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Communicating citizenship in verbal interaction: Principles of a speech act oriented discourse analysis

My aim in this paper is to propose the careful and critical use of conceptual tools inspired by speech act theory in the analysis of discourse¹. Resort to such conceptual tools is most to the point when matters of power are at issue, especially as regards those kinds of power unbalance among the social roles of participants that may be confirmed or enhanced in verbal interaction. Citizenship involves a bundle of rights, obligations, legitimate expectations, which on the one side are in principle established by constitutions and other regulations, but on the other side are also often or even regularly relied upon, appealed to, challenged, confirmed or specified in actual social interaction.

The role that speech acts may play in the analysis of communicating citizenship can best be brought to the fore if speech act theory itself is critically considered and its seemingly uncontroversial claim that language is action is recognized to transcend the guidelines of the received view of linguistic communication as expression and transmission of mental content. Communicating citizenship cannot be reduced to transmission of information, let alone mental content, but consists also or even primarily of ways of acting by which participants recognize or attribute to each other the rights, obligations, expectations etc. that citizenship involves, therefore affecting their actual possession of these. We need, therefore, descriptive tools for representing participants as actors whom rights, obligations, and the like belong to, may be attributed to or subtracted from, and verbal interaction as involving ways of affecting such matters. To this aim, I will introduce into the picture the "deontic modal competence" that participants are endowed with and define speech acts accordingly as bringing about changes in it.

The connection between the proposed use of speech act theory as a resource for describing communicating citizenship and speech act theory as a tradition in the philosophy of language may not be completely clear. Therefore, I would like to begin by recalling some main lines of development in the history of speech act theory as well as some main features of the original Austinian proposal.

1. Speech act theory

There are at least two versions of speech act theory. The work of Austin has often been conflated with that of Searle, but these two philosophers hold deeply different views of language, action, subjectivity, and of philosophy too.

According to Austin the object to be studied by the philosophers of language and linguists is "the total speech act in the total speech situation" (Austin, 1975: 52). But no all encompassing description is possible: every description is inescapably partial, focusing on certain aspects of the described object or event. So the total speech act may be described as a locutionary act (having

meaning), as an illocutionary act (having force), or as a perlocutionary act (bringing about extralinguistic effects). The three Austinian "acts" are aspects of the total speech act and are not meant to be exhaustive of it. This leaves room, in principle, to other, complementary approaches to language and its use.

According to Searle (1969), illocutionary act and speech act coincide. The illocutionary act so conceived includes the propositional act (a theoretical construct reintroducing the Fregean notion of the true/false proposition or thought expressed by the uttered sentence). The utterance of a sentence expressing a proposition and containing a force-indicating device in principle exhaust the total speech act.

These and other differences between the speech act theory of Austin and that of Searle can be traced back to their different conceptions of an act. In fact, an act can be defined in different ways, among which there are the following:

1. a psycho-physical gesture on the part of an individual
2. the bringing about of a state of affairs on the part of an agent.

The former view is most commonly accepted and is the one held by Searle. But it is the latter view that can be found in Austin. This explains why he does not connect locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts with separate kinds of psycho-physical gestures. Distinctions between aspects of the total speech act correspond, rather, to distinctions between aspects of the state of affairs brought about.

It is characteristic of speech act theory, both in the Austinian and the Searlean version, to consider the illocutionary act as "conventional". This too may be ambiguous. A conventional act may be defined as

1. a gesture performed conforming to a convention
2. the bringing about of a conventional state of affairs.

While in the Searlean perspective the former definition is most natural, the latter definition is more consistent with the Austinian approach to action. Certainly Austin also admits that illocutionary acts are performed according to conventions. But conventional procedures for the performance of such acts involve the production of conventional results. These are characterized by liability to annulment or cancellation. According to Austin, at least some violations of felicity conditions may make the illocutionary act null and void (as when an order is issued without authority or a promise without recognized capacity to perform). A late discovery that the speaker was not entitled to perform the act he or she attempted to perform may reveal that the act was null and void and that its conventional effect never occurred (if there have been non-conventional effects in the meantime, like kids from a null marriage, nothing can cancel these). The conventional effects of felicitous illocutionary acts may also be cancelled by subsequent and opposite illocutionary acts (as when permissions cancel forbiddings, when a second trial acquits the defendant who had formerly been condemned, or when a claim or commitment is withdrawn).

The Austinian approach to illocutionary acts calls for further investigation of what it is for a state of affairs to be cancellable and why only some states of affairs are such. It is not a matter of our limited powers (as Searle 1989 seems to suggest with reference the kinds of states of affairs we can bring into existence by using words), but of the very nature of the states of affairs in question. My reply to this puzzle is that the states of affairs brought about by illocutionary acts are cancellable and therefore conventional, insofar as they depend on (some kind of) intersubjective agreement

which operates by default but may be suspended or withdrawn. Therefore, hearer's responses manifesting how the hearer has received the speaker's illocutionary act must be taken into account when what has been done is at issue. An analyst can tell what has been done (at the illocutionary level) from the consideration of illocutionary force indicating devices (what I would like to call the speech act's illocutionary physiognomy) and from the hearer's response, provided the speaker does not further challenge the latter (Sbisà 2002). Note that hearers are often but not always also addressees, and that although in general it is addressees that are affected by the illocutionary act and respond to it, the relevant intersubjective agreement may depend on participants other than the addressee.

In conclusion, Austinian illocutionary acts

- (i) can be described by describing how the intersubjective relationship between the interlocutors is changed by the successful performance of the act;
- (ii) produce these conventional effects only if there is intersubjective agreement about the fact that they have been produced;
- (iii) can be recognized from the illocutionary force indicating devices included in the speaker's utterance and from the hearer's response (manifesting reception and therefore by-default agreement).

2. Communication

Let me now try to show how an Austin-inspired view of speech acts may contribute to a broader philosophical conception of communication as well as to an approach to the analysis of actual communicative events.

The received view of communication in the philosophy of language depicts linguistic communication in the following way:

- (i) the speaker has an idea (or representation, or communicative intention) in his or her mind
- (ii) the hearer has to form an identical or similar idea or representation, or a representation of that communicative intention, in his or her own mind
- (iii) what the speaker means by a communicative act depends on the idea/ representation/ intention in his or her mind
- (iv) the communicative act is designed to enable the hearer to grasp such an idea/ representation/ intention and is successful when he or she actually grasps it.

This view largely coincides with the most widespread "commonsense" view of communication in Western countries (linguistic anthropology raises doubts about its being equally "commonsense" everywhere: cf. Duranti 1992). It is not very clear to me how "communicating citizenship" should be tackled according to this view. Maybe, an effort should be made to find out what mental representation of citizenship is contained in the minds of the relevant social actors and see whether and how this representation is transmitted to other social actors. This mental representation might have the form of a linguistic description of what being a citizen amounts to (perhaps, of a script articulating steps and properties of being a citizen), or of a concept or prototype specifying either conditions of applicability for the predicate "citizen (of)" or properties and functions typically associated with being a citizen. When communication of citizenship occurs with reference to particular individuals, the content conveyed should be equated with the content of a sentence such as "I am (you are, he or she is) a citizen (of)". Here, I will not rely on any such picture of communication, for the following reasons:

(i) There are various philosophical difficulties with "representation" and "intention". All versions of the received view of communication presuppose that there are representations (and mental representations), but there is no convincing account of how and why something really is the representation of something else. Moreover, intention-based versions imply that what a speaker means coincides with what he or she intends to convey, which contrasts with the many observations and analyses convincingly suggesting that meaning is an interactional achievement.

