

AUDIENCE, SPEECH ACT THEORY, AND COMPOSITION TEXTBOOKS
A REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF AUDIENCE IN COMPOSITION TEXTS

by

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The notion that the student writer should be able to identify an audience for his writing is a recent addition to some college composition textbooks. Some authors see this identification as an important beginning step in the writing process, and they devote several pages to the idea. Each author offers practical suggestions aimed at helping the student to understand that audience is an important factor in determining the tone, purpose and mode of discourse of a piece of writing. As a philosophy of language, Speech Act Theory includes the audience as a factor the writer must consider when writing a sentence. The premise of this report is that Speech Act Theory does offer a student an additional method of locating and writing to an audience.

To use a language, whether through speech or writing is to engage in a rule-governed form of behavior. This is the hypothesis that John R. Searle tests through his theory that "the production of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication."¹ It is the rules or conditions that Searle is interested in identifying in order to explain how a speaker or writer can use language to communicate effectively. In order to do this, Searle identifies the three elements necessary in any communication as the speaker, hearer, and utterance, or for the purposes of this report in written communications as the writer, audience, and artifact. In order to consider the issue of audience as set out in several

current composition textbooks, it is necessary to summarize briefly Searle's establishment of the rules that govern speech acts. The discussion is adapted from Searle's work; the principles are his.

Searle's work is an expansion of philosopher J. L. Austin's ideas that are contained in the work How to do Things With Words. Austin, and Searle's publications opened a new vein of thought in the field of language philosophy. After Searle's Speech Acts was published in 1969, other linguists and philosophers saw the importance of the work and began their own studies expanding on Searle and Austin. Still Speech Act Theory is a relatively new area of inquiry that is being applied in many fields. There is a wealth of newly published material that deals with Speech Act Theory or pragmatics in the fields of philosophy, grammar, literary criticism and, most recently, composition.

The other element of this report, audience, has also been the subject of a great deal of publication, mostly due to the great new interest in the field of composition. But although there are some recent publications that consider Speech Act Theory and composition together, an ERIC search revealed that there is no available study relating this specific part of composition, audience to Speech Act Theory,--a relationship that this report attempts to provide which is what this report is concerned with.

Essential to this study is the understanding that there are rules or conditions necessary to perform speech acts, and a distinction must be made between regulative rules and constitutive rules. As their names suggest, regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity, while constitutive rules constitute an activity, but an activity that can be newly created or defined by the con-

stitutive rules. Games offer the best example of constitutive rules, because the rules provide specifications for the game, without which the game would be impossible to play.²

Another distinction between regulative and constitutive rules is the form they usually take. Regulative rules are commonly imperatives: "Do X" or "If Y do X." Constitutive rules are not always imperative and can be expressed as "X counts as Y," or "X counts as Y in context C." For example: "If you shoot for the basket, arch the ball high" is a regulative rule. "If you hit the basket, it counts as a score in basketball." is a constitutive rule. This formula provides for specifications rather than appraisals.³ Language use then "is a matter of performing speech acts according to systems of constitutive rules."⁴ This conclusion can be drawn if one considers language behavior is conventional, and that speech acts are performed in accordance with the rules of language behavior, because the rules define the conventions.

When a speaker makes an utterance, or a writer writes a sentence, three acts can be distinguished. The locutionary act is the utterance. The second act, the illocutionary act is that made in the utterance. The third act is that made by the utterance. Examples here are helpful:

Locutionary act: Saying "I didn't murder my wife."
 Illocutionary act: Informing an audience that "I didn't murder my wife."
 Perlocutionary act: Convincing an audience that "I didn't murder my wife."

Another act is the propositional act or the performance of reference or predication. But propositional acts cannot be performed without the illocutionary act: "one cannot just express a

proposition while doing nothing else and have thereby performed a complete speech act."⁵ In grammatical terms, the propositional act is part of a sentence, while the illocutionary act is the whole sentence.⁶ This distinction leads to an identification of the illocutionary force of the statement, or how the proposition should be understood, or in different terms, what illocutionary act is being performed. For example, "I am going" is a proposition plus the illocutionary force of warning. Searle identifies some illocutionary force indicating devices of English as word order, punctuation, and mood of the verb.⁷ In an analysis of an illocutionary act, rules account for the propositional indicators.

