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How to Establish Authority with Words: Imperative Utterances and Presupposition Accommodation *

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it aims at providing an account of an indirect mechanism responsible for establishing one's power to issue binding directive acts; second, it is intended as a case for an externalist account of illocutionary interaction. The mechanism in question is akin to what David Lewis calls "presupposition accommodation": a rule-governed process whereby the context of an utterance is adjusted to make the utterance acceptable; the main idea behind the proposed account is that the indirect power-establishing mechanism involves the use of imperative sentences that function as presupposition triggers and as such can trigger off the accommodating change of the context of their utterance. According to the externalist account of illocutionary interaction, in turn, at least in some cases the illocutionary force of an act is determined by the audience's uptake rather than by what the speaker intends or believes; in particular, at least in some cases it is the speaker, not her audience, who is invited to accommodate the presupposition of her act.

The paper has three parts. The first one defines a few terms — i.e., an "illocution", a "binding act", the "audience's uptake" and an "Austinian presupposition" — thereby setting the stage for the subsequent discussion. The second part formulates and discusses the main problem of the present paper: what is the source of the agent's power to perform binding directive acts? The third part offers an account of the indirect power-establishing mechanism and discusses its externalist implications.

1. Terminological preliminaries

1.1. Illocutions

Following John L. Austin [1962: 92], I distinguish between two readings of the term "utterance". I assume, namely, that it can be read as standing either for the issuing of an utterance or for what is thereby uttered or produced. Austin calls the former "*utteratio*", and the latter — "*utteratum*". In my view, the *utteratio/utteratum* distinction applies to every abstract aspect of what Austin calls the "total speech-act in the total speech situation" (1962: 148); that is to say, we can distinguish between the ISSUING OF A PHONETIC ACT and the PHONE thereby produced, the ISSUING OF A PHATIC ACT and its corresponding PHEME, the ISSUING OF A RHETIC ACT and its corresponding RHEME, and the ISSUING OF AN ILLOCUTIONARY ACT and the ILLOCUTION thereby produced.

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The *utteratio/utteratum* contrast is a variant of Kazimierz Twardowski's [1912/1999] distinction between actions and products. According to Twardowski, in many cases the difference between an action (or an act) and its product is abstract rather than real. For example, there is no real difference between an act of thinking and the thought thereby produced and between an act of speaking and the speech thereby produced. Nevertheless, the distinction is worth drawing, because the act of speaking (i.e., *utteratio*) and its product (i.e., *utteratum*) do differ in respect of their properties as well as in respect of the effects they have on the social life. For example, it is the pheme, not the act of its issuance, that can be evaluated as grammatical or non-grammatical; by the same token, it is the illocution rather than the act of its production that can be evaluated as felicitous and binding.

In what follows I use the terms “illocutionary act” and “illocution” interchangeably. I take them to refer to *utteratum* in Austin's sense: to what is produced in the issuing of an illocutionary act rather than to the act of its issuance. Now let us consider what it is for an illocution to be binding.

1.2. Binding illocutions

Following Austin [1962: 117], by BINDING OR FELICITOUS illocutions I mean illocutionary acts that TAKE EFFECT, i.e., acts that bring about changes in the normative sphere of the rights, entitlements, duties, obligations and commitments of the participants in illocutionary interaction. For example, a binding order creates the audience's obligation to do what he or she is told and the speaker's right to expect the audience to do it; a binding promise, in turn, produces the speaker's commitment to perform the action he or she refers to and the audience's right to expect the speaker to keep his or her promise. In general, the normative change brought about by a binding illocutionary act can be called the act's *normative* effect or — using Austin's own term — its CONVENTIONAL effect. I assume, following Marina Sbisà [2002: 433], that to call such an effect conventional is to assume that it is “brought about [...] on the basis of an agreement among the relevant social participants”.

Following Jacek Jadacki [2002] and Anna Brożek [2011], I use the term “generating” to refer to the aforementioned function of illocutionary act, i.e., their function to bring about changes in the normative sphere of the rights and commitments of the participants in verbal interaction.

