

## **The things we do with words: Ilongot speech acts and speech act theory in philosophy\***

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### ABSTRACT

I begin by introducing the Ilongots and some of their attitudes toward speech. Whereas most modern theorists think of language as a tool designed primarily to “express” or to “refer,” Ilongots think of language first in terms of action. They see commands as the exemplary act of speech, displaying less concern for the subjective meanings that an utterance conveys than for the social contexts in which utterances are heard. An ethnographic sketch thus outlines how Ilongots think of words and how their thought relates to aspects of their practice – providing an external foil for theorists found closer to home. Speech Act Theory is discussed and questioned first on internal grounds, as an approach that recognizes but slights important situational and cultural constraints on forms of language use. A consideration of the application of Searle’s taxonomy of acts of speech to Ilongot categories of language use then leads to a clarification of the individualistic and relatively asocial biases of his essentially intra-cultural account. Last, I return to Ilongot directives. A partial analysis of Ilongot acts of speech provides the basis for a statement of the ways in which indigenous categories are related to the forms that actions take, as both of these, in turn, reflect the sociocultural ordering of local worlds.<sup>1</sup> (Speech acts, philosophy and ethnography, ethnography of speaking, Ilongot [Philippines].)

Through analyses that show the mutual bearing of activities and thoughts in cultures other than our own, anthropologists can make clear the ways in which accounts of human action are dependent on an understanding of the actors’ socio-cultural milieu.<sup>2</sup> More narrowly, I want to argue here that ways of thinking about language and about human agency and personhood are intimately linked:<sup>3</sup> our theoretical attempts to understand how language works are like the far less explicated linguistic thoughts of people elsewhere in the world, in that both inevitably tend to reflect locally prevalent views about the given nature of those human persons by whom language is used.

Speech Act Theory<sup>4</sup> is at once my inspiration and my butt. The work of Austin, Searle, and others commands my interest as an attempt to show the

mutual relevance of technically linguistic and more loosely social and contextual concerns. Speech act theorists seek to comprehend the fact that to talk about the world “out there” will of necessity involve not only propositions to be judged for truth, but something more: communicative intentions. The meanings carried by our words must thus depend not just on what we say, but who we are and what we hope our interlocutors to know. Yet in focusing on the ways “intentions” are embodied in all acts of speech, speech act theorists have failed to grapple with some of the more exciting implications of their work. They think of “doing things with words” as the achievement of autonomous selves, whose deeds are not significantly constrained by the relationships and expectations that define their local world. In the end, I claim, the theory fails because it does not comprehend the sociality of individuals who use its “rules” and “resources” to act. Stated otherwise, it fails because it construes action independent of its reflexive status both as consequence and cause of human social forms.

These limitations are clarified, I suggest, through a consideration of the ways in which it does, and does not, prove adequate in grappling with speech among a people who think about and use their words in ways that differ from our own.

#### THE ILONGOTS

One striking feature of the Ilongot households where my husband and I lived, for close to two years in 1967–69 and again for nine months in 1974, was the salience, in daily life, of brief and undisguised directives. Although a sense of balance and reciprocity obtained in what appeared to be quite egalitarian relations among both children and adults, demands for services were so common that one quickly learned to turn to others rather than obtain desired objects by oneself.

So, for example, Bayaw, who finished eating moments before his wife was heard to issue this directive:<sup>6</sup>

*ta dēnum Sawad ya, 'aika 'egkang* “That (implying, ‘over there, unconnected to you’) water, Sawad c’mon, come and get up now.”

And 'Insan, wanting a bit of lime in preparation for his betel chew, remained seated while he told his wife to move:

*tu tangtangmu Duman, rawmu* “This (implying, ‘it is yours, is not far, alien from you’) your lime container, Duman, go get it.”

Duman, already occupied, did not challenge his command, but instead responded by communicating the father’s words to a young daughter:

*rawmud tu 'umel* “Go get it over here, little girl.”

Again, Tepeg, a middle-aged man, desired to share a roasted sweet potato with his senior companion; thus, his wife became the object of this brief command:

*Midalya 'irawim si kabu nima 'ula ya* ‘‘Midalya, go get my friend here a sweet potato, c'mon.’’

But then Midalya, much like Duman, found a child to do the job:

*'irawim nu sit nima'ula Delali* ‘‘Go get one of those sweet potatoes for them, Delali.’’

What is involved here? Lacking such institutions as the office, church, or court, most Ilongot social life took place within large one room houses. Each family in these simple homes was apt to store its goods and concentrate for sleep and eating in the vicinity of a single sunken hearth – the number of hearths per household (between one and three) serving as a reasonable index of its component family units. Hearth and family space were located on the ‘‘edges’’ – usually raised platforms – that surrounded larger, undivided ‘‘centers,’’ where young children talked and played, and adults cooked and then apportioned food for regular household meals where individualized plates of rice and viand would be distributed equally to all. Characteristically, life at an ‘‘edge’’ was calm and quiet. When positioned comfortably on a platform, the whittling musier could ignore much of the bustling life around him, and enjoy the silent pleasures of a window that might serve to ease and ‘‘open out’’ his burdened heart.

Within the house, no single space was delegated to a single category of persons. But it was not long before I found it all too clear that adult men alone were regularly privileged to enjoy the ‘‘lazy’’ ease of platforms. These men would pass requests for betel, water, and supplies to youths, and, in particular, to women. And women, when themselves at rest or else engaged in their routine domestic chores, would either move or else command, in turn, their ‘‘children,’’ to ‘‘get up’’ and ‘‘fetch’’ things in quick and relatively unordered movement across the common floor.

Although it is not difficult to find exceptions to the rule – men ask children directly; juniors make demands of seniors; women call on men to help with their domestic tasks, to join in garden work or hunt – one can, in general, say that in the household men enjoy a relatively silent space and are rarely the objects of directives. Women, engaged more frequently than men in daily household tasks, are both more likely to receive commands and to command their children. And children, following hierarchies of age, receive and then pass on directives from their seniors – unwittingly disrupting things and so confirming their subordinate place through tired pleas of laziness and lack of skill, or else through abrupt movements that contribute to an ever-present sense of chaos on the central floor. Adults, by contrast, rarely challenge a request, unless to state that they are occupied (and so, cannot conceivably comply) or question a subordinate’s sheer shamelessness in voicing inappropriate demands.

These Ilongots, who in many ways appeared more flexible and egalitarian than any people I have known, recognized and apparently enjoyed in their domestic

life a hierarchy of commands blatant and (to me) unjust. In laughter, they remarked on how my husband often “moved” for me and typically joined with me at the river to wash clothing. I, in turn, would argue that all husbands should respect and try to ease their wives’ incessant work. They would answer, “so they do, we all must eat,” but then again that women should “respect” and be reluctant to command more “angry” men because the latter have, in travels, hunts, and taking heads,<sup>7</sup> displayed superior energy and poise. Contrasting men and women, Ilongots would say that female hearts were “vague” and lacking “focus.” Of children, they declared that all youth “knew” was “how to play,” and so, that youngsters were dependent on adults to channel wild energies toward work. Unlike adults (and in particular, of course, men) who stooped to cross the room in their infrequent errands, children moved too frequently and all too often, “without purpose.” And unlike men – both men and women would recount – most women often failed to “know” what was demanded by the social situation presently at hand.

Thus, at much the same time that they recognized that commanded parties need not (and do not) necessarily comply – that children must be coaxed to heed a parent’s wish and women often answer men’s commands with an unhearing silence – Ilongots also seemed convinced that through commands they both articulated and shaped ongoing forms of social order. Women would, for instance, readily explain that they rarely urged domestic chores upon a spouse because they knew that men were “lazy” and could not be moved when in the home – and even more, because they felt “respect” and “fear” towards an accomplished husband’s “angry” force. The goaded husband would, Ilongots claimed, occasionally beat his taunting wife; although men, recognizing their dependence on a good wife’s work and care, declared as well that they were “fearful” to estrange a spouse through violence. And yet more generally, Ilongots suggested that true *tuydek*, or “commands” – unlike *bēge*, “requests” (see below) – were rare from young to old or women to men, because “respect” and the display of “care” and “reticence” or “shame” appropriate in asymmetric bonds, were typified by a readiness to rise and a reluctance to stir others to unneeded tasks.

But if commands typically move in lines associated with age- and sex-linked social rank, Ilongots insist as well that children may direct their parents to provide them with snacks, mend clothing or supplies, prepare their things for travel. And men, who issue *tuydek* to their wives within the home, may be commanded by their wives in turn when a discussion concerns the need for forest foods. *Commands, in short, involve particular and limited ideas of social rank.* They are constrained by everyday concerns for orderly cooperation and expectations that decide what different persons ought to know and do.

Thus, while *tuydek* vary considerably in linguistic form, it would appear that differences – in such things as manner, mode, aspect, and focus of the verb – have more to do with what Ilongots see as reasonable expectations and accounts

of their objective needs than with desires to accommodate those whose relative status differs from one's own.<sup>8</sup> A command in (what I tentatively gloss as) incomplete aspect, brief, imperative form, such as:

- 'ekarka* "get going";  
*mambēyuka* "start pounding rice";  
*pilisim* "squeeze it (e.g., vegetables, to see if they are cooked)";  
*nangasim* "pour it out (for them, into containers, to be distributed)";

although most common in directives to the young, is used primarily, Ilongots say, as an efficient tool that wins immediate and limited responses. No rule of etiquette would lead the busy woman to attempt to qualify these simple verbs should she desire a man to look and see if vegetables are cooked, or pour out water for a thirsty child. Again, commands in the subjunctive:

- 'engraw'uka 'enakdu 'enginumak* "if only (i.e., hurry and) you'd fetch water, I want to drink";  
*'enakduw'uka ma dēnum* "(while you're there), would you fetch water at the river";  
*tunur'u muy tan* "if only you would (would you please) light this."

can be used either to plead or to complain. They are most likely in interactions with such mature persons as can claim competing goals and needs; but the form appears much more concerned with the "impersonal" fact that some desired act has yet to be performed than with assumptions about status. And finally, it is significant that Ilongots, in reflecting on the difference between straightforward:

*rawka manakdu* "go and fetch water,"

and

- 'engraw'uka enakdu* "if only (subjunctive) you would go fetch water";  
*'irawim 'itakduwi* "go fetch water (for him)";  
*mangkerawka manakdu* "just (make a little effort to) go and fetch water";  
*durutmu dēken 'itakduwi* "just quickly, go fetch water for me",

or any of a variety of ways of issuing what are often seen as "softer," "slower" *tuydek* forms, point out again that choice is shaped, primarily not by differential rank, but rather by the sense of speed and likelihood with which the speaker seeks compliance.<sup>9</sup>

What this suggests, of course, is that for Ilongots the social expectations realized in how they use commands do not in any simple sense defy their notion that all people, ultimately, are "equal" or, as they put it, *'anurut* "the same." Commands to men or children may be equally "abrupt" (*'u'awet* "quick") or "soft" (*'uyamek*). It all depends on what is wanted; what commanded parties may reasonably be asked to do; and what sorts of helpers are available. And yet, to speak of flexibility does not deny a sense of rule. Rather, it is to argue that the hierarchies associated with Ilongot commands are social facts that must themselves be understood within the context of folk views about the nature of their

local social world. In particular, it would appear that Ilongot hierarchies of prerogative and respect must be seen ultimately as matters not of power, deference, or control, but rather of particular persons' needs and skills and of the reciprocities (and inequities) that grow through regular performance of sex/age appropriate chores.