The meaning of a sentence is accounted for by the illocutionary act, while the effect that a sentence has on its audience is accounted for the perlocutionary act.⁸ Added to this distinction must be the concept of rules that define the conventions. If illocutionary acts are performed according to rules, and the illocutionary act carries meaning, then meaning is not only a matter of effect or response, but also of convention.⁹ This concept reiterates the theory that speech acts, with their conventional rules, are the basic units of communication. The identification of the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts also allows meaning to be independent of effect and thus allows for statements that have no perlocutionary effect. For example, "Hello" as a greeting does not demand anything of the audience except an acknowledgement that the statement is a greeting. There is, in normal circumstances, no perlocutionary effect, only the illocutionary force, or the understanding, of a greeting. The distinction of effect (per-

locution) and meaning (illocution) also accounts for the statements that produce an unintentional effect on the audience.¹⁰

The applications for a student writer searching for an audience are clear. Students are typically asked to direct their writing to an audience; an audience they are instructed to "identify" or "see." But if the student is only given vague imperatives like "Don't insult your reader," or unclear advice about effect, response or perlocution, his audience will remain vague and out of focus and cannot be identified. However, if a student has the notion of illocutionary acts and their constitutive rules, then he can put himself in the place of a reader whose task is to receive communication, that is to understand, not simply to react or respond. Thus the writing process begins by giving the student a distinct model of communication that truly allows him to "see" his audience. It is this distinct model of communication that this report recommends developing into a working model for composition textbooks. Speech Act Theory represents a point of departure from most textbook treatments of audience, and the premise of this report is that the theory does offer the student more than the inexact guidelines that current textbooks give.

The following discussion will assess five current composition textbooks' treatment of audience by first examining their shared characteristics, and then their individual features. The five textbooks are: Contemporary Writing, Jim W. Corder; Modern English Handbook, Robert M. Gorrell & Charlton Laird; A Contemporary Rhetoric, Maxine Hairston; Writing With a Purpose, James M. McCrimmon; and Words in Action, Martin Steinmann, Jr. The first four textbooks were chosen because of their popularity and because

they all devote several pages to a lesson on audience.¹¹ Steinmann's text was chosen because of the author's expressed interest in Speech Act Theory as a rhetorical springboard. The discussion will contrast the textbooks' treatment of audience to the assumptions of Speech Act Theory to show that the theory can assist the student in locating an audience for his writing. But most importantly, the report will show that Speech Act Theory can help the student to communicate his message clearly and effectively to his readers, because the beginning assertion of the report is that language is a means of communicating, and the job of composition textbooks should be to give students a model or theory that will help them to communicate effectively.

The five textbooks were chosen for their popularity, but also because they are representative of the many composition textbooks available, in that they could be labeled process-oriented or product-oriented. A process-oriented text presents writing as a process; it traces the steps a writer takes as he writes. The text has divisions that discuss prewriting, writing, and rewriting. The treatment of audience usually occurs in the early prewriting chapters, as a step in the composing process. Corder's Contemporary Writing and McCrimmon's Writing With a Purpose are examples of process-oriented texts. A product-oriented text is not concerned with the act of writing, but the result of writing. It tells students the characteristics of good prose in order for the student to meet the requirements. The text has chapters that deal with sentences, paragraphs and modes of discourse. Audience is seen as a component of good prose that the student must recognize, but the treatment of audience may occur

anywhere in the textbook, not necessarily in the beginning chapters. Hairston's A Contemporary Rhetoric, Steinmann's Words in Action, and Gorrell and Laird's Modern English Handbook are examples of product-oriented textbooks.

