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Where to do things with words

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WHERE TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS*

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Austin (1962) uses the term MASQUERADE to point up a crucial distinction between such sentences as (1a) and (1b):

- (1) a. *I move the piano.*
 b. *I move the question.*

While the speaker of (1a) makes an assertion, which can be said to be true or false, (1b) has a quite different status. Depending on quite complicated conditions (such as whether a meeting is in progress, whether the speaker has been recognized by the chair, and whether, in fact, a motion calling for a vote is at present on the floor), a particular utterance of (1b) will be said to be FELICITOUS (to use a term proposed by Austin) if all of the FELICITY CONDITIONS just mentioned (as well as some others), have been met, and INFELICITOUS if some of them have not been met.

Thus, despite the harmless SVO superficial form of (1b), which would lead us to expect it to be an assertion, an utterance of this sentence is a horse of another color. Depending on such felicity conditions as those cited earlier, it will either 'make it' as a motion or not: It is, to use another term invented by Austin, a PERFORMATIVE utterance. The study of the different kinds of felicity conditions on the use of verbs that can appear as the main verbs of performative utter-

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ances—verbs like *sentence*, *ask*, *vow*, *guarantee*, *request*, *excommunicate*, *absolve*, *promise*, *confess*, *bet*, and *bequeath*, to give a random and fractional list [fuller treatments are to be found in Fraser (1974) and McCawley (to appear)]—and of the complex interactions between such felicity conditions, has occupied a number of researchers since Austin's pioneering work called attention to the existence of this interesting and important area in the philosophy of language.

I would like to borrow Austin's metaphor of the masquerade to discuss an area of recent research that is a descendant of the original work on performatives. Thus note that though the sentences in (3) have the same superficial form as the performative utterances in (2), they only masquerade as a promise and a question, respectively:

- (2) a. *I promise you my continuing support, if you decide to run again.*
 b. *I ask you where you were on the night of the 14th.*
 (3) a. *I promise you a good spanking if you pour any more sugar into my gas tank.*
 b. *I ask you how any decent citizen can give his vote again to Governor Schamlos.*

Typically, while (2a) would be used to make a promise—a commitment to perform an act in the future which the speaker believes is desired by his interlocutor—(3a) would be used to issue a warning to the interlocutor, that is, to describe a future event that the speaker believes is NOT desired by his interlocutor. And while (2b) could be used by a prosecutor trying to elicit information from a witness, (3b) can, for me, be used only as a rhetorical question (the *any* in the embedded subject forces this interpretation). That is, (3b) is only masquerading as a question: Really, it is closer in its ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE (another term of Austin's) to being a negative assertion like (4):

- (4) *No decent citizen can give his vote again to Governor Schamlos.*

What interests researchers who try to 'see through' such masquerades is questions like the following: Why is it that sentences that look like promises on the surface, like (3a), can be used as warnings, while sentences that look like warnings, like (5), do not have the potential to be taken as promises?

- (5) *I warn you that I will read your manuscript carefully.*

And why is it that sentences that look like requests for information, like (6a), can be used as rough paraphrases of declaratives like (4), while recommendations like (6b) cannot be?

- (6) a. *I ask that you tell me how any decent citizen can give his vote again to Governor Schamlos.*
 b. *I recommend that you tell me how any decent citizen can give his vote again to Governor Schamlos.*

Among the speech acts that a sentence can be used to perform are the illocutionary acts of the sentences. We will say that the BASIC illocutionary force of such sentences as (2a) is that of a promise, but that under a speaker assumption that giving support to the hearer will not be desired by the hearer, (2a) can also have a DERIVED force: the force of a warning. Thus, one task of the semantician/philosopher of language is to specify that while promises can acquire, via a DERIVED FORCE RULE, the forces of warnings, warnings cannot acquire the forces of promises. Naturally, the researcher will not be content to merely state that this curious asymmetry exists, but will also attempt to explain it.¹

In this chapter, I will be concerned, in part, with specifying the conditions under which one such derived force rule (or possibly a family of similar rules) can operate. This is the rule that specifies that

¹ In the case at hand, the explanation will probably be found to lie in the more general asymmetry which specifies that the positive member of a pair of polar opposites is the unmarked member, as has often been noted. Thus, contrast the grammaticality of the question-answer sequence in (i) with the ungrammaticality of the mixed sequence in (ii):

- (i) Q: *How wide is it?*
 A: *Quite* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{wide} \\ \text{narrow} \end{array} \right\}$.
 (ii) Q: *How narrow is it?*
 A: *Quite* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{wide} \\ \text{narrow} \end{array} \right\}$.

