

3.1.1 Internalist vs. Externalist Understanding

In the further development of this classical concept, two strands have emerged: An internalist approach focuses on the functions or intentions of a securitising move itself, while an externalist approach focuses on the context and consequences.

Internalist Understanding: Focus on the Speech Act

Drawing from Austin's speech act theory, Wæver insists on "analysing securitization as an illocutionary and not a perlocutionary act in order to organize the theory around the constitutive, transformative event of actors [...] rather than seeing an external cause–effect relationship between speech and effects."¹⁸ Representatives of this analytical approach attempt to decode the *grammar of security*. Presumably drawing inspiration from speech act theory and leveraging linguistic vocabulary, Wæver, Buzan, and de Wilde introduced the term *grammar of security*. Interestingly, they associated its meaning with the construction of a plot rather than a universal set of rules and constraints, like scholars such as Vuori, who taxonomized general functions of securitisation speech acts.¹⁹ Again, securitisation, does not seek to grasp what (in)security *is* but what constructions of (in)security *do*, that is, they do not have to be 'true' in order to be effective.

While the focus on the *illocutionary act*, that is, the intention or function of the speech act, focuses on a temporal snapshot in analysis, the *perlocutionary act*, that is, the effect and consequence of the speech act, involves a temporal frame that goes beyond the utterance itself. Moreover, Austin already noted that the *perlocution* is "specific to the *circumstances* of issuance and is therefore not conventionally achieved just by uttering particular utterances, and includes all those effects, intended or unintended, often indeterminate, that some particular utterances *in a particular situation* may cause."²⁰ In other words: context matters.

For a second generation of securitisation scholars, this was the starting point to critique various aspects of the use of speech acts,²¹ which eventually led to more contextualist readings of securitisation. Holger Stritzel notes that since the internalist understanding of securitisation does not convincingly explain why some securitisations are successful and while others fail, it is of limited use for empirical research.²² An internalist understanding could only point to the rhetoric, which must be persuasive by nature. Due to this explanatory weakness, a more externalist understanding developed, which focuses on the context of a speech act.

¹⁸ Ole Wæver, "The Theory Act: Responsibility and Exactitude as Seen from Securitization," *International Relations* 29, no. 1 (2015): 122–23

¹⁹ Vuori, *How to do security with words*.

²⁰ Emphasis added, Austin, *How to do things with words*, pp. 14–15.

²¹ Thierry Balzacq, ed., *Securitization theory: How security problems emerge and dissolve*, PRIO new security studies (New York: Routledge, 2011); Stritzel and Chang, "Securitization and counter-securitization in Afghanistan"; Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School"; Howell and Richter-Montpetit, "Is securitization theory racist?"; Bertrand, "Can the subaltern securitize?"

²² Holger Stritzel, "Towards a Theory of Securitization," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2007): 362, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066107080128>.

Externalist Understanding: Focus on the Context

Asking why some securitisation moves succeed while others fail, and what the political consequences are, Balzacq's shift to focus on the *perlocutionary act* brought contextual factors into the centre of the analysis.²³ While prioritizing the *illocutionary act* allows for an analysis of a context-independent *grammar of security*, that is, the intended functions of security speech acts in any given society, prioritizing the *perlocutionary act* has allowed for the emergence of a diverse body of scholarly work that has focused on specific kinds of context, for instance the regional context,²⁴ international context,²⁵ political-historical context,²⁶ or gendered context.²⁷ In other words, the focus shifted from the 'grammar of security' to the 'dialects of security.'

In their different facets, these dialects focus on the social, political, and cultural contexts in which threats are constructed. Contextual factors are non-exhaustive and include, for example, the symbolic and social capital of the securitising actor, the cultural or historical disposition of the audience, power relations between securitising actor and audience,²⁸ etc. Context is not a purely independent variable, though, because agents can also bring about or prevent certain contexts. In this regard, Bonacker points out that this contextualist reading of securitisation theory is analytically unsatisfactory, as it has not yet been clarified from a methodological point of view what is meant by a "context."²⁹ But the *methodological situationism* that he proposes to replace 'context' suffers from the logical fallacy that he defines situations *idem per idem* as "interactional contexts in which social order is first produced."³⁰ Nonetheless, he draws attention to the fact that if context is emphasized too much in the *perlocutionary-/context-focused* strand of securitisation analysis, its validity degenerates into 'everything depends on context' and thus loses analytical sharpness.

3.1.2 The Audience's Agency

Already in 1998, the representatives of the Copenhagen School assessed that in the *grammar of security* the audience represented the *conditio sine qua non* because an "issue is secu-

²³ Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066105052960>.

²⁴ Nergis Canefe, "Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question," *South European Society & Politics*, no. 3 (2013)

²⁵ Nicole J. Jackson, "International Organizations, Security Dichotomies and the Trafficking of Persons and Narcotics in Post-Soviet Central Asia," *Security Dialogue*, 2006.

²⁶ Jef Huysmans, *The European Union and the securitization of migration* (2000); Jef Huysmans, "Agency and the Politics of Protection," in *The politics of protection: Sites of insecurity and political agency*, ed. Jef Huysmans, Andrew Dobson and Raia Prokhorovik, 1st ed., Routledge advances in international relations and global politics (New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2006)

²⁷ Hakan Seckinelgin and Joseph Bigirumwami, "Securitization of HIV/AIDS in Context," *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 5 (2010)

²⁸ Silva, "Securitization as a nation-building instrument"

²⁹ Thorsten Bonacker, "Situierte Sicherheit," *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 28, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.5771/0946-7165-2021-1-5>.

³⁰ Emphasis added, Bonacker, "Situierte Sicherheit," p. 7.