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A Discourse Analysis of Cheers

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A Discourse Analysis of *Cheers*

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Dedicated to Lijuan Wang,

who showed me the value of sitcoms to learning a second language,

and without whose support I would have never finished this project.

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the pragmatics features of the language in an episode of the sitcom *Cheers* to find out what second language learners need to know about the language of the sitcom and about the background knowledge informing it for that episode to be understandable to them and for it thus to be an effective as an instruction tool. To answer this question, the researcher transcribed the speech in the episode and used a speech act theory-based approach to identify and categorize deixis, locutionary forms, illocutionary types, and instances of reduction and types of indirect speech. Categories in these areas were compared for their relative prevalence and for the prevalence of correlations between them. The paper concludes that the researcher's speech act theoretical approach was useful in identifying over a third of the indirect speech in the episode of *Cheers* in the form of non-standard alignments between locutionary form and illocutionary type.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Two aliens walk into a bar in Boston, Massachusetts. At the bar, English is the common language of the employees and clientele, and they speak Standard American English, though many with a noticeable Bostonian accent. The aliens intend to communicate with the customers and staff at the bar; they intend to do so in English using *only* their knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of English. The question is: Are the aliens adequately equipped to communicate? The answer is no. As Chaika (2008) explains, "Simply knowing the language is not sufficient, for the true meaning often lies not in the actual words uttered but in a complex of social knowledge" (p. 276). That knowledge is as necessary at the bar as it is any other social setting. Knowing only the words and grammatical rules of English, the aliens are ignorant of pragmatics. The aliens will fail for an additional reason: the bar they are going to is one where ignorance of the unspoken assumptions of society will render them especially lost, for that bar is Cheers—the fictional (in 1982) namesake of the TV series *Cheers*.

Herein lies my aliens' problem: their knowledge lies in the domains of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, but these are not enough to survive at the bar called Cheers, nor in broader English discourse. This "alien" experience need not refer to aliens who would hypothetically be from outer space. Many non-native speakers of English (NNSEs) in the US or in other English-speaking countries find themselves in a position in which their knowledge of their second language is limited to that with which an incomplete English education has

equipped them—an education consisting primarily of knowledge of grammatical standards of English as shown in textbooks and of vocabulary as defined in dictionaries.

What Is Pragmatics?

Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is an important part of learning a language, but if an ESL education leaves everything else out, then the gaps will be too great to make much sense of natural English discourse. That "everything else" is what linguists mean when they talk about pragmatics. As Washburn (2001) characterizes the distinction, "learning a language means learning not only the vocabulary, grammar, and sounds of the language, but also *how to use the language appropriately in different situations, depending on such factors as the relationship between the speakers, the setting, and the context of the situation*" [emphasis added] (p. 21). Those situational appropriate uses define the domain of pragmatics.

Bolchover (2012), Marra (2012), Timpe-Laughlin and Choi (2017), Oliveri and Tannenbaum (2019), and Takuchi (2020) show how English language proficiency correlates to professional success in an increasingly globalized business world, emphasizing especially the role of pragmatics. Imagine a student of English who misunderstands their boss's joke, fails to appropriately laugh, or fails to respond with an apology, a thank you, or congratulations where it would have been appropriate. These missed opportunities would place the non-native English-speaking individual at a social and professional disadvantage. One needs to express one's opinions at the workplace to clients, peers, and bosses; if there is a deficiency in pragmatics, opinions may come across as too overt or harsh or may be misunderstood altogether. In such situations, higher competency with pragmatics offers an opportunity to strengthen a social or professional relationship.

The Problem

A problem for much education in the English language available to students who speak other languages is that the focus is too much on vocabulary and grammar and not enough on how to use English in different situations appropriate to the relationships, settings, and other contextual specifics. Such knowledge is hard to acquire, given obstacles in education that stand in the way. For one thing, non-native speakers are unlikely to encounter this knowledge in their books or classrooms; for another, where NNSEs do encounter authentic language use in the real world, it is typically in a form that is hard to comprehend; further, native speakers of English are unlikely to be helpful in explaining it because they tend to be unaware of the nature of their own pragmatics, and they either respond to NNSEs' violations in ways that are unhelpful altogether or they pretend they don't notice those violations at all (Washburn, 2001). But lack of English pragmatics knowledge is likely to be a stumbling block for a non-native speaker, both socially and professionally. There is thus a strong need for ESL instruction to address this deficit. But where can we find the materials to do so?

The default answer is usually to find a suitable textbook that can effectively represent the pragmatics of English. But many researchers have found that textbooks are of limited use to students of English as a second language in the realm of pragmatics (d'Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999; Nguyen, 2011; Vellenga, 2004). It would make sense if these texts are incapable of serving such a role; pragmatics is by definition richly context-dependent and constantly shifting, whereas textbooks represent language as context-independent or as abstracted from real-life scenarios. The main argument against these textbooks is that they do not represent authentic natural oral English, at least not usually and not very well (Vellenga, 2004; Washburn, 2001). Another argument comes from the importance of skills other than reading. Research has repeatedly

demonstrated the importance of listening comprehension (Dunkel, 1986). Textbooks run into an inevitable shortcoming in this area; they are pieces of written text, not intended for use in improving listening comprehension.

The problem cannot be solved by replacing textbooks with other types of books, such as works of fiction, biographies, and so on. Dialogue contained in such texts may be more "authentic" than textbooks as a representation of natural English conversation, depending on one's definition of authenticity and depending on the quality of dialogue within such works. But as mentioned above, instruction needs to address the importance of listening comprehension, and a novel or memoir would be no more helpful in this pursuit than a textbook. Thus, the search for authentic materials must continue, and it must go beyond books.

In such a search, it would be useful to have a definition of authenticity. As Rings (1986) writes, what we need is not a definition of authenticity itself, which she calls an "elusive concept," but rather a definition of authentic conversation (p. 206). By Ring's definition, the most authentic representation of English conversation imaginable would "occur between native speakers of the target language, were there not tape recorders or researchers/linguists/teachers present" (p. 206). One is tempted to imagine a hidden microphone that could capture private conversations without native speakers' knowledge; the recorded audio could then be delivered directly to ESL classrooms, ensuring study materials' maximum authenticity. In the US, this would be illegal, and there may be ethical reasons not to pursue this possibility.

Private conversations being unavailable to the public, the question becomes: what is the next best thing? Rings considers a wide range of deviations from the ideal, including excerpts, reenactments, adaptations, and so on, going so far as to offer a ranking of types of conversational texts according to her own opinion of what is most authentic. According to Rings's (1986)

ranking, "simulated roleplay by native speakers" ranks third, and "plays written by a genius in language use and acted out by good actors / actresses" rank fourth (p. 207).

Rings's list offers a helpful starting point in the search for authentic materials; however, Al-Surmi (2012) casts doubt on the objectivity of Ring's rankings and argues that a more objective empirical tool is needed to gauge the naturalness of a text; Al-Surmi suggests multi-dimensional analysis is such a tool. Al-Surmi (2012) compares sitcoms and soap operas for the frequency of a wide range of the linguistic features of natural English conversation, adapting Biber and Conrad's 2001 approach to multi-dimensional analysis for his study of the linguistic features found in a corpus of soap operas and finding that sitcoms accurately represent those features to a greater extent than soap operas. Yet another possibility would be to use full feature films as instructional materials. Martínez-Flor (2007) concludes in her analysis of request modification devices in films that "the use of films is a good source of material for exposing learners to authentic samples of appropriate pragmatic input in a variety of contexts, as well as preparing them for communication in different cultural settings" (p. 276). Though they may offer a great deal in the way of authentic conversation, films lie outside the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, we find an unexpected source of authentic conversation in the English language situation comedy. As Washburn (2001) argues, "sitcoms provide the best conditions for pragmatic language learning and the best teaching materials," for reasons including that they have high availability (e.g., online streaming); low stress (improving focus on learning); the ability to be paused, backed up, and rewatched; the rich contexts needed for pragmatics to be used meaningfully (characters, motivations, relationships); as well as tones of voice, facial expressions, gestures, etc., further supporting understanding (p. 22).

What Is Situational Comedy?

In many countries in which English is studied, learners enjoy watching English language situation comedies, as some studies have implied without explicitly claiming such (Rings, 1984; Peters & Webb, 2018; Dizon, 2020). A situation comedy is a subgenre which exists within the genre of comedy. According to the *Dictionary of Media and Communications*, comedy is a "form of drama or entertainment that deals with humorous or ridiculous aspects of human behavior" (Danesi, 2009, p. 66). A TV series can be a comedy, but so can a play, a movie, or a piece of literature. On the other hand, a situation comedy or sitcom is a "genre based on social situations with which audiences can easily identify, broadcast on a recurring basis. … It uses stock characters and recurring situations to explore life in the home, the workplace [etc.] in a funny, often satirical way" (Danesi, 2009, p. 271). Therefore, a situation comedy is a type of comedy that is broadcast specifically on television. It should be noted that this definition needs to be expanded to remain relevant today, as most such programs are not exclusively broadcast, or may not even be broadcast at all, but are made available online through subscription services, often exclusively. Moreover, a comedy that is simply broadcast on television need not be a sitcom. A TV comedy in which a different set of characters appear in each episode or in which there is no stable setting from one episode to the next (such as *America's Funniest Home Videos*) would not be a sitcom; a sitcom must have a "recurring situation" including recurring characters and a recurring physical setting. Of particular interest to my analysis is the characteristic of the sitcom quoted above as being "based on social situations." It is this feature which suggests that sitcoms may be the type of TV program most suitable as an instructional tool in learning English pragmatics.

These television programs are a form of recreation, not needing further justification. On the other hand, learners of English as a second language have suggested that watching these sitcoms is beneficial to them in their acquisition of English, particularly with respect to listening comprehension. I found some support for this claim in personal, anecdotal reports. L. Wang, a native speaker of Mandarin, described her experiences with sitcoms such as *Friends, Big Bang Theory,* and *Two Broke Girls*:

> I watched the English language sitcoms not just for fun, but also for practicing my listening and speaking. I think it's helpful to improve my English studying. Before I started to watch the sitcoms, my purpose was to help me learn English, then I found out it's also fun. The sitcoms helped me learn a lot of oral English that I couldn't have learned from a textbook or English class. (Personal communication, 2022)

M. Imtiaz, a native speaker of Urdu, wrote of her experience with the British sitcom *Mr. Bean*:

> "I watched Mr. Bean with my cousins when I was a college student and we considered we would learn English by watching English series. We started to watch Mr. Bean to learn English but later we watched for fun and laughed together. It helped me learn gestures and expressions, and I found that native English speakers talk with expressions" (personal communication, 2022).

Imtiaz further adds that she encourages her children to watch American TV series, including the drama *Stranger Things*, to give them exposure to American English accents and to encourage vocabulary development (personal communication, 2022).

K. Kim, a native speaker of Korean, wrote of her experience with such sitcoms as *How I Met Your Mother* that "I watched for fun and for improving my English as well. … Sometimes

there are these moments: 'Oh, that is a good expression I can use later'" (personal

communication, 2022).

H. Qarini, a native speaker of Arabic, writes of her experiences watching the American

TV sitcoms *Seinfeld* and *The King of Queens* and additionally of experiences with American

superhero films in the Marvel Studios media franchise:

> "I mostly watched them for fun, but I also learned some English from them too. It is
>
> easier to learn English while watching. I am a visual learner, and some words are hard to
>
> understand from a written text but easier to understand on a T.V. screen" (personal
>
> communication, 2022).

On the other hand, J. Vazquez Juarez described his preference for forms of TV and film

other than sitcoms. In his limited experiences with sitcoms, Vazquez Juarez described himself as

having "a hard time understanding the humor of this type of series;" rather, he preferred "action

and adventure movies in English," explaining that the latter "are very funny, and they make me

work hard to practice my English" (personal communication, 2022). Additionally, Vazquez

Juarez wrote,

> "I like to watch series in English and with English subtitles such as *Breaking Bad*,
>
> *Stranger Things*, and TV channels like *The History Channel* or news. This is because I
>
> find them very interesting and they call my attention a lot, and I can be focused on the
>
> whole show" (personal communication, 2022).

It is one thing to use a sitcom as part of one's informal English self-education, but it is

another thing to ask: Are these sitcoms appropriate for use as instructional tools in ESL? If they

are to be judged appropriate for such purposes, the dialogue in them must accurately represent

natural oral English discourse. To determine whether linguistic features of a sitcom's dialogue

represent natural English conversation, it is necessary to find out what linguistic features are, and to that end, it is useful to make a discourse analysis of a sitcom episode's dialogue. Curzan & Adams (2006) define discourse as "connected text […] above the level of the sentence" (p. 243)—that is, constituted of more than a single sentence. Thus, a single question taken with its answer would border on the small end of discourse. A speech, an essay, a play, and a novel would be examples of larger units of discourse. An episode of a sitcom is a text—a piece of discourse—to the extent that it is composed of multiple lines of dialogue.

I focused on the following questions for research: Who are the speakers in my chosen sitcom episode, what lines of dialogue do they utter, and to whom are those utterances addressed? What types of deictic expressions are used most often, and to what types of things do those expressions refer? What types of speech acts are performed, and for what purposes? How much of the speech in the episode is direct or indirect? Most importantly, if it is to be viewed by NNSEs, what information would such viewers need to know in order to understand the dialogue? What areas of background knowledge (such as popular American culture, use of slang words, and so on) or what clues from the context (such as the implied circumstances of characters in the episode) are needed for comprehending the meanings of utterances? Finally, is the use of sitcoms in second language English instruction to be recommended or discouraged? If it is to be recommended, then which conclusions of this research will be useful in determining how best to use the sitcom as an instructional tool?

My research will consider a single episode of *Cheers*, namely the pilot episode which originally aired in 1982. I chose this episode because it was the pilot of *Cheers,* promising the clear best choice for an introduction to the series. I chose the series *Cheers* because I knew nothing about it except that it was a famous American sitcom; I believed it therefore to be a

plausible candidate for English learners' choice as an English language study material and as good a representation of American culture as any other American sitcom. I did not choose, for instance, *Seinfeld* or *Friends*, because I was already familiar with those sitcoms, and felt that I could not readily analyze them with the same level of objectivity. My motivation for studying sitcoms comes from my own personal interest in using sitcoms of my second language as an engaging way of studying my second language (though I have not done so) as well as my awareness that many of my students and friends of first languages other than English have noted their use of English language sitcoms for similar purposes. I wanted to gain insight into the possible advantages, if any, of recommending my students or friends to seek out sitcoms as a tool for improving knowledge of English pragmatics, and perhaps even the possible advantages of using a sitcom as an ESL instructional tool.

Overview

In Chapter 2, "Methods," I explain what it means that I am making a discourse analysis of a TV episode, specifically one that takes a speech act theoretical approach to analysis. In Chapter 3, "Results," I summarize my findings about the dialogue in the episode including on the identification of its speakers and their addressees; on its settings within the episode; on the occurrence of various deictic expressions and on contextual information required for understanding them; its references to itself in the form of dialogue referring to other dialogue within the episode, its locutionary types (statements, questions, commands) and their relative frequencies; its illocutionary types (according to John Searle's (1976) taxonomy of representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations) and their relative frequencies; the perlocutionary intents of its speakers (that is, of the fictional characters, not of the actors or screenwriters), and its explicit references or veiled allusions to American cultural

information which would not necessarily be available to a multilingual viewership. I hope that

Chapter 4, "Discussion" will be useful to instructors who are considering using this episode, or a

similar episode from the same or a similar sitcom, either as an instructional tool or as

recommended viewing for students of English who speak other languages; it is a discussion of

the implications of my results for instruction and for a multilingual viewership. Chapter 5,

"Conclusion," summarizes my findings and offers recommendations for future research.

Synopsis of the *Cheers* Pilot Episode

For readers unfamiliar with the *Cheers* episode "Give Me a Ring Sometime" or

unfamiliar with the sitcom *Cheers* generally, a brief synopsis is in order. The entire episode takes

place at a bar, located in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. A "bar," in the sense of the word that

defines the setting of this series, is an establishment that serves alcoholic beverages. The fictional

(in 1982) bar called "Cheers" is one such establishment. The name "Cheers" presumably comes

from the expression "cheers" which is used in American English as a drinking toast. The bar

Cheers which is the setting of the show consists of a large interior space with many tables for

guests and a long serving counter (confusingly, also called a "bar") which is located at the center

of the main room, serving as a buffer between the alcohol supply and the would-be customers.

Sam is the owner and chief bartender of Cheers. Sam's employees at the beginning of the

episode include Coach, who also bartends, and Carla, who takes orders and serves to tables.

The main events of the plot unfold on a single day in 1982, except for the final scene,

which takes place between one week later or less. An engaged couple enters the bar: Sumner, a

professor of literature, and Diane, a teaching assistant and student of literature. We learn that the

couple has been engaged just today, but they plan to fly to Barbados the same day and get

married the following day. Sumner insists that Diane accept his offer of an antique gold wedding

ring which he inherited from his grandmother but which is currently on the finger of his ex-wife,
Barbara. Sumner calls Barbara on the phone and then leaves Diane waiting at Cheers, promising
to return soon with the ring; however, Sumner's return is delayed, and when he returns, he
confesses that meeting with his ex-wife has rekindled old love, and that he feels conflicted about
marrying Diane. He calls Barbara again, leaves Diane waiting at Cheers, and promises to return
in time to accompany Diane to the airport. Sumner does not return, and when Diane calls the
airline to change her and Sumner's tickets, she learns that "Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane" have
already boarded the flight to Barbados, revealing that Sumner has abandoned Diane to be with
his ex-wife. Sam comforts Diane and offers her a job at the bar. One week later, we see Diane as
a new server at Cheers, getting ready to serve her first customers. Thus "give me a ring
sometime," which usually means "give me a phone call," has an unexpected, double meaning
here, suggesting a wedding ring of the sort which Sumner infelicitously promises to give to
Diane.

Chapter 2: Methods

Various approaches to discourse analysis of a sitcom episode are possible. One possible approach to discourse analysis is that of conversational analysis. Conversational analysis focuses on structural features that are characteristic of conversations, such as adjacency pairs, speaker selection, topic selection, turn-taking practices, and so forth (Wang & Waring, 2012). Consider adjacency pairs, for instance: which types of pairs occur more or less frequently in natural conversation? Are these relative frequencies reflected in the dialogue of sitcoms, or to what extent are they different? One might conceivably find that the incidence of the adjacency pair *joke - laughter* is far more frequent in a sitcom than in natural conversation. If so, this might be a disadvantage for the use of sitcoms as instructional tools; such texts would be a poor reflection of natural English discourse with respect to the frequency of certain adjacency pairs. On the other hand, such a judgment assumes that priorities for instruction should be determined by what occurs most frequently in natural English conversation. But one need not assume such. There may be other reasons for a given type of adjacency pair to form the object of ESL instruction. One might argue for instance that a particular type of adjacency pair is important, even if it is not encountered as frequently.

Though such a conversational analysis promises to be informative and useful to second language pedagogy, there are problems with a conversational analysis of such texts. One problem is that not all dialogue in a sitcom is necessarily conversation, and what does not fall

under conversation must be excluded from such an analysis. Conversation is not any oral

dialogue between speakers; it has a narrower definition. Consider the cold open sequence from

the *Cheers* pilot episode, "Give me a ring sometime." This one-minute dialogue takes place

between Sam, a bartender, and a boy who enters the bar seeking to buy a beer but who is

obviously too young. The boy orders a drink, Sam asks to see the boy's ID, the boy provides a

fake ID, and Sam denies him the beer. There is much that is of linguistic interest in this exchange,

but it is not conversation. Conversation is informal. The dialogue between Sam and the boy is

not informal. Sam is not speaking to the boy as an equal; he is speaking in his capacity as the

holder of a liquor license, or as a representative of a business. In the real world, bartenders

frequently have such exchanges with would-be clients; these exchanges are not conversation,

either. On the other hand, much of the dialogue in the same episode of *Cheers* does qualify as

conversation, including between Sam and his clients. Consider a conversation between Sam and

Diane in which they are arguing about whether Sumner is a worthy groom for Diane. This is a

conversation, because Sam and Diane are speaking not as bartender and client but, at least for the

purpose of that verbal exchange, as equals. Not all dialogue between these two characters is

conversation; Sam later hires Diane as an employee and much of their ensuing dialogue is

necessarily institutional talk, but not all of it is, and it is not always self-evident whether a given

exchange constitutes conversation or does not. A conversational analysis of the *Cheers* pilot

would be possible, though it would need a means of separating conversation proper from other

discourse found in the episode. I do not propose a criterion for doing so here.