1.3. Uptake

According to Austin, the performance of a binding illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake on the part of the audience, which “amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and the force of the locution” [1962: 117]. In other words, an illocutionary act fails to take effect — e.g., an order fails to create the hearer's obligation and a promise fails to produce the speaker's commitment — unless uptake is secured.

In what follows, I accept the idea of the indispensability of uptake in performing binding illocutionary acts. Following Sbisà, however, I assume that the securing of uptake does not necessarily involve CONSCIOUS understanding the force of

the act. In other words, the hearer can be said to take up the speaker's illocutionary act even if he produces no mental representation of its force and meaning; in my view, what matters is that he *RESPONDS* to the act in accordance with an appropriate pattern of verbal interaction, i.e., in accordance with the pattern whose reproduction has been initiated or offered by the speaker (for a discussion of this idea, see Millikan [2005], Hulstijn and Maudet [2006] and Witek [2010]). As Sbisà puts it, "in many cases uptake consists in a tacit agreement, that is, either is made manifest in the audience's *response* [...], or holds by default" [Sbisà 2009: 50] (the emphasis is mine — M.W.).

1.4. Austinian presuppositions

According to Austin, for every illocutionary act one can specify a set of requirements — that he calls "felicity conditions" — whose joint satisfaction guarantees that the act succeeds in performing its generative function, e.g., an order succeeds in bringing about the hearer's obligation and a promise succeeds in bringing about the speaker's commitment. In general, for an utterance to be a binding illocution the following conditions have to be met:

(A.1) There must exist an acceptable conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,

(A.2) the particular person and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

(B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B.2) completely [Austin 1962: 14-15].

(I ignore conditions (I.1) and (I.2), since their violation results in the act's being an abuse — e.g., being an insincere order or promise — rather than in its being non-binding.)

In what follows I assume that illocutionary acts are typed by reference to their *CONVENTIONAL OR NORMATIVE EFFECTS* mentioned in condition (A.1); recall, for example, that the generative function of an order involves the bringing about of the hearer's obligation to do what he or she is told and the generative function of a promise involves the producing of the speaker's commitment to perform the action he or she refers to. In short, the force of an illocution depends on what counts as its normative effect, the latter being determined by one of the felicity conditions the totality of which forms the conventional procedure invoked.

According to condition (A.2), an utterance counts as a binding illocution provided the speaker who produces the utterance meets certain requirements. In the case of an order, for example, he or she has to stand in an appropriate authority relation to his or her audience, whereas in the case of a promise he or she has to be empowered to make certain promises. In general, for an utterance to be a binding illocutionary act, its speaker has to be endowed with certain *DEONTIC OR ILLOCUTIONARY powers* (for a discussion of the idea of deontic powers see Searle 2005), e.g., the power to issue binding orders or the power to make binding promises.

Finally, observe that the performance of a binding illocution requires APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES. For example, the utterance of the sentence “Open the window” cannot be regarded as a binding order, i.e., as bringing about the audience’s obligation to open the window the speaker refers to, unless the window is closed; by the same token, the utterance of the sentence “I promise that I will pick you up at the airport tomorrow” cannot be regarded as a binding promise, i.e., as creating the speaker’s commitment to pick up the hearer/recipient at the airport, if the addressee of this utterance does not plan any trip within the next few days or is going to stay home for the whole day tomorrow.

Let us assume, following Austin, that the felicity of an illocutionary act PRESUPPOSES, first, that the speaker of the act is endowed with an appropriate illocutionary power and, second, the circumstances into which the act is produced are appropriate. Let us call these conditions the “Austinian presuppositions of an act”. According to Austin:

We might say that the formula “I do” presupposes lots of things: if these are not satisfied, the formula is unhappy, void: it does not succeed in being a contract when the reference fails (or even when it is ambiguous) any more than the other succeeds in being a statement. Similarly the question of goodness or badness of advice does not arise if you are not in a position to advise me about that matter [1962: 51].

In other words, the felicity of a promise made in uttering the formula “I do” presupposes that the reference to the promised action has been determined, and the felicity of an act of advising presupposes that the speaker is an expert on the matters being discussed and, as a result, has the illocutionary power to advise on them. If these presuppositions are not satisfied, then the speaker’s acts are not binding but void: they fail to bring about their characteristic normative effects.

