can be grouped into coherent systems constituting different local semiotic systems (Millikan 2004) or, as Stephen C. Levinson would put it, different activity types conceived of as “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). The interactional account, then, is *not* committed to a traditional version of the literal force hypothesis, according to which the indicative mood encodes the force of making a statement, the imperative mood encodes the force of issuing a command, and the interrogative mood encodes the force of asking a question (for a discussion of this hypothesis, see Gazdar 1981, p. 74); depending on the type of the language game that is currently being played, rather, one can use an indicative sentence to make a statement, a request, a command, a promise, a permission, and so on.

In my view, the above-mentioned tenets of the interactional account provide a sufficient basis for examining two different though closely interconnected issues: the coordinative function of speaker-hearer patterns (Section 3) and the normative aspect of illocutionary practice (Section 4).

3 Conventional Patterns and their Coordinative Function

According to Millikan, the proper function of speaker-hearer patterns is to help achieve coordination among conversing agents. It is not clear, however, what type of coordination they are designed to produce and maintain. In this section I put forth a hypothesis according to which language conventions proliferate because they help achieve *mental coordination*. Following Richmond H. Thomason, I assume that the participants in a conversation "are working together to build a shared date structure [henceforth, SDS]" (Thomason 1990, p. 339) construed of as a set of their shared beliefs, desires, intentions, expectations. As Thomason has noted, however, there is no "literally shared memory" (*ibid.*); normally, the participants in a dialogue build their own representations of their SDS and assume by default — *i.e.*, unless there is a reason to think otherwise — that they match or coincide with each other. Producing and maintaining mental coordination between the conversing agents, then, consists in keeping their own representations of SDS sufficiently aligned or, in other words, in achieving a *preferred correspondence* between what the agents take to be their shared believe, desire, intend, expect, and so on.

In what follows, I examine the structure of speaker-hearer patterns (in Subsection 3.1), thereby setting the stage for the discussion of their coordinative proper function (in Subsection 3.2).

3.1 *The Structure of Speaker-Hearer Patterns*

Consider John and Mary who are looking at guests coming to Linda's wedding party. John says:

(1) The man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin.

Mary responds by forming the belief that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin. The second event takes place in a university canteen. Tom, who is about to pay, realizes that he has no cash his wallet and says to Peter:

(2) Lend me 10 euros.

Peter responds by opening his wallet and handing Tom a 10 euro bill. Consider, thirdly, a father who is sitting at a kitchen table reading a newspaper. His daughter, Hanna, runs into the kitchen and shouts sentence (3a); the father responds by uttering sentence (3b).

(3) a. I am hungry!

b. There is a piece of pizza in the fridge.

The three events discussed above can be described in terms of one agent's initiating and the other's completing the reproduction of a certain speaker-hearer coordinative pattern. Consider the wedding scenario first. Let us assume that the reproduction begins with (i_1) John's belief that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin, moves through (ii_1) his utterance

of sentence (1), and ends with (iii_1) Mary's forming the belief that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin. Next, let us assume that Tom and Peter are engaged in reproducing a speaker-hearer pattern that involves four components: (i_2) Tom's having a desire that Peter lends him 10 euros, (ii_2) his utterance of sentence (2), (iii_2) Peter's forming an intention to lend Tom 10 euros, and (iv_2) his handing Tom a 10 euro bill. In the kitchen scenario, in turn, the reproduction involves (i_3) Hanna's desire to get something to eat, (ii_3) her uttering sentence (3a), (iii_3) the father's forming the desire that Hanna gets something to eat, and (iv_3) his uttering sentence (3b).

In general, the three patterns under discussion have roughly the same structure with the exception that the pattern reproduced by John and Mary involves no response at the behavioural level. This common structure can be represented as a sequence of the following four elements:

(*i*) a certain mental state of the speaker;

(*ii*) the speaker's utterance of a certain linguistic form in a context;

(*iii*) the hearer's forming a mental state that stands in a preferred correspondence relation to the speaker state specified in (*i*);

(*iv*) the hearer's practical response to the speaker's utterance (*ii*).

A central tenet of the interactional account is that making a speech act consists in producing component (*ii*) of a certain speaker-hearer pattern; the force of the act thereby performed depends on what counts as its interactional effect or, more precisely, on what counts as its *primary* interactional effect. This effect is to be identified with the hearer's cooperative response that is determined by the primary pattern invoked by the speaker. In the

wedding scenario, for example, by forming the belief that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin, Mary completes the reproduction of the primary pattern invoked by John's utterance of indicative sentence (1). Similarly, Peter's handing Tom a 10 euro bill completes the reproduction of the pattern invoked by Tom's utterance of imperative sentence (2). In short, the two acts under discussion succeed in bringing about their primary interactional effects. It is worth noting, however, that the primary effect of John's act is Mary's mental state, whereas the primary effect of Tom's utterance is Peter's publicly observable action. The hearer's cooperative response to the speaker's utterance can therefore occur either at the level of belief formation or at the level of practical responses, depending on whether the utterance has the force of making an assertion or that of making a directive act. In uttering imperative sentence (2), Tom makes a directive act, whereas John's utterance of indicative sentence (1) has the force of making an assertion. Generally speaking, assertions invite *by convention* the response of trust, whereas directive acts invite *by convention* the response of compliance or doing what one is told. It is instructive to stress, however, that 'by convention' as used here means 'in agreement with primary speaker-hearer patterns'.