The outlook the authors of the textbooks have toward writing also influences their treatment of audience. Both Corder and McCrimmon present their lessons on audience in their prewriting chapters, although Corder puts all his ideas in several pages devoted to the topic in Chapter Five of his text and McCrimmon treats the topic in two places. One is very early in the pre-writing section (p. 6) and again later in the book in the chapter on persuasive writing. But both authors present audience as a step in the composing process.

Hairston, Steinmann, and Gorrell and Laird include audience in their textbooks, but their treatments all occur in different places according to the scheme of their textbooks. Hairston includes her audience lesson in a chapter titled "The Components of Rhetoric," which follows discussions of sentences and paragraphs. Steinmann's last chapter, chapter three, is devoted to audience, but included in this chapter titled "Keeping an Eye on Your Readers," is his discussion of dialects. Gorrell and Laird's fifth chapter is titled "The Audience and the Writer's Voice," which follows chapters that deal with topic sentences, paragraphs and the development of materials. Their fifth chapter includes not only audience, but a discussion of writer's voice, choice of person, tone, and point of view. Even though each author fits audience into his textbook at different points, they all intend to show the student that in order to write good prose, they must

be aware of their audience.

Before beginning the textbook critique, two elements of the systematized apparatus of Speech Act Theory must be introduced. The first is the idea of uptake, and the second is a sample of the rules of illocutionary acts that Searle decided on. Uptake is J. L. Austin's term for the hearer's reception of the illocutionary act, and his understanding or misunderstanding the act.¹² Although Searle does not adopt the term uptake, he is concerned with the realization that the illocutionary act may follow all the rules and still be misunderstood. There is not really any way to guarantee that the hearer will have good uptake and get the meaning of every utterance, but the rules of illocutionary acts can account for the ways in which statements are defective and misunderstanding occurs. This is not to assume that in normal conversation when a statement is misunderstood, it should be reviewed as to whether or not the illocutionary act did follow the rules, but a review is a possibility for the composition student. The textbooks admit to the loss of immediate feedback when one is writing as opposed to conversing,¹³ so then the notion of uptake and of rules could act in the same way as the confused look or shoulder shrug or question that indicate misunderstanding in conversation.

Searle has a lengthy, detailed discussion that identifies the conditions and rules for certain illocutionary acts in chapter three of Speech Acts. The processes he goes through are very detailed and complex, and are unnecessary for this report. All that needs to be recognized is that all illocutionary acts are performed according to four rules: the propositional content rule,

the preparatory rule, the sincerity rule and the essential rule, each of which is satisfied or fulfilled in different ways for different illocutionary acts.¹⁴ A chart that employs these rules to explain some illocutionary acts is included as an appendix to this report.

At the beginning of each textbook discussion of audience is a diagram that is each author's attempt to show the student where audience is in relation to himself and his writing. The diagrams are composed of various geometric figures, squares, triangles or ovals, and the influence each element has on the other is shown by arrows, intersecting lines, or right angles. Each diagram is accompanied by an explanatory paragraph admitting that in actual writing situations, the diagram may be altered. As a visual aid whose purpose is to help the student locate his relationship to the other elements of the composing process the diagrams are less than enlightening. As a device whose aim is to simplify a detailed process, they are deceptive. As an attempt to represent a model of communication, they are only gestures. In contrast, a simple linear progression from writer to audience via the artifact, could diagram the communication model of Speech Act Theory, because the premise behind the model is simple. The writer writes a sentence, or paragraph, or theme, that contains an illocutionary force that carries the meaning. The illocutionary force, if it follows the constitutive rules, is understood by the audience, and finally the artifact effects the audience: locution, illocution, perlocution.

This model illuminates two elements missing from the textbook discussions. One is that understanding is prior to response, so response is contingent on understanding the illocutionary force.