Note also such contrasts as (iii)–(iv), which were first pointed out by Paul Chapin (cf. Chapin, 1965):

- (iii) *To say that a tree is* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{thick} \\ \text{thin} \end{array} \right\}$ *is to say something about its thickness.*
 (iv) *To say that a tree is* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{wide} \\ \text{thin} \end{array} \right\}$ *is to say something about its thinness.*

such sentences as those in (7) can be taken to be requests on the part of the speaker for action on the part of the hearer:

- (7) a. *I want you to hand over your valuables.*
 b. *Could you hand over your valuables?*

The basic force of (7a) is that of a declarative, as can be seen by the fact that, as a direct quote, it can be followed by such appositives as those in (8):

- (8) *Knucks McGonagle said, 'I want you to hand over your valuables,'* $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{which was a lie} \\ \text{which was obviously true} \\ \text{which must have been false} \end{array} \right\}$.

To the best of my knowledge, only true declaratives can antecede such appositives, as is shown by the ungrammaticalities of such close semantic pairs as those in (9)–(11):

- (9) a. *Bill said, 'England is over there,' which was a lie.*
 b. ??*Bill said, 'There's England over there,' which was a lie.*
- (10) a. *Mme. Post said, 'Nobody could help gagging on a quiche like that,' which was probably true.*
 b. ??*Mme. Post said, 'Who could help gagging on a quiche like that?,' which was probably true.*
- (11) a. ?*Tex said, 'She never saw him at all, I gather,' which was a lie.*
 b. ??*Tex said, 'I gather (?^o that) she never saw him at all,' which was a lie.*

Here, apparently, the deictics, rhetorical questions, and 'pulled punch assertions'² in the (b) examples are not close enough to quintessential declaratives to allow the type of appositives we see in (8).

And the basic illocutionary force of (7b) is that of a question, as we see from the fact that it can be followed by such appositives as those in (12). These are possible only after true information-seeking questions, as the oddnesses in (13) show:

- (12) *Knucks said, 'Could you hand over your valuables?,'* $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{which was not obvious} \\ \text{which no one knows to this day} \\ \text{which I had been wondering about myself} \end{array} \right\}$.

² 'Hedged' assertions would probably be a better term. For an important beginning on the incredibly difficult semantic problems posed by hedges of various sorts, cf. G. Lakoff (1972a).

- (13) *Mme. Post said, 'Who could help gagging on a quiche like that?,'* $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{?}^o \text{ which was not obvious} \\ \text{?}^o \text{ which no one knows to this day} \\ \text{??} \text{ which I had been wondering about myself} \end{array} \right\}$.

However, though the basic forces of (7a) and (7b) are those of a declarative and a request for information, respectively, they can also be used as a request to the hearer to hand over the valuables, as the sentences in (14) indicate.

- (14) *Knucks said to Mme. Post, 'I want you to hand over your valuables?,'* $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Could you hand over} \\ \text{your valuables?} \end{array} \right\}$, *and she complied.*

As Robin Lakoff has pointed out to me, the verb *comply* can be used anaphorically, as it is in (14), only when the clause to which it refers is taken to have the force of a request.³ Some examples of the types of ungrammaticalities that result when this condition is not met can be seen in:

- (15) **Knucks said to Mme. Post,* $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{'Sure is nice out.'} \\ \text{'Might the Redlegs have won?'} \\ \text{'How scrawny these ruffians are!'} \end{array} \right\}$ *and she complied.*

It is possible to force the request-for-action interpretation of the sentences in (7) by inserting the morpheme⁴ *please* preverbally, as in:

- (16) a. *I want you to please hand over your valuables.*
 b. *Could you please hand over your valuables?*

That these sentences can only be interpreted as requests can be seen by the impossibility of following them with the types of typically declarative appositive clauses used in (8), or with the types of information-seeking question appositive clauses shown in (12). Both of

³ This is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition, as the following sentence indicates:

- (i) **The Duke said to Bottomley, 'It's cold in here,' and Bottomley complied.*

The point is that though statements can also have the derived forces of requests, such requests cannot be referred to anaphorically with *comply*.

⁴ Or morphemes? Cf. the noun *plea*.

Thus, note that while (21a) and (21b) are exactly synonymous, on a reading, with the other sentences in (21) also being quite close to (21a) in meaning, only (21a) is fully natural with preverbal *please*, as the sentences of (22) indicate:

- (21) a. *Can you lift your boots?*
 b. *Are you able to lift your boots?*
 c. *Would you be able to lift your boots?*
 d. *Would it be possible for you to lift your boots?*
 e. *Is it possible for you to lift your boots?*
 f. *Do you have the* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ability} \\ \text{capacity} \\ \text{power} \end{array} \right\}$ *to lift your boots?*
- (22) a. *Can you please lift your boots?*
 b. *?°Are you able to please lift your boots?*
 c. *?°Would you be able to please lift your boots?*
 d. *?°Would it be possible for you to please lift your boots?*
 e. *??°Would it be possible for you to please lift your boots?*
 f. *°Do you have the* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ability} \\ \text{capacity} \\ \text{power} \end{array} \right\}$ *to please lift your boots?*

Similarly, while the sentences without *please* in (23) are all in the same semantic ballpark, we find that only some of them have viable derived request forces and can tolerate preverbal *please*:

- (23) a. *I* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{want} \\ \text{would like} \end{array} \right\}$ *you to (please) sign here.*
 b. *I would like it if you'd (?please) sign here.*
 c. *I would appreciate it if you'd (??please) sign here.*
 d. *I would be* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{glad} \\ \text{grateful} \end{array} \right\}$ *if you'd (?please) sign here.*
 e. *I would be* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{happy} \\ \text{appreciative} \end{array} \right\}$ *if you'd (??please) sign here.*
 f. *I'd be ecstatic if you'd (°please) sign here.*⁷

⁷ While I cannot digress into the fascinating problems that would arise in seeking a detailed explanation of such contrasts as those in (21)–(23), I might point out in pass-

What this indicates is that transderivational rules like (20) cannot be conceived of as relations between one logical structure and another one but rather must be thought of as relationships between one logical structure (the request interpretation) and part or all of another derivation.

Nonetheless, my major concern in this chapter will not be in documenting further the need for this relatively trivial departure from (20), which embodies that spirit of the Gordon–Lakoff proposal, but, rather, in arguing for a different kind of extension. To this end, consider the syntactic process of SLIFTING, which converts such sentences as those in (24) into such sentences as those in (25):⁸

- (24) a. *I take it that you are a Plutonian.*
 b. *Remember that I am slower than you.*
- (25) a. *You are a Plutonian, I take it.*
 b. *I am slower than you, remember.*

In particular, let us investigate the following problem: When can

ing that the difference between (22a) and (22b) is not accidental. Sentences containing modals typically have more derived forces than synonymous sentences without modals, as Bruce Fraser has pointed out to me. Thus, note the contrasts in:

- (i) *Will you (please) leave?*
 (ii) *Are you going to (?°please) leave?*
 (iii) *May I (please) have those spurs?*
 (iv) *Am I permitted to (°please) have those spurs?*

Since parallel contrasts appear to exist in other languages, such as German and French [cf. (v) and (vi)]:

- (v) a. *Können Sie (bitte) Ihren Hut abnehmen?*
 can you please your hat take off
 'Can you (please) take off your hat?'
 b. *Sind Sie instande (°bitte) Ihren Hut abzunehmen?*
 are you able please your hat to take off
- (vi) a. *Pouvez-vous enlever votre chapeau, s'il vous plaît?*
 can you take off your hat please
 b. *??Êtes-vous capable d'enlever votre chapeau, s'il vous plaît?*
 are you able of to take off your hat please

the conclusion that naturally suggests itself is that one of the relevant parts of a language-universal definition of the concept MODAL VERB is precisely this 'force shift-ness.'

⁸ Cf. Ross (1973c) for arguments that parentheticals such as those in (25) derive from such sources as (24).

question clauses be slifted? The conversion of (26)–(27) shows some instances in which SLIFTING can operate,⁹ and the impossibility of converting (28) into (*29) shows some instances in which it cannot:

- (26) a. *I want you to tell me when dinner will be ready.*
 b. *Tell me where you were staying.*
 c. *I wonder how long he has been floating near me.*
 d. *Can you tell me who Sam is pitching to next?*
- (27) a. *When will dinner be ready, I want you to tell me.*
 b. *Where were you staying, tell me.*
 c. *How long has he been floating near me, I wonder.*
 d. *Who is Sam pitching to next, can you tell me?*
- (28) a. *I (don't) want Fat Albert to tell me when dinner will be ready.*
 b. *(Never) tell Ed where you were staying.*
 c. *They may have wondered how long he has been floating near me.*
 d. *Are you able to tell me who Sam is pitching to next?*
- (29) a. **When will dinner be ready, I (don't) want Fat Albert to tell me.*
 b. **Where were you staying, (never) tell Ed.*
 c. **How long has he been floating near me, they may have wondered.¹⁰*
 d. **Who is Sam pitching to next, are you able to tell me?¹¹*

⁹ One argument that SLIFTING, or some rule functionally equivalent to it, is involved in the production of such sentences as (27)—that is, that (27) cannot be a remote structure—will be developed in footnote 16, in connection with examples like (35h).

¹⁰ Since *wonder* is a verb that can take direct quotes, (29c) might be interpretable as a slifted form of something like:

- (i) (Each, of) *them may have wondered 'How long has he been floating near me?'*

where the first-person pronoun *me* refers, as is mandatory in direct quotes, to the subject of the quote-taking verb, not to the utterer of the sentence. If *me* in (29c) is taken to refer to a suppressed *each*, as in (i), then (29c) might be grammatical for some speakers. But if the question is forced to be an indirect quote, by taking this *me* to refer to the utterer, then (29c) is impossible, and this is the reading on which I have starred it.