The primary interactional effect of an utterance is a second act on the part of the hearer. Its performance completes the cooperative function of the speaker's act. In some cases, however, a hearer can be justifiably regarded as cooperating with the speaker even though he fails to respond in agreement with the primary pattern that she invokes. This is exactly what takes place in the kitchen scenario: instead of giving her daughter something to eat, the father utters sentence (3b). Still, this response is cooperative. Although the father fails to comply with Hanna's directive act, he adopts conversational goal (i_3) behind her utterance — *i.e.*, he takes it to be desirable that Hanna gets something to eat — and utters sentence (3b). The function of this utterance is to help Hanna elaborate a plan to achieve goal (i_3) behind her

utterance of (3a). As Nicolas Asher and Alex Lascarides (2001; 2003) would put it, the act made in uttering (3b) is relational. More precisely, it is a rhetorical relation of *Plan Elaboration* represented by means of the formula '*Plan-Elab*(3a, 3b)' meaning 'the act made in uttering (3b) has the force of *Plan Elaboration* with respect to the act made in uttering (3a)'. Viewed from the perspective of the interactional model, this formula stands for a secondary speaker-hearer pattern reproduced by Hanna and her father; consistently, the father's utterance of sentence (3b) can be regarded as a secondary interactional effect of Hanna's directive act. This effect is *interactional*, because it can be justifiably described as the father's *cooperative* reaction to Hanna's request: the felicity of the relational act of *Plan-Elab*(α, β) presupposes that the speaker of β adopts the conversational goal behind utterance α; it is *secondary*, because it cannot be described as a case of straightforward trust or compliance. It is worth stressing, however, that it is secondary *with respect to* what would count as the primary effect of Hanna's utterance, *i.e.*, with respect to the father's giving his daughter something to eat. Note, namely, that what these two responses — *i.e.*, the primary and the secondary — have in common is that their performances presuppose adoption (iii_3) of the same conversational goal (i_3). Nevertheless, the phrases 'primary effect' and 'secondary effect' differ in the roles they play in our theorising about linguistic practice. We employ the former to define types of speech acts and to explain their stability by reference to their cooperative proper functions;[5] we use the latter, in turn, to account for those cases of conversational cooperation that cannot be described in terms of straightforward trust or compliance.

Discussing the kitchen scenario I have tacitly assumed that in uttering sentence (3a) Hanna performs a conventional and direct request; more specifically, I have taken her

5 For a discussion of the stabilizing aspect of Millikanian proper functions, see Matczak 2017, esp. Section 3.2.

utterance to constitute component (*ii*) of a primary pattern whose force-determining component (*iv*) — *i.e.*, the primary interactional effect — consists in the addressee's giving the speaker something to eat. One can object, however, that this assumption fails to provide an adequate description of that talk exchange. One can claim, namely, that in uttering sentence (3a) Hanna performs two illocutionary acts: she makes a direct and conventional statement to the effect that she is hungry and, in doing this, she indirectly and non-conventionally asks for something to eat; the force of making a statement is direct and conventional, because it fits the one encoded by the indicative mood of sentence (3b); the force of making a request, in turn, is indirect and non-conventional, because it is communicated at the level of what is conversationally implicated (for a discussion of a similar example, see Bach 1987, p. 73). To strengthen this Gricean reading of the kitchen scenario, one can consider its slightly modified version in which the father precedes his utterance of (3b) with the utterance of sentence (4):

(4) That's strange. You have just had lunch.

One can maintain, namely, that in uttering (4) the father makes a comment on Hanna's direct statement, whereas in uttering (3b) he responds to her indirect request. In other words the utterance of (3a) seems to function as a reference point for two rhetorical relations: *Comment*(3a, 4) and *Plan-Elab*(3a, 3b): the former exploits Hanna's direct contribution to the kitchen dialogue, whereas the latter exploits what she communicates at the level of conversational implicature.

In my view, however, Hanna's utterance of (3a) can be regarded *either* as a direct and conventional statement, *or* as a direct and conventional request, *or* as two direct and conventional acts — a statement and a request — made in one utterance. The actual force of

this utterance depends on the type of the game that Hanna and her father are playing. I assume that game or activity types can be represented as coherent systems of speaker-hearer patterns that put constraints "on the kinds of allowable contributions." (Levinson 1979, p. 368) If in uttering sentence (3a) Hanna invites her father to play an information-exchange game, then her act is to be regarded as a direct statement and as such responded by the utterance of (4); this move is an allowable contribution in the game or, in other words, the rhetorical relation of *Comment* is one of the secondary speaker-hearer patterns that the players are allowed to reproduce. If, by contrast, in uttering sentence (3a) Hanna invites her father to play an instruction-exchange game, then her utterance should be regarded as constituting a direct request and as such can be responded either by direct compliance (*i.e.*, the father's giving Hanna something to eat) or by the father's producing one of the secondary effects that are allowable in this game (*e.g.*, by his uttering sentence (3b) with the relational force of *Plan Elaboration*). In some cases, however, Hanna's initiating utterance can be regarded as an invitation to play both the information-exchange and the instruction-exchange games. If this is the case, her act can be legitimately regarded as both a direct statement and as a direct request and, as the corollary of this, felicitously responded by uttering (4) followed by (3b).

In short, speaker-hearer patterns operate locally rather than globally and make up coherent systems representing different game types. To accept this idea is to reject a classical formulation of the literal force hypothesis, according to which the indicative mood encodes the force of making a statement, the imperative mood encodes the force of issuing a command, and the interrogative mood encodes the force of asking a question. As a matter of fact, sentences of the forms (3a) can be used to make moves in different games and, as the corollary of this, to initiate the reproduction of different speaker-hearer patterns. If uttered by a patient examined by her physician, the pheme token thereby produced constitutes a direct

act of informing; no wonder, since medical examination is an information-exchange game. If, by contrast, it is uttered by a child who speaks to her father, it constitutes a direct request. Finally, if pheme (3a) is produced by my colleague who enters my office in lunch time, it constitutes a direct suggestion that I should take a break and go to the canteen. These three speech situations contribute to one phatic type or — as Millikan (2005; cf. Witek 2015b) would put it, to one phatic lineage — which is a collection of past uses of pheme (3a). The lineage criss-cross different illocutionary lineages or, more precisely, different game types within which its constituent pheme tokens function as different illocutionary acts.

