

Impositive Speech Acts

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## Impositive Speech Acts\*

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### 1. Types of Impositive Speech Acts

1.1. The speech acts which are impositive speech acts are those whose illocutionary point is to get someone to do something, or to impose the speaker's will upon the hearer. Verbs which describe such speech acts are:

admonish, advise, appeal, ask, beg, beseech, bid, caution,  
command, counsel, demand, direct, enjoin, exhort, forbid,  
implore, insist, instruct, interdict, move, nominate,  
order, petition, plead, pray, prescribe, proscribe, propose,  
recommend, request, require, solicit, submit, suggest,  
urge, warn.

For Austin<sup>1</sup> impositive acts were a part of the rather diverse category he called exercitives. Vendler<sup>2</sup> reduced Austin's category of exercitives, but it still contains two subcategories which do not fall into the impositive class. One is the type Vendler calls 'weaker exercitives', which includes the verbs permit and allow; although acts of permitting and allowing may make it possible for the hearer to do something, they are not attempts to get the hearer to do something.<sup>3</sup> The other type Vendler includes in his list of exercitives that are not impositive verbs are what he calls 'provokers'; examples of such verbs are dare and challenge. These verbs do seem to share the same illocutionary point as the impositive verbs mentioned above, but they also differ in many ways. For this reason I have labelled them 'semi-impositives' and will deal with them in more detail later, after the nature of the more straightforward impositive verbs has been examined.

In yet another taxonomy of speech acts, J. McCawley (1973) divides impositive acts into imperatives and advisories, apparently using a criterion similar to the status condition, the imperatives being those verbs which may be used to describe an act in which there is unequal status and advisories being used when there is equal status between the speaker and hearer. In a taxonomy formulated by Fraser (1972), the distinction is between verbs of requesting and verbs of suggesting; these two categories correspond, for the most part, to McCawley's imperatives and advisories, respectively.

1.2. In this section I will attempt to show that impositive speech acts are properly divided into two main types and three secondary types according to the condition on status. Also, it is my contention that there is a further semantic distinction which differentiates acts

within one of the main status types. A summary of the proposed taxonomy of impositive speech acts follows.

The specific Status condition involved in impositive acts applies to distinguish the relative status of the conversational participants in 'orders' and 'requests' (hereafter grouped together as the 'unequal status impositives'). The condition applies to insure that the status of the conversational participants is the same in 'suggestions' (the 'equal status impositives'). Although the Status condition applies to impositive acts in three ways (distinguishing, in general, orders from suggestions from requests) the type of application is not always discrete; for instance, acts of advising require only slightly unequal status. There is no impositive act to which the distinction does not apply; all impositive acts exhibit some reference to status. The condition applies to orders by requiring that the speaker have (or be acting as if he had) superior status to the hearer or be in a position of authority (or acting so, at least). Verbs of ordering are: command, demand, direct, enjoin, forbid, instruct, interdict, prescribe, proscribe and require. For requests the speaker is in an inferior position or has lower status than the hearer (or, is acting as if this were the case). Requests are performed and/or described by the following verbs: appeal, ask, beg, beseech, bid, implore, petition, plead, pray, request, solicit, suplicate. Recommendations and suggestions are distinguished by the fact that recommendations require that the speaker have just slightly higher status than the hearer, or at least that he definitely not have lower status than the hearer. For suggestions, the status need only be approximately equal, and the speaker can even have slightly lower status than the hearer. Verbs of recommending are: admonish, advise, caution, counsel, exhort, insist, recommend, urge and warn. Suggesting verbs are: move, nominate, propose, submit and, of course, suggest.

There is another property which distinguishes among equal status verbs. There are verbs of suggesting and recommending which reflect an attempt to cause the hearer to consider a proposition or action, and there are verbs of suggesting and recommending which reflect an attempt to get the hearer to do an action. The unequal status impositive acts are all attempts to get the hearer to do an action.

1.3. The first two properties used above for distinguishing the various types of impositive acts are quite different in nature from the third, and they present different kinds of analytic problems. Felicity conditions such as the Status condition can be considered to be pragmatic, whereas the decomposition of verbs of recommending and suggesting into considering as opposed to doing is clearly semantic. The problem arises of how to determine what is pragmatic and what is semantic in illocutionary acts; and, although linguists have at least some idea of how syntax and semantics interact, it is unclear how pragmatics interacts with semantics. While a final solution to this major theoretical problem is beyond the scope of this study, some remarks on the matter are required.

The traditional philosophical distinction between semantics and pragmatics is that semantics concerns propositions as they occur in language while pragmatics concerns language users and contexts in which language is used. One problem is whether illocutionary force is semantic or pragmatic, since the function that illocutionary force performs is to

link up the speaker (his intentions, desires, etc.) with the proposition of the speech act. Linguists have generally considered illocutionary force to be semantic for several reasons. Ross (1970a) considers the possibility of illocutionary force being pragmatic rather than semantic (a 'pragmatic analysis' of speech acts as opposed to a 'performative analysis') and rejects it mainly on the grounds that no pragmatic theory of language exists and therefore the pragmatic analysis does not exist. There is, however, a semantic theory into which a performative analysis fits. Moreover, there are syntactic facts supporting performative verbs in deep syntactic (i.e. semantic) structure. Ross does not rule out the development of a pragmatics, but since the time of his writing of this article no theory of language use has been propounded that would be capable of incorporating a pragmatic analysis of illocutionary force.<sup>4</sup> What has been proposed is that illocutionary acts, while not actually pragmatic in nature, are sensitive to pragmatics in specific ways. I will be adopting a performative analysis here, and taking the view that illocutionary force is semantic and is represented by abstract performative predicates, but that the illocutionary force can be indirect and that such indirection is the result of operations which may be performed on pragmatic felicity conditions.

It is easier to see that illocutionary force is semantic in nature if one considers speech acts other than impositive acts. As was noted earlier, the illocutionary point of impositive acts is to get someone to do something, and, although it was also noted that illocutionary points are in general felicity conditions, this is an oversimplification (which will be discussed further in sub-section 1.4). At least a portion of what Searle (1973) labelled illocutionary point<sup>5</sup> is semantic and part of the illocutionary force. The difference between impositive acts and other speech acts is that the illocutionary force of impositive acts includes an intended perlocution, i.e., it is the speaker's intention to, in some way, affect the hearer's future actions (even if only mental actions). However, this does not warrant calling the illocutionary force of impositive acts pragmatic.

Certain felicity conditions on illocutionary acts can only be said to be pragmatic; extrinsic conditions refer to the language user and the context, and they neither refer to propositions nor have any direct syntactic consequences. Viewing felicity conditions as semantic creates a problem in that their representation in semantic structure, as it is generally accepted, is difficult. Calling felicity conditions pragmatic simply relocates the problem of representation, one of the many problems yet to be solved in pragmatics.

One relationship between felicity conditions and presuppositions is that what is a felicity condition for the performance of a particular speech act is a presupposition in the reporting of that act. This would seem to imply that if any felicity conditions are pragmatic, so are presuppositions (or at least those presuppositions that correspond to felicity conditions). Recently it has been suggested (Karttunen 1973, Stalnaker 1973, Thomason 1973) that at least some presuppositions are pragmatic rather than semantic. It is most likely that the type of presupposition that reflects felicity conditions is one of these pragmatic presuppositions.

1.4. Given the apparatus of generative grammar, the semantic structure<sup>6</sup> of impositive speech acts can be any of several possibilities which interact in some way with various felicity conditions to produce commands, suggestions, recommendations, and requests. I now sketch these possibilities in order to show which is the best and why.

Although I will be concerned here solely with impositive acts, the analysis presented here is extendable to other sorts of speech acts. Based on the facts about both direct and indirect impositive acts, I will try to show which aspects of meaning and illocutionary force must be expressed as part of the semantic structure of the impositive utterance and which must be considered as pragmatic conditions on those utterances.

There are basically four possibilities for the semantic structure of impositive acts; beginning with the most extreme and most unlikely we have:

#### 1.4.1. No similarity in semantic structure

This view is that there is no necessary underlying similarity among impositive speech acts either in semantic primes or in the manner in which such primes relate to one another. The problem with this view is that there are certain similarities among the various types of impositive acts which must be accounted for in some way. First, there are the properties that derive from the illocutionary point. Since the illocutionary point of all impositive acts is to get the hearer to do something, the following properties are shared by all impositive acts:

- a) they are intentional;
- b) they involve causation;
- c) they involve a change of state.

Next there are syntactic properties:

- d) the subject of the proposition is in the second person when the act is explicitly performative;
- e) the proposition of an explicitly performative impositive act is in the future tense.

There are exceptions to (d) and (e), significant exceptions, in fact; however they are limited to suggestions. (These exceptions will be dealt with in sub-section 1.4.2.)

Finally there is a property whose importance is very difficult to determine:

- f) impositive acts can, in general, be performed directly with an explicit performative verb.

Although there is no obvious significance to impositive acts having many explicit performative verbs, the fact that they do contrasts sharply with the fact that Searle's representatives<sup>5</sup> (e.g., affirm, describe, mention), for instance, have relatively few explicitly performative verbs. Since it is doubtful that property (f) has any real bearing on the nature of impositive acts (and if it does, it is a mystery how), this property will not be considered in trying to arrive at a probably semantic structure for impositive acts.

Properties (a)-(c) could be considered to be either pragmatic or semantic; of the three, property (a) is the one most likely to be pragmatic; intention certainly refers to the language user. There is,

however, no real problem with considering (a) to be pragmatic, since it is a property common to all illocutionary acts having locutions (that is, all speech acts except exclamations involve the idea of intention even though what is intended differs for various kinds of acts). Intentionality is therefore not particularly useful in characterizing impositive acts. What is significant is that while (a) can be thought of as pragmatic, (b) and (c) cannot (as will be shown below). Consequently, the notion of illocutionary point, which includes (a), (b) and (c), is not as simple as it at first seemed.

In adopting a preformative analysis, I have already excluded the possibility that all these features are pragmatic. However, it remains to be seen that properties (b) and (c) are not pragmatic (the syntactic properties (d) and (e) are not serious candidates for pragmatic features). Causation and change of state ((b) and (c)) are, I believe, semantic; such semantic features have already been proposed and used in semantic structures throughout the literature (e.g., Dowty 1972, G. Lee 1971, J. McCawley 1968). In fact, the syntactic property (d) is a consequence of either (b) or (c), or both (b) and (c). (Since causation implies change of state it is perhaps unnecessary and redundant to refer to them as two separate features.) Change of state involves a time prior to the change ( $t_1$ ) and a time after the change ( $t_2$ ). When a speech act is performed it is performed in the present ( $t_1$ ); consequently any change which the act is intended to bring about must occur after  $t_1$ , and any time after the present is the future. It is therefore a direct result of property (c) that the proposition of an impositive act is in the future tense (property (d)).

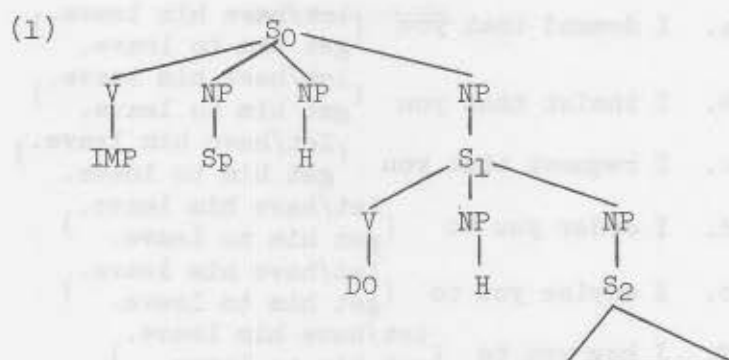
Since properties (b) and (c) are semantic and are common to all impositive acts, they must be represented as similarities in the semantic structure of impositive acts.

#### 1.4.2. Total similarity in semantic structure

This view is that all impositive acts are semantically the same, i.e., they share a distinctive set of semantic primes and similar semantic structure and their only differences are those arising from different felicity conditions. This view is not as blatantly wrong as the first one, but it does suffer serious drawbacks.

