MODELS (?) FOR A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS *

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This paper stems from a confrontation between speech act theory and interactionist sociology. Its aim is to clarify the theoretical framework of recent research on verbal interaction with reference to a larger framework of a philosophical and ... ... t includes the following proposals: (i) a distinction between a one-place model and a two-place model of the speech act; (ii) a linking of the one-place model with the structural-functional analysis of social behavior; (iii) a linking of the two-place model with the interactionist analysis of social behavior; (iv) some arguments in favor of adopting an interactionist perspective in pragmatics. In particular, this perspective is shown to involve such notions as strategic interaction, retroactivity of presuppositions, self-modification of the participants' "selves", and context change, all of which are relevant to social change.

> "Denn es gehören zwei nicht nur
> zum Heiraten, sondern zu jedem
> sozialen Geschehen"
> (Bühler 1934: 79)

1.

Why speak of 'models' for linguistic pragmatics? Pragmatic studies often follow theoretically constructed schemata instead of facing empirical evidence and the epistemological problems concerning it. The philosophical origins of speech act theory still seem to have too much weight in the speech act-oriented analyses of discourse and conversation. On the contrary, a great deal of empirical work is

needed, if we a· , to understand more clearly, at least, how our own everyday interaction does work.

Although such considerations should hold us back from making any theoretical statement about pragmatics, we think that it is worth-while to attempt a re-examination of some major theoretical claims that have been put forward about speech acts and about interaction. We do *not* want to set up normative models. Rather, we want to describe (and, to a certain extent, classify) the ways in which people already are dealing with pragmatic facts. Our description will not claim to be an 'objective' one, but simply to be correct enough with reference to its purposes, which can be expressed as follows.

If, in one sense, philosophy has been given too much weight in pragmatics, in another sense too little attention has been paid to it, at least in recent years. It has been taken for granted that Austin's and Searle's work form a homogeneous body and that no basic philosophical concepts need any longer be discussed in pragmatics. Recently, however, pragmaticians have begun to realize that there are underground disagreements here and there. In fact, these disagreements (*e.g.* concerning the definitions of such concepts as act, speech act, rule, intention, and others) sometimes make empirical research unfruitful or, which is perhaps worse, make its results more confusing than clarifying. We maintain that open confrontation may make things easier. It is in order to achieve such a confrontation that we propose to consider linguistic pragmatics as involving two main trends. These are not to be identified with two distinct 'schools' or sets of authors, but rather constitute two sets of differently oriented assumptions that, outside explicit methodological considerations, are often mixed up in actual research. While many recent authors have started out from speech act theory mainly as formulated by Searle, they have gradually become more and more conscious of its inadequacies. And when they have tried to improve or amend Searle's theory here and there, tacit methodological contrast between the initial theoretical statements and their actual research results can have given rise to a certain confusion. Our task will be to separate from each other the assumptions and procedures that we hold to be methodologically incompatible; we will do this partly by the aid of a comparison with two main sociological approaches to interaction. A certain amount of simplification will be necessary, and the opposite views, for the sake of exposition, will be formulated in their most radical versions.

2.

There are at least two ways of describing speech acts. That is, for any theoretically relevant feature of a speech act, there are at least two ways of accounting for it. We shall pick out of the literature two series of alternative suggestions concerning the major aspects of the speech act and try to consolidate them into two opposite 'models for pragmatic analysis': that is to say, two models we want to consider as

representative of two main trends in linguistic pragmatics. The former model will be characterized as a one-place model, the latter as a two-place one.

Our approach will focus on understanding the illocutionary act performed together with a certain speech act. Let us state in advance that we shall not use the terms *illocutionary act* and *speech act* as synonyms, although the fact that each speech act is also an illocutionary act and that each illocutionary act is, together with its propositional content, also a full speech act has sometimes led to disregard this distinction (see Searle 1964). By *illocutionary act* we mean that particular aspect of the speech act that can be abstracted from its whole to the extent that the speech act counts as having a certain force (*e.g.* the force of an order, a promise, an apology, a statement. . .). The question we want to ask ourselves, so as to set up two alternative answers, is: given a certain speech act (that is, roughly, given the issuing of a certain utterance in a certain context) [1], how can the hearer understand which illocutionary act the speaker has performed?

2.1.

A first, well-known, and to a certain extent satisfactory answer can be formulated as follows. The sentence uttered by the speaker exhibits a set of syntactic and semantic properties which not only express its propositional content, but also include force-indicating devices. The illocutionary act performed by the speaker will therefore be understood by recognizing, according to such devices, the speaker's intention in uttering the speech act. When, as often happens, the force-indicating devices turn out to be ambiguous, it is still possible to identify the speaker's intention, and therefore the performed illocutionary act, by making reference to the ways in which it should have been more suitably expressed. In such cases, a selection among the several potential illocutionary forces (or among the various possible explicit formulations of the ambiguously expressed illocutionary force) is brought about by the context of the utterance.