      Rather than a conversation analysis approach to discourse analysis, I analyze the

discourse from a speech act theory perspective. Speech act theory begins with the work of Austin

(1962) in *How to Do Things with Words*. Speech act theory is roughly the idea that speech is an

act. The utterances that make up natural oral discourse are types of acts that individual speakers perform. As the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2020) clarifies, "Whereas an act of speech is any act of uttering meaningful words, … speech acts are those acts that can (though need not) be performed by saying that one is doing so" (paragraph 5). That is, to state that X, to ask whether X, and to command that X are all ways to perform a speech act, even when not phrased explicitly as "I believe that X" or "Is X the case?" or "I command that X," insofar as they are used in a way synonymous with such manners of speaking. Following Austin's death, John Searle (1964, 1976) continued to develop speech act theory. Austin shows that a speech act as comprised of multiple acts all in the business of contributing different aspects to speech production overall. Two of those types of acts are what Austin calls the locutionary and illocutionary acts. Locutionary acts are the physical acts that hearers hear when a speaker speaks. Illocutionary acts are how the speaker intends to use the utterance in a context. For NNSEs, the challenge of English pragmatics is that there is often a gap between what an utterance seems to mean on the surface (the locutionary act) and the speaker's communicative intention for the utterance (the illocutionary act).

After selecting a theoretical approach for the task, the work of data collection of the pilot episode of *Cheers* began with the episode's script and its performance. First, I transcribed dialogue of the entire 30-minute episode into a spreadsheet, assigning line numbers in the written transcript, noting the timestamp of the audio-visual text, identifying the character making an utterance as speaker, the character(s) targeted as hearers as addressees, and the words spoken as the utterance. Next, I prepared columns for the later analysis of each utterance: its sentence type, its locutionary type, and its illocutionary type. I also added columns for the analysis of deictic language use as well as key cultural features. An example of data for one utterance is shown in

Table 1 to illustrate my methods and lend relevance to the sections on speech act theoretical

method.

Table 1

Sample Entry from Transcript

Line	Timestamp	Speaker	Utterance	Addressee (evidence)	Deictic expressions	Deictic categories
29	2:59	SUMNER	Diane, if we're going to be married, I insist you have my grandmother's antique gold wedding ring.	DIANE (addressed by name)	we; I; you; my	personal; personal; personal; personal

Referents of deictic words	Locutionary type	Sentence type	Illocutionary type	Slang words	References to culture, history, etc.
SUMNER & DIANE; SUMNER; DIANE; SUMNER's	Statement	Unreduced complex sentence	Representative	—	Engagement traditions; status symbols

Note. A line of dialogue delivered by SUMNER three minutes into the episode has been used in

this example. All data columns are shown with actual data entered for each variable analyzed.

Classification of Locutionary Acts

One task for this discourse analysis was to identify the locutionary and illocutionary

types of utterances in *Cheers* and to find and compare correlations. The notion of the locutionary

act in speech act theory has its origins in Austin's (1962) seminal work, *How to Do Things with

Words*. The locutionary act is presented as a component of a speech act that results in an

utterance having a set of external features, such as being composed of a set of words uttered in a

grammatically structured way, independent from the speaker's point or purpose in uttering it. As

he writes,

to say something is … to do something—which includes the utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain "meaning" …, i.e., with a certain sense and with a certain reference. The act of "saying something" … I call, i.e. dub, the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances thus far and in these respects [I call] the study of locutions, or of the full units of speech. (p. 94)

The locutionary act stands in contrast to the illocutionary act, which concerns a speaker's communicative intentions behind the locutionary act and the specific way in a context in which the speaker uses the locutionary act to realize those intentions.

To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform an *illocutionary* act … . To determine what illocutionary act is so performed we must determine in what way we are using the locution: [as] a question, … an assurance or a warning, … a verdict or … sentence, … an appeal or a criticism, … or [as] a description, and the numerous like. (Austin, 1962, p. 98)

A speaker performs these two types of actions at the same time. As Austin writes, "in general the locutionary act as much as the illocutionary is an abstraction only: every genuine speech act is both" (p. 146). Hanks (2015) offers an analogy: "Bodily movements are to intentional actions as locutionary acts are to illocutionary acts" (p. 96). The analogy proves problematic, as Hanks goes on to show, but it is a useful one to understand Austin's concept of the illocutionary act.

To clarify what I mean by locutionary type, I should first clarify what I do not mean by it. First, Austin considers a locutionary act as falling under a whole spectrum of acts—all those that characterize speech. These acts range widely and include acts of using speech organs to produce

"noises" or phonemes; they include acts of uttering syntactic structures consisting of words; they

include acts of referring to whatever those words and structures refer; they include many other

types of acts. The features of the locutionary act which I was interested in were those pertaining

to the vocabulary and grammar contained in an utterance. I did not mean the term "locutionary

act" in this broad sense when I classified them. I was only interested in the vocabulary and

grammar features of the locutionary.

Second, I do not employ the term "locutionary act" to mean something that is devoid of

force. Austin (1962) suggests this when he reaffirms the distinction between force and meaning.

He concludes, "we distinguished the locutionary act (and within it the phonetic, the phatic, and

the rhetic acts) which has a *meaning;* the illocutionary act which has a certain force in saying

something" (p. 120). Hanks (2015) rejects a notion of locutionary types whereby those acts are

construed as neutral with respect to force. I will not go into Hanks's argument here except to say

that I agree with Hanks. A locutionary act that does not assert (e.g., ask, command) anything, i.e.,

a locutionary act without any component force, would not be meaningful as utterance.

Yet I continue to speak of locutionary acts here. This brings me to what I do mean by

"locutionary acts." A locutionary act in English is a speaker's oral production of at minimum one

word of English. At maximum, it may be the speaker's oral production of a grammatical

construction containing any number of words and clauses but expressing one complete thought.

The meanings of words in a locutionary act are not chosen by the speaker but are determined by

the conventions of the broader society or language community. Likewise, the meaning and force

of a locutionary act are constrained by conventions defining standard (American) English

grammar. In contrast to the notion rejected by Hanks, I assume that locutionary acts have a force

that is, to a certain extent determined by the form or syntactic mood of an utterance. For example,

"You are there" and "Are you there" consist of the same three words, but the syntactic difference between them entails that first likely has the force of a statement and the other a question.

The types of locutionary force which I identified in the dialogue of *Cheers* were assertive, interrogative, and imperative, corresponding to three types of locutionary acts: statements, questions, and commands, respectively. These three categories nearly line up with three types of written sentences in traditional English grammar. Houts-Smith (2018) explains that statements, questions, and exclamations are differentiated by end point punctuation (p. 29). End point punctuation is selected to describe or instruct the speaker's intonation in uttering a sentence, or as Houts-Smith puts it more strongly, "end point punctuation actually attempts to encode a speaker's intonation with a written symbol, and each end point is associated with a specific intonation pattern" (2018, p. 29). Locutionary types have much in parallel with (written) sentence types. Where sentence statements and questions have periods and question marks, locutionary statements and questions have falling and rising intonation patterns. On the other hand, commands can be exclamations, but so can statements, and most commands are not exclaimed but uttered with similar intonation to statements.

The criterion that decided nearly every classification of locutionary act was not the utterance's intonation but its mood:

> The indicative refers to the verb mood of the twelve basic tenses as they are used in declarative sentences or statements. The interrogative refers to the verb mood as used in questions, which may also be called interrogative sentences. The term imperative refers to the verb mood of a unique verb form in sentences that are often defined as those that give a command. (Houts-Smith, 2018, p. 95)

Usually, the identification of words and structures was sufficient to identify an utterance's locutionary type. Sometimes it was not, such as "You don't like me!" from "You don't like me?" The former is a statement or exclamation, whereas the latter is a question. This is possible even though both utterances consist of the same words arranged in the same order. The difference in meaning is made intelligible by the difference in intonation, such as falling versus rising. In such cases, I let intonation inform classification, but in the vast majority, mood was the only criterion.

A feature of many utterances in *Cheers* is the deletion of some part of speech that is conventionally mandated by the type of speech act attempted. This produces a reduced form. I tagged a locutionary act as reduced if, for instance, it communicated a question but omitted a requisite question word, or if it communicates a simple statement but omits a subject or verb, or if it communicates a complex statement but contains at least one clause that is reduced. I do not tag such utterances as "I think you do" as reduced. The subordinating conjunction "that" is deleted, but deletion is standardly permissible, and the referent of "do" may be used as discourse deixis, standing in for a full verb phrase, but this is permitted by the rules of standard English grammar. These reductions are part of the locutionary form of an utterance. I gathered data on them because I anticipated that the prevalence of deletions in *Cheers* would present an obstacles to NNSEs' in understanding the dialogue. Such gaps might begin to close with support in the pragmatic tactics NSEs deploy in reducing an utterance without losing the thread of communication.

Classification of Illocutionary Acts

Searle's (1964) examples of illocutionary acts include "state, assert, describe, warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticize, apologize, censure, approve, welcome,

promise, express approval, and express regret" (p. 221). Austin introduces his concept of the

illocutionary act, explaining what he means in relation to the notion of locutionary acts which he

has already laid out earlier:

> When we perform a locutionary act, we use speech: but in what way precisely are we
>
> using it on this occasion? For there are very numerous functions of or ways in which we
>
> use speech, and it makes a great difference to our act in which way and which *sense* we
>
> were on this occasion "using" it. … I shall refer to the doctrine of the different types of
>
> function of language here in question as the doctrine of "illocutionary forces." (1962, p.
>
> 99)

Illocutionary acts are defined by the speaker's intention behind their utterance. A speaker

hopes to accomplish something by their speech. Searle (1976) writes, "The point or purpose of a

description is that it is a representation (true or false, accurate or inaccurate) of how something

is." (pp. 2-3). Part of what sets the boundaries of illocutionary types is the speaker's

"illocutionary point" (Searle, 1976, p. 3) or intended purpose.

Austin (1962) suggests five categories of illocutionary types. Searle (1976) shows

problems with Austin's taxonomy and proposes an alternative taxonomy of his own. I have used

Searle's taxonomy rather than Austin's for my analysis of *Cheers*. Searle's (1976) five groups

are "representatives," "directives," "commissives," "expressives," and "declarations" (pp. 10-21).

To Searle's five categories, I added a sixth category, "interrogatives," because I disagreed with

Searle's claim that questions are a subset of directives and agreed with an argument from Hanks

(2015) that questions cannot be subsumed into directives. Once I had categorized all the

utterances in the episode, it was possible to count the instances of representatives, directives,

commissives, expressives, declarations, and questions, and to find the relative frequency of different types of illocutionary acts.

Most importantly, this data made it possible to compare how often a particular illocutionary act in *Cheers* assumed a particular locutionary form. I wanted to know, for example, how often an utterance which was intended as a question was articulated using a standard interrogative locutionary form (e.g., "Which is the way to X?" when I want to know the way to X) as opposed to some other non-standard locutionary form (such as, "I need to get to X" which is a locutionary statement, but an illocutionary question synonymous with the above). Likewise, I wanted to know how often requests take the standard syntactic form of a command with an implied subject (such as "Sweep the floor!") as opposed to some (non-standard) locutionary form such as an assertion ("I would appreciate it if you'd sweep the floor") or a question ("Why don't you sweep the floor?"), and so on for other combinations of illocutionary and locutionary forms.

I followed Searle's (1976) definitions of the five types of illocutionary acts according to his taxonomy. They are listed in Table 2, quoting Searle (1976) from "A Classification of Illocutionary Acts" for the first through fifth types listed. I have added a sixth type of illocutionary act, defining it in terms taken from Hanks's (2015) view of questions, quoting his *Propositional Content* in my definition for this sixth type.

Table 2

Defining Features of Six Illocutionary Types

Illocutionary type	Point (purpose)	Direction of fit	Psychological state (sincerity condition)
Representative	"To commit the speaker [...] to the truth of the expressed proposition" (p. 10).	Words → world	Belief
Directive	"To get the hearer to do something" (P. 11).	World → words	Want (desire)
Commissive	"To commit the speaker [...] to some future course of action" (p. 11).	World → words	Intention
Expressive	"to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the	No direction of fit	Many possible expressed states (gratitude, regret,

	propositional content" (p. 12).		congratulatory sentiment, etc.)
Performative	To bring about "the correspondence between the propositional content and reality" (p. 13).	Both directions of fit (words ↔ world)	No expressed state
Interrogative	"A question is answered if the subject comes to have the relevant information" (p. 187)	"Interrogative propositions have […] word-to-word, or mind-to-mind, direction of fit" (p. 187).	Want (desired information)

Identifying Direct and Indirect Speech

There is a sense of the term direct speech that means the opposite of reported speech. This is the difference between 1) my assertion that P, and 2) my assertion that speaker S asserted that P. This is not the sense of the term "direct speech" that I am interested in here. Confusingly, there is a sense of the term "indirect speech" which is synonymous with "reported speech" in the above example, which is not what I mean by "indirect speech," either. Rather, in the sense in which I am interested here, indirect speech is any speech which for any reason would elude the comprehension of one who knows only dictionary definitions and standard English grammar.

There is an abundance of such indirect speech in *Cheers*. One task was to sort direct and indirect speech. This sorting allows two categories: direct and indirect. Direct speech is any for which knowledge of standard grammar and definitions is sufficient to grasp the essence of what the speaker intends to convey. Indirect speech is too general a category. I found it necessary to further sort indirect speech according to three types of features. I have three hypotheses about types of indirect speech.

I have already alluded above to at least two kinds of indirect speech, without calling it such. My first of these three hypotheses is that reductions are a kind of indirect speech. When a subject or verb is implied but not explicitly uttered, an utterance may nevertheless communicate a full thought that implies the identity of the omitted subject or verb. "You want one?" for instance indirectly might ask "Do you want one?" I identified all the reduced forms in the

episode and identified all instances of the first kind of indirect speech, grouping them according to what was omitted: subjects (S-deletion), verbs (V-deletion), both (S-V deletion), or deletion of any other word required by standard English grammar for the type of sentence uttered (e.g., "if" or "and").

My second hypothesis is that a second category of indirect speech exists and is defined by form-force alignment. For instance, "I would like a beer" is a locutionary statement but may be used as an illocutionary directive, equivalent to "Give me a beer." This would be indirect speech in the sense discussed above in the section titled "Classification of Illocutionary Acts." Each type of illocutionary act is commonly associated with a type of form. Representatives are typically given assertive locutionary forms; questions are given interrogative ones; directives take imperative ones. Performatives, such as "I now pronounce you man and wife," are usually assertive; additionally, a particular function, such as ordaining a marriage, may have other standard specifications of form (e.g., use of "pronounce" or "declare" to pronounce a couple's marriage or to declare a ceasefire). Commissives are often stated with "I will (not)," "I'll," "I won't," or "I'm going to" plus a verb. These forms are standard in every way but in consideration of form-force alignment, I ignored other kinds of standards such as completeness or word selection. "Gonna" and "gotta" may be nonstandard forms, but the commissive statements containing them are nevertheless form-force aligned. "Yes" or "no" by itself given in response to a directive may be considered reduced statements in which everything but the "yes" or "no" is deleted. Nevertheless, such commissive acts may be form-force aligned. Expressives may be phrased as statements, such as "I'm sorry," or "I apologize for my lateness," but rules of standard use do not require or necessarily allow for syntactical completeness. "Thanks," "Goodnight," or "Congratulations!" may be considered reductions of the equivalent (though

stilted-sounding) statements, e.g., "I thank you for the beer;" "I bid you goodnight," or "I congratulate you on your engagement"; one-word expressive acts are reduced, but form-force aligned. But standards vary for expressives. "Don't mention it," "Excuse me," or "Never mind," are all articulated as commands; these examples are not only grammatically standard, but standard with respect to form-force alignment for those types of expressives.

My third category of indirect speech I call rhetorical or non-literal speech. When speakers speak truly, reasonably, clearly, and so on, their speech can be interpreted literally. Suppose I say, "I will give you a ring tonight." My utterance is direct speech just when a set of conditions hold for my speech act. As the speaker, I must own a ring or have the authority to give it to you or have good reason to believe I will have such a ring or such authority to give you one tonight; I must genuinely intend to give you a ring tonight (I can't be lying); I must not mean my remark as a joke, as sarcasm, as metaphor, or as a hint to you by which I imply other than that I intend to give you a ring tonight; I must mean a ring that can be given, as opposed to a call on the phone; and so on. It is my hypothesis that in case an utterance fails to meet any of those conditions, the utterance constitutes indirect speech of this third variety.

To understand what is going on in these cases, it is helpful to consider Grice's (1975) cooperative principle (CP) of conversation: "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange" (p. 45). This definition of principle embodies the CP but by itself does not clarify what would constitute following or violating it. That clarification is found in Grice's (1975) four maxims: (a) quality: don't lie or make unfounded claims; (b) quantity: speak the required amount; (c) relation: be relevant; and (d) manner: be clear) (pp. 46-47).

The prevailing legacy of Grice's (1975) cooperative principle in contemporary linguistics is relevance theory. Despite disagreeing with a few elements of the Gricean view, Wilson and Sperber (2012) have built upon the theoretical foundation laid by Grice. What Sperber and Wilson call relevance is not a distinct quality from honesty, brevity, or clarity, but is part of all communication: Understood thus, Grice's other maxims—quality, quantity, and manner—can be subsumed into relevance. If the hearer must mentally abridge a long utterance to grasp a simple meaning or has to fill in too many blanks to understand a short one, the utterance fails to be optimally relevant to the hearer. In Grice's terms, such speech violates the maxim of quantity, but does so by virtue of containing irrelevant information or by omitting some of the relevant information, resulting ultimately in a violation the maxim of relevance. Gricean maxims of quality and manner could be similarly reframed.

A statement such as "I'll give you a ring sometime" could mean different things in different contexts. "Give" might mean to gift, to sell, to lend, to deliver, to offer as payment, or others; "ring" might mean a piece of jewelry, a keyring, a phone call, or others; "sometime" might mean today, this week, or before we die. The speaker may intend flirtation, marriage proposal, a simple phone call, or may be signaling the end of the conversation. How is it that speakers in natural discourse can understand each other at all? Relevance theory offers a succinct answer in Sperber and Wilson's (2012) "cognitive principle of relevance": "The human cognitive system tends toward processing the most relevant inputs available" (p. 64). Being human, NNSEs already have the cognitive system that will tend to process the most relevant inputs available; the problem is that gaps in pragmatics or cultural background, etc., make it harder to identify the relevant inputs or to grasp the nature of their relevance. An equal parallel assumption in relevance theory is Wilson and Sperber's (2012) "communicative principle of relevance":

"Every utterance conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (p. 65). Optimal

relevance is defined in relation to both the hearer and the speaker: the utterance must be (a),

"relevant enough to be worth the hearer's processing effort" and (b), "the most relevant

[utterance] compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences" (p. 64).

The apparent literal meaning of any utterance is what it would convey if it were meant

literally. Consider a (possibly problematic) assumption of Romantic rhetoricians, a view

articulated by Sperber and Wilson (2012): "an utterance or text has a literal meaning which it is

presumed to convey in the absence of contrary indications" (p. 86). For an utterance to be truly

direct, it is necessary that the cooperative principle be preserved or that relevance effects are

achieved. But these conditions are not sufficient for directness, because even when speakers flout

maxims or speak in non-literal ways, their speech manages to achieve those effects. To be

considered truly direct, an utterance must be intended to mean precisely what it would seem to

mean if it were removed entirely from context. In *Cheers*, such direct speech is rare, any speech

that is not direct in this strict sense would fall into my third category of indirect speech. Sarcastic

remarks, jokes, hyperbole, lies, exaggerations, vague statements, innuendo, and countless other

similarly fine-grained types of speech all received such classification.

Identification of Utterances, Speakers, and Addressees

An episode of a sitcom is a piece of discourse to the extent that it is composed of lines of

dialogue. The text I analyze is all the dialogue found in the *Cheers* episode "Give Me a Ring

Sometime" (1982). I produced the transcript by watching and listening to the episode many times

on HULU and on DVD. I entered all the dialogue of the episode into a spreadsheet.