(ii) The claim that the meaning of a communicative act depends on something in the mind of the speaker is doubtful and in part at odds with everyday experience. In particular, independent knowledge of a speaker's (or author's) previous ideas and attitudes does not say the last word about what his or her words actually mean in a given occasion. The received view of communication emphasizes the conscious mental life of the speaker, neglecting social constraints, deference of meaning to external experts, or the massive presence of quotation and semi-quotation in everyday talk.

(iii) When communication is viewed as transmission of content, speech acts can only be equated with the speaker's intention that the content transmitted is received in a certain way: as the content of an assertion, of a directive, of a question. This makes it natural to restrict the effect of the Austinian illocutionary act to the understanding of the meaning and force of the utterance: a purely cognitive effect. So, in the received view of communication illocutionary acts are not considered as bringing about full-fledged effects on the participants and the supporters of that view regularly fail to see that they should have some such effects, if they are to be real acts.

(iv) The received view of communication is hardly of help in explaining how citizenship may be communicated. It focuses on the explicit communication of cognitive contents as opposed to the mutual shaping of the actors of the interactional event. I believe that the bulk of "communicating citizenship" goes through the ways in which the enunciator acts when speaking qua citizen or the addressee is dealt with when considered as a citizen. To exploit a famous Wittgensteinian dichotomy, it goes through showing rather than saying - even though participants can of course refer to themselves explicitly 'as citizens' (cf. the contribution by Padmos/Mazeland/teMolder this volume).

For all these reasons, I consider the view of communication as expression and transmission of content in various respects insufficient or misleading and I prefer to it another view emerging from the work of philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Austin. (One of the merits of the work of John Searle has been that of coming close to conciliating speech acts with the received view of communication: but just because of this, I will not rely on his work). I am afraid that no real canonical statement of such an alternative view exists up to now. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* refrain from proposing theories, let alone a theory of linguistic communication, and Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* is a somewhat incomplete outline. Nevertheless, I will try to sketch out some main guidelines of what a view of communication as action, alternative to the received view, might be like. Communication is one way in which people act on each other. Participants in communicative events coordinate their courses of behavior, thus making collaborative action possible. Coordination requires the shaping of each agent as playing a role in the interpersonal relationship. In their communicative acts, participants present themselves and recognize each other as endowed with rights, obligations, legitimate expectations, commitments, knowledge-that and knowledge-how, cognitive and volitional attitudes. They also affect the local statuses of one another, confirming or modifying them. Transmission of knowledge itself is rooted in this broader dimension of interpersonal action. As Wittgenstein (1953) suggests, it is the fact the

communication is primarily, rather than merely accidentally, action that keeps transmission of knowledge from being a matter of a completely mysterious bargain between minds.

Thus, in investigating a given communicative event we should not start by asking what do people tell to each other (or what do people mean, or how should the analyst characterize the participants' mental representations and their production process), but more basically, "who is doing what to whom".

Starting from "who is doing what to whom" implies articulating the analysis of verbal interaction at least into the following two main steps:

1. identification and characterization of the "who" and the "whom" involved in the communicative act;
2. identification and description of the "what" produced or achieved by the communicative act.

Let us consider these two steps in turn.

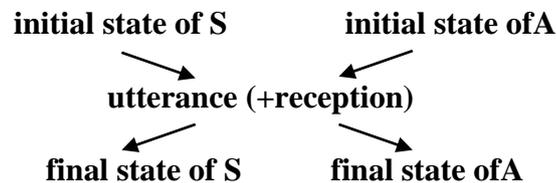
1. As to the "who", I think that a very helpful account may be drawn from Goffman's sociological research (Goffman 1981; see also Levinson 1988, McCawley 1999). Goffman conceives of the self as produced in social interaction. In acting (and therefore also in speaking), people display or project selves that do not coincide with mere sources of gestures and utterances, but are enriched by various interactionally recognized or negotiated properties and attitudes. Goffman also proposes a distinction between the individual providing psychophysical resources for gestures or utterances (the "animator"), the individual or group of individuals on whom the choice of gestures or words depends (the "author"), and the projected self endowed with responsibility for the action or speech act (the "principal", who is not necessarily anchored in an individual or group of individuals, but might, for instance, consist of an institution or of a fictional entity). Animator, author and principal as components or functions may be conflated into one speaker but also separated (as in theatre, but also, say, in ordinary attitude reports). When the addressor of a message is considered as its principal, he or she is construed as possessing some competence (hopefully, the appropriate one), being endowed with the bundle of legitimate expectations called "face" (Goffman 1967, Brown and Levinson 1987), and undertaking commitments, all of which are to be interactionally recognized.

2. As to the "what", it is natural enough to take inspiration from speech act theory. A first suggestion is to try to describe how utterances affect the interpersonal relationship between the participants (and thus the roles of the participants with respect to each other or their local statuses), which can be shown to amount to counting utterances as illocutionary acts of certain kinds. Various tools may be used for the relevant description, first of all naïve ones such as the ordinary lexicon for illocutionary acts: assertions, orders, warnings, promises, permissions, offers, proposals, apologies, compliments, complaints,... For example, given an utterance about an action of A, manifesting some dissatisfaction with that action on the part of the speaker S, we might say that S has complained or protested for what A has done, or that S has reproached A for doing so or has leveled some criticism at A. In fact, as anybody can experiment by him or herself, finding out a suitable description of an utterance in these terms is already largely illuminating with respect to "what" participants are doing to one another. But if we like, we may also resort to some theory-laden typology. The one I have found most helpful borrows its main distinctions from Austin (1975: 151-161): verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives (Sbisà 1984, 1989; see below, § 5). These types of illocutionary acts, viewed as fuzzy and partially overlapping sets having prototypical cases at their core, provide us with fairly rich descriptive tools for interactionally produced changes in the interpersonal relationship. But beyond assigning the speech acts performed to such illocutionary

types, we may also want to be able to describe each of these changes in terms allowing for comparison and generalization.

3. Deontic modal competence

I propose then to represent the performance of a speech act as follows:

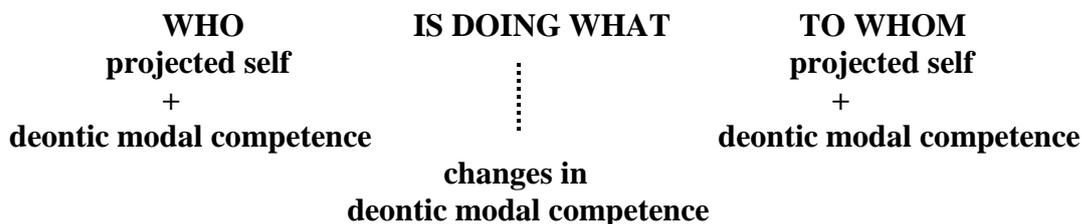


Describing the intersubjective relationship between the speaker S and his or her addressee A amounts to describing the initial states of each (as correlated to one another) or the final states of each (again, as correlated to one another). The effect of the speech act consists of turning the pair of initial states into the pair of final states. We are considering the speech act as an illocutionary act when the two pairs of states involved have conventional nature. Intersubjective relationships of a conventional nature can in a very wide range of cases be described in terms of what participants can do (have a right, are entitled or are allowed to do) or should do (are obliged or committed to do). In this connection, knowledge-that may be assimilated to some kind of entitlement to assert something, so that transmission of information can be described as the production of an entitlement to assert.