¹¹ This string of words is grammatical if read as a sequence of two sentences, each of which is a question, but it is out if read with the kind of single-sentence intonation that (27d) can be given. The contrast emerges even more clearly if the parentheticals

The first hypothesis that suggests itself is given in:

- (30) GENERALIZATION I: *Embedded questions can be slifted only if the sentences in which they appear have the (basic or derived) illocutionary force of a request on the part of the speaker for the hearer to provide the relevant information about the wh-ed parts of the question that is to be slifted.*

This generalization, coupled with the independently necessary statement to the effect that questions based on *can* (and other modals) can convey requests for action, while questions based on *be able to* (and other periphrastic constructions) cannot [cf. the contrast between (22a) and the other sentences of (22)], would explain the contrast between (27d) and *(29d). Similarly, since *I want you to X* has the derived force of a request to X, whereas neither *I want Fat Albert to X* nor *I don't want Fat Albert to X* can have such a force, (27a) would be allowed by (30), but not *(29a). And since other meaning postulates must account for the rough equivalences shown in:

- (31) a. $X \text{ wants } Y \text{ to tell } X \text{ } Z \cong X \text{ wants to } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{hear} \\ \text{know} \end{array} \right\} Z \text{ from } Y^{12}$
 b. $I \text{ want to know } Z \text{ from you } \cong I \text{ wonder (about) } Z$

Generalization I can also account for the contrast between (27c) and *(29c).

The full range of data which (30) can provide explanations for, in ways that I will not spell out in detail here, is suggested by the complex array of facts shown in:

in (27d) and in (29d) are inserted, by a rule I refer to as NICHING [cf. Ross (in preparation) for details], into their respective main clauses, as (i) shows:

- (i) $\text{Who, } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{?can you} \\ \text{*are you able to} \end{array} \right\} \text{ tell me, is Sam pitching to next?}$

¹² Of course, this rough equivalence should be reduced to the more basic one shown in (i):

- (i) $Y \text{ tell } Z \text{ to } X \cong Y \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{hear} \\ \text{know} \end{array} \right\} Z \text{ from } Y$

- (32)
- a. $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{I\} \{want\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{you\} \text{ to tell } \{me\} \\ \{Jan\} \text{ to } \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\} \\ \{They\} \{expect\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{Sam\} \text{ to } \{know\} \text{ from } \{you\} \\ \{remember\} \{Jan\} \end{array} \right\} \end{array} \right\}$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{Could\} \{you\} \text{ tell } \{me\} \\ \{Can\} \{Jan\} \text{ } \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Will } \{you\} \text{ know } \{me\} \\ \{Jan\} \text{ tell } \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Would } \{you\} \text{ be } \\ \{Are\} \{you\} \\ \{Is\} \{Jan\} \end{array} \right\} \text{ willing to tell } \{me\} \\ \{Bob\}$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Do you think } \{you\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{could} \\ \text{can} \\ \text{would be willing to} \end{array} \right\} \text{ tell } \{me\} \\ \{they\} \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}$
- when dinner will be?

(SLIFTING)

- b. When will dinner be,
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{I\} \{want\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{you\} \text{ to tell } \{me\} \\ \{Jan\} \text{ to } \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}^{13} \\ \{they\} \{expect\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{Sam\} \text{ to } \{know\} \text{ from } \{you\} \\ \{remember\} \{Jan\} \end{array} \right\} \end{array} \right\}$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{could\} \{you\} \text{ tell } \{me\} \\ \{can\} \{Jan\} \text{ } \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}?$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{will } \{you\} \text{ know } \{me\} \\ \{Jan\} \text{ tell } \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}?$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{would } \{you\} \text{ be } \\ \{are\} \{you\} \\ \{is\} \{Jan\} \end{array} \right\} \text{ willing to tell } \{me\} \\ \{Bob\}?$
- $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{do you think } \{you\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{could} \\ \text{can} \\ \text{would be willing to} \end{array} \right\} \text{ tell } \{me\} \\ \{they\} \{Bob\} \end{array} \right\}?$

¹³ I am aware that many of the asterisks in (32b) (and in corresponding sentences later on) are too uncharitable, particularly with respect to the NP occurring where *you* occurs. Thus, the tag in:

In the bracketed expressions in (32), only those sequences of words that can convey requests for information are in bold type. The important parts of these underlined sequences are repeated in (33) and (34):

- (33) a. *I want you to (please) X.*
 b. $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{Could\} \\ \{Can\} \end{array} \right\} \text{ you (please) X?}$
 c. *Will you (please) X?*
- (34) a. *I want to (?please) know X from you.*
 b. *Would you be willing to (??please) X?*
 c. *Do you think you could (?please) X?*

As I have already pointed out in connection with (21)–(23), sentences starting with such sequences as those in (33a) and (33b) can convey requests. The Gordon–Lakoff rule stated in (20) accounts for this, and Gordon and Lakoff also explain, along similar lines, how sentences starting with *will you* can convey requests. Thus, all of these sentences can exhibit a preverbal *please*.