When speech from one speaker was immediately followed by speech from a different

speaker, it marked the end of the first speaker's turn and the beginning of the other speaker's

new turn. By "turn," I mean a turn in the sense of "turn-taking" used by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) in their seminal work in conversation analysis toward describing a system of turn construction and allocation. Turns in *Cheers* were frequently comprised of more than one utterance. But turns are not analyzable in Speech Act Theoretic terms, and my research questions applied to individual utterances, so I next needed to further parse the dialogue: I identified and placed individual utterances on separate lines, so that a single turn might involve a series of utterances by a single speaker.

By "utterance," I mean a unit of speech in an oral text that in written discourse would be distinguished using end point punctuation. Oral text does not include punctuation, so in transcribing dialogue, I added my own punctuation. I decided where to put periods, exclamation marks, or question marks. My decisions here were informed partly by listening to the intonation of an utterance. Exclamation marks indicate heightened emotion, but like periods, they are associated with intonation that falls at the end of an utterance. Consequently, there is a lack of distinction in spoken English where a distinction seems clear in written discourse. Questions are usually asked using rising intonation at the end of the utterance if it is a yes-no question, but earlier in the question (not on the final word) for a 'what,' 'who,' or other wh- question. On the other hand, sometimes spoken statements show rising intonation, such as to signal hesitation, and sometimes questions are spoken with falling intonation, such as some declarative questions. Thus, intonation was not enough by itself to classify sentences or to determine end point punctuation. Additionally, syntax was used, and where reductions produced incomplete syntax, context was used. Where context could not clear up ambiguity, some utterances were omitted from analysis.

Identifying Deictic Expressions

Deixis is generally likely to be a source of confusion for a non-native English-speaking viewership insofar as, in this *Cheers* episode as in natural oral English discourse, there are many deictic expressions used, and it may not always be obvious which expressions refer to which referents. The set of all things referred to is certain to be far greater than the number of words used in referring to them because a single word like "it" or "that" may be used to refer to any number of things. It is useful to distinguish between different types of deixis based on the types of things which those expressions refer to.

In a separate column, I noted all the deictic expressions contained in the corresponding utterance. Where there were multiple deictic expressions, I separated them with semicolons. The word count function on my word processor made it possible to count the total words uttered in the episode. This allowed me to determine the relative quantity and frequency of deictic expressions. In the next column, I entered data on whether the recorded deictic expressions were examples of personal deixis ("I," "you," etc.), spatial deixis ("this," "here," etc.), temporal deixis ("now," "yesterday"), discourse deixis (referring to already- or yet-to-be-mentioned content), or social deixis ("sir," "darling," etc.).

I anticipated some sources of confusion in my methodologies and attempted to prevent them. For personal deixis, I assumed that the subject pronouns, object pronouns, possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns, and indefinite pronouns of English form a complete list of all personal deictic expressions. The category term "personal deixis" may be misleading, insofar as personal deictic expressions do not necessarily always refer to people; for instance, "it" or "they," often refer to inanimate things, but such instances may still be classified as personal deixis. Contractions like "I've" and "you're" contain both a deictic pronoun and a non-deictic verb form

of "have" or "be." For these contractions, I entered "I" or "you" (e.g.) as data and excluded the

contracted verb form from the entry.

The demonstrative words of English are *this, that, these,* and *those*. In my collection of

data, it was important to distinguish between two different ways in which these four

demonstratives may be used deictically. They may be used as a pronoun at the head of a noun

phrase, as in "Look at that." On the other hand, any demonstrative may be used as a determiner

in a phrase whose head is non-deictic, such as "Look at that tree." "Tree," here as anywhere, is

non-deictic; it means the same thing that "tree" always does. But the deictic expression in "Look

at that tree" cannot be merely "that," because "that" does not by itself refer to the tree in question;

it is the whole noun phrase 'that tree' which has the property of referring to the tree in question. I

distinguished this in my data in the following way: if the demonstrative (e.g., "that") comprised

the whole of the deictic expression, I listed it by itself (as "*that*"); if it was a determiner, then I

included the non-deictic head of the phrase in parentheses following the demonstrative (as "*that*

(tree)").

In the above example, "that" is an example of spatial deixis, and indeed demonstratives

often are, but they are not always used in such ways. Often, they are used in metaphorical or

abstract ways, such as to refer to quantities ("*this* many" or "*that* expensive", e.g.) but where

demonstratives were used in these or similar ways, I still counted them as spatial deixis, unless

they referred to something that had already been mentioned earlier in the dialogue or that was to

be mentioned later (the quantity represented by "*that* many" or price represented by "*that*

expensive", e.g.), in which case I counted them as discourse deixis. On the other hand, when

demonstratives were found to be determiners in time expressions, such as "these days" or "that

long ago," I counted them as temporal deixis. Finally, I had to be careful to exclude non-

demonstrative, non-deictic homophones, such as the word 'that' when used as a subordinating conjunction.

In order to find all the instances of temporal deixis, I could not simply search for a limited set of words, because there are inordinately many possible words that could be used as temporal deixis, e.g., "now," "tomorrow," "in ten minutes," "for a while," "back then," "next Monday," etc. Not all temporal expressions are deictic expressions—for instance, "in 1982" would not be deictic; it means the same thing regardless of whether it is uttered before, in, or after 1982. If an expression referred to a unique temporal frame in virtue of *when* it was uttered, then I classified that expression as temporal deixis. An important part of a complete catalog of temporal deixis is verb tense; however, I did not gather data on verb tense, due to manageability constraints.

Discourse deixis often uses demonstratives to refer to ephemeral concepts or things which have been referred to already in a conversation, but in the same way that "this" or "that" may be used as discourse deixis, the personal pronoun "it" may also be used as discourse deixis. When "it" referred to something already mentioned in the conversation, I did not count it as personal deixis, but as discourse deixis.

Finally, social deixis would include such forms of address as "Miss" and "Sir"; it would include titles such as "Captain" or "Officer" if they were to be found; and it would also include terms of endearment such as "buddy," "darling," and so on.

Having identified all deictic expressions, I attempted to identify all their referents where I believed it was possible to do so. I wanted to identify which specific people, places, or things were referred most often using deictic expressions; further, by identifying all referents of deictic

expressions, I wanted to see which ones were easy to identify (such as personal deixis referring

to familiar people) or were more likely to produce confusion (such as abstract discourse deixis).

Identifying Slang Words

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, slang is "language of a highly colloquial

type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new

words or of current words employed in some special sense" (2022). Slang was relevant to my

analysis here insofar as it signified relationships and patterns of speech that were specific to a

social situation and to a particular place and time. I identified the slang in the dialogue of *Cheers*

by using the *New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (Dalzell & Victor,

2012), or NPDSUE, to look up words or phrases that are not part of standard English or that are

used in the dialogue to mean other than standard meanings. If a word from the dialogue was in

the slang dictionary, and if it was used in the dialogue in the sense defined therein, I included it

in my slang glossary, found in Table 5. Usually, I considered a word slang if its relevant meaning

could not be found in OED but could be found in NPDSUE; however, sometimes the more

relevant definition was found in OED, but I considered it slang nonetheless, because the specific

usage was subtly different from the OED definition.

Identifying References to Special Background Knowledge

Sitcoms produced in America for an American audience often allude to elements of

popular culture, history, current events, or knowledge with which such an audience might

reasonably be assumed to be familiar. Such assumptions cannot be made about NNSEs, so study

or instruction must consider what background knowledge is necessary to the understanding of

the dialogue. I could not objectively decide whether an area of knowledge was necessary, or to

what extent it was necessary for comprehension; I could only say whether it was relevant. I

loosely defined ten categories of background knowledge such as alcohol culture, marriage

traditions, football, movies, etc., and collected data on which utterances made any reference at all

to an area of knowledge, regardless of whether they did so directly or indirectly. This made it

possible to rank the ten categories of background knowledge according to how many lines of

dialogue from the episode alluded to those areas.

Chapter 3. Results

Having developed a transcript and having separated it into individual utterances, I then moved forward inputting the data from the episode dialogue into the spreadsheet and analyzing them. Each table, diagram, or chart in this chapter presents a portion of the results of the analysis.

Table 3

Speakers, Addressees, and Numbers of Utterances

Addressees	BOY	CARLA	CLIFF	COACH	DIANE	FOREIGNER 1	MAN 1	MAN 2	MANY SPEAKERS	NORM	RON	SAM	SAM & COACH	SUMNER	Addressed totals
BOY												10		1	11
CALLEE 1 (AGENT)				4											4
CALLER 1 (VICKY)				10											10
CALLER 2				3											3
CALLER 3 (BARBARA)		2												6	8
CARLA				4	5				1	1		4		1	16
CARLA & NORM				1											1
CLIFF										1					1
SAM & COACH		3			5		1			9		12			30
DIANE		18	2	11		2				8		58		35	134
DIANE & SUMNER	4												3		7
FOREIGNERS 1 & 2					19										19
NORM		1	1	7	1							5	2		17
RON												2			2
SAM	7	14		18	66					7	2			13	127
SAM & COACH										2					2
SUMNER		1	1		22							2			26
UNCLEAR		4	5	12	1			1		5	2	9		1	40
Total utterances	11	43	9	56	133	2	1	1	1	33	4	105	2	57	458

In Table 3, speakers are listed in alphabetical order horizontally; addressees are listed in alphabetical order vertically according to identifiers used in the transcript. Columns each show a speaker's numbers of utterances to each addressee and in total. Rows each show an addressee's total times spoken to by each speaker and in total. Each group that spoke collectively (or was addressed collectively) was given a separate column (or row) from any of its members.

Table 4

Deictic Words Uttered at Least 10 Times

Rank	Word	Count
1	I	113
2	You	106
3	He	40
4	It	40
5	Me	26
6	That	25
7	My	22
8	Here	20
9	They	18
10	She	17
11	Your	17
12	This	16
13	We	16
14	One	15
15	Her	12

Table 4 shows the fifteen most frequently uttered deictic words in an episode of *Cheers*. Rankings are given in order of descending frequency. Counts reflect total utterances of a word, regardless of which deictic types individual instances were classified as.

Quantities in Figure 1 below show how many deictic expressions were found to belong to each of five types of deixis. Percentages are out of 570 counted deictic expressions found in my transcript of *Cheers*.

Figure 1

Prevalence of Deictic Types
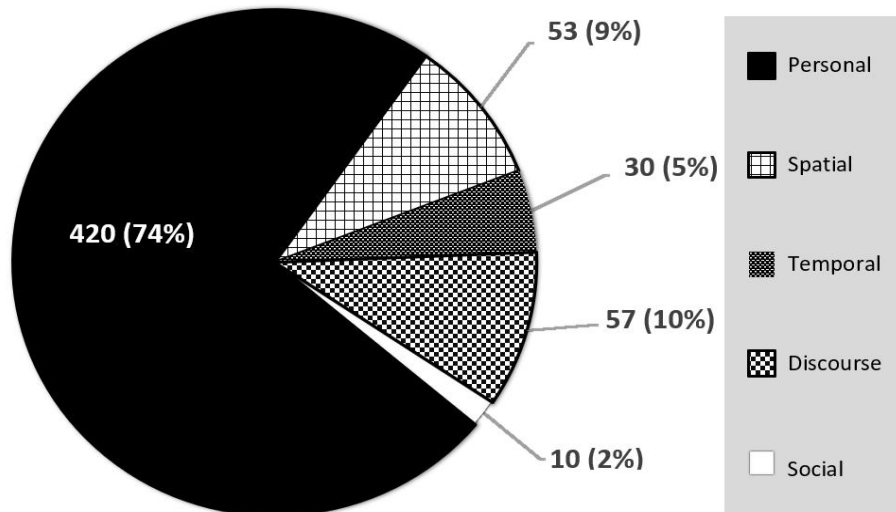
In Figure 2 below, rows show types of locutionary acts, descending in order of least to most frequent; vertical lines mark intervals of fifty utterances in an episode of *Cheers*. Labels indicate total utterances of a given locutionary type. Percentages are out of 459 utterances. Of 458 utterances in the *Cheers* pilot episode, 434 (94.8%) were identified as having a single locutionary form. This number comes from adding the statements, questions, and commands together. Two utterances (0.4%) were identified as compounds of two different types locutionary forms: "If you're not, I apologize, but is your name Sumner Sloane?" (15:34) is a statement compounded with a question, and "One quick one then I really gotta fly" (17:22) is a reduced command compounded with a statement. The remaining 24 utterances were either vocative phrases ("You, miss!", "Norm!", etc.), backchannel utterances ("oh," "yeah," "Ah, nuts!", etc.), or greetings ("Hi," "Hello," "Hiya").

Figure 2

Prevalence of Locutionary Types
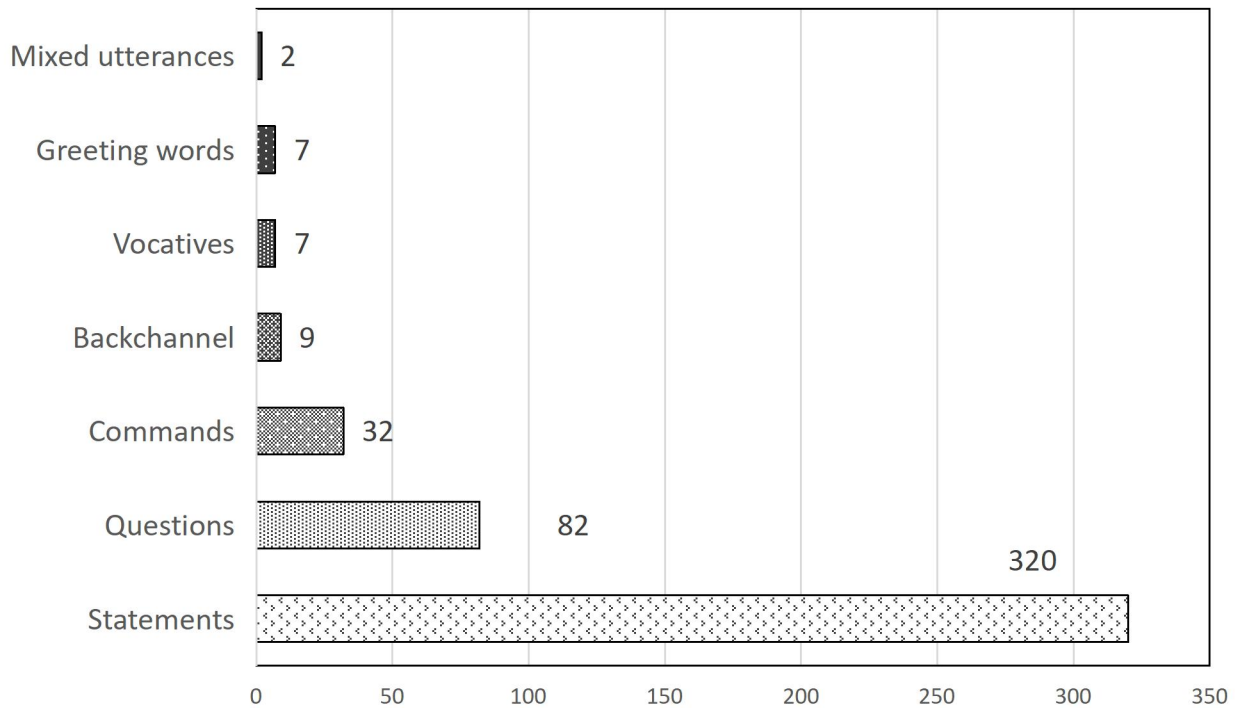
In Figure 3 below, Rows show illocutionary types in order of ascending frequency; vertical lines mark intervals of fifty utterances. Figures indicate the number of utterances classified as a given type of illocutionary act. Percentages are out of a total of 459 utterances counted in my *Cheers* transcript.

Figure 3

Prevalence of Illocutionary Types
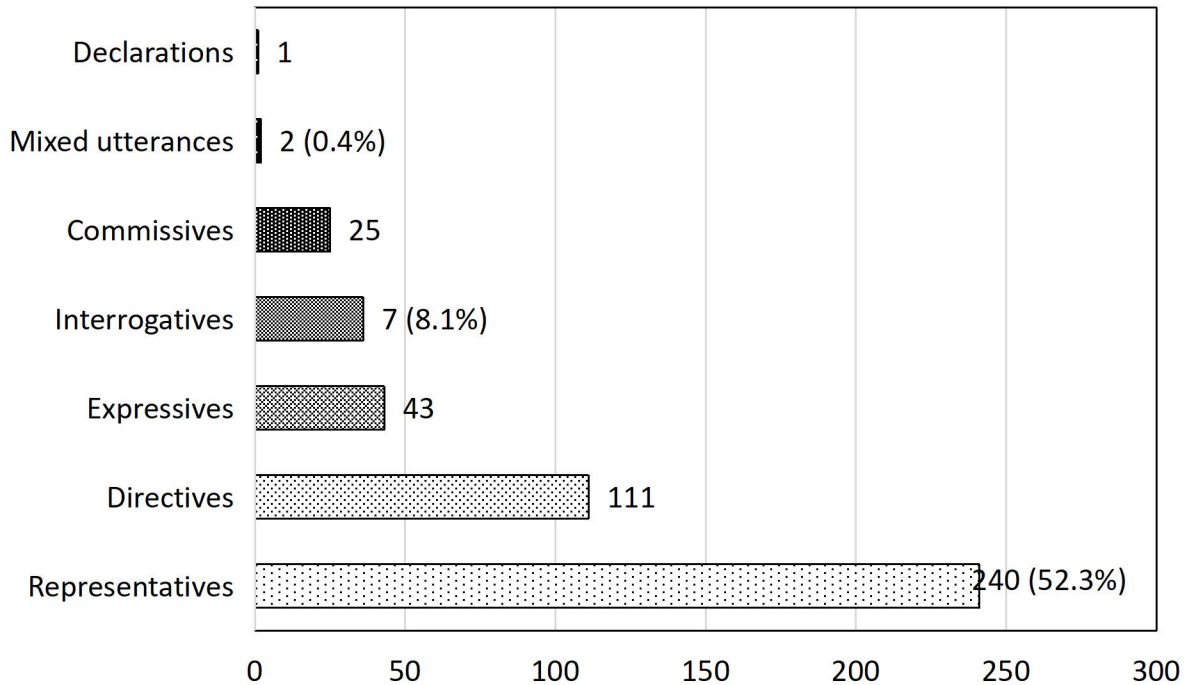
In Figure 4 below, pies show each of six illocutionary types (a-f) and total (n) utterances for each type in the *Cheers* pilot; (g) shows mixed utterances. Slices represent portions of *n* associated with a type of locutionary form. Percentages are out of the *n* value for each illocutionary type.

In Figure 5, reduced utterances (114 analyzed) comprised about 25% of total dialogue (459 utterances). Number labels show utterances with S-deletion (omission of subject only), V-deletions (omission of a verb but not of subject), S-V deletion (omission of both a subject and a verb), and other (omission of neither subject nor verb, but of some other part of speech standardly required for the given structure). Percentages are out of total reduced utterances (114).