3.2 *The Function of Speaker-Hearer Patterns*

According to Millikan, "all that is required for a [speaker-hearer] convention to survive, to be repeated and passed on, is to succeed in coordinating the interests of speakers and hearers some critical proportion of the time, weighting the value of coordination success against the disvalue of failures." (Millikan 2008, p. 88) The proper function of a speaker-hearer pattern, then, is to help achieve coordination between participants in a dialogue.

My aim in this subsection is to elaborate on the above-mentioned idea by considering the relationship between three types of coordination problems that speaker-hearer patterns can be seen as designed to solve: task-specific, signalling, and mental. In particular, I argue that the *focused* proper function of language conventions is to ensure what I call *mental* coordination: even though a given speaker-hearer pattern serves various task-specific purposes on different occasions, they all converge and depend on its function to produce and maintain a preferred correspondence between the mental states of the conversing agents. The distinction between the focused proper function of a device and its further proper functions comes from Millikan (1984, pp. 34-38), who explicates it by discussing a number of

examples; for instance, she claims that a “brake pedal has as a focused function to slow or stop the car, further functions of that slowing or stopping may have being alternative and diverse.” (Millikan 1984, p. 36)

Task-specific coordination problems can be defined by reference to the various goals that are accepted and shared by the interacting agents on different occasions. Let us consider, for example, two engineers whose common aim is to defuse a pair of interconnected bombs located in different rooms. Each bomb has a colourful tangle of wires under its cover. To perform their task successfully, however, the engineers have to achieve coordination between their complementary contributions to their joint activity, *e.g.*, to simultaneously cut wires of the same colour. In short, they face a task-specific coordination problem, which can be solved by means of a speaker-hearer pattern that involves one of the engineers saying ‘The red one, now!’ and the other engineer cutting the red wire in his bomb (let us assume that they communicate by phone). Other examples of joint activities that may generate task-specific coordination problems are group hunting, playing a basketball match, carrying a heavy sofa upstairs, repairing a car, and so on. Some of these problems can be solved with the help of linguistic devices or, more specifically, by reproducing appropriate speaker-hearer patterns. The reproduction begins with component (*i*), *i.e.*, the speaker’s mental state whose content is appropriately related to the speaker’s contribution to the activity — *e.g.*, with the first engineer’s intention to cut the red wire in her bomb — and ends with component (*iv*), *i.e.*, the hearer’s cooperative response that stands in a preferred correspondence relation to the speaker’s contribution; the coordination thereby produced ensures the achievement of the task-specific goal that is commonly accepted by interacting agents.

Each signalling problem, in turn, involves two agents: a signaller and a responder. The signaller, unlike the responder, has a perceptual access to certain states of affairs. The

responder, however, is supposed to respond to the states in accordance with a certain correspondence rule. More specifically, the common aim of the signaller and the responder is to ensure a preferred correspondence *between* the states of affairs that the signaller can see *and* the actions performed by the responder. This aim can be achieved only if there is a coordination between what Lewis (2002, p 122) called (*a*) the *contingency plan* followed by the signaller and (*b*) the *contingency plan* followed by the responder. The signaller's contingency plan consists of rules in accordance with which she translates the states she is aware of into the signals that the responder can perceive; by analogy, the responder's contingency plan consists of rules in accordance with which he translates the signals produced by the signaller into responses that are preferred in the light of the accepted correspondence rule. The plans can be coordinated by a *signaller-responder pattern* whose structure involves the signaller's perceptual state, the signal she produces, and the responder's preferred response.

If the coordination between the contingency plans is achieved, the responder's perception is in a sense *extended*: in practice, he takes the signals produced by his partner to be perceptually available symptoms of the states that they stand for (for a discussion of this idea, see McDowell 1998; Millikan 2004, pp. 113-125). Consider, following Millikan (1989, p. 288; cf. Matczak 2017, p. ##), a beaver hitting the water with its tail to produce a splashing sound that signals the presence of a predator in its vicinity; other beavers, even though they cannot see or hear the predator, respond to this signal by flying out and looking for places to hide. In this case, the coordination between the contingency plan followed by the signaller and that followed by the responder is ensured by natural selection or learning: the plans make up a signaller-responder pattern that is in a sense *built in* the structure of the beavers' minds. Another example of solving a signalling problem is the International Code of Signals that

consists of two complementary contingency plans: one of the form "if in such-and-such predicament, hoist such-and-such flags," (Lewis 2002, p. 125) and the other of the form "if a ship hoists such-and-such flags, act as would be appropriate on the assumption that it is in such-and-such predicament." (*ibid*) This time, the plans are coordinated by a convention created by agreement. The convention, let us note, can be represented as a lineage of signaller-responder interactions.

In summary, signalling problems can be solved with the help of conventional or non-conventional signaller-responder patterns. At the current stage of analysis it does not matter what is the mechanism whereby the patterns perform their coordination function; in particular, we can leave it as an open question whether it involves expressing and recognising Gricean reflexive intentions. What matters is that the signaller is disposed to translate his perceptual states into signals in accordance with her part of a certain signalling pattern and the responder is disposed to react to the signals produced by the signaller in accordance with his part of the pattern.