In Romance languages modal verbs like *pouvoir*, *devoir* (French) or *potere*, *dovere* (Italian) provide unified lexical labels for matters that speakers of Germanic languages, particularly of English, tend to consider as disparate, such as: rights, entitlements, licenses, authority, debts, obligations, commitments. However, two fuzzy sets gathering rights, entitlements, licenses, authority, and respectively obligations, debts and commitments, can be discerned without too great an imaginative effort. Thus we may identify two groups of modal attributions that may be made to the participants (as projected selves and particularly principals): taking inspiration from the terminology of narrative semiotics (Greimas and Courtés 1979), I will call these attributions their "modal competence". It should be noted that the modal attributions brought about by illocutionary acts fall within the field of deontic modality (concerning absence or presence of psycho-social forces or barriers related to action: cf Talmy 1988, Sweetser 1990). This is apparent in illocutionary acts assigning obligations or commitments such as orders and promises, in those giving or withdrawing a license such as permissions and forbids, in those linked to interpersonal debts and their repair such as thanksgivings and apologies. But the same point can be made in subtler ways with respect to practically any illocutionary act. It appears reasonable, in this perspective, to assimilate the transmission of knowledge resulting from an act of assertion as a special kind of right or entitlement, that is, an entitlement to perform related acts of assertion inheriting the same reliability of the original one. The possibility of such an assimilation suggests some compatibility between this perspective on speech acts and the Foucaultian conception of knowledge-that as integral to social power (*pouvoir/savoir*). In fact, it is apparent that rights and entitlements are in general associated with higher levels of social power than debts or obligations and even contribute to constituting these. Knowledge-that, as a socially recognized and transmitted component of an actor's competence, should not be treated as an exception.

So "deontic modal competence", that is, the set of deontic modal attributes possessed by a social actor at a given stage of an interactional sequence, should be added to the tools of a speech act oriented analysis of discourse.

We are now in a position to articulate the analysis of the speech acts performed in a conversation in the following way:



When we consider the "who" and "to whom" of communication we should focus upon projected selves (as principals of communicative acts or of responses to them), starting by their deontic modal competences. When we consider the "what", we should investigate what changes in the deontic modal competences of the participants are brought about in virtue of the interplay of speaker's utterances and hearer's receptions.

For some aspects at least, consideration of these features of communicative events seems to come close to what Fairclough (1992, 166) calls the "ethos" of the participants and may reasonably be held to contribute to its analysis. One difference that should be pointed out, though, is that ethos is introduced by Fairclough as essentially dependent on intertextuality, while in the present proposal it is stressed that deontic modal competences, although depending on language rules and social conventions, habits or practices, are in the last resort negotiated locally.

4. Speech acts and the communication of citizenship

The view on speech acts outlined above applies to "communicating citizenship" insofar as citizenship itself can be described as a set of deontic modal attributes of social actors. It is peculiar to the proposed approach that these attributes are considered as communicated not or not only in the sense in which communication is expression and transmission of intended contents, but also and more basically in the sense in which communication consists of the participants' acting on each other by means of their speech acts. This enables us to see that communicating citizenship is not merely transmitting information about the attributes of a citizen in general or about the possession of such attributes by a particular social actor: rather, attributes characteristic of citizenship may be a part of the deontic modal competence of the participants and so may be themselves affected (assigned, confirmed, removed, modified..) by the participants' illocutionary acts.

The proposed approach shares with other interactionally oriented approaches the assumption that citizenship (like other features of subjectivity) is an interactional achievement (cf. the introduction to this volume). In fact, an actor's deontic modal attributes depend both on his or her behavior and on the behavior of his or her interlocutors. Of course, there is a tricky distinction to be drawn between the macro-social and the micro-social level. Citizenship is to a certain extent an interactional achievement even at the macro-level (it is by means of verbal interaction that Assemblies or Parliaments set the rules for citizenship in a State, defining the rights and obligations of citizens as well as the conditions at which citizenship is acquired; it is by means of verbal interaction that applicants for citizenship have to show to the relevant authorities that they meet these conditions). But whether possessed from birth or acquired by means of macro-level procedures, at the micro-level citizenship is not merely inherited, but enacted and acted upon. The local status of social actors does not always reflect all and only the possession of the modal

attributes officially granted to them as citizens by macro-level rules. In some cases there might be a gap between officially granted rights (or officially imposed obligations), and the ability or willingness of the social actor to exploit them (or cope with them) thoroughly. Most importantly, in order to be acted upon in local contexts the modal attributes related to citizenship should be taken as relevant to the ongoing interactional episode and their possession by a certain social actor should be interactionally recognized. This makes citizenship at the micro-level an interactional achievement in a much stronger sense.

Thus I propose to view communicating citizenship as a process of shaping oneself or one's addressee as a citizen. The following are examples of situations in which citizenship is communicated in this sense: being admitted/ not admitted to a procedure designed for citizens, actually entering or giving up entering a procedure designed for citizens, being admitted/ not admitted to a procedure reserved for citizens of a certain kind, actually entering or giving up entering such a procedure. But more generally, in every situation in which somebody acts/does not act as a citizen he or she implicitly raises/ fails to raise a claim to some deontic modal feature associated with citizenship, and is granted/ denied it. Such a competence, viewed as integral to the actor's local status, is also liable to modifications of detail depending on the speech acts performed and received in the relevant situation.

The use of the proposed speech act approach in the analysis of "communicating citizenship" envisages:

1. description of the modal competences of participants before and after an utterance
2. observation of illocutionary force-indicating devices pertaining to linguistic form, paralinguistic cues etc., as well as of the sequence in which the utterance under scrutiny is embedded.

Since the successful performance of the illocutionary act and thus its deontic modal effect depend on intersubjective agreement as manifested in the hearer's response, in order to determine whether some effect has actually been achieved on the participants' modal competences, the hearer's response has to be examined too. But also the speaker's response to the hearer's response has to be considered, because it might challenge the hearer's response by means of a so-called third-position repair (Schegloff 1992). So, the relevant sequence must comprise at least two turns (or more exactly, sequential positions) subsequent to the turn focused upon.

5. Aspects of the communication of citizenship

I pass now to some aspects of possible research on "communicating citizenship" in the light of the proposed approach.

(i) kinds of social actors

In applying the proposed approach to the constitution and characterization of the social actors involved in communicating citizenship, it might be important to distinguish among different kinds of such social actors. Participants in a verbal interaction episode of a public kind or involving issues of public interest may act as members of a national/ linguistic/ ethnic/ religious/ cultural/ professional/ gender group, as citizens of a State, or as political agents in a broader sense:

1. Ideally, members of a national/linguistic/ethnic/religious/cultural/professional/gender group are to be characterized in terms of their projected selves. Their behavior projects a self, often indeed a composite or fluctuating one, that other participants may trace back to membership in a social group of a certain kind. While in real life people often happen to be characterized deductively on the basis of the stereotypes associated to the group they are known to belong to, at a more fundamental level it

is the language used, the cultural habits displayed and values invoked, the acceptance of certain ritual behavior, etc., that enable observers to assign an individual a certain social identity. It is not enough to know that a certain speaker is (say) a farmer: what is relevant for interactionally constructed identity is whether he or she plays the role of a farmer, that is, acts or speaks as a farmer or on the basis of being a farmer in the interactional event under scrutiny. Of course, the same individual may (and usually does) belong to groups of different kinds at the same time, so that social identity is always multi-dimensional. Contrary to ideological approaches, interactional approaches recognize that projected selves may well be composite and are ready to cope with borderline identities in a "family resemblances" spirit (Wittgenstein 1953, Sbisà 1999b).

2. By "citizens of a State" I mean social actors characterized by certain rights and obligations with respect to a political institution in charge of the organization of social life on a certain territory. In an accurate analysis of the role of citizenship among identity concepts, being a citizen of a State should be sharply distinguished from being a member of a linguistic/ethnic/religious, etc., and even a national group. Being a citizen of a State does not *per se* entail sharing the linguistic/ethnic/religious and even national identity of most other citizens. It entails undertaking the commitment to accept the Constitution of that State and its other laws. So there might be contradiction, say, between certain kinds of fundamentalist religious identity and the rights/obligations of citizenship. But there should never be contradiction between belonging to a linguistic-cultural or even national minority and being a citizen of the State in which that minority happens to live (sometimes enjoying protection laws, sometimes not). In order to cope with the complexities of present day Europe, research or reflection on citizenship should adopt a terminology that carefully distinguishes citizenship from nationality (which is not equally easy to do in all European languages).²

3. However, I do not take citizenship (always correlative to a State) as exhaustive of the deontic modal competences of a political kind (in a broad sense) that a social actor may possess and act upon. Politics is concerned with power relationships in social groups as bearing on decisions of common interest as well as on individual fortunes. One might detect and study power relationships (and thus in a broad sense political ones) within groups much smaller than a State, such as families or groups of schoolmates, as well as (of course) on the world-wide scene. Concern for the world-wide scene might also be expressed by people while playing their roles as citizens of a State, but transcends this role in the direction of a more general conception of political interests and responsibilities.

(ii) circumstances of the attribution of deontic modal competence

Anybody who acts or speaks does so on the basis of some deontic modal competence: the actual performance of a speech act (and the achievement of its illocutionary, conventional effect) depends on the kind of competence that is invoked by the speaker and recognized by the receiver. It is relevant for research on the communication of citizenship to investigate whether this competence appears in local contexts as self-ascribed or ascribed by others (and in the latter case, formally or informally), whether participants raise explicit or implicit claims to it, and whether and how the competence to which a claim is raised is legitimized or not at the local level as well as at a broader social or institutional level.

Detailed linguistic analysis can show whether it is the speaker who ascribes the relevant deontic modal competence to him or herself (whether successfully or not, subsequent turns should be enough to reveal), or is ascribed that competence from outside either as a reflex of institutional rules or on the spot. Attention for these aspects might throw some lights on the gaps that possibly exist (and in fact, are likely to exist) between the institutional rules of citizenship and the modal competences people raise claims to as citizens in local situations. Sometimes these gaps reveal mere ignorance of the real rights and obligations connected with being a citizen, while in some other

cases actually established rules are disregarded in view of some ideal and even idiosyncratic conception of what rights and obligations being a citizen should entail.

Citizenship may be implicitly taken as being rule bound, as if the rights connected with being a citizen were exhausted as soon as the citizen's counterpart in a social conflict has fulfilled all legal requirements. Or citizenship rights might be taken to extend to claims to negotiation and attempts at raising one's power level, as when consumer's power is appealed to. Citizenship may also be held to involve a right of the citizen to be provided with correct scientific information on matters pertaining to health and environment, or may be construed as involving a right to opinion and decision even in absence of specialized knowledge (presumably on the basis of commonsense ethical intuitions). I have found all of these positions exemplified in the transcription of a public debate on agricultural biotechnologies (Sickte, Germany, 15/04/2000), to which I will refer as a source of examples throughout this paper.³ Positions of third kind emerge repeatedly from the Italian data collected within the Paradys research program in 2001 and 2002, to which I will make reference in the last section of this paper in order to illustrate some problems that arise in the application of the proposed approach.

(iii) illocutionary types

As to the "what" that may be done in communication, I would like to briefly recall Austin's typology of illocutionary acts, which I have already claimed elsewhere to be applicable to the analysis of verbal interaction with interesting results (Sbisà 1989). I read it as specifying some main types of changes that speech acts may produce in the deontic modal competence of the participants. Reference to these types may help us to describe what deontic modal attributes are assigned, confirmed or withdrawn to or from each participant by each conversational turn. Typology does not by itself provide linguistic description of the means that participants may use to make their utterances count as illocutionary acts of a given type, but offers some helpful guidelines nevertheless. In fact, assigning speech acts to illocutionary types is a matter of recognizing what deontic modal changes participants are dealing with and an initial answer to this lies in what they present themselves as dealing with, whether using performatives or illocutionary indicators such as mood, or in virtue of some other feature of the meaning of their utterance.

These are four of Austin's classes of illocutionary acts accompanied by a partially reformulated definition. Each definition is followed by one or two examples, drawn from the Sickte debate transcription. These examples should be considered as merely illustrative of the kinds of utterances that can reasonably be assigned to each illocutionary type, which may be expected to occur in the genre of social interaction at issue. Actual analytical work would require, beyond the consideration of syntax and lexicon, also the detailed consideration of prosodic features and of the sequence of interactional moves to which the utterance belongs.⁴

1. Verdictives, that is, illocutionary acts consisting of the issuing of a finding on the basis of evidence or reasons. They may be formal or informal, final or provisional, and concerning fact or value. They presuppose that the speaker has access to the elements required for a justified finding (data, criteria...) on the relevant subject matter: we may say that he or she must be, or count as, cognitively competent. They commit the speaker to give evidence or reasons for his or her verdictive if requested, and give license to the addressee to issue analogous verdictives on the same subject matter.

Illustrative examples may be:

(1) (...) und wenn man das ausmisst, (-) dan is der raps (-) etwa zwei kilometer (-) von unsren flächen entfernt. (-) der mais (-) is gut drei kilometer von unsren flächen entfährnt (101-103)⁵

and if one measures the distance (-) the oilseed rape is (-) about two kilometers away from our areas (-) the corn (-) is a good three kilometers away from our areas

(2) so sind die richtlinien für den biolandbau (-) diese richtlinien finden wir auch ganz richtig so dass sie so sind (-) weils die einzige möglichkeit is (-) dem verbraucher ne sicherheit zu geben, (-) dass wenn sie biolebensmittel kaufen, (-) tatsächlich nichts an gentechnischer veränderung auch drinne is (130-133)

such are the guidelines for organic farming (-) these guidelines we find quite right that they are made this way (-) because it's the only possible way (-) to give the consumer some security (-) that if they buy organic food (-) there really is no genetical modification in it

In (1) the speaker, while arguing for her claim that experimental releases may damage neighbouring ecologically working farms, provides the audience with pieces of information presented as findings based of evidence (here, measurement). In (2), the same speaker issues a positive value judgement with respect to the way organic farming is regulated and provides a reason supporting that judgement.

2. Exercitives, that is, illocutionary acts consisting of the exercise of authority or influence. They presuppose some degree of authority or authoritativeness on the part of the speaker and assign or cancel rights or obligations to or from the addressee. Some of them are institutional and have been considered by Searle (1979) as declaratives, while others are informal and coincide with Searle's directives.

The following utterances may reasonably count as exercitives:

(3) denke ich sollten wir dieses feld (--) ganzsicherlich nicht (--) diesen sogenannten sachverstand überlassen. (-) sondern uns alle, (--) als zuständig. auf jeden fall als zuständig (--) erklären (305-307)

I think we should certainly not leave this matter in the hands of so called experts but declare all of us as competent, in any case as competent

(4) (...) ich denke wenn sich fünf personen heute abend einich werden (--) und vor dem tor der biologischen bundesanstalt in Braunschweich (-) mal ne kleine mahnwache machen. (-) kann das nicht schaden (496-498)

I think, that if five people will reach agreement tonight and in front of the gate of the Biologische Bundesanstalt in Braunschweig make a little admonitional watch, that can't do any harm

Both these utterances are issued by the same speaker, a College professor who is supposed to have scientific background. In (3), at the beginning of the long speech he delivers, he urges the audience not to defer decisional competence to experts and draws the authority for urging from the fact that he himself is giving up speaking qua a knowledgeable person (which he would be in a position to do), rather, he intends to speak as a person concerned with social and environmental issues. The assignment of (moral) obligation to the addressees (as well as to himself) is apparent in the use of "sollten wir"; inclusive first person plural frequently occurs in urging. In (4), towards the end of his speech, he puts forward the idea of organizing a sit-in: the utterance can reasonably be taken as a proposal, whose chances to be felt by the addressees as influential rely on the degree of authority that the speaker has eventually gained by repeatedly appealing to values and to exemplary cases.

3. Commissives, that is, illocutionary acts consisting of the undertaking of commitments. They presuppose the recognized capacity to perform what one is committing oneself to. They assign to the speaker a commitment or obligation (to a certain action or more generally to a certain kind of behavior), assigning at the same time to the addressee the corresponding legitimate expectation.

Illustrative examples may be:

(5) (...) und das is warum wir auch diese veranstaltung hier unterstützen. (142)
and that is why we also support this event here.

(6) solange die konsumenten und die politiker, (-) die: wir heute ha vielleicht auch erwähnen sollten dieses akzeptieren und die mehrheit der wissenschaftler dieses positiv begleitet, (-) kann die heimische landwirtschaft wenn sie überleben will und sie will überleben (-) kann sie sich nur anpassen: (...) (214-217)

as long as consumers and politicians whom we maybe should also mention today accept this and the majority of scientists have a positive view of this, local agriculture can only, if it wants to survive and it does want to survive, it can only adapt

By issuing these utterances, speakers do not perform prototypical commissives such as promises, not even in the mitigated form of the expression of intentions, but take sides. In (5) this is done by mentioning the very act of taking sides ("wir... unterstützen", *we support*), although in an embedded clause which turns the declared support into a presupposition of a wider stretch of discourse. In (6), the speaker may seem to report on the farmers' situation and attitudes, but since he is a representative of the farmers, what he really does is taking sides on behalf of the farmers, espousing non resistance to biotechnologies.

4. Behabitives, that is, illocutionary acts consisting of the taking of a stand or the production of a response, which often fulfil an obligation or debt. They do not presuppose any special local status of the speaker, apart from his or her finding him or herself in the appropriate circumstances. They produce knowledge and specifically license assertions about the speaker, but do not commit the speaker to provide reasons. They may commit the speaker to some kind of further behavior, if they raise in the addressee a legitimate expectation to this effect.

The following utterances may reasonably count as behabitives:

(7) wir waren also recht dankbar das aus der zeitung zu erfahren, und sind dann halt weil es in unserer nachbarschaft is. (-) ziemlich erschrocken, (-) zu dieser informationsveranstaltung hingegangen. (-) um das ganze zu verdeutlichen wie unsere betroffenheit as biobetrieb is, (73-75)
so we were quite grateful for getting to know about it through the newspaper and then we have come, because it's in our neighborhood, quite startled to this information meeting, to make clear it all what our concern as an organically working farm is

(8) und wenn der markt für gentechnisch (-) freie (?versuche es) erlaubt sind wir hiesigen landwirte gerne bereit den zug der gentechnologie nicht mitzufahren (-) aber hierzu sind wir landwirte ohne unterstützung der konsumenten alleine nicht in der lage. (222-225)

and if it is in line with market conditions for genetic engineering free (?trials) we as local farmers will be more than willing not to ride on the train of genetic engineering, but without the support of consumers we alone aren't in a position to do so.

In (7), the speaker does various things, all of which display behabitive features: she thanks the organizers of the information meeting (by reporting that she and her colleagues were "recht dankbar", *quite grateful*), she reports their feeling shocked, she expresses (by way of a presupposition) their concern for the field release at issue. The speaker's reactions or attitudes towards actions and events in her social environment are manifest in her words, without its being a matter of having evidence or reasons, or recognized capability to perform further actions. In (8), the speaker raises sort of a challenge to consumers, which might even be read as a request to play a

more active role. Such a request does not count as an exercitive, but rather as a behabitive, since it is not grounded in authority, but stems from the state of inability manifested by the speaker.

A speaker performing verdictives in an interactional situation such as a public debate presents him or herself as willing to take on responsibility for the correctness of his or her claims and as acting on the basis of some kind of reliable and testable cognitive competence. The audience is supposed not merely to acquire the speaker's findings, but also some of his or her evidence or reasons and thereby of his or her competence. Arguing involves verdictives: a speaker who argues aims at producing knowledge and is bound to justify his or her moves by defending the assertions of which the argument consists as well as the argument itself. Authors of verdictives are by definition open to objections and corrections and may on occasion make this explicit (as happens in the Sickte debate with just the same speaker I have quoted as issuing verdictives). A shift to exercitives occurs when the audience is not expected to be interested in checking justification but merely to rely on the speaker's authority. Many exercitives (particularly, those which are also directives) are marked by the imperative mood or by modals such as "should", but even utterances in the indicative mood may fit the pattern: explanations may play the role of exercitives whenever the speaker offering them raises an implicit claim to being an expert whose words can only be believed (Sbisà 1995). The choice of verdictive-oriented rather than exercitive-oriented speech has political relevance (at the micro level), because the former either presupposes or tends to produce symmetry in deontic modal competences. Moreover, only in the framework of verdictive-oriented speech can correct information itself be dealt with as both a task and a right.

Moves such as approving of a certain line of conduct or taking sides in favour of some opinion or decision (for example with respect to possible solutions to the same social or political issue), although quite different from promises, are commissives under our definition (as well as according to Austin 1975: 152). They may be considered as central to the aims of a public debate and accessible to speakers quite independently of whether their approach to the problems at issue is based on cognitive competence or on authority. Miscellaneous moves ranging from protesting or complaining to expressing desires or opinions may be considered as behabitives and yield some background positioning of speakers towards each other as well as towards the matters at issue. It should be noted that behabitives, not involving claims to any special local status, are the cheapest illocutionary moves available to a speaker and may either be used as a first step before passing on to some more costly kind of illocutionary acts, or constitute what is left to a speaker whose claims to competence, authority or recognized capacity to act eventually fail to be recognized. In contexts in which citizenship and citizen participation are at issue, resort to behabitives may suggest that the speaker lacks either formal or substantive rights on the matter at issue.

It should be noted that the correctness of a speech act is quite another matter than its successfulness in producing conventional effects. This distinction too might be relevant to the analysis of "communicating citizenship", because there are cases in which conversation appears quite appropriate from the point of view of the successfulness of speech acts (participants recognize each other's modal competence), but unfortunately turns out to provide wrong information, unfair evaluations or misleading advice, which may substantively violate some of the very same rights that are being formally recognized.

6. Some refinements

I append here a list of other, miscellaneous features to be found in conversational turns or sequences, the study of which might be fruitfully combined with the approach I have been proposing.