The relation between illocutionary act and context can be stated more precisely in terms of presuppositions, that is, conditions for the appropriate performance of a given illocutionary act that must be satisfied by the context if the speaker is to carry out his/her intention successfully [2]. It is not definitely clear whether any-

[1] It might be interesting to note that such a terminology relies on Austin 1962. Given the well-known ambiguity of the term *utterance* (see also Garner 1968), Austin uses it to designate the effect of an act of uttering and chooses "the issuing of an utterance" to designate the act itself (Austin 1962: 92n).

[2] We are told that in English the masculine pronouns *he* and *him*, as well as the possessive *his*, cannot be heard as involving a neutralization of gender (and neither, therefore, of sex). In order to avoid attributing to our ideal speakers and hearers a definitely *male* sex, we shall adopt the usage of referring to them by both the masculine and the feminine pronoun. Nevertheless, in doing so, we do not want to be understood as implying that sexual roles (whether social or biological) are relevant to the study of verbal interaction at such an abstract level as that of our paper; rather, the converse is true. We take sides for role-making against role-taking, that is, for

body is supposed to check the presuppositions of his/her intended illocutionary act before, or even after, his/her utterance; nor whether the appropriate illocutionary acts could be selected by their contexts automatically, provided the speakers are orderly, respectful, and polite people. Anyway, the presuppositions of the illocutionary act together with the communicative intention of the speaker (referred to as "illocutionary point" or as "essential condition" of the act: see Searle 1975a, 1969) form a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the felicitous performance of an illocutionary act. The understanding of such an act is therefore based on the linguistic expression of the communicative intention, in a context fulfilling its presuppositions.

According to this approach, (i) the communicative intention of the speaker, as long as it is expressed in a recognizable way and under appropriate circumstances, is to be identified with the performing of an illocutionary act; (ii) since the communicative intention is necessarily such that it can be expressed in an unambiguous way (see Searle's "principle of expressibility"), the same intention can underlie different formulations without being affected by them; (iii) since the communicative intention pertains to the speaker's mind, the hearer can pick it up only through conventional devices, notably linguistic ones, and a strict relation between the syntactic and semantic properties of the uttered sentence and the expressed intention must be postulated (possibly in the form of a "performative hypothesis": see Ross 1970; Lakoff 1972, 1974; Sadock 1974). As a consequence of all this, the speech act theorists' attention focuses on the linguistic form of the speech act, and consideration of speech acts in terms of a theory of action is not undertaken. In this connection, it is to be noted that the cases in which the act performed is not expressed in a standard form (or the cases in which a standard form is used, but does not correspond to the speaker's communicative intention) are to be handled as derivative ones, to be accounted for in terms of their relation to the normal, "direct" cases (Searle 1975b). Moreover, cases in which extra-linguistic conventions are involved, that is those cases in which the act performed is to be defined in terms of its relations to a certain more or less ritualized social procedure, cannot play the central role in speech act theory that they used to have in earlier discussions on performative utterances. Rather, these cases should be examined as marginal cases,

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an analysis of behavior as involving the modification of the culturally available roles against a consideration of it as simple selection among given roles. In our perspective, sexual roles are no more pre-determined than social roles of other kinds and therefore cannot be conceived of as prior to all other interactional determination of the self; rather, we want to consider them as interactionally determined and open to negotiation. Perhaps this is too optimistic, but it might turn out to be useful all the same. We think that if we stop reducing all behavior to either a masculine pattern or a feminine one (let alone to various sub-classifications of deviance), we will be able to see how new and different lines of activity stem from peoples's interaction among each other. This, again, may give rise to not-preestablished kinds of social actors even with respect to 'sex', and it might even amount to canceling the very notion of 'sexual role' together with (in the long run) its actual practice.

to be included in a special, separate class (as suggested, for example, by Furberg 1969 and by Searle 1975a).

Thus, this approach to linguistic pragmatics can be characterized by, first of all, a descriptive preference for those relations between linguistic forms and communicative intentions that are evaluated as standard ones; second, an attempt to define the contextual constraints on the normal, appropriate performance of speech acts expressing such intentions; and third, a belief that the theory will account for actual talk, by complicating the (theoretically) 'simplest' cases.

2.2.

Now let us try another answer to our question. Instead of limiting our account of illocutionary force to the consideration of the speaker's intention and of its recognizability, we want to consider the hearer as an active participant. The neutral, passive (in principle, objective) recognition of the speaker's communicative intention turns into the more problematic process of attributing a communicative intention to the speaker and taking him/her to be responsible for it. From this perspective, it is up to the hearer (on the basis of the force-indicating devices and of the context of the utterance) (i) to select an acceptable interpretation of the speech act, and (ii) to either accept the speech act, under such an interpretation, as a successful act, or to completely or partly reject it as more or less inappropriate and 'unhappy'. Consequently, trying to formulate a complete list of necessary and sufficient conditions for the performance of an illocutionary act would be pointless here. In such a list, we would have to include the hearer's selection of a certain interpretation and his/her acceptance of the speech act; these, since they are subsequent to the speech act itself, can neither be known nor, therefore, verified in advance. Only observation of the hearer's answer can tell whether the speaker succeeded in performing his/her speech act, or even what kind of an illocutionary act was performed. Moreover, the hearer's uptake does not involve any final verification of the preferred interpretation, but rather an open falsification procedure where the preferred interpretation can be submitted to examination by casting doubts on the satisfaction of its presuppositions as often as these doubts are held to be justifiable. Such a procedure, of course, can stop at any stage at which the hearer is willing to take the achieved interpretation as unproblematic, and even at such an early stage that the accepted interpretation turns out to be the most obvious one (that is, apparently consistent with the force-indicating devices and not openly disproved by the context). In principle, however, the procedure can always start anew later on (Leonardi and Sbisà 1977).

