
PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF UTTERANCES

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Abstract.

The communicative approach in studying the language requires the realization of the functions of language units in the process of communication. All areas of human activity involve the use of language, and utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each area through their content, style, and compositional structure. This article aims at investigating theories from Bakhtin, Kolshanskiy and other linguists upon different speech genres, answers to the question of what is the utterance according to the Principles of Pragmatics.

Key words.

speech genres, communication, utterance, pragmatics, context, intention, language.

It is commonly recognized that communicative approach in studying the language requires the necessity of using as one of the important components the realization of the functions of the language units in the process of communication. Professor Kolshanskiy defined: "Pragmatics as a communicative aspect of the language aimed at making the final effect of the language. Communication can be called "pragmatic verbal behavior". Every language unit is determined by the speaker's intention in the process of communication. Studying of language units and their pragmatic aspect and communicative function is very effective nowadays (Saidova 1988).

Pragmatic approach considers meaning as a certain function which can a certain language unit perform in a certain context and situation in the process of communication or speech acts.

The function of the utterance is always realized in some definite context and situation depending on the communicative intention of the speaker (Kolshanskiy 1984).

All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity. "Language is realized in the form of individual concrete

utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects - thematic content, style, and compositional structure - are inseparably linked in the role of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication. Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres." (Bakhtin 1986).

Bakhtin considered that special emphasis should be placed on the extreme heterogeneity of speech genres (oral and written). While studying speech genres, he found out that the general problem of speech genres has never really been raised while literary genres have been studied more than anything else. At that time, more attention was already being devoted to the verbal nature of these genres as utterances: for example, to such aspects as the relation to the listener and his influence on the utterance, the specific verbal finalization of the utterance (as distinct from its completeness of thought), and so forth.

Bakhtin argued the underestimation of the extreme heterogeneity of speech genres and the attendant difficulