

Basic illocutionary forces

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1. Problem.

Assuming a three-way distinction as in (1) (a.o. Ginzburg&Sag 2000), the question is how to define the basic illocutionary forces (BIF).

(1) Syntactic type / semantic type / basic illocutionary force

It has been proposed to identify BIFs with usual speech acts such as asserting, questioning or commanding, as in (2).

(2) Declarative / proposition / asserting
Interrogative / propositional abstract /questioning
Imperative / outcome / commanding

Assuming (2), uses of declaratives with a questioning value (3), and of interrogatives with an asserting value (4) (so-called rhetorical questions) are challenging.

(3) A.: Mary has arrived [?] B.: Yes

(4) A.: Is the pope catholic? B.: You're right!

Two ways can be taken: (a) one can derive the speech act value in (3) or (4) as an indirect speech act from the basic speech act as postulated in (2) or (b) one can underspecify BIFs. We take the latter route here. In this abstract, we only consider questioning declaratives for space reason. First, we show that questioning declaratives (QD) should be distinguished from asserting declaratives (AD). Second, we take up Truckenbrodt's (2004) proposal. He distinguishes two types of BIFs (epistemic *vs* non epistemic); BIFs give rise to BSAs (asserting, questioning, commanding); BSAs give rise to indirect speech act (e.g. indirect commanding such as *Can you pass me the salt?*). Here we leave aside indirect speech acts. We focus on typical *vs* untypical uses of syntactic types, and precisely on declaratives. Contrary to Truckendrodt, we claim that the divide between typical and untypical uses of declaratives does not rely on the intonation.

2. QDs vs ADs.

We claim that QDs are not question-denoting, but rather proposition-denoting. If one assumes that negative polarity items are licensed by semantic types, QDs do not denote questions:

(5) a. A-t-elle jamais travaillé? *has she ever worked*
jamais = one day / * jamais = never
b. [QD] Elle a jamais travaillé ? *she has ever worked*
*jamais = one day / jamais = never

If one assumes that discourse markers, such as *sans doute* (*no doubt*), are compatible with semantic types, QDs denote propositions.

(6) a. [Polar-Q] * Est-ce que Marie va sans doute venir ? *Will Mary no doubt come*
b. [QD] Marie va sans doute venir ? *Mary will no doubt come*
c. [AD] Marie va sans doute venir

Nevertheless, QDs behave as questions in dialogue. They are uptaken the same way as polar questions are; crucially their uptake is different from that of ADs. This is obvious with negative QDs or ADs in French (7).

(7) (i) A.: [QD] Marie n'est pas arrivée ? *Mary hasn't arrived*
B.: Si / *Oui [= she has arrived]
Non / Tu plaisantes (*you're kidding*) [= she hasn't arrived]
(ii) A.: [AD] Marie n'est pas arrivée
B.: Oui / *Si / Non (pronounced as [nõ::]) [= B acknowledges A's assertion]
Mais si / Si si / Tu plaisantes [= B rejects A's assertion]

The adverb *sincèrement* (*sincerely*) is speaker-oriented with ADs (8a), while it is hearer-oriented with QDs (8b).

(8) a. [AD] Sincèrement, Marie viendra *Sincerely, Mary will come*
= I'm speaking sincerely, Mary will come
b. [QD] Sincèrement, Marie viendra ?
= Answer sincerely, will Mary come?

3. Truckenbrodt's proposal.

Truckenbrodt's proposal can be summarized into the three propositions (9) that we take up.

- (9) a. "Sentence type meanings are not so specific as to always determine a particular speech act (assertion, demand, question, etc.)".
 b. BIFs associated to declaratives, interrogatives or imperatives are directives (Merin 1994, Zaefferer 2001): they all include the component that characterizes the BIF associated to imperatives (IMP).
 c. The direction of intended information flow is underspecified: it goes either from Speaker to Hearer, or from Hearer to Speaker.

As for QDs, Truckenbrodt follows Gunlogson (2001) and proposes that the questioning value arises from the meaning conveyed by the rising contour. Rising contours are assumed to convey Hearer's commitment (Gunlogson 2001) or lack of Speaker's commitment (Truckenbrodt, *ibid.*). Intuitively, when Speaker signals lack of belief in p, belief belongs to Hearer.

(10) Declarative + Non-committing intonation → Question

Such an account is not acceptable. For two reasons : (a) rising contours (or specific components of rising contours) are not univocally linked to questionhood or lack of Speaker's commitment (crucially, assertions with one-sided Speaker's commitment may be intoned with a rising contour in French); (b) QDs do not require a rising contour. It is well known that there are falling QDs both in English or French (cf. the so-called verifying questions), and alternative questioning declaratives are usually falling in French :

- (11) Tu bois du thé ou du café ? *You drink tea or coffee*
 Tu démissionnes ou tu restes ? *You resign or you keep up*

Thus another story should be set up to account for QDs, which would take into account the very fact that intonation meaning is orthogonal to illocutionary import.

4. Analysis of declaratives.

We assume Truckenbrodt's BIF for declaratives (12). The recourse to Shared Ground instead of Common Ground will be justified in the talk.

(12) IMP (Sp, Add, SG (p))

Speaker calls on Addressee towards the incrementation of their Shared Ground with p. The Shared Ground is the set of joint commitments dialogue participants have reached so far. A declarative has a questioning value when Speaker, Hearer or both believe that Hearer, instead of Speaker, has the ability (in terms of knowledge or power) to warrant the truth of the proposition. In that case, Speaker gives up her responsibility towards the truth of p. Hence, the questioning value.

As shown in Marandin *et al.* (2004), QDs may be uttered with any of the contours making up the intonation lexicon of French. For example, QDs with falling contours convey the meaning that Hearer "knows better" about p, but Speaker anticipates that p is non-contentious (Steedman 2003) and will readily be added to the Shared Ground by Hearer. Hence their typical occurrence in verifying moves. The whole distribution is given below:

DECLARATIVE	Asserting	Questioning
Falling contour	Typical statement	Verifying move
Rising contour	Strong assertion	Speaker's bias towards p
Falling form penultimate peak	Weak assertion	No bias (typical QD)

Conclusion.

To assume that BIFs are underspecified enables one (a) to posit a one-to-one pairing between syntactic types, semantic types and basic illocutionary forces, (b) to give a simple account of QDs without making wrong claims concerning contour meaning or confusing them with indirect speech acts.

Selected ref. **Bartels 1997**, Intonation of statements and questions in English. **Ginzburg&Sag 2000**, Interrogative investigations, **Gunlogson 2001**, True to form. **Marandin et al. 2004**, Meaning of final contours in French. **Merin 1994**, Algebra of elementary social acts. **Stalnacker 1978**, Assertion. **Steedman 2003**, Information-Structural Semantics for English intonation. **Truckenbrodt 2004**, Sentence type meaning. **Zaefferer 2001**, Deconstructing a classical classification.