In this framework, presuppositions are not necessary and sufficient conditions of the illocutionary act, but are inferred by the hearer on the basis (or even as an effect) of his/her uptake of the speaker's illocutionary act. The speaker's intentions are taken to be those required by the sincere and responsible performance of his/her act (under the hearer's interpretation), and these may not coincide with what

may be otherwise revealed as his/her 'real' psychological state. The 'self' is no longer a monolith; and anyway, even if the negotiation of an intersubjectively accepted definition of the performed illocutionary act does not affect the speaker's psychological state, (i) it interacts with its linguistic interpretation and (ii) it does affect the effects of the speech act and therefore the act itself (if we are willing to consider it as an *act*, that is, as something that changes a state of affairs into another, initiating a new state of affairs). It is worth noting that, if we focus on action instead of on linguistic form, we can distinguish the illocutionary act from different aspects of the speech act by singling out the kind of change it brings about as long as it is successful: that is, the conventional effect of the speech act (in Austin's terms), as opposed to the achieving of a response (which is a perlocutionary effect) (Austin 1962; Wunderlich 1972; Ducrot 1978). This conventional effect should be analyzed in terms of the hearer's uptake (that is, acceptance of the speech act under a certain interpretation) and of the speaker's acceptance of such acceptance. Finally, while the previously sketched view emphasized the linguistic force-indicating devices, the present view does not overlook them, it simply accounts for their function in another fashion. No strict correspondence is required between force-indicating devices and illocutionary acts, but the fact that the illocutionary force of the speech act is mediated by the hearer leads (i) to a more detailed consideration of how using a particular force-indicating device rather than another can affect the hearer's uptake and, therefore, to a more attentive appreciation of the differences among the various linguistic forms in the use of which related illocutionary acts are performed. It leads also (ii) to the rejection of the performative hypothesis, since no force-indicating devices can any longer be considered as equivalent to each other with respect to interaction and therefore, the 'same' illocutionary act cannot underlie different surface forms. A 'pragmatic hypothesis' (see Wunderlich 1971) would nevertheless be available. There is a consequence for explicit performatives, too: since every force-indicating device can be said not simply to express, but to actively expedite the performance of an illocutionary act, explicit performatives should be considered not as making an illocutionary act explicit, but as performing it explicitly (Austin 1962: 70). Ritual acts and 'declaratives' could be reconsidered as more akin to other speech acts than they are held to be.

This approach to linguistic pragmatics is not concerned with the 'appropriateness' or 'inappropriateness' of speech acts, at least if these are considered as resulting from the application of a standard set of rules to the relation between context and linguistic form. Nor is it concerned with theoretically 'simple' cases, but with empirically observable (and observed) ones. It attempts to account for the dynamics of linguistic interaction, which never reproduces its so-called rules passively, but can deviate from them without ceasing to be meaningful and even gain, in doing so, a richer meaning.

3.

The two ways of describing speech acts we have just mentioned are comparable to either of the main sociological approaches to interaction. This may sound trivial, since it seems by now to be firmly established that, from a pragmatic perspective, language is a kind of social interaction; pragmatic and micro-sociological studies are therefore likely to have the same problems of object and methodology. However, the correspondences between the relevant features of a speech act description and of a description of social behavior may deserve more detailed examination. Beyond the obvious correspondence between a speech act and a strip of social activity, and the general relevance of the context or situation, we face in both cases an acting/speaking 'self', and the various relationships between agents/speakers and partners/hearers, their intentions, understanding, and cultural and/or linguistic rules. The problems concerning social status are at least partly parallel to those concerning presuppositions, while the problems concerning the description of strips of activity in terms of roles turn out to be parallel to those concerning the description of speech acts as involving the performance of illocutionary acts. In particular, playing a role seems to involve having a certain social status in much the same way in which performing an illocutionary act involves satisfying its presuppositions. Later on, we shall look through this series of correspondences in order to compare either analysis of the speech act to its related micro-sociological approach, and to build up two unified pragmatic models.