The introductory subsequences in (34) are not as good in conveying requests, as the prefixes before the inserted *please*'s in these examples indicate. While we need not inquire in detail as to what the conditions are under which it is less than completely possible to achieve the derived force of a request, the mere fact that 'quasi-requests' like those in (34) exist is of considerable interest, for it suggests that no discrete treatment of the problem of derived illocutionary force is likely to be viable. To account for such quasi-requests as these,¹⁴ it will eventually be necessary to construct

- (i) . . . , *I want Jan to tell me.*

is interpretable in a context in which the speaker is addressing a group containing Jan, or in a context in which the speaker is requesting the person(s) addressed to get Jan to answer his question. The same obtains for the tags in:

- (ii) a. . . . , *could Jan tell me?*
 b. . . . , *will Jan tell me?*

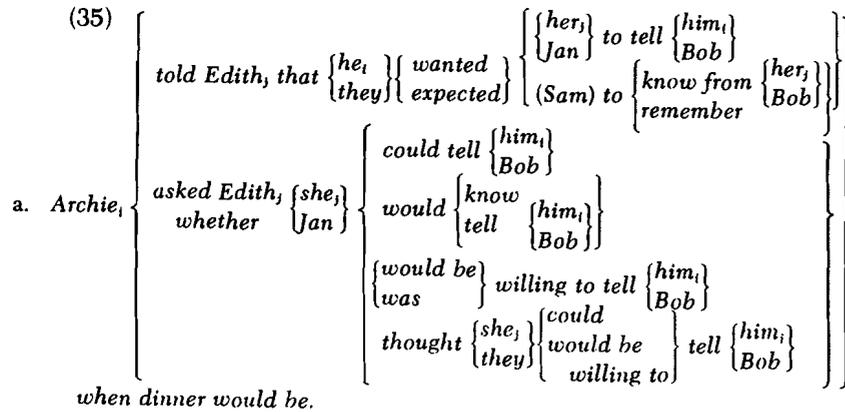
Also, when *Bob* replaces *me* in such tags, interpretations are usually possible under which the questioner is one of a group including Bob, and so on. But for the purposes of providing a simplified look at a complex situation, I have ruthlessly given asterisks to these 'further out' interpretations. In any case, they do not materially affect the main point, which is that a parallel exists between (32) and (35), for the asterisks in this latter example should also be taken to be under the same caveat.

¹⁴ Other examples of quasi-requests are the strings in (22) and (23) that are less than fully grammatical.

formal rules that will assign DEGREES of requesthood, declarativeness, hortatoriness, and so on.¹⁵

At any rate, the fact that the sliftability of the embedded question of (32a) varies directly with the extent to which the sentence in which it occurs can convey a request for information provides some support for the correctness of Generalization I.

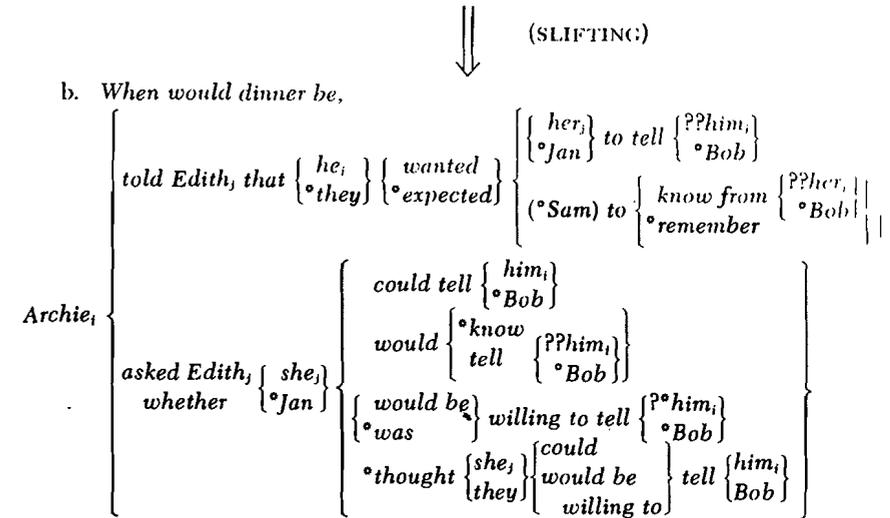
Nonetheless, it is necessary to reformulate this generalization, for we also find that questions can be slifted out of declarative sentences that REPORT requests. It is clear that the conversion of (35a) into (35b) closely parallels that of (32a) into (32b):¹⁶



¹⁵ I have argued for the postulation of SQUISHES—matrices representing the interactions of nondiscretely varying parameters—in a number of recent articles (cf. Ross, 1972, 1973b, 1973d). The semigrammaticalities of (22), (23), and (34) make it seem likely that the area of derived illocutionary force will present many similarities to the problems these articles take up.

¹⁶ One argument that sentences like those in (35b) have been produced by SLIFTING stems from the fact that the rule accounting for sequence-of-tense facts has operated to produce the *would* in the question clause. If (35b) were not derived from (35a), but was, rather, basic, then in order to produce the *would* of the question clause of (35b), any sequence-of-tense process that would proceed from the past tense of *told* or *asked* to introduce the past-tense morpheme on *would* would not proceed down the tree but would, instead, go backward into a noncommanded clause—the question clause of (35b). In Ross (1973c), I argue that a general constraint on rules should be imposed which would preclude any such case.

