April 16, 2008

1.
What might make each of these 'promises' infelicitous?

(a) Ti prometto di pulire la cucina. ['I promise you that I'll clean up the kitchen' spoken to someone who the speaker knows does not understand Italian.]
(b) I promise that I'll punch you in the nose.
(c) I promise that the sun will come up tomorrow.
(d) I promise that I started the dishwasher.
(e) I promise that you'll make a wonderful dessert.
(f) I promise that I'll jump over that skyscraper if I pass my exam.

2.
In each of the following dialogues, decide whether the second speaker's utterance is a representative, a commissive, or a directive.
        (a) Jane: Coco's sick.
            Steve:I'll take her to the vet.
        (b) Mike: What's the weather like in Dallas?
            Annie:It's raining.
        (c) Ed: The garage is a mess.
            Faye: Clean it up!

3.
Look at the second speakers' utterances in next the two dialogues. Can these be easily classified using the categories of representative, commissive or directive?
        (d) Carmen: You've thrown away the paper.
            Dave: I'm sorry.
        (e) Patrick: I got a new Nintendo game.
            Virginia: Who from?

4.
Have they appointed a new director?

Can you hand me the pen?

5.
How would you describe the relationship between the words and the world in the following utterances? Do any of the categories we have discussed so far capture this relationship?

        (a) I now pronounce you husband and wife.
        (b) I name this ship 'Buster Brown'.
        (c) I sentence you to 10 years in prison.

Table 1 The relation between 'words' and 'the world'

Speech-act category	Relation between 'the words' and 'the world'	Who is responsible for the relation
Declarations	the words change the world	speaker
Representatives	the words fit the world ('outside' world)	speaker
Expressives	the words fit the world ('psychological' world)	speaker
Rogatives	the words fit the world	hearer
Commissives	the world will fit the words	speaker
Directives	the world will fit the words	hearer

6.
Look at each of these pairs of utterances. Classify the likely speech-act type expressed by the (a) utterance using the categories in Table 1. Satisfy yourself that, given the right context, the (b) utterance in each pair could also be used to carry out that type of speech act. Why does the first utterance in each pair seem a more 'direct' way of performing the act?

          1(a) Go away.
          1(b) My essay is due tomorrow morning.
          2(a) Put your jacket on.
          2(b) Did you put your jacket on?
          3(a) Be quiet.
          3(b) I'm very upset that so many of you are talking.
          4(a) The Democrats won.
          4(b) Have you heard that the Democrats won?
          5(a) Have you been fired?
          5(b) Someone said you got fired.
          6(a) I'll pay you back.
          6(b) Authors always pay their debts.

Table 2 Typical linguistic expressions of speech acts

Speech-act category	Typical expression	Example
Declarations	declarative structure with speaker as subject and a performative verb in simple present tense	We find the defendant guilty. I resign.
Representatives	declarative structure	Tom's eating grapes. Bill was an accountant.
Expressives	declarative structure with words referring to feelings	I'm sorry to hear that. This beer is disgusting.
Directives	imperative sentence	Sit down! Fasten your seat belts.
Rogatives	interrogative structure	Where did he go? Is she leaving?
Commissives	declarative structure with speaker subject and future time expressed	I'll call you tonight. We're going to turn you in.

7.
This time look at the (b) utterance in each of the pairs in Exercise 6. Using Table 2, decide what type of speech act they 'look like'.

8.
Try your hand at writing some felicity conditions for a 'true' or 'felicitous' directive.

9.
Now write two key felicity conditions for a 'felicitous' rogative.

10.
A mother is standing by the door as her child starts to go out without his jacket and says: *Did you put your jacket on?* Using the felicity conditions for directives and rogatives, explain why the mother's utterance would be interpreted as an indirect directive.

11.
In Exercises 2 and 3 you were asked to identify the speech acts of the second speakers using the categories in Table 1. Now go back and do the same thing for the first speakers' utterances.

12.
An utterance that looks superficially like a directive because of its imperative form, but is indirectly realizing another type of speech act, is sometimes called a PSEUDO-DIRECTIVE. Label each of the following utterances as direct directive, indirect directive or pseudo-directive. For a pseudo-directive state the true illocutionary force. Give your reasons in each case, making use of the felicity condition framework.
        (a) Mother to child: Please pick up your clothes.
        (b) Mother to child: You haven't made your bed!
        (c) Speaker has just been thanked: Don't mention it.

13.
Using the answer to Exercise 11, show how *Can you be quiet?* would be interpreted as an indirect directive.

14.
Apply the direct directive/indirect directive/pseudo-directive analysis used in Exercise 12 to the following:
        (a) Burglary victim to police officer in a ransacked house:
           Officer, look at the mess they've made!
        (b) Mourner to bereaved: Please accept my deepest sym-
           pathy.
        (c) Mother to child: How many times have I asked you to
           clean your room?
        (d) Mother to child: You should clean up your room.
        (e) Waiter to diner: Enjoy your meal.
        (f) Sacked worker to boss: Drop dead!

15.
Look again at the utterances in Exercise 1. Since we concluded that they were not promises, what were they?

16.
Take the example utterances in Table 2 and construct a context where each of these could be used to perform indirectly some other type of speech act.

17.
It is possible to write felicity conditions that apply to all the members of a category. For example, all commissives share certain felicity conditions such as they must refer in some way to a future act which will be performed by the speaker. However, different illocutions in that category will have special felicity conditions that distinguish them from each other. For example, a threat involves an action undesirable to the hearer, while a promise involves a desirable one. Coulthard (1985) has proposed that it is very difficult to write felicity conditions for expressives in general because they are usually used to perform some other act over and above simply representing the speaker's psychological state. Do you agree?

18.
Try writing a set of felicity conditions for each of the following illocutionary acts.
> (a) thanking
> (b) commanding
> (c) naming a ship
> (d) apologizing
> (e) congratulating
> (f) performing a marriage

You will probably find that, for some of these, the sincerity condition was a bit problematic. For example, does an apology have to be sincere in order to count as an apology? In Parliament an MP says I apologize for calling my honourable friend a liar to avoid being ejected from the House. The mere form of words is enough, even when everyone present knows that the MP is not remotely sorry. Content conditions can also be a problem in some of these. For example, can *You're hitched!* be substituted for I now pronounce you man and wife?

19.
Searle acknowledged that there are several 'grey areas' in his classification system. Using the classifications in Table 1, where would you put boasting, complaining, accusing, deploring? What distinguishes confiding from announcing, both of which would belong to the general class of representatives? Is advising a representative or a directive?