This point needs stressing. Attention to universal "features" such as "power," "dominance," and the like will be misleading if the social relationships so described go unexplored. Inequities exist for Ilongots; they are articulated and negotiated in the social uses of commands. But an understanding of what Ilongot directives mean requires an account not just of rank but of ideas defining social roles and bonds.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Ilongots will sometimes claim that male adults rarely need be the objects of commands because men tend to "know" (*bēya*, see M. Rosaldo 1980) what chores are reasonably theirs, and realize these (such things as hunting, killing, joining oratorical debate) in relatively independent actions that remove them from domestic contexts. Similarly, they say that women typically receive commands within the household because the place where people concentrate is the place where women work. But then, they claim that women – who are thought to have less differentiated or "focused" hearts and thoughts than men – are apt to need direction in order to best compensate for social "knowledge" that they lack.

Those who in general give commands, are said to have a "knowledge" that their objects need, and to deserve "respect," because, in giving food (or joy, through taking heads), they have provided their consociates with life. Furthermore, Ilongots say that those who most receive commands are "lightest" and "most quick" to stir and stand: the woman who "knows" little of the world and yet takes pride in her agility around the home; the child who, still lacking "shame," appears inclined to constant movement. Not simply do unmarried youngsters have an energy and readiness lacked by more constrained adults; as evidenced by their disruptive taste for noise and play, most children need formal directives in order to prevent their causing stress.

When asked why they want offspring of their own, Ilongots often say that children are desired so that adults can have young hands to work – or, as they put it, "be commanded." But Ilongots believe as well that *tuydek* serve to guarantee that children learn to recognize and respect the "mothers" and "fathers" who gave them life; to follow them, and thus achieve an active consciousness regarding work; and from this, to attain the sort of "heart" that can direct and focus speech and action on its own. The child needs commands, Ilongots say, because its heart lacks "knowledge" of the world. And it is through *tuydek*, or commands, that adults first shape the movements of young hearts, thus teaching youths to think of things that should be done, and speak in knowing words.<sup>11</sup>

Commands, in short, are significant not only in organizing the energy and labor of the powerless or immature. They form critical moments in the child's education. For Ilongots, the *tuydek*, "fetch me that" is what instructs young

children both in their relationships to adults, and in their knowledge of what language is and how it should be used. Where we incline, I think, to regard linguistic learning as a matter of acquiring phrases that identify and describe, Ilongots would often claim that children learn to speak by learning *tuydek*. In fact, my own desires, when in the field, to help by fetching things that my companions sought were seen as testimony to linguistic youth – explicable with reference not to inner generosity or grace but my quite sensible attempts to learn to use their words.

*Tuydek*, then, were seen as the exemplary act of speech. As significant in ordering domestic life as in the socialization of the young, directive utterances were, for my Ilongot friends, the very stuff of language: knowing how to speak itself was virtually identical to knowing how and when to act. Language was, in the Ilongot view, a paradigm of thought. Thoughts were seen as utterances of the heart. And human choice and effort were themselves construed as a response to silent *tuydek* through which the knowing heart could give directions to unknowing hands.

Thus, when Ilongots told stories, a brief imperative: “So I said to my sister/wife/mother, ‘pound me rice for I am going off’,” emerged in almost every text as an introduction to core protagonists and their actions. In the same way that Ilongots think children require *tuydek* if they are to learn to act, commands through which the heart informs the hand: “And I said in my heart, ‘Draw the bow’, and I drew it,” appear recurrently in recollections and reports as a description of human activity itself. Similarly, when Ilongots were asked to illustrate through sample sentences the use of words that I had written on vocabulary cards, close to 50% were cast in utterance frames associated with directives.<sup>12</sup> And finally, in magical spells, a pairing of evocative imagery and directive speech:

- “Here is a plant called ‘meeting’, hand, meet the game, hand . . .”;
- “Here is a plant that springs up after floods; so may this body spring up in health . . .”;
- “Make my body like a spinning bug, dizzy with the thickness of this harvest . . .”;

appeared to link desired outcomes to such words and images as were able both to name, and change, human activity in the world. Magical spells could be successful if practitioners managed to “hit upon” appropriate commands.

In short, for Ilongots, domestic scenes elaborating hierarchies of command are not embarrassments to universal equalizing rules. If anything, Ilongot uses of commands are rooted in their views of human action and of human social order. Ilongots value “sameness” and yet assign to differences a necessary place. If adults failed to use their “knowledge” to direct the “energy” of the young, or if adults among themselves were not concerned to “reach” and equal the achievements of their peers, then human life itself would fail for lack of energy and

cooperation. Ideas of “sameness” for the Ilongots are not like legal notions that describe what people “are,” but images that speak to their desires. Young men, for instance, strive to be “the same” as more achieved adults; lacking sameness, they are “envious” and try to prove themselves through shows of “energy” and “anger.” Lack of sameness – or its threat – is what encourages adults in daily work. Conflict resolution is a matter of acknowledging and discarding lack of “sameness” among persons who are either “similar” to or “angry” at their fellows. And yet, the irony, from our point of view, is that the ordering of mundane life requires a recognition of difference, of hierarchy, and complementarity. For Ilongots, such order is achieved when people recognize themselves as kin, and thus as persons who cooperate and share in daily life and labor. Yet, given the ability of autonomous human beings to insist on sameness and deny the claims of kin, it is precisely in the proffering and acknowledgment of commands that Ilongots are able to display commitment to ongoing kinship bonds. For enemies to turn kinsmen they must prove themselves to be “the same.” But then, for kin to act as kin they must acknowledge difference, show “respect,” using not “envy” but the “knowledge” of adults to organize the “energy” in young hearts.

Stated otherwise, Ilongot social life – like that of many peoples in the world – is organized in terms of norms of sex, age, and relation, wherein kinship is what permits people to make age/sex appropriate claims. But equally, kinship itself depends not on a set of jural fictions binding futures to the past, but on repeated shows of care, cooperation, and respect in everyday affairs. Thus, kin *are* those people who arrange sex/age appropriate divisions of labor. And similarly, they are the people who articulate their relations in mundane services and commands.

Thus, if most Western linguists have been primarily impressed with language as a “resource” that can represent the world (and that the individual can then “use” as a tool to argue, promise, criticize, or lie),<sup>13</sup> the Ilongot case points toward a rather different view of speech and meaning. For them, words are not made to “represent” objective truth, because all truth is relative to the relationships and experiences of those who claim to “know.”<sup>14</sup> We may well recognize the context-boundedness of speech – and yet tend ultimately to think that meaning grows from what the individual “intends” to say. For Ilongots, I think, it is relations, not intentions, that come first.

#### SPEECH ACT THEORY

J. L. Austin was, of course, an heir to Wittgenstein, who stressed connections between forms of social life and forms of meaning. Like Ilongots, whose view of language-as-command links speech to socially expected modes of knowledge, energy, and skill, his writings argue that we would do well to think of language first as an activity, conventionally defined, and subject to norms operative in the various situations where we speak. And yet, the very fact that Austin’s notions had their roots in language bound to relatively limited and ritualized domains



permitted later thinkers to begin to question his concerns, abandoning his interest in the institutional constraints on talk in favor of more universalizing views of what it means to say that utterances are acts at all.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, most recent writers have come to concentrate on how our deeds – or utterances – are shaped by what the individual “intends” or “means,” without attention to the social and cultural contexts in which meanings are born.<sup>16</sup> Linguistic action is construed much less in terms of “where” and “how” than of just “what” is said and “why” – as if it were, in fact, the case that only in the courtroom or in church is subjectivity constrained or shaped by situationally bound norms. Unlike Austin then, such recent writers as the philosopher, John Searle<sup>17</sup> tend overwhelmingly to view familiar acts of speech not primarily as social facts, but as the embodiments of universal goals, beliefs, and needs possessed by individuated speakers. And whereas Austin discovered illocutionary force in speech by concentrating on conventional acts that have the power to change the world, Searle uses “promising” – in place of Austin’s oath of marriage or the Ilongot command – to serve as paradigmatic of our ways of “doing things with words.”

I argue later that the act of “promising” is alien to the Ilongot repertory of kinds of speech. More immediately relevant, however, is the question as to why, and with what consequences, the act of promising has been used as a paradigm in theories presently available.<sup>18</sup> To think of promising is, I would claim, to focus on the sincerity and integrity of the one who speaks. Unlike such things as greetings that we often speak because, it seems, “one must,” a promise would appear to come, authentically, from inside out. It is a public testimony to commitments we sincerely undertake, born of a genuine human need to “contract” social bonds, an altruism that makes us want to publicize our plans. Thus the promise leads us to think of meaning as a thing derived from inner life. A world of promises appears as one where privacy, not community, is what gives rise to talk.

Not surprisingly, then, when Searle (1965; 1969) describes how speech acts work, his “constitutive rules” – when the promise is defined as a sincere undertaking, by the speaker (S), of a commitment to do A, where A is something S would not ordinarily undertake, and something, furthermore, that S believes that hearer (H) desires – do not reveal that there is more than a commitment and sincere intent to please involved in issuing a promise. What Searle forgets, and yet to me seems clear, is that the good intentions that a promise brings are things we only offer certain kinds of people, and at certain times. Introspection suggests, for example, that promises to one’s child are typically didactic and tendentious. A promise to, or from, a candidate for public office is apt to prove neither sincere nor insincere but in equal measure suspicious, significant, and grand. Sincere promises to my colleagues are typically no more than that: sincere commitments. To a high administrator, my promises may seem peculiar. And I cannot escape a sense of awkwardness in imagining a promise to my spouse.<sup>19</sup>

There are, in short, quite complex social “rules” that circumscribe the happy “promise” – although our ideology of promising leads one to focus not on these but on the “inner” orientations and commitments of the speaking self. Moreover, it would appear that Searle, by focusing on the promise as a paradigmatic act of speech, himself falls victim to folk views that locate social meaning first in private persons – and slight the sense of situational constraint (who promises to whom, and where, and how) that operates in subtle but important ways in promising, and in yet more salient ways in the case of a directive, like “commanding,” or such apparently expressive acts as “congratulating,” “greeting,” and “bidding farewell.” The centrality of promising supports a theory where conditions on the happiness of a speech act look primarily not to context, but to beliefs and attitudes pertaining to the speaker’s private self.

Searle argues that we recognize the significance of psychological constraints on acts of speech in observing, for example, that it makes odd sense to say, “I tell you X, but don’t believe it” or similarly, “I send condolences with joy.” We cannot conjure a linguistic world where utterances bear no relation to assumptions about truth; just as we fear that “thank-you’s” become empty without “gratitude,” and yet more generally, that conversation is untenable if speakers prove entirely insincere. Through negative arguments such as these, Searle clearly shows that the acknowledgment of certain contrary psychological states may undermine an act of speech. But what he fails to see is that such observations do not prove the positive claim that if performatives are to work, then the presumption of a given psychological orientation is required. “Sincerity,” and such related terms as “feeling,” “intention,” and “belief,” may well be things whose absence is impossible to conceive. But to the analyst sensitive to the cultural peculiarity of such words, more than a negative argument would seem necessary to define them.<sup>20</sup>

In brief, by generalizing culturally particular views of human acts, intentions, and beliefs, Searle fails to recognize the ways that local practices give shape at once to human actions and their meanings. Ignoring context, he discovers that linguistic action can be classified in universal (and essentially subjective) terms, but in so doing he projects misleading patterns on our categories of speech.