Let us note that what I call the “Austinian presupposition” of an act differs from the act’s pragmatic presupposition in the sense defined by Robert Stalnaker [1973: 2002]. The “Stalnakerian presupposition” of an act is a propositional attitude of the speaker; that is to say, to presuppose a certain proposition in this sense is to take it for granted, or at least to accept it for the sake of conversation, “as background information — as *common ground* among the participants in conversation” [Stalnaker 2002: 701]. The Austinian presupposition of an act, by contrast, cannot be reduced to the speaker’s mental states. Rather, it is best understood as a contextual state of affairs that, first, is required by the act’s felicity and, second, is determined by the conventional procedure under which the act is performed.

The distinction between the Stalnakerian presupposition of an act and its Austinian presupposition corresponds to the contrast between the COGNITIVE and OBJECTIVE context of an act. The former is what Stalnaker call the COMMON GROUND of a conversation: the set of propositions mutually BELIEVED by the speaker and the hearer or at least mutually ACCEPTED by them for the purposes of the interaction they are involved in [Stalnaker 2002]. The latter, in turn, is the class of worldly facts — i.e., physical, mental, social and normative states of affairs — relative to which the

felicity of an act is to be evaluated. As Sbisà [2002: 428] observes, the participants in conversation can be WRONG ABOUT OR EVEN UNAWARE OF some of the components of the objective context of their utterances; the point is, namely, that what contributes to the objective context of an act is determined by the relevant set of felicity conditions rather than by the mental states of the speaker and her audience. For example, the speaker who utters the imperative sentence “Give me the report back!” can be unaware that the report she refers to has already been returned to her office OR that she has been demoted from her position as the department manager and, as the corollary of this, is no longer endowed with the illocutionary power to issue her colleagues binding commands; her false beliefs to the effect that the report has not been returned and that she is still the department manager do not make her utterance a biding directive act. I assume that the norms of linguistic appropriateness in general — and the conditions of illocutionary felicity in particular — are to be formulated in terms of the objective context of an act rather than in that of what the speaker and her audience believe, accept or take for granted. As Christopher Gauker [1998: 153] observes, we refer to the cognitive context of an utterance if our aim is to EXPLAIN and *interpret* the speaker’s behaviour by attributing certain beliefs and intentions to her; but if our aim is to evaluate the speaker’s act, we have no alternative but to refer to the objective context of her utterance: the set of worldly states relative to which the appropriateness of the utterance is to be evaluated. By contrast, the cognitive context of the speaker’s utterance plays an explanatory role: it is the set of beliefs against her linguistic behaviour is to be explained and thereby interpreted.

To cut the long story short, let us observe that the Stalnakerian presupposition of an utterance is a candidate for a component of its cognitive context, whereas its Austinian presupposition, if satisfied, contributes to its objective context. Let us also observe that both the Stalnakerian presupposition of an utterance and the utterance’s cognitive context are defined in terms of the mental states of the participants in communication. By contrast, the Austinian presuppositions of an act and its objective context seem to be the act’s mind-transcendent properties: one cannot preclude *a priori* that the speaker is unaware of some of the Austinian presuppositions of her act as well as can be ignorant of or mistaken about what actually contributes to her act’s objective context.

In what follows I will use the phrases “ x presupposes_A y ” and “ x presupposes_S y ” as abbreviations for “ x presupposes in Austin’s sense y ” and “ x presupposes in Stalnaker’s sense y ”, respectively. Consistently, I will use the phrases “presupposition_A” and “presupposition_S” as standing for Austinian presuppositions and Stalnakerian presuppositions, respectively.

2. The sources of one’s power to issue binding directive acts

Recall that the felicity of a directive act — e.g., the felicity of an order made in uttering an imperative sentence — presupposes_A that the speaker is endowed with an

appropriate illocutionary power or, more specifically, that she stand in an appropriate authority relation to her audience. If this requirement is not satisfied by the objective context of the speaker's utterance, her action cannot be evaluated as a binding order. As Sbisà [2002: 423] observes, „an order issued without authority may be a rude request, but not an order”.