Figure 4

Correlations Between Locutionary Forms and Illocutionary Types

(a) *Representatives* (*n*=240)
- 234 Statements (97.5%)
- 3 Backchannel utterances (1.3%)
- 2 Questions (1%)
- 1 Command (0.42%)

(b) *Directives* (*n*=111)
- 32 Statements (28.8%)
- 27 Commands (24.3%)
- 4 Vocatives (3.6%)
- 2 Backchannel utterances (1.8%)
- 46 Questions (41.4%)

(c) *Expressives* (*n*=43)
- 26 Statements (61.9%)
- 6 Greeting words (14.3%)
- 4 Backchannel utterances (9.5%)
- 3 Commands (7.1%)
- 3 Vocatives (7.1%)

(d) *Interrogatives* (*n*=37)
- 3 Statements (8.1%)
- 1 Backchannel utterance 2.7%
- 33 Questions (89.2%)

(e) *Commissives* (*n*=25)
- 1 Command (4.0%)
- 24 Statements (96.0%)

(f) *Declarations* (*n*=1)
- 1 Statements (100.0%)

(g) *Mixed Utterances* (*n*=2)
- 1 Directive + Commissive (50.0%)
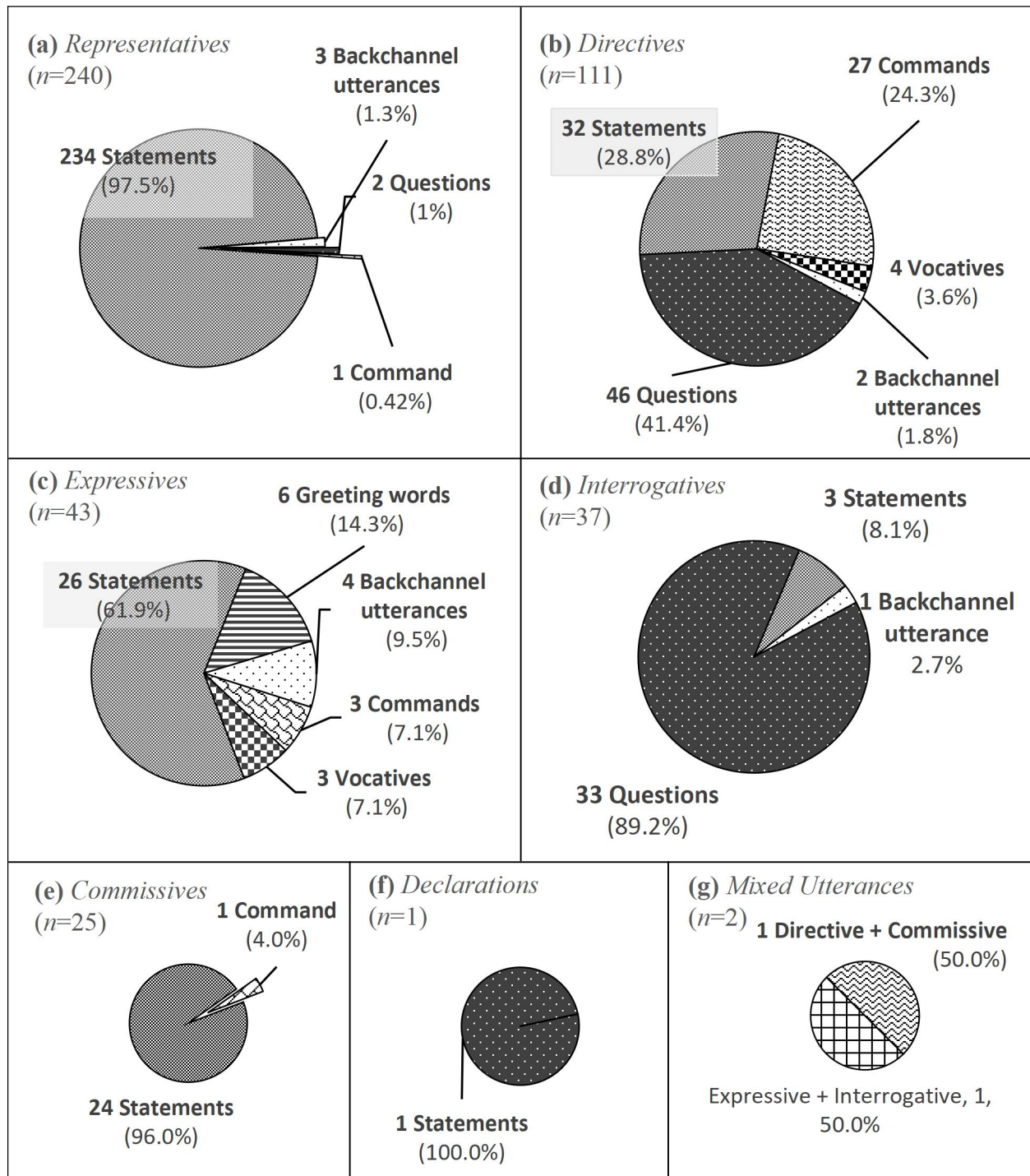- Expressive + Interrogative, 1, 50.0%

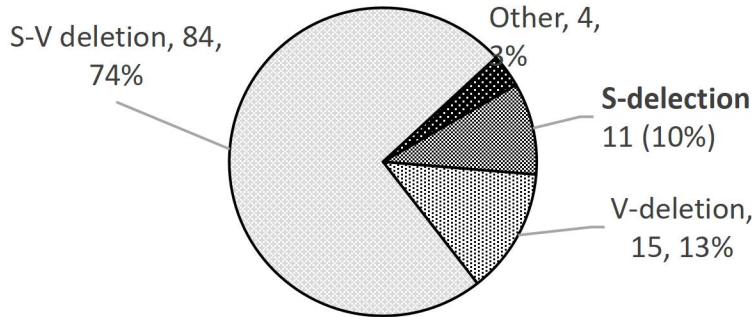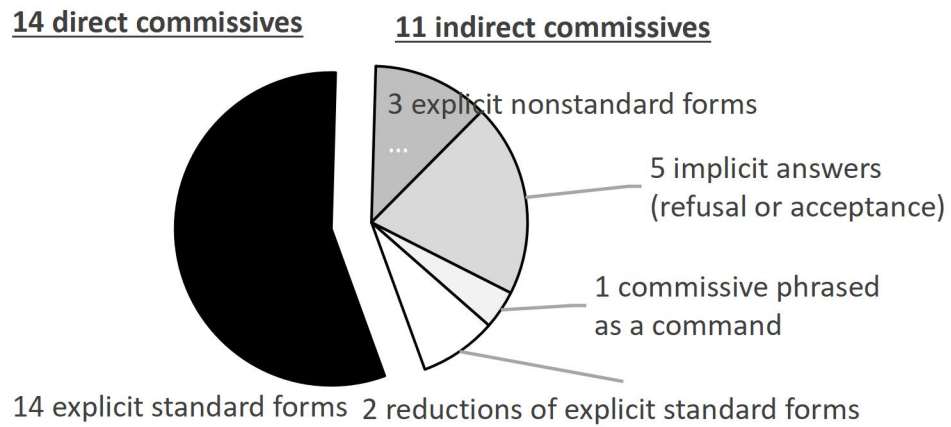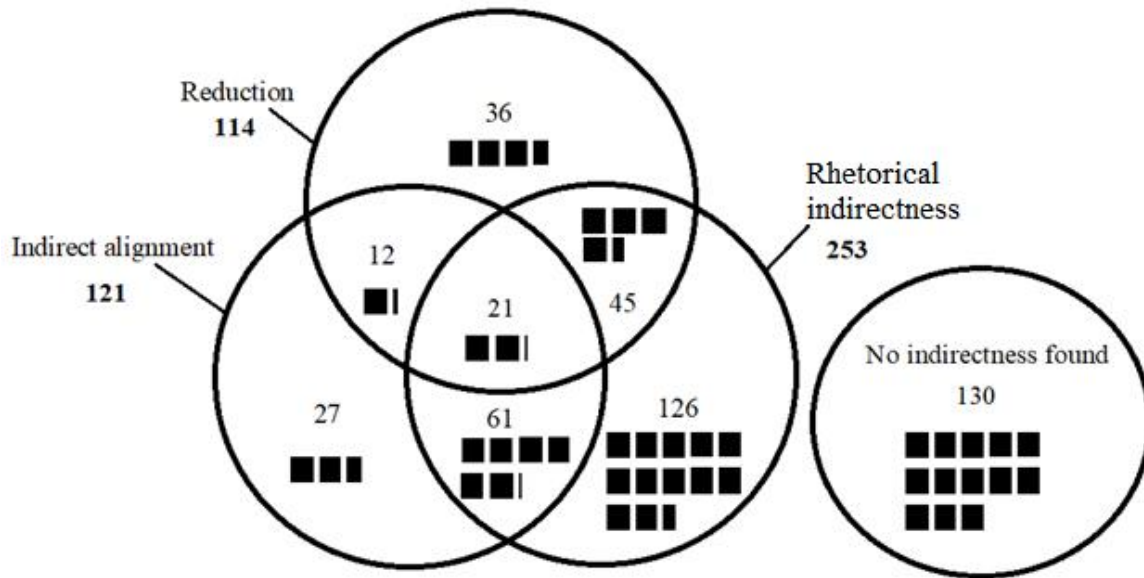**Figure 5**

Reductions

Figure 6

Direct and Indirect Commissives

In Figure 6 above, the 25 commissive illocutionary acts identified are divided into direct and indirect speech acts, above. Legend shows distinct types of alignment identified between commissive illocutionary acts and locutionary forms. Data labels show total utterances of each subset.

Figure 7

Three Indirect Speech Features

In Figure 7 above, a Venn diagram represents all indirect utterances in a *Cheers* episode, with each of three circles showing one of three indirect speech features. Each area of overlap represents a combination of features. Squares each represent 10 utterances of *Cheers*. All eight possible combinations of features are subtotaled inside each section, for a total of 458 (100%). Each feature is totaled regardless of other features, separately, on the outside. A separate circle on the right represents the remaining utterances showing none of the three features, i.e., the direct utterances in the episode.

In Table 5 below, definitions marked "OED" are from the online Oxford English Dictionary, accessed in 2022; all other definitions are from "NPDSUE," i.e., *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (Dalzell & Victor, 2022).

Table 5

Data Identifying Slang Words

Item	Definition (from NPSUE except where specified otherwise)	Line of dialogue
Beast	1) (n.) "anything excellent" (p.131); 2) "A person who exhibits base, licentious, or indulgent behaviour; a person regarded as animal-like in lacking self-control or rational thought" (OED)	"You're a magnificent pagan beast" (4:28)
Cookie	(n.) "a person" (p. 535)	"Cheer up, cookie" (16:46)
Goofy	(adj.) "gawky, foolish, clumsy, eccentric" (p. 1025)	"You're going to find someone a lot better than that goofy professor" (19:00)
Hell	5.a) (n.) a "state, or situation of […] misery" (OED)	"Must've been hell" (10:46)
Hooker	(n.): (1) "a prostitute" (p. 1175)	"She's a hooker" (8:01)
Horsehide	(n.) a baseball (assumed; no relevant definition found in either OED or NPDSUE)	"Wouldn't you love to see Sammy there flinging the old horsehide again?" (9:35)
Kill	(v.) "to cause pain to someone" (p. 1324)	"My head is killing me" (11:41)
Knock off	(v.) "to finish a work shift, job, etc." (p. 1343)	"I'm knocking off, Sam" (16:53)
Nibs	(n.) (his nibs or her nibs) "himself; herself; a self-important person"; "Usually styled as a mock title" (p. 1572)	"Well, tell her nibs I'm sorry" (8:59)
Nuts	(interj.) an interjection used to express disappointment (assumed; not found in either OED or NPDSUE)	"Aw, nuts" (8:10)
Pagan	"A person not subscribing to any major or recognized religion, esp. the dominant religion of a particular society; *spec.* a heathen, a non-Christian, esp. considered as savage, uncivilized, etc." (OED).	"You're a magnificent pagan beast" (4:28)

In Table 6 below, references to American culture, history, or social norms, are ranked in approximate order of relevance based on the number of utterances for which knowledge of a given aspect of culture, etc. was useful in the process of inferring the meanings of those utterances.

Table 6

References to Popular American Culture, History, or Social Norms

Rank	Cultural items, historical items, or other items of background knowledge alluded to in *Cheers*	Numbers of utterances
1	Alcohol culture, including bartending and serving tables at bars; types of drinks and their cultural significance (champagne, beer, scotch "on the rocks," et al); alcoholism (and sobriety); legal drinking age in the US (21 years); and bars such as Cheers, in their capacity as establishments where alcohol is served	39
2	The American football team the Patriots; American football in general; the 1982 NFL draft; football positions (linebacker, etc.); names of teams; and names and team affiliations of players; football jargon (*jackrabbit, quarterback, linebacker, Superbowl*)	26
3	Traditions surrounding engagement and marriage; norms dictating how engaged couples should behave toward each other and toward others; honeymoons; wearing a ring as a symbol of marital status	23
4	Minor-league baseball; AA league; baseball positions; baseball coaching; names of teams; names and team affiliations of baseball players; baseball jargon ("horsehide," "Double-A," "little league")	17
5	American films from the '50s, '60s, '70s, and early '80s (*Rocky II, Ben Hur, Alien, Cool Hand Luke*, etc.)	13
6	The Vietnam War; common perceptions of veterans of the Vietnam War; military titles or ranks	8
7	Sex work and sex workers; sex culture	6
8	Irish, English, and French literature (Yeats, Donne, and Proust)	3
9a	American magazines (*Harper's* Magazine)	1
9b	The first photographs of the earth taken from outer space in 1946 (NASA satellite)	1

Chapter 4. Discussion

Speakers, Addressees, and Their Relationships

According to my transcript of the *Cheers* pilot, there were 458 utterances in the dialogue of the entire episode. DIANE spoke the most lines of dialogue in the episode at 133 utterances in total, followed by SAM at 105 utterances. CARLA, COACH, NORM, and SUMNER each had between 33 and 56 utterances of their own. These six characters collectively have the most lines of dialogue; the same six are also the characters whose names feature in the dialogue repeatedly, reminding viewers which names go with which faces.

The total of 458 utterances excludes laughter, which was audible only twice: first, CARLA laughs at SUMNER (15:40) for having a name ("Sumner Sloane") that apparently strikes CARLA in her working-class milieu as egregiously typical of the upper crust of society; and second, DIANE laughs at SAM (21:19) for suggesting that DIANE take a job at the bar Cheers—an improbable leap downwards on the ladder of social status from DIANE's formal position as a teaching assistant at a prestigious Boston university. These instances of laughter each contribute a character's full "turn" in the sense of the term used in conversation analysis or contribution to the conversation. I likewise excluded acts of cheering, notably on the occasion when many customers at once cheer for DIANE. These instances of laughter and of cheering constitute meaningful communication; they are directed at specific hearers and signify much about the meaning of the relationships between those characters. Nevertheless, those behaviors are paralinguistic.

I have excluded the utterances of two callers and one callee, because they were either inaudible or, more likely, because those utterances were not part of the scripted dialogue in the episode. In the world of natural English discourse, it is not unusual for a conversationalist—even in the middle of a conversation with others who are physically present—to make (or to answer) a phone call to (or from) another party. Thus, a conversationalist is privy to two conversations such that one (on the phone) interrupts the other (in-person conversation), or such that the same conversationalist juggles two conversations at once. This type of conversational "juggling" is depicted in *Cheers* three times. First, DIANE answers VICKY's call in the presence of SAM; second, CARLA takes a call from BARBARA and passes the phone to SUMNER; and finally, DIANE uses the bar phone with SAM's permission to call an airline agent. These depictions are accurate in that they show that participants who are present cannot hear what is said on the other end of the line or vice versa. On the other hand, these depictions are idealized; unlike in real world discourse, the writers have taken care to build the context required for viewers to "fill in the gaps" or make reasonable inferences about the content uttered on other end of the line. For instance, when DIANE answers VICKY's call, she learns that SAM wishes for DIANE to pretend that SAM is absent. (That DIANE is able to oblige SAM in this regard is uniquely possible in such cases of conversation "juggling.") The inaudible dialogue on the other end of the line can be interpreted for its significance to the episode's characters and its story but cannot be analyzed for its linguistic features. Therefore, I counted no dialogue *uttered* by callers or callees, but I did count utterances *addressed* to those callers or callees.

When multiple speakers produced an utterance chorally, I did not count the utterance toward the totals of multiple individual speakers; rather, I created a separate column for each unique combination of speakers, ensuring that each choral utterance was counted exactly once.

Similarly, when I identified an utterance as being addressed to more than one individual, I created a separate row for that unique combination of addressees. Thus, the number of lines of dialogue *uttered* was equal to the total number of lines *addressed* (to an audience of any number). This consequence agrees with the assumption that there is a fundamental, qualitative difference between addressing a group as a group and addressing the set of individuals in that group separately.

When speakers addressed a hearer by name, it was obvious to whom an utterance was addressed. According to my data, this happened 46 times, which is only ten percent of utterances. In the other 90%, one must seek other clues identifying addressees. In natural English conversation, however, speakers generally address hearers by name far less often than in this *Cheers* episode (Charles, Charles, & Burrows, 1982). Therefore, by this measure at least, the dialogue of *Cheers* does not seem to represent natural English conversation. The reason for this high frequency is presumably that the writers of *Cheers* deemed it necessary for viewers to know the names of the characters. This would be especially important given that it is the pilot episode.

The addressee of an utterance may be revealed in one of several ways or in several ways at once. In a way paralleling address by name, speakers in *Cheers* sometimes addressed each other by terms of endearment. I will discuss these below in my section on deixis. The second person pronoun of English, namely 'you,' is very commonly used to address a hearer, but it is not able to identify the hearer on its own, given that 'you' may refer to anyone who is present.

As in discourse everywhere, the speakers in *Cheers* often gaze directly at their addressee, making it possible for conversationalists to identify to whom an utterance is addressed. Visual cues are needed when a speaker is initiating a topic, shifting the topic, or divulging information not specifically relevant to anyone present. When CARLA tells DIANE, "You know, Sam once

struck out Cash, Kaline and Freehan with a tying run on second" (10:06), it would have been

unclear whom CARLA was addressing if not for eye contact or direction of gaze.

More important than any of the above channels, however, is context. When CARLA

addresses DIANE first, neither knows the other's name; "I love to see a woman who isn't afraid

to take her luggage out for a drink" (8:51). Here, CARLA neither uses a term of endearment as

she later does with "Cheer up, cookie" (16:46), nor is DIANE even aware of CARLA's gaze at

first. Still more confusingly, CARLA addresses DIANE not in the second person with "you" but

in the third person with "a woman" and "her." How does DIANE know she is being spoken to?

DIANE is seated at the bar, unaccompanied by anyone, and is surrounded by what appear to be

several pieces of luggage. These bits of information concerning the physical context of the

speaker, the hearer, and their surroundings, imply that CARLA was speaking *about* DIANE. But

CARLA could have been addressing SAM. Why not? This inference is ruled out by the social

norms of the time and place. In the US as in many countries, it would be considered rude for me

to talk about you when you are in the room and are able to hear me, and this is especially

pertinent for CARLA given that she and DIANE have not yet been acquainted. What would be

appropriate, however, would be to "break the ice." CARLA's utterance is intended to initiate a

first conversation with DIANE. Although DIANE is familiar with the norms and discourse

routines involved, she ignores CARLA's remark. DIANE's behavior here is rude. Etiquette does

not demand that DIANE accept CARLA's implicit invitation to chat, but it does require that she

acknowledge CARLA. SAM intervenes and warns CARLA, "She doesn't want to be disturbed"

(8:57), showing how a speaker may in some cases refer to someone who is present *without*

addressing them. SAM chooses his utterance to fit DIANE's wish—namely, to *not* be addressed

by anyone. This interaction highlights the *bartender – customer* relationship between SAM and

DIANE, a relationship defined by linguistic norms governing how SAM and DIANE behave to each other, linguistically or otherwise.

Rude behavior raises an interesting question for one who would use a sitcom as a resource for learning a second language. When should students (of English) follow the examples set out in the dialogue (in this case, by DIANE, CARLA, and SAM) and when should they not? A possible argument against sitcoms for English learners may be that in such shows as *Cheers*, much of the dialogue is written not to exemplify the conversational practices that society dictates we *should* follow, but rather precisely what *not* to do in conversation. Consider SAM's crude joke to COACH:

> DIANE: I hate to keep asking for special attention, but could you not discuss my private life with everyone that comes in?
>
> SAM: What would you like me to tell him?
>
> DIANE: I don't care.
>
> SAM: [to COACH] She's a hooker (7:52—8:01).

Offenses against social and linguistic norms, such as in the above dialogue, do not represent appropriate English conversational practices. The prevalence of abuses in *Cheers* may advise a disclaimer for study and instruction alike: sitcom dialogue *demonstrates* the norms of English conversation, but it does so by way of *violating* those norms as often as it does by *heeding* them well—socially, linguistically, and appropriately to the type of situation depicted.

Thus, sitcom dialogue promises to be good entertainment, but not necessarily good material for instruction in English conversation; nevertheless, I argue that it does prove useful. The real world of oral English discourse is a world full of rude remarks, cold judgments, subtle insults, tasteless jokes, and the like, which are as necessary for one to understand (if one is to

survive in that world of discourse) as are the sorts of English which are usually taught in textbooks (true, clear, brief, polite, grammatical, etc.).

Often, lines of dialogue were addressed to more than one person. Sometimes it was nevertheless clear to whom those utterances were addressed. Once, COACH addresses both NORM and CARLA; a few times, SAM addresses both DIANE and SUMNER; DIANE's closing one-minute-long monologue is addressed to both FOREIGNERS 1 and 2.