The sociological approaches to interaction we shall refer to are exemplified respectively by the classical structural-functional perspective (see Parsons 1937) and by the interactionist perspective (symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology). In the first case, the starting point of the analysis is culture, that is, a set of internalized rules governing social behavior: interaction is explained as the carrying out of culturally pre-established programs (it is even possible, from this perspective, to compare culture to the genetic code of physical organisms). Cultural rules, whether internalized through the process of socialization or supported by social control and by the related 'sanctions' against deviant behavior, have a normative function with respect to the carrying out of social activities. In interaction, everyone — if he/she does not want to become a 'deviant' — plays his/her own role: the role that is culturally approved as appropriate to his/her status, in an particular situation. In the second case, the starting point is interaction itself. The social relations among the participants are considered as defined, negotiated, and modified in and by interaction. Cultural rules are considered as internalized in a merely cognitive sense, and therefore offer no more than reference points to actions, and/or to the understanding of other people's actions. Roles are built up by the participants themselves, that is, reference to cultural patterns leaves it open to the participants to initiate not-preestablished lines of activity and to negotiate the significance and appropriateness of their actual interactional behavior.

Now, we want to compare our one-place model of the speech act (2.1) to the

structural-functional approach to social behavior and our two-place model (2.2) to the interactionist approach. The former comparison will point out methodological similarities and common assumptions; the latter will call attention to close similarities between some suggestions made by Austin and some interactionist theses, and claim that a reframed speech act theory can be compatible with an interactionist and/or ethnomethodological approach. We shall neither demonstrate nor postulate actual historical relations, but only indicate that (i) a speech act theory identifying the illocutionary act with the speaker's communicative intention, admitting of necessary and sufficient conditions for the performance of illocutionary acts, involving a 'principle of expressibility' and even a performative hypothesis, integrates pretty well with a structural-functional sociology; and (ii) a speech act theory relying upon such concepts as the hearer's uptake and the 'conventional effect' or change brought about by the illocutionary act, rejecting necessary and sufficient conditions and the performative hypothesis, requires — if coherently developed — an interactionist theory of social behavior and, perhaps, epistemological remarks of an ethnomethodological kind on the researcher's role. If, as we believe, speech act theory is still in need of defining those sociological concepts that enter it, and if there are similarities between some attitudes and methods of sociology and some attitudes and methods of linguistic pragmatics, it will be of interest for the further developments of the theory of language to carefully choose from which type of sociology useful suggestions are to be picked up. By creating our two models (which we will refer to as M1 and M2) we want to emphasize that we face a crossroad, and that the ways before us are not equivalent, but involve different operational possibilities.

3.1.

M1 takes as starting point the normative system in force in the social group. This system is thought of as given, whether it is culturally established or it relies, to a lesser or greater extent (as supposedly is the case for many linguistic rules), on innate structures. Linguistic rules include rules for the appropriate performance of illocutionary acts. The whole set of rules governing verbal and non-verbal behavior is considered as independent from the activities that occur in actual interaction, including the performing of speech acts; that is, they affect such activities but remain unaffected by them. Social behavior and speech are examined as rule-governed activities. And since the description of a rule-governed activity comes down to the description of its rules (especially those of a constitutive kind), the main purpose of the theory will be to describe such rules. A correct theory should be able to evaluate, according to these rules, strips of activity and/or speech acts as appropriate and normal, or as inappropriate and deviant instances of meaningful procedures; these evaluations should correspond, at a more formal and precise level, to the intuitive judgments of the social group members. Roles, including illocutionary acts, are defined by sets of constitutive rules, which are in principle

necessary and sufficient conditions for a certain strip of activity or speech act to count as playing a given role or performing a given illocutionary act.

The appropriate performance of rule-governed activity and its evaluation are possible because agents/speakers implicitly know the relevant sets of rules. More properly, they have internalized the culturally given normative system and have developed (perhaps on a genetic basis) a pragmatic competence concerning linguistic behavior. Such sets of rules give the agents/speakers the behavioral and linguistic-pragmatic programs to actualize in connection with each type of situation and intention. Each illocutionary act (defined by its own set of conditions) has, according to the principle of expressibility, one and only one explicit formulation which fully expresses the speaker's communicative intention; each role involves a number of activities and attitudes which fulfil it appropriately and through which it can be recognized. Different manners of performance, vagueness, or any other variation in actual behavior neither affect the definition of the played role nor that of the performed illocutionary act, but merely (i) influence some marginal aspects of them, like their degree of 'intensity' (Searle and Vanderveken 1978), or (ii) make them open to criticism as inappropriate, or as not performed according to a standard pattern. An ambiguous behavior can always, and only, be understood, inasmuch as it is reducible to unambiguous patterns among which the context makes selection: people can evaluate the context as apt to satisfy the conditions of a certain illocutionary act or role, or as not allowing its felicitous performance.

3.2.