Now we are in a position to formulate and consider the main problem of the present paper: what is the source of one's illocutionary power to perform binding directive acts? Or, in other words, what is the mechanism responsible for establishing one's authority over one's audience?

There are, I think, at least two solutions to the problem under discussion. Call the first one “solution *A*”, and the second one — “solution *B*”. I take them to be neither alternative nor competing; in my view, rather, they describe two different though complementary discursive mechanisms whose function is to establish one's authority over one's audience.

According to solution *A*, the speaker's power to issue binding directive acts can be established directly by an explicit act made either by the speaker or by her audience. To illustrate the latter possibility, let us consider the following passage from Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*:

The person, to be the object of the verb “I order to ...” must, by some previous procedure [...] have first constituted the person who is to do the ordering an authority, *e.g.*, by saying ‘I promise to do what you order me to do’. This is, of course *one* of the uncertainties — and a purely general one really — which underlie the debate when we discuss in political theory whether there is or is not or should be a social contract [Austin 1962: 28-29].

In short, the speaker's authority over the hearer can be established by the hearer's PREVIOUS act whereby he explicitly promises to carry out the speaker's orders. By making such a promise, the hearer endows the speaker with the illocutionary power presupposed by the felicity of her directive acts.

In some cases, the speaker's power to make felicitous directives can be established by a previous act of the speaker. For example, consider the preamble to the Decalogue, whereby God declares that he has the power to issue commandments to his people:

I AM the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exodus 20: 1).

God declares that he is the lord to the people of Israel, which means that he stands in an authority relation to them and is entitled to issue commandments that regulate their social life. As the corollary of this, the commandments of the Decalogue are binding and felicitous directive acts.

Solution *A*, however, faces a serious problem. Namely, it leads to an infinite regress. According to Arkadiusz Chrudzimski, this problem was first identified by Adolf Reinach who, a few decades before Austin gave his famous William James Lectures, developed an account of what he called “social acts”: “overtly expressed

(typically verbal) actions, embedded in the network of social communication conventions [...] [and] responsible for the existence of a specifically human world” [Chrudzimski 2012: 1]. Following Reinach, Chrudzimski considers the possibility of one’s empowering another person to perform binding social acts, e.g., to make binding promises:

What is the ultimate source of this amazing power of “doing things with words”? We have now before us one of possible sources of this power. We see that this power can be sometimes “given” to us by another person. If *C* empowers *A* to make a promise in his name, then *A* acquires a power to produce certain obligations he did not have before. But what about *C*? Reinach argues that nobody can ever give to another person a power he himself does not have. So what is the source of *C*’s power to generate his own obligation? In principle we can imagine that *C*’s power derives from a still further social act, performed by *E* etc... But Reinach’s thesis is that such an infinite regress of empowerments would be evidently vicious [Chrudzimski 2012: 16].

In Reinach’s view, one can stop this regress by assuming that every human conscious agent is endowed with some primitive legal powers that are not generated by further social acts. I find this solution very problematic. What makes speech act theory an attractive research project is that it attempts at explaining how the normative domain of rights and duties is created and modified in the course of verbal interaction; in particular, it promises to show that human deontic powers — e.g., entitlements, permissions, commitments, obligations, and co on — are natural products of interacting conscious agents. That is why I am reluctant to accept the idea of there being primitive and non-derived deontic or legal powers. Only God can have deontic powers in and of himself; human beings have no choice but to create them by themselves in the course of social interactions.

Let us consider solution *B* which, I think, can be used to stop Reinach’s regress of empowerments. According to solution *B*, at least in some cases one’s power to make binding directive acts can be created indirectly, i.e., by means of a tacitly negotiated agreement between the interacting agents. What I have in mind is the idea of an indirect mechanism whereby one’s authority over one’s audience can be established without being explicitly represented. The mechanism in question is akin to what David Lewis calls *presupposition accommodation*. To illustrate how it works, let us consider another passage from *How to Do Things with Words*:

On a desert island you may say to me “Go and pick up wood” and I may say “I don’t take orders from you” or “you’re not entitled to give me orders” — I do not take orders from you when you try to “assert your authority” (which I myself fall in with but may not) on a desert island, as opposed to the case when you are the captain on a ship and therefore genuinely have authority [Austin 1962: 28].