Quite often interacting agents are interested in achieving signalling coordination because they are interested in solving certain task-specific coordination problems. In other words, the *focal* proper function of a signalling patter is to coordinate the agents' contingency plans, whereas its various *further* proper function consists in helping them achieve their task-specific goals. This is true of the patterns that make up the International Code of Signals as well as of the pattern reproduced by engineers involved in defusing a pair of bombs. Note, namely, that the utterance of 'The red one, now!' made by one of the engineers can be regarded as a signal that stands for what she is currently doing and thereby 'extends' the other engineer's perception. Reproducing the pattern that involves the utterance of 'The red one, now!', the engineers solve a certain signalling problem, *i.e.*, they ensure a preferred

correspondence between their contingency plans. In doing this, they solve a corresponding task-specific coordination problem: they ensure a preferred correspondence between their complementary contributions to their joint action and, as a result, succeed in defusing a pair of interconnected bombs. By analogy, one may ask what is the task-specific coordination problem that John and Mary want to solve by reproducing the pattern involving the utterance of (1). I am inclined to say that there is no such problem in particular: apart from letting Mary know who the man with a purple ties is, there seems to be no ulterior motive behind John's utterance.

It is instructive to note, however, that the reproduction of the pattern that involves steps from (i_1) to (iii_1) results in a partial overlap between John's mental states and Mary's mental states or, more accurately, it updates their representations of their SDS (*i.e.*, their shared data structure) with the same piece of information. In other words, the reproduction of the pattern in question is a self-manifest event that results in a preferred correspondence between John's and Mary's representations of their SDS: John and Mary have information that this event takes place, it indicates to each of them that they both have information that this event takes place, and it indicates to both John and Mary that they both believe that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin[6].

Generally speaking, even though a reproduction of a given speaker-hearer pattern solves no particular task-specific coordination problem, it results in what I call *mental coordination*. The *focused* proper function of speaker-hearer patterns, then, is to help achieve mental coordination between the conversing agent, that is to say, to produce a preferred correspondence between their representations of the SDS. Normally, the participant in a

6 I model my analysis of updating the representations of SDS on Herbert H. Clark's definition of a *basis* for a piece of common ground; see Clark 1996, p. 99.

conversation are interested in making their representations of the SDS aligned or coinciding with each other, because they are interested in building a comprehensive basis for solving any task-specific coordination problem that they happen to face. In other words, any belief that the interacting agents jointly represent as shared is a potential coordination device that can be consumed in the future. The richer the stock of the assumptions they jointly represent as shared, the greater the number of particular task-specific coordination problems that they can immediately solve. Therefore, it is beneficial for the conversing agents to cooperate on producing a preferred correspondence between their representations of the SDS; in other words, it is beneficial for them to cooperate on producing and maintaining mental coordination. All that is required for a speaker-hearer conventional pattern to proliferate, then, is to succeed in achieving mental coordination between speakers and hearers "some critical proportion of the time, weighting the value of coordination success against the disvalue of failures." (Millikan 2008, p. 88)

So far I have limited my discussion to assertions. It can easily be extended, however, to include cases of directives and other types of illocutionary forces. For instance, one can argue that the reproduction of the pattern that involves the utterance of sentence (2) — see the canteen scenario discussed in subsection 3.1. — results in a partial overlap between Tom's mental states and Peter's mental states; namely, it updates their representations of their SDS — i.e., Tom's representation of what he (Tom) takes to be their shared mental states and Peter's representation of what he (Peter) takes to be their shared states — with the desire that Peter lends Tom 10 euros. By analogy, let us consider the kitchen scenario discussed in subsection 3.1. Recall that the pattern that goes through Hanna's utterance of (3a) and her father's utterance of (3b) involves, as its hidden element, the father's adopting the desire that Hanna gets something to eat, *i.e.*, his adoption of the conversational goal behind her utterance.

In other words, the reproduction of this pattern results in enhancing mental coordination between Hanna and her father: the desire in question becomes part of their individual representations of their SDS and as such can be used as a basis for solving further coordination problems that they happen to face. It is also instructive to note that the pattern under discussion is secondary: even though the father fails to produce the primary interactional effect of Hanna's speech act, he adopts the conversational goal behind her utterance and, as the corollary of this, responds cooperatively by performing the act of *Plan Elaboration*. In sum, the *focal* proper function of the secondary pattern seems to be the same as the *focal* function of its corresponding primary pattern, *i.e.*, the one that involves Hanna's utterance of (3a) and her father's giving her something to eat. One can argue, namely, that these two conventions has been selected for their use in enhancing mental coordination among the conversing agents or, more precisely, in contributing the desire in question to the set of mental states that they jointly represent as shared.

Millikan seems to assume that language conventions consist of signaller-responder patterns whose proper function is to solve particular and current task-specific problems. Nevertheless, quite often we speak to others without any particular aim or motive apart from sharing our mental states — beliefs, desires, intentions, expectations, and so on — with others; that is to say, rather than aiming at solving a particular task-specific coordination problem, our objective is merely to enhance mental coordination among the members of our community. The best way to do this is to invite our interlocutors to reproduce certain speaker-hearer patterns.

4. The Normative Aspect of Illocutionary Practice

Illocutionary practice has a characteristic normative aspect that distinguishes it from other forms of human activity. Roughly speaking, speech acts construed as moves made in an illocutionary game *are subject to* norms and *produce* normative effects (see Witek 2015c). More specifically, they are subject to sincerity norms, one example of which is the famous knowledge rule for assertive acts discussed by Williamson (1996; cf. Green 2009; Ball 2014a; 2014b; 2017, esp. Section 5), according to which one is only to assert what one knows; on its weaker version it says that one is only to assert what one believes.[7] Illocutionary acts produce normative effects in that they bring about changes in the domain of the commitments and rights of conversing agents. For instance, a felicitous assertion *takes effect* — see the discussion of effects of the (e_2) type in Section 1 — by creating the speaker's commitment to the truth of what she says as well as the hearer's right to include the asserted proposition into his belief system; by analogy, a binding order results in the speaker's being entitled to expect the hearer to perform a certain action as well as in the hearer's being committed to perform the action. In short, there are at least two normative elements involved in the practice of performing illocutionary acts: sincerity norms and act-produced normative states of affairs; the former govern the practice, whereas the latter are brought about by its constituent moves and contribute to the construction of the institutional reality (see Searle 2005).

In what follows I attempt to account for the normative aspect of illocutionary practice within the framework of the interactional model presented in Sections 2 and 3. It should be stressed that I limit my analysis to two types of illocutionary force: assertive and directive. In subsection 4.1, I focus on two sincerity rules — the *belief rule* and the *desire rule* — and put forth a hypothesis according to which their normativity can be explained in terms of Normal conditions for proper functioning of assertive and directive acts, respectively. Next, in section

7 For a discussion of the idea of weakening the knowledge rule, see Sbisà 2017, esp. Section 6.

4.2, I examine the possibility of providing a naturalistic account of the normative effects of illocutionary acts.

4.1 *The Normative Character of Sincerity Rules*

My aim in this subsection is to consider the sincerity rules and the role that they play in the illocutionary practice. More specifically, I focus on two rules to which assertive and directive acts are subject:

(BR) One must: assert that *p* only if one believes that *p*.

(DR) One must: order the hearer to do *A* only if one desires the hearer to do *A*.

According to some theorists (Williamson 1996; Green 2009; Ball 2014a; 2014b), the sincerity rules *constitutively* govern the practice of making illocutionary acts;[8] for instance, (BR) is constitutive of assertion — construed of as a speech act type — in that it governs every performance of this act. In my view, what constitutes illocutionary practice are primary and secondary speaker-hearer patterns that make up coherent sets representing different activity types. In saying this, however, I do not want to eliminate the normative aspect of speech acts. Although I am reluctant to call (BR) and (DR) *constitutive rules*, I take their normativity to be

8 According to Sbisà (2017, p. ##) sincerity rules are constitutive in a weak sense of this term or, in other words, are 'weakly constitutive:' the violation of a weakly constitutive rule does not result in the nullification of the speaker's act, but subjects her to certain forms of criticisms, e.g., it exposes her to accusations of being insincere or inconsistent. In general, a given rule is *weakly* constitutive for a certain act only if it contributes to the definition of the type to which the act belongs, but the non-compliance with it does not annul the act's normative effects. By contrast, to say that a given rule is *strongly* constitutive in Sbisà's sense is to assume that its violation results in making the speaker's purported act void and null.

a genuine phenomenon that calls for explanation. In what follows, then, I assume that illocutionary acts are subject to sincerity norms. In particular, I assume that assertions are subject to (BR) and directives are subject to (DR). I claim, however, that the observed normative character of (BR) and (DR) can be accounted for within the framework of the interactional model.

My argument consists of two main claims: (C_1) that a Normal condition for proper functioning of an illocutionary act is that the act is sincere, and (C_2) that speaker's obligation to perform sincere illocutions — *e.g.*, their obligation to act in accordance with rules (BR) and (DR) — is derived from their more general responsibility for providing Normal conditions for proper functioning of the practice of interpreting speech acts.

To support claim (C_1), I argue that illocutionary acts form a type of *cooperative intentional signs* in Millikan's sense. Generally speaking, every cooperative intentional sign stands "midway between two systems that have been designed to cooperate with one another:" (Millikan 2004, p. 73) a *sign-producer*, whose proper function is to produce signs that represent world affairs by a required semantic mapping function — which can be likened to a preferred contingency plan in Lewis' sense (see Lewis 2002: 122 and the discussion in Subsection 3.2 above) — and a *sign-consumer*, whose job is to translate the signs produced by the first system into responses that are beneficial to both of them. Depending on a particular case, the systems in question may be either two separate organisms or two parts of one organism. To illustrate the former possibility, recall the beaver who produces a splashing sound to signal the presence of a predator and the other beavers who respond to this signal by flying out and looking for places to hide (see the discussion in Subsection 3.2 above): the signalling beaver is a sign-producer, the other beavers are sign-consumers, and the splashing sound is a cooperative intentional sign. The latter eventuality can be illustrated by a

cooperating pair of two mental systems that are parts of one organisms: a *perceptual system* or *predator-recognition module*, whose proper job is to produce percepts representing predators, and an *executive system*, whose job is to translate these percepts into appropriate behavioural reactions of the organism. By analogy, in what follows I distinguish between two aspects or parts of human illocutionary competence: the illocution-producer and the illocution-consumer. More specifically, I assume that that illocution-producing mechanisms in speakers and illocution-consuming mechanisms in hearers have been designed to function symbiotically in accordance with appropriate speaker-hearer patterns whose proper function is to help achieve mental coordination among the conversing agents. I argue that a Normal condition for proper functioning of the illocution-consuming system is the sincerity of the act it responds to: if the act was insincere, the hearer's cooperative response to it would not result in mental coordination between him and the speaker, *i.e.*, would not contribute to the achievement of the proper purpose of the pattern that is currently being reproduced. To support claim (C_2), in turn, I assume —following Brian Ball — that "speakers always have (some, possible overridden) reason to do what is [N]ormal." (Ball 2014a, p. 16) More specifically, I account for that the normative character of sincerity rules (BR) and (DR) by reference to the speakers' general responsibility for providing conditions necessary for the stability of the illocutionary practice they participate in.