On the other hand, if (35a) underlies (35b), the sequence-of-tense rule will be able to proceed down the tree, from *told* or *asked* to *would*, before SLIFTING, in conformity with the constraint just mentioned.



Similarly, the conversion of (37a) into (37b) is possible only under conditions closely parallel to those under which (36a) can be converted into (36b):

(36) a. I ask you (to tell me) when dinner will be.

(SLIFTING)

b. When will dinner be, I ask you (?to tell me)?

(37) a. Archie_i asked Edith_j (to tell him_i) when dinner would be.

(SLIFTING)

b. When would dinner be, Archie_i asked Edith_j (??to tell him_i).

I have described these parallels only as 'close,' not as 'exact,' because it is obvious that there is an asymmetry here:

(38) Whenever it is possible to slift a question out of a reported request, it is possible to slift it in a corresponding sentence that is a request, or has the force of one, but not conversely.

In other words, whenever a construction in (35b) or (37b) is possible, the corresponding construction is possible in (32b) or (36b), but not conversely. This is one reflection of a quite general phenomenon, which I have stated here in a rough form:

- (39) THE PENTHOUSE PRINCIPLE: *Any rule that can operate in embedded contexts can also operate in unembedded ones, but not conversely.*¹⁷

Therefore, since it appears that the asymmetry noted in (38) can be made to follow from the Penthouse Principle, I will not attempt here a detailed account of the differences between (32) and (36), on the one hand, and (35) and (37), on the other, and will instead assume in what follows that a single characterization should be given for both types of sentences.¹⁸

The rule stated in (40) can serve as a first approximation to such a characterization:

- (40) GENERALIZATION II: *Embedded questions can be slifted only if the agent of the next-highest verb of saying is being requested by the indirect object of this verb to provide the relevant information about the wh-ed parts of the question that is to be slifted.*

While there are several inadequacies in (40),¹⁹ I doubt that the three conclusions that I will draw from it would be affected in any

¹⁷ This principle is explained and argued for in detail in Ross (1973a).

¹⁸ The following is a brief sketch of what I would hope would turn out to be the structure of a more detailed account. In line with my comments on the differences between (33) and (34), I assume that the rules that assign derived illocutionary forces will give graded outputs, and will say, for instance, that a sentence like (34c) can only partially attain the force of a request. Let us say that these squishy derived force rules assign strings some index of requesthood, x , where $0 \leq x \leq 1$. For the sake of discussion, let us say that, in isolation, (34c) would be assigned the value [0.43 Request]. The effect of the Penthouse Principle on such derived force rules would be to lower, in embedded contexts, all values of x produced in isolation, possibly, but not necessarily, by some constant amount. Thus, though strings like (34c) would receive the value of 0.43 in isolation, when they appear as the object of *Archie asked Edith*, as in (35b), the embedding decrement might bring x down to 0.13, say, which would be below the "0" threshold, as far as requests were concerned.

While this sketch is brief and programmatic in the extreme, I think the approach that I would attempt to implement should be sufficiently clear.

¹⁹ One obvious defect is the fact that (40) will not account for the grammaticality of (27c) or the corresponding embedded case in:

- (i) *When would dinner be, Archie wondered.*

major way by any reformulations that would be necessary to arrive at a more adequate rule.

CONCLUSION I

Though I have not stated in detail the formal rules that assign requesthood, it seems clear to me that it will only be possible to cast these rules in a maximally general way if the performative analysis of declaratives is assumed. That is, we want the conversion of (41a) to (41b) to be possible under precisely the same conditions as the conversion of (26a) to (27a) is possible. But this identity of conditions is apparent only if the latter two sentences are reanalyzed, in accordance with the performative analysis, as deriving from remote structures that include a highest performative, as in (42a) and (42b):

Assuming the performative analysis for declaratives (cf. Ross, 1970 for details), the source of (i) would be (ii), approximately:

- (ii) *I tell you that Archie wondered when dinner would be.*

Here, the first verb of saying above the question is *tell*, and it is not its subject that is requesting information. The only way to retain (40) in its present form would be to show that independent justification existed for decomposing *wondered* into something on the order of *said-want-tell*, as in:

- (iii) *I tell you that Archie_i said to X that he_i wanted X to tell him_i when dinner would be.*

While I know of no difficulty in principle with such a decomposition, at present it would be ad hoc.

