
Advising as Providing Guidance: A Revised Account of Directive Speech Acts

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Résumé

This paper challenges the traditional view that advising is a subset of directive speech acts primarily aimed at compliance. I argue that advice fundamentally differs from commands and orders because it functions to guide rather than influence the hearer. My proposed categorising directives capture this distinction into speaker-first (S-Directives) and hearer-first (H-Directives). While S-Directives serve the speaker's goals by seeking compliance (e.g., orders, commands), H-Directives-including advice-aim to assist the hearer's deliberation, even when not followed.

This reconceptualisation has significant implications for action theory, as it broadens the understanding of directives to include mental actions such as 'considering' and 'taking into account.' By extending directives beyond physical compliance, my account highlights how speech acts can shape deliberative processes without coercion. I argue that moral advice exemplifies H-Directives because it fosters moral agency by inviting the hearer to engage with moral deliberation rather than demanding compliance. This challenges views that conflate moral directives with mere prescriptions, emphasising the deliberative dimension of moral agency.

This also contributes to the philosophy of language, as I introduce a new way to interpret directive speech acts by showing that indicative sentences, such as "Lying is wrong," can function as H-Directives in context-dependent ways. This challenges standard assumptions that imperatives are the primary linguistic form of directives and underscores the role of speaker intention and conversational context in shaping illocutionary force. By integrating insights from speech act theory, ethics, and action theory, my account proposes a better understanding of advising as an autonomy-respecting, deliberation-fostering act.

Mots-Clés: Directive Speech Acts, Moral Agency, Deliberation, Mental action, Advice

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