Before examining the problems with such an analysis, let us look at what sort of semantic primes are involved. An abstract performative verb, represented as IMPERE, has been posited in the underlying structure of both requests and commands by several linguists (among them R. Lakoff and Sadock); however, the nature of this performative predicate is not always agreed upon, and, in fact, is rarely even specified.<sup>7</sup> I propose a related predicate IMP which has the advantage of not being any more closely associated with imperative sentences types or commands than with any other sentence type or impositive act type. The semantic prime IMP embodies that which is semantic and peculiar to impositive speech acts, i.e., the speaker's attempt to cause the hearer to perform an action. The predicate IMP has, of course, in addition, the properties that all abstract performative verbs have of being a linguistic verb of communication, being unembeddable and being able to be realized as an explicit performative (the last property is generally, but not universally, true of performative predicates).

Returning to the second alternative for the semantic representation of impositive acts, such a structure can now be represented as:



(where Sp stands for speaker and H stands for hearer). This proposal is that all impositive acts can be represented as (1) and that the only differences among them derive from non-semantic sources such as pragmatic felicity conditions.

If it were the case that there were no syntactic variations corresponding to impositive act types, this proposal would be a plausible one. There is some negative evidence for this proposal in Fraser's (1972) demonstration that there is no correspondence between types of impositive acts (or at least different impositive verbs) and types of complementizers that occur with those verbs. But there is also more direct evidence against this proposal.

It was mentioned above (in 1.4.1.) that there are exceptions to the two syntactic properties (d) that the subject of the proposition be in the second person, and (e) that the verb of the proposition be in the future tense. First, there are some exceptions to (d) which occur frequently but are easily accounted for.

This set of exceptions to (d) are exemplified in the performative utterances (2) and the reports of performative utterances (3):

- (2)
- a. I demand that he leave.
  - b. I insist that he leave.
  - c. I request that he leave.
  - d. I order that he leave.
  - e. I advise that he leave.
  - f. I beg that he leave.
- (3)
- a. I demanded of Hilda that Norman leave.
  - b. I insisted to Hilda that Norman leave.
  - c. I requested of Hilda that Norman leave.
  - d. ?I ordered (of) Hilda that Norman leave.
  - e. I advised Hilda that Norman leave.
  - f. I begged of Hilda that Norman leave.

(The dubious grammatical status of (3d) is idiosyncratic and not relevant to this point.) Although these all seem to be violations of the generalization that impositive acts require the subject of the proposition to be the hearer or second person, these sentences submit only to a rather special interpretation, namely, that, in the speaker's opinion, the hearer is in some way able to control or influence the behavior of the person referred to in the proposition. This is shown

by the fact that (4) is a paraphrase of (2) and (5) or (3).

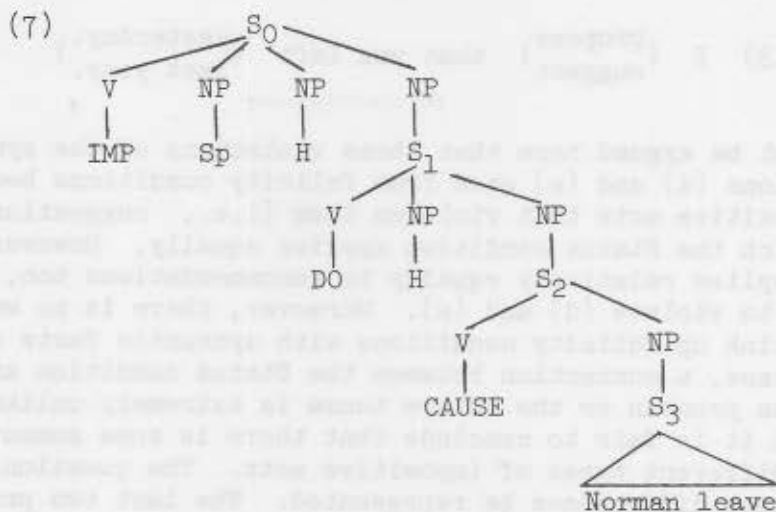
- (4)
- a. I demand that you {let/have him leave.  
get him to leave.}
  - b. I insist that you {let/have him leave.  
get him to leave.}
  - c. I request that you {let/have him leave.  
get him to leave.}
  - d. I order you to {let/have him leave.  
get him to leave.}
  - e. I advise you to {let/have him leave.  
get him to leave.}
  - f. I beg you to {let/have him leave.  
get him to leave.}
- (5)
- a. I demanded of Hilda that she let Norman leave.
  - b. I insisted to Hilda that she let Norman leave.
  - c. I requested that Hilda have Norman leave.
  - d. I ordered Hilda to have Norman leave.
  - e. I advised Hilda to get Norman to leave.
  - f. I begged Hilda to get Norman to leave.

Also, the (3) sentences can be conjoined with sentences explicating the manner in which the request, recommendation or order is carried out:

- (6)
- a. I demanded of Hilda that Norman leave and she obeyed by letting him go.
  - b. I insisted to Hilda that Norman leave and she obeyed (?) by letting him go.
  - c. I requested of Hilda that Norman leave and she complied by having him go.
  - d. ?I ordered (of) Hilda that Norman leave and she obeyed by having him go.
  - e. I advised Hilda that Norman leave and she took my advice and got him to go.
  - f. I begged of Hilda that Norman leave and she complied by getting him to go.

Sentences (4)-(6) indicate that the semantic structure of (2), rather than being grossly different from (1), is simply an elaborated version of (1) where the structure under  $S_2$  is causative, on the order of (7).





Although these orders, recommendations and requests cannot be said to be exceptions to (d), in any but a most superficial sense, that is not true of suggestions.

- (8) a. I propose that he leave.  
 b. I suggest that he leave.
- (9) a. I proposed to Hilda that Norman leave.  
 b. I suggested to Hilda that Norman leave.

The performative utterances (8) and the reports of them (9) do not necessarily imply that the hearer has, in the speaker's opinion, influence or control over the actions of the subject of the proposition; rather, they only imply that the speaker wants the hearer to think about the possibility or desirability of the proposition. This is shown by the fact that (10) and (11) are not paraphrases of (8) and (9) (as (4) and (5) were of (2) and (3)).

- (10) a. I propose that you get him to leave.  
 b. I suggest that you let him leave.
- (11) a. I proposed to Hilda that she get Norman to leave.  
 b. I suggested to Hilda that she let Norman leave.

The point here is that the proposition of suggestions and some recommendations may have subjects in some person other than second with no special interpretation of hearer influence over the subject associated with them.

The exceptions to syntactic generalization (e)--that the verb of the impositive act always be in the future tense--are the same type of impositive acts that are exceptions to (d), i.e., suggestions.

- (12) I { order  
 advise  
 insist  
 request } you to leave { immediately.  
 tomorrow.  
 \*yesterday.  
 \*last year. }

(13) I {propose} that you left {yesterday.}  
           {suggest}                                  {last year.}

It might be argued here that these violations of the syntactic generalizations (d) and (e) stem from felicity conditions because the kind of impositive acts that violates them (i.e., suggestions) is the kind to which the Status condition applies equally. However, the Status condition applies relatively equally to recommendations too, but they do not tend to violate (d) and (e). Moreover, there is no way in general to link up felicity conditions with syntactic facts and, in this particular case, a connection between the Status condition and the second person pronoun or the future tense is extremely unlikely.

I think it is fair to conclude that there is some semantic difference among different types of impositive acts. The question now is: how should such differences be represented. The last two proposals for the semantic structure of impositive acts explore this question.

#### 1.4.3. Different abstract performative verbs, same embedded proposition.

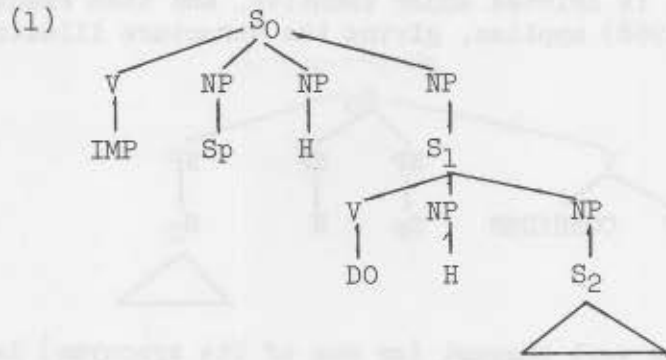
This solution does not really come to grips with the problems mentioned in 1.4.2. above. It is inadequate in that it simply says that there are two IMPs with different syntactic restrictions;<sup>9</sup> it offers no explanation as to why that might be so. Perhaps the lack of explanation offered by such a proposal results from our general lack of knowledge about the nature of abstract performative verbs. In any case, a solution along these lines does not provide much enlightenment.

It was stated earlier that ideally the abstract performative verb should embody the illocutionary force of the speech act; having two verbs of imposition would lead one to wonder whether the illocutionary force of suggesting is different from that of ordering, recommending and requesting. This is certainly not an entirely implausible idea, however, the problem remains that there is no way, within the currently available framework, to explore this possibility. Consequently, the rejection of this view is based not on any real evidence against it, but on its lack of fertility. It may eventually turn out that this view is the right one, but for now we need a proposal which will shed more light on the similarities and differences among types of impositive acts.

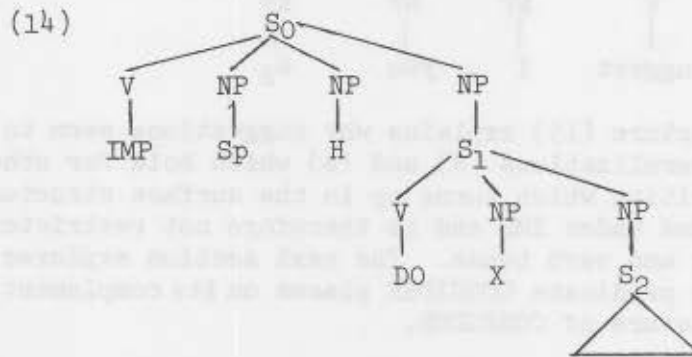
#### 1.4.4. Same abstract performative verb, different embedded propositions.

This proposal says that the similarities among orders, recommendations, suggestions and requests are due to the same abstract performative verb and that the differences result from the structure beneath the performative predicate. For orders, recommendations, and requests, the structure proposed earlier as (1) is adequate.



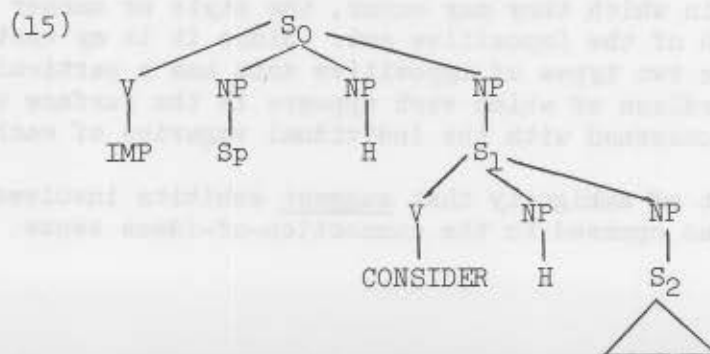


Suggestions, however, require some modification of the structure  $S_1$ . One possibility is to simply substitute a variable for H in  $S_1$ , as is illustrated in (14).

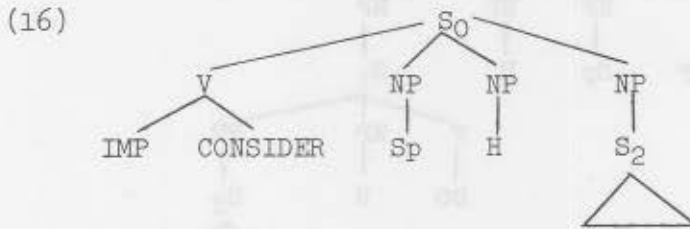


This would solve the problem of the unrestricted subject of the embedded proposition of suggestions, but it does not deal with the fact that the verb of the embedded proposition is not necessarily in the future tense for suggestions. Also, this formulation of the semantic structure of suggestions leads to a rather peculiar result when the rule of Performative Deletion<sup>10</sup> is applied to it. Since what Performative Deletion does is delete the performative sentence,  $S_0$ , when applied to a structure like (14) it would produce a sentence which is indistinguishable from a declarative-form assertion and not interpretable as a suggestion (e.g., the reduced form of (8a) would be He will leave).

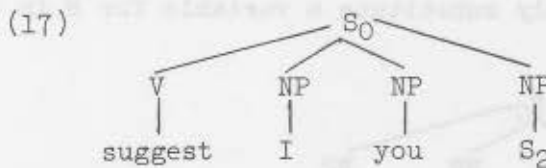
The other solution, and the one advocated here, is a semantic structure on the order of (15) with an intermediate proposition whose predicate is CONSIDER, a representation of the properties common to the lexical items consider, think about, take into account, etc.



The hearer NP of  $S_1$  is deleted under identity, and then Predicate Raising (McCawley 1968) applies, giving the structure illustrated in (16).



Finally, the surface verb suggest (or one of its synonyms) is inserted to produce the derived structure (17).



The semantic structure (15) explains why suggestions seem to violate the syntactic generalizations (d) and (e) which hold for other impositive acts. The proposition which turns up in the surface structure was not originally embedded under IMP and is therefore not restricted as to person of subject and verb tense. The next section explores the restrictions the predicate CONSIDER places on its complement sentence and the general nature of CONSIDER.

## 2. Suggestions.

2.1. Before going into the details of the predicate CONSIDER and the arguments for its existence in the semantic structure of suggestions, I would like to examine the verb suggest, or, more precisely, the various verbs suggest. The other impositive verbs of suggesting (propose, move, submit, etc.) are not ambiguous in the same way as suggest is, and, since they share the important semantic features of the impositive suggest, they will be assumed to derive from the same semantic structure as suggest.

In each of the categories of impositive verbs there are a few verbs which seem to typify the category by their neutrality and their freedom of occurrence. For suggestions these verbs are suggest and propose (as opposed to move and nominate, for example). For orders, the verbs order and command are typical; advise and recommend are typical to recommendations, as are ask and request for requests. The other verbs in each of these categories are distinguished by such things as the context in which they may occur, the style or manner of speaking, and the strength of the impositive act. Since it is my contention that each of the two types of impositive acts has a particular semantic structure, regardless of which verb appears in the surface structure, I will not be concerned with the individual vagaries of each verb.

2.1.1. One sort of ambiguity that suggest exhibits involves the agentive sense as opposed to the connection-of-ideas sense. This is

an ambiguity that resides in many non-impositive verbs as well (mean, imply, indicate, prove, demonstrate, say and tell).<sup>11</sup> The connection-of-ideas suggest (suggest<sub>1</sub>) has the meaning 'to bring to mind through association' and is illustrated in the following sentences:

- (18) It suggested a fine Italian hand to me.  
 (19) The fragrance suggested trade winds and palm trees.

Suggest<sub>1</sub> is, consequently, entirely distinct from the impositive suggest, since verbs which can be used as explicit performatives or which can be used to describe speech acts (as the impositive suggest can) must take agents as their subjects.

It has been argued by philosophers (e.g., Ware 1973) that a crucial difference between acts and actions is that acts must be performed by an agent. Linguistic evidence for such a view, however, is something of a problem to produce. Explicitly performative uses of verbs are highly restricted: they do not allow manner adverbs nor do they occur embedded after persuade--so that such verbs cannot be shown to be pro-agentive<sup>12</sup> when they are used as explicit performatives. They can be used in imperative-form sentences, e.g.,

- (20) Order her to stay.  
 (21) Advise him to return.  
 (22) Request them to come soon.

but all that shows is that they can take agents when occurring in that context; it says nothing about when they occur as explicit performatives. Similarly, it can be shown that in reports of impositive acts the verbs are agentive:

- (23) Miranda { cleverly  
                  stupidly } { ordered  
                                  advised  
                                  requested } us to leave.  
 (24) Hilda persuaded Miranda to { order  
  advise  
  request } us to leave.

These facts make it seem likely that the subjects of explicit performative utterances at least can be agents, but what is really needed is evidence that the subject of such verbs cannot be non-agents. Such evidence is provided by the following anti-agentive context (proposed in G. Lee, 1971):

- (25) NP turns out to \_\_\_\_\_.

where turns out to is interpreted as proves to. In this frame only verbs which cannot have agent subjects may occur, as (26)-(29) illustrate:

- (26) \*He turns out to assassinate the premier.  
 (27) \*He turns out to believe the story.  
 (28) It turns out to glimmer.  
 (29) It/he turns out to be tall.

Those impositive verbs which can be used as explicit performatives and which do not have a non-agentive reading (as suggest has) cannot occur in this environment.

- (30) \*It/he turns out to  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{advise} \\ \text{order} \\ \text{request} \end{array} \right\}$  that we leave.

This indicates that these verbs can never take non-agents as subjects and therefore must take agents as subjects. Although because of its non-agentive reading, suggest does not prove to be agentive according to this test, I will show that there is an agentive suggest, which is similar enough to the other impositive verbs to be supposed to be agentive when used as an explicit performative.

2.1.2. Another property of explicitly performative verbs is that they are verbs of linguistic communication. It is in this way that the impositive suggest differs from yet another suggest; this suggest<sub>2</sub> is agentive but not necessarily a verb of saying and means 'to show indirectly or imply':

- (31) Carl suggested he was guilty by refusing to answer the question.  
 (32) Without saying a word, Hermione managed to suggest that we go to bed early.  
 (33) Zachary cleverly suggested leaving by declining another drink.  
 (34) Silently, but unmistakably, Jane suggested that I had said enough.

There are speakers for whom (31)-(34) are marginally acceptable at best; this may be the result of a hierarchical relationship of the linguistic communication aspect of verbs, which will be examined below.

2.1.3. The third suggest, meaning 'to bring (a thought, problem, or desire) to mind for consideration', is the one which occurs as an explicit performative, as in (35)-(37).

- (35) I (hereby) suggest that we try to help.  
 (36) I suggest you eat less.  
 (37) I suggest that Cora did it.

Suggest<sub>3</sub> is a more specific verb than suggest<sub>2</sub> (having the added restriction of being a verb of linguistic communication) and, as was pointed out to me by Arnold Zwicky, can be contrasted with suggest<sub>2</sub> in a sentence like (38),

- (38) She suggested<sub>2</sub> that Harbird was guilty, without  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{,in fact,} \\ \text{actually} \end{array} \right\}$  suggesting<sub>3</sub> it.

A sentence such as (38) would be contradictory unless two distinct verbs were involved; the less specific one (suggest<sub>2</sub>) being asserted

and the more specific one (suggest<sub>3</sub>) being denied.<sup>13</sup> I personally do not find (38) to be contradictory and there are speakers who agree with that judgment; however, other speakers do consider (38) to be contradictory. This judgment is similar to the judgment of unacceptability of (31)-(34) in that it results from the same (closely compacted) hierarchy.

This hierarchy consists of verbs of communication and is determined by the nature of the communication--whether or not it is linguistic and to what degree it is or is not. A rough idea of this hierarchy's categories and category members is given in (39).

- (39) Not            Not necessarily    Necessarily    Really  
linguistic        linguistic        linguistic        linguistic

persuade-imply-suggest<sub>2</sub>-suggest<sub>3</sub>-say-mutter-say in a mutter

The verbs on the non-linguistic end of the continuum occur with the adverbial phrase without saying a word, while the really linguistic verbs do not. Conversely, the non-linguistic verbs do not occur with the adverb loudly, while the linguistic and really linguistic verbs do occur with it.

- (40) a. Without saying a word, Joshua persuaded Irving to give up.  
b. Without saying a word, Joshua implied/suggested<sub>2</sub> that Irving should give up.  
c. ?Without saying a word, Joshua suggested<sub>3</sub> that Irving should give up.  
d. ?\*Without saying a word, Joshua said that Irving should give up.  
e. \*Without saying a word, Joshua muttered that Irving should give up.  
f. \*\*Without saying a word, Joshua said in a mutter that Irving should give up.

- (41) a. \*Joshua loudly persuaded Irving to give up.  
b. ?\*Joshua loudly implied that Irving should give up.  
c. ?Joshua loudly suggested<sub>2</sub> that Irving should give up.  
d. Joshua loudly said that Irving should give up.  
e. Joshua loudly muttered that Irving should give up.  
f. Joshua loudly said in a mutter that Irving should give up.

There are many mysteries connected with this hierarchy; for instance, why are manner-of-speaking verbs like mutter or say in a mutter so much worse with the phrase without saying a word than say or suggest<sub>3</sub>? By labelling the manner-of-speaking end of the hierarchy 'really linguistic' I have suggested that these sorts of verbs are somehow more linguistic than other necessarily linguistic verbs; I have no idea what it might mean for some necessarily linguistic verbs to be more linguistic than

others. In any case, if it turns out that there actually is such a hierarchy, it may be that for some speakers the continuum is so tightly compressed in the middle that suggest<sub>2</sub> and suggest<sub>3</sub> are indistinguishable; for those speakers, sentences (31)-(34) are unacceptable and (38) is an internal contradiction.<sup>14</sup> This is really just to say that, for those speakers, agentive suggest is neutral rather than ambiguous and that the neutrality involves the manner of communication.

2.1.4. Returning to the verbs suggest, we find that there is one more, suggest<sub>4</sub>, which means 'to propose someone or something as a possibility'. Suggest<sub>4</sub> can also be used as an explicit performative, and, in fact, seems to differ from suggest<sub>3</sub> only in the nature of its direct object, which must be concrete as opposed to the abstract object (e.g., thought, problem, etc.) that suggest<sub>3</sub> takes. But even that difference has a superficial appearance since, according to the definition of suggest<sub>4</sub>, it is as a 'possibility' that the concrete is being viewed. The following sentences,

- (42) I suggest Cora. (may = 37)  
 (43) I suggest mangoes.

can be reduced versions of the sentences

- (44) I suggest (that it is possible) that Cora did it.  
 (45) I suggest (that it is possible)  
       { to have mangoes } for dessert.<sup>15</sup>  
       { that we have mangoes }

The fact that the sentences in which suggest<sub>4</sub> occur have non-elliptical counterparts which look very much like the sentences in which suggest<sub>3</sub> occurs indicates that they are the same verbs, and that the difference resides in their complement sentences. This, then, is the impositive suggest whose semantic structure will now be examined.

2.2. It was proposed in section 1 that the semantic structure of suggestions involves a predicate CONSIDER; such a predicate would encompass the meaning common to the following lexical items (and probably others as well):

- (46) consider, contemplate, deliberate on, mull over,  
muse, ponder, reflect on, take into account,  
think about.

The semantic commonality of these verbs is that they all express intentional mental activity, directed toward a specific matter.

Syntactically, they are non-stative:

- (47) a. Morley was { considering  
                           reflecting on  
                           thinking about } going home.



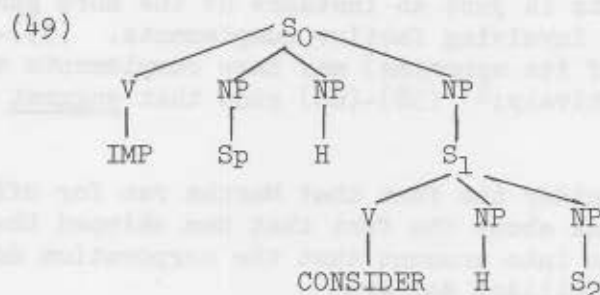
- (47) b. Morley slowly { considered  
reflected on  
thought about } going home.

These verbs are also agentive:

- (48) a. { Consider  
Reflect upon  
Think about } going to the party.  
 b. Milly { carefully  
deliberately } { considered  
reflected on  
thought about }  
going to the party.  
 c. Lynn persuaded Mark to { consider  
reflect upon  
think about }  
going to the party.

From these properties of the verbs in (46) it can be inferred that the semantic predicate CONSIDER is also non-stative and agentive; consequently, CONSIDER is decomposable into some structure involving DO.<sup>16</sup> Although the details of such a structure are not clear, nor especially important here, it is interesting to note that the semantic structure of suggestions is not as radically different from that of other impositive acts as it may have appeared when CONSIDER was first introduced. That is, the predicate embedded immediately under IMP is DO for orders, recommendations and requests; for suggestions it is also DO, but with the added specification of direct mental activity.

A more interesting property of the verbs in (46) and of the predicate CONSIDER, is that they take as complements sentences whose main verbs may be of any tense. If CONSIDER is a part of the semantic structure of suggestions, this property would account for the fact that the suggested propositions may be in the present or past tense, as well as the future tense. In other words, the proposed structure (repeated here as (49)),



would, by virtue of a syntactic property of CONSIDER, explain why suggestions like (50) are acceptable, while similar orders, recommendations and requests, as in (51), are not.

- (50) I { suggest  
propose } that you left { yesterday.  
last year. }

- (51) \*I {  
 beg you to leave  
 order you to leave  
 demand that you leave  
 advise you to leave  
 insist that you leave  
 request you to leave  
 } {yesterday-}  
 {last year.}

There are two other properties of the verb consider that must be carefully excluded from the syntax of the predicate CONSIDER. The first one is only a property of consider when it is synonymous with the verbs assume and suppose; the property is that the complement sentence be suppositional in nature. The predicate CONSIDER does not take suppositional complements, so that (52), which looks like it could derive from a structure like (49) (by Equi-NP Deletion of the hearer NP of  $S_1$  and Performative Deletion of  $S_0$ ), is not a suggestion.

- (52) Consider that all triangles are red.

It is, rather, the equivalent of (53), which must have a suppositional reading.

- (53) { Assume  
 Suppose } that all triangles are red.

In this imperative-form construction the preferred reading of consider is suppositional and therefore not equivalent to the suggestion:

- (54) I suggest that all triangles are red.

The other property of consider that is not a property of CONSIDER is that consider may take a factive complement but CONSIDER may not. This is related to the fact about suppositional complements; what it means for a sentence to be suppositional is that the proposition being put forth is to be accepted as true or as a fact for the sake of an argument. It is, therefore, a factive. So it seems that the observation about the difference between consider and CONSIDER in regard to suppositional complements is just an instance of the more general difference between them involving factive complements. (55)-(57) show that consider (or one of its synonyms) may have complements which can only be interpreted factively;<sup>17</sup> (58)-(60) show that suggest (or IMP CONSIDER) cannot:

- (55) a. Consider the fact that Martha ran for office.  
 b. Think about the fact that Sam skipped the country.  
 c. Take into account that the corporation donated a million dollars.
- (56) a. Consider his refusal to testify.  
 b. Think about Bland's gift to the committee.  
 c. Take into account Yvonne's perserverance.
- (57) a. Consider Martha's running for office.  
 b. Think about Sam's skipping the country.  
 c. Take into account the corporation's donating a million dollars.

- (58) a. \*I suggest the fact that Martha ran for office.  
 b. \*I suggest the fact that Sam skipped the country.  
 c. \*I suggest the fact that the corporation donated a million dollars.
- (59) a. \*I suggest his refusal to testify.  
 b. \*I suggest Bland's gift to the committee.  
 c. \*I suggest Yvonne's perseverance.
- (60) a. \*I suggest Martha's running for office.  
 b. \*I suggest Sam's skipping the country.  
 c. \*I suggest the corporation's donating a million dollars.

There is a construction very similar to the Poss-ing construction of (57) and (60) which is non-factive and therefore does occur with suggest. This non-factive construction differs from the factive one only in not having a possessive marker on the first noun of the proposition. Examples are:

- (61) { Consider  
 Think about } Martha running for office.
- (62) I suggest Martha running for office.

2.3. It should perhaps be noted here that the imperative sentence form, which crops up so often in a discussion of impositive speech acts, is a direct result of an underlying structure which has as its abstract performative, IMP, since one of the properties of IMP is that the subject of its embedded sentence is coreferential with its indirect object (i.e., the hearer of the utterance). The result of this property of IMP (which is, incidentally, reflected in the statement of the illocutionary point of impositive speech acts) is that Equi-NP Deletion can apply to delete the hearer NP of  $S_1$ , after which Performative Deletion may apply to  $S_0$ , producing the typical subject-less imperative sentence form. With the exception of requests, whose deferential nature requires that the direct act be somehow modified (as with the addition of tags like please or will you), all impositive acts can undergo Equi-NP Deletion and Performative Deletion and turn up as imperative sentences. Therefore, if a structure like (49) does underlie suggestions, one would expect imperative-form sentences beginning with consider (at least in its non-factive sense) to be suggestions. Sentences like (61) do seem to be suggestions.<sup>18</sup> Not only are they paraphrases of sentences like (62), but they also do not allow tags that orders typically allow (such as expletives like dammit, or adverbs indicating urgency like now!, immediately!, and I don't mean next year!):

- (63) Consider Martha running for office, \*dammit!
- (64) Think about doing it, { \*immediately!  
 \*and I don't mean next year! }

Consider imperatives like (61) cannot be requests because requests do not occur as unmodified imperatives. It is more difficult to distinguish imperative-form suggestions from imperative-form recommendations, but it does seem that a sentence like (65) is odd.

- (65) { ?For your own good,  
For {Thelma's} sake,  
my } consider { Joe doing it.  
having your  
hair cut. }

Both the strangeness of (65) and the restrictions mentioned above on the kinds of tags that may occur with either orders or requests are results of felicity conditions on various types of impositive acts; these conditions will be examined in detail in section 3.

2.4. There is another way that suggestions may be distinguished from other impositive acts which could also be taken as evidence for the existence of CONSIDER in the semantic structure of suggestions. It was demonstrated by Morgan (1973) that there is a syntactic relation between utterances and their responses. Suggestions can typically be responded to by sentences making reference either to the act of considering or the sort of thing which can be considered (i.e., an idea, a proposition, etc.). So the suggestions in (66) below can be responded to by the sentences in (70), but the orders in (67) and the requests in (68) cannot. Just as the distinction between suggestions and recommendations was difficult to perceive above, so it is now, with some of the responses in (70) being appropriate to the recommendations in (69) and some not. However, the fact that the responses which are not appropriate to the recommendations are those with explicit reference to considering, (70d-f) may indicate a real semantic difference between suggestions and recommendations. In any case, it is clear that suggestions and recommendations have more in common with each other than suggestions do with either orders or requests; this is a point that I will return to shortly.

- (66) Suggestions:  
a. I suggest we all leave now.  
b. I suggest Harry go first.
- (67) Orders:  
a. I order you to clean the latrine.  
b. Pick up your socks, dammit!
- (68) Requests:  
a. Please give me a dime.  
b. I humbly request that you stay.
- (69) Recommendations:  
a. I recommend that we leave now.  
b. I advise you to stay put.
- (70) Responses:  
a. That's a good idea.  
b. That's a terrible idea.  
c. I'll keep that in mind.  
d. That's worth thinking about.  
e. That's worth considering.  
f. I'll think about it.  
g. I'll take that into consideration.

2.5. The problem of determining just what is a suggestion and what is a recommendation involves both semantics (if CONSIDER is actually

a semantic predicate of the act of suggesting) and pragmatic felicity conditions. This sub-section will be devoted to exploring both kinds of distinctions in an attempt to clarify the suggestion/recommendation problem. The reason that these two types of impositive acts are so much more confusing than orders and requests is that the latter two are easily distinguished from each other and from suggestions and recommendations by the felicity condition involving the relative status of the speaker and hearer. This Status condition applies in a very similar way to suggestions and recommendations, so the difference between these two kinds of impositive acts must be sought elsewhere.

The simple proposal for distinguishing suggestions and recommendations is that: a) recommendations have in their semantic structure IMP DO, and a felicity condition that the speaker believe that the action being recommended is desirable or good for the hearer or some other concerned party, and that: b) suggestions are semantically IMP CONSIDER and do not have a 'Good For' condition. As might be expected, this simple proposal is too simple; the impositive verb suggest, for many speakers, implies a Good For condition identical to that of recommendations. In addition, there are occurrences of direct suggestions which do not seem to involve CONSIDER, but rather DO, e.g.,

- (71) I suggest you { go soak your head.  
go jump in the lake.  
bug off. }

It does seem that sarcastic suggestions like (71), which have a semantic DO, are never supposed to be good for the hearer, so suggestions and recommendations are still indistinguishable.

A less clear set of examples of suggestions which have DO rather than CONSIDER in their semantic structure are those indirect suggestions beginning with Let's as illustrated in (72).

- (72) a. Let's go swimming.  
b. Let's throw a party.  
c. Let's get to work.  
d. Let's clean the fish; we've got to do it sometime.  
e. It's now or never and we've got to get it over with, so let's do it.

There is a problem with Let's suggestions; they frequently seem to have a Good For condition (as in (72a) and (72b)), but sometimes it is unclear whether or not they have such a condition. (72c) is especially unclear, while (72d) and (72e), by their explanatory additions, indicate that the end result or the accomplishment of the action is a good or desirable thing. If Let's suggestions do have a Good For condition, then they are not really suggestions at all, but recommendations. Another possibility for these sentences is that they do not have exactly a Good For condition, but a more general condition that the proposed action is not bad for the hearer or hearers.<sup>19</sup> That would account for the neutrality of (72c) in regard to desirability and the apparent need for justification in (72d-e). It would also explain why (71) is either rude or facetious, but not an ordinary suggestions. If

this is the case, then there is still a pragmatic difference between suggestions and recommendations.

The final problem is that the verbs advise and recommend (though none of the other verbs of recommending) are sometimes used with the same freedom of complements as verbs of suggesting. That is, (73) and (74) are not unacceptable.

(73) I recommend that John, Ella and Ann go.

(74) I advise that he leave now.

If the semantic structure of recommendations is IMP DO, there is a problem in deriving these forms; if it is IMP CONSIDER there is no problem. Also, (75) and (76) are at least rough paraphrases of (73) and (74).

(75) For your sake, consider that John, Ella and Ann go.

(76) In your own best interest, I suggest that he leave now.

This indicates that, while these sorts of recommendations can have the Good For condition, they also have the semantic structure usually associated with suggestions.

The result of this attempt at disentanglement is four kinds of equal status impositive acts:

I. DO recommendations.

Semantic structure: IMP DO

Felicity condition: Action is good for hearer.

Example: I recommend you leave now.

II. CONSIDER recommendations.

Semantic structure: IMP CONSIDER

Felicity condition: Action is good for hearer.

Example: I recommend that Ann go.

III. CONSIDER suggestions.

Semantic structure: IMP CONSIDER

Felicity condition: Action is not bad for hearer.

Example: I suggest that he did it.

IV. DO suggestions.

Semantic structure: IMP DO

Felicity condition: Action is not bad for hearer.

Example: Let's get to work.

2.6. In concluding this section, I would like to point out that, although there are no strong arguments for the existence of CONSIDER in the semantic structure of CONSIDER suggestions or CONSIDER recommendations, such a predicate would account for the fact that these two kinds of impositive acts can be paraphrased by imperative-form sentences with consider and, more importantly, the fact that they can have complement sentences which are not constrained by IMP to have second person subjects and future tenses, as are other structures dominated by IMP. The second point is more important than the first because consider imperatives could just as easily be explained on the grounds that there is a felicity condition which says the hearer is to consider the proposition and this condition may be asserted to perform indirectly

the act of which it is a condition.<sup>21</sup> There is, however, no other way to account for the second point.

On the other side of the issue are two arguments against decomposing suggest into IMP CONSIDER. One is that the scope of an adverb like again or almost can be either the whole structure or just the embedded verb; consequently sentences like (77) and (78), with the causative verb boil, are ambiguous:<sup>22</sup>

(77) John almost boiled the water.

(78) John boiled the water again.

Sentence (77) can mean either (79) or (80).

(79) John almost caused the water to boil.

(80) John caused the water to almost boil.

Likewise, (78) can mean either (81) or (82).

(81) John again caused the water to boil.

(82) John caused the water to boil again.

If suggest decomposed into IMP CONSIDER one would expect (83) and (84) to be ambiguous in the same way as (77) and (78) are.

(83) John almost suggested it.

(84) John suggested it again.

These sentences are not ambiguous in the expected way, and so the IMP CONSIDER proposal is weakened.

To further weaken it is the fact that the embedded predicate of a decomposed verb can be referred to by a pronoun, as in (85).<sup>23</sup>

(85) Julia thickened the sauce, but it took her three hours to bring it about.

where the second it refers not to what Julia did, but rather to what she caused to happen (i.e., that the sauce became thick). In a report of a suggestion, CONSIDER cannot be anaphorically referred to.

(86) George suggested the theatre, but it took him three hours to do it.

(86) can only be interpreted to mean George has a terrible stutter, aphasia, or is incredibly circumlocutory. It cannot mean that it was three hours before anyone considered the theatre.

Although these two arguments have only been made for causative decompositions, there is no obvious reason they should not hold for impositive decompositions as well, especially in view of the fact that there is a causal relation between the speaker and the hearer of an impositive act. These arguments are therefore good arguments against the IMP CONSIDER proposal. For this reason, I leave it as simply a

proposal, or CONSIDER suggestion, saying only that it is possible, not necessarily desirable.

### 3. Indirect Illocution.

3.1. According to a proposal made by Heringer (1972), speech acts may be performed indirectly by reference to certain participant-based felicity conditions on those speech acts. Heringer's proposal is that such intrinsic conditions can be either asserted or questioned to perform, indirectly, acts for which they are conditions. These intrinsic conditions are either essential, involving the speaker's knowledge, intentions and desires, or non-essential, involving the speaker's beliefs. The essential intrinsic condition of intention is an important part of what Searle calls illocutionary point, in that the illocutionary point is the speaker's purpose or intention in performing the speech act. This condition and the essential conditions of speaker's knowledge and desire are not of primary importance to the performance of indirect impositive acts and therefore will not be discussed here.<sup>24</sup> This section will be mainly concerned with those intrinsic conditions, which happen to be non-essential, that are peculiar to impositive speech acts and that are the basis for the majority of indirect impositive acts.<sup>25</sup>

3.2. There is, for impositive acts, a condition of participant status which is neither purely intrinsic nor purely extrinsic.<sup>26</sup> It cannot, therefore, be used as a basis for indirect impositive acts (i.e., either questioned or asserted to perform the act), but it does affect how various types of indirect impositive acts may be performed.

The Status condition for impositive acts can be thought of as applying in three distinct ways: for commands the speaker must believe he has superior status to (or authority over) the hearer; for suggestions and recommendations, the speaker must believe that he and the hearer are of equal status; for requests, the speaker must believe, or be acting as if he believed, that he has status inferior to the hearer. This is a simplification, however; it takes slightly more status to advise than to suggest and even more to insist, urge or exhort. Similarly, it takes less status to propose or submit than to advise. Rather than viewing the Status condition as dividing impositive acts into a trichotomy, then, it will be considered to be one aspect of a 'squish',<sup>27</sup> with orders and requests having special properties, not because they are qualitatively different from suggestions and recommendations, but rather because they form the endpoints or boundaries of the squish.

Regardless of the way in which the relation between the Status condition and suggesting is viewed, it still contrasts sharply with the relation between the Status condition and ordering on the one hand, and the Status condition and requesting on the other hand. Commands are only felicitous if the conversational participants believe that the speaker has the authority or sufficiently higher status in terms of the particular social setting relevant to the conversation. When a person without such status issues a command it is considered rude or impertinent and will, no doubt, be ignored. Requests, however, are used when the speaker wants to act as if he is inferior in status to the hearer(s). Such behavior is usually referred to as 'deference'



and is crucially involved in certain conditions on illocutionary acts. It should be noted that neither aspect of the Status condition is independent of the social setting; in fact, they are completely determined by such setting.

There is a certain asymmetry here due to the nature of authority; a person in an authoritative position may easily show deference if he likes, but it is much more difficult (perhaps impossible) for a person not in authority to show authority. The linguistic consequence of this is that the violations on authority conditions for commanding are much easier to recognize than violations of deference conditions on requesting. In fact it may never be the case that a speaker cannot show deference.

In both cases the speaker and hearer(s) have to agree upon their relative status. If they do not agree and the speaker makes a command, a hearer may respond with a denial or questioning of the speaker's authority, e.g.,

(87) You can't tell me what to do.

(88) Who do you think you are, { telling me what to do.  
trying to tell me what  
to do. }

(89) You've (got) no right to order me around.

A speaker with authority to command may, of course, choose to be deferent. However if his superior is recognized by the hearer(s) they may respond with a direct reference to the speaker's ability to command:

(90) I won't do it unless you order me to.

(91) I'm afraid you'll have to make that an order.

(92) I'll do it if you command me to, but not

{ otherwise,  
if you just ask, }

There is a way in which the Status condition, by applying to suggestions in such a neutral way, affects indirect suggestions. If one person wishes to order another to do something, he cannot possibly do it by asking a question; likewise, in making a request or plea a speaker cannot use an assertion without relinquishing his guise of deference or subservience. Since these restrictions do not hold for suggestions, both assertions and questions may be used to perform the indirect illocutionary act of suggesting.

The squish representing the continuum of the Status condition also indicates the strength of the act, with the strongest acts being at the order end and the weakest at the request end. Strength itself is not a felicity condition but rather a result of a combination of conditions, one of which is Status. (The other condition involved will be discussed in 3.5.).

Impositive verbs fit into the strength squish in approximately the following order (slashes indicate equivalence of strength):

- (93) command/order/enjoin/interdict - proscribe/demand/forbid - direct/require - instruct - exhort/urge/warn - insist/admonish - caution/counsel/advise/recommend - suggest - submit/propose/move/nominate - ask/request - petition/bid - solicit/appeal - plead/beg/beseech/implore - pray/supplicate.

This is not meant to be definitive by any means; there is always a problem with fixing the order of continua, especially when many of the items are synonymous or nearly so. It is presented here only to give a general idea of how a squish based on strength might look, and it does reflect the way in which these acts are talked about. For instance, a strong suggestion is actually a recommendation. Also, different impositive acts can be referred to in different ways, e.g. and that's an order, versus it was just a suggestion and I was only asking.

3.3. There are three main intrinsic conditions upon which indirect impositive acts are based and one derivative condition. The first condition is one discussed by Heringer as condition 3.31: 'the performer of an illocutionary act K believes that no acts involved in the performance of K are already performed.' This formulation, however, needs certain modification; not only must the speaker believe the actions are not performed, he must also believe they are not, at the time of the speech act, being performed.<sup>28</sup>

That this condition is actually a condition on impositive speech acts is illustrated by the fact that if it is denied at the same time that the act is uttered, an unacceptable sentence results:

- (94) \*I don't care if you are doing the dishes, (I order you to) do the dishes.  
 (95) \*I suggest you have your wisdom teeth taken out even if you've already had them taken out.  
 (96) \*Please set the clock if you've already done so.

That the proposed modification of Heringer's statement of the condition is necessary is shown by the fact that (97) - (99) are not unacceptable:

- (97) I don't care if you did do the dishes (once), (I order you to) do the dishes (again).  
 (98) I suggest you look (some more/again), even if you've already looked.  
 (99) I know you just did it, but please do it again for me.

This condition will be referred to as the Not Done condition.

3.4. The next intrinsic condition is restricted to recommendations and suggestions, and requires that the action involved be possible. It is rather difficult to tell where this Possibility condition stops being applicable on the impositive continuum, but it does seem that whereas one can order and request actions, he does not necessarily

believe to be possible, he cannot suggest or recommend them:<sup>29</sup>

- (100) Whether it's possible or not, I order you to be there.
- (101) Whether or not it's possible for you to come, I request you to (come).
- (102) ??Whether or not it's possible for you to do so, I suggest you take Joanna with you.
- (103) ?\*I advise you to get a good night's sleep, even though it's impossible.

3.5. The third condition has to do with whether or not the action, in the speaker's opinion, is desirable, or good for, either the hearer or some third party.<sup>30</sup> This is a belief condition and should be carefully distinguished from the intrinsic condition involving the speaker's desire. This latter condition is an essential one, and it requires that the speaker want the action to be done. The non-essential belief condition (which will be called the Good For condition) primarily concerns the nature of the act mentioned and usually some person other than the speaker. The two conditions are not unrelated, however; it can be the case that the reason the speaker wants the hearer to do the action is that the speaker believes the action will benefit the hearer or someone else whom the hearer has an interest in. Orders do not have this condition and requests ordinarily do not, although they may be modified to include it, as it:

- (104) a. For Charley's sake, I beg you to leave now.  
b. For your own good, please tell the truth.

It was assumed in section 2, for the sake of exposition, that there was a qualitative difference between suggestions and recommendations in terms of the Good For condition. Upon closer examination, however, it appears that this condition is really only quantitatively different for suggestions and recommendations. Consequently, there are no absolute differences between these two types of impositive acts. That there is no absolute difference is not surprising in view of the overlap in meaning of the verbs suggest, advise, and recommend. These verbs are in the middle of the strength squish mentioned above; they are the equal status verbs. This portion of the squish will be referred to simply as suggestions when there is no reason to specify whether the semantic structure contains DO or CONSIDER and no reason to specify the particular application of the Good For condition.

- (105) exhort/urge/warn - insist/admonish - caution/  
counsel/advise/recommend - suggest - submit/  
propose/move/nominate.

This strength squish corresponds not only to difference in status, but also in how good for the hearer (or whomever) the action is believed to be. Although the Good For condition cannot in itself definitively differentiate between various direct impositive acts,

it does play an important role in differentiating indirect impositive acts, as will be seen in the next section. The Good For condition can be used to perform indirect impositive illocutions because it is an intrinsic condition; the Status condition is not purely intrinsic and therefore cannot be so used.

The Good For condition applies most strongly to the strong end of the sub-squish (105); those acts to which the Good For condition applies most strongly can be modified by the condition, but not by its denial as (106) and (107) show.

- (106) a. Since sunshine is healthful, I recommend that  
we all sunbathe two hours a day.  
b. \*Since sunshine is dangerous, I recommend that  
we all sunbathe two hours a day.
- (107) a. I warn you that if you don't get out of the  
way, you'll get hurt.  
b. \*I warn you that if you don't get out of the  
way, you won't get hurt.

(106) and (107) are, of course, not out-and-out unacceptable sentences; they can be used if the speaker is trying to be ironic or especially perverse (i.e., the speaker has, or is acting as if he had, the belief that being unhealthy or dead is good and that one should try to attain such a state). It should be noted that on the perverse reading of (106) and (107) the Good For condition is still not being violated or suspended; what is being violated is the ordinary way of interpreting the adjective dangerous and the verb hurt. Whereas in normal usage dangerous and hurt are both considered to be bad or undesirable, in the perverse usage they are being used by the speaker as good or desirable things. So that if dangerous or hurt are believed by the speaker to mean or imply something which is bad for the hearer, then the (b) sentences are unacceptable. I am not able to find an acceptable reading for:<sup>31</sup>

- (108) \*Since I believe sunshine is dangerous, and I believe  
danger is bad and to be avoided at all costs, I  
recommend that we all sunbathe two hours a day.

Before going into the last intrinsic condition which may be used derivatively to perform indirect impositive acts, I would like to point out that there is at least one other feature of impositive acts that is derived from others. Because there are two conditions determining the strength squish, it is very difficult to be precise about which of several verbs, like urge, exhort and warn, is stronger--or even if strength is what differentiates them. There is, however, a derived property of strength, which Searle calls style of disclosure, that can be used to distinguish among impositive verbs.<sup>32</sup> Style is said to be derivation of strength, because style tends to correspond very closely with strength, and it is only when two or more impositive verbs have identical strength that style distinguishes them. Such is the case with exhort, urge and warn; although warn has certain distinctive syntactic properties, semantically, it is indistinguishable from urge

and exhort. All three of these verbs have the same amount of strength, but exhort emphasizes the contribution of the Status condition to strength, while urge stresses the Good For condition. Warn is more like urge in that it also stresses the Good For condition, but it tends to do it by giving the reason that a particular action is or is not good for the hearer.

3.6. Finally, indirect illocutions of impositive acts may be performed by asserting or questioning certain implications of the three intrinsic conditions just discussed. The implications that may be so used are those which refer to any of the three conditions as a (or the) reason for the hearer to carry out the action specified in the proposition, or that give a reason for the speaker believing the particular intrinsic condition. This Reason condition is a derived condition because its existence is dependent upon the three basic conditions of Not Done, Possibility and Good For, which provide the reason for doing the proposed action. The Reason condition is, then, that the reason the speaker wants the hearer to do the action is any one of, or any combination of, the three primary intrinsic conditions. The implication of the Reason condition itself is that the speaker believes any one of, or any combination of the intrinsic conditions.

The Reason condition can be used to modify impositive acts by stating, either conditionally or not, that there is no reason not to do the action (as illustrated in (109)), or that there is a reason to do the action (as illustrated in (110) and (111)).

- (109) a. If/Since there's no reason not to learn French,  
I suggest you do (it).  
b. \*If/Since there is a reason not to learn French,  
I suggest you do (it).
- (110) a. If/Since there's a good reason to go to New  
Zealand, I recommend that we go.  
b. \*If/Since there's no good reason to go to New  
Zealand, I recommend that we go.
- (111) a. If/Since there's a good reason not to eat  
apples, I warn you not to.  
b. \*If/Since there's no (good) reason not to eat  
apples, I warn you not to.

For sentences (109a) and (110b) there is the same sort of perverse reading as there was for (106b) and (107b). For the perverse reading of (109b) the speaker must believe that things should be done without reasons for doing them, which is a strange attitude. For the weird reading of (110b) the speaker must believe that the fact that there is no reason to do the action is itself a reason to do the action, which is conceivable if, for some reason, the speaker wants to do something irrational (or at least apparently irrational). Perhaps it is more likely that such a speaker would want to do something unpredictable, as when he does not want another person to be able to figure out what he will do next or where he will go next and therefore tries to do the thing or go to the place for which no reason, except for the very lack of reason, exists.

It seems that there ought to be a perverse reading for (111b) parallel to those of (109b) and (110b), however if there is one, I cannot discern it: (111b) seems simply to make no sense at all, perhaps because of the over-abundance of negatives.

It might be argued that the (a) versions of (109)-(111) are not ideal sentences either; and I would agree, however I believe that the reason they are not perfectly common everyday sentences is that these conditions are so basic to the speech acts in question that it seems odd actually to assert them; they are generally assumed by all speakers of the language. Certainly in the case of the version of the (a) sentences with if, the oddity arises from the fact that the sentences are tautologies. In the cases of the (a) sentences with since, they seem strange because usually if a speaker believes that there is a reason to do something or not to do something, he will give the reason rather than just saying that there is one. This is borne out by the fact that (109a) with since is not an unusual sentence as (110a) and (111a) with since, and in (109a) the condition being illustrated is the lack of a reason.

The Reason condition can also modify an impositive act by giving one of the three basic conditions as a reason, as is illustrated in (112)-(114):

- (112) a. If/Since you haven't done your homework yet,  
I suggest you do it.  
b. \*If/Since you've already done your homework,  
I suggest you do it.
- (113) a. If/Since it's possible to finish today, I  
suggest we do so.  
b. \*If/Since it's impossible to finish today, I  
suggest we do so.
- (114) a. If/Since it's good for you, I recommend you do it.  
b. \*If/Since it's not good for you, I recommend you  
do it.

#### 4. Indirect Impositive Acts.

4.1. Impositive acts may be performed directly in two ways: as an explicit performative sentence with an impositive verb, or as an imperative-form sentence. The first way has been exemplified repeatedly in the preceding sections. The second way has been mentioned with regard to CONSIDER suggestions; it is the most normal form of impositive acts on the strong end of the impositive squish (i.e., orders). Imperative-form sentences may also be used to suggest, but not to request, since using a direct form is not a polite way to impose one's will upon another, and the Status conditions on requests is that the speaker act as an inferior to the hearer (and hence deferentially).

There are many more ways to perform impositive acts indirectly, but even these are limited by the Status condition. Orders, to be effective, must be direct; requests, to be polite, must be in the form of questions or otherwise modified (e.g., with the addition of please or tags). Suggestions, however, are not so constrained by the Status condition and therefore may be either assertions or questions. The

result is that there are many types of indirect suggestions, some types of indirect requests and no indirect orders.

4.2. Looking first at the Not Done condition, we find the following indirect suggestions based on it,

- (115) Have you thought about Jeremiah's doing it?
- (116) You haven't considered Jeremiah's doing it.
- (117) Have you read Cat's Cradle?
- (118) You haven't read Cat's Cradle.

Sentences (117) and (118) are less obviously suggestions than (115) and (116), but they do appear quite natural with the responses appropriate to CONSIDER suggestions. There seems to be no reason that (117) and (118) are not DO suggestions; also, one would expect (115) and (117) to be possible indirect requests which they are not. It would appear that the Not Done condition has a very narrow range of indirect acts that it can produce by being questioned or asserted; although it is a condition that applies very generally, it only produces CONSIDER suggestion indirectly. Why this should be so is not clear, but the Not Done condition is the only condition which applies equally to all impositive acts; the other conditions apply more strongly to some impositive acts than to others and can be used to perform indirectly those to which it applies most strongly. The Not Done condition follows this pattern for the performance of indirect acts, but it does not apply any more strongly to one type of act than to another.

The Not Done condition also has implications which may also be used to perform indirect suggestions:

- (119) Are you aware that Jeremiah could do it?
- (120) You don't seem to be aware of the possibility of Jeremiah's doing it.

Sentences like (119) and (120) are possible indirect suggestions based on the Not Done condition because 'not being aware' is related to 'not doing' or 'not done' by the Reason condition; that is, a possible reason for not having done an action is not being aware of the possibility of doing it. The indirect suggestions (119) and (120) also involve the Possibility condition, illustrating that indirect illocutions may be far from simple results of asserting or questioning felicity conditions.

Notice that (121) is not really a suggestion--possibly not an acceptable sentence of any kind:

- (121) ?You aren't aware of the possibility of Jeremiah's doing it.

The oddity of (121) is a result of the fact that it is very difficult (if not impossible) to know, or even think with any confidence, what another person is aware of (in ordinary circumstances). It is not as difficult to have an opinion on whether or not another person has

considered a matter since such consideration usually results in some sort of action (linguistic or otherwise), especially in a situation calling for suggestions upon or discussion of, a matter.

4.3. The Possibility condition produces the following indirect suggestions, (122)-(124), and requests, (125)-(126).

- (122) You could eat liver.
- (123) It wouldn't kill you to wash your feet.
- (124) Maybe she could take you to school.
- (125) Could we move that thing?
- (126) Is it possible to turn the radio down?

No doubt, for some speakers, the more direct assertion, It's possible for you to eat liver, which (122) is a paraphrase of, is also acceptable; in my dialect there is something strange about stating such an obvious fact in such a direct manner.

Sentence (123) is slightly more indirect than (122), but since it rests on the indisputable fact that, for most people, an action which requires relinquishing one's life is not a possible action, it is a reasonable indirect suggestion. (124) illustrates that the possibility can be asserted more than once, and that such a possibility may depend on someone's physical ability to do something. An even more exaggerated assertion would be Maybe it might just possibly be the case that she could possibly, if she were able, take you to school, which is still an indirect suggestion although it certainly gives the hearer cause to doubt that the speaker actually believes in the possibility of the action. Sentences (125) and (126) are straightforward and need no further comment.

It should be noted at this point that since all the conditions being discussed here are conditions on the speaker's beliefs, the indirect suggestion performed by asserting those beliefs can be prefaced with I believe or I think, so that such versions of (116) and (122)-(126) are also suggestions:

- (127) I think you haven't considered Jeremiah's doing it.
- (128) I don't think you've thought about Jeremiah's doing it.
- (129) I believe you could eat liver.
- (130) I don't think it would kill you to wash your feet.
- (131) I believe maybe she could take you to school.

I have used as main examples, and will continue to do so, those sentences without the I believe or I think in them because it is always assumed that, if a speaker is being sincere, he believes what he asserts, and therefore the simple sentences are more common and more natural.

Although the Possibility condition applies to all impositive acts, it is stronger on the weak end of the continuum; that is, the Possibility condition is more important for suggestions and requests.<sup>33</sup> With the exception of orders, at the strong end of the squish, just the opposite is true for the Good For condition. It applies more strongly



to recommendations than to suggestions and more strongly to suggestions than to requests. The result of this, for indirect illocutions, is that the Possibility condition is used to perform indirect requests and suggestions, but not recommendations, and the Good For condition is used to perform recommendations (and sometimes suggestions), but not requests.

4.4. The Good For condition is that the speaker believes the action is desirable or good for the hearer, although it is not always as an individual that the hearer is being thought of, but rather as a member of a group. There may be cases where the best interest of a particular individual is, in the speaker's opinion, less important than the welfare of the group; in such cases a recommendation may still be made, even though the proposed action may not be desirable for a particular member of the group. (However, even in these cases, the speaker believes the hearer will, as a member of the group, benefit in the long run.)

Some indirect recommendations, then, are:

- (132) It would be nice if you visited your mother.
- (133) He ought to learn to drive.
- (134) You should read Tolkien.
- (135) Shouldn't you try sketching first?
- (136) It wouldn't hurt to straighten up your desk  
once in a while.
- (137) Wouldn't it be better to chew tobacco?

Sentences (132)-(135) are fairly straightforward; that which is 'nice' is good for someone, and, for (133)-(135), the only link needed is the generally accepted notion that people should do good or desirable things, or that desirable things are things that people should do. Sentence (136) is more complicated, partly because it is a sarcastic recommendation, but also because of certain assumptions the speaker makes when he says (136). Since the speaker of this sarcastic recommendation believes that for the hearer to straighten up his desk once in a while is a desirable thing, and furthermore he believes (or at least is pretending to believe) that the hearer shares this belief, then there must be some reason that the hearer doesn't straighten up his desk; a candidate (deliberately unlikely, by the way, since otherwise the speaker would not be able to deny it so confidently) for such a reason is that the hearer fears he will do himself psychic or bodily harm by cleaning up his desk. The speaker doesn't think any harm will befall the hearer if he cleans up his desk and says so. The sarcasm comes from the assumption of some sort of harm as a consequence of desk-cleaning; the speaker doesn't really believe that that is the reason for hearer's slovenliness, he is just pretending to believe it in order to attribute a reason to the hearer which he (the speaker) can then dispute or deny. This complex example involves the Reason condition as well as the Good For condition.

Sentence (137) is considerably less complicated; the speaker is questioning the condition with a negative auxiliary, which implies that he believes that to chew tobacco would be better; since the related question with a positive auxiliary lacks that implication, Would it be better to chew tobacco? does not count as a recommendation;

this exemplifies the fact that the condition need not be stated, but only implied, to effect the recommendation; it is also true of (135) and other questions.

Indirect warnings are also produced by asserting the Good For condition; however, warnings are generally against particular actions, so they turn up in negative sentences more often than in positive ones.

- (138) It's not a good idea to run on lava rock.
- (139) If I were you I wouldn't do that.
- (140) I don't think you should drink that cobra venom.
- (141) It's not safe to swim here.

Example (138) is an assertion of the condition by virtue of the fact that a good idea is a paraphrase (perhaps a loose paraphrase, but a paraphrase, nevertheless) of 'something that is good for someone'. In (139) there are certain assumptions made; if an action is undesirable, the speaker would not do it--so, instead of saying it is not desirable, he says he wouldn't do it, thus affirming the consequent. Furthermore, since the hearer is the one contemplating, or about to do, the action, the speaker hypothetically puts himself in the hearer's position, thereby warning him indirectly.

The cobra venom sentence is more obvious; one should not do potentially harmful things. (141) is also straightforward--unsafe actions (in the belief of most people) are not good things to do.

This particular condition does not lend itself to questioning as a way to perform indirect warnings; the sorts of questions one would expect to be indirect warnings are:

- (142) Is it wise to feed cockroaches?
- (143) Should you grow pot in your front yard?
- (144) Would it be healthful to eat granola?

These are obviously not warnings; they are not even suggestions; they may have the perlocutionary effect of warning, but not even that is obvious. There are two possible reasons for these questions not being indirect warnings. One has to do with the syntactic form of the question, which must be that the auxiliary is positive (since the action is a negative or undesirable one); it seems that although the negative auxiliary implies the desirability of the complement (as was noted above), the positive auxiliary does not quite imply the negative; it seems, rather, to be relatively neutral in this respect. Therefore the undesirability is not implied and the warning is not produced. The other possible reason that (142)-(144) are not indirect warnings is that warnings are toward the strong end of the impositive squish. Consequently, unless a speaker is fairly secure in his belief that the action is undesirable he will not feel justified in making a warning; if the hearer is already involved in the action or obviously contemplating it, a speaker who is not secure in his belief of the undesirability of the action will become even more insecure, since the very fact that the hearer does not seem to consider it undesirable may influence his (i.e., the speaker's) views on the matter.

It is the combination of the Good For condition and the Reason condition that produces the most common form of warnings, the conditional sentence. In some cases the Good For condition is relatively explicit, e.g.:

- (145) Don't touch that, if you know what's good for you.
- (146) If you want to stay alive, tell us the secret formula.

In other cases, it is not quite so explicit, e.g.:

- (147) There's a good reason not to sell now.
- (148) You'll lose a bundle if you sell now.
- (149) If you as much as look cross-eyed, I'll punch you in the nose.
- (150) Don't move or I'll blast you.
- (151) Don't touch it or it'll sting you.

Sentence (147) is not the best warning a person could give, but that is due to the fact that if the speaker has a reason, it is more normal for him to say what that reason is rather than to simply state that there is one. However, if the hearer has sufficient confidence in the speaker's knowledge of, for example the stockmarket in (147), then such an assertion will probably serve as a warning. (148) is actually the more normal form that one would expect an indirect warning to take, i.e., the asserting of the reason for not doing the action. (149) is one of the most common ways that warnings are made, giving the reason for not doing an action in terms of a hypothetical situation; it is, of course an exaggerated warning, but such an exaggeration simply adds force to the intended effect. The warning in (150) is also a common type and, like (149), gives the reason for the hearer's not doing the specified action. The last example is similar to the previous one and simply shows that warnings of this type do not have to be threats like (149) and (150).

As in the set of warnings derived from the Good For condition, there are no warnings based on the Reason condition in the form of a question. However, there are sentences like (152),

- (152) Why sell dope?

which are not quite strong enough to be warnings, but which admonish or discourage. This is to be expected since admonish is weaker on the impositive squish than warn, and, in general, questioning is the milder form of indirect illocution and tends to be used for weaker sorts of impositive acts.

4.5. The Reason condition is asserted and questioned to perform suggestions in the following sentences:

- (153) There's no reason not to have a party.
- (154) There's nothing preventing us from making stroganoff.
- (155) I see no reason not to drink wine.
- (156) Is there any reason not to invite Yuriko?
- (157) Does anyone have anything against rehearsing now?

The first two of these indirect suggestions are plain enough. (155) uses only the additional assumption that a reason has to be known to be a reason. The question (156) is straightforward and (157) requires only that a possible reason for not rehearsing now is understood to be that someone may not want or be able to. There is a point that becomes slightly more prominent here than in previous examples, and that is that all these sentences are ambiguous; they all have literal interpretations where the speaker intends only to state a fact or request information. In cases such as (156) and (157) where the literal readings tend to overshadow the indirect illocutionary readings, the stress of the sentences plays an important part. To be a suggestions, (156) must be stressed normally, i.e., on Yuriko; if the stress is on not, for instance, the suggestion reading does not come through. Likewise, for (157); the stress must be on now, which is the essence of the suggestion; extra stress anywhere else obliterates the impositive reading.

Recommendations based on the Reason condition are:

- (158) There's at least one good reason to impeach the president.
- (159) We'll make a lot of money if we sell now.
- (160) You'll live longer if you practice yoga.
- (161) Why don't we go horseback riding?
- (162) Why not buy the Bishop Estate?

The only assumptions involved in these sentences is that at least one reason is a reason, sentence (158); making a lot of money is a good reason for doing something, (159); and living longer is a reason to do something, (160). Like the suggestions in (156) and (157), the stress in the indirect recommendations (161) and (162) affects the import of the recommendation. The normal stress of (161) is on horseback; however if it is shifted to don't the recommending force is lost and the only sense left is that of requesting information. The stress can be shifted to we and still maintain the impositive reading; the only difference is that the recommendation centers on us as opposed to some other person or people. When the stress is reduced on don't and we they can be deleted, and a sentence of the form illustrated by (162) results. (162) can have stress either on buy or Bishop Estate and still be an indirect recommendation, but if there is extra stress on why or not it must be interpreted literally.

4.6. There are rather common types of suggestions which seem to be indirect but are not derivable, in any straightforward way, from the intrinsic conditions on direct suggestions. The first of these is the Let's suggestions, such as:

- (163) Let's go to town.
- (164) Let's think about moving to California.
- (165) Let's have dinner.

Part of the problem with these suggestions is that they are, at least

to some degree, idiomatic with very curious syntactic properties.<sup>34</sup>

None of the intrinsic conditions discussed above provide a basis for the Let's suggestions; however, there may be some basis for these suggestions in the intermediate (i.e., neither purely intrinsic nor purely extrinsic) Status condition. Since the form of Let's suggestions is idiomatic, it is very difficult to see what the exact relationship between them and the Status condition is. It does seem, however, that the speaker and hearer have equal status in Let's constructions, and if the Let's idiom originated from the permission granting let, and if the underlying subject of Let's is both I and you (as Costa 1972 suggests), these facts would link up the equal status requirement and the Let's suggestions. This is all very tenuous, of course, but there is one other fact that may lend it support. Sentences like (166) and (167),

- (166) Let's go, Sheila.  
 (167) Let's get crackin', Kay.

can, for some speakers, be interpreted as not including the speaker in the action. When this is the case, the force of such impositives is much stronger than just a suggestion. It is, in fact, very like an order, made less severe (or perhaps even indirect) by using the equal status Let's.<sup>35</sup>

Another type of impositive act which does not fit neatly into the framework provided here are those beginning with How about and What about as in:

- (168) How about a drink?  
 (169) How about coming home with me?  
 (170) What about Arlene?  
 (171) What about going home?

These too are idiomatic; there is no direct, literal reading of them. Because of this idiomaticity I can only offer a suggestion as to how they might be related to the felicity conditions on impositive acts: that How about and What about forms originate from questions on the order of How do you feel about and What do you think about, whose most direct function is to elicit an opinion from the hearer. Speakers generally only elicit opinions from people they consider their equals or superiors. According to the Status condition, these How about and What about sentences, if they are to be interpreted as impositive acts, must be either suggestions or requests. And so they are: (168)-(171) are all interpreted as suggestions by some speakers, while others take (168) and (169) to be suggestions and (170) and (171) to be requests.

- (168) a. How about a drink?  
       b. That's a good idea.  
       c. OK./\*Sorry.  
 (169) a. How about coming home with me.  
       b. That's a lousy idea.  
       c. OK./?Sorry.

- (170) a. What about Arlene?  
 b. That's a possibility.  
 c. OK./Sorry.
- (171) a. What about going home?  
 b. I'll keep that in mind.  
 c. OK./Sorry.

4.7. I conclude with a brief discussion of verbs which exhibit some properties of impositive verbs, but which differ from them in fundamental ways.<sup>36</sup> The first of these 'semi-impositives' is the verb invite; invitations look very much like regular impositive acts. They can be direct:

- (172) a. I hereby invite you to my party.  
 b. You are hereby invited to my party.

They can also have the same indirect forms that requests can have, e.g.,

- (173) Can you come to my party?  
 (174) Will you come to my party?  
 (175) I'd like you to come to my party.

or even some of the suggestion forms,

- (176) How about coming to my party?  
 (177) Why don't you come to my party?  
 (178) Why not come to my party?

The request-type invitations of (173)-(175) are more normal than the suggestion-types (176)-(178) and (176) is a better invitation than (177), which in turn is slightly better than (178). Why there should be a difference among the invitations (176)-(178) is not clear, but the difference between (173)-(175) and (176)-(178) is understandable. Requests are more polite than suggestions; invitations generally are polite and therefore the requesting forms are better invitations than the suggesting forms. There is a problem here however, being polite means assuming a position inferior to that of the hearer, but at the same time, a speaker must, in order to be able to issue an invitation, be in a position higher than that of the hearer. In this way invitations are different from impositives; although it may be the case for impositive acts that the speaker is only acting as an inferior, there are no impositive acts which require that the speaker have higher status and at the same time require the speaker to act as if he had lower status.

The other major differences between invitations and impositive acts involves illocutionary point. The purpose or aim of invitations seems to be to get the hearer to do something, which is the same as the illocutionary point of impositives. There is, however, another way of looking at the purpose of invitations: what appears to be the illocutionary point is actually a purely perlocutionary effect, and the illocutionary point of invitations is actually just to give the hearer permission to do something or to make an action possible for the hearer. Whether getting someone to do something is illocutionary or purely perlocutionary is in principle easily determined. If

invitations are impositive acts, it is safe to assume they are requests; it was proposed in P. Lee (1974) that the positive responses,

- (179) OK.
- (180) Sure.
- (181) All right.

and the negative response,

- (182) Sorry.

were appropriate to illocutionary requests but not to perlocutionary requests, for which they require elaborated responses. E.g.,

- (183) OK, I'll come.
- (184) Sure, I'd like to come.
- (185) All right, I'll be there.
- (186) Sorry, I can't make it.

The problem with invitations is that, at least in my dialect, it is not obvious that the simple responses (179)-(182) are completely inappropriate, although they do seem considerably worse than the elaborated responses (183)-(186):

- (187) A. i. Can you come to my party?  
ii. I'd like you to come to my party.
- (188) B. i. ?\*OK.  
ii. ?Sure.  
iii. ?\*All right.  
iv. ?Sorry.
- (189) B. i. OK, I'll come.  
ii. Sure, I'd like to come.  
iii. All right, I'll be there.  
iv. Sorry, I can't make it.

I have called invitations semi-impositives because their status condition works differently than that of any impositive act and their illocutionary point, though similar, is not indisputably the same as that of impositive acts. There are semi-impositive acts which appear to be special types of invitations and differ from impositives in even more interesting ways.

These acts I will refer to as challenges; they are performed and/or described by the verbs dare, defy and challenge and are exemplified in:

- (190) I dare you to cross that line.
- (191) I defy you to say that again.
- (192) I hereby challenge you to { defend that claim.  
a dual at sunrise. }

Challenges are invitations in that they invite (or make it possible for) the hearer to do some action. However, challenges differ from

normal invitations in the application of felicity conditions. The status condition is the same as for invitations (that is, the speaker has higher status than the hearer) but one of the ultimate results the speaker of a challenge hopes to produce is to conclusively determine his superior status.

Another felicity condition that holds for impositives does not hold for challenges, namely, the Good For condition. A speaker uttering a challenge does not believe that the hearer's taking up the challenge will benefit him (the hearer); in fact, he believes quite the opposite and is trying to get the hearer to engage in an activity that will be harmful to him.

The Possibility condition is an interesting one for challenges. It seems to hold for them as (193) shows:

- (193) If/Since you think you can climb the tree,  
 I { dare  
     defy  
     challenge } you to do it.

However, a common form of indirect challenges is based on the negation or denial of this condition, e.g.,

- (194) You can't climb that tree.  
 (195) You can't catch me.

Notice that the hearer may respond to (194) or (195) with either of the following two remarks:

- (196) Is that a challenge?  
 (197) That sounds like a dare to me.

This is the first instance we have seen of the denial of a felicity condition being used to perform an indirect illocutionary act. A closer look at negative illocutionary verbs is needed to see how general this phenomenon is.

The denial of the possibility condition as an indirect challenge is also exhibited in certain uses of the verbs bet and wager. When these verbs are used to express the speaker's belief that the hearer is incapable of performing a particular action, the resulting assertions are illocutionary challenges. E.g.,

- (198) I bet you can't catch me.  
 (199) I wager you aren't able to do it.