Corder, for example, writes about three different writer-audience relationships that he labels referential, active, and personal. The approach that a writer takes, according to Corder, is determined by "how important it is for readers to respond to you."¹⁵ It is an individual, unique effort: "Each writer speaks in his or her own way to readers who respond in their own ways."¹⁶ Corder does not account for understanding or uptake. Steinmann reduces the writing process to a stimulus-response relationship: "Your paper is a stimulus; your readers' reading it and reacting to it, a response."¹⁷ This viewpoint assumes that reading is automatically accompanied by understanding. Anyone who has read something just beyond his grasp can see the fallacy of this notion. Granted the reaction of a reader may be confusion, but is that confusion a response stemming from understanding or misunderstanding? The problem is that the authors instruct students to be concerned with causing a reaction in the readers; the authors equate meaning with response rather than showing that meaning is conveyed prior to response. In Speech Act Theory terms, they are giving perlocutionary advice and are ignoring illocutionary acts. The missing second element is a distinction between illocution and perlocution, and to ignore this distinction is to ignore part of communication.

The textbooks then are not giving the student a complete model of communication. The quotations from Steinmann and Corder given above illustrate this omission. Hairston tells the student that "rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing effectively or persuasively," and she identifies as "four ingredients involved in the communication process" as the persuasive purpose, the audience,

the writer's persona, and the content of the argument. These ingredients constitute her "rhetorical square."¹⁸ She equates meaning with response. McCrimmon states that "the need to understand your readers is greatest when you are trying to persuade them"¹⁹ This statement not only misplaces meaning, but it makes a slippery perlocutionary act, persuasion, the greatest reason to understand one's audience. The introduction of meaning as part of college composition textbooks could be a very difficult task because the concept of meaning, particularly meaning's location is a gray area for many linguists. But if the distinction between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts is introduced to the student, by accounting for meaning as prior to response and carried by the illocutionary force, then the student can discover in his own writing, by putting himself in the place of the audience, where and how his sentences and perhaps the entire composition go wrong.

Gorrell and Laird's treatment of audience codifies the kinds of audience a student would write to, and gives the students questions to aid in the identification of the audience. The choices given are basically levels of diction. "The writer must be prepared to give an audience the information it wants, in an acceptable style."²⁰ The other textbooks also discuss diction and tone as an important part of considering audience. The chapter in Gorrell and Laird that begins with audience, ends with a lesson on tone. Corder's dependence on the term relationship to discuss audience, leads him to write that, "some kind of relationship always exists between a writer and his or her audience. It may be favorable, warm, close and trusting."²¹ The choice of words then depends on your relationship to the audience. Steinmann uses

a discussion of dialects in a section headed "Your Readers' Knowledge of Language," to make his point about diction. McCrimmon also includes diction as an element of audience consideration. One of the three steps a writer should take is "to show understanding of the reader's position by restating it in terms acceptable to the reader."²² These discussions of diction levels are an important part of any composition course, and to include the topic in a treatment of audience, is a wise move. But think how much more effective the discussion of diction levels would be in connection with the idea of illocutionary acts. For example, the difference between request and demand could be examined for both connotative value and illocutionary force. Not only would the student have a model of communication, but also an understanding of how the components of a speech act, words, can be manipulated for the clearest meaning.

The absence or the blurring of the distinction between meaning and response is also evident in the advice given in the textbooks on how the writer can cause a certain effect in the reader. This cause/effect relationship equates meaning to effect, rather than response, as in the previous discussion. The difference here is apparently that the audience can respond without being effected or moved in any way. This idea comes close to the illocution/perlocution distinction, because some illocutionary acts do not correspond to particular perlocutionary effects, but the notion of meaning as an entity independent of effect is still not included. McCrimmon for example, defines the purpose of persuasion as "to change the reader's image of something."²³ The desired effect is change. Hairston gives advice about making appeals: "It is vir-

tually impossible to frame an appeal that will work with large, undifferentiated masses of people, and you would do better not to try. The attempt to do so can produce little but bland and vapid generalities."²⁴ The desired effect of trying to appeal to a large audience is discouraged. Although the definition is accurate and observation important, they would be clearer if preceded by a discussion of illocution and perlocution.

After reading several treatments of audience, one characteristic becomes very evident. That is the authors' use of jargon in a sociological or psychological vein. The most recurring of these terms are concerns and values as traits of the audience that the writer should isolate in order to establish a relationship.

Steinmann says it best: "When you are writing well, then, you are tailoring virtually every aspect of your paper to your readers' knowledge, interest, values and relationship to you."²⁵ The impossibility of such an assignment is overwhelming. How can a college freshman direct a theme to his readers' knowledge, etc., when he has not yet come to grips with his own opinions and values? It is not that freshmen have no opinions; they all have opinions and interests, but they are not always aware that they have them. Every composition teacher has experienced the blank stares after giving a "free" writing assignment. When instructed to write about what interests them, the stares are accompanied by nail chewing and a stammering, "I don't have any intersts!" It then takes careful guidance to prove that they do have interests in the form of hobbies, or jobs, or majors, or boy/girl friends. How could that same student possibly deal with instructions like "You will have to analyze your audience consciously, specify its

traits, and decide what conclusions you can legitimately make about an audience with those traits,"²⁶ or clarifications like "There is a distinct difference between cynically playing on your audience's biases and prejudices and appealing to their legitimate interests and concerns."²⁷

The author's purpose in using all this psychological jargon is to help the student identify or assume or remember his audience. For example, Corder gives his readers a subject-reader-audience triangle, and then labels writing that is focused on one of the points of the triangle. Personal writing, like diaries or journals, is concerned with "exploring your own thoughts,"²⁸ or is focused on the author. Referential writing, like lab reports or encyclopedia entries, is mostly concerned with "some subject outside your self,"²⁹ or is focused on the subject. Active writing, like advertisements or editorials, is mostly concerned with "occasions (where) the audience comes first."³⁰ or is focused on the audience. The triangle shows the relationship the author has to the other members of the trio, but Corder implies that these distinctions are conscious choices made by the author, when they actually seem to be decided by the assignment. To help the student think from the perspective of the audience, the levels and relationships are only confusing. A presentation of the rules for types of illocutionary acts in a chart form, could replace the labels and most of the "psychobabble." The chart could systematically show the student that if he wants a sentence, or paragraph, or theme to have illocutionary force of a warning, then it must follow certain rules to be understood as a warning. There is no guarantee his audience has the uptake to understand the warning, but do Corder's

distinctions guarantee the audience will understand? The point is that instead of vague instructions about the psychology of an audience, Speech Act Theory can make students aware of specific rules that can guide his writing to be understood by an audience.

Another characteristic of the textbooks is their insistence that the student identify or assume an audience. Gorrell and Laird for example, describe three kinds of audiences--limited, specialized and general--to help the student decide what kind of audience he should write to. Gorrell and Laird also discourage the students from assuming the teacher as their audience and encourage them to assume their classmates are the audience.³¹ Hairston also encourages the assumption that the class is the audience; her reason is clear: "Doing this solves your problem about vocabulary and terminology and gives you a basis of common assumptions and experience from which to work."³² Such advice seems very straightforward. Assume an audience and write to it. But an audience with exactly the same assumptions and experiences would not need to be written to or informed of anything, and such advice is not helpful in the student's decision of what and how much to explain to this assumed audience. Steinmann is more helpful by citing another language philosopher working in the same field as Searle, H. P. Grice, whose "maxims of quantity" are these: give your readers 1) nothing they already know and 2) enough of what they do not know.³³ But Steinmann wants more than assumptions, he wants to know what the audience does or does not know. Steinmann illustrates the result of violating the maxims, but not how a writer can meet the challenge of becoming a mind reader. The hypothesis that language is a rule-governed form of behavior, if ex-

plained to students would make such mind reading unnecessary. The rules are not decided on by a committee, or given by a great linguist. The rules are universal and only need to be identified. This explanation would make the necessary audience accessible because the writer would know his audience's language is rule-governed by universal rules, just as his own is.