(i) Embedded enunciators. The social actors on the scene in an interactional episode may exceed the people who are actually physically present. Various kinds of reported speech and attitude attribution can be analyzed as embedded communicative acts that project selves not anchored in any physically present participant, who play a role in the interactional event nevertheless. In a context such as the Sickte debate, we find various kinds of reported speech (indirect reports of speech attributed to a specific person; reports of *doxa*, that is widely accepted opinion, or of scientific and other findings) and quotation (actual or fictional) (cf. Holsanova, this volume, dealing with quotations in public talk). Embedded enunciators may be studied in various perspectives, but the present proposal underscores two features: the recognition by some non-embedded participant of the embedded enunciator and his or her (or its) modal competence, and the kind of illocutionary act that the embedded enunciator is represented as performing. Whenever talk, attitudes, opinion or knowledge are reported as primarily belonging not to the current speaker, but to somebody else or to some community or institution, a virtual participant is introduced into the conversation. Sometimes, the embedded enunciator bears a close relationship of support or legitimization to the current speaker (for example, when he or she is the source of the speaker's knowledge or authority). On other occasions, it constitutes one more interlocutor whom the speaker responds to or sides with or against. In any case, since the embedded enunciator is responsible for some kind of a speech act, he or she or it must overtly or implicitly be attributed deontic modal competence. This is apparent, for example, when one of the Sickte debate speakers describes at length the author of a quotation he is going to read in support of his views as authoritative and praiseworthy. Warnings, blame and accusations provided by the embedded enunciator are felicitous exercitives assigning various kinds of obligations to the (actual) audience, insofar as the speaker has managed to make the audience attribute to the embedded enunciator the relevant authority.

Attention for embedded enunciators, their speech acts, the modal competence that is attributed to them can also help reconstructing the larger network of intertextual relationships in which the interactional episode under scrutiny participates (cf. Fairclough/Pardoe/Szerszynski this volume to the concept of intertextuality).

(ii) Selection by reception. Selection by reception is a negotial feature of conversation which is highlighted by the speech-act theoretical framework here proposed. It happens fairly often that a speaker issues an utterance which might be suitable for performing each one among various illocutionary acts. Which one of these is actually performed (and thus, which effect is achieved) can be shown to depend on the hearer's response. The hearer's response selects one illocutionary effect by implicitly recognizing its achievement. Responses to so-called indirect speech acts ("It is cold in here") are typically selective ("Sure, it's quite uncomfortable" vs "Wait a moment, I turn the heating on!"). But there are also over-rich conversational turns that open various possible subsequent developments for the conversation, only one of which is activated by the reply (Sbisà 2002). Closer investigation shows that selection by reception works in different ways in symmetric contexts and asymmetric ones: in the latter, only participants in the one-up position succeed in selecting the illocutionary forces of other participants' utterances.

In multi-party conversations and even more in public debates, it proves difficult to pick up indicators of reception for all utterances that may be considered as communicative units. Public debates share with multi-party conversations the availability of multiple responses, which may take the same utterances as performing different speech acts. But in public debates it happens also that a lot of moves are left without any apparent uptake by the audience. However, the audience's questions and comments are a source of illocutionary force selection for at least some parts of a speaker's talk. A nice example from the Sickte debate is reception of our example (6). The speaker is apparently taken as issuing a commissive, since the policy he espouses on behalf of the farmers is criticized. In his reply, he shifts to a verdictive-like reformulation of his utterance as describing or

foreseeing a hardly avoidable course of events. What is at issue is the positive characterization of farmers as responsible citizens; the speaker is not completely successful in establishing it, since his reformulated utterance, although taken by his opponent as a verdictive, is criticized again as contradicting another one of his claims.

(iii) Presupposition. Presupposition is often considered as background or mutual knowledge (which must be already possessed and even shared by the participants). But presuppositional lexical occurrences or syntactic constructions are often used both in everyday conversation and in the media to convey new information or establish new attitudes. In connection with the proposed speech-act theoretical approach, informative or persuasive presuppositions can be explained as pre-conditions of the successfulness of the performed speech act, to be retrieved on the basis of the speech act itself (Sbisà 1999a). Since we tend to communicate by way of presupposition precisely those contents that we are unwilling to submit to discussion, informative and persuasive presuppositions offer a good access to ideological stances as well as to various beliefs and values connected with sociocultural affiliation. For the same reason, the ability to detect informative or persuasive presuppositions can be of help in critical uses of discourse analysis.

In the context of discourse on biotechnologies, trust or distrust in science, unavailability of scientific progress, objectification of market laws, risks for human health and environment or concern for them are likely to be fairly often communicated implicitly by way of presupposition. Insofar as the source of the presupposed information or values lies outside the current speaker's individual competence, resort to presupposition is also connected with issues of intertextuality.

(iv) Mitigation/reinforcement. Finally, I would like to recall the broad trend in pragmatic research that investigates the mitigation or reinforcement of speech acts, often in connection either to matters of politeness or to involvement and emotions (Holmes 1984, Caffi 1999). Mitigation and reinforcement can be seen as affecting the conventional effect of the illocutionary act (Sbisà 2001) and so as connected, not only to the attitudes towards citizenship possibly expressed by people, but also to adjustments of that interactionally recognized deontic modal competence which accounts for the communication of citizenship. Mitigation and reinforcement are ubiquitous in actual language use and serve several different aims. Both may be used, for example, to increase the efficiency of exercitives in achieving their perlocutionary goals (emotional and practical): so in the Sichte debate, the speaker issuing our examples (3) and (4) stresses in many ways the importance of the task he is trying to assign to his audience (rejecting biotechnology altogether), but as for the practical proposal of a sit-in, he prefers to present it in an understated form ("ne kleine mahnwache", *a little admonitional watch*). Mention of attitudes such as belief or hope and some uses of "ich denke", "wir denken" (*I think, we think*) work as mitigating devices, since they make the utterance look more like a behabitive. A nice example of mitigation can be found in the following accusation leveled by the representative of a group of biologically working farmers at the national office that is planning the release at issue:

(9) wir denken. dass die biologische bundesanstalt aus unachtsamkeit oder aus welchen gründen nun auch immer, uns als biologisch wirtschaftenden betrieb diesem risiko aussetzt mit diesem versuch, (139-141)

we think that the Biologische Bundesanstalt has by inattentiveness or for whatever reason put us as an organically producing farm under this risk with this experiment

The accusation is introduced by "wir denken" (*we think*) (uttered with some emphasis), as if it were an expression of opinion, and then modified by the attribution of possible reasons for the national office to permit the release, one of which a partial excuse ("aus Unachtsamkeit", *by inattentiveness*).

But it is clearly a matter of judging the national office liable for failing to care for the rights of citizens. Mitigation seems here to imply some kind of respect still due to institutional authority, not without ambiguity between residual trust in institutions and a sense of unavoidable power unbalance between institutions and citizens.

7. Two problems to be expected in application

In actual analyses of communicated citizenship relying on the principles and instruments I have presented in this paper, at least two kinds of problems can be expected to arise.

First, clearly not all of what belongs to the deontic modal competence of speakers, even when these participate in a public debate in which citizen status is at issue, is directly related to citizenship. Therefore, a distinction should be drawn between those assignments of deontic modal predicates which are related to citizen status and those which are independent from it or irrelevant to it. How can this be done? Second, not all features of locally negotiated modal competences that are pertinent to citizenship mirror institutionally established citizen rights and obligations. How should the gap between micro-social and macro-social facts be dealt with?

In concluding this paper, I shall shortly address these two kinds of problems as they emerge not only from consideration of the data from the Sickte debate already referred to above, but also of the corpus of Italian data collected by Elena Collavin and Giuseppe Pellegrini within the Paradys research project (consisting of the transcriptions of various interviews and one public debate held at Casalino (Novara), Italy, on 22/10/2002).⁶

7.1. Citizen status vs other rights and obligations

In order to apply a speech act oriented approach to communicated citizenship, it is not enough to focus on illocutionary acts as matters of deontic modal competence. Rather, one should single out the subset of attributions of deontic modal competence that depend on or affect citizen status. This requires finer distinctions than those among kinds of illocutionary effect, involving consideration of such matters as what the speech act is about, what is its goal or what are the relevant participant roles.

Among the examples quoted in §5, (3) and (5) contain speech acts that are grounded in citizen status or affect the addressee as a citizen. The former

(3) denke ich sollten wir dieses feld (--) ganzsicherlich nicht (--) diesen sogenannten sachverstand überlassen. (-) sondern uns alle, (--) als zuständig. auf jeden fall als zuständig (--) erklären
I think we should certainly not leave this matter in the hands of so called experts but declare all of us as competent, in any case as competent

is clearly the exhortation of a citizen addressed to other citizens and the latter

(5) (...) und das is warum wir auch diese veranstaltung hier unterstützen.
and that is why we also support this event here.

constitutes the exercise of citizen rights such as freedom of association, of expression of one's opinions, etc.

In contrast, the speech act in example (1), a verdictive about distances between the relevant cultivated areas, is grounded in competence in measurement and acquaintance with the environment quite apart from social issues such as citizenship. Examples (4), the proposal to make an admonitional watch, and (6), an espousal of non resistance to biotechnologies on behalf of the farmers, although presupposing citizenship as a general framework, are made felicitous as an exercitive and a commissive respectively by specific personal circumstances: the speaker of (4) is recognized as influential by the audience, that of (6) is entitled to act as a representative of farmers. Finally, example (2) is worth reconsidering as a case of indirect relationship to citizen status, mediated by a presupposition:

(2) so sind die richtlinien für den biolandbau (-) diese richtlinien finden wir auch ganz richtig so dass sie so sind (-) weils die einzige möglichkeit is (-) dem verbraucher ne sicherheit zu geben, (-) dass wenn sie biolebensmittel kaufen, (-) tatsächlich nichts an gentechnischer veränderung auch drinne is (130-133)

such are the guidelines for organic farming (-) these guidelines we find quite right that they are made this way (-) because it's the only possible way (-) to give the consumer some security (-) that if they buy organic food (-) there really is no genetical modification in it

The positive value judgement with respect to the guidelines for organic farming, although itself not depending on citizenship rights (any person acquainted with the facts and interested in the relevant values would be competent enough to issue such a judgement), presupposes care for consumer security as a criterion of evaluation, and therefore that consumers and *a fortiori* citizens have a right to security.

An interesting case is that of explanations, a kind of speech act frequently occurring in the Italian Paradys data, interviews in particular. Explanation *per se* is hardly relevant to citizen status. Explanations presuppose the authority of the speaker as possessing "expert" status and the lack of knowledge of the addressee(s) as to the *explanandum*, and may attribute to the addressee the obligation to believe what the expert says or the entitlement to make assertions in one's own turn on the same topic. None of these modal attributions is grounded on citizenship nor affects citizen status. But there is indirect connection with citizenship issues when explanations about GMOs (what they are, how they behave, why they are or aren't dangerous, etc.) occur in attempts by activists to be accredited as experts by their audience and increase their chances of being influential, or when expert talk by scientists is presented as fulfilling a legitimate demand for information on the part of citizens and enabling citizen to exercise their right to make or influence decisions in matters of health and environment. Here is an example from the Casalino debate:

(10) Scientist: posso posso credo che nei nei discorsi che abbiamo fatto manchi una cosa importante per poter decidere se accettare o meno la tecnologia noi abbiamo sempre parlato di rischi non ho mai mai non abbiamo parlato di benefici e io credo che la scelta debba essere fatta facendo un rapporto rischi benefici

May I may I, I believe that in in the talks we made an important thing is missing in order to be able to decide whether to accept or not technology. We have always spoken of risks, I have never never we have not spoken of benefits and I believe that the choice should be made comparing risks and benefits

Audience: certo

sure

Scientist: diceva giustamente prima il presidente la candela qual è [...] la candela potrebbe essere che () come è successo () quindici anni fa che son stati chiusi molti pozzi anche qui nella zona perchè erano pieni di atrazina pote potrebbe essere di usare un decimo dei diserbanti che si usano attualmente, vale il gioco? vale la candela tecnologia? ecco dobbiamo decidere su questo

the president correctly said before which is the candle⁷ [...]the candle might be that () as it happened () fifteen years ago that many wells were closed here too in this area because they were full of atrazine might be to use the tenth part of the herbicides that are used at present, is the game worth? worth the candle technology? well we have to decide on this

In the framework of exercitive talk, recommending to the audience they should consider both risks and benefits in their decision making procedure, a scientist explains what the main benefit of the use of GMOs in local agriculture would be: stopping or drastically reducing contamination of drinkable water by herbicides. Without this information, it is implied, any decision would be *de facto* flawed.

More directly linked to citizen status are those protests, complaints, criticisms or accusations that presuppose that citizens have a right both to make certain choices and to be provided with all information necessary for choosing knowledgeably. In one of the interviews in the Italian Paradys data, a man repeatedly criticizes the current Italian regulations about food labels for not enabling the consumer to exercise his or her right to choose what to buy. For example:

(11)

Man: [...] però la nostra legge non prevede che debba essere scritta la percentuale e allora io anche se metto l'un per cento di olio d'oliva rientro nella legge questa cosa è veramente ridicola [...]quindi la gente consuma prodotti no che n la tracciabilità no di cui si parla tanto no [io sto consumando] [...] *but our law does not require that the percentage should be written and then I even if I put one pro cent olive oil in it I fall within legality this thing is really ridiculous [...] so people consume products whose traceability of which it is spoken so much, I am consuming*

Interviewer: [sì sì sì sì]

yes yes yes yes

Man: questo prodotto voglio sapere.=

this product I want to know

Interviewer:=la filiera.=

the production procedure

Man:=da dove viene (0.5) chi lo fa

where it comes from (0.5) who makes it

The right to information has a counterpart in the obligation of the relevant authorities to provide the information in question. Since transmission of knowledge involves the issuing of verdictives, this obligation is somewhat at stake in the following exchange from the Casalino debate between the biologist in charge of security controls and a local resident:

(12)

Biologist: [...] abbiamo fatto due ispezioni () nel nel settembre 2001 e e una adesso in ottobre eee e anche li insomma tutto è andato molto bene (laughs) non ci sono stati problemi [...]

[...]we made two inspections () in in September 2001 and and one now in October and there too summing up everything fared very well (laughs) there were no problems

[...]

Audience: [...] è andato tutto bene rispetto a quale parametro?

[...] everything fared very well with respect to what parameter?

Biologist: [...] è andato tutto bene nel senso che non ci sono mai state difformità rispetto a quanto eee era stato precisato

[...] everything fared very well in the sense that there were never found difformities with respect to what had been specified

"Tutto è andato molto bene" (*everything fared very well*) summarizes the official positive assessment of the open field experiment issued by the biologist and may thus inherit its exercitive force. But the question about criteria, issued by the local resident, makes it count as a verdictive. The biologist's reply includes an explanation of the kind of criteria used, thus confirming her acceptance of the obligation to state one's criteria on request, which is typically a part of the effect of a verdictive speech act. On the one hand, it is with respect to verdictives that the addressee is entitled to ask for criteria of judgement; on the other hand, taking the assessment as a verdictive as opposed to an exercitive implicates rejection of the uncritical, passive fruition of decisions made by others and willingness to participate in decisions as a knowledgeable person.

