

A Semantico-Pragmatic Analysis of Performative Utterances, Part II: How Performative Utterances Make Statements

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0. Introduction

Austin (1962) claimed that performative utterances or performatives are not statements and that they are neither true nor false. Take the following examples, which are cited from Austin (1962: 5):

- (1) a. I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*.
b. I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.

Austin (1962: 6) says:

- (2) In these examples [= those like (1a) and (1b)] it seems clear that to utter sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it. None of the utterances cited is either true or false: I assert this as obvious and do not argue it. It needs argument no more than that 'damn' is not true or false: it may be that the utterance 'serves to inform you'—but that is quite different.

However, Lewis (1972: 210) argues against this view and says:

- (3) I would wish to say that 'I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow' is true on an occasion of utterance iff the utterer *does* then bet his audience sixpence that it will rain on the following day; and, if the occasion is normal in certain respects, the utterer does so bet; therefore his utterance is true. Austin says it is obviously neither true nor false,

apparently because to utter the sentence (in normal circumstances) is to bet. Granted; but why is that a reason to deny that the utterance is true?

To utter 'I am speaking' is to speak, but it is also to speak the truth.

Clearly, Lewis considers that to utter, for instance, sentence (1 b) is to perform the action named by its main verb *bet*. He seems to agree with Austin in this respect, but he objects that the utterance is describing the betting act performed in itself. That is, he claims that by his utterance, the speaker is making a statement that he is performing the action named by the performative verb it contains. Thus the difference is that, while Austin claims that performatives just perform acts named by their main verbs, Lewis claims that they do not only perform the named acts, but also make statements about those performed acts.

In section 1, I will show how it is possible that to utter a performative sentence is to perform the act named by its main verb; and, in sections 2 and 3, I will discuss the question of whether it makes a statement or not.

1. How performatives constitute the actions named by their main verbs

The problem we have to solve before examining Lewis's claim is how performatives constitute the actions named by their main verbs. Without a solution to this problem, Lewis's claim is groundless. As Lyons (1977:742) points out, the performative use of *I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow* is 'logically, if not historically, prior to the descriptive use of the verb *bet* and the description of the performed act is 'a secondary consequence of this fact'.

A number of authors, including Bach and Harnish (1979), Searle (1989), Harnish (2002) and Jary (2007), have presented their accounts for the problem. Bach and Harnish consider that performative utterances make statements and constitutes intended speech acts by virtue of pragmatic inferences. Searle's view is that performatives are declarations, that is, that their performativity is due to their declarational nature.¹ Jary argues that 'explicit performatives are best characterized as linguistic acts of showing.'

However, I claim that there are two different ways in which performative utterances constitute actions named by their main verbs.² The first is linguistic; we have linguistic performatives whose performativity is attributed to their semantic properties, especially to those of their main verbs. For example, consider:

- (4) a. You are wrong.
 b. John says that you are wrong.
 c. I say that you are wrong.

When a speaker utters sentence (4a), he refers to a situation r_a , which is of type T_a specified by the sentence *you are wrong*; that is, the utterance situation u_a represents the situation r_a , as in:

- (5) $S_a: u_a \rightarrow r_a$
 $u_a \models \langle \text{uttering, sp, YOU ARE WRONG} \rangle$
 $r_a \models \langle \text{wrong, hr} \rangle$
 $T_a = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \text{wrong, hr} \rangle]$

In the utterance of sentence (4b), the utterance situation u_b represents John's utterance situation r_b , which is of type T_b specified by sentence (4 b) *John says that you are wrong*:

- (6) $S_b: u_b \rightarrow r_b$
 $u_b \models \langle \text{uttering, sp, JOHN SAYS THAT YOU ARE WRONG} \rangle$
 $r_b \models \langle \text{saying, j, } (r_a \models \langle \text{wrong, hr} \rangle) \rangle$
 $T_b = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \text{saying, j, } (r_a \models \langle \text{wrong, hr} \rangle) \rangle]$

In the case of sentence (4 c), since the sentence *I say...* in the first person singular present form is self-referential, the utterance situation u_c represents itself; that is, it is the represented situation r_c itself. This means that the utterance situation u_c is of type T_c determined by (4 c) *I say that you are wrong*, as in:

- (7) $S_c: u_c \rightarrow r_c = u_c$

1 Grewendorf (2002) discusses the problems with these approaches.

2 For further details, see my paper Nakashima (2008).

$$u_c \models \langle \text{uttering, sp, I SAY THAT YOU ARE WRONG} \rangle$$

$$r_c = u_c \models \langle \text{saying, sp, (} r_a \models \langle \text{wrong, hr} \rangle \rangle \rangle$$

$$T_c = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \text{saying, sp, (} r_a \models \langle \text{wrong, hr} \rangle \rangle \rangle]$$

Thus the utterance of sentence (4c) constitutes a speech act named by the verb *say* by virtue of its semantic property producing the self-referentiality; that is, when combined with the first person pronoun, its present form refers to its own utterance. The same is true of other performative sentences such as *I tell you...*, *I state...*, *I claim...*, *I assert...*, etc. whose main verbs all have the semantic property of speaking.

The second way is extra-linguistic; we have extra-linguistic performative utterances whose performativity is due to special conventions within the institution and which replace nonverbal actions or gestures such as signing one's name, stamping some papers, whacking a gavel and crossing one's self. Imagine a situation, for example, where a soldier is undertaking a mission; there he expresses his intention to volunteer for the mission by stepping forward and, as a result, his action is counted as a volunteering act, i.e. one that is of type T_v , as shown in:

(8) $s \rightarrow v$

$$s \models \langle \text{stepping-forward, sl} \rangle, \text{ where sl is the soldier.}$$

$$v \models \langle \text{volunteering, sl, m} \rangle, \text{ where m is the mission.}$$

$$T_v = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \text{volunteering, sl, m} \rangle]$$

He can also perform a volunteering act verbally just in saying (9):

(9) I volunteer to go to the mission.

In this case, we may say that, in a sense, an utterance like (9) replaces an action of stepping forward. Namely, it is playing a role of volunteering in place of the stepping-forward action; and it is of type T_v :

(10) $S_v: u = v \rightarrow v$

$$u \models \langle \text{uttering, sl, I VOLUNTEER TO GO TO THE MISSION} \rangle$$

$$u = v \models \langle \text{volunteering, sl, m} \rangle$$

Thus the utterance constitutes an action named by the verbs by replacing a

nonverbal behavior in virtue of social conventions.

2. Are performative utterances statements?

First let us look at Lyons (1977: 728)'s comment about the following sentence in connection with the problem of whether a performative is used to make a statement.

(11) I am speaking.

He says:

(12) ...Nor is it the case that anyone saying *I am speaking* would normally expect to be taken as asserting that in the course of saying *I am speaking*, rather than before or after his utterance of *I am speaking*, he was speaking: it is difficult, though not impossible, to imagine a situation in which *I am speaking* could be token- reflexive.

The reason that 'it is difficult, though not impossible,' to make a 'token-reflexive' or self-referential statement in saying *I am speaking* is that the statement is very trivial, if made, because the utterance is automatically true; that is, the sentence *I am speaking* is not worth saying self-referentially. Someone saying *I am speaking* is normally taken as asserting that he is speaking at the different time from his utterance of *I am speaking*. For example, when he is making a speech, he may tell the noisy audience, "I'm speaking," as in:

(13) Please be quiet! I'm speaking.

In this case, the situation d described by sentence (11) is different from the situation u in which it is uttered, as shown by:

(14)

U	⇒	D
↑		↑
u	→	d

$U = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \langle \text{uttering, sp, I AM SPEAKING, I} \rangle \rangle]$

$$\begin{aligned}
 D &= [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{speaking, sp, } \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle] \\
 u &\models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, I AM SPEAKING, } \mathbf{I}_u \rangle\rangle \\
 d &\models \langle\langle \text{speaking, sp, } \mathbf{I}_d \rangle\rangle
 \end{aligned}$$

The described situation d is the one where people are noisy. So the speaker is making a statement about the situation d , i.e., the statement that he is speaking (in the noisy situation).

$$(15) \quad u \models \langle\langle \text{stating, sp, } (d \models \langle\langle \text{speaking, sp, } \mathbf{I}_d \rangle\rangle) \rangle\rangle$$

In the case of the self-referential utterance u of *I am speaking*, on the other hand, the relationship among situations and types is shown diagrammatically as in:

