

Notes on the Intentionality of Perlocutionary Acts

- Green (1996, p. 67): Perlocutionary acts are “acts which have an effect which is an intended, but not a necessary consequence of performing the illocutionary act.”
- Levinson (1983, p. 237): “A perlocutionary act is specific to the circumstances of issuance, and is therefore not conventionally achieved just by uttering that particular utterance, and includes all those effects, intended or unintended, often indeterminate, that some particular utterance in a particular situation may cause.”

notes on classes

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- Austin (1962, p. 101): [Perlocution] “Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them...”
- (p. 105): “Acts of all our three kinds necessitate, since they are the performing of actions, allowance being made for the ills that all action is heir to. We must systematically be prepared to distinguish between ‘the act of doing x’, i.e. achieving x, and the ‘act of attempting to do x.’”

notes on classes

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- (p. 106): “Since our acts are actions, we must always remember the distinction between producing effects or consequences which are intended or unintended; and (i) when the speaker intends to produce an effect it may nevertheless not occur, and (ii) when he does not intend to produce it or intends not to produce it it may nevertheless occur.”
- FOOTNOTE: “This complication in (ii), it may be pointed out, can of course also arise in the cases of both locutionary and illocutionary acts....But it is in connection with perlocution that it is most prominent, as is also the distinction between attempt and achievement.”

notes on classes

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- (p. 107): “The perlocutionary act always includes some consequences, as when we say ‘By doing x I was doing y’: we do bring in a greater or less stretch of ‘consequences’ always, some of which may be ‘unintentional.’”
- Austin makes the distinction between “perlocutionary object”, which would seem to be intentional, from “perlocutionary sequel”, which would seem to be, at least sometimes, unintentional.

notes on classes

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- (p. 118): “The perlocutionary act may be either the achievement of a perlocutionary object (convince, persuade) or the production of a perlocutionary sequel. Thus the act of warning may achieve its perlocutionary object of alerting and also have the perlocutionary sequel of alarming, and an argument against a view may fail to achieve its object but have the perlocutionary sequel of convincing our opponent of its truth (‘I only succeeded in convincing him.’)”
- Note that in this last example, Austin is making a distinction between the object of an argument, which is validly proving its point, from merely convincing the opponent.

notes on classes

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Can A both Presuppose and Entail B?

- Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet (2000, p. 30): “Sentence (40a) not only presupposes (40e); it also entails (40e):
 - (40a) It was Lee who got a perfect score on the semantics quiz.
 - (40e) Someone got a perfect score on the semantics quiz.
- (p. 31): “Given the way we have defined entailment and presupposition, it is possible for A both to entail and to presuppose B. (Some accounts of presupposition do not admit this possibility.)”

notes on classes

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- (p. 355): “(42a) both entails and presupposes (42b)”:
- (42a) Joan realizes that syntax deals with sentence structure.
- (42b) Syntax deals with sentence structure.
- Levinson (1983, p. 194):
- (117) John doesn’t regret doing a useless PhD in linguistics because in fact he never did one!
- (121) *John regrets doing a PhD because in fact he never did one.
- (123) *Florence has stopped beating her husband and in fact she never did beat him.
- (124) *It was Luke who would betray him, because in fact no one would.

notes on classes

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- “In connection with overt denials as in (117)-(119), it is important to note that at least in many cases they are not possible with positive sentences.... A simple but important explanation of this is to claim that, at least in these cases, the affirmative sentences *entail* what we have hitherto called the presupposition of each of them. Thus (121)-(123) are simply contradictions and thus semantically anomalous. This claim leaves it open whether in addition to being entailed the alleged presuppositions are also (redundantly) presupposed in the affirmative sentence, although most presuppositional theorists would claim that they are. The asymmetries that thus show up between negative and positive sentences with respect to overt denial of presuppositions argue strongly for the entailment analysis in positive sentences (see Wilson, 1975: 25-8; Gazdar, 1979a: 119-23 for further argument).”

notes on classes

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“Flout” versus “Flaunt”

- American Heritage Dictionary
 - Flout
 - To show contempt for; scorn.
 - *To flout a law; behavior that flouted convention.*
 - [Perhaps from Middle English *flouten*, to play the flute]
 - Flaunt
 - To exhibit ostentatiously or shamelessly
 - *Flaunt his knowledge.*
 - [Origin unknown]

- USAGE NOTE
 - *Flaunt* as a transitive verb means “to exhibit ostentatiously”: *She flaunted her diamonds.* *To flout* is “to show contempt for”: *She flouted the proprieties.* For some time now *flaunt* has been used in the sense “to show contempt for,” even by educated users of English. This usage is still widely seen as erroneous and is best avoided.

Example from “History of the American Family
Lecture” from Michigan Corpus of Academic
English (www.hti.umich.edu/m/micase/)

alright. there are th- two parts to the exam, short answer and i'm not kidding when i say, i want you to identify, each of these things in no more than three sentences do not spend a paragraph these are just to make sure that you've been attending lectures and know what day it is and what class this is. okay? alright. you can do all of these you should be able to do all of these. but you don't have to you get you know only have to do five out of six okay? now... let me remind you these essays are a way of testing your knowledge and i need to know that you've been doing the reading so, tell me this is a chance to, **flout** or **flaunt** okay? not **flout** but **flaunt**, all the stuff you've been reading and everything you know okay? and what i want why i give this kind of uh e- exam is because i really want you to sit down with all the stuff you've learned your notes, your notes to the reading, your discussions and i want you to figure out what it is you've learned. in the past couple of weeks. and unless you are, asked to bring this stuff together, think it through you'll never know what you learned in this course and i really want you to know, what you learned in this course okay?