It might appear that the version of (37b) that does not contain the verb of saying *tell* would also cause problems for (40), but in fact, as Postal has pointed out (cf. Postal, 1970), there exists independent evidence for a rule deleting *tell* under the conditions suggested in:

- (iv)
- $$\begin{array}{c} X \text{ ask } Y \text{ [(Y) [tell X] Q] } \\ \downarrow \quad \downarrow \\ \text{Equi } \emptyset \quad \downarrow \quad \downarrow \\ \quad \quad \quad \emptyset \quad \text{Tell DELETION} \end{array}$$

First of all, this rule regularizes the distribution of *ask*, for it allows one to simply specify that *ask* is an equi-subject predicate (cf. Perlmutter, 1971 for a definition of this term), instead of making it necessary to call it EITHER an equi-subject predicate OR a question-taking predicate. Second, it resolves an apparent irregularity in the control problem. In (v), the indirect object of *ask* deletes the subject of *buy*, while in (vi), the subject of *ask* does so:

- (v) *I asked Josh to buy a leech.*
 (vi) *I asked Josh when to buy a leech.*

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- (41) a. *Archie_i told Edith_j that he_i wanted her_j to tell him_i when dinner would be.*

↓ (SLIFTING)
↓

- b. *When would dinner be, Archie_i told Edith_j that he_i wanted her_j to tell him_i.*

- (42) a. *I tell you that I want you to tell me when dinner will be.*

↓ (SLIFTING)
↓

- b. *When will dinner be, I tell you that I want you to tell me.*

There exist many other parallels between apparently unembedded cases like (32) and obviously embedded cases like (35). All of these provide further support for the performative analysis.

Under the Tell DELETION analysis, however, the controller of the deleted subject of *buy* in (vi) is really the indirect object of the deleted *tell*, as is shown in:

- (vii) *I asked Josh [he tell me [when I should buy a leech]].*

Thus, the short version of (37b) does not cause any problems for (40).

But there is a second problem with (40), which was pointed out to me by Jim McCawley. Namely, as (40) is formulated at present, it will allow all of the sentences in (viii) to undergo SLIFTING, yielding the corresponding sentences in (ix). However, not all of these are grammatical:

- (viii) a. *I think that Archie asked Edith when dinner would be.*
 b. *I doubt that Archie asked Edith when dinner would be.*
 c. *Archie tried to ask Edith when dinner would be.*
 d. *Archie failed to ask Edith when dinner would be.*
 e. *Archie could not have failed to ask Edith when dinner would be.*
- (ix) a. *?When would dinner be, I think that Archie asked Edith.*
 b. **When would dinner be, I doubt that Archie asked Edith.*
 c. *When would dinner be, Archie tried to ask Edith.*
 d. **When would dinner be, Archie failed to ask Edith.*
 e. *??When would dinner be, Archie could not have failed to ask Edith.*

The complexity of the conditions that seem to be involved here suggests that a great deal of research may be necessary to repair the deficiency of (40) that McCawley pointed out.

CONCLUSION 2

The basic idea of Gordon and Lakoff was to account for derived illocutionary forces by transderivational rules that would relate one logical structure [one expressing a declarative, like (42a), say] to a different logical structure [one expressing a request, like (43)]:

- (43) *I ask you to tell me when dinner will be.*

But the preceding discussion has shown, in effect, that the type of rules that Gordon and Lakoff postulate must be assumed to be able to apply also in embedded contexts, WITHOUT CHANGING THE FORCE OF THE STRUCTURE IN WHICH THEY APPLY.

An example may make this point clearer. The basic illocutionary force of (41a) is that of a declarative. Since the derived force rules will specify that it is an assertion to the effect that Archie has requested Edith to answer the embedded question, Generalization II will allow this question to be sifted. The result, (41b), SEEMS TO RETAIN ITS DECLARATIVE FORCE.²⁰

²⁰ Dick Oehrle has pointed out to me that there may be some change of force involved in changing (41a) to (41b). In particular, while the former could be followed by such appositives as *which was a lie* [cf. (i)], which I argued, in connection with (8)-(11), to be restricted to declaratives:

- (i) *You said, 'Archie told Edith that he wanted her to tell him when dinner would be,' which was a lie.*

the latter is somewhat odd when such tags are appended to it:

- (ii) *??You said, 'When would dinner be, Archie told Edith that he wanted her to tell him,' which was a lie.*

A shorter example of the same type, (iii), seems better:

- (iii) *?You said, 'When would dinner be, Archie asked Edith,' which was a lie.*

The '?' prefix on (iii) shows that the rule assigning declarativeness will not give it a 1.0 rating, but it certainly cannot be regarded as having the force of a question, either, as (*iv) shows:

- (iv) *You said, '[When would dinner be]_{S1}, Archie asked Edith]_{S2}.'*

{[?]which₁}
was not obvious.
{[?]which₂}

It is weakly possible to follow (iv) with a question-requiring appositive, but only if the *which* refers to Archie's question, not to the whole direct quote.