(16)

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 U & \Rightarrow & D \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
 u & \rightarrow & d = u
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 U &= [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, I AM SPEAKING, } \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle] \\
 D &= [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{speaking, sp, } \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle] = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, } \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle]
 \end{aligned}$$

Here the value of the variable \mathbf{X} may be a word, a sentence or anything you say in any language. When the sentence *I am speaking* is substituted for the variable \mathbf{X} , type D turns type D' , which is the same as the utterance type U :

$$(17) \quad D' = U = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, I AM SPEAKING, } \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle]$$

To put it differently, the described situation d of type D' is both of type D and of type U ; and it is the utterance situation itself:

$$(18) \quad u = d \models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, I AM SPEAKING, } \mathbf{I}_u \rangle\rangle$$

That is, when you say *I am speaking*, referring to your utterance situation, the state of affairs your utterance means automatically holds in the described situation because that described situation is the utterance situation itself. This means that making a self-referential statement by using sentence (11) is very

trivial and pointless.

However, sentence (11) can be used easily to refer to its own utterance when it has a manner adverb like *softly* or *loudly* occurring in it:

(19) I am speaking softly/loudly.

In saying, “I am speaking softly/loudly,” you can assert that you are speaking softly or loudly, while uttering this sentence softly or loudly. In that case, your assertion is true. In contrast, if you said ‘I am speaking softly,’ while speaking loudly, you would be making a false assertion. Thus you can make a meaningful assertion in saying sentence (11).

Precisely the same is true of performative utterances. Jary (2007: 207-208) points out that a declarative sentence in the first person singular present form like (20) can be used both to make a promise and to assert that a promise is made.

(20) I promise never to drink again.

The promise-making or performative use is made manifest by adding the adverb *hereby*:

(21) I hereby promise never to drink again.

When it is uttered in an exchange like (22), on the other hand, the utterance of (20) has to be taken as an assertion about the speaker B’s habitual behavior:

(22) A: What do you do when you wake up with a terrible hangover?

B: I promise never to drink again.

This is shown by the following:

(23) For every d : $d \models \langle \text{hangover}, \text{sp} \rangle$

U	⇒	D
↑		↑
u	→	d

$U = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \text{uttering}, \text{sp}, \text{I PROMISE NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN}, \mathbf{I} \rangle]$

$D = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \langle \text{promising-never-to-drink, sp, } \mathbf{I} \rangle \rangle]$
 $u \models \langle \langle \text{uttering, sp, I PROMISE NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN, } l_u \rangle \rangle$
 $d \models \langle \langle \text{promising-never-to-drink, sp, } l_d \rangle \rangle$

And, in the utterance situation u , the speaker is making an assertion, as in:

(24) $u \models \langle \langle \text{asserting, sp, } (\forall d \models \langle \langle \text{promising-never-to-drink, sp, } l_d \rangle \rangle) \rangle \rangle$

Also Rutherford (1970: 102 - 103) indicates that the verb *promise* of a sentence containing a restrictive *because* clause cannot be a performative, as shown by:

- (25) a. I hereby promise to be loyal to the cause (*because I have no other choice).
 b. I (*hereby) promise to be loyal to the cause because I have no other choice.

That is, when you say, 'I promise to be loyal to the cause because I have not other choice,' you can univocally make an assertion about the reason why you are loyal to the cause.

In the case of the performative use of sentence (20), can we make a statement about our own promising acts we are performing? My answer is that it is possible, but normally we don't. For, if we did, the statement would be trivially true and pointless. This is shown by the following, just as in (16):

(26) I (hereby) promise never to drink again.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 U & \Rightarrow & D \\
 \uparrow & & \uparrow \\
 u & \rightarrow & d = u
 \end{array}$$

$U = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \langle \text{uttering, sp, I PROMISE NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN, } \mathbf{I} \rangle \rangle]$
 $D = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle \langle \text{promising-never-to-drink, sp, } \mathbf{I} \rangle \rangle]$
 $u \models \langle \langle \text{uttering, sp, I PROMISE NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN, } l_u \rangle \rangle$
 $u = d \models \langle \langle \text{promising-never-to-drink, sp, } l_u \rangle \rangle$

As I have claimed in the previous section, the act of uttering *I promise never to drink again* is counted as an act of promising never to drink again by social conventions, so the utterance situation turns a described one. Therefore anyone uttering sentence (20) under the appropriate conditions is performing a promising act; and consequently he makes a very trivial statement, if he does, which is true just because it is uttered.