This illustrates another new aspect of indirect illocutionary acts: the existence of specific verbs that can be used to perform only indirect illocutions. Bet and wager do not count as challenges (although they are, of course, used as direct bets), as the unacceptability of (200) and (201) show,

- (200) \*I bet you to climb that tree.  
 (201) \*I wager that you catch me.

(The asterisks here refer only to the challenge reading; with that-



clauses both verbs are acceptable but must be interpreted as bets, in which case the speaker does believe that hearer can do the specified action.)

Negative bets without the modal of possibility can are ambiguous as between bets and challenges, though the literal (bet) reading is stronger:

(202) I bet you don't climb that tree.

(203) I wager that you don't catch me.

This discussion has only touched upon the possibilities involved in related illocutionary act types (impositives and invitations), denial of felicity conditions, and indirect illocutionary verbs. A more comprehensive analysis must await further investigation.

There is one last semi-impositive I would like to mention. The verb threaten describes both linguistic and non-linguistic acts; it is related to the impositive warn in that a threat can be a specific kind of warning--namely, one in which the speaker intends to produce the undesirable effect being warned against.

However, threats can be used to inform the hearer of the speaker's intention to harm him. Threats only seem impositive when the hearer is offered a choice: either do the specified action or suffer the consequences. The following threats do not have impositive force.

(204) I'm going to take your teddy bear away.

(205) No matter what you do, you can't stop me; I'm going to cut your hair.

Illocutionarily, threats are commissives; causing people to do things is a perlocutionary effect of threats which can be either intentional or unintentional.<sup>37</sup> In this regard threats are very much like contingent promises which also have the perlocutionary effect of getting the hearer to do something. Thus the difference between the two is neither illocutionary or perlocutionary. The sentences below are threats if the intention of the speaker is to do something which is not good for the hearer, and they are promises if it is something that is good for the hearer.

(206) Cook dinner, and I'll help you with your project.

(207) If you cook dinner, I'll help you with your project.

The two interpretations of (206) and (207) depend entirely on the Good For condition;<sup>38</sup> the relationship between threats and promises is similar to many different types of impositive acts which have the same illocutionary point but different felicity conditions.

The discussion presented here of semi-impositives is meant only as an indication that there are related speech act types and that such relations can be described in terms of illocutionary point, perlocutionary effect, and felicity conditions. Further such analyses of other types of speech acts should provide us with much valuable information on the nature of illocutionary acts.

## Footnotes

\*This is a revision of Chapters III-VI of my OSU Ph.D. dissertation (March 1974).

<sup>1</sup>In How to Do Things with Words, J. L. Austin offers the first recent taxonomy of speech acts, his classification includes verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives.

<sup>2</sup>Zeno Vendler in Res Cogitans redefines Austin's classes and adds two more, operatives and interrogatives.

<sup>3</sup>At least they are not direct attempts to get people to do things; they may function as indirect illocutionary illocutionary impositive acts, but that is a different matter (see Lee 1974b: Ch. 5).

<sup>4</sup>R. Lakoff (1972) has suggested that a pragmatic analysis is possible and that certain pragmatic features have syntactic consequences. However, it is not clear that these features are purely pragmatic, i.e., are not semantic features with closely related pragmatic features.

<sup>5</sup>By illocutionary point Searle means, at least roughly, the purpose, intention or aim of the act. In the same 1973 paper Searle provides a taxonomy of speech acts consisting of reprpresentatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Impositives are Searle's directives.

<sup>6</sup>The term 'semantic structure' is used throughout this paper rather presumptuously; there are no doubt deeper semantic representations for the structures presented here.

<sup>7</sup>R. Lakoff (1968) in discussing abstract performative verbs in Latin syntax uses IMPER for commands only and suggests that there are other such verbs for other types of impositive acts. Sadock (1971a) uses IMPERE in an underlying structure (p. 223), but gives no explanation of what he means by it.

<sup>8</sup>The verbs suggest, recommend, and advise are, for some speakers, ambiguous as between a suggestion and a recommendation; see section 2.5 for more on this.

<sup>9</sup>This proposal, in general, is the same as R. Lakoff's (1968) who advocated several different abstract performative verbs, each representing only surface verbs which are synonymous. Each of her abstract performative structures are differentiated by undergoing only certain transformational rules.

<sup>10</sup>Performative Deletion was proposed by Ross (1970a, 1970b) and, although there are some problems with its exact formulation and application (see Anderson (1971) and Fraser (1971) for criticism of the performative analysis), the general idea is sound. All types of

impositive acts can be formed via this rule: it applies after Equi-NP Deletion for orders (accounting for the imperative sentence type in Go home!) and before Subject-Verb Inversion for requests (Will you go home?).

<sup>11</sup>Several linguists have discussed this particular sort of ambiguity; G. Lee (1971) argues that the connection-of-ideas sense derives from a structure involving CAUSE (SEEM) whereas the agentive sense derives from an underlying agent. Zwicky and Zwicky (1973) suggest that the ambiguity stems from an underlying REASON which divides into CAUSE (for non-agentives) and PURPOSE (for agentives).

<sup>12</sup>The term 'pro-agentive' was introduced by G. Lee (1971) and refers to contexts in which agents may occur; the opposite term 'anti-agentive' describes contexts in which agents may not occur. Lee distinguishes pro-agentive contexts from the broader class of non-stative verbs proposed by G. Lakoff (1966); the following are pro-agentive contexts; in imperative sentence form; with a manner adverb typically referring to human attributes (e.g., cleverly, stupidly, intentionally); and as complement of the verb persuade. In contrast, a test such as whether or not a verb can occur in the progressive says nothing about agentivity, but only whether that verb is stative or non-stative.

<sup>13</sup>Notice that the relationship between the two verbs is such that suggest<sub>3</sub> implies suggest<sub>2</sub>, but not vice versa; a sentence such as (i) is contradictory for all speakers:

- (i) She suggested<sub>3</sub> that Harbird was guilty (by saying "I suggest Harbird did it.") without actually suggesting<sub>2</sub> it.

It is because suggest<sub>3</sub> implies suggest<sub>2</sub> that G. Lakoff's (1970) test for showing ambiguity does not work:

- (ii) She suggested that Harbird was guilty and so did he.

This line of argument was originally presented in Zwicky and Sadock (1975).

<sup>14</sup>It may also be that the same speaker would accept (31)-(34) but not (38) simply because of the phonological identity of the two suggests in (38).

<sup>15</sup>See Morgan (1973) for an extremely interesting account of sentence fragments.

<sup>16</sup>See G. Lee (1971) and Dowty (1972) for a discussion of the role DO plays in the semantic configurations of activities and agentive predicates.

<sup>17</sup>There are speakers for whom (60) has a non-factive reading (in addition to the factive one); for those speakers sentence (60) is acceptable and means the same as (62).

<sup>18</sup>It is possible that (61) is an indirect suggestion based on a felicity condition involving the notion of considering; this and other problems with the CONSIDER analysis will be discussed in section 2.6.

<sup>19</sup>This was suggested or recommended to me by Gregory Lee.

<sup>20</sup>Recommendations and suggestions are beginning to look very indiscrete, especially with respect to the Good For condition.

<sup>21</sup>More will be said about this kind of illocution in the next section.

<sup>22</sup>The almost argument is attributed to Jerry Morgan by McCawley (1968); the again argument is simply a logical extension of the almost argument.

<sup>23</sup>This argument is due to G. Lakoff (1970b).

<sup>24</sup>An important non-essential condition of some impositive acts is that the speaker believe that the proposed action is one which is desirable to, or good for, the hearer or some concerned party. This is related to the essential condition of speaker desire in that it may provide a reason for the speaker's desiring to perform the act.

<sup>25</sup>See Heringer (1972), Chapter three, for more general conditions on a wider variety of speech acts, which account for some indirect impositive acts such as, May I suggest you get ready and I would like to suggest that we leave now.

<sup>26</sup>The status condition cannot be said to be strictly intrinsic or strictly extrinsic because it depends on the speaker and hearer sharing the belief that a particular status relation obtains.

<sup>27</sup>The term 'squish' is due to Ross (1972), who defines it as a quasi-continuum of linguistic elements. A later definition (Ross 1973: 98) is: 'the matrix formed when two hierarchies interact to mutually define each other'.

<sup>28</sup>Note that whether the notion of considering is represented as a semantic CONSIDER or as a felicity condition, it still falls under the domain of this condition, since in either case it is an act involved in the performance of an impositive act.

<sup>29</sup>It was pointed out to me by Richard Garner that this appears to violate the illocutionary point of impositive acts. However, that is only true if what the speaker is attempting to get the hearer to do is to complete the specified action. For these cases, it appears that the speaker is only trying to get the hearer to attempt to do the specified action. In this regard these acts are similar to the semi-impositive acts of challenging discussed in Lee (1974b: section 6.7.)

<sup>30</sup>A broader view of this condition is expressed in Searle's property six, which says that an act may differ in whether the proposition is in the interest of the speaker, hearer, both or neither. For impositive acts only the interest of the hearer is important.

<sup>31</sup>Apparently, for some speakers there is an acceptable sarcastic reading of (108). It was suggested to me by Gregory Lee that such a reading is possible, especially if the adverb naturally is inserted before recommend.

<sup>32</sup>There is also the factor of the extra-linguistic environment in which the act is performed affecting style; nominations and motions are the formal equivalent of suggestions.

<sup>33</sup>One way of looking at this difference is that for the weaker impositives the speaker is relatively neutral toward the possibility of the action, but for orders the speaker believes strongly that the action is either possible or not (cf. note 29).

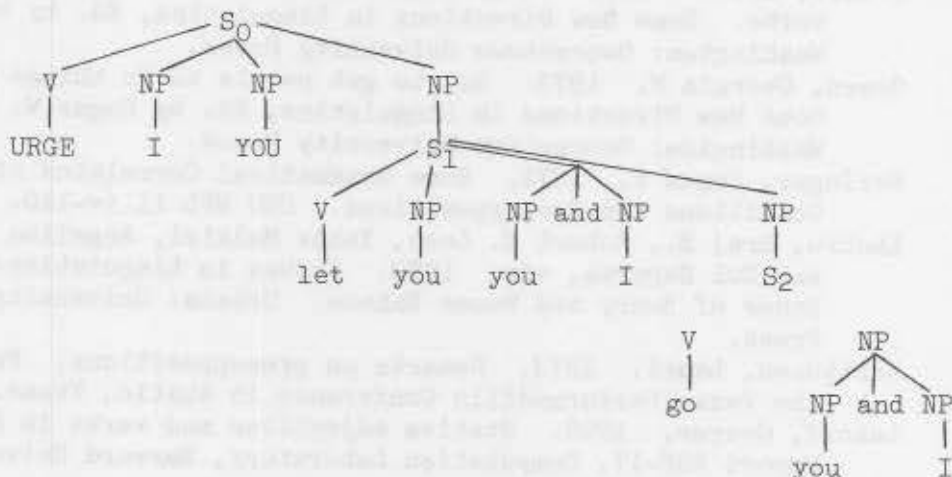
<sup>34</sup>Newmeyer (1971) points out that if Let's suggestions are assumed to have the underlying structure: [We let we [we eat]] certain tags are easily accounted for:

- (i) Let's eat, shall we?
- (ii) Let's eat, why don't we?

However, he notes, such an underlying structure would predict (iii) instead of (iv).

- (iii) \*Let ourselves eat!
- (iv) Let us eat!

Costa (1972) proposes that Let's suggestions are 'true imperatives' with an underlying structure like:



<sup>35</sup>It was pointed out to me by Arnold Zwicky that some speakers have the compound suggestions:

- (i) { <sup>How about</sup> } let's do that!  
       { <sup>Don't</sup> }

<sup>36</sup>This discussion of kinds of invitations owes much to suggestions from Gregory Lee.

<sup>37</sup>This view is opposed to the one that Sadock (1974) takes; he claims that threats and warnings constitute a distinct illocutionary type.

<sup>38</sup>R. Lakoff (1969) discusses a consequence of this difference in application of the Good For condition. Where contingent promises normally have some, threats have any, e.g.,

- (i) If you eat { <sup>some</sup> } candy, I'll give you ten dollars.  
       { \*any }
- (ii) If you eat { <sup>\*some</sup> } candy, I'll whip you.  
       { any }

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