#### SEARLE’S BIASES AND ILONGOT NAMES FOR ACTS OF SPEECH

I now compare Ilongot notions about acts of speech to the five categories (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations) proposed by Searle (e.g., 1976, 1979f) as the foundations for a cross-cultural typology of linguistic action.<sup>21</sup> While Searle’s categories provide a reasonable heuristic for introducing speech act verbs, the *rationale* that he details proves unsuccessful as a gloss on Ilongot materials. Some of Searle’s limitations are methodological: One imagines that a comparable investigation of cultural ordering among English acts of speech would present comparable points of challenge. But most important, the

Ilongot data show that accounts of verbal action cannot reasonably proceed without attention to the relations between social order, folk ideas about the world, and styles of speaking.<sup>22</sup>

*Assertives.*<sup>23</sup> Searle's first category grants "propositions" the status of an act, one of *asserting* something true or false about the world. Assertive acts, to Searle, may range from "boasts" to "answers," "explanations," "statements," "arguments," and "claims." Their names are such familiar "referential" verbs that form the stock-in-trade of politicians, legal witnesses, and academics who are professionally concerned with certainty and proof. And I imagine that this fact itself may be related to their philosophical salience.<sup>24</sup> Surely, the many comparable Ilongot names for acts of speech – *upu* "word, to talk"; *petpek* "to explain"; *sibēr* "to answer"; *reteb* "to guess"; *ta'en* "to think, to say, to resemble"; *tudtud* "story, to tell a story"; *tadēk* "story, to tell a story"; *bēita* "gossip, to gossip, to report"; *purung* "oratory, to orate"; *'aked* "to give (words), to speak, to advise" – are associated with quite different institutions and conventional concerns.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, much as in English, Ilongot assertive verbs are sometimes used as true performatives, that can announce assertive acts:

*'eg ki pa 'entudtudēk* "don't speak, I'm going to tell a story";  
*'upuluwengku diyu petpeki tuy ma 'en'ara'anden* "I'll tell you in full, explaining all, what they are doing";  
*rawengku diyu 'akedi tuy ma 'u'likin bēyak nun . . .* "I'm going to give you my little bit of knowledge, to the effect that . . ."

And yet, far from addressing a concern for truth, my understanding is that words like these are used with different purposes and in different sorts of contexts. Heard most frequently at the beginnings of encounters, or in oratorical debate, Ilongot verbs describing statements and accounts clearly have less to do with ascertaining truths than with ongoing formulations of relationship and claims, through a discussion that alludes repeatedly to the character of discourse.<sup>26</sup>

*'away bērita'engku say bi'ala legem* "I have no news to tell, it's just that the old lady . . .";  
*ten tum a'enakay nawengku diyu 'upuwi nu nagiata* "don't think I am going to speak bad, aggressive, words to you . . .";  
*'awana purung, legema 'entudtudēk* "this isn't oratory, I'm just going to tell a story."

Ilongots will, of course, make clear at times that some of what they say is hearsay, some experienced truth. But they will rarely dwell on arguments designed to ferret out an undetermined fact, or clarify the accuracy of an assertion. Rather than pursuing truths, Ilongot speakers seem inclined to grant each other privileged claims to things that all, as individuals, may claim to "know." And so – much less concerned with factual detail than with the question as to who

withholds, and who reveals, a knowledge of well-bruited fact – Ilongots use denial and assertion in discourse as a device for the establishment of interactional roles.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, for example, I have known Ilongots to deny that they had taken heads of kin of interlocutors who in fact *had* been their victims in the past, and then, when challenged, to pronounce a readiness to undergo dangerous ordeals and oaths in order to test the mettle of accusers who appeared less certain, or more fearful, than they thought themselves. Clearly, at times like these, my secretive friends were not concerned with telling lies or telling truths. As always, what they claimed was “true” depended less on “what took place” than on the quality of an interaction where what mattered most was who spoke out and claimed the privilege to reveal or hide a public secret hitherto clothed in silence.

To “be the one to tell you that,” “let out a secret hidden in my heart,” “go at you with my words,” “share knowledge,” or “tell stories” are, then, in most Ilongot speech, a matter less of representing facts about the world in words, than of articulating relationships and claims within the context of a history that is already known. Or stated otherwise, assertives used in a performative mode – especially in formal speech – appear equivalent to a variety of devices used to talk about alliance and opposition in particular social groups by talking about the character of spoken words. Thus, artful oratory is replete with cautious qualifying verbs:

*bukud ma sa'usa'ulengku dimu 'upuwa* “well, what I will just, uncertainly, say to you”;

*'ebtarengku saws as away . . .* “I guess, wildly (what you want to hear)”;

verbs marking boundaries and relations in discourse:

*nu 'alagam 'iman* “if you are finished there”;

*'etu'etuydengengku duduwala maman* “I’ll extend that (idea) with just two words”;

*'awana rawengku ma rawenmu 'engara'i 'empupurunga* “I will not go for (address) the things you are going to get at in your oratory”;

and metaphors designed to qualify the speaker’s actions:

*siya'ak ta 'umuri bumugkut ten betar nima lapura* “I’ll be the one to run ahead again (and speak out) since it’s the way with young dogs”;

*pebtuwenta 'ipani'ungip'ungiptan 'upu* “(let’s talk until) we are filled up, contented, from hand feeding one another words”;

*'aligi nud ma ke'ewengtu 'away tulanitu legema renërekbuta* “(my heart is something) we can compare to a new plant (*'eweng?*), without roots or thorns, and so easy to pull up (i.e., I hold nothing back).”

And what these share has less to do with ways certain words can represent the world than with the fact that speakers’ naming and describing their assertive acts itself becomes the stuff of verbal duels – becomes a medium for the construction

and manipulation of social bonds. Assertive verbs appear, in short, as counters in confrontations with one's "same" or equal men. As such, they help to shape discourse. Their power seems much closer to the force that Searle assigns to our "declaratives" than to assertive acts like "arguing" and "stating facts."

*Directives.* Unlike assertives, Ilongot names for their *directive* acts are rare in oratory or in speakers' own accounts of their ongoing speech. Where they emerge, instead, is in the conduct and the criticism of everyday social interaction:

*ngaden 'itu 'ed metuydeka 'anaka* "what kind of children are these, who won't be commanded";  
*nii ta sinengtengku dimu* "now (don't forget) what I ordered you to do";  
*'ennngadenanmuwak bēt* "are you naming, ordering, accusing me?"

Along with *tudyek*, or "commands," directive acts include as well: *bēge* "to ask, request"; *tengteng* "to order, warn, instruct"; and *tukbur* "to forbid." In addition, there are a set of verbs more limited in directive sense: *'ungi'ungi* "to coax, plead"; *tawaw* "to call, summon"; *maiw* "to ask to stay, stall"; and compounds like *pekamu* "to cause, tell to hurry," formed by linking the causative prefix *pe-* to the root *kamu* "hurry, to be fast."

All directive acts have multiple possible realizations in everyday Ilongot speech, although (much as in English) few actually appear as first person incomplete aspect performatives, of the form, "I order you . . ." or "I command . . ." But while overt performatives are rarely heard in Ilongot discourse, the "force" intended by particular directive acts is characteristically made clear through use of recognized and stereotyped linguistic formulae. Thus, the typical *tuydek*, or "command," makes use of modal verbs like *raw* "go and," *geptay* "cut off an activity and," *durut* "hurry and," *legem* "just":

*rawmu ma dēnum* "go for the water";  
*'irawi itakduwi* "go and fetch water for me";  
*legemka raw 'engriyak* "just go get some rice from the granary";  
*geptaymu pa dēken 'iya'den* "interrupt yourself a moment to go up the hill for me (and see if . . .)."

Stereotyped *tukbur* ("prohibitions") – heard both in daily speech and in the formulaic lines of magic – employ imperative negation (*'ed/'eg mulka Vb.*):

*'eg kin 'anak 'en'upu'upu* "don't keep talking, you children";  
*'ed musu dēdengēra* "don't listen to him";  
*'eg kan pagi mendēdēsi dēsi pagi* "don't, rice, act foolish (lose your fertility), rice."

And *tengteng* ("orders, warnings") – found in magical spells, in daily salutations and goodbyes, as well as oratorical encounters – typically use *ten*, "because," plus an incomplete verb to issue words of warning:

*ten mita'engka* "don't let yourself fall";  
*ten tuma'engkay'amunga dimayu kami* "don't think we have become lazy,  
 silent, unwilling to talk";  
*ten rawenmu'ipeka'kanamkanama'i* "don't go making a lot of this, speak-  
 ing more than is necessary."

A general reluctance to assert unequal bonds in words may well explain the fact that while one hears, "I ask you to . . . ," performative use of most directive verbs seems odd. Ilongots in general understood, but tended to correct my efforts to perform directives that began, "I forbid . . . ," "I summon . . . ," or "I warn . . ."

In Ilongot, as in English, one can formulate directive acts with reference to a speaker's wants. But while one can say, for example:

*kermakangku ma dēnum* "I want the water";  
*say ramakku ma 'u'ursige 'upu* "I want (you to speak in) straight, non-  
 contentious words";  
*kermakangku nem 'enakduka* "I would like for you to fetch water,"

with a recognized directive sense, it seems to me that utterances like these, much like overt performatives, were rarely heard, and that in general, they implied much less sincere desire than an unwarranted claim to precedence on the directing speaker's part.<sup>28</sup>

Again, Ilongot speakers questioning if hearers could or would perform as asked ("can you take out the garbage") did not use the verb *giwar* "can, with reference to ability or skill," but *medarum* "can," implying "is it possible, would it be appropriate to act," as in *medaruma rawenmy dēken ma panak* "could you go and get my arrow," (although here too, my data indicate that even this directive form was seen as awkward). Certainly, only children spoke in terms of *giwar*, and they did this not in issuing commands but in attempting to evade unwanted tasks: *'awana giwarengku* "I can't do it (i.e., I will not perform as asked)."

What these and the facts discussed above suggest is that, while Searle's category of *directives* may hold in Ilongot as much as in English speech, the rules and the significances associated with Ilongot directive acts are, in most important ways, quite different from the ones that Searle proposes. Like us, Ilongots vary their directives by speaking of the mode or manner of an act; describing things that should be done; questioning the appropriateness of tasks; or otherwise, appealing to the expectations that decide prerogatives and claims in everyday communication. But where Ilongots may differ most significantly from ourselves<sup>29</sup> is that, for them, *overt directive formulae are not construed as harsh or impolite*. And this, I would suggest, is true because directive use is seen as having less to do with actor-based prerogatives and wants than with relationships affirmed and challenged in their ongoing social life.<sup>30</sup>

Reflections on Ilongot may thus highlight an apparently universal fact that Searle is blind to. Directive acts, unlike assertives, tend to be characterized by uptake-demanding verbs.<sup>31</sup> Or, stated otherwise, directive acts are vacuous unless acknowledged. To “ask,” of course, demands an “answer,” and to “command,” insofar as one is “heard,” is to require “compliance.” Ilongot directive verbs thus form a class with such Ilongot acts as *'amit* “to demean, belittle”, *bēngen* “to insult,” *maduran* “to voice disappointment,” *pakiw* “to criticize, find fault,” in that they typically initiate what Sacks (1973a) has called “adjacency pairs” – routines wherein the utterances that follow them are necessarily heard as “answers” (*sibēr*), “agreements” (*tebēr*); “acknowledgments, acceptances” (*telu*), or else “counters, denials” (*sima'lad*).

As Searle would argue, then, directive utterances may generally be seen as an attempt to match the world to spoken words. But their power to do this depends upon their placement in socially organized conversational contexts. Not only is their happiness dependent on the relationships and expectations particular interactants claim; their social significance itself is indissociable from their vulnerability to disregard.

*Commissives, Expressives.* Not surprisingly, given my remarks above, Searle’s categories of *commissive* and *expressive* acts differ from the assertives and directives previously discussed in that they lack substantial Ilongot exemplars. One can communicate a firm intent to act by adding an intensifying (/VI-/) affix to first person incomplete verbs:

*upuluwengku ma 'eg kusu kē'weri* “I say (and mean) that I won’t forget (to do) it”;

*'arale'engku tuy ma 'embēge'enmu* “I’ll really do what you are asking.”

But utterances such as these could also mean, “I say it over and over . . . ,” or “I am intent on, exerting myself in doing . . . ,” where no element of “commitment” is involved. Similarly, numerous enclitics can be used in something like “expressive” acts of speech, wherein, for example, *'anin* “oh dear,” may signal acts of *dimet* “pity,” and *ngu'dek* “unfortunately,” communicates a feeling of *kidē'ri* “sympathy, desire to help.” But overwhelmingly, expressive acts like these appear concerned with only fleeting recognition of such things as limitation, longing, misfortune, and distress. Rather than communicate a feeling one might then expect to find sustained in subsequent shows of empathy and regard, their meaning seems the relatively “phatic” one of indicating awareness of, perhaps connection to, disturbing facts at once associated with and distanced from, oneself.

To Westerners, taught to think of social life as constituted by so many individuated cells, prosocial impulses and drives may seem a necessary prerequisite to social bonds, and so the notion of a world where no one “promises,” “apolo-

gizes,” “congratulates,” “establishes commitments,” or “gives thanks,” may seem either untenable or anomic. Certainly, when in the field, I was consistently distressed to find that Ilongots did not appear to share in my responses to such things as disappointment or success, and that they lacked expressive forms with which to signal feelings of appreciation, obligation, salutation, and regret, like our “I’m sorry” or “good morning.” Repeatedly, I was outraged to find that friends who had arranged to meet and work with me did not appear at the decided time – especially as they would then speak not of commitments broken, or of excuses and regrets, but of devices (such as gifts) that might assuage the generally unexpected and disturbing anger in my heart. To them, it mattered that I was annoyed (a dangerous and explosive state), but not that someone else, in carelessness, had hurt and angered me by failing to fulfill commitments I had understood as tantamount to promises.

My point is not, of course, to claim that Ilongots in daily life do not coordinate their plans or that they fail to recognize varying degrees of reliability of people with whom they live and share. But what Ilongots lack from a perspective such as ours is something like our notion of an inner self continuous through time, a self whose actions can be *judged* in terms of the sincerity, integrity, and commitment actually involved in his or her bygone pronouncements. Because Ilongots do not see their inmost “hearts” as constant causes, independent of their acts, they have no reasons to “commit” themselves to future deeds, or feel somehow guilt-stricken or in need of an account when subsequent actions prove their earlier expressions false.<sup>32</sup>

In linguistic terms, what seem to be the Ilongot equivalents closest to our “expressive” and “commissive” acts will most often function more like the members of Searle’s “declarative” class, wherein what matters is the act itself and not the personal statement it purportedly involves. Thus, apparently “expressive” acts include, as we have seen, *dimet* “pity,” *dē’ri*, *kidē’ri* “to express sympathy, to help,” as well perhaps as *takit* “love,” *’imanu* “greet formally” and *turun* “bid farewell.” As with directives these acts tend to be associated with stereotyped expressive forms. And further, as with all Ilongot acts of speech, it is clear that words of “pity,” “sympathy,” and the like are apt to have much more to do with social roles and bonds than with the inner feelings they apparently signify.

“Love,” for example, is characteristically expressed by “naming” one’s desired object in a dream. And such expressions, in and of themselves, can serve to “call” the other’s heart, so that it will begin to “love” – by interacting with – oneself. Expressions of “sympathy” may similarly assert, and thus create, new social ties. One does not begin by “feeling” sympathy and then decide to act; instead, it is through shows of care and help that “sympathy” is known. In fact, it is because “expressive” acts in word or deed can, in and of themselves, give rise to social bonds, that the Ilongot fear of “pity” from the dead makes sense: only death can come of sustained links with the departed.



Thus, for dead ancestors to say 'anin "oh dear," in pity for still living kin, as for adults to voice a sense of "pity/longing" for once youthful bodies, or then again, for killers to pronounce their "pity" towards the victims of headhunting raids – involve, in every case, the forging of new kinds of ties through recognition of their lack. And just as headhunters can hope to be invigorated through the establishment of mystic bonds to their poor victims' lives, so the old may feel enlivened by their reminiscences of youth – and living people ordinarily will fear increased involvement with beloved departed. Finally, we can begin to understand why "farewell" (*turun*) songs from women to young headhunters when the latter leave on raids appear to make a very special claim upon the would-be killers' hearts: accomplished headhunters recount that they were "shameful" to return without successful boasts to answer women's words, and further, that before attacking, they required special rituals to expunge the weighty thoughts and feelings born of their connection to the female dirge.

Apparently expressive acts do not, of course, in every case, have social and affective implications of such weight. But while at times statements of feeling seem no more than revelations of affective truths, it seems in general that as Ilongots give voice to aspects of their inner hearts, they are likely to be engaged in something we would see as a "declarative" and creative act, which holds immediate consequences for the character and quality of social life itself. Feelings are not the sorts of things one nurtures and then, necessarily, reveals. If silenced, they will typically have no effect. But if evoked in an expressive act, they can well change the world. I can think of only one "expressive" – the '*imanu* "formal greeting" – for which this characterization does not hold. And since '*imanu*' are, like taunts and insults, devices used primarily to announce a stalwart presence and then call for a response, they should probably be distinguished from "farewells" and sounds of "pity," as "expressives" that resemble not "declaratives" but "directives" in their force.

A similar argument can, I think, be made for the two Ilongot verbs with an apparently *commissive* function.<sup>33</sup> The closest Ilongot equivalent to our "promise" is called *sigem*, a formulaic oath by salt, wherein participants declare that if their words prove false, their lives, like salt, will be "dissolved." But Ilongot oaths are different from our "promises" in the central fact that *sigem* speaks not to commitments personally assumed (and for which subsequent violators might, as individuals, be held in fault) but to constraints based on external, "supernatural" sorts of law.

Some years ago, for instance, an old man accidentally dropped his load of game upon a gun (not his own) that fired and killed him. Because of circumstance, his death was construed as punishment for the breaking of an oath of peace by a young nephew who, in killing enemies sworn as friends, provided supernatural cause for the loss of the unfortunate old man. And yet, to my surprise, immediate kin of the deceased did not seek recompense from the young man whose violent actions had apparently "caused" the accident in the first

place. Whereas I thought that blame belonged to the young man who violated the oath, my friends declared that “angry” vengeance would have turned upon the innocent owner of the accidentally triggered gun, had he not subsequently died.

Thus, where our “promises” assume that things like blame, intention, and responsibility are all intimately linked, Ilongots in a case like that described above ignore the very issues we find necessary in deciding obligation, wrong, and right. They fixed their “anger” on the man whose gun occasioned harm, and sought, not an acknowledgment of “doing wrong,” but a repayment, on the one hand, from the man who owned the gun, and on the other, from the one-time enemies who had been party to the now disastrous “promise.”

In subsequent years, the Ilongots concerned made known a sense of wariness and distrust toward the oath-breaking younger man. But only when their one-time enemies asked that gifts be given in exchange for kin of theirs whom the unruly youth had killed, was he made answerable, not to the “broken” oath, but to the *enemy* death he caused. In short, within a world in which “intentions” are not understood as “cause,” no agreement is quite like the “promise” we know because the involved parties need not ask who is “responsible” for subsequent events as long as all can recognize the objects and the perpetrators of loss.

Of course, most peoples’ actions bear some resemblance to their words. But in those rare cases where a violation does in fact occur, appeal is made, not to the obligations particular persons have assumed, but to dynamics in which damaged parties either damage others or demand some recompense for hurt. “Blame” is thus dissociated from one’s “disappointment” with another’s failure to perform as hoped. Violations have much less to do with breach than with the suffering occasioned by one’s (innocent or guilty) deeds. And friendly dealings are established through declarative “oaths by salt,” that provide a context wherein enemies can hope to forge a sense of kin-like bonds.

As a last and related example, I would remark that regular appeal to an external (although not “supernatural”) constraint is used by Ilongots to secure agreements that they forge by tying knots in strings to count the days until encounters (*getur*). When such arrangements fail, blame will most likely fall, not on the individuals involved, but on the string itself. As with the *sigem* promise, then, *getur*-agreements forged in knots are not properly “commissive” acts, because a string – external to the actors’ selves – is seen as bearer of the expectations, plans, and bonds that it evokes.

*Declarations.* These speech acts are, for Searle, all cases where mere “saying so” can really change the world, by virtue of the fact that, given interactants’ roles, some one of them is privileged to declare the others “married,” “guilty,” “innocent,” “cursed,” or “fired.” Utterances where the supernatural is evoked may, similarly, have this sort of “strong” illocutionary force because transforming action is (at least potentially) performed in the mere uttering of the appropriate words themselves.<sup>34</sup> And in a somewhat different way, declarative force belongs

as well to numerous metalinguistic acts, like “I define” and “I conclude,” which in and of themselves decide the nature of ongoing talk.

Of course, traditional Ilongots do not enjoy such things as churches, court-rooms, offices, and schools, all institutional forms, wherein the power of words as acts is indissociable from positions of recognized authority. For Ilongots, there are no roles or contexts wherein individual speakers can expect, definitively, to change their world, at least in part because their lives are far too fluid to assure that any utterance is certain to be “heard.” Thus, it is hardly surprising that the Ilongot speech acts most obviously related to Searle’s “declarative” class are those whose power depends not on a human interlocutor’s ear, but the attentions of diffuse, yet ever present, supernatural forces. And though in every case, effectiveness depends upon one’s luck in “hitting” the “right words” in speech, a variety of “invocations” (*nawnaw*) – including “magical spells” (*nawnaw*, ‘*aimet*), “curses” (*ayu*) and “boasts” (*eyap*, which are, at times, capable of causing harm to less accomplished fellows) – provide clear instances of “declarative” acts wherein formulaic expressions, if uttered in the appropriate tones, may lead directly to more joy or suffering in one’s immediate environment.

Considering strictly “supernatural” or “invocational” verbs alone, the set of Ilongot declarative acts appears quite small – a fact one might associate with their relatively low level of institutional differentiation. But such a characterization would, I think, prove far from adequate in light of facts discussed above, where all but Ilongot “directive” verbs were characterized as “declarative” in their force. Thus, I suggested that apparently “assertive” verbs, used most frequently in oratorical debates, are like “declaratives” in that they operate as “metalinguistic” glosses on political relationships that are forged in a discussion where the speakers are concerned not just with “what took place,” but with the way the past will be described and used in present talk. In naming verbal actions, assertive verbs are thus in fact employed much less to clarify, than to impose, the terms through which debate proceeds; they help create/define a social world by stressing its unfolding form in ongoing political discourse. The same, of course, is true of much English assertive speech: in saying what the world is like, authoritative figures manage to impose their versions of reality. But whereas it is common practice for English speakers to confront an assertive statement with a discourse honed to test its claims to truth, Ilongots seem much less concerned with what is said than who it is who gets to name which point of fact, and how, given relationships immediately at stake, the statement of that point of fact is to be relationally construed.