Three lines of dialogue were uttered by multiple people in unison. Once, many customers at the bar Cheers respond to CARLA's directive, "Who isn't here?" (15:23) by calling in unison "Me" (15:25). These calls are not really a single utterance, but rather multiple instances of the same basic speech act which were all uttered by different speakers addressing the same hearer at the same time; however, I counted them as one utterance for the sake of simplicity. Twice, SAM and COACH both call out to NORM, first greeting NORM with "Norm!" (9:04) and later waking NORM up with "Norm!" (17:15).

In *Cheers*, as in real life, it is not always clear precisely to whom a given utterance may be addressed. There were 40 utterances of dialogue for which it was unclear whom the speaker intended to address. Usually, this was because the utterance was addressed to a set of people or because the utterance was no more relevant to any specific hearer than to any other. A good example of this is CARLA's topic initiation to a group of customers seated at the bar: "You know, there's a group over there arguing about the sweatiest movie ever made" (13:32). On a few occasions, it was unclear who was addressed because it could not be ruled out that the speakers were talking to themselves or to no one: at one point DIANE mutters, "This is the night before my wedding and I'm in the middle of a sweat contest" (13:55), apparently to no one, and

COACH mutters, "Gee, I got an awful headache all of a sudden" (9:19), and later, "My head is killing me" (11:41), also apparently to no one.

On the other hand, many utterances could be identified as addressed to a specific set of people. Four of the unnamed BOY's utterances and three of SAM's were intended for both SUMNER and DIANE. In these 7 utterances, the *fiancé – fiancé* relationship between both addressees was significant to the identification of addressees, because the content of the utterances was relevant to DIANE and SUMNER for reasons related to their being a couple. For example, BOY exhorts, "Why don't we celebrate with a drink?" (2:43), and later, SAM asks, "So, where's the ceremony gonna be?" (5:19). The relevance of an utterance's content to contextual information about characters' relationships is what reveals to whom those utterances are addressed.

The exchange between SAM and COACH about whether DIANE is a hooker begins with COACH addressing a group that includes NORM and CARLA, but when SAM steps in to repair the misunderstanding, he addresses COACH in a way that is also for the benefit of CARLA and all the clientele present:

CARLA: So, what's Goldilocks's story?

SAM: Never mind.

CARLA: Come on, Sam.

NORM: Why can't you tell us?

CARLA: Yeah, what's the big deal?

COACH: Take it, take it easy will you, will you?

COACH: Sam's kinda shy about this sort of thing.

COACH: So, I'll fill you in.

COACH: She's a hooker.

SAM: She's not a hooker.

COACH: Well, no, she's not a hooker, Sam, in the traditional sense.

SAM: She's not a hooker at all.

COACH: Finest young lady I ever met. (11:18—11:39)

This sort of dialogue presented a challenge in the identification of addressees in the episode. On the surface, COACH and SAM are addressing each other here. But the reason that SAM contradicts his earlier, sarcastic remark "She's a hooker" (8:01) is that now there are many more people present and listening in. Not only are CARLA and NORM eager for gossip about DIANE ("Goldilocks"), but several unidentified customers are sitting at the bar as well, and based on their gazes and facial expressions, are apparently amused by what they hear. The repair SAM makes on his miscommunication with COACH is significant to all potential hearers; SAM doesn't want his bad joke to fan into a rumor.

A noteworthy pattern that emerged was that as the number of people being addressed increased, it became increasingly difficult to determine whether any given individual who was present was (or was not) among the speaker's intended addressees. Compare the opening scene, in which only SAM and BOY are present, to a scene much later in which CARLA addresses a group at the bar and tells them "You know, there's a group over there arguing about the sweatiest movie ever made" (13:32). When only two people were present, it was trivially obvious to whom any given utterance was addressed: it was always the person other than the speaker. When there was a group of people conversing amongst themselves in a crowded bar, it appeared that CARLA e.g. was addressing the group, but it was not clear precisely who was or was not part of

that group. Then, when members of the group began to address the group at another table to which CARLA had referred, it became even less clear who was addressing whom.

The possibility of addressing multiple people with a single utterance allows a speaker to do some interesting things. On one occasion, DIANE seems to address the question "Where?" both to CALLER 1 as a request for yes-no confirmation that CALLER 1 wants to know where SAM is, and as a wh- question to SAM asking not "Where are you?" but rather "Where do you want me to say that you are?" This shows DIANE's utterance to be capable of being two different utterances to different addressees. This is an unusual phenomenon; I found one instance of it in the episode.

Using data about speaker and addressee, patterns emerged in the form of correlations between on one hand the frequency with which a pair of characters addressed each other in the episode and on the other hand the importance (to the episode's plot) of the relationship between those two characters. These patterns are not of significance to the linguistics of the dialogue in the episode, but they are noteworthy from the standpoint of using this episode as an instructional tool. Given limited classroom time with which to discuss samples of the dialogue, it may be advisable to choose samples of dialogue that are important to the plot. Evidence to inform those decisions can be found in the data about 1) who spoke more lines of dialogue, and 2) who spoke to whom most often. BOY speaks very few lines; BOY and SAM speak to each other during only one brief exchange. These observations reflect the weakness of the relationship between BOY and SAM (they do not know each other). On the other hand, SAM, DIANE, and SUMNER are important characters in this episode, and this is reflected in the number of lines they speak overall as well as to each other. The relationship between SAM and SUMNER is not so important–they only speak a few lines to each other–but the relationship between DIANE and

SUMNER is a very important one to the story, and this is reflected in the number of times they address each other when they speak. This is not a surprising observation, because we know that they have a *fiancé – fiancé* relationship. More surprising is the number of times SAM and DIANE address each other. This is unexpected because in this early episode SAM and DIANE do not know each other any better than BOY and SAM or SAM and SUMNER. The relationship between them is merely *bartender – client*. Yet the importance of their relationship yet to come– that of *employer – employee* but also involving hints of mutual romantic interest, which suggest an additional type of relationship. The abundance of the two characters' speech to each other lays the basis for their unfolding relationship in the story.

Discussion of Deixis

A large portion of the dialogue consists of deictic expressions. Based on Quaglio's (2009) research on *Friends*, another sitcom similar episode duration, my total word count for the *Cheers* pilot episode is on par with *Friends*, which averaged 2,507 and 2,842 words per episode in its first and second seasons respectively (p. 30). Of these 2,677 words, 737 (27.5%) formed the whole or a part of some deictic expression.

My figuring here included words which were not themselves deictic (e.g. "life;" "kid;" "flight") but were controlled by possessive pronouns, demonstratives, or some other deictic determiner ("my life;" "that kid;" "later flight"). I also included repetitions, such as COACH's "Take it, take it easy, will you, will you?", which adds two instances of "you" rather than one; however, I excluded "it" in the same utterance, because it is part of an irreducible expression "Take it easy" which I consider non-deictic, because "it" here cannot be replaced by another expression referring to the same thing as "it."

Verb tense is often considered a form of temporal deixis, but I did not gather data on tenses and so excluded this aspect of temporal deixis from my calculations. Also excluded from totals were deictic expressions that were implied but not uttered, such as the dropped subject "it" of NORM's "Must've been hell;" however, it is noteworthy that many reduced sentences were found such that, had the subject not been dropped, most of these would have included still more deictic expressions (more on reduced sentences below).

Of the 458 utterances in the episode, a majority (approximately 75%) contained deictic expressions, often containing many deictic phrases in a single utterance. The most common deictic words were "I," "you," "he," "it," and "that," all of which were uttered at least 40 times. Table 4 excludes deictic words that occurred fewer than 10 times in the episode.

Ranking of priorities for instruction may be informed by the data concerning deixis in a couple of ways. The data indicate that personal deixis is by far the most prevalent form of deixis used in the dialogue: of the five forms that occurred at least 40 times, four were personal deictic words. This information prescribes a clear priority for sitcom readiness. A better target, however, would be a narrower one, for there are many pronouns in English, but they are not all equally frequently used. The pronouns "I" and "you" are by far the most frequent and arguably the most essential in this episode. They are also the ones that are less likely to need to be taught, given that any student advanced enough to understand even part of the sitcom's dialogue would not be a beginner. "He" and "she" are also high on the list; the distinction between the two is pertinent to understanding the dialogue. Personal subject and object pronouns are usually distinguished in English, but rules governing their correct use are not as essential to the task at hand, given that viewers need only to listen and understand; moreover, those rules are sometimes flouted in the casual discourse of *Cheers*, especially when forms are reduced. The distinction between singular

and plural pronouns is more essential for knowing to whom a speaker does and does not refer by

"he" or "they," "I" or "we"; however, "you" is not distinguished by number in the dialect of

English spoken in *Cheers*. Therefore, rather than knowledge of any distinction, it is knowledge

of the *lack* of grammatical distinction which proves essential to understanding whether "you"

means *you* or *you all*, highlighting the importance of context when inferring whom "*you*" (or any

deictic word) might refer to.

Words and expressions which are sometimes deictic and sometimes non-deictic may be a

source of confusion. The pronoun "it" and the adverb "there" are usually deictic, but both "it"

and "there" may also be used as dummy subjects, which are non-deictic. "That" can function as

(a whole or a part of) a deictic expression, or it can be a (non-deictic) subordinating conjunction.

Examples of both functions are abundant in this episode, as in natural English conversation.

When it serves as a conjunction, it is not deictic. These are features of English grammar, not

pragmatics; I have stipulated that the audience considered here knows the vocabulary and

grammar of English. But when (deictic) words take on special meanings in conversation, those

words present a greater challenge to a second language learner if they have multiple, distinct

meanings or functions.

A special feature of "it" is that "it" may be part of an irreducible expression such as

"Take it easy." "Take it easy" may mean that the speaker wants the hearer to calm down, or it

may be a way of casually expressing a goodbye. In either case "it" is non-deictic because it

doesn't change meaning from one speaker's instance of use to another's. Similarly, "it" in "run

for it" is non-deictic. It is less obvious whether "it" in expressions such as "it's OK" or "play it

by ear" are deictic. In such idioms, "it" may refer to the situation in which those idioms are used,

or the speaker may use such idioms synonymously with "don't worry," or "improvise." Idioms

may in fact belong to the realm of semantics; my aliens know semantics. But idioms, much like pronouns, are highly variable in their specific meanings in conversation. If one misreads the context of a conversation, one is likely to misread idioms as well.

Personal Deixis

The most abundant deictic expressions were those classified as personal deixis. The personal deictic expressions of English include subject pronouns (I, you, he, she, it, we, they), possessive pronouns (my, your, his, her, its, our, their), object pronouns (me, you, him, her, it, us, them), reflexive pronouns (myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves), and indefinite pronouns (someone, anyone, everyone, something, anything, everything, nothing, no one, nobody, somewhere, anywhere, nowhere). Not all of these appeared in the episode; those that appeared did so in widely varying frequencies.

In the *Cheers* pilot episode, the word "I" almost always refers to the speaker. In 124 instances of "I" that I recorded in my transcript, 123 referred unambiguously to the speaker of the utterance. Only one instance referred to someone else, namely CARLA: "I need... I need two vodka gimlets, one straight up, one blended, rocks, Chivas rocks, soda, a Comfort Manhattan, no cherry, a white wine spritzer, an Old Bushmill Irish decaf, hold the sugar" (21:30). In this instance, CARLA does not literally mean that she wants those drinks for herself. She is speaking on behalf of her customers, hence "I need XYZ" really means "The customers at table number such-and-such ordered XYZ"; however, CARLA's use of "I" is not unusual. CARLA needs the drinks in the sense determined by her job description; she needs to serve her customers. It would be awkward and excessive, though not false, for her to say "I need to serve two vodka gimlets, et al, to the guests at table 2."

I identified 23 instances of the object pronoun "me," all of which referred to the speaker

of the utterance. The count is not precise due to one special instance of the 23 after CARLA,

preparing to answer the phone at the bar, asks all the clientele who are present, "Who's not here?"

to which all or nearly all the clientele answer in unison, "Me!" (15:23). This was not really a

single instance but rather an unknown number of simultaneous instances involving many

speakers all uttering the word "me" at the same time, such that each speaker referred to

themselves as an individual. This example highlights that in some cases, "me" is used not as an

object pronoun in the standard sense but as a subject pronoun in a reduced sentence. For instance,

in the example, to answer "Me!" meant "I am not here." This nonstandard use of "me" is usually

seen as a mistake in formal or written English, but in contemporary American English, it is the

de facto norm for (reduced) "I" answers to "who" questions. One would rarely answer "Who's

there?" by either "I" or "It is I," which are standard, but sound stilted; rather, one would almost

invariably answer "Me" or "It's me."

The second person pronoun "you" of English is used both as a singular and plural

pronoun. In Standard American English of the period (and of the time of this writing), the phrase

"you guys" is additionally used as specifically a second person plural pronoun, similarly to how

"y'all" or "all y'all" in other American dialects of English is used to address multiple addressees.

Rather than either "you guys" or any alternative way of addressing a group in the second person,

when a speaker addressed a group in the *Cheers* pilot, they did so simply with "you." The word

"you" appears 106 times in the episode. In 98 of those cases, "you" referred to a single

identifiable addressee. The 8 other cases, it referred to a group, but when it did so, it sometimes

referred to a definite group, and other times to an indefinite one. When COACH says, "Take it,

take it easy, will you, will you?" (11:27) and "Sam's nervous about these things, so I'll fill you

in," he addresses NORM and CARLA and possibly other customers within ear's reach. When

CARLA addresses a group of customers, saying, "You know, there's a group over there arguing

about the sweatiest movie ever made," (13:32) her use of the phrase "you know" functions as a

discourse marker, one whose common uses include signaling that the speaker is about to divulge

content that may be unknown to the hearers (an ironic usage, to be sure), but the "you" in

CARLA's "you know" refers to an indefinite number of hearers who may find the reported

information interesting. In these cases, a list of addressees is difficult to specify. In contrast, in

her lengthy monologue to the two foreigners who walk into Cheers, DIANE addresses both

hearers collectively as "you" five times (before realizing that they cannot understand her). In

these five instances, it is clear precisely to whom "you" refers, namely, it refers to both of the

foreigners whom she mistakes for customers. This use of the second person pronoun in English

to refer to both singular and plural second persons is relevant information for ELs, especially if

their L1 distinguishes explicitly between second person singular and plural, as many languages

do; this distinction is not mandatory in Standard American English, as the above examples from

Cheers show.

The word "your" in all instances in *Cheers* was usually identified as a determiner in a

noun phrase whose head referred to something of a single addressee's person or possession:

"your name" refers to SAM's name (the addressee's name); "your ex-wife's finger" refers to

SUMNER's (the addressee's) ex-wife BARBARA's finger; and so on, in ways equivalent to the

uses of "your" which are standardly taught in English classrooms. A couple of exceptions,

however, are of high significance: first, when DIANE addresses SAM, saying, "I'd like a bottle

of your best champagne" (4:48), "your best champagne" refers not to SAM's best champagne

but to the best champagne available at the establishment Cheers. That is, DIANE's utterances

does not address SAM as an individual but as a representative of an institution. Second, later, when DIANE asks COACH, "Where is your bathroom?" (11:06), COACH misunderstands DIANE (whether earnestly or in jest), as COACH reveals when he answers, "Next to my bedroom" (11:07). Of course, the intention of DIANE's question is to address COACH not as an individual who has a private bathroom in his home, but as a representative of the establishment Cheers, which offers the use of a public bathroom to its guests. This play on the meaning of "your" is necessary for ELs to grasp if the humor in this exchange is to be understood.

The third person plural pronoun of English is "they." "They" appears many times in the episode, but surely when it appears in DIANE's phone call to the airline agent, DIANE's use of "they" becomes uniquely loaded with meaning:

DIANE: I'd like to change the reservations for Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane, flight 481 to Barbados.

DIANE: They did?

DIANE: Are you—are you sure?

DIANE: Uh, no, thank you (20:20—20:40).

First, DIANE's reference to "Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane" reveals the referent of "they" in DIANE's subsequent utterance. This may confuse non-native English-speaking viewers for a couple of reasons: 1) the phrase "Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane," according to linguistic norms standard in some contexts at the time when *Cheers* first aired (but not commonly today), refers to SUMNER SLOANE and SUMNER SLOANE's wife (and NOT, as it may seem, to a couple of individuals who share "Sumner-Sloane" as a surname; and 2) the referent of Sumner Sloane's wife is apparently a disputed one. When DIANE asks to change reservations for "Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane," she means SUMNER and herself, i.e., DIANE in her capacity as the woman

about to marry SUMNER; she is referring to both herself and her fiancé in the third person, rather than the first person plural—that is, she did not say "Mr. Sumner Sloane and me"—because it is normal to do so when the stranger on the phone given that a stranger on the phone would not know who "me" refers to. We cannot hear what CALLEE 1 says, but probably it was something like "They have already boarded the plane"; this information leads DIANE to conclude that, contrary to her expectations, DIANE is not "Mrs. Sumner Sloane" and to conclude that, to her profound disappointment, the couple who have now boarded the plane to Barbados are not herself and SUMNER but rather SUMNER and SUMNER's ex-wife BARBARA. According to the agent's (CALLEE 1's) information, the two people with the reservation referred to have already boarded the plane, leading the agent plausibly to infer that DIANE is neither of those two people; therefore, the agent in their task of selecting the correct pronoun to stand in for "Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane" would have been compelled by English pragmatics to pick the third person plural subject pronoun "they." This would reveal the meaning of DIANE's reaction, "They did?" namely, that it is now dawning on DIANE that SUMNER has abandoned her in pursuit of BARBARA, confirming both DIANE's worst suspicions and SAM's blunt predictions. The dialogue of *Cheers* thus reveals a crucial turning point in the story, using one ambiguous word to evoke two distinct couples: an expected "they" (by which DIANE means *we*, the two (ex)fiancés) on the one hand, and the plot-twist "they" (which DIANE realizes really *is* the third person *they*, the two (ex)divorcees) on the other.

Spatial Deixis

The expression used most often for spatial deixis in the sitcom called *Cheers* is one which refers most often to the bar called Cheers: the adverb "here." COACH botches a greeting to DIANE, "Uh, uh, I hope nobody told you the bus goes by here" (7:43); SAM repairs

COACH's botched greeting, "No, Coach, she's going to be sitting here for a while" (7:45);

COACH infelicitously summons "Is there an Ernie Pantusso here?" (13:25) an unidentified

bargoer, who turns out to be no bargoer at all but COACH himself; DIANE complains to

SUMNER, "I've been sitting here listening to these men argue over the sweatiest movie ever

made" (14:31). Then again, in this last example, 'here' may refer to not the bar Cheers generally

but specifically the bar counter at the center of the bar Cheers. It doesn't matter here; however,

these two distinct but related meanings of 'bar' may lead to confusion elsewhere: CARLA's

summons "Who isn't here?" (15:23), or perhaps it's an anti-summons, may lead one to ponder

the meaning both of 'here' and of the question itself, given little in the way of context to inform

one's understanding. (The relevant piece is that when bargoers are enjoying themselves at the bar

Cheers, they prefer not to be disturbed by summonses.) On the other hand, when DIANE

welcomes her first not-quite-customers, "Why don't you sit down here?" (23:17), she trivially

does mean the bar Cheers, but her utterance points to a specific table—a rare prototypical

instance of 'here' accompanied by Diane's directional hand gesture.

Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis is a part of every utterance that contains a verb, but the targeted

expressions for my analysis were those that built the element of the setting which places the

events of the plot in the year 1982 and in relation to such. The number referring to the year 1982

is not a deictic expression in Standard American English; it means the same year it does

independent of the day, month, or year when one utters 1982. Thanks to a well-placed clue from

the writers, it was clear that the episode does indeed take place in the same year in which the

episode was originally aired:

SAM: Ah, military ID!

SAM: First Sergeant Walter Keller, born 1944.

SAM: That makes you thirty-eight (0:58-1:04).

In this way, we do not need rely on our memory (if any) of the 1980s to identify the period, nor do we need to assume that *Cheers* was intended as contemporary fiction, as opposed to one purporting to represent, say, the '60s. SAM gives it to us (and BOY lends a hand). This bit of information set up the temporal backdrop against which all reference to time made in the episode could be incorporated. For example, we know SAM got sober in 1979:

DIANE: Are you drunk now?

SAM: No, I haven't had a drink in three years (10:42-10:44).