Thus, while such sentences as (41b) seem not to be perfect as declaratives, they seem to come closer to having this force than to having any other. I conclude, then

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CONCLUSION 3

Assuming, for the sake of discussion, the correctness of Conclusion 2 (though bearing in mind the caveat of footnote 20), we see that derived force rules must be integrated into the grammar much more tightly than has sometimes been held to be necessary. In particular, they must be able to apply in embedded contexts, IN SUCH A WAY THAT A SYNTACTIC TRANSFORMATION—the rule of SLIFTING—CAN APPLY TO THEIR OUTPUT. In other words, if derived force rules are taken to be rules of pragmatics, and I believe this conception to be quite a traditional one, then it is not possible to relegate syntactic and pragmatic processes to different components of a grammar. Rather than it being possible for the 'work' of linking surface structures to the sets of contexts in which these structures can be appropriately used to be dichotomized into a set of pragmatic rules and a set of semantactic rules, it seems to be necessary to postulate that this work is to be accomplished by one unified component, in which rules concerned with such pragmatic matters as illocutionary force, speaker location, and so on, and rules concerned with such semantic matters as synonymy, metaphoric extension of senses, and so on, and rules concerned with such syntactic matters as the distribution of meaningless morphemes,²¹ the choice of prepositional versus postpositional languages, and so on, are interspersed in various ways.²² Following a recent practice of Fillmore, we might term the study of such mixed components PRAGMANTAX.

Note that accepting the conclusion that there is a pragmantactic component does not necessarily entail abandoning the distinction between pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic aspects of linguistic structure. Conceptually, at least, it does seem possible to draw these traditional distinctions, and it may even sometime be possible to

that applying derived force rules in embedded contexts does not change the force of the superordinate structure. It is obvious, however, that this whole area will require intensive study in the future. In particular, what are the theoretical implications of another of Oehrle's observations—namely, that such sentences as (35b) and (41b) occur only in narration? These are deep waters, and I must leave the many questions that denizen them unanswered.

²¹ If such there be.

²² Surely, it will in the course of time be possible and necessary to isolate possible from impossible types of interspersions and admixtures of these various (and other various) types of rules, but at present, in my opinion, not enough mixed cases have been studied to allow any such constraints to be formulated with an adequate empirical basis.

show that pragmatic violations (like including a first-person pronoun in a newspaper article that has no byline), semantic violations (like asserting that something fell upward), and syntactic violations (like keeping the first occurrence of *and*, rather than the last, in a coordinate structure [^o*winter, and spring, summer, fall* instead of *winter, spring, summer, and fall*]) all produce psychologically different reactions. At present, however, there are no known psychological correlates of this tripartite distinction. If future research should uncover empirical support for these conceptual distinctions, it would still be perfectly possible to maintain the hypothesis that there is a pragmantactic component, in which rules of psychologically distinct types were intermixed. For to claim that there is a pragmantactic component is merely to claim that rules of the three types interact in a way that would preclude their being studied in isolation from each other.

How could this conclusion—that pragmatic rules like Generalization II must apply before syntactic transformations like SLIFTING—be avoided? It is worthwhile examining in some detail a hypothetical reanalysis of the type of facts I have been dealing with, for there might be some who would see in such a reanalysis a serious alternative to accepting the postulation of a pragmantactic component.

Supposing, for instance, that one were to say that there is no 'syntactic' difference between (44a) and (44b)—that the syntactic component, operating in total isolation from any pragmatic inputs such as those in Generalization II, specifies both of the strings in (44) as being 'syntactically well-formed':

- (44) a. *When did Tom leave, I want to know.*
 b. *When did Tom leave, I don't want to know.*

After the syntactic component had applied, an independently operating pragmatic component, which would contain the equivalent of Generalization II, would specify that certain syntactically well-formed strings, like (44b), were 'pragmatically deviant.'

Under such a conception, which would shrink the traditional domain of syntax by removing from the syntactic component the work of specifying the distribution of so-called 'empty *do*' in English, as well as the work of specifying the conditions under which tensed auxiliaries precede the subjects of their clauses, my claim—that it is necessary to intersperse pragmatic and syntactic rules—would have been avoided. But at what cost?

The cost, it seems to me, would be that of abandoning a rather traditional definition of the term SYNTAX—namely, that syntax is the

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THE SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC STATUS OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

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I. INTRODUCTION

An important and controversial problem in contemporary linguistics is to determine the theoretical implications of the notion of conversational implicature, proposed by Grice (chapter 2 of this volume). Grice argues that there are aspects of what a speaker intends to communicate by a sentence that are conversationally implicated by the sentence but are not part of the logical structure of the sentence.¹ For instance, Pamela, upon being asked (1), might reply (2):

- (1) *How are you doing in your new position at San Andreas Fault University?*
- (2) *Well, I haven't been fired yet.*

¹ As I shall use the term, LOGICAL STRUCTURE is assumed to refer to a single-linguistically significant level, which is both the input to the rules of grammar mapping underlying structure onto surface structure, and is the input to the interpretive rules of a model theoretic formal semantics. I do not assume that the logical structure of a sentence is the standard translation of a natural language sentence into the notation of first-order predicate calculus. I leave open the question of whether first-order predicate calculus (or, in fact, any extant logical system) is adequate for the representation of natural language. In addition, I follow in the footsteps of earlier generative grammarians in not assuming any great degree of similarity between underlying, logical structure and the surface structure of a sentence.

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