Again, although for rather different reasons, I have argued that most of the possible members of Ilongot “commissive” and “assertive” groups should actually be seen as “declarations.” Although in English, too, it seems that the expression of emotions can be a way of making claims, Ilongots differ from us in a tendency to focus less on *feelings* harbored deep within the self, than on the way that feelings *spoken* may – like tears that bring disaster in their wake –

themselves shape human worlds. In fact, it makes but little sense to speak of Ilongot “expressive” acts because Ilongots do not think in terms of inner “feelings” needing to emerge, but rather of social contexts in which people do or do not take for granted previously asserted claims and bonds.

OF CULTURE AND CLASSIFICATIONS

My review of Ilongot categories of acts of speech might lead modern philosophers to conclude that Ilongots, unfortunately, have not evolved the subtleties enjoyed by us – perhaps because of “supernatural” orientations (or “under-differentiated” social forms) that preclude our psychological grasp of human persons.<sup>35</sup> And yet my point has been very a very different one of challenging our common sense, so as to better think about relationships that link a set of categories of forms of action to the sociocultural world where they are used. Although one can, in Ilongot, discriminate verbal actions in terms of categories like those proposed by Searle – and demonstrate, in English, that discriminations such as his may be misleading for the analyst concerned with interactive functions – the *cultural* limitations of Searle’s categories and his assumptions about individuated human selves appear precisely in the fact that Ilongots do not appear to find in one another’s speech appropriate circumstance to talk about or query Searle’s concerns. Ilongots lack “our” interest in considerations like sincerity and truth; their lives lead them to concentrate, instead, on social bonds and interactive meanings. And so, where Searle proposes speech act categories that correspond to speakers’ states, for Ilongots I suggest instead that verbal actions be divided into *those which roughly correspond to social situations wherein norms of “sameness” and autonomy prevail, and those belonging to relationships defined by continuity and hierarchy.*

The division is a crude one. Interactants mix their modes. But what I am proposing is that, just as *sameness* and *hierarchy* can be seen as interdependent moments in Ilongot social life, so Ilongot speech acts may be grouped, roughly, into two categories. The first – including Searle’s apparently “expressive,” “commissive,” “assertive,” and “declarative” sets – may be distinguished by the fact that they can “act” upon the world without demanding interlocutor response. The second – clearly recognized as a category in Ilongot folk reflections upon speech – involve “directive” speech acts wherein relation, even hierarchy, is characteristically presupposed and utterances include demand for uptake from one’s fellows. The clearest case of acts belonging to the first, “declarative” set, are those in which mere saying so creates a challenge, mere longing makes one’s fellows ill – those cases where, in short, the act of speech itself creates a bond defining the relations of potentially autonomous and unconnected selves. By contrast, verbal actions like directives that require a response depend upon, as they articulate, ongoing daily patterns of cooperation, care and

talk. The *tuydek*, or command, is thus, as we have seen, at least in part a paradigmatic act of speech because Ilongots use directives to articulate and display ongoing kinship bonds.

In separating *tuydek* as a category from all other acts of speech, I may be motivated, in part, by the universal presence of imperative and interrogative (i.e., “directive”) verbal modes in human language. But I would argue that for Ilongots the special status of directives makes good social sense as well. Ilongot interest in directives is derived, I would suggest, first from a sense that speech is of necessity embedded in and so dependent on a pattern of (often asymmetrical) relational bonds; and secondly, from an awareness that the hierarchies that define their everyday cooperative affairs are also daily undermined, so that the order in their world is not a thing accomplished for all time, but an achievement needing constant recreation.

In general, the analytical distinction I have drawn, between “declaratives” and “directives” among Ilongot acts of speech appears consistent with their ways of organizing – and understanding – social action. And categories of speech acts that they recognize with distinctive verbal names reflect indigenous concerns with order in their social world.

In order to illustrate this point I focus again on directives. Dimensions necessary to a grasp of how Ilongots differentiate directive acts at once confirm my previous observations concerning Ilongot sociality, and help me demonstrate the sense in which varieties of action are themselves the products of the ways relationships are organized and understood by native speakers.

In general, Ilongots claim, “commands” or *tuydek* should be distinguished from related acts of speech – like “prohibitions” (*tukbur*), “orders, warnings” (*tengteng*), “requests” (*bēge*), “appeals” (*’ungi’ungi*) and a variety of unclassified directives that include such things as “awakening” (*pabēngun*) and “hurrying up” (*pekamu*). And even though they were aware of ambiguity and difficulty in discriminating among such acts as these, informants found it reasonable to assign directive utterances different directive names – and in so doing, to reflect on meanings implicated in their names for verbal deeds.

How then were various directive acts distinguished? Neither grammar nor a concern for things like deference and “face” emerged consistently in Ilongot talk about directives. “Is there some water here” and “give me water” were not distinguished as a “soft” request versus a “hard” command form. Nor did employment of grammatically distinct imperatives correlate in any simple way with the varieties of directive use.<sup>36</sup> Certain formulae, illustrated above, proved unambiguous markers of such things as “warnings,” “supplications,” and “prohibitions.” But, as will be seen in discussion of directive categories below, the issues that consistently emerged as most salient in indigenous discussions of varieties of directives used had less to do with our concern for things like proper form and indirection, deference and politesse, than with Ilongot views of the cooperative activities that a directive act evoked.<sup>37</sup>

## ILONGOT DIRECTIVE ACTS

1. *Tuydek* ‘‘Commands.’’ As already indicated, *raw* ‘‘go and,’’ as well as certain other modal verbs, appear to mark the prototypical *tuydek*. Further, and not surprisingly, Ilongots asked to give examples of *tuydek* characteristically use *raw*-forms in conjunction with verbs that name routine domestic tasks. In addition (and again as seen above) the use of different modal verbs, subjunctive forms, and verbal foci, may serve to ‘‘soften’’ a command’s intended force, but they do not themselves suffice to turn instances of *tuydek* into unambiguous cases of ‘‘appealing/pleading’’ or ‘‘requesting.’’ Instead, commands are singled out from other directive forms in terms of the kind and character of action they call forth.

What seems distinctive about *tuydek* are, thus, three things: (a) the call for an activity marked by interruption/movement; (b) appeal to social hierarchies and expectations of unequally distributed knowledge, energy and skill; and (c) concern for finite, easily realized, sorts of tasks.

(a) First – as is suggested by the cultural fact that *tuydek* typically are received by those most likely to ‘‘get up’’ and move (and similarly, by those thought generally to be least ‘‘focused’’ in their ‘‘concentration’’) – ‘‘commands,’’ unlike ‘‘requests,’’ require motion. Imperatives are not in general seen as *tuydek* if they do not require addressees to interrupt themselves and move. In fact, the modal verbs used characteristically in *tuydek* – not only *raw* ‘‘go for/and’’, but others like *durut* ‘‘hurry and,’’ *legem* ‘‘just (go ahead) and,’’ as well as *ra'mut* ‘‘unhesitatingly go and,’’ *lipalipa* ‘‘cautiously, slowly do it,’’ *'ai* ‘‘come, orient toward me and’’ – all seem concerned with qualifying motion, and so either ‘‘softening’’ or specifying the quality of the activity in which the addressee is to engage. By contrast, a directive that begins, ‘‘ask/tell him . . .’’ is seen in general as an ‘‘order, instruction’’; and ‘‘give me . . . (something near you, or something you already have)’’ is usually construed as a ‘‘request.’’ Directives seen as *tuydek* thus require public manifestation of a quality – mobility – that signifies both the energy and the lack of knowledge that together figure prominently in Ilongot justifications of hierarchicalized directive use.

(b) Second (and as again makes sense given my earlier remarks on how chains of command figure in age/sex hierarchies) the typical *tuydek* calls for services in which one person ‘‘moves’’ out of ‘‘respect’’ or deference towards some other. Thus, not only:

*nangatka* ‘‘pour it out (into a container)’’;  
*'edem ta* ‘‘take, carry this’’;

but also:

*nangasi* ‘‘pour me some’’;  
*nangasim* ‘‘pour some (for someone other than speaker)’’;  
*'i'de'imuwak* ‘‘carry it for me, bring it to me’’;

are all instances of *tuydek*. But interestingly, cooperative actions:

'aika dēken 'emēmekmek “come with me to chop shrubs in the field”;  
 pemēn'ara kisi “let's work together (in one another's fields)”;  
 'edēm dēken ta “carry this for me (with implication that I have already been  
 carrying it for a while)”;

are seen as instances of “requesting,” as are imperatives like “eat” or “drink” in which the beneficiary is not the giver, but the recipient of the command.

(c) Third, *tuydek* are concerned with finite, easily realized sorts of labor. Characteristically, one fulfills *tuydek* not by “promising” or “assuming obligations,” but by engaging in required actions in immediate response to the directive utterance itself. Thus, imperatives demanding no particular task or action – like “hurry up,” “be cautious,” and “wake up” – are seen in general as unclassified directives. Imperatives which specify the time, or place, or persons likely to be implicated in an action (e.g., “fetch me water over there”; “ask him to come”) are usually “orders, instructions,” as are imperatives that make use of incomplete verbs. And, as already indicated, imperatives in which the addressee is not expected to work for an inactive party are not “commands,” or *tuydek*, but *bēge* “requests.”

2. *Bēge* “Requests.” The class “request,” or *bēge*, is easily specified given these comments. In contrast to the English speaker's sense of the “request” as a more indirect, less hierarchical, variety of “command,” Ilongots typically assume that what distinguishes “requests” is, first of all, the quality of movement they evoke, and secondly, the sorts of social relationships and claims that they imply. Thus, unlike “commands,” Ilongot *bēge*, or “requests,” will only rarely involve a major movement from or interruption in the addressee's ongoing action. To ask a woman to prepare a meal: *panganmut X* “feed, prepare a meal, for X”; or fix a betel chew: *pakibi'enmuwak* “fix me a betel chew,” are actions recognized as “commands,” or *tuydek*. But people saw the following as instances of “requests”: *pakanmut X* “feed, give (some of the prepared) food to X”; *pabi'enmuwak* “give me some betel, supplies”; *panabakum* “give (someone) some tobacco.” Commonly recognized as “requests,” again, are such imperatives as employ the verb 'aa “to give, to hand” – suggesting that most acts of “giving” do not require the addressee to move: *nara'im ta sabitmu 'embi' enak* “give me your betel pouch, I want to chew”; *nu waden man ta dēnum mad kudilya 'inara'i* “if there is water in the cup, give it to me”; *aam pa ngu dēken ta* “come on and hand that to me.” In fact, one woman told me that “respect” due to an affine keeps her from either “naming” or “commanding” her husband's sister. “All I ever say,” she told me, “is so-and-so, now give me that.” Significantly, however, when “giving” requires “going for,” the directive is classified as a “command”: *nara'im 'irawi ta dēnum* “go and get some water to give me.”

A second characteristic of requests is that – to the extent that they in fact call for some kind of interrupted action – the goal is either one of securing the addressee's welfare (as is the case in “eat this,” “come in,” “watch out”) or else of winning his or her cooperation with a person who seeks help. Thus,

Ilongots often use a superficially expressive verb in the imperative form, *kadē'-dē'rika* ‘‘have pity, please,’’ in uttering request directives; and at still other times, verbal affixes (*meki-*, *pemen-*) and pronouns (*kita* ‘‘the two of us,’’ *kisi* ‘‘all of us’’) implying collective or reciprocal forms of action may be used to turn ‘‘commands’’ into acts recognized as ‘‘requests for cooperative aid’’:

'*aika dēken mekitakdu* ‘‘come and help me fetch water’’;  
'*entalabaku kisi ngu* ‘‘let’s get to work.’’

3. *Tengteng* ‘‘order, warning.’’ While those imperatives marked unambiguously with a completive verbal aspect are characteristically seen as *tuydek* or ‘‘commands,’’ directives classed as *tengteng* are associated either with notions of futurity or with incompletive verbs. Thus, ‘‘warnings’’ may, as we have seen, use *ten* + incompletive verb to warn against an undesired future action:

*ten tuma'engki* . . . ‘‘don’t think . . .’’ (-*um-* marks incompletive aspect);  
*ten rawenyu dēken* . . . ‘‘don’t think . . .’’ (-*en* here indicates continuity, in marked contrast, e.g., to the *rawmu*, ‘‘go and,’’ of commands).

And – almost surprisingly like ‘‘warnings’’<sup>38</sup> – most ‘‘orders’’ also appear to differ from ‘‘command’’ directives in terms of the (implicit or explicit) verbal aspect they evoke:

*manakduka mad denum* ‘‘go fetch water at the river’’ (*mang-* prefix + *takdu*, ‘‘to fetch water’’ may mark incompletive aspect, or else, the sense of incompleteness may belong to the fact that locative information is stressed);  
(when I leave) *mampēpedegkid tu* ‘‘when I leave, you stay here’’ (*mang-* prefix plus reduplicated *pe-* together suggest continuity);  
(when you are in the lowlands) *'itaiwmu dēken ta . . .*’ (when you are in the lowlands) buy me . . .’ (here incompletive aspect seems a function of the introductory clause).

In addition, those imperatives which tell the addressee to ‘‘ask’’ or ‘‘speak with’’ some third party are more likely to be understood as ‘‘orders’’ than ‘‘commands’’:

'*ibēgēm nud X 'ungkitur nu mawa'wa* ‘‘tell X to come downstream tomorrow’’;  
*mēkibēgē'im puy nitu bēitatu* ‘‘ask her, for me, what is new’’;  
*mambēgēka nud ta'u nima lapit* ‘‘ask uncle for a pencil.’’

Quite possibly, what makes ‘‘orders’’ of directions of this sort is something like the open-endedness of the actions that they call for. To ask someone to ask someone, is, I would suggest, to focus less on finite tasks to be performed within a circumscribed social context than to chart a course of future action with still undetermined limits. By projecting their desires on a yet untested person, place, or context, *tengteng*-givers necessarily extend their view beyond the confines of immediate relations and look instead toward situations wherein present projects lose their relevance and the present speaker is unlikely to retain an instrumental role.



In this respect, pairings of *tengteng*-utterance plus response may well appear, in fact, to have a force resembling that of Searle's commissives. And just as Ilongots may confirm their dates and plans by tying knots in strings to count the days until projected meetings, so it makes sense that many acts of "order/warning" are accompanied by the tying of a string onto the ordered party's hand. Clearly, the use of such external marks designed to guarantee the force of speakers' words upon another's actions is far from necessary in the case of the more certain, and situationally constrained, "commands."

In summary then, three culturally situated concerns emerge as necessary to a characterization of differences between directives. First, because divisions of labor in terms of sex and age are (as we have seen) conceived by Ilongots in terms of differences in "knowledge" and capacities to "move," directives are distinguished in terms of their concern with interruption/movement. Second, because directives concern coordination of tasks and services in a world where hierarchy is balanced by parity, and autonomy by cooperative work, directives are distinguished in terms of hierarchical as against more mutual or reciprocal chains of service and command. And third, because directives figure centrally in the articulation of a kinship order that is experienced, most of the time, as given, and yet in fact requires repeated realization in concrete cooperative displays, directives differ with reference to the action context that a directive act evokes. In short, indigenous views of human actions and interactions – concerns for movement; for social hierarchy and cooperation; and for the temporal fragility of social bonds – prove necessary to an understanding of conventions that discriminate among directive categories that Ilongots recognize as such.

#### CONCLUSIONS

It is a social science commonplace that the ways the natives talk about behavior must be recognized as different from the analysts' accounts of how and why they act the way they do.<sup>39</sup> Thus, it seems that analysts more astute than I might well dismiss the bulk of what has been said above as evidence of the confusions that are born from an undeserved love of Oxford. We need not dwell on men like Searle and Austin if what we really want to know is how real people, not philosophers, manage to "do their thing" with words. But my difficulties with a set of categories like those proposed by Searle are not simply those of a behaviorist who claims Searle's data is limited as an account of how real people really act, but those of an anthropologist who insists that action is something constituted by social beings who, in acting, implicate their understanding of the world in which they live.

Surely, Searle's categories are versatile enough to be applied to other peoples' acts of speech. But at the same time, they can be criticized for undue emphasis upon the speaker's psychological state, and corresponding inattention to the social sphere.<sup>40</sup> The fact that "we" stress propositions whereas Ilongots see directives as a paradigmatic act of speech reflects, I think, our relatively indi-

vidualistic (and sociologically, problematic) view of human sociality and communication. If social relationships are to be recognized in analytical accounts of verbal acts, it will prove necessary to grasp the different ways that social worlds shape things that one can do or say with words by shaping notions about personhood, society, and speech. Thus, the difficulty with such categories as “assertion” and “expression” when applied to Ilongot acts of speech is that they do not help us comprehend the common Ilongot understandings of the designated acts – as these, in turn, are documented both in Ilongot names for verbal acts and in the ways they use these names and understand and answer to each other’s speech. Ilongot notions lead, instead, to my proposal that Ilongot speech acts be distinguished as “declaratives” and “directives.” And furthermore, Ilongot marking and differentiation of the category of directive acts is something which, we see, makes sense with reference to the ways they think about and order their ongoing social bonds and deeds.

One reason to attend some of the ways in which Ilongot notions of linguistic action differ from the select Western notions documented by Searle is thus to show that certain of our culturally shaped ideas about how human beings act have limited our grasp of speech behavior, leading us to celebrate the individual who acts without attending to contextual constraints on meaning. Ilongot views of language – and, in particular, their emphasis on commands – suggest alternatives to the philosopher’s account of referential, individually deployed, systems of speech. They help display the problems that inhere in all attempts to construe action in universal and subjective terms, without regard for how societies and cultures shape our selves, our motives, and our activities. Searle uses English performative verbs as guides to something like a universal law. I think his efforts might better be understood as an ethnography – however partial – of contemporary views of human personhood and action as these are linked to culturally particular modes of speaking.

In sum, there is no question in my mind but that Ilongots conduct social life in ways quite similar to and yet quite different from ourselves – and that these differences are revealed, at once, in how they think about and categorize each other’s acts, and in the forms through which their interactions actually proceed. The differences between Ilongot *tuydek* and comparable English directive acts are indissociable from our respective ways of thinking about labor, language, human skill, and human action, and such social facts as “sameness,” hierarchy, cooperation, and prestige. And I would argue that these differences, in turn, prove consequential on the one hand, for an analysis of our distinctive socioeconomic forms, and on the other, for a technical understanding of the ways we use our words in speech.

Reflections on Ilongot notions concerning acts of speech should serve, then, as a reminder that the understanding of linguistic action always, and necessarily, demands much more than an account of what it is that individuals intend to say: because, as Ilongots themselves are well aware, the “force” of acts of speech

depends on things participants expect; and then again, because, as our comparison makes clear, such expectations are themselves the products of particular forms of sociocultural being.

NOTES

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1. This paper was written while the author was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, partially supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Gregory Accaioli, A. Becker, Eve Clark, Jane Collier, Jean Comaroff, Paul Friedrich, Ian Hacking, Dell Hymes, Beatriz Lavandera, Fred Myers, Carol Pateman, Mary Pratt, Renato Rosaldo, Gillian Sankoff, Michael Silverstein, and Elizabeth Traugott are all to be thanked for their helpful conversations and comments.

2. This goal – essentially, of characterizing the necessary interaction between action and structure, instrumentality and meaning – is more or less explicitly recognized as a central problematic in much modern social theory. See, e.g., Giddens (1976), Bourdieu (1977), or the recent polemic by Thompson (1978) against Althusser (1971).

3. The claim, of course, is not a new one. It has been developed in a variety of ways in the literature associated with the Ethnography of Speaking (e.g., Gumperz & Hymes 1972; Bauman & Sherzer 1974). Recently, M. Silverstein (1979) has made a suggestive, and relevant, argument concerning the relationship between cultural tradition, linguistic form, and dominant theories about language, insisting that our representational view of linguistic phenomena is at once the product of our ways of speaking and the cause of a certain conservatism in our conceptions of how language works. For an earlier and still important formulation of the interdependence of conceptions of action, personhood, moral order, and modes of speech, see K. Burke (e.g., 1950).

4. Although reference to "speech acts" is found in the work of quite diverse authors (e.g., Voloshinov 1973; Hymes 1972), and was not, to my knowledge, used by Austin – the notion of "speech act theory" tends to refer to developments initiated by Austin's discussions of the "performative/constative" distinction and of "illocutionary force" (1962, 1963), receiving their fullest formulation in the writings of the Berkeley philosopher, John Searle (1965, 1969, 1976, 1979a). The 1970s saw the adoption of speech-act-theoretic concepts by linguists (see, Cole & Morgan 1975; Saddock 1974), literary critics (e.g., Fish 1979; Pratt 1978; Searle 1979d) and anthropologists (e.g., Ahern 1979; Tambiah 1973), as well as numerous philosophers – largely, I think, because of their promise to relate the formal study of language to questions of the use and effectiveness of speech. It is because of the wide-ranging appeal of the theory that I think it worthwhile to try to clarify – from a sympathetic, and yet empirically oriented perspective – one critical (and largely unnoted) area where it goes wrong.

5. Research among the Ilongots of Northern Luzon, Philippines, was conducted by Renato Rosaldo and myself over a period of nearly two years in the late 1960s and again in 1974 (under the sponsorship of a National Institute of Health Predoctoral Fellowship and a National Institute of Health Research Grant, 5 FI MH-33, 243-02, BEH-A, and a National Science Foundation Research Grant No. GS-40788). For additional sources on Ilongot language and culture, see M. Rosaldo 1972; 1973; 1975; 1980; and R. Rosaldo 1980.

6. For a detailed sketch of Ilongot phonology (and aspects of Ilongot grammar), see M. Rosaldo 1980. In reading the examples to follow, the following conventions should be noted: /e/ is a low mid vowel; /ē/ is a lengthened, high mid vowel; /r/ is a voiced velar fricative; /ʔ/ is a glottal stop; /i/ and /u/ are front and back vowels respectively, with high and low allophones determined, in large part, by the preceding consonant.

7. The interrelations between headhunting, violence, gender concepts, and notions of obedience and respect in everyday affairs are developed in M. Rosaldo (1980; n.d.b). Collier & Rosaldo (in press), provide a model for interpreting these and other aspects of Ilongot society and culture.

8. Recently, some extremely suggestive work has been done on the relationship between syntactic alternates and politeness phenomena cross-linguistically, wherein it is suggested, e.g., that "indirection," the use of passives, and of qualifications as to name, modality, and so on, may all figure in complex attempts by speakers to appear at once effective and polite (for different, but not unrelated

inquiries, see Ervin-Tripp 1976; Brown & Levinson 1978; Searle 1975, 1979b). Part of my purpose here and in what follows is to point to some of the limitations of our (implicitly, I think, universalizing) ideas of politeness – by suggesting that concerns for “politeness” themselves are dependent on local forms of social inequality and hierarchy, forms which differ considerably between such relatively “egalitarian” peoples as the Ilongots and ourselves. Consequently, I would argue, Ilongots use and elaborate linguistic resources in ways that do not correspond with our categories; the semantics of their linguistic varieties is not random, but it cannot be understood without some appreciation of the distinctive conceptual and relational shape of Ilongot society.

9. That variation in directive forms may be concerned not just with etiquette but urgency and speed is indicated in Lavandera’s (1977) discussion of Argentine Spanish, suggesting that some of the considerations raised by my Ilongot analysis may well have cross-linguistic analogues. In fact, it may turn out that emphasis on simple notions of “power” and “solidarity” in much sociolinguistic analysis reflects the poverty of our analytical grasp of human social life.

10. Stated otherwise, it seems to me that we cannot understand Ilongot acts of *tuydek* without some grasp of the ways that Ilongots themselves construe their social context; our understandings of speech acts cannot be linked directly to our views of universal human nature without some attempt to reconstitute their immediate “world.” In a related vein, see P. Ricoeur (1971) who argues that “inscribed” human behavior (i.e., social science data) is like a literary text lacking an ordinary communicative context, and so requiring some sort of situating in a world or context if the things it “says” are to be “understood.”

11. A more detailed study of children’s linguistic-learning-of-relationships would include an account of “learning to plead” (*kide’ri*), which is almost simultaneous with “learning to obey commands.” These reflections were occasioned, in part, by consideration of Ilongot similarities and contrasts to the Kaluli described by Schieffelin (n.d.). Kaluli children learn about (by learning to perform within) a special sort of sibling bond in which one party’s “pleading” guarantees that the other will obey.

12. Michael Silverstein points out (personal communication) that, as directive verb forms are often unmarked, this result may be an accident. I think not. When asked, for example, for a gloss on “to cross a river,” one schoolboy wrote, “the game I killed is across the river, go across and get it”; for a gloss on “to belittle”, I received, “I am your equal, do not belittle me.” Most instances resemble these in having a clearly intended directive sense.

13. “Most” here refers to dominant themes in “generative” (or structural) linguistics. Surely, there have been other – and more sociological – schools of linguistic thinking, from Wittgenstein to Whorf, Sapir, Malinowski, Hymes, and Halliday. At the same time, it seems to me fair to say that “functional” linguistics has not enjoyed the centrality of more “structural” schools, and that many would-be sociological or cultural linguistic thinkers tend in fact to see issues of “use” and “function” as things “added on” to a proposition-making core. Surely, this characterization is appropriate to all theorists who are concerned to differentiate, e.g., “utterance/sentence meaning” from “speaker’s meaning” or “statement meaning” (e.g., Searle 1969; Graham 1977), in a manner that construes the relative stability of the former as a condition for the latter. Although his formulation is somewhat different, Grice’s work is based on rather similar views. Thus, Grice argues that our conversational maxims are formed with reference to “the particular purposes . . . that talk is adapted to serve . . . . I have stated my maxims as if this purpose were a maximally effective exchange of information; this specification is, of course, too narrow and the scheme needs to be generalized to allow for such general purposes as influencing or directing the actions of others” (1975: 47). Whatever the difficulties with his argument (see, e.g., Sapir 1979), M. Silverstein’s work (1976) is significant for its suggestion that analyses that begin in a Gricean fashion will never achieve the sort of generalization that Grice himself finds desirable.

14. Here as elsewhere, constraints of space require that I make general ethnographic statements without elaborating their ethnographic basis. To demonstrate, for instance, the “relativity” built into Ilongot views of truth, I would cite their readiness to acknowledge differences in, e.g., botanical naming practices among adults who “grew up in different houses”; their lack of interest in ascertaining “the facts” when engaged in legal argument; their use of the word *beya*, or “knowledge” in contexts where what seems to matter is knowing *how* rather than knowing *that*.

15. With the exception of a few anthropologists (e.g., Finnegan 1969; Foster 1974), interested in highlighting ritual and oratory contexts where speech takes on a special sort of force, none of the recent commentators on Austin (e.g., Graham 1977; Holdcroft 1978) seem to pick up on the

sociological perspective implicit in his account. Part of the problem here, as Paul Friedrich (1979, and personal communication) points out, is that the transformationalist's stress on freedom and creativity has led to a distrust of convention and a systematic discounting of regularized linguistic and social expectations concerning speech. The significance of routines for our grasp of memory and meaning (e.g., Tyler 1978: 229–48) or for an understanding of communication generally is, of course, a central insight among ethnographers of communication (e.g., Hymes 1972: 57). And it seems ironic that those theorists most wedded to freedom and invention seem willing to accept a very narrow view of the sorts of "intentions" likely to be realized in speech. In fact, I would suggest that a good deal of what people like Searle see as inconsistency in Austin's speech act classification derives from the latter's attempt to retain a sense of interactional relevance in his categories; the casual character of Austin's typology is, in part, a testimony to his own scepticism of ever realizing a definitive classification of all forms of action, or all ways of doing things with words. If my reading is correct, Austin remains in spirit a good deal closer than his followers to the (more or less) Marxist claim that forms of action cannot be classified absolutely, but must be analyzed with reference to socioeconomic contexts in which activities are performed (e.g., Giddens 1979; Asad 1979; Voloshinov 1973). It also seems to me that Austin's explorations are much closer to Derridian inquiry (e.g., Derrida 1977) than Searle (1977) allows.

16. See Anthony Giddens (1976, 1979) for a particularly illuminating discussion of the consequences of an unfortunate division of labor between social scientists, concerned to understand human "behavior" as the product of unintended "forces," and philosophers of "action" who tend to stress agency at the expense of any grasp of social and cultural factors shaping what we do and mean.

17. A progression can be traced in Searle's published work, from a concern with delimiting the notion of "speech act" and "illocutionary force" by offering illustrative sets of "rules" (1965, 1969), to one with speech act typology or taxonomy (1976, 1979a, 1979f). The two converge, of course, in that many of the "rules" constituting a successful speech act in Searle (essential conditions, propositional content rules, preparatory conditions) are paralleled by the dimensions of his taxonomy (essential, words/world, psychological state). Furthermore, I believe that it is this convergence that gives him confidence in his anti-Wittgensteinian claim that there are, in fact, limited kinds of actions that human beings do, or can, perform with words (1979a: vii). Graham's critique of Austin is also, implicitly, at odds with Searle in this regard (1977: 107–08). Of course, Searle's formulations continue to be modified, expanded, and criticized, both in his own work (1979; Searle & Vanderveken, n.d.) and that of writers who are more or less disturbed than he about the kinds of lines he draws between, for example, semantics and pragmatics (e.g., Katz 1977; Morgan 1975; Labov & Fanshel 1977). Some theorists have tried to prove the relevance of Austin's claims by putting speech acts "under," "over," or "behind" conventional propositional forms in speaker's minds and/or in depths of grammar (Ross 1970; Gordon & Lakoff 1971; Grimes 1975; Saddock 1974; Searle 1975, 1979e). And work by Grice (1975), Strawson (1971), and others concerned with comprehending the very *flexible* rule-governedness of talk has developed in lines essentially compatible with Searle's own. But it remains, unfortunately, the case that the empirical and largely antagonistic voice of ethnomethodologists (e.g., Sacks 1973b; and others, e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1976; Gumperz in press; Rosaldo 1974) interested in how real speakers both interpret and respond to one another's words has not yet managed to enrich the rather abstract and idealized view of conversation characteristic of this dominant philosophical account of talk. In fact, for Habermas (1979), it is just the way in which Searle's theory at once refers to and apparently transcends constraints of actual (and "distorted") forms of talk that makes it useful to philosophers who are concerned to claim that people can communicate in ways more moral, searching, and humane than we do now.

18. See C. Pateman (1979) for a complementary discussion of the use – and misuse – of concepts of promising in philosophical discussions of political obligation. Although Pateman sees the promise as a crucial concept, mediating an overly "socialized" view of human beings and an "individualizing" stress on free action (which leads to "contracts"), she realizes that promises have, in general, been evoked in essentially individualistic analyses which assume that people accept obligations and make promises without prior obligations and constraints.

19. I haven't made HIM a promise "since the big one," as my friend, John Haugeland once pointed out. But the example is telling. If we were to consider "oaths of marriage" as meta-promises that hold across all future interactions, we might as well assume that our very entry into (THE, or any) "social contract" constitutes such a "promise," thus mitigating the need to voice commitments in our day-to-day affairs. And yet – to look ahead to my discussion of the Ilongots – the very notion

of a "contract" suggests that a particular sort of contingency is built into our social relationships. Social relations elsewhere need not be utterly stable or non-contingent, but if people do not see themselves as bearers of inevitably divisive interests, it may be that such connections as do take hold have less the quality of "contracts" than of inherently incontestable (for Ilongots, "kinship" dissolves when people cease to cooperate or when they argue about their relations) bonds. Furthermore, it may well be that in a world in which people do not assume themselves to be divided, there is no reason to voice "promises" – acts that presuppose division, in order then to make commitments clear.

20. For critiques in a similar spirit, see the papers by Philips (1976) and Keenan (1976) in *Language in Society*. What both suggest is that terms we use as analytical tokens of necessity are, in fact, culturally "loaded." Thus, for example, while on some level it makes sense to claim that a spoken language only randomly related to beliefs about what is true would not be intelligible, it is also clear that the particular ways in which utterance and "truth" may be related are diverse enough, across contexts and cultures, to make some of Grice's conversational maxims a good deal less powerful than one might think.

21. As I understand it, Searle would pose two objections before I started. First, he would argue that the fact that not all languages have "evolved" syntactic means for performing, e.g., "commitments," does not undermine the logical status of his categories (1979a: viii) – a point that I would answer by referring to critiques of "evolutionary" biases in Austin (e.g., Graham 1977: 46) and furthermore, insisting that a set of analytical categories that work better for some languages, or cultures, than for others *are* to be suspected on those grounds alone. Second, Searle might argue (as, e.g., do Brown & Levinson 1978), that his appeal to, e.g., indirect speech acts (1975, 1979b), to confirm aspects of his analysis, requires simply that predicted alternates be recognized as intelligible and not that they be idiomatic – a point that I can answer only by suggesting (a) that since contemporary analyses are built upon the idiomatic possibilities of English, we might learn something new from looking elsewhere; and (b) that it seems possible that what emerges, historically, as idiomatic in any language may well reflect culture-specific dynamics, wherein certain speech forms come to be associated with particular (desirable or undesirable) institutions and social contexts. Thus while accepting, e.g., with Vendler (1967: 26), the argument that "the only way of arriving at conclusions that are necessarily true is to explore the necessary truths in some language . . ." and that this limitation does not mean that we are "trapped in the conceptual network of our language . . .", I would insist that philosophers have yet to grapple seriously with the question of the *kinds* of biases that are likely to be built into *our* cultural/linguistic tradition, or of the kinds of things that they might learn through serious investigation of traditions elsewhere in the world.

22. Although philosophers are unlikely to make use of data of this sort, it is worth noting that English language data *is* used – for the most part, unquestioningly – in philosophical arguments. Thus, to note that, for example, our performative vocabulary seems evenly distributed across the categories designed by Searle; to comment on semantic and grammatical affinities between our names for actions (e.g., "I assert . . .") and their corresponding psychological states ("I believe . . ."); or then again, to recognize the availability (in English) of "indirect speech acts" that appear to work by questioning or asserting, rules that govern more "straightforward" acts of speech – so that, e.g., "I want you to take the garbage out," "the garbage should be taken out," and "can you take the garbage out," may all be roughly similar to a straightforward imperative command – are all rhetorical techniques employed in demonstration that the analyses set forth are philosophically and (of course) empirically well-founded.

