

Rhetorical structure rules and the normative aspect of illocutionary interaction*

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My aim in this paper is to account for the normative aspect of illocutionary interaction. Following Asher and Lascarides (2001), I assume, first, that making illocutionary acts involves following rhetorical structure rules (RSRs) and, second, that the illocutionary contribution of an utterance to the discourse is anaphorically or cataphorically dependent on the illocutionary contribution of some antecedent or subsequent act. I also assume that the illocutionary practice has an inherently normative aspect. That is to say, rather than being merely an empirical fact, our following RSRs is something that we are supposed to do: we are (i) committed to respond to our interlocutors in agreement with RSRs and (ii) entitled to expect them to do the same. In short, felicitous illocutionary acts bring about changes in the normative situations of the discourse participants.

I start by re-describing RSRs in terms of utterances and responses they conventionally invite (Austin 1962: 116) or, in other words, in that of illocutionary acts and their *interactive effects*. Next, I draw a distinction between the *primary* and *secondary interactive effect* of an act and stipulate that it is the former, not the latter, that determines the act's type. Finally, I put forth two hypotheses. According to the first one, the proper function (Millikan 2005) of an illocutionary act is to evoke its primary effect (e.g., *accepting* information, *carrying out* a request, etc.) whereas the occurrence of its secondary effect (e.g., *challenging* or *correcting* what the speaker states, *negotiating* the carrying out of a request, etc.) allows the cooperation to proceed even if the hearer refuses or delays to produce the act's primary effect. According to the second hypothesis, one can infer the act's normative effect from the description of *normal conditions* under which the RSR that defines the act's primary interactive effect has functioned properly.

key terms: normative aspect of linguistic interaction, rhetorical structure rules, SDRT, illocutionary acts, Austin

Asher, N. and Lascarides, A. (2001), "Indirect Speech Acts", *Synthese* 128, 183-228.

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