Before I get into the details, let me say a word on the notion of *Normal conditions*, which plays a key role in my argument[9]. Following Millikan (1984, p. 33-34), I use the phrase 'Normal conditions' with a capital 'N' to distinguish Normal conditions in her technical sense

9 An alternative account of the normative character of sincerity rules in terms of Normal conditions comes from Brian Ball (2014a; 2014b). A detailed discussion of Ball's proposal goes beyond the scope of the present paper. My main objection to his account is that he seems to ignore Millikan's distinction between normal and proper functioning of a trait (see, for instance, Millikan 2004, p. 76), which plays a key role in my argument.

from normal conditions in an ordinary sense: the former, unlike the latter, do not have to be average conditions. Roughly speaking, in the case of devices that have been selected for performing a certain function, Normal conditions for their proper functioning "are the conditions to which the device that performs the proper function is (…) adapted." (Millikan 1984, p. 34) According to Millikan, the term 'Normal' applies to both explanations and conditions:

> A 'normal explanation' explains the performance of a particular function, telling how it was (typically) historically performed on those (perhaps rare) occasions when it was properly performed. Normal explanations do not tell, say, why it has been common for a function to be performed; they are not statistical explanations. They cover only past times of actual performance, showing how these performances were entailed by natural law, given certain conditions, coupled with the dispositions and structures of the relevant functional devices. In the second instance, 'normal' applies to conditions. A 'normal condition for performance of a function' is a condition, the presence of which must be mentioned in giving a full normal explanation for performance of that function. (Millikan, 1989, pp. 284-285)

For example, a Normal condition for the proper functioning of a rabbit's behavioural disposition to run away every time it hears a soft noise is that the noise is caused by a predator. In my view, if the rabbit reacts to a noise that is not produced by a predator, this disposition functions properly, though not normally. A Normal condition of a sign-consuming system, in turn, is that the sign it responds to is true in accordance with an appropriate semantic-mapping function (for a discussion of this idea, see Millikan 2004, esp. Chapter 6).

According to Millikan, the "term 'normal' should be read normatively, historically, and *relative to specific function*." (Millikan 1989, p. 284, my emphasis – M.W.) Recall that on the interactional model, the proper function of speaker-hearer patterns is to help achieve *mental coordination* between interacting agents or, more accurately, to produce and maintain a preferred overlap between their representations of the SDS. The proper function of a speech

act, in turn, is to produce its interactional effect or, in other words, to evoke a cooperative response on the part of the hearer. More specifically, as far as its role in producing mental coordination is concerned, a speech act of type *F* functions properly only if it succeeds in inducing a mental state of type *M* in the hearer's mind. The force of the act depends on what counts as its conventionally determined interactional effect, where 'conventionally' means 'in accordance with a speaker-hearer pattern that is currently being reproduced'. For example, the cooperative proper function of an assertion that *p* is to get the hearer to believe that *p*, and the cooperative proper function of a request to do *A* is to get the hearer to desire to do *A*. (For the sake of generality I assume that the interactional effect of a directive act occurs at the level of mental states formation rather than at that of practical responses.) My claim in this subsection is that these functions are performed Normally — or, more accurately, in Normal conditions — if the acts are sincere. Recall that the proper function of an illocutionary act is to evoke the hearer's cooperative response. In other words, the proper function of the hearer's illocution-producing mechanism is to translate the speaker's act into an appropriate mental state: a belief, is the act is an assertion, or a desire, if the act is a directive. The response is beneficial for both the speaker and the hearer, however, if it contributes to the achievement of mental coordination between them. That is to say, the proper function of an illocutionary act *qua* a cooperative intentional sign is to evoke a certain mental state on the part of the hearer and *thereby* enhance the overlap between the interacting agents' representations of the SDS.

To justify my point, let me begin with considering a signalling pattern whose reproduction requires two complementary contributions: one by the signaller and the other by the responder. The signaller's contribution consists in translating her perceptual states into observable signals in accordance with her contingency plan, whereas the responder's contribution consists in translating the signals into his actions in accordance with his

contingency plan. The proper function of the whole pattern, in turn, is to coordinate these two plans and, as a result, to ensure a preferred correspondence between the states that the signaller can perceive and the actions performed by the responder.

In short, the signalling coordination is achieved if the signaller and the responder do their jobs properly. The signaller's job is to produce signals that are true in accordance with her contingency plan. The responder's job, in turn, is to perform actions that are appropriate in the light of his contingency plan. Viewed from the perspective of Millikan's teleosemantic theory (Millikan 2004, p. 76), the Normal condition for proper functioning of the responder's contribution is that the signal he consumes — *i.e.*, the signal that he translates into his action — is true in accordance with the signaller's contingency plan. It does not matter how it is produced; rather, what is required for the responder to do his job properly is that the signal that he consumes is true. If it were not true, then the responder's job, despite being done properly, would fail to ensure the preferred correspondence between the states that the signaller can perceive and the actions performed by the responder.

It is worth noting that the responder's job coincides in content with what can be called the signal's proper function: it is to evoke a preferred action on the part of the responder. Therefore, the claim that the Normal condition for proper functioning of the responder's contribution is the truth of the signal that he consumes can be paraphrased by saying that the truth of the signal is the Normal condition for its proper functioning.

As Millikan puts it, it "is always possible that a trait should cause some proper effect, an effect it was selected for, by accident in some cases;" (Millikan 2004, p. 69) to survive, however, the trait is supposed to perform its proper function in a Normal way often enough. One can add that the proper functioning of the trait is supposed to involve, at least in some cases, mechanisms and conditions that are normal; otherwise the trait is likely to die out. Let

us call this idea the *principle of normal functioning*. It is worth noting that this principle behaves like a norm: although often violated, it cannot be regularly disobeyed. Consider, for example, the idea that signals whose production is designed to contribute to the solution of signalling problems — by getting responders to perform appropriate actions — are supposed to be true. Undoubtedly, this principle is like a norm: if it were systematically disobeyed, the signals would no longer be followed by the responders and the whole pattern would eventually die out.