23. In the paragraphs that follow, I may be accused of confusing evidence on "illocutions" (the conventional force, that *constitutes* a kind of action) with evidence on "perlocution" (the actual force, or effect, realized by a particular act of speech). Stated otherwise, I may seem to be lumping rules and behaviors. My response is that ethnographers have no alternative. Searle and Austin both seem to assume that the primary use of performative verbs is one of clarifying the performative force of utterances (in fact, Searle's categories of speech acts all derive from performative verbs). I question this assumption and insist, furthermore, that in lieu of rule-formulating natives (full of "native intuitions"), we can only figure out what people are up to and what their words mean through a dialectic that moves back and forth, from tentative translation to an examination of actual practices. In fact, Searle's analytical technique is similar. Searle learns what constitutes, e.g., an assertion, by considering conventional markings of violations, "you said X but did not believe it . . ." Many of my arguments concerning Ilongot have to do with the fact that, while one is

unlikely to hear protests of *this* sort, there is a good bit of "are you trying to answer me . . . ," "I am not orating, just telling news . . ."

24. Mary Pratt (personal communication) points out that the very salience of "assertions" in recent speech act theory has had the ironic consequence of inhibiting analysis of this class of "acts." Thus, Searle writes on issues concerning "reference" and "predication," but never explores in depth conventional rules which "constitute" varieties of assertive acts.

25. For more data on these and other Ilongot names for acts of speech see M. Rosaldo (1973, 1980).

26. See M. Rosaldo (1973, 1980, and n.d.a) for a discussion of the nature of political/legal debate in Ilongot oratory, the lack of concern for "finding out the facts" or "passing judgment" and the ways that "talk about talk" is used to manipulate interactional roles. My work on Ilongot oratory suggests some interesting parallels with the fact that Austin's interest in performatives grew initially from a concern with legal discourse. Surely, it seems no accident that we and the Ilongots use performative verbs in somewhat comparable settings, or that a recognition of language as action would emerge from considerations of contexts – like legal ones – where talk, in fact, can shape the world.

27. Lavandera (1978) makes a similar claim for the use of the subjunctive in Argentine Spanish, suggesting that analyses that highlight "certainty" may often say more about the concerns of linguists than with the actual salience of particular meanings in informal speech.

28. The one instance I have recorded comes from an oratorical encounter in which a young, government appointed "captain" tried to direct a bridewealth meeting by telling participants what kind of speech he wanted to hear. As far as I could tell, his self-oriented directives were seen as "the kind of thing that captains (i.e., non-Ilongot leaders) do" and had no influence on the way the debate proceeded.

29. Gillian Sankoff (personal communication) suggests that bald directives may be more common in American English speech than many of us believe to be the case – an instance of practice deviating from folk expectations. The appropriate conclusion to be drawn, however, is not that evidence of this sort proves Searle wrong about English or shows Ilongots to be identical to ourselves, but instead that we need to learn more about what the American folk rule, "don't be rude or imposing; say please," means by asking when it *does* (and when it does not) dictate practice – and why.

30. Issues of relationship are, of course, at issue in English directive use as well, e.g., "your request is my command." I would guess, however, that the relational concerns at stake in English have largely to do with issues of imposition, i.e., can I impose my will on your activity? For Ilongots, by contrast, the key issues have to do with social relationships and roles, i.e., are you my "child"? What is at stake in English discourse seems to have more to do with a conception of a private and privileged self, leery of imposition; whereas, what matters for Ilongots is the nature of social bonds.

31. Several analysts (e.g., Sacks 1972; Goody 1978a, 1978b) have noted that an important interactional fact about questions is that they "demand" responses, a fact that makes them particularly relevant to the study of politeness, status manipulation in discourse, and the interaction between individual intentions and contextual facts of power and solidarity as both are realized in speech. My point here is that in Ilongot (and probably universally) "demand for uptake," or for "recognition" may be a general property of "directive," as opposed, e.g., to "assertives": one can "state" although no one hears you, but it seems difficult to "promise" without an audience, and impossible to "command" with no hope of response. It is significant – and disappointing – that this sort of interactional fact has no place in the analysis developed by Searle.

32. See my discussions of Ilongot notions of exchange, anger, and wrongdoing (M. Rosaldo 1980, n.d.a, n.d.b).

33. Here I am speaking of the verbs, *sigem* "to swear an oath by salt," and *getur* "to make a date by tying knots in string," both discussed below. One feature of *sigem* is that it is used only in making negative statements of commitment: one swears by salt in promising *not* to kill; more casually, one says, *nansigem*. "I swear by salt," when, e.g., *denying* that one has any betel nuts to share. What then of positive commitment? Two words, *tebēr* "to say yes, agree," and *telu* "to obey," might be considered names for commissive actions – although they can equally describe an action like getting up and fetching water when performed in immediate compliance with a command. I do not treat these here, however, because they, like *sibēr* "to answer," have the property of occurring only as second-pair-part members to directives, and the sense in which they may in fact entail "commitments" binding in the future has more to do with the direction than the response. To me, then, more

important than their possible function as “commissives” are the ways they are embedded in discursive interaction, and their affinities with and dependence on directives – properties far from evident in our English “commissive” acts.

34. The phrase, “strong” illocutionary force, comes from an important and incisive article by Ahern (1979) in which it is argued that even supernaturally oriented “declarations” need not always be assumed to have the same sort of illocutionary power, and that one must attend to native views and institutional contexts in order to determine the particular kind of force speakers intend.

35. Austin, adopting an evolutionary view, suggested that in “primitive” languages, performative verb forms might not have been available to mark illocutionary force – a view I was appalled to learn that one contemporary critic still finds “plausible” (Holdcroft 1978: 34). Searle seems to agree, although he also writes as though all languages must, of necessity, have performatives or performative-like devices to unambiguously distinguish between such acts as “threatening” and “warning” (1969: 16). My point, of course, is not that performative verbs have nothing to do with (the evolution of) social institutions (quite the contrary!), but rather than an evolutionary view is unacceptable insofar as it does no more than offer theoretical support to the universalistic pretensions of Western ideologies.

36. Ideally, I would offer at this point a full grammatical account of Ilongot imperatives, but unfortunately, my grasp of Ilongot root classes, affixes, and verbal aspects is still imperfect. For the following discussion, these remarks, however, should suffice:

a) “simple” imperatives are not marked for aspect, although they may at times have an incomplete sense.

i) these verbs typically have the form, *Vb-ka* (actor focus) or *Vb-(i)m* (object focus) as in: *'ekarka di dēnum* “go to the water”; *tawawim si X* “call X.”

ii) some “simple” imperatives use the prefix, *mang-*, again, I believe, not marked for aspect: *mangangka* “eat” (root *kan*); *mambēyuka* “pound rice” (root *bēyu*).

iii) again, not marked for aspect are varieties of modal + verb: *rawka manakdu* “go and fetch water”; *rawkasu 'etakduwi* “go over to his place to fetch water.”

iv) finally, aspect unmarked imperatives can take a benefactive verbal focus: *'irawi 'itakduwi* “go fetch water for me”; *'irawim si kabu nima 'ula* “go get Kabu a sweet potato.”

b) “subjunctive” imperatives use affix *'u*: *'engraw'uka 'enakdu* “if only you would go fetch water”; *tunur'umuy tan* “if only you would (would you please) light that.”

c) perfective (completive) imperatives use affixes *-im*, *-in*, *nang-*: *kimitaka di denum* “go to the water”; *'ingrawmu tuy ma ganagana mad . . .* “put the goods in . . .”; *nangasi* “pour out the water (for me).”

d) imperfective (incomplete) imperatives may use affix *-um-*, or reduplication: *(ten) kumitaka* “(don't) go”; *mangangka* “eat, eat up, keep eating”; *'eg kin 'en'epu'upu* “don't keep talking.”

37. As E. Traugott (personal communication) pointed out to me, my method in what follows is closer in spirit to that of field, or componential, semantics than to the propositional semantics used by Searle. The choice probably reflects the kind of holistic and relational thinking I find appropriate to a cultural problematic, wherein indigenous ideas and practices are defined through their relations. I would point out, however, that unlike many anthropologists who base analyses on semantic contrasts, I concentrate on the ways in which not only *categories* but *dimensions* must be understood with reference to a cultural field. Ilongot categories of action overlap with our own, but they differ not just in scope but quality. As will be seen in what follows, dimensions that discriminate among these categories are rooted in the Ilongot sociocultural milieu.

38. Interestingly, Searle (1976: 22) notes a similar ambiguity in the English performative, “I warn you . . .” which can be used either to “warn/forbid” (a directive) or to “warn/advise” (representative, assertive). But where his analysis highlights the disjunction in our uses of “warning,” mine suggests that both kinds of Ilongot *tengteng* (“orders” and statements of “warning/advise”) are best seen as directives that share an “open-ended” aspectual quality.

39. For a particularly clear statement of this position, see Ervin-Tripp (1966: 28): “Terms like ‘promise’, ‘tell’, ‘request’ . . . are derived from the vocabulary of indirect speech, in which speech events are reported as categories. . . . But the English verbs used in reporting are not necessarily the best analytical categories for classifying speech events. . . . There is no reason to believe that



English has a good metalanguage for itself. . . .'' The difficulty with Ervin-Tripp's position is that it provides no alternative *theoretical* account for discriminating kinds of acts, or functions, and makes the relationship between linguistic "structure" and linguistic "function" a wholly arbitrary one (in radical contrast, e.g., to the sort of intimate linkage scholars like Halliday (1975) propose.) John Dore's (1979) work on conversational acts, wherein conversationally realized typifications of linguistic actions provide the basis for speech act classification seems to meet Ervin-Tripp's behavioral concern and yet give theoretical space to the sorts of cultural and institutional issues considered here.

40. An interesting point about several of the writers who attempt to modify, without rejecting, Searlian speech act classification, is that their modifications move in the direction of adding sociological and interactional dimensions to his taxonomy. Thus, e.g., Labov & Fanshel (1977: 60-61) propose the categories Meta-linguistic, Representation, Request, and Challenge as sufficient to a speech act analysis of therapeutic discourse; Longacre suggests that it is profitable to think about performative verbs "in terms of the various discourse genre with which they are associated" (1976: 251) and in terms of the "resolving utterances" they "solicit" (ibid); Dore (1979) proposes *conversational* as against *speech* (implying sentence-unit?) acts as units of analysis; and Hancher (1979) argues that Searle's taxonomy must be expanded to include what he calls "cooperative" speech acts, like betting. I am in sympathy with these revisions, but wish that the theorists concerned had recognized the ways in which their emendations tend to undermine the "intentional" (and noninteractional) bias built into Searle's analysis itself. Bach & Harnish (1979) make what is perhaps the most significant attempt in this direction, by speaking of speech acts in the context of a theory concerned with communication and interpretation. For them, "rules" governing performance and interpretation are distinguished from conventions and constitutive meanings, so that, e.g., "sincerity" bears no necessary relation to the use of a conventional token, like "thanks." Their scheme, however, leads to a radical dissociation of "convention" from linguistic action, and thus fails to grapple with the social and interactional character of meaning-produced-in-speech.

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