Allan (1986:229) claims that performatives are statements, indicating that they are reported by *saying that* Σ .³ This form, he says, 'reports statements, i.e. propositions that have truth values in the world spoken of, so that *saying that* $\Sigma = \textit{saying that } p$.' Consider:

- (27) a. I promise I will.
 b. I said that I promise I will.

You can report an utterance of performative sentence (27a) by *saying that* Σ , as in (27b). According to Allan, the reported form (27b) 'shows that the locution of of an explicit performative is that of a statement. and so, the primary illocution of an explicit performative clause will be that of a statement.' However, Wilson (1995: 202-204) points out, in relation to Grice's Maxim of Quality, that ' [t]here are two possible interpretations of the notion of saying, ... [o]n the weaker interpretation, *saying* involves merely expressing a proposition, without any necessary commitment to its truth... [o]n the stronger interpretation, *saying* involves not merely expressing a proposition but committing oneself to its truth.' The use of *say* in (27b) should be interpreted in its weaker sense. After all, it is pointless to commit oneself to the truth of the proposition that would, if asserted, be automatically true.⁴

On the other hand, sentences like those in (28), which contain manner adverbials, are used to make non-trivial statements.⁵

3 Allan considers that, in performative utterances, the illocution shown by the main verbs are indirect, derived by inference from the primary illocution of statements.

4 Notice that it is the rhetic act, not the phatic one, that replaces a social action or counts token-reflexively as an act named by the main verb.

- (28) a. I tell you frankly that this party is boring.
 b. I christen this ship the S.W. Splash happily.
 c. I (hereby) urgently beseech you to help me.
 d. I (hereby) reluctantly pronounce you man and wife.
 e. I (hereby) promise for the first and last time never to drink again.

For example, consider the following exchange:⁶

- (29) A: I tell you frankly that this party is boring.
 B: That's not true. You are not being frank, I've just seen you dancing with the blonde beauty in blue.

Notice that A asserts that the party is boring, but he is laying himself open to a charge against the unfrankness of his assertion. This can be explained on the assumption that, in his utterance, A also asserts that he tells B that the party is boring or, to put it differently, he makes an assertion about the assertive act he is performing; that is, he makes two assertions: an assertion that the party is boring and an assertion about that assertion.

Many authors present similar examples as evidence to show that performatives are statements. For example, Lycan (2000: 183) points out that, as we work our way down the following list of sentences, more and more information is conveyed by performative prefaces containing adverbials:

- (30) a. I admit freely that I had several private conversations with the defendant.
 b. I admit with reluctance that I had several private conversations with the defendant.
 c. I admit gladly and with the greatest pleasure that I had several private

5 The examples (28b), (28c) and (28d) are cited from Schreiber (1972) and (28e) from Jary (2007).

6 I have revised Ifantidou-Trouki (1993: 84)'s example:

i. Peter: Frankly, this party is boring.

Mary: You are not being frank. I've just seen you dancing with the blonde beauty in blue.

In this case, the performative clause modified by the adverb *frankly* is suppressed.

conversations with the defendant.

d. Because I am concerned to tell the whole truth, I admit that I had several private conversations with the defendant.

e. Mindful that there is a just and mighty God I Heaven who punishes those who withhold information in courts of law, and in mortal fear of the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched, I admit that I had several private conversations with the defendant.

Of these, the performative preface in (30d) contains an entire clause whose information cannot be ignored; and so it seems that the preface makes a statement about the reason why the speaker admits that he had private conversations with the defendant.

The following example given by Jary (2007 : 228) has a performative sentence *your policy is (hereby) cancelled* embedded:

(31) I regret to inform you that your policy is (hereby) cancelled.

In uttering this sentence, the speaker performs a cancelling act. He admits that an assertion is also performed in that utterance, because we can deny that the speaker regrets what he is doing.

3. How does the performative make a statement about itself?

First consider the following:

(32) I promise for the first and last time never to drink again.

