

- (4) grübel grübel
meditate-STEM meditate-STEM

Finally, and most importantly, NICs are performative in the sense that uttering a NIC is an act of performing something, thus true by utterance. Therefore, one can react to the NIC in (5a) by a rejection like in (6b) but not by a denial like in (6a). In contrast, the assertion in (5b) can be denied. Hence, as generally assumed for performatives, NICs are evaluated with regard to felicity conditions and not to truth conditions.

- (5) a. A: grübel
meditate-STEM
 b. A: Ich grübel.
I meditate-FINITE
- (6) a. B: You are not meditating, you are just pretending.
 b. B: Stop it.

We propose to capture NICs as separate performatives following Portner (2007) in assuming two interpretative functions, i.e. ordinary content ($= \llbracket \cdot \rrbracket_c$) and non-truthconditional content ($= \llbracket \cdot \rrbracket_c^C$). Compare the representation in (7):

- (7) (a) $\llbracket \text{NIC} \rrbracket_c = \emptyset$
 (b) $\llbracket \text{NIC} \rrbracket_c^C = [\lambda P. \lambda w \text{ speaker}(c) \text{ instantiates } P \text{ in } w]$

P corresponds to the descriptive content of the verbal structure projected by NICs. Since NICs lack any inflection, i.e. any potential anchoring to the ordinary meaning dimension, P is situated in the non-truthconditional sphere. As desired, the non-displaceability property of NICs follows immediately from their being mapped onto $\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket_c^C$ whereas $\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket_c$ remains empty. Furthermore, the open argument of P (being of type $\langle e, t \rangle$) can directly be identified with the speaker.

The anchoring in w might come as a surprise as the corresponding actions are not really performed in the actual world. However, the construction's specific effect is to *do* things linguistically which normally cannot be instantiated by linguistic expressions.⁴ In other words, NICs allow verbs which are canonically not performative to come across as performatives.

References

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⁴This reminds of Searle (1989) who argues that in virtual worlds you can fry an egg by saying it.