Suppose, however, that the speaker of the sentence “Go and pick up/gather wood” succeeds in getting the hearer to do what he is told and thereby succeeds in asserting her authority. I assume, namely, that the hearer’s cooperative response — i.e., his complying with what the speaker has told him to do — involves his tacit acceptance of the speaker’s power to give him binding orders. Note, however, that the acceptance in question does not have to involve any further mental or speech act on

the part of the hearer. What matters here is that the interaction under discussion sets a precedent and that the hearer is disposed to follow it. In other words, both the precedent and the hearer's disposition contribute to the gradual construction of the authority relations between the people stranded on the desert island.

Let us take stock. The felicity of the act made in uttering the sentence "Go and pick up/gather wood" presupposes_A that the speaker stands in an appropriate authority relation to the hearer. In other words, if the act is a binding order, then the objective context against which it is evaluated involves the speaker's having an appropriate illocutionary power. The power, nevertheless, does not exist prior to the utterance under discussion. In a sense, it is a by-product of the act. My contention is that it is produced by a mechanism akin to what Lewis calls presupposition accommodation: a rule-governed process whose function is to adjust the context of an act to make it appropriate. In the particular case under discussion, the adjustment in question is triggered off and motivated by the hearer's default and tacit assumption to the effect that the speaker's utterance is a felicitous order (for a discussion of this idea see [Sbisà 2002: 425]). Let us add that the assumption does not have to be explicitly made and expressed; rather, it is manifested in the hearer's response to what he is told and in his being disposed to follow the precedent thereby set.

Note that using the idea of the indirect authority-establishing mechanism we can stop Reinach's regress of empowerments without postulating the existence of primitive deontic powers. The point is, namely, that in some cases the establishing of the speaker's authority to give orders on certain matters involves no additional speech acts — no declarations and no promises — made by the speaker or another person; rather, the authority automatically becomes an element of the objective context of interaction provided the speaker's utterance is taken up, by default, to be a binding order. In short, the speaker's power to give the hearer felicitous directives is established by a mechanism akin to what Lewis calls presupposition accommodation. Let us now consider how this mechanism works and what the rules that govern its functioning are.

3. The indirect authority-establishing mechanism

In what follows, I offer a short discussion of the mechanism responsible for the accommodation of Stalnakerian presuppositions and, next, use it as a reference point for accounting for the analogous process of Austinian presupposition accommodation. Finally, I discuss what I take to be the externalist background of the proposed account.

3.1. The accommodation of Stalnakerian presuppositions

According to Lewis [1979], presupposition accommodation — or, more precisely, presupposition_S accommodation — is a context-adjusting process governed by the following rule:

THE RULE OF ACCOMMODATION FOR PRESUPPOSITION_S:

If at time t something is said that requires presupposition_S P to be acceptable,

and if P is not presupposed_s just before t , then — *ceteris paribus* and within certain limits — presupposition_s P comes into existence at t .

Following Stalnaker [2002] and Lewis [1979], let us assume that to say something is to make a move in a language game. If the game is an information-gathering discourse, the purpose behind saying something is to update the common ground: the set of propositions that the participants in conversation mutually accept or take for granted as a basis for their cooperative interaction (for a discussion of the common ground theory of presuppositions see [von Stechow 2008]). Assume, next, that the game is constituted by certain pragmatic conventions that for every UTTERANCE TYPE define the conditions of its appropriate use or, in other words, combine utterance types with their PRESUPPOSITIONAL_S REQUIREMENTS. Let us take that to say that a proposition that P is the presuppositional_s requirement of utterance u is to say that u is appropriately produced only if it is common ground that P .

The conventions under discussion are pragmatic rather than semantic. The point is that they pertain to UTTERANCE rather than SENTENCE types. Let us assume that two utterances are of the same type if they are equivalent not only in respect of the linguistic means employed in their production, but also in respect of what is normally said in producing them. In my view, “what is said” is a pragmatic term that stands for the token-reflexive content of the speaker’s act (for a discussion of the idea of token-reflexive content see García-Carpintero [1998], Perry [2001], Korta and Perry [2007]). For example, every utterance u of the sentence:

(1) I have to pick up my sister at the airport.

expresses a token-reflexive proposition to the effect that the speaker of u has to pick up the sister of the speaker of u at the airport most salient at the moment u is produced.