Persuasion has already been labeled in this report as a slippery perlocutionary act. But persuasion seems to be the mode of discourse that the textbooks are concerned with most. McCrimmon devotes two pages to audience at the beginning of his text, with a chapter on prewriting. Later in the chapter devoted to persuasion he devotes four more pages to audience. Hairston also seems to direct her students toward persuasion. All the examples she uses in her discussion are argument topics. Also under the heading "keeping your audience in mind," she writes "you are not likely to make an effective argument unless you decide ahead of time whom you are going to address."³⁴ Yet beside these instructions for effective persuasion, are warnings about prose that may anger the reader. Hairston gives examples of anti-rhetoric that is a failure at persuasion, but a success at making the readers hostile or defensive. Corder also advises that "it is better if you can manage to be flexible rather than rigid, tentative and seeking, rather than dogmatic and authoritative."³⁵ McCrimmon explains that some images are deep-rooted and some are shallow-rooted, and that to attempt to change a deep-rooted image through persuasion is rather tricky: "A writer who understands the nature of deep-rooted images will respect them and will not dismiss a reader who holds them as 'stupid' or 'stubborn.' The writer will

not assume that these images can be changed in any one essay. Direct attack on them will only intensify resistance."³⁶ These warnings are to steer a student clear of emotional topics like abortion or nuclear power, but they also are to keep students writing unimpassioned themes about the parking problem on campus, or any other reasonable topic, so they cannot make any enemies. The result is often academic-like prose that has no intense cries for justice or revenge or The American Way, or whatever. The warnings against hostile prose seem to contradict the insistence on leading the discussion to persuasion. This contradiction reinforces the idea that Speech Act Theory could help the student find his audience. Since the textbooks assert that it is easiest to see the importance of knowing one's audience in preparation for a persuasive theme, their discussions lead to that end and are limited to a focus on response or perlocution as indicated earlier. The model of communication that Speech Act Theory offers a student would be helpful in any mode of discourse.

Perhaps some general comments need to be made about these textbooks that have been subjected to such scrutiny. First, the authors should be congratulated for including any detailed discussion of audience, because other widely adopted texts have no discussion, or have only a half-hearted paragraph to explain such a sketchy part of writing as audience.³⁷ Other textbook authors that include a discussion of audience, do so by insistence of the publishers, along with an admission of that fact. Second, each textbook approaches writing in a different way. As previously stated, Gorrell and Laird are interested in the resulting product of writing, and their text gives characteristics of the finished product for

the student to match to his own writing. Corder's text is more process oriented than the other textbooks; he is interested in providing the steps the student takes as he writes. McCrimmon's textbook is also based on the assumption that composition is a process that should have a specific goal or purpose; hence, his title, Writing With a Purpose. Hairston takes a rhetorical basis for her work in hopes of teaching the student basic writing skills, along with how to write competently and effectively. Steinmann's introduction shows his acquaintance with Speech Act Theory; he writes:

When writing, you usually try to do two things with words. First, to communicate a message to your readers. You try to make a statement to them, for instance, or to ask them a question or to make a request of them or to welcome them to a group. Second, by communicating a message to your readers, you try to influence them. You try to get them to believe your statement or to answer your question or to grant your request or to feel welcome.³⁸

He then expresses the goals of his text as to teach the student to write effectively and clearly, and to do this he provides a selection of essays as models of his rhetorical guidelines. The textbooks, on the whole, are well-written; the composition student is sure to gain something from carefully reading the texts. Of course, the way the material is presented by the instructor is a factor in determining whether or not the texts are effective guides to better writing.

In presenting Speech Act Theory there are some practical considerations for the writers of composition textbooks. One of these is the human factor, because both human students and human instructors must understand the apparatus of the theory, i.e., the rules, illocution, perlocution, and applications of the theory, but

does the student need the complete philosophical background?

Does the instructor need it to be able to teach the theory? This is a difficult pedagogical decision, that this author does not feel qualified to make. Granted, the student may be overwhelmed by the labels Searle attaches to things, but that is easily remedied; more important, would the intended instructor be put off by the same labels, or by the seeming obviousness of the theory itself?

As a conclusion, an attempt will be made to outline a treatment of audience that could be included in a composition textbook, based on Speech Act Theory. It should begin with the assertion that language is a rule-governed form of behavior. These rules, it must be pointed out, are not like the rules of etiquette, that regulate an activity, but more like the rules of a game of football. To illuminate this concept, the text could ask the student if he could explain football to someone without using the rules of the game. In contrast, he could explain eating without using etiquette. The distinction must then be applied to language--being careful to avoid the confusion with the regulative rules of grammar. The student should be told the rules are universal--they apply to every language equally, and they are determined by anyone who uses the language.

After a discussion of rules, the student should be shown the distinction between the locution, illocution and perlocution with plenty of examples, and an admission that perlocution is a slippery element because it cannot always be predicted.

The student can be given a chart similar to Searle's but without the labels that could scare the student, or worse confuse him. Something systematic is essential here a chart of graph, so

the student can see the rules: perhaps an exercise using sentences that have similar grammatical forms could be identified according to their illocutionary force. Maybe something like:

A vote for Reagan is a vote for a good president.	Request
A vote for Reagan is a vote for nuclear war.	Warn
A vote for Reagan is a vote for the private sector.	Advise

Another exercise could be to ask the student to make up rules for illocutionary acts himself. A creative exercise like this reinforces the idea that the rules are universals. But it must be clear that the rules govern illocutionary acts, not modes of discourse. If the rules are applied by assigning rules for narrative or description, the theory has been reduced to a rubric, not a model for communication.

The next step would be to show that the rules are important to the audience too; that the audience uses the same rules to communicate; therefore, if the student's writing follows the rules, his audience should understand the theme. This could also be the place where defective statements can be introduced.

The previous discussion that contains suggestions for including Speech Act Theory in composition textbooks is only a minor consideration of this report; the main consideration of this report is the analysis of the representative textbooks. The analysis does show that the topic of audience, as explained in the textbooks, does not include a complete model of communication; that a distinction between meaning and response is either confused or omitted, therefore ignoring an element of communication. Speech Act Theory could help make this distinction clear with a discussion of illocution and perlocution, and also make any vague instructions about the psychology of an audience unnecessary.

The beginning assertions of this report is that composition textbooks should give students a model or theory that will help them both to identify an audience for their writing, and to recognize that audience's process of understanding. Because Speech Act Theory, I have argued, does account for the three elements of the communication situation, the theory would help the student to understand and communicate with an audience. The student must, in any writing situation, make practical decisions about his audience concerning diction levels, tone and shared knowledge. Speech Act Theory provides the most comprehensive framework for these decisions; thus if the theory were to be incorporated into an audience lesson, the student would approach the act of writing as a speech act, and he would practice satisfying, clear rules and conditions as he practices writing.

Appendix

Sample illocutionary acts and their rules

S = Speaker, H = Hearer, A = Act

	Request
Propositional content	Future act A of H
Preparatory	1. H is able to do A. S believes H is able to do A. 2. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of his own accord.
Sincerity	S want H to do A.
Essential	Counts as an attempt to get H to do A.
	Thank (for)
Propositional content	Past act A done by H.
Preparatory	A. benefits S and S believes A benefits S.
Sincerity	S feels grateful or appreciative for A
Essential	Counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation.

From John R. Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 66-7.

Notes

- ¹ John R. Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 16.
 - ² Searle, pp. 34-35.
 - ³ Searle, p. 36.
 - ⁴ Searle, p. 38.
 - ⁵ Searle, p. 29.
 - ⁶ Searle, p. 25.
 - ⁷ Searle, p. 30.
 - ⁸ Searle, p. 46.
 - ⁹ Searle, p. 48.
 - ¹⁰ Searle, p. 46.
 - ¹¹ Jim W. Corder, Contemporary Writing (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1979), pp. 75-91, et passim.
- Robert Gorrell and Charlton Laird, Modern English Handbook, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976), pp. 80-98, et passim.
- Maxine Hairston, A Contemporary Rhetoric, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1980), pp. 104-113, et passim.
- James M. McCrimmon, Writing With a Purpose, 7th ed. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1980), pp. 6-7, 204-207, et passim.
- Martin Steinmann, Words in Action (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979), pp. 367-378, et passim.

The report states that one of reasons the textbooks were selected is that several pages in each textbook are devoted to a lesson on audience. This obvious criterion forces the exclusion

of several popular textbooks, for instance Hans P. Guth, Words and Ideas, 5th ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1980) and Frederick Crews, The Random House Handbook, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1977), because they have little or no discussion of audience. However, other textbooks that do treat audience were excluded for two main reasons. First, a canvassing of all appropriate composition textbooks would be an always increasing task, not theoretically enlightening. For example, Linda Flower's recent Problem Solving Strategies for Writing, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1981), though it contributes new ideas to composition theory, does not contribute any ideas to audience theory beyond those considered in the present essay.

Second, many approaches do not lend themselves to the kind of analysis needed for a discussion of Speech Act Theory. For example Robert Scholes' The Practice of Writing (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981) is a structuralist approach to composition. The treatment of audience in this textbook appears to present Searle's ideas but Scholes refers to Speech Acts in a non-technical way, and his "codes" are conventions rather than rules (pp. 2-7). Moreover, composition texts which give "contexts" for the student to use in a writing assignment, build specific audiences into each assignment, and therefore do not necessarily need a specific theoretical discussion of the issue of audience.

At all events, it is not the primary intention of the present essay to review the entire field of composition texts, but to give a representative selection that especially affords analysis of an application of Speech Act Theory.

¹² J.L. Austin, How To Do Things With Words (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 36.

¹³ Hairston, p. 108.

McCrimmon, p. 7.

¹⁴ Searle, pp. 55-64.

¹⁵ Corder, p. 84.

¹⁶ Corder, p. 84.

¹⁷ Steinmann, p. 368.

¹⁸ Hairston, p. 103.

¹⁹ McCrimmon, p. 6.

²⁰ Gorrell, p. 81.

²¹ Corder, p. 91.

²² McCrimmon, p. 205.

- 23 McCrimmon, p. 204.
- 24 Hairston, p. 110.
- 25 Steinmann, p. 369.
- 26 Hairston, p. 108.
- 27 Hairston, p. 110.
- 28 Corder, p. 76.
- 29 Corder, p. 77.
- 30 Corder, p. 77.
- 31 Gorrell, p. 82.
- 32 Hairston, p. 112.
- 33 Steinmann, p. 374.
- 34 Hairston, p. 111.
- 35 Corder, p. 88.
- 36 McCrimmon, p. 205.
- 37 Hans P. Guth Words and Ideas, 5th ed. (Belmont, California;
Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1980).
- Frederick Crews, The Random House Handbook, 2nd ed. (New York:
Random House, 1977).
- 38 Steinmann, p. 2.

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AUDIENCE, SPEECH ACT THEORY, AND COMPOSITION TEXTBOOKS
A REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF AUDIENCE IN COMPOSITION TEXTS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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Many college textbooks contain chapters that help a student writer identify an audience for his writing. Each textbook offers practical suggestions aimed at helping the student to understand that the audience is an important factor in determining the tone, subject, and mode of discourse of a piece of writing. Speech Act Theory is a language philosophy that includes audience as a factor the writer must consider when writing. The premise of this report is that Speech Act Theory does offer a student an additional method of locating and writing to an audience.

The report explains the vocabulary and assumptions of Speech Act Theory as they relate to audience. Then the treatment of audience in the textbooks is examined for concerns which resemble Speech Act Theory, and also to determine whether Speech Act Theory could improve the treatment of audience. The report concludes with suggested techniques for including Speech Act Theory in the treatment of audience in textbooks.