When this sentence is used performatively, as I have argued, its utterance counts as an action of promising by virtue of the social conventions that replace nonverbal social actions with linguistic ones.

(33) $S_p: u \rightarrow r$

$u \models \langle \langle \text{uttering, sp, I PROMISE FOR THE FIRST AND LAST TIME NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN, } l_u \rangle \rangle$

$r \models \langle \langle \text{promising, sp, p, } l_u \rangle \rangle$

$p = (t \models \langle \langle \text{drinking-again, sp, } 0 \rangle \rangle)$

However, notice that, in this case, it is not guaranteed that the promising act

is performed for the first and last time; the conventions do not have a capacity for guaranteeing such a thing. Thus determining whether or not the speaker is making a promise for the first and last time is not quite so obvious.

(34)

$$\begin{array}{lcl} U & \Rightarrow & D \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow (?) \\ u & \rightarrow & d = u \end{array}$$

$$U = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, I PROMISE FOR THE FIRST AND LAST TIME NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN, } \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle]$$

$$D = [\mathbf{s} \mid \mathbf{s} \models \langle\langle \text{promising-for-the-first-and-last-time, sp, p, } \mathbf{I} \rangle\rangle]$$

$$p = (t \models \langle\langle \text{drinking-again, sp, } 0 \rangle\rangle)$$

$$u \models \langle\langle \text{uttering, sp, I PROMISE FOR THE FIRST AND LAST TIME NEVER TO DRINK AGAIN, } l_u \rangle\rangle$$

$$u = d \models \langle\langle \text{promising (-for-the-first-and-last-time), sp, p, } l_u \rangle\rangle$$

As a result, it is not pointless to make a statement about one's own utterance, manifesting one's belief in the truth of that statement.⁷

$$(35) u \models \langle\langle \text{stating, sp, } (u \models \langle\langle \text{promising-for-the-first-and-last-time, sp, p, } l_u \rangle\rangle), l_u \rangle\rangle$$

Next consider the following example given by Rutherford (1970:103):

$$(36) \text{ I hereby promise to be loyal to the cause, because I have no other choice.}$$

Since this sentence contains the performative verb *promise* with *hereby*, the speaker performs a promising act felicitously in uttering the main clause. It also contains the non-restrictive reason adverbial *because I have no other choice*, which means that he performs another speech act, making a statement about a causal relation between his promising and his having no

7 In (35), the utterance situation u has itself as a constituent; that is, the situation supporting the speaker's making a statement occurs in the proposition he states. To put it in Barwise (1989)'s words, the situation u is *circular* in the sense that there is a finite sequence of situations, starting and ending with u , as in:

$$u \in \dots \in u.$$

For further details, see Barwise (1989, Ch.8) .

other choice. That is, the following two speech acts are being performed in the overall utterance:

- (37) a. I hereby promise to be loyal to the cause.
 b. I hereby state that I promise to be loyal to the cause because I have no other choice.

To explain this fact, Allan proposes a paratactic analysis, shown roughly as follows:

- (38) I declare [[I hereby promise [+perf] to be loyal to the cause] and [I promise [-perf] to be loyal to the cause because I have no other choice]]

One of the inadequacies for this analysis is that it needs the superfluous topmost performative clause *I declare* that dominates the two performative clauses connected by the conjunct *and*. Actually, in (36), there are two independent speech acts, one performed in the main clause utterance and the other performed in the *because*-clause utterance. Notice that the main clause *I hereby promise to be loyal to the cause* plays a dual role: one is performing a promising act and the other is contributing to the propositional meaning, i.e. the causal relation, represented by the higher performative clause. To rephrase the latter role, the utterance of the main clause is incorporated into the higher clause as shown by:

- (39) I hereby state that [I promise...the cause] because I have no other choice.

↑

I hereby promise to be loyal to the cause.

This sort of incorporation can be explained by Davidson's Demonstrative Theory of Quotation as follows:

- (40) I hereby state that *this* is because I have no other choice: "I hereby promise to be loyal to the cause."