Knowing the year is trivial to the plot, but occasionally, it helps to narrow the search for what characters intend to communicate by what they say. When characters refer to the Patriots' draft, to minor league baseball, to the "current" issue of *Harper Magazine*, to films such as *Rocky II* and *Alien* (only three years old at the time), to the Vietnam War that had ended seven years hence, and even to the first photographs of the earth taken from outer space in the 1940s (a vivid memory, it seems, for COACH), knowledge of the year adds meaning and specificity to the dialogue.

When SUMNER promises DIANE, "I'll be back in ten minutes" (6:18), the relevant deictic expressions are "be" (in the sense equivalent to *come*) and "back." The non-deictic head, "ten minutes," is not meant strictly literally. SUMNER means he will return to DIANE at the bar Cheers in between, say, 10 and 20 minutes. His utterance commits him to return quickly, but not to return within ten minutes or less. Correspondingly, when DIANE complains, "What happened to you? It's been over an hour" (14:42—14:43), "it" refers to the span of time between SUMNER's earlier departure from Cheers and his return as of less than a minute ago; the words

"been" and "over" control the meaning of the non-deictic "an hour"—the literal value of an hour again here being irrelevant—such that one can infer that at the time of the utterance, somewhere between 60 and, say, 90 minutes have lapsed since the events of the earlier scene.

Discourse Deixis

Occasionally, the referent of a discourse deictic word is easy to pin down.:

CARLA: If you're not, I apologize, but is your name Sumner Sloane?

SUMNER: Yes, it is (15:34—15:39).

"Is your name Sumner Sloane?" with "Yes, it is", "it" refers to SUMNER's *name*. It is discourse deixis insofar as it refers to something that has already been mentioned, SUMNER's name. But this is an unusually simple, straightforward example.

At other times, the referent of a discourse deictic word is harder to pin down. Consider SUMNER's final utterance below in his exchange with DIANE:

SUMNER: Barbara was home, and she said I can come over.

DIANE: Oh?

DIANE: Well, do you want me to go with you?

SUMNER: No, it could get a trifle sticky (5:00—5:05).

Here, it may not be obvious to NNSEs what "it" refers to, because although this is discourse deixis, the referent is not made explicit in the conversation either before or after. Roughly "it" may mean the scenario SUMNER anticipates in which SUMNER and BARBARA will meet face to face for the purpose of settling the issue of the transfer of SUMNER's grandmother's antique gold wedding ring from BARBARA to DIANE.

According to Sperber and Wilson in *Meaning and Relevance* (2012), "a word which encodes a given concept can be used to convey (as a component of a speaker's meaning) another

concept that neither it nor any other expression in the language actually encodes" (p. 43).

Sperber and Wilson's 2012 book shows how English speakers communicate successfully and refer successfully to many concepts that lack a word in English. They give an example: "Come on, you're not *that* tired!" (p. 40). A similar example is found in *Cheers* when SUMNER says, "I can't fly to Barbados *this* confused" (15:03). In the context of Sperber and Wilson's example, the speaker means to protest that the hearer is not too tired to accompany him to the cinema. In the example from *Cheers*, SUMNER means that SUMNER is too confused to fly to Barbados. The deictic expressions in these examples are "that (tired)" and "this (confused)." The referents of both deictic expressions lack a word in English; rather, the former example is an "*ad hoc*, circumstantial notion of tiredness" (Sperber & Wilson, 2012, p. 41), and likewise, the example from *Cheers* could be called an *ad hoc*, circumstantial notion of confusion. The particular referent of the expression "*that (tired)*" in the context is only relevant to that speaker and hearer (i.e., it is private) in that particular context (i.e., it is circumstantial) at a particular point in time (i.e., it is ephemeral); and the selection of words used to refer to that concept ("that" and "tired") is made for a particular purpose as suited to the speaker's and hearer's communicative needs (i.e., it is *ad hoc*). The same would go for the example from *Cheers*.

In both the above examples, demonstratives are used. In neither case is the demonstrative "this" or "that" used in what could be called a prototypical way. In a typical ESL class, the way in which students would be first taught how to use a demonstrative in a sentence would be as a determiner in a spatial deictic noun phrase such as "this table" or "that person" or "these chairs," etc. "This" and "these," it is taught, indicate things at a relatively short distance such as within arm's reach, whereas "that" and "those" indicate things at a relatively far distance such as outside arm's reach of the speaker. Such uses are what I mean by prototypical uses of

demonstratives. They are concrete examples that may involve literal physical gestures such as pointing with one's index finger. But above, the head of the deictic expression is not a noun but an adjective. How these examples with adjectives should be categorized is not clear to me. (Perhaps they can be classified as instances of spatial deixis, but in a different way from the examples involving concrete nouns. That is, they are spatial in an abstract way; one speaks of the size of the hearer's tiredness, the other of the size of the speaker's confusion. This is not a very satisfying answer, but it is the best I could come up with, and I used it as the basis for categorizing SUMNER's remark as an instance of spatial deixis.) Regardless of how one chooses to classify such examples, those examples show that in English conversation, speakers do not always or even usually use demonstratives in the prototypical, concrete ways that are taught in beginning English classes. To comprehend the dialogue in *Cheers*, viewers need to know that demonstratives can refer to more than physical things which are or are not literally within arm's reach of the speaker.

> DIANE: You must get real tired of hearing people cry in their beer.
>
> DIANE: I wonder why people tell bartenders their problems.
>
> DIANE: It's kind of sad, isn't it?
>
> SAM: Yeah.
>
> DIANE: These poor wretches with no one in the world to turn to but some stranger who mixes drinks (17:55—18:10).

Suppose a student asks for clarification about what DIANE means by "it" when DIANE asks, "It's kind of sad, isn't it?" (18:05). The minimum explanation to satisfy the student would surely be longer than when "it" refers to SUMNER's name. What DIANE's "it" refers to is the situation she has just mentioned and is about to continue to talk about. But precisely what she has

said is not obvious. It cannot be the fact that she wonders something, nor can it be the question of

why people tell bartenders their problems. Perhaps DIANE's "it" refers to her general

observation that "people" habitually tell bartenders their problems. Not all people, of course, but

specifically "these poor wretches with no one in the world to turn to but some stranger who

mixes drinks," (18:10). Then again, "these poor wretches" is an instance of discourse deixis as

well, referring back to what she has already said.

To explain what discourse deictic expressions sometimes refer is unlikely to be helpful to

students of L2 English, whether in *Cheers* or other discourse. (Hopefully, such explanations can

be rendered unnecessary through oral practice and exposure to meaningful conversation.) The

point is that to understand the dialogue, one must understand how words like "it" and "that" can

be used in more than one way: 1) there are the prototypical ways taught in beginner-level English

textbooks; 2) "that" may be used spatially or to refer to something abstract, such as an idea, and

likewise for "it"); and finally, 3) "it" or "that" may refer to what is alluded to in conversation,

whether explicitly or implicitly.

Social Deixis

Social deixis offers unique insight into the nuances of relationships between characters.

BOY opens the episode in a thick Bostonian accent with "How about a beer, chief?" (0:38).

BOY deploys the "chief" here strategically. BOY wants to project himself as on higher social

footing than BOY in fact has given BOY's actual age. A child would never address the owner of

a bar as "chief" because it is a form of social deixis reserved for people with less of a social

status gap than that between a child and a bartender. The purpose of BOY's effort to assert his

social status relative to SAM is that BOY wants to buy beer, but in the US, it is illegal for BOY,

who is well below the legal drinking age of 21, to buy beer and for SAM to sell it to him. BOY's

nonchalant request fails to convince SAM, but it would not be out of place for NORM or another adult male customer to address SAM as "chief," so the term is not inappropriate for the age BOY is pretending to be. BOY's plan falls apart for other reasons.

The fact that it strikes a native speaker as funny or odd to hear BOY call an adult "chief" is evidence that "chief" plays a pragmatic role in signaling relative social status between speaker and addressee. A boy may call his peer "chief," and an adult bargoer might call a bartender "chief" or vice versa, but a boy and an adult do not stand as equals in the social order and the lower one would seldom address the higher one by this term of casual address. A more felicitous case of this pattern comes when NORM muses, "Sure could have used you coming out of the pen, buddy" (9:26). NORM's utterance reinforces the rapport he enjoys with SAM. They are both adult men who despite their divergent lifestyles and careers are nevertheless peers of roughly equal standing in society.

SUMNER falls afoul of social and linguistic norms already in one of his first utterances to SAM: "I'm uh Dr. Sumner Sloane, Professor of World Literature at the U." (5:25). SAM deliberately ignores the introduction. SUMNER's utterance divulges more than what modesty calls for. It signifies SUMNER's social status, and therefore it draws attention to an invisible gap between the bartender and the professor. Later, when SUMNER is preparing to leave the bar Cheers to collect the ring he has promised to DIANE, he needs a favor from SAM, namely to "keep an eye" on DIANE while he is absent. To ask SAM for the favor, he needs to assume that his relationship with SAM is a friendly one. SUMNER attempts to establish collegiality with SAM by calling him "old man:"

SUMNER: Excuse me.

SUMNER: What's your name?

SAM: Sam.

SUMNER: Listen, Sam, old man.

SUMNER: I have an errand to run.

SUMNER: And Diane is going to stay here.

SUMNER: I'd appreciate it if you would keep an eye on her.

SAM: For you, Sumner, old man, I'll keep both my eyes on her (6:20-6:30).

The term "old man" here hits a sour note. As with "chief," the term serves a social deixis function unrelated to its literal meaning (that is, it does not presume that the addressee is older than the speaker); and as with "chief," it makes SUMNER sound as if he and SAM are old buddies. SUMNER's social deixis clashes with his earlier statement that underscored the two men's unequal social station. Consequently, when SUMNER needs a favor and suddenly acts all chummy with SAM, his use of "old man" ends up sounding condescending and phony, serving only to reinforce the tension between the two men.

CARLA's quip "Tell her nibs I'm sorry" (8:59), while referring to DIANE, is addressed to SAM, but is obviously also intended for DIANE's ears. "Her nibs" is an example of social deixis. This expression's deictic component is "her," a word that usually functions as personal deixis. It is the non-deictic component "nibs" that determines the expression's status as social deixis. This social deictic phrase, unlike "her majesty" or "his excellence," rarely addresses its referent; rather than "your nibs," CARLA says "her nibs" for the special purpose of addressing SAM while referring to DIANE in a way intended for DIANE's ears: she wants DIANE to infer that CARLA thinks DIANE is a first-class snob. CARLA's use of social deixis underscores the relationship between CARLA and DIANE. They relate not (yet) as *coworker – coworker*, nor does their *server – customer* relationship prove helpful to uncover the source of meaning behind

their dialogue. Rather, it is a relationship of *upper-class identity – lower-class identity*. DIANE is an academic at a prestigious university in Boston; CARLA is a server at a bar. DIANE's style of speech displays her education and her refinement; CARLA's rough and direct manner of talk reveals a lack of education or refinement. The dynamic between the two is not always so abrasive; CARLA softens her social deixis later, urging DIANE to "Cheer up, cookie. He may have been in an accident" (16:48). This is CARLA's same bluntness, but to a different communicative end: she feels sorry for DIANE, realizing the SUMNER has treated DIANE poorly. CARLA's selection of "cookie" is telling. "Cookie" may be CARLA's of speaking woman-to-woman—the equivalent of "buddy" or "chief" between two men. It is a pity that in this episode DIANE and CARLA speak so little to each other (and when they do, only of the men in their lives); their exchanges, perhaps the best of any dialogue in the episode, show how the pragmatics of English can shed insight into the (mis)communication of meaning across social class barriers.

Types of Locutionary Forms

To clarify what I mean by locutionary type, I should first clarify what I do *not* mean by it. According to Searle's (1976) reading of Austin (1962), locutionary types, if they exist, are devoid of illocutionary force, such as assertive force, interrogative force, and so on. Searle is skeptical of the notion of a force-neutral locutionary type, and he may be right about this. It is not obvious how an utterance could be force neutral. But this is not what I mean when I am discussing locutionary acts. In the way that I mean the term, locutionary acts have a force that is determined by the form or syntactic mood of an utterance. Thus, when I classified the utterances according to their locutionary type, I did not consider the implicature of the utterance. Effectively, I pretended that every utterance was direct speech.

In direct speech, a representative statement takes on the locutionary form of an assertion. A prototypical assertion is a full sentence with an explicit subject and predicate, but assertions are not limited to such a simple structure. They may be compound (e.g., SUMNER: "Barbara was home, and she said I can come over" (5:02)), or they may be complex (e.g., COACH: "I never used to believe it until I saw those pictures from the space shuttle" (9:59)), or they may be both compound and complex (DIANE's "I'll find it, and when I do, I'll know it" (22:33)). In each of these cases, the utterance contains multiple subjects and multiple predicates. *Cheers* contains plenty of such multi-clausal utterances.

On the other hand, assertions may be reduced, omitting either a subject, a verb, or both. As Rings (1986) observes, "in casual spoken language, what would be considered grammatical 'mistakes' in written language are a necessary part of the grammar of the spoken language" (p. 205). The most common "mistakes" I found were reductions. I often noted the deletion of a sentence's subject. Consider SAM's "Must've fought in Vietnam?" This sentence omits the subject "you" (addressing BOY), rendering the sentence incomplete. Here it's obvious that "you" (BOY) is the implied subject, because SAM and BOY are the only two people present. Consider NORM's two-part answer to COACH:

COACH: Doesn't your wife wonder where you're at?

NORM: Wonders.

NORM: Doesn't care. (17:34—17:37)

In this case, the implied subject is NORM's wife. This is made obvious by the fact that COACH has just referred explicitly to NORM's wife. CARLA's "Said I wouldn't fit in with the other repairmen's wives," omits a subject that has recently been explicitly mentioned, namely, her ex-husband. But other instances of the same practice of subject omission are more likely to

cause confusion. Consider NORM's "Sure could have used you coming out of the pen, buddy,"

which omits a subject referring to the Boston Red Sox. NORM's "Must've been hell" omits a

subject that would have referred to SAM's experience of quitting drinking alcohol. In all these

examples, it is possible to infer the identity of the implied subject from the context–the subject

has recently been referred to, implicitly or explicitly–but many non-native English speakers will

likely need support in this area, even if they are advanced in the written forms of English. If

students' English exposure is limited to informational texts, then even advanced ones may have

never encountered such reductions.

Elsewhere in the episode, the main verb of a statement is omitted. When CARLA tells a

group of customers at the bar about an argument going on at another table, the customers begin

to offer their answers to the question, "What is the sweatiest movie ever made?" A long string of

proffered answers includes reduced statements in which the subject is included (*Rocky II, Body*

Heat, Sweat City, Ben Hur, or *Cool Hand Luke*) but in which the predicate ("is the sweatiest

movie ever made"), including the main verb "is" is deleted.

But more often than the omission of the subject alone occurred, utterances with both the

subject and the main verb in the assertion were omitted, producing locutionary fragments that are

impossible to decode outside of context, such as COACH's "Well, not in the traditional sense"

(11:35). Here, COACH means that DIANE is not a hooker in the traditional sense of the word

"hooker;" his utterance omits both the subject ("Diane" or "she") and the main verb ("is"). Other

examples, such as BOY's "Gross," SUMNER's "True," SAM's "Too close to call," NORM's

"Not enough," COACH's "Finest young lady I ever met," and CARLA's "The Colletti

Academy," can be analyzed similarly. Occasionally, both the subject and a verb other than the

main verb were deleted, such as following DIANE's question to COACH, "You're writing a

novel?" (17:04) when COACH answers, "No, [I am] reading one" (17:06), omitting the auxiliary *be* form.

Still more potentially challenging are utterances that are both multi-clausal and reduced. For instance, take CARLA's "You don't buy that excuse, I'll quit, 'cause I don't work for a man who has no compassion for my children" (8:16). CARLA's utterance here contains four clauses, and one of them is reduced, though not by omission of subject or of verb but rather of the word "if." In conditionals like this one, the assertional force of the subordinate clause is canceled; this is the case with CARLA's statement here, but the force cancellation is rendered less obvious by her omission of "if." Such utterances may be challenging to non-native speakers of English–even more so when they are uttered as rapidly as CARLA's–but arguably they represent the way native English speakers converse with each other more accurately than most textbooks.

Locutionary assertions are not alone in having these multi-clausal and/or reduction features. Interrogatives do as well, and so do commands. Consider DIANE's utterance "If you were so good, why aren't you still playing?" (10:21) or CARLA's utterance to SAM, referring to DIANE: "Well, tell her nibs I'm sorry" (8:59). The locutionary type of the former is a complex wh- interrogative, whereas the latter is a complex command. Further consider CARLA's "If you're not, I apologize, but is your name Sumner Sloane?" (15:34), which is a compound of a complex assertion and a yes-no interrogative.

There are rules about how to "break the rules" in natural English conversation. Locutionary statements, questions, and commands all follow different rules about which parts may be deleted. Whereas it is common to delete both the subject and the main verb of a statement, it is more common in the dialogue of this episode to delete an auxiliary verb. SAM asks COACH, "[Do you] think I was too hard on her?" and later, "[Are you] still working on that

novel, huh, Coach?" The subject and the auxiliaries *do* and *are,* respectively, are deleted. NORM's question to DIANE, "You, miss–What you reading?" deletes the auxiliary *are*. On the other hand, suggestion questions often follow a different reduction pattern, depending on how they are analyzed: BOY's "How about a beer, chief?" or SAM's "How about an ID?" might be construed as reductions of "How [do you feel] about [giving (/ showing) me] a beer (/ an ID)?" in which case a subject and more than one verb are deleted. But even more than this may be deleted, as DIANE's question to NORM shows:

NORM: Wouldn't you love to see Sammy there flinging the old horsehide again?

DIANE: Flinging what? (9:35—9:36)

Commands so frequently do not contain subjects that commands reduced in this way are considered standard forms. But in the *Cheers* script, they often also omit a main verb, such as in CARLA's "[Wait] just a minute," NORM's "Well, yeah, [give me] one more quick one, Coach," or COACH's "Yeah, just [wait] a sec."

Whether a locutionary form contains more information than a prototypical statement, question, or command (as is the case with multi-clausal sentences) or contains less information than a standard one (as with a reduction), the likely result is that the utterance will be relatively difficult for a non-native speaker of English to syntactically decode. It is possible for a student of English to become advanced in the written forms of English without learning how to understand reductions or to infer their meanings from context. A student looking for authentic examples of how reductions are used will encounter an abundance in *Cheers*. On the other hand, students who are insufficiently equipped with the language proficiency to interpret reduced statements would benefit from explicit instructional support in this area before or during exposure to this episode or another like it.

In conclusion, the locutionary forms in *Cheers* are often compound or complex multi-clausal structures, requiring competency with advanced grammar (though not necessarily explicit knowledge of it) for dialogue to be comprehended. Equally important, familiarity with reduced forms and competency in decoding their implied (omitted) parts of speech is necessary in order for viewers to comprehend the dialogue. It is important for instructors to be conscious of the level of complexity involved in such utterances.

As mentioned above, the word "that" is a likely source of confusion for ELs because it has multiple functions. Aside from the deictic functions discussed above, it can be a subordinating conjunction. In *Cheers* as in natural English conversation, native English speakers often show habitual "that"-deletion—the process by which the complete sentence "I told her that you're here" is changed to DIANE's utterance, "I told her you're here" (3:53). The practice of "that"-deletion correlates positively with the involved (as opposed to informational) quality of a text (Al-Surmi, 2012, p. 677). This is akin to saying that "that"-deletion is statistically more common in conversational settings than in textbooks or lectures. The fact that "that"-deletion abounds in *Cheers* suggests a way in which the sitcom is ostensibly authentic as a representation of natural English conversation. "That"-deletion presents an obstacle for ELs: when they are listening to (or reading) complex, multi-clausal sentences, omission of the subordinating conjunction makes it harder to identify or isolate subordinate clauses to comprehend a speaker's (or writer's) overall meaning. These features are syntactic, not pragmatic. But it is essential for ELs to learn how certain syntactic structures are used pragmatically.

Types of Illocutionary Acts

The illocutionary types, according to John Searle (1976), are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (pp. 354-361). To decide which utterances belong to

which category, it was necessary to understand Searle's definitions of these five classes. Searle's

definitions are based on his notion of directions of fit between world and words. There are two

directions of fit, according to Searle: words-to-world and world-to-words. Searle (1976)

illustrates the distinction with an analogy:

> Suppose a man goes to the supermarket with a shopping list given him by his wife on
>
> which are written the words 'beans, butter, bacon, and bread'. Suppose as he goes around
>
> with his shopping cart selecting these items, he is followed by a detective who writes
>
> down everything he takes. As they emerge from the store both shopper and detective will
>
> have identical lists. But the function of the two lists will be quite different. In the case of
>
> the shopper's list, the purpose of the list is, so to speak, to get the world to match the
>
> words; the man is supposed to make his actions fit the list. In the case of the detective, the
>
> purpose of the list is to make the words match the world; the man is supposed to make the
>
> list fit the actions of the shopper. (p. 3)

In Searle's analogy, the shopper's list's direction of fit is world-to-words, but the

detective's list's direction of fit is words-to-world. Searle's argument for these two directions of

fit is certainly correct. His analogy shows a scenario in which two lists exist which have identical

content but which are nonetheless different with respect to their direction of fit. Searle seems to

assume that these two different directions of fit–world-to-words and words-to-world–are the only

two directions of fit that are possible in language. (It does not follow for Searle, however, that all

illocutionary acts show either a world-to-words or a words-to-world direction of fit; some may

exhibit no direction of fit, while others may exhibit both directions of fit.)

According to Searle's (1976) definition of representatives, "The point or purpose of the

members of the representative class is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's

being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition" (p. 10). The direction of fit for

representatives is words-to-world. In my analysis of *Cheers*, I accept Searle's definition entirely.

Often, my task of doing so is clear cut: for instance, SUMNER's "the phone's back here" (03:16)

is true if and only if the telephone SUMNER refers to is in the location SUMNER indicates by

"back here" as he walks toward the back of the bar Cheers. The statement represents a relatively

simple state of affairs involving a speaker, a payphone, a setting, and a spatial relation among

them. A clear-cut example of a representative speech act is found in CARLA's report that

CARLA's husband said CARLA "wouldn't fit in with the other repairmen's wives" (13:03). This

is a speech report which hinges for its truth not on whether CARLA would not fit in with the

wives of her former husband's coworkers but merely on whether CARLA's husband in fact

made such a claim. SUMNER's *boast* that "I'm Dr. Sumner Sloane, professor of world literature

at the U" is another representative; either the character holds the position he claims to, or he does

not. Some *complaints* would be harder to verify, such as COACH's "I got an awful headache all

of a sudden" (9:19). These statements refer to internal states and can only be verified by the

person having the experience; nevertheless, they are true or false and as such should be classed

with representatives.

Representatives must also include opinions. At first blush, this seems to contradict

Searle's (1976) claim that "All of the members of the representative class are assessable on the

dimension of assessment which includes true and false" (10). Consider utterances like SAM's

remark that DIANE's excuse for SAM "wasn't that great a lie" (4:51), or DIANE's praise for

SUMNER when she pines, "He's the most brilliant man I've ever known," or even CARLA's

vague generalization, "I'm usually very punctual." These statements are not as obviously truth

conditional as my earlier set of examples, given that there is no fact of the matter that makes

DIANE's lie "great" or not, nor that makes SUMNER "brilliant" or not, nor that makes CARLA "punctual" or not. Nevertheless, I classified all such statements as *representatives*. Additionally, I considered counterfactual statements, such as SAM's "If I didn't work here, I'd fire me on the spot" (4:39) to be representatives, and thus to be assessable as true or false in a way that I believe agrees with Searle. This is less obvious, because representatives are defined by the force component of assertion, and SAM's subordinate clause above "if I didn't work here" does not involve SAM asserting that he does not work at the bar Cheers; similarly, the main clause "I'd fire me on the spot" does not involve any assertion about what SAM will really do. Nevertheless, the utterance overall asserts something, albeit hypothetically, and as such, counterfactuals ought to be classed as representatives. Further, although it may be impossible to judge whether CARLA is usually very punctual, since no definitions of usual or punctual are established, CARLA's statement "I'm usually very punctual" could nevertheless be a veiled way of saying that CARLA believes that CARLA is usually very punctual, which would be true if and only if CARLA believes the content of her claim. According to Searle (1976), the sincerity condition of an assertion is that the speaker must believe the content of their claim (p. 4). Whether CARLA believes what she says about herself determines the truth or falsity of her claim, and for this reason I categorize utterances like these examples all as representatives.

Searle's (1976) category of directives includes all "attempts […] by the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (p. 11). Directives range in their degree of what Searle calls illocutionary "force" from SAM's reluctant suggestion to DIANE that "you could work here" (21:13) to SUMNER's comparatively forceful "I insist that you have my grandmother's antique gold wedding ring" (02:59), and everything in between. Whether an utterance is gentle or forceful, or whether it is asked politely or demanded outright, it is a directive. Searle (1976)

mentions questions only in a brief footnote: "Questions are directives, since they are attempts to get the hearer to perform a speech act" (p. 11). Nearly all questions are directives, but to the understandable confusion of non-native English speakers, not all questions ask for an answer in the form of a speech act. Often, utterances that are formed like questions are really requests. Take BOY's "How about a beer, chief?" (0:38), or SAM's "How about an ID?" (0:41). It would not be suitable to merely answer "sure," or "here you are;" in fact, such words are unnecessary altogether. Such questions ask not for words but for a beer or a form of ID. In addition to questions, statements that on the surface may appear representative of states of affairs are in fact disguised directives.

An undisguised directive would be, "Give me a beer," but this is only one sentence that was classified as such: others include SUMNER's instructions to DIANE, "you sit at the bar and you chat with Sam while I'm gone" (6:51), DIANE's polite request to SAM, "I'd like a bottle of your best champagne" (4:48), and NORM's fragment, "One more quick one, Coach" (12:25). How many questions ask to be satisfied by drinks or by yes-no answers or by a series of directions to the nearest bathroom? Findings here are likely to be useful to ESL instruction in revealing the confusingly divergent grammatical forms that directives may appropriately assume in different situations involving participants' different social statuses, relationships, settings, and communicative intentions.

Commissives, Searle's (1976) third class of illocutionary types, are "those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action" (p. 11). Promises fall into this category. DIANE's utterance, "Yes, I'll take a message," (4:17) is a commissive speech act. In uttering it, DIANE commits herself to the act of taking a message for SAM. Refusals are less obvious but are best classed as commissives as well. They

commit the speaker to a course of action that is defined by what it is not. To illustrate this, consider SAM's remark to BOY, "I'm sorry, soldier" (01:18): this releases SAM from any hypothetical commitment to selling BOY a beer, and it commits SAM to the converse course of action—namely, of not selling BOY a beer. However, this refusal is an indirect commissive, in that it lacks a "no," "won't," or "won't"; in contrast, DIANE's above commissive is explicit, containing both a "yes" and the contraction "I'll." I analyzed 25 speech acts in *Cheers*, including both direct and indirect ones, and including among the indirect ones several types of indirectness which are analyzed later on in my sections on comparisons between locutionary and illocutionary type and on rhetorical indirectness.

Searle's (1976) fourth class, expressives, is defined as one with the illocutionary point "to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content" (p. 12). Expressives include words used to show gratitude to the hearer. "Thanks" or "Thank you" initiates an utterance pair that may be completed by another expressive form: "You're welcome" expresses the generosity of the speaker toward the other, in reference to the same content for which "Thank you" expresses gratitude. But "You're welcome" is formal and so is rarely heard at Cheers, where words of thanks usually get acknowledged silently. "You're welcome" is uttered only once, by Diane, not to anyone at the bar but to an unknown caller—there, the expression is appropriate to the speech register, given that DIANE is answering the telephone for a business. Soon after, DIANE's ironic "Thank you" to SAM is met with an equally ironic "Don't mention it" (8:07). Much later, DIANE's sincere "Thank you" to SAM receives instead his nonchalant yet sincere "Yeah, sure" (18:55-18:58). In such cases, the "You're welcome" is not spoken, but the same discourse function is served by other words befitting informal settings, speaker preferences, personalities, and so on. "Welcome"

takes on a different discourse function in DIANE's "Welcome to Cheers!" (23:13), representing

the whole establishment in expressing an attitude of generosity toward patrons entering the bar.

Most such expressives are easy to identify for what they are expressing, but not all.

Consider SAM's expressive following DIANE's phone call to the airline agent:

DIANE: "Uh yes, I'd like to change the reservations for Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Sloane,

flight 481 to Barbados."

DIANE: They did?

DIANE: Are you—are you sure?

DIANE: Uh, no, thank you.

SAM: I'm sorry. (20:20—20:47)

"Sorry" is a word often used both in apology and in condolences, and there may be

misunderstanding among viewers about which SAM means in his "I'm sorry" to DIANE (20:48),

especially since SAM's behavior leading up to it is rude enough to warrant an apology. To

understand that SAM is offering condolences to DIANE, an NNSE needs not only to grasp that

"sorry" can be used to express a sentiment quite distinct from that of apology but also to

comprehend what has just happened to DIANE that calls for condolences: DIANE's fiancée has

just left DIANE for his ex-wife; exposition of this plot point may be easy to miss for non-native

viewers.

Searle's final category of illocutionary act is that of *declarations*. Declarations mostly

overlap with what Austin (1962) calls "performatives:" a class of speech acts that bring about the

states of affairs which they describe, such that "saying" something can, under the right set of

circumstances, "make it so" (p. 7). Declarations are made true by speakers uttering them under

appropriate conditions. Searle (1976) writes, "It is the defining characteristic of this class that the

successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality; successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world" (p. 13).

To illustrate, consider a hypothetical example: Toward the end of the episode, SAM offers DIANE a job, but this is not yet a declaration, because DIANE initially refuses. Perhaps at some point in the time that elapses before the final scene, in which we learn DIANE accepted the job, there was a job interview at the end of which SAM said, "You're hired!" Such a statement would have been made true by SAM's saying it under the right conditions. Those conditions include 1) that SAM indeed has the authority to offer DIANE the job in question, and 2) that DIANE accepts the job. This would be a clear-cut example of what Searle means by a *declaration* (or by what Austin means by a *performative*). But it does not appear in the episode. In fact, while Searle and Austin are correct that this category exists, declarations are the rarest illocutionary type in my chosen *Cheers* episode. There is an off-screen declaration which is made by BARBARA and which SUMNER reports to DIANE: SUMNER says, "She insists that you have the ring," suggesting that BARBARA, who was the owner of SUMNER's grandmother's antique gold wedding ring and therefore had the authority to offer it to DIANE. But this happens over the phone, unheard by anyone other than SUMNER; therefore, it does not count as an utterance in the dialogue.

Consider an exchange between SAM and DIANE:

SAM: For lying for me, I'll uh buy you a first drink.

DIANE: Oh, uh, I'd like a bottle of your best champagne.

SAM: It wasn't that great a lie.

DIANE: No, no—we'll pay for it.

DIANE: We're on our way to get married.

SAM: Oh?

SAM: Well, hey—then this *is* on me. (4:43-4:59).

When SAM initially offers to buy DIANE a drink, his utterance is commissive. The utterance does not bring about a state of affairs by SAM's uttering it; it only commits SAM to a course of action, in the event that DIANE takes SAM up on the offer. But later, when SAM declares, "Well, hey–then this *is* on me" (4:59), he utters a declaration which does not merely commit him to providing a bottle of champagne to DIANE but in fact brings about a state of affairs in which the requested bottle of champagne is now officially DIANE's. SAM's declaration is apparently a felicitous one; SAM has the authority to make the declaration in virtue of being the owner of the bar Cheers and the champagne within it, being the holder of a liquor license, and given that DIANE implicitly accepts the offer, does not continue to insist on paying for it, and so on. SAM's declaration above was the only one I found in the entire episode.

Some utterances were difficult to identify as a single type of illocutionary act. Of these, the difficulty was sometimes due to ambiguity of meaning; elsewhere, two distinct illocutionary forces appeared to co-occur in an utterance. Consider DIANE and SAM first, as DIANE is answering the phone at the bar:

DIANE: Are you Sam?

SAM: Yes.

DIANE (to CALLER 1): Yes, he's here.

DIANE (to SAM): Someone named Vicky.

SAM: No, no, no, no, no. (3:42-3:46)

The force of SAM's "No, no, no, no, no" depends on what this negative answer is intended to negate: 1), SAM may mean to "take back" or cancel his earlier affirmative response, i.e., "I'm not SAM"—which would also be representative (and also contradictory); 2), SAM could mean to counter DIANE's assertion that "he's here," in which "no" is short for "I'm not here," which is a representative (albeit contradictory) illocutionary act; or 3), he could be refusing DIANE's tacit request to take the phone call, as if to say, "I won't take the call," or "Don't make me take the call," conveying either commissive or directive force, respectively. The suddenness of SAM's change in demeanor between "yes" to "no" is the source of humor here, highlighting interpretation 1) above; however, SAM goes on to compel DIANE to lie for him to CALLER 1 (VICKY) that SAM is not at the bar, supporting interpretation 2); but ultimately, SAM succeeds in getting DIANE not to make him take the call, making 3) seem valid, too. Incredibly, SAM's repeated monosyllable manages not only to do at least as much work as two fuller speech acts, but to extend at least two types of illocutionary force to those implicatures. Fortunately for NNSEs, the above scene is narrated visually with props, faces, and gestures, making SAM's intentions behind "no, no, no, no, no" abundantly clear.

It is unlikely that classification would be similarly confounded again, but one that it is sure to encounter is tag questions, such as DIANE's to CARLA: "You're a bitter little person, aren't you?" On the surface, DIANE's utterance is both representative (DIANE believes CARLA feels bitter about the opposite sex) and interrogative (DIANE wants CARLA to (dis)confirm that CARLA is bitter). It will not do to parse such utterances as two separate speech acts in sequence. To do so would indicate a speaker's sudden shift from stronger to weaker belief. In fact, DIANE's questions do not indicate a shift from confidence toward doubt, but rather indicate a degree of belief somewhere between a representative (such as "You are bitter," period) and an

interrogative ("Are you bitter?"). That degree of belief could range closer to an assertion or to neutrality, depending on the speaker's intention.

At first, I was unsure how to classify cohortatives. Cohortatives often begin with the word "Let's __", a contraction of "let us." This includes a first-person plural pronoun, which is appropriate, given that cohortatives, though they are uttered by an individual speaker, refer to both the speaker and the hearer. Like a commissive, a cohortative seems to commit the speaker to a course of action, but like a directive, it directs the hearer to comply with or partake in that same course of action. Consider BOY's utterance to SUMNER and DIANE: "Why don't we celebrate with a drink?" (2:43). BOY's utterance does not include the word "let's," but it is indirectly equivalent to the direct cohortative "Let's celebrate with a drink." Even though BOY's utterance is a locutionary wh- question, BOY is not merely urging the others to drink but is committing himself to drinking with them, at least on the condition that they agree. Likewise, when SUMNER replies to BOY's cohortative utterance with "I think not" (2:45), his utterance sounds cohortative insofar as it may appear equivalent to "Let's *not* (celebrate with a drink)." When DIANE says to SUMNER, "We've got a plane to catch" and "We can talk about it on the flight," she is indirectly urging that the two of them quickly go to the airport, which makes these two speech acts cohortative as well.

I decided to classify most of these cohortative speech acts as directives. They also exhibit features of commissives, but these features are found in the explicatures of such speech acts; they do not extend to illocutionary point. The illocutionary point of cohortatives is not to commit the speaker to a course of action, but to direct the hearer to follow the speaker in that course of action. It is the contracted "us" in "let's" that makes it explicit that the speaker of the directive expresses commitment to the same action. There is one exception among the above examples:

SUMNER's "I think not" is not a directive; rather, it is a commissive. SUMNER merely refuses to drink *with* BOY; he is not forbidding BOY from drinking, even though part of the implicature of SUMNER's refusal is that SUMNER believes BOY to be too young to drink.

Searle's (1976) classification of illocutionary acts has been very helpful in my analysis of *Cheers*, and I have followed his classification almost completely. But I differ with Searle on one point, and that point is the assumption that there are only *two* possible directions of fit. Hanks (2015) has suggested a third direction of fit: words-to-words. An analogy for Hanks's third direction of fit can be drawn from my chosen *Cheers* episode, which (similarly to Searle's) involves two lists (unlike Searle's) transmitted orally rather than in writing. CARLA says to SAM: "I need two vodka gimlets, one straight up, one blended, rocks, Chivas rocks, soda, a Comfort Manhattan, no cherry, a white wine spritzer, an Old Bushmill Irish decaf, hold the sugar" (21:32). CARLA wants SAM to produce (actual) drinks that match her list (in English) of (desired) drinks; she wants to bring the world into agreement with the words, i.e., the direction of fit is world-to-words. A moment later, talking with DIANE, SAM gets distracted and forgets CARLA's drink order. He asks CARLA, "What am I making?" meaning "What did you tell me to make?" Before CARLA can repeat the list, DIANE replies, "Two vodka gimlets, one straight up, one blended, rocks, Chivas rocks, soda, a Comfort Manhattan, no cherry, a white wine spritzer with a twist, one Old Bushmill lrish decaf, hold the sugar" (22:37-22:40). At first glance, this sounds analogous to Searle's analogy involving the shopper's list and the detective's list. Here, too, there are two lists which are identical in their content but which differ in their direction of fit. The purpose of CARLA's utterance is to request SAM to produce actual drinks to match the group's orders–i.e, to make the world match the words. In that way, CARLA's list is like the shopper's list. Suppose DIANE never heard CARLA's list but had produced her list by

watching SAM as she saw the drinks being made. In such a scenario, DIANE's utterance would have the same direction of fit as the detective's list. Instead of this, DIANE chooses her words based on other words coming from CARLA. SAM's utterance could be construed as a request for information. Searle would class SAM's utterance as a directive, but Hanks (2015) points out the distinction between asking and ordering (pp. 186-204). As Hanks (2015) clarifies, "Requests can only be satisfied by the person to whom they are given. Questions can be answered by anyone" (188). SAM expects to get that information from CARLA, but when DIANE provides it, it is as useful to him as if CARLA had repeated her own utterance; following DIANE's answer, SAM ceases to seek out the requested information from CARLA, because he already has what he needs.

Comparisons Between Locutionary and Illocutionary Types

After identifying all the representative utterances of *Cheers*, I compared the locutionary and illocutionary types of all the representative speech acts in the episode. This was useful in identifying many of the speech acts as indirect; I specified in Chapter 2 which form-force alignments would be considered direct or indirect. A quarter of all speech in the episode was indirect in this way.

Most utterances (73.4%) were direct speech with respect to form-force alignment, though of these many were indirect for other reasons. The most common reason for indirectness with respect to form-force misalignment and resulting indirect speech was the use of structures other than explicitly imperative ones to convey a request. As Figure 4 (c) reveals, less than a quarter of directives were articulated as commands; the remainder were disguised as statements, questions, or other forms. The other illocutionary types were overwhelmingly standard with respect to

form-force alignment: nearly 98% of representatives were phrased as statements, and over 97%

of interrogatives were phrased as questions.

I classified nearly all expressives as direct speech with respect to form-force alignment.

The identification of a speech act as expressive often depends on one or two words, such as

"Thanks," "Sorry," or "Congratulations;" indeed, such key words are often form the whole of an

utterance and may be considered standard forms. If all that is required is a word, then an

omission would result in not a reduced form but in no form at all. Directness with regard to

form-force alignment is for expressive speech acts a low bar to reach, or perhaps it should be

said that indirectness is a high bar to reach. A thank you requires only the word "thanks," at

minimum; an apology only the word "sorry," congratulations only the word "congratulations,"

and so on. The syntactic forms of expressives vary widely, but form-force misalignment is rare

in such utterances. A rare counterexample is found in SAM's expressive to DIANE:

DIANE: Wish me luck.

SAM: Luck. (23:08—23:09)

This is a bit of linguistic humor from SAM. His oddly incomplete expression of good will

to DIANE highlights an oddity of the familiar discourse routine:

A: "Wish me luck."

B: "Good luck!"

"Wish me luck" really means "Wish me good luck." But social conventions dictate that

"good" is almost never included—not because all luck is good luck, but because the only kind of

luck one ever wants to be wished by others is good luck. But those conventions also dictate

(contradictorily, it seems) that the desired response does include "good" (perhaps because good

luck is not the only kind of luck people wish upon others). As "good luck" may be considered a

reduction of the form "I wish you good luck," "Luck" by itself must be a reduction of "I wish you luck," which leaves one wondering what kind of luck SAM wishes upon DIANE. SAM's response is partly a linguistic joke: on a literal reading of DIANE's request, she does not ask for "good" luck but for luck, period—so SAM cheekily gives her exactly what she seems to ask for. Another element of humor comes from SAM's stone-faced delivery of his line, which makes the viewer wonder what kind of luck he wishes upon DIANE.