Consider, by analogy, a speaker-hearer pattern whose function is to ensure mental coordination between two agents: a speaker and a hearer. Roughly speaking, the proper effect of its reproduction is a preferred overlap between the speaker's representation of the SDS and the hearer's representation of the SDS. The reproduction of the pattern requires two complementary contributions: one by the speaker and the other by the hearer. The speaker's contribution involves (*i*) the speaker's having state *M* and (*ii*) her uttering an appropriate sentence. The hearer's contribution, in turn, consists in his responding to utterance (*ii*) by (*iii*) forming a corresponding state *M*'. If the act performed in making utterance (*ii*) is an assertion, states *M* and *M*' are beliefs that are equivalent with respect to their contents; if the act has a directive force, in turn, states *M* and *M*' are desires to the effect that the hearer performs certain action *A*.

Let us focus on illocutionary acts made in utterances (*ii*) and consider normal conditions for their proper functioning. Recall that the reproduction of a speaker-hearer pattern results in mental coordination if the speaker and the hearer do their jobs properly. The speaker's job — or, more accurately, the function of the speaker's illocution-producing mechanism — is to make a sincere illocution, whereas the hearer's job — or, in other words, the function of the hearer's illocution-consuming mechanism — is to respond to the act by

forming an appropriate mental state, where 'appropriate' means 'corresponding to the state expressed by the speaker in accordance with a preferred correspondence rule'. Doing his job properly, the hearer contributes to the achievement of mental coordination between him and the speaker. One of the Normal conditions for proper functioning of the hearer's contribution is that the illocution produced by the speaker is sincere. To say this, however, is to assume that the sincerity of an illocution is a Normal condition for its proper functioning and, for the same reasons, is a Normal condition for the proper functioning of the hearer's illocution-consuming mechanisms. The proper function of the speaker's illocutionary act, namely, is equivalent in content with the proper function of the hearer's contribution to the reproduction of the pattern they reproduce: it is to evoke a cooperative response on the part of the hearer.

According to the principle of normal functioning, the proper functioning of a trait is supposed to involve, at least in some cases, mechanisms and conditions that are normal; otherwise the trait is likely to die out. For example, properly functioning illocutionary acts *qua* cooperative intentional signs — *i.e.*, acts that succeed in getting hearers to form appropriate mental states and thereby enhance the overlap between the interacting agents' representations of the SDS — are supposed to be sincere. In particular, one is supposed to assert only what one believes, and one is supposed to tell one's interlocutor only what one desires him or her to do. The point is that insincere illocutions that succeed in getting the hearer to form appropriate mental states — *i.e.*, illocutions that are insincere though interactionally effective — cannot be regarded as performing their proper function in a normal way. In other words, although they function properly, they cannot be regarded as functioning normally. For an illocutionary act to function properly is for it to be interactionally effective, *i.e.*, to succeed in evoking its interactional effect. To function normally, however, the interactionally effective act is supposed to produce a preferred correspondence between the

mental states of the speaker and the hearer or, more accurately, to enhance the overlap between their representations of the SDS; in short, next to being interactionally effective, it is supposed to be sincere. In saying this I do not want to claim that all Normal or, in other words, sincere illocutions are interactionally effective. As a matter of fact, illocutionary acts can be insincere and interactionally effective, sincere and interactionally effective, and sincere and interactionally ineffective. My point is that the sincerity of an illocutionary act is a Normal condition for its proper functioning, *i.e.*, a condition under which the act succeeds in producing mental coordination provided it succeeds in getting the hearer to form an appropriate mental state. An illocutionary act *qua* a cooperative intentional sign functions properly only if it produces its interactional effect; it performs its proper function in a Normal way, in turn, only if its production contributes to the *complete* reproduction of a speaker-hearer pattern whose structure involves elements from (*i*) to (*v*).

In summary, rules (BR) and (DR) behave like norms: despite the fact that they are often violated, they cannot systematically be disobeyed; if they were, the practice of making assertive and directive acts would be seriously destabilized and eventually such acts would die out. The crucial point is that if most of our illocutionary acts were insincere, then, even if they were interactionally effective, they would fail to produce mental coordination; in other words, the hearer's trust and compliance would no longer be adaptive attitudes.

Some theorists take sincerity norms to be constitutive of our linguistic practice (Williamson 1996; Green 2009; Ball 2014a; 2014b). Consistently, they assume that rules such as (BR) and (DR) should be cited in any adequate account of the function and nature of illocutionary acts. For example, Mitchell S. Green refers to sincerity norms to explain how it is possible for illocutionary acts to express mental states. He assumes that illocutionary acts are handicaps: signals "that can only be faked with great difficulty as a result of being costly

to produce;" (Green 2009, pp. 150-151) they are costly to produce because in performing a speech act that allows for Moorean absurdity, the speaker makes himself or herself subject to loss of credibility. As the corollary of this — Green claims — speech acts express the states that they signal as handicaps. In my view, however, it is the normativity of sincerity rules that poses a real challenge to the naturalistic model of linguistic practice. The capacity of speech acts to express psychological states, it seems, can be accounted for in terms of speaker-hearer conventional patterns and the role they play in coordinating joint actions. The normativity of sincerity rules, in turn, can be explained in terms of Normal conditions for proper functioning of illocutionary acts *qua* cooperative intentional signs.

4.2 *The Normative Effects of Illocutionary Acts*

Following Austin (1975), Sbisà (1992; 2002; 2009; 2013) and Searle (1969; 1979; 2005), I assume that making a move in an illocutionary game involves bringing about a change in the normative domain of the rights and commitments of interacting agents (see also Witek 2015c). In other words, a successful illocutionary act takes effect "in certain ways, as distinguished from producing consequences in the sense of bringing about states of affairs in the 'normal' way, *i.e.*, changes in the natural course of events." (Austin, 1975, p. 117) According to the institutionalist approach (see Section 1), illocutionary acts should be typed in terms of their normative effects and explained by reference to constitutive rules of the form '*X* counts as *Y* in context *C*', where '*X*' stands for the utterance of a certain linguistic form and '*Y*' is the normative effect of the act performed in uttering *X*. For example, the utterance of 'I promise I will do *A*' "counts as the undertaking of an obligation to do *A*." (Searle 1969, p. 63) On the interactional model of speech acts, however, normative effects — construed as rights, entitlements, obligations and commitments — are no longer regarded as definitionally and

explanatorily basic entities. In saying this, however, I do not want to eliminate them from an adequate picture of our linguistic practice. Quite the contrary, I take them to be real states of affairs that call for explanation in terms of interactional effects.