7.2. Micro-social negotiations vs macro-social regulations

Once we have identified those attributions of deontic modal competence that are pertinent to citizenship, we meet with a further problem. Not all of these actually contribute to determining the contents of citizen status. The role that citizens of a certain country may play with respect to a particular matter of public interest, such as authorization of GMOs deliberate release, is established by law on the background of more general rights and obligations set by other laws of more general import holding in that country. A law attributes rights and obligations to the social agents it is addressed at, and the deontic modal competences so defined allow the agents to perform, on occasion, certain illocutionary acts. But sometimes, in actual occasions of interaction, participants act on the assumption that they as citizens possess certain rights or that the relevant authorities have certain obligations towards them, and even reach intersubjective agreement about that, while no macro-level regulation envisages such rights or obligations. There might even be a clash between the deontic modal effects brought about by intersubjective agreement among participants and the rights and obligations that depend on macro-level regulations. In such cases, there are limitations to the extent to which the attributions of modal competence that are agreed upon locally become part of the contents of the participants' citizen status.

The gap between citizenship-related local beliefs, negotiations or agreements and rights or obligations established by macro-level regulations has various causes. Sometimes people fail to be knowledgeable about the laws of their own country. Their information about the rights and obligations they possess as citizens is hearsay, so that they are liable to sheer mistake. But it happens also that people have diverging intuitions about the rights or obligations that a citizen should possess than those assumed by the legislator and embodied in the law. It is these diverging intuitions that enable citizens to criticize a law or propose to modify it.

In the Italian data collected within the Paradys research, the gap between micro-social and macro-social facts is especially apparent. Regulations about GMOs deliberate release holding in Italy in 2002 (Legislative Decree 92/1993) did not assign any role to citizens in the authorization procedure and (quite consistently) bypassed the issue of citizen information.⁸ But people discussing about GMO open field trials in the interviews collected or in the Casalino meeting spoke and acted upon their own intuitions about the rights that citizens should possess. In particular, a central role was played by the right to information. Elena Collavin (in Collavin and Pellegrini 2003) points at an interesting example (quoted below with some abbreviation) of interactional recognition of a citizenship-based right to information from the Casalino meeting:

(13) Woman: [...] siccome, l'esperimento è in corso, allora, h noi abbiamo questo privilegio, a questo punto, secondo alcuni, che nel nostro territorio, sta avvenendo questo magnifico esperimento, h che sa, allora a questo punto siamo tutti informati vogliamo sapere come, come v

procede, che risultati da, non solo alla fine, che cosa succede nel percorso,. ecco io adesso non lo so cosa succederà, non ho capito, ma non mi ricordo più quali sono i tempi cosa succede adesso [xxxx

for, given the fact that the experiment is running, so, we have this privilege, at this point, according to somebody, that on our territory this wonderful experiment is taking place, that, so at this point we are all informed we want to know how it is going, which results it produces, not only in the end, what happens along the way. Actually now I don't know what is going to happen, I have not understood, but I cannot remember anymore, which is the timing what happens now [...

Scientist: [io come sono venuto questa sera, tra un anno quando:, si ripeterà l'esperimento il prossimo anno posso venire [e sarò ben felice di portarvi anche con diapositive i dati e tutto quanto
[I, as I have come tonight in one year when, we will repeat the experiment next year I can come [and I will be glad to bring to you also with slides the data and everything

Man: [ecco, e magari ci far ci porterà la paniscia fatta con quel riso lì
[that's it and maybe [he will make he will bring the paniscia⁹ made with that very rice ((xxx))
(rumori di sottofondo, risate)
(background noises, laughs)

Woman: e poi ognuno deciderà se mangiarla oppure no ((ridendo))
and then everybody will decide if they want to eat it or not ((laughing))

After repeated complaints for lack of information, a woman in the audience puts forward a request for more, and more detailed, information about the local GMO field trial. In his reply, the scientist running the trial undertakes a commitment to provide the kind of information required, thus implicitly accepting the right of that person and other local residents to be informed. The connection of information with decisional capacity is playfully (but illuminatingly) stressed by the woman in her last turn. But it is fair to remember that the obligation locally attributed to the scientist as well as the right that the scientist concedes to the audience are micro-level and do not correspond to contents of citizen status established by macro-level regulations. Interaction goes beyond the existing law and plays what might be called a "pioneering" role (I borrow this image from the talk delivered by the Casalino mayor at the beginning of the meeting). In this perspective, micro-practice can contribute, not only to the enactment of macro-level regulations, but also to their improvement.¹⁰

Summing up, it must be recognized that in any attempt to connect interaction and citizen status to each other, the gap between micro-social and macro-social facts is at least indirectly at issue. What is peculiar to the speech act approach proposed here is that it does not purport to fill in that gap and make it disappear, but offers conceptual tools that can be applied on both its sides, thus emphasizing the comparability between social facts of the two levels. Attribution and modification of deontic modal competence is, in fact, a phenomenon instantiated throughout informal and formal contexts up to institutional and legal ones.

Notes

¹ By discourse I mean language as a social practice, both affected by other social facts and affecting them (cf. Fairclough 1989), and producing texts (in the semiotic sense, cf. Hjelmslev 1961, of meaningful events grounded in underlying semiotic systems).

² In the Italian lexicon *cittadinanza* and *nazionalità* are neatly distinguished from one another, but the distinction becomes problematic in French or English where nationality and citizenship appear to be traditionally conflated under the labels *nationality* or *nationalité*.

³ These data (recording: Heiko Hausendorf; transcription: Melanie Werner) were made available for discussion to the participants in the interdisciplinary research on communicating citizenship

(coordinated by Alfons Bora and Heiko Hausendorf) to which the present volume is devoted, at their first meeting in Bielefeld, June 2001. My comments on the Sickte data owe much to the insightful discussion of them at the Bielefeld meeting. Many thanks to Ingrid Furchner in particular.

⁴ Modal particles are a peculiar feature of German that will not be tackled here, although most probably linked to illocutionary force and mitigation/reinforcement phenomena.

⁵ Examples are quoted here using simplified transcriptions conventions: (-) and (--) indicate short and medium pauses respectively; the comma indicates raising or slightly raising intonation, the period falling intonation. Uncertain words are in brackets, preceded by a question mark. English translation is as literal as possible but not on a word by word basis (since the relevant unit of analysis is the conversational turn).

⁶ Elena Collavin has analyzed the Italian Paradys data from the linguistic point of view, with attention to speech acts and their effects on deontic modal competences, in Collavin (2002) and Collavin and Pellegrini (2003). She is going to further develop her analyses in her PhD thesis (in preparation).

⁷ The speaker elaborates on the Italian idiom "il gioco vale la candela" (lit: *the game is worth the candle*), often used in the interrogative to cast doubt on the balance between effort and result or risk and benefit involved in a given activity.

⁸ The only information potentially accessible to the lay citizen is publication on the Health Ministry web site of the details of authorized experiments. Only very motivated people is likely to find it out. The Regional Administration too receives communication of the experiments that have been authorized in its territory, but with no obligation to make it further public.

⁹ A local dish made with rice, meat and vegetables.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, the new Italian law about GMOs deliberate release (194/2003), issued in summer 2003, has taken only a little step forward as regards citizen information. Information about each application will be sent to a list of subjects that will include institutions, associations and other organizations as well as individuals who require to be included, and published on the web site of the Environment Ministry already before authorization, while again no specific action is taken to inform local residents.

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