Consider a situation in which Alice talks to Tom and utters sentence (1) with the intention to update the common ground. There is a pragmatic convention according to which every utterance of sentence (1) requires for its appropriateness that it is common ground among the participants in conversation that the speaker has a sister. Assume, however, that Alice falsely assumes that Tom believes that she has a sister; in other words, she presupposes that she has a sister but this presupposition is not part of the common ground before time t at which the utterance of (1) is produced. Appearances to the contrary, this fact does not lead to a conversation failure. The common ground is automatically repaired or adjusted *via* the mechanism of presupposition_s accommodation. The adjusting process is triggered off by the fact that Alice produces and Tom perceives the descriptive phrase „my sister”; what is more, it exhausts the pragmatic convention that defines the presuppositional_s requirement of Alice’s utterance and works by default unless Tom has some reasons to refuse accepting the proposition that Alice has a sister. It is worth stressing that the assertion Alice makes in uttering sentence (1) is to be evaluated relative to the adjusted common ground: the fact that before time t at which the utterance of (1) is made it is not common ground that Alice has a sister is beside the point.

It turns out, therefore, that the common ground of a linguistic interaction can be updated not only by what the speaker says, but also by what she presupposes_S in saying what she says. In other words, the speaker's presuppositions_S can be as informative as the assertions she makes.

3.2. The accommodation of Austinian presuppositions

The central idea of this paper is that one's authority over one's audience can be established indirectly *via* a mechanism analogous to the one responsible for presupposition_S accommodation. The analogy, of course, has its limits. Nevertheless, it captures two important facts: first, that the two mechanisms under discussion are governed by their respective rules of accommodation and, second, that they can function only against the background of certain pragmatic conventions of linguistic appropriateness.

In my view, the accommodation of Austinian presupposition — or presupposition_A accommodation, for short — is a process whose function is to adjust the objective context of an interaction in accordance with the following rule:

THE RULE OF ACCOMMODATION FOR PRESUPPOSITION_A:

If at time t speaker S makes binding illocution I , and if the felicity of I requires presupposition_A F to be satisfied by the objective context, and if F is not part of the objective context just before t , then — *ceteris paribus* and within certain limits — presupposition_A F becomes part of the objective context at t .

Recall that to make an illocutionary act is to make a move in a language game; the function of the move is to generate normative states of affairs: the rights, empowerments, permissions, obligations, and commitments of the participants in verbal interaction. Following Gerald Gazdar [1981], let us define an illocution as a function from context to context; in other words, the purpose behind an illocutionary act is to modify the objective context of its production.

The illocutionary game is constituted by conventional procedures conceived as sets of conventional rules that for every illocutionary act type define the conditions of its felicitous performance. Recall that the rules can be viewed as determining the presuppositions_A of a given illocution type. For example, the felicitous performance of an order presupposes_A that the speaker stands in an appropriate authority relation to the hearer or, in other words, *REQUIRES* that the speaker's having such an authority is part of the objective context of her act. If she is not endowed with the power to issue the hearer binding directives, her purported orders are void and can function at least as rude requests or suggestions.

Consider, however, the following situation: Alice, Tom and a few other people survive a plane crash and find themselves on a desert island. While talking to Tom, Alice utters the following imperative sentence:

(2) Go and pick up/gather wood.

Assume that there is a conventional rule according to which one can perform a binding order in uttering the sentence (2) provided one stands in an appropriate authority relation to one's audience. In other words, the felicity of Alice's order made

in uttering (2) presupposes_A or requires that it is part of the objective context that she is endowed with the power to issue Tom binding directives. Assume, however, that this requirement is not satisfied prior to time t at which the utterance under discussion is produced: before the fatal flight Alice and Tom did not know each other. Does it mean that in uttering (2) Alice fails to perform a binding directive act? Not necessarily. What is presupposed_A by the felicity of her order is that her having the required authority over Tom must be part of the objective context RELATIVE TO WHICH HER ACT IS TO BE EVALUATED, but not part of the objective context PRIOR TO THE TIME OF HER UTTERANCE. What is more, the former can result from adjusting the latter to make Alice's utterance a binding order. Let us consider how it is possible.

The process whereby the objective context is adjusted to make one's utterance a felicitous illocution is presupposition_A accommodation. Observe, first, that it is governed by the relevant rule of accommodation. Second, the rule can function only against the background of certain pragmatic conventions — i.e., felicity conditions — that jointly determine the requirements that have to be satisfied by the objective context of a felicitous illocution of a given type. Third, what triggers off the adjusting process is the fact that the speaker uses certain illocutionary force indicative devices; in the case under discussion, it is the fact that Alice uses an imperative sentence. Fourth, note that the adjustment under discussion involves the securing of uptake: Alice's utterance must be taken up to be an order. Recall, however, that in some cases the securing of uptake does not involve the hearer's conscious understanding of the force and meaning of the speaker's act. In the case under discussion, for example, it suffices that Tom complies with what he is told; the way he takes up Alice's utterance is manifested in his overt non-verbal action rather than in his further mental or speech acts. In general, the speaker's utterance can succeed in functioning as a felicitous illocution of a given type — e.g., as a binding order — without being so represented by her audience; what matters is the way the audience responds to what the speaker says.

3.3. The externalist background of the proposed account

In my view, the phrase “presupposition F is accommodated” can mean at least two different ideas: first, that F becomes part of the context of a verbal interaction and, second, that F is recognized and accepted by the interacting agents. Let us call the former OBJECTIVE ACCOMMODATION, and the latter — SUBJECTIVE ACCOMMODATION. With this distinction in hand we can discuss the difference between Stalnakerian and Austinian presuppositions as well as the externalist background of the account proposed in section 3.2.

According to the account presented in section 3.2., the Austinian presupposition of the speaker's act can be accommodated objectively without being accommodated subjectively. For example, Alice's standing in the required authority relation to Tom can become an element of the objective content without being so represented by the interacting partners. That is to say, the objective accommodation of her power to issue binding directives can involve nothing more than the re-

occurrence of an appropriate pattern of interaction, i.e., the pattern that involves Alice's uttering an imperative sentence and Tom's complying with what he is told. Observe, by contrast, that the Stalnakerian presupposition of an act cannot be accommodated objectively without being accommodated subjectively: no proposition can become part of the common ground among the participants in communication without being believed or at least accepted by them.

Let us discuss the case of subjective accommodation in more details. Note that the mechanism of Stalnakerian presupposition accommodation is in a sense asymmetric: it is the hearer, not the speaker, who is invited to subjectively accommodate the presuppositions of the speaker's act; no wonder, since the presuppositions of an act is a propositional attitude of the speaker. By contrast, the mechanism responsible for the subjective accommodation of Austinian presuppositions is symmetric: depending on a situation, it can be either the speaker or the hearer who is invited to accommodate the presupposition of the speaker's act. Assume, for example, that Alice utters sentence (2) and other imperative sentences having no intention to make binding orders; the purpose behind her utterances can be to advise others or merely to think out loud. As the interaction proceeds, however, she can come to realize that her utterances are taken up to be binding orders. That is to say, she can find herself invited to accept what her speech acts systematically presuppose_A and what has already been objectively accommodated; namely, she can find herself invited to accept that she is the leader of the shipwrecked group.

Finally, let me now say a word on the externalist background of the presented account. Roughly speaking, the externalist conception of illocutionary interaction defends two ideas: that at least in some cases the actual force of an act can be determined by the hearer's uptake rather than by what the speaker has in mind and, as the corollary of this, that at least in some cases it is the hearer, not the speaker, who is in a position enabling the adequate recognition of the force of the speaker's act. In my view, these two ideas can be found among the assumptions of the proposed account. Consider once again the situation in which Alice is invited to subjectively accommodate the Austinian presupposition of her directive acts. To say that her utterances of imperative sentences are binding orders despite her being unaware of their actual force is to assume that at least in some cases what the speaker has in mind can have no bearing on the force of her acts.

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