Commissives require not merely the syntactic form of a statement but one with both a first-person singular subject and a verb in future tense, e.g., "I'll take a message" (4:17). A simple "yes" could be considered a reduced form of such a statement, e.g. "Yes, I'll take a message" or "No, I will not." As a result, I classified them as direct speech with respect to form-force alignment. In any case, I found zero instances of "yes" or "no" given as answers to directives. A majority of commissives (15 of 25, or 60%) were direct with respect to form-force alignment.

Finally, the standard form of a declarative is similarly fine-grained to a commissive speech act, but there was only one declarative identified, and it appeared to be form-force aligned insofar as "This is on me" is phrased with declarative force in a manner no weaker than, say, "I hereby declare that this bottle of champagne is on the house."

The strongest correlation was between locutionary statements and illocutionary representatives. Such speech acts use statement form to convey representative content. Single speakers may and often do take turns longer than a single utterance in which a long string of representative statements are uttered without sounding unnatural, as DIANE illustrates in a monologue:

DIANE: These poor wretches with no one in the world to turn to but some stranger who mixes drinks.

DIANE: I met SUMNER two years ago.

DIANE: I was so flattered when he went out of his way to pick me as his teaching assistant.

DIANE: I'm still kind of in awe of him, you know.

DIANE: He's the most brilliant man I've ever known.

DIANE: For the last two years, he's been the most important thing in my life, and now I think I may be losing him. (18:10-18:37).

Of 240 representative utterances, fewer than 3% were phrased as other than statements. The exceptions were problematic utterances that had disputable status as representatives. Consider CARLA's question below:

CARLA: You know, there's a group over there arguing about the sweatiest movie ever made.

NORM: The what?

CARLA: What movie did people sweat the most in. (13:32-13:39)

CARLA's question is probably not first and foremost a question at all but a representative. NORM's question to CARLA is a reduced way of asking, "What are they arguing about?" and CARLA's answer may likewise be seen as a reduced way of answering NORM: "They are arguing about the question of what movie people sweated the most in." If so, NORM's statement is a representative, but it is a rare case of one in which the reduced syntax is identical to the complete syntax of the question, "What movie did people sweat the most in?" Then again, perhaps CARLA is not really answering NORM's question but encouraging the spread of the

question to NORM's table; that is, she is sincerely asking NORM in what movie people sweat the most. If it is an exception to the general correlation between sentence and representative, it does little to weaken the strength of the generalization.

DIANE's utterance to CARLA, "You're a bitter little person, aren't you?" (12:38), is a question in the locutionary sense, but utterances with question tags sometimes appear to straddle a fence between representatives and interrogatives. I classified DIANE's here as representative, because I believed DIANE was interested not in getting CARLA to (dis)confirm that CARLA was bitter; rather, DIANE was asserting her opinion. This interpretation may be disputed, but clearly, representatives are overwhelmingly phrased as statements.

Of the 25 commissives in the episode (excluding NORM's single mixed utterance, which is partly commissive), 15 (60%) were identified as explicit commissives in virtue of their inclusion of *will, going to*, or a contraction such as *I'll* or *gonna*. In response to directives, refusals and acceptances were both classified as commissives. Of six refusals and acceptances, zero were explicit with yes or no; one of the commissives (4%) was an implicit acceptance "Fine" (20:00); and five of the commissives (20%) were indirect refusals (e.g. "I'm sorry," "I think not," or "I can't…"). Two commissives (8%) were reduced statements: "Tell you what" (4:43) and "Home to my book" (16:55). One commissive (4%) was an indirect announcement ("I'm knocking off, Sam," (16:53) which is a slang expression that means "I'm finished with work") and could be identified as a commissive only in its implicature (roughly, COACH is finished with work, *so he will go home*). Only one commissive (4%) was phrased as other than a statement; "Just let me call Barbara and see if she's home" (3:14) exhibited the form of a command. Although SUMNER's choice of locutionary form may have been selected for politeness—it would be appropriate for SUMNER to ask DIANE to excuse him while he makes

a phone call)—his illocutionary point here is not to receive permission but to express his intention to call his ex-wife BARBARA. "Let me […]" in the context here is commissive. As per explicature, SUMNER means he intends to call BARBARA, and in doing so, expects to conclude based on BARBARA's answering the phone (or not) that she is home (or not, for there are no mobile phones in 1982). As per implicature, however, SUMNER's utterance commits him to seeking BARBARA's permission to visit BARBARA at her home (for there would be little point in merely learning BARBARA's whereabouts).

Very little can be said about declarations, as only one was found in the dialogue of this episode. The only declaration (100%) was a statement. This is not surprising. It is unlikely that I could mean "I declare that *x*" by uttering a locutionary question or command about content *x*.

In the most catastrophic of the misunderstandings depicted in the dialogue, SUMNER rushes out of Cheers a second time for the same professed purpose of obtaining DIANE's promised ring. But as he rushes out the door, he makes a fatal error:

DIANE: Sumner...

SUMNER: Yes?

DIANE: How about a kiss?

SUMNER: Maybe. I'll play it by ear. (16:15-16:20)

Diane's indirect speech act here is not a question—despite its phrasing as one—but rather a *command*. DIANE is telling SUMNER to kiss her without the authoritative-sounding language of direct commands. As Chaika (2008) explains, "phrasing as a question maintains the fiction that the one commanded has the right to refuse, even when [they] do not" (p. 288). The appropriate response in discourse is the production not of speech but of the desired behavior— here, a kiss. Sumner not only withholds the kiss (an implicit rejection) but also makes an

unsolicited oral response. The content of that response is so unexpected that the viewer must

pause and arrive at the implicature in a roundabout way. The idiomatic phrasing in the indirect

statement "I'll play it by ear" is equivalent to "I'll think about it." The implicature is that Sumner

will consider Diane's suggestion; he is opting for deferral, which elsewhere might but here

cannot complete any utterance pair, for no such suggestion has been made. For Sumner's

response to make sense, Diane would have had to suggest that her fiancé kiss his ex-wife *instead*

of Diane. That doubtful implicature is precisely what Sumner thinks she means, and this is

devastating to Diane.

   According to one interpretation of DIANE's utterance, "How about a kiss?" DIANE's

chosen locutionary form sounds like a suggestion. To interpret it as such is a mistake SUMNER

makes, and one which English learners lacking pragmatics might make. The utterance in the way

I have transcribed it is punctuated with a question mark; correspondingly, DIANE's utterance

shows rising intonation. A suggestion is typically a yes-no question. It would be possible to say,

"How about a kiss?" and to mean it as a suggestion. One situation in which this might make

sense would the following, which is not a quotation from *Cheers*:

   A: "What should I give to X as a way of saying thank you for the ring?"

   B: "How about a kiss?"

   In that case, "How about a kiss?" is equivalent to "I suggest you give X a kiss."

SUMNER evidently thinks this is the case when he responds, "Maybe; I'll play it by ear." The

appropriate response to such a suggestion might be "good idea" (meaning "yes, I will kiss X") or

"I don't think so" (meaning "no, I won't") or even SUMNER's "I'll play it by ear" (meaning

"maybe"). If DIANE's utterance were regarding BARBARA, it might have carried the weak

imperative force of a suggestion; But DIANE's utterance is not a mild suggestion; it is a strong

directive. When one says to their fiancée, "How about a kiss?" it is inappropriate for the hearer to decline.

While SUMNER misreads a command as a suggestion, the gravity of his mistake has more to do with personal deixis than with indirect speech; he misinterprets the implied object of DIANE's suggested kiss to be BARBARA. This confusion is only possible for SUMNER given that in English, the directive "How about [giving me / her] a kiss?" may omit the verb phrase and its indirect object "me" or "her." Many facets of pragmatics factor into such misunderstandings, and the strength of illocutionary force is among those factors.

Rhetorical Indirectness

In Chapter 2, I outlined three types of indirect speech. So far, the present chapter has discussed two of these: reductions and form-force alignment. According to my data, these only comprise a minority of the indirect speech in *Cheers*. As Figure 8 illustrates, most indirect speech is indirect for some reason other than or in addition to either of the two analyzed above.

Consider CARLA's declarative question to SAM, "You don't like it?" (8:25). Syntax here indicates a statement, but intonation rises as in a yes-no question. Since intonation is part of locutionary form (at least for my purposes) it follows that declarative questions are indeed locutionary questions, rather than statements. But CARLA does not wish SAM to answer. I classified rhetorical questions as directives. They do not ask for information; they ask the hearer to continue to yield the floor. Analyzed thus, rhetorical questions function in conversation analysis as turn allocation units as defined by Wong and Waring (2012).

The distinction is only meaningful if one assumes (as I have) that interrogatives and directives are distinct types. According to Searle's taxonomy (1976), there are only two possible directions of fit—namely, words-to-world and world-to-words—and Searle attributes the latter to

speech acts regardless of whether they want beer or answers—i.e., whether the speaker wants a speech act or any other kind of act from the hearer (for answers are speech, and speech is action).

For Searle, the indirectness of a rhetorical question would be found not in any discrepancy between its being phrased as a question and its being intended as other than a question; rather, it consists in being phrased as a question when its illocutionary point is other than to get the hearer to provide an answer.

There are questions in indirect speech beyond those posed as "rhetorical questions" in the familiar sense of not being meant to be answered. Earlier, I noted that SAM's rising intonation at the end of "Must've fought in Vietnam?" identifies his declarative form as a question, and not misleadingly, for SAM does expect BOY to answer the question. But SAM's question is indirect for other rhetorical reasons. To understand SAM's deeper meaning, we need an approach based not on speech act theory but on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle of communication or on relevance theory as developed by Wilson and Sperber (2012) and others. Grice might have called SAM's utterance flouting, but it is unclear which maxim is being flouted. Certainly, SAM is flouting Grice's Maxim of Relevance, insofar as fighting in Vietnam is a topic of irrelevance to BOY's objective (to buy a beer) or SAM's (to get BOY to leave the bar Cheers). Equally certain is that even as SAM flouts relevance, he does so in a way that ensures the relevance of his contribution overall: he is interrogating BOY to expose BOY's phony identity claim. This in turn exposes BOY's reasons for showing a fake ID: he needs to pass himself off as of legal drinking age to buy beer, and the only reason he would lie about his identity would be that he is not old enough to buy beer. None of these things need to be said out loud given that the exchange takes place between native speakers. But such implications rest on a network of tacit knowledge of

context, including factors variously broad or narrow—a puzzle in which a single missing piece

may lead to a breakdown in understanding.

Such pieces include background knowledge of the society's laws and culture surrounding

the consumption of alcohol, but they also include knowledge of prevailing linguistic habits.

Though declarative questions convey an attitude of disbelief, they often indicate that the speaker

expects the yes-answer. No-answers are less common. SAM could have replied to DIANE's

"You know why you don't like SUMNER?" (19:16) hypothetically by saying, "actually, I *do* like

SUMNER," but DIANE does not expect such an answer when she asks SAM. Her question is

rhetorical. SAM's answer, "Because he's goofy," is rhetorically indirect as well, insofar as he

knows that DIANE's question seeks not an answer but to hold the floor and to set the rhetorical

stage for her defense of SUMNER, her rebut to SAM, and her counterattack that SAM lacks all

SUMNER's desirable qualities. SAM's choice of a declarative question to ask for verification is

misleading. It is misleading because it expected affirmative answer to SAM's "Must've fought in

Vietnam?" suggests an assumption which SAM does not hold. Insofar as this assumption is

widespread in English pragmatics, SAM also flouts the Maxim of Quality, namely, to try to

make one's contribution true, and to avoid asserting what one lacks good reason to believe.

Waiting alone, Diane overhears Sam rudely sharing sensitive information about her:

DIANE: Excuse me. I hate to keep asking for special attention, but could you not discuss

my private life with everyone that comes in?

SAM (to DIANE): What would you like me to tell him?

DIANE: I don't care.

SAM (to COACH): She's a hooker.

COACH: Yeah?

DIANE (to SAM): Thank you.

SAM (to DIANE): Don't mention it. (7:50-8:07)

Sam's statement is not a reduced form, nor does it show form-force misalignment. SAM's remark that Diane is a "hooker" is irony, encoding a proposition opposite to what SAM really means—that Diane is *not* a sex worker. Sam is flouting Grice's maxim of *quality*, which requires of a speaker: "don't say what you lack evidence for" (Grice, 1975, pp. 51-52). Sam has no reason to think that Diane is a sex worker. His remark is a crass sexual joke, but it contains a non-sexual implicature: though SAM has a crude way of doing so, this is his way of saying that he agrees to stop telling others what DIANE does not want them to know. Diane's "thank you" to Sam is sarcastic, yet it doubles as an acknowledgement of his promise. The humor of the exchange, if it can be called funny in any sense, comes from the juxtaposition of DIANE's style of speech and dress with the improbable suggestion of her status as a prostitute: in the society of the story's setting, a prostitute would not dress as DIANE does, nor would they be likely to quote John Donne; DIANE is determined to turn a cold shoulder to anyone who tries to start a conversation with her, which ought to make it obvious that she is not in the line of work SAM refers to.

These bits of contextual knowledge—the significance of DIANE's clothing, her manner of speaking, the sexual culture references, etc.—are what is relevant to understand the meaning of the dialogue in this specific case. In terms of Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, those pieces of knowledge are "the most relevant [ones] compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences" (2012, p. 64). It was far beyond the scope of this research to determine what specific information was relevant to understanding each line of dialogue. Therefore, I mention relevance theory as a lens for understanding rhetorically indirect speech but do not draw

generalizations about these utterances in the episode. What is important to this discussion is that

much of the dialogue was indirect for rhetorical reasons. As shown in Figure 7, this includes

utterances that were indirect purely for their rhetorical features, as well as those which were

additionally indirect in terms of reduction or form-force alignment or a combination of these.

Slang

The slang items from Table 5 are the words not found in dictionaries in the ways they are

used in the dialogue and need to be understood for their slang meanings in order for the dialogue

to be understood. Not much else needs to be said about slang.

When DIANE answers the phone and takes a message for SAM, she reports it to him

presumably verbatim from CALLER 1's (VICKY's) inaudible utterance: "You're a magnificent

pagan beast." This sounds like slang, but it is not a familiar slang expression. It is probably an

invented expression intended as innuendo and may exercise creative license with the word

"pagan," a word which I did not find in a slang dictionary. "Pagan" has a familiar standard

meaning: "A person not subscribing to any major or recognized religion, esp. the dominant

religion of a particular society; *spec.* a heathen, a non-Christian, esp. considered as savage,

uncivilized, etc." (Oxford English Dictionary, 2022). The relevant parts of the standard definition

are "non-Christian," "savage," and "uncivilized"; that is, CALLER 1 (VICKY) means that

SAM's sexual behavior is rough and wild in a way that contrasts to sexual monogamy or

abstinence the likes of which CALLER 1 (VICKY) would consider prudish or unattractive.

"Beast," on the other hand, has several slang definitions from NPDSUE, but they are clearly

irrelevant (except for definition 4, "anything excellent," which I found inadequately specific).

The relevant part of the standard definition is "A person who exhibits base, licentious, or

indulgent behaviour; a person regarded as animal-like in lacking self-control or rational thought"
(Oxford English Dictionary, 2022). This definition is relevant for similar reasons that I found
"pagan" to be relevant above. It may be disputable that the expression in question constitutes
slang, but it cannot be denied that the words carry a non-standard connotation insofar as the
standard meanings have negative connotations, whereas CALLER 1 (VICKY) means them as a
compliment, as evidenced by her use of "magnificent."

References to Background Knowledge About America

Though I was not satisfied with my data in this area—my own biases were involved in
deciding how to carve up background knowledge into categories to a greater extent than other
data sets—a few clear patterns emerged. However, my quantitative findings here did not agree
with my own convictions about what is most important to understand in the episode.

To understand the dialogue of *Cheers*, it is important that viewers understand what a bar
is; they should know the basics of alcohol culture, extending to such areas as social norms for
conducting oneself inside a bar and how they differ for staff as opposed to clientele, men as
opposed to women (in 1982, at least), and so on; laws and norms for selling alcohol at a bar to
customers, such as legal drinking age; and names of alcoholic drinks must be recognized as
names of alcoholic drinks (though it is unnecessary to know specifically of what a given drink
consists). This area had the highest number of references of any of my categories, which is
unsurprising, given that the episode takes place inside a bar.

Another area of knowledge which is widely referred to in the episode is American
football; however, in my opinion, though references to this sport are abundant, they do not
generally concern the plot. In comparison, explicit or even implicit references to marriage and to
traditions and social norms surrounding engagement, wedding ceremonies, potentially, etc., are

notably fewer than sports references; however, they are essential to the plot, arguably even more so than alcohol culture.

Above all else, it is essential to understand that SUMNER and DIANE are engaged and what sort of commitment this is engagement entails. This was only the third highest-ranking area of background knowledge according to my data; however, I believe it is the most important. If the social significance of SUMNER's commitment to DIANE—to take her to the romantic setting of Barbados and to honeymoon with her there as he has promised—is not thoroughly understood, then it will not be as devastating when SUMNER abandons her; moreover, the character arc of DIANE will not be appreciated, when it is her character arc which is the single most essential element of the story in this episode, in this researcher's opinion.

Ranked fourth is American baseball, which—though it is not referred to as often as American football—is more significant to character development in the episode. Viewers who understand that SAM is a formerly great major league pitcher, but a disgraced one, as well as a reformed alcoholic, will learn an important part about SAM's background story that makes SAM a more sympathetic character than might otherwise be possible given his at times callous, demeaning attitude toward DIANE.

Numerous other areas of background knowledge are also alluded to, including popular films, NASA, and so on, but each of these is worth understanding only for the benefit of appreciating isolated pieces of humor. As such, they ought not to define priorities for instruction, but may add additional appreciation for NNSE viewers, depending on time available to instructors.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Though *Cheers* may have been tailored for a native English-speaking American viewership in the 1980s, I have focused on a potential viewership for which *Cheers* was not specially tailored: English learners of other first languages. Research has long been interested in the question of sitcoms' potential value for use in L2 English learning; studies on this question have been available since the 1980s. Research continuing to the present has demonstrated a significant extent to which dialogue in sitcoms represents authentic English speech in comparison with other texts. Assuming one is satisfied that sitcoms have high potential to be helpful in L2 learning, the next question becomes what knowledge of context or language is likely to be needed for NNSEs to understand the dialogue. I have attempted to address this apparent gap in the literature here, focusing on *Cheers*.

The episode deploys a wide range of types of speech acts, showing how native speakers often use reduced or non-standard forms, refer to deictic expressions, alignments between locutionary and illocutionary types of speech acts, and intentional violations of the cooperative principle to achieve their communicative ends. *Cheers*'s dialogue abounds with subtle, context-dependent implications of the same sorts that are abundant in natural English conversation. There is a lot that NNSEs may need to know to successfully grasp these meanings. Deictic expressions can refer to nearly anything at all; what they in fact refer to in any given case must be inferred from context. Speakers often omit crucial meaning words from their utterances, producing

possibly unfamiliar forms, and may choose other misleading structures that belie their communicative intents. NNSEs must identify when a speaker means something other than a strictly literal reading of their utterances. They need to know to which features of the situation (based on the picture built up by the writers and performers) need to be paid attention to, such as both broader societal, cultural, and linguistic norms as well as narrower particulars to characters' immediate intentions or ephemeral situations.

Recommendations for future research extend to other episodes of *Cheers* as well as other sitcoms. Sitcoms of worldwide renown are often the basis of studies, but it need not be true that *Cheers* or *Seinfeld* or *Friends* offer the greatest advantages among candidate sitcoms for use in language learning. *Cheers* is now forty years old. Are more contemporary sitcoms more representative of English discourse as it is spoken today? What representations in *Cheers* of gender, race, etc. would be considered inappropriate by today's standards? Would an episode of the HULU sitcom *Abbott Elementary,* for instance, fare well in any areas in which *Cheers* encounters deficiencies? Another major gap in the research concerns the question, do non-native speakers in fact use sitcoms or other programs as a tool for second language self-study? I have referred anecdotally to reports from my NNSE friends and colleagues, yet I encountered very little in the way of research into the prevailing habits among NNSEs' regarding their independent, self-initiated use of sitcoms. Finally, what is the best way to proceed with instruction? How can a sitcom episode be utilized most effectively in a second language classroom?

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