(this = " ")

Suppose that the incorporated utterance is a quoted utterance token. (39) can be replaced by (40); that is, the quotation marks play the role of a singular term containing the demonstrative *this* and refer to the situation type T_u of which the quoted utterance, i.e. ‘this utterance,’ is a token:

$$(41) T_u = [s \mid s \models \langle\langle \text{promising, sp, to-be-loyal-to-the-cause, } l_u \rangle\rangle]$$

And the *because*-clause represents the type T_b :

$$(42) T_b = [s \mid s \models \langle\langle \text{having-other-choice, sp, } 0 \rangle\rangle]$$

So the statement made by the speaker about the causal relation is shown by:⁸

$$(43) u \models \langle\langle \text{stating, sp, } (u \models \langle\langle \text{Because, } T_u, T_b \rangle\rangle), l_u \rangle\rangle$$

As is clear from this analysis, I claim that, in the case of (36), it is the utterance of the *because*-clause that makes a statement about the speech act performed, and that the utterance of the performative main clause itself just performs an act of promising, not making any statement.

Allan (1986: 230-231) argues that the following a-sentences, which contain style disjuncts, show evidence that ‘performative sentences have the primary illocution of statements,’ because they can be paraphrased as the b-sentences:

(44) a. *In the first place* I admit to being wrong; and *secondly*, I promise it’ll never happen again.

b. The first thing I have to say is that I admit to being wrong; and the second is that I promise it’ll never happen again.

(45) a. *Once and for all*, I promise never to see the girl again.

b. I say once and for all, I promise never to see the girl again.

8 With the use of a channel c connecting situations, the causal relation is shown more specifically, as in:

- i. $u \models \langle\langle \text{Because, } T_u, T_b \rangle\rangle$
 $\leftrightarrow \exists c, s [R_c(u, s) \wedge u \models T_u \wedge s \models T_b]$
- ii. $u \models T_u$
 $\leftrightarrow u \models \langle\langle \text{promising, sp, to-be-loyal-to-the-cause, } l_u \rangle\rangle$
- iii. $s \models T_b$
 $\leftrightarrow s \models \langle\langle \text{having-other-choice, sp, } 0 \rangle\rangle$

The channel c connects the utterance situation u and the other situation s , indicating the causal relation between them

He says that, in (36 a), “secondly’ does not designate a second set of promising, but a second act of stating.’ However, as I have noticed, this sort of *say* is interpreted in the weak sense and so the speaker does not commit himself to the truth of the sentences. Also, according to the ‘demonstrative’ analysis, the utterance of a performative clause, for example, *I promise never to see the girl again* in (45), does not make a statement; it just presents itself as a specimen, as shown by:

(46) I state that I say *this* once and for all: “I promise never to see the girl again.”

Allan (1986: 231) also gives the following example:

(47) a. *In conclusion*, I declare the fête open.

b. My concluding statement is that I declare the fête open.

Here he paraphrases example (47 a) as (47 b), using the word *statement*. If this paraphrase is right, the utterance of the performative clause *I declare the fête open* makes a trivial statement in the sense that to utter a sentence is automatically to make a true statement; and that statement is incorporated into the statement made by the utterance of the adverbial *in conclusion*:

(48) I state that my concluding statement is *this*: [I state] “I declare the fête open.”

Finally consider the following example, cited from Jary (2007: 228):

(49) I regret to inform you that your policy is (hereby) cancelled.

This example has a performative clause embedded in the object clause. When it is uttered, the speaker is both performing the act named by the performative verb *cancelled* and asserting that he regrets having to do so. The Demonstrative Theory analyses the utterance of (49) as follows:

(50) I regret to inform you *this*: Your policy is hereby cancelled.

Here the embedded clause plays a dual role: performing the speech act, i.e. cancelling the addressee’s policy, and presenting itself as a specimen, which is picked up by the demonstrative *this*. So (50) is similar to a more natural utterance like:

(51) I regret to inform you, but your policy is (hereby) cancelled.

4. Conclusion

I agree that, as Lewis assumes, performative utterances can have, or have, truth-values. Yet, when uttering performative sentences, we are usually not stating that we are performing speech acts named by their main verbs. For it is pointless to do so, because, in normal circumstances, to utter them is to perform those speech acts; that is, such self-referential statements would, if made, automatically be true. In this regard, I agree with Austin; by performative sentences, we perform social acts but do not state or describe anything. In some cases, however, it is not pointless to make statements about our own speech acts or to describe ourselves as performing those acts. In this paper, I have shown how performatives make such meaningful statements.

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