My aim in this subsection is to consider whether the interactional model can accommodate the normative effects of illocutionary acts. My tentative answer is that it can. Even though a detailed justification of this claim goes beyond the scope of the present paper, I would like to set the stage for a future discussion by making three general points.

Firstly, sincerity rules can be spelled out in terms of the commitments of the participants in an illocutionary game. For example, rather than saying that a speaker who asserts that *p* must believe that *p*, one can say that in asserting that *p* the speaker undertakes the commitment to have the belief that *p* or, in other words, makes herself responsible for having this belief (see Searle 1969, p. 62). This observation, however, does not support the view that sincerity norms can be reduced to act-produced norms. What it suggests, rather, is that the mechanisms responsible for bringing about at least some of the normative effects of speech acts involve the operation of sincerity norms and that the latter function as rules governing illocutionary practice.

Secondly, it seems that the normative effects of any illocutionary contribution to a language game can be spelled out in terms of the constraints that its performance puts on the types of moves that the players are allowed or obliged to make. In *How To Do Things With Words* Austin suggested that the performance of a binding illocutionary act makes certain subsequent actions allowable, mandatory or forbidden. For example, a binding act of naming a ship the *Queen Elizabeth* takes effect by making it the case that "referring to [the ship] as the *Generalissimo Stalin* will be out of order." (Austin 1975, p. 117) By analogy, a binding assertion takes effect by committing the speaker to the truth of what he asserts and giving the

hearer the right to adopt the asserted proposition into her belief system. Let us consider, for instance, the wedding scenario discussed in subsection 2.1. In uttering sentence (1) John makes a binding assertion that creates two normative states of affairs: John's commitment to the truth of the proposition that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin and Mary's right to accept this proposition as part of her belief system. My hypothesis is that these two states can be unpacked and spelled out in terms of subsequent moves that John and Mary can or should make *provided they want to continue the game* initiated by John's opening remark. In other words, the normativity of these effects is *conditional* with regard to whether John and Mary are interested in continuing this game in accordance with its constitutive patterns. If they are, then at every stage of their interaction they are supposed to contribute to the reproduction of the primary and secondary patterns that were invoked or activated by previous contributions. For example, to say that John's assertion made in uttering sentence (1) brings about Mary's certain rights is to say that Mary, provided she is interested in continuing the game, can *either* produce the primary effect of John's act (*i.e.*, to form the belief that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin) *or* respond in agreement with one of the secondary patterns available at this stage of the interaction, *e.g.*, she can *challenge* John's assertion by saying 'How do you know?', *reject* his opinion by saying 'No, he is not!', or merely *comment* on it by saying 'That's interesting.' (Note that the last response is not at odds with Mary's producing the primary effect of John's act.) To say that in uttering (1) John undertakes the commitment to the truth of the proposition that he asserts, in turn, is to say that he is supposed to justify this proposition in case it is challenged, or withdraw his assertion if Mary supports her rejection with convincing reasons. In general, my hypothesis is that the commitments and rights produced by moves made in an illocutionary game are, firstly, conditional with regard to whether the players are supposed to continue the game and, secondly, explicable in terms of

the speaker-hearer patterns that are constitutive of the game.

Thirdly, the *total normative effect* of an illocutionary act has two aspects: one described in terms of rights and entitlements and the other defined in terms of commitments and obligations. For example, a felicitous assertion creates the *speaker's commitment* to the truth of the asserted proposition and the *hearer's rights* to accept this proposition as part of his belief system, whereas a binding order results in the *hearer's commitment* to do what he is told and the *speaker's right* to expect the hearer to comply. In short, the difference between the two forces under consideration — *i.e.*, the assertive and the directive one — can be described in terms of the distribution of rights and commitments among interacting agents: assertions commit speakers and give rights to hearers, whereas directives commit hearers and give rights to speakers.

In my view the asymmetry in question can be explained within the framework of the interactional model presented in Section 2. Let us recall that the proper function of speaker-hearer patterns is to produce mental coordination between interacting agents. Let us take it for granted that participants in an interactional event are seriously interested in enhancing their representations of the SDS with representations of states whose propositional contents are *either* true *or* are likely to become true; the point is that false shared beliefs fail to constitute an adequate basis for successful interaction. With this assumption in mind let us consider the wedding scenario again. It is *up to* John rather than to Mary whether the proposition that the man with a purple tie is Linda's cousin is true. Therefore, it is John, not Mary, who is responsible for the truth of the statement. Consider, by analogy, the canteen scenario. It is *up to* Peter rather than to Tom whether the proposition that Tom gets 10 euros is true. Hence, it is Peter, not Tom, who is committed to seeing to it that the proposition is true.

4. Conclusions

The interactional account of illocutionary practice 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. In this paper I have proposed an elaboration of Millikan's claim to the effect that the proper function of language conventions is to help achieve coordination between conversing agent. In Section 3, I have argued that the proper purpose of illocutionary conventions — construed of as complex patterns of speaker-hearer interaction — is to produce and maintain mental coordination between the speaker and the hearer. Next, in Section 4, I used the resulting model of mental coordination to develop a naturalistic explanation of the normative aspect of linguistic activity: firstly, I accounted for the normative character of sincerity rules in terms of Normal conditions for proper functioning of speech acts and, secondly, discussed the possibility of constructing a naturalistic explanation of the normative states of affairs brought about by moves made in illocutionary games.

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