M2 focuses on strips of activity and/or speech acts, as occurring in interaction. Events as opposed to system, activity as opposed to rules, actual behavior as opposed to cultural patterns, speech acts as opposed to *langue* and to presuppositions are therefore in focus. In M1, interaction among people is mediated by culture and language, and everyone is alone facing culture and language; in M2, no agent/speaker can be thought of as isolated from one or more partners, and access to cultural and linguistic-pragmatic rules is mediated by interaction. Participants look for agreement and coordination (at least as far as these are necessary for the purpose of communication: communication itself often expresses contrasting interests or struggles, and may even conceal various forms of deception). Cultural and linguistic-pragmatic rules are part of the environment in which interaction occurs: they do not pre-determine the outcome of the negotiations among the participants; rather, the former are affected by the latter. The crucial function of the hearer's uptake in the definition of the illocutionary act the speaker has performed, as well as the crucial function of the partner in attaching a role to the agent stems precisely from this mediating function of interaction. It is up to the partner/hearer to consider the agent/speaker as playing a role/performing an illocutionary act (Austin 1962: 116; Turner 1962: *passim*), and this attribution does not rely on a final verification of what has 'really' happened, but is confirmed step by step, or further negotiated, in the ongoing interaction. As for the agent's social status, the partner's acceptance of

a particular strip of activity as constituting the playing of a role turns out to be a necessary condition for the agent to actually achieve (or confirm) the status required by the role itself. The same holds for the hearer's acceptance of the speaker's illocutionary act as a felicitous one, which turns out to be a necessary condition (i) for the speech act to 'take effect', and (ii) for the speaker to appear as having fulfilled the presuppositions required by the illocutionary act.

The force- and role-indicating devices, whose task is to make illocutionary acts and social roles recognizable according to cultural schemata only have the first word here, and by no means the last one: they offer the agent/speaker's interpretation of his own action to the partner/hearer, and they open the arbitrarily long (or short) negotiation procedures by their initiating, creative contribution. The speaker, choosing some force-indicating devices among others, is not simply making the act itself or his/her communicative intention clearer: he/she is creating an action that is characterized by its being made explicit in that particular way (among other properties). Likewise the agent, by making explicit some aspects of the role he/she presents to his/her partner, is creating and modifying roles as well as bringing them to light (Austin 1962: 72; Turner 1962: 22). Ambiguity and vagueness of certain expressions or strips of activity are not necessarily weaknesses, but rather means of interaction. They are to be understood by reference to rules that are used not as evaluative criteria, but as interpretive devices (just like certain meridians and parallels are referred to in calculating the longitude and latitude of geographical points lying outside them, strictly speaking). In M2, names for roles and for illocutionary acts preserve some rigidity of meaning, since it is possible to refer to a set of actions as forming a single role, or to the utterance of a string of words as performing a single illocutionary act only by using a specific name to single out the latter (Turner 1962: 28). And this becomes even more clear when the belief in a previous definition (whether cultural or psycholinguistic) of the range of communicative intentions is given up: no way is left to identify roles and illocutionary acts, apart from the actual uses of their names that participants in the interaction will agree or disagree on, and will negotiate about.

Finally, it is worth noting that while M1's primary object of analysis is the agent/speaker (his/her behavior, his/her mental states, etc.) as observed by a supposedly objective linguist, psychologist, or social scientist, M2 deals with the interactional relation from a point of view closely linked to a partner/hearer's perspective: the researcher *is* a partner/hearer, too, and his or her interpretation of what is going on does not claim to be more 'objective' than anybody else's, but, perhaps (given that it is as effective as any other interpretation) clearer and more exhaustive, as far as the dynamics of interaction is concerned.

4.

M1 is simpler than M2; but we shall now argue in favor of M2, since it seems clear M2 has greater explanatory power and opens new ways to analysis, where M1

merely presuppoes a number of so-called basic concepts. An application of the two models to empirical research might show M2 as achieving richer and more detailed results than M1, but we shall leave such issues undecided [3].

We shall now consider some main heuristic differences between M1 and M2, concerning respectively: (i) units of analysis and the textual dimension of speech; (ii) the 'self'; (iii) textual coherence and pragmatic presuppositions; (iv) context; (v) rules and social change.

4.1.

M1 and M2 involve different ways of defining, segmenting, and sequencing units of analysis. In M1, the speech act corresponds to the issuing of a one-sentence utterance. An act performed in uttering a sequence of connected sentences will be called a macro-speech act (van Dijk 1978). The distinction between micro-speech acts and macro-speech acts, expressing respectively minimal communicative intentions and more general goals and plans, relies on a syntactic criterion. Attention focuses again on the linguistic properties of the uttered sentence and/or sequence of sentences, and it is implied that the performed action strictly depends on such properties. One questionable consequence is that it becomes difficult to cope with the altogether plain fact that the linguistic means to achieve an illocutionary effect – for example, the effect of a promise – often involves the uttering of more than one sentence. In M2, the criterion for identifying a pragmatic unit is independent from linguistic syntax (though not, of course, from a syntax of actions); discovery in the context of an achieved change enables us to single out an act and, therefore, the relevant pragmatic unit. We face what counts as a single speech act whenever it is relevant to state that the uttering of certain words operates a single change in the interactional situation. There is no necessary correspondence between single sentences and single illocutionary acts. Higher level units do not involve, here, the use of a larger number of sentences, but a series of effects and, therefore, of acts producing them; they should be thought of as tactics and strategies of interaction, where the single speech act counts as a 'move'. The internal organization of a tactic does not rely on the connections linking together a number of sentences or the related speaker's intentions, but on a sequence of connected effects on the interactional situation (mainly, on the relation between the agent/speaker and his/her partner), in which earlier effects condition later ones and are brought about on account of them. The minimal instance of a tactic should involve at least one effect and one feedback to it; each of these effects may be achieved in uttering one or more sentences.

Introducing notions such as tactics and strategy makes us enter a wide research field involving the description of strategic interaction (see Goffman 1969) and the

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[3] Careful empirical observation of verbal interaction sometimes leads to M2-oriented considerations, even in spite of a mainly M1-oriented theoretical framework (as can be seen in Sinclair and Coulthard 1975).

possible identification of certain elementary maneuvers (as has been attempted by Greimas) [4]. Many problems are at issue here. Greimas' tactics, for example, are viewed as maneuvers striving to change the previous relation between agent/speaker and partner/hearer into another relation such that the latter is left with only one available answer. Relations between participants are defined in terms of their 'modal competences', that is to say, in terms of what they can or must do, what they know to be the case, and so on (Greimas 1976; Greimas and Courtés 1979). But it is still to be considered whether and how such an analysis could be integrated with an account of tactics in terms of the sequencing of illocutionary acts (this account would be possible if, as we believe, effects of illocutionary acts and, there- · fore, illocutionary acts themselves could be described in terms of modalities; see Sbisà 1979b). Moreover, the distinction between tactics and strategy is not at all clear. Here we want merely to suggest that this distinction, like that between speech act and tactics, should not be viewed as relying merely on the length of the relevant strings of discourse and/or of action, but as having a functional character [5]. And it might well be that, under different descriptions, the same string of discourse and/or of action could count as either one tactic or one strategy, respectively. Linking strategies and tactics to macro-speech acts, making sentences 'add up' in such a way that in uttering each sentence just one speech act is performed (as, for exam- ple, is done in van Dijk 1978) would be a gross simplification of these problems.

Last but not least, M1's definition of its units of analysis, assuming their one-to-one correspondence to sentences, has made it more and more difficult to take into account such things as complex communicative units, both verbal and non-verbal, or the non-verbal communicative moves playing a role analogous to certain illocutionary acts. By contrast, M2 can deal with this topic by detecting a common dimension to speech act theory and the theory of non-verbal interaction in the analysis of action (and in the reconsideration of 'communication' as action) [6]. By defining the illocutionary act as the specific level where speech acts bring about a particular kind of change (modal change) in the relation between the participants, M2 points out a level of description for interactional moves that is sure to be relevant to the analysis of non-verbal as well as of verbal interaction.

4.2.

From M1 to M2, the way of dealing with the 'self' differs widely. The roles the 'self' is called to play in either model point to two ways in expressing subjectivity

[4] Greimas' seminar 1976–77 at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris) was devoted to the semiotics of manipulation. One of us (Paolo Fabbri) was among the participants.
[5] A further tentative suggestion: a strategy seems to bear a relation to the actual context and the actual goals of the participants, a tactic seems to have a more abstract character, being in principle applicable to different situations.
[6] It might be useful to remind that a crucial contribution to such a reconsideration is to be found in Wittgenstein's later philosophy (see, for example, 1953: §363, §491).

that may turn out to be complementary or alternative, but in any case radically opposite to each other.

At first sight, M1 seems to hold the 'self' in great honor. Speech acts and other actions are examined from the speaker's point of view, as expressions of the speaker's intentions; intentions themselves are considered in a mentalistic vein as states of the mind (Searle 1979). The analysis of interaction involves assumptions concerning what the agent/speaker *is*: his/her status, his/her consciousness of it, his/her goals, his/her implicit knowledge of linguistic and pragmatic rules, the system of the social norms he/she has internalized, sometimes even his/her 'rationality'. The 'self' appears as the 'owner' of a number of properties, faculties, knowledges, mental states, processes, and operations. But neither its properties and faculties, nor its linguistic and pragmatic competence, nor the available type of mental states and operations result from its acting, or are even affected by it. It is a *static* self, unable to enter any dynamic game: it does not change during interaction, neither does it bring about changes in the interactional situation; it cannot initiate unforeseen behavior. M2 examines interaction as a two-place process, that is as something which happens between two agents/speakers (who play in turn the roles of addressor and addressee). It would seem that such a perspective leads to an understatement of the unique, crucial role of the 'self'. We maintain, on the contrary, that an M2 account — forcing us to give up an easy handling of the 'self' in terms of mental faculties and states, existing before interaction and outside of it, in favor of the more complex dynamic analysis of the reconstruction and mutual modification of several 'selves' through each other's acceptance (or other negotiated agreement) in interaction — may gain interesting insights. Its main achievement would be that it could account for the self's capacity of bringing about changes not only in the context, but also in itself: either as a feedback to the partner's action or, in a more complex way, as a reflexive effect of its own action and of the significance it acquires through the partner's uptake. M2 focuses on action and therefore on what participants in interaction are *doing*, not on what they are, or were, or would be, outside that interaction. M2 is concerned with what the participants are, or were, only as far as such properties enter in a dynamic relation with action, that is, turn out to work as its motivations or as its effects. Therefore, M2 is concerned with what participants in interaction *become* by means of what they do: and this is exactly what M1 cannot account for.

4.3.

Since, in M2, it is up to the partner/hearer to determine which action the agent/speaker has performed and whether this action is felicitous, it can be stated that, in principle, interactional behavior should be read backwards, starting from the partner's answer, and therefore from that definition of the agent/speaker's action upon which the participants seem to have agreed. Two related consequences stem from this statement: the former is concerned with textual coherence, the latter with

pragmatic presuppositions. If interactional behavior is to be read backwards, then coherence of behavior and/or of discourse should not be considered as reflecting the coherence of the speaker's intentions and goals when planning his/her action, but as depending on the partner/hearer's recognition of the produced string of actions and/or text as coherent wholes. In fact, there are many cases in which the same string of actions and/or text may be interpreted either as coherent or as incoherent, and the final answer cannot be given on the only basis of the examined string of actions or text. As it has been suggested by a number of authors, from H.P. Grice (*e.g.* 1975) on, a text, to be coherent, often demands the addressee's cooperation to fill up, by implicatures, all its gaps; literary texts very often even speculate in this (see Pratt 1977; Eco 1979). It could even be maintained that coherence, as such, does not exist, and that there are simply different degrees in the amount of cooperative work required from the partner/hearer in order to take the text as a coherent whole. Correspondingly, there are different degrees in the partner's willingness to cooperate. Since M2 requires taking into account both the structure of the text and the interpretive work of the addressee (while in M1 the interpretive work of the addressee comes down to the mere recognition of a set of coherent intentions on the part of the agent/speaker), M2 has more chances than M1 to account for textual coherence in a full and empirically adequate way.

As for pragmatic presuppositions, there is a parallel argument. In M1, pragmatic presuppositions are often defined as speaker's assumptions that the hearer is supposed to share. In this vein, some authors have talked of an *act of presupposing*, that is of making certain assumptions, on the part of the speaker. But to postulate a specific, preliminary act, is not more realistic than it was — on the part of the philosophers and logicians criticized by Grice (1975) — to believe that the truth of its 'semantic' presuppositions is a necessary condition for the truth value of a statement. And it is even worse when it is assumed that, in the absence of such an act, the speech act should be judged as inappropriate. M2 is far from doing all this. As we said above, in M2 the crucial condition for an action to be taken as felicitous or appropriate is the partner/hearer's acceptance of it under a certain interpretation. Therefore, presuppositions don't come 'before' the successful performance of the act (whether in the form of necessary and sufficient conditions to be verified by the context, or in the form of the appropriate common assumptions of speaker and hearer). Rather, it is the acceptance of the act that comes first, whether it occurs on grounds such as knowledge of the context, previous acquaintance with the speaker, and so on, or merely on trust. A backwards reading of interactional behavior involves here the retrospective and, moreover, retroactive function of presuppositions. They are to be considered as 'speaker's assumptions' only as far as the hearer's acceptance of the successful performance of the speaker's illocutionary act enables — or even forces — the former to attach such assumptions to the latter, and to consider him/her as responsible for them as for the speech act itself. That is to say, at least in most cases, an agent/speaker does not previously verify either the appropriateness or the coherence of his/her action (for example, his/her being

authorized to produce such a strip of activity); he/she does not start by thinking of his/her own status; he/she simply initiates an activity, or tries a speech act containing some kind of illocutionary force-indicating devices, so that the form of his/her action relates what he/she is doing to some possible interpretations and to their presuppositions. But when the partner in interaction accepts the agent/speaker's action under a certain interpretation, the former is thereby authorized to act as if the latter had a certain status, and as if he/she had it previously to the interaction itself. If presuppositions, in particular cases, can be considered as preconditions to ways of acting and/or speaking, it is precisely because of this retroactive effect. And such a backwards reading can also account for the often noticed, but never explained communicative function of presuppositions, that is, for the fact that a speech act can be performed just for the sake of getting the hearer acquainted with its presuppositions (see, among others: Ducrot 1972; Stalnaker 1973, 1977, Gazdar 1977). The speaker can even speculate on the hearer's willingness to accept his/her act, in order to make him/her implicitly accept, without open discussion, some presupposed proposition (Sbisà 1979a).

It is worth noting that (i) in the case of presuppositions as in the case of textual coherence, the partner/hearer integrates the text he/she is faced with, in order to achieve a certain understanding of it. The differences (if any) between these forms of integration could be further discussed in terms of their functions within the interaction; such a discussion would involve us in an attempt to answer the question whether, and how, presupposition is to be distinguished from conversational implicature. Moreover (ii), implicatures filling up a text's gaps [7], as well as presuppositions attached to the agent/speaker do not leave the participants' 'selves' unaffected. Presuppositions in particular, as long as they are retroactive in attaching to the agent/speaker a different status (so that e.g. he/she might gain authority by succeeding in having his/her orders accepted as such by people who previously were not subordinate to him/her), appear to be one of the main devices for self-modification.

4.4.

In linguistic pragmatics, context often appears as a *deus ex machina*. It is context that disambiguates illocutionary force, makes the use of linguistic expressions appropriate or inappropriate, selects or cancels conversational implicatures. In M1-oriented pragmatics, such a notion of context is identified with the speaker's knowledge about the world and about the situation in which interaction occurs; or else with such a knowledge as far as it is shared by the hearer. The distinctive feature of an M1-oriented notion of context, however, is to be found in the fact that the context is taken as given. If there are differences between the speaker's and the hearer's knowledge of the speech situation, they are taken to be mere quantitative

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[7] Cf. Hjelmslev's term *catalysis* (Hjelmslev 1961; Greimas and Courtés 1979).

differences to be cancelled by further information. From this perspective, according to M1 there must be an objective way of describing the situation. All action takes place within this scenario, without bringing about any change in it; rather, when (during an interval, as it were) the scenario is changed, subsequent action should change too. M2, on the contrary, takes the notion of context as a problematic one. Who is to decide, if not the participants themselves, by which description the participants are to refer to the situation in which they are acting? A speech act usually contains linguistic devices apt to define its context, that is, the features of the speech situation to be assumed as relevant (referential use of proper names and of definite descriptions is, perhaps, the most common example). Even in non-verbal interaction, it is up to the participants to single out by their action those aspects of the situation which will count as relevant, the kind of frame within which they are to be understood, and so on. M2 recognizes therefore the situation in which interaction occurs as defined during and by the interaction itself and makes linguistic pragmatics open to (i) the problems of the framing of actions (see Goffman 1974), and (ii) to a logic of context change (see Ballmer 1978). Participants in interaction can (or even must) negotiate not only what they are doing, but also, the definition of the situation in which they are acting: that is, they have to build up their context. Again, among the linguistic devices at their disposal, there is the retroactive effect of presuppositions. From an M2 perspective, presuppositions are not to be considered as assumptions concerning some states of affairs that occur in the actual speech situation; rather, they produce an extension of the context of utterance on the basis of the hearer's understanding of the speech act. They count as an enlargement of the hearer's (and perhaps of the speaker's) knowledge of the speech situation (Leonardi and Sbisà 1978). This extension can be genuinely creative, since it can modify to a lesser or greater extent the participants' interpretation of the situation. Context, therefore, will no longer appear as an objective final criterion for the interpretation of speech acts and strips of activity; rather, its definition will be one more variable in the dynamics of interaction.

4.5.

From sections 4.1 – 4.4, it will now be clear why M2 (as opposed to M1) can possibly account for social change. M1, starting from culture and language as normative systems and considering speech and social behavior as determined by their internalization, cannot formulate any theoretical statements explaining the construction and transformation of culture and/or language themselves. The analysis proceeds within the same cultural framework in which had been started, as if the possible modification of the latter did not have any theoretical and/or practical interest. In speech act analysis, too, the unilateral consideration of the constitutive rules of the speech act, and therefore of its presuppositions as given previously to the act itself, the absence of a context-changing and self-modifying dimension in the concept of 'self', and so on, all bar the way to a more careful analysis of the relations between verbal

interaction and the definition or re-definition of its context, its participants, and its rules. M2, starting from interaction and considering culture as something to be accounted for, leads to the detection of the premises for changes in social context, as well as in the rules and norms that are in force within it, in interaction itself. M2's capacity of focusing on social change has two pretty interesting consequences, one of a theoretical and the other of a practical kind. The relation of rules to social behavior is no longer thought of as a normative one: nor is it reduced to the mere description of factual regularities. Rules of a pragmatic kind had better be viewed as principles constraining interpretation (Leech 1979). While in M2 the theory itself involves evaluation of behavior in terms of 'normality' and 'deviance', and all interaction is interpreted according to the supposedly 'normal' rules governing 'normal' communication situations, M2 allows for the fact that many rules themselves result from social interaction, and recognizes a larger (perhaps even inter-cultural) validity for those rules only which are better understood as principles, that is, not as norms governing behavior, but as interpretive devices governing understanding (Grice's conversational maxims are rules of such a kind). Moreover, an M1-oriented linguistic pragmatics, if it attempts to set up a connection between language and society, will only allow for a one-way relation: language will appear as reflecting social stratification in a rather external way. The old idea of a 'neutral' language has perhaps not yet been given up: anyway, there is a persisting unwillingness to face speech as capable to handle and produce power. M2, on the contrary, suggests the view of a context-changing and self-modifying 'self'; it allows for the possibility of social change, and maintains that it is worth-while to focus our attention on it, particularly in connection with micro-sociological interaction. Speech is obviously to be included in this perspective, so that it will not escape its responsibilities towards all those matters of power that are decided on in interaction (whether in the interaction of individuals, or of larger groups and even 'social classes'), and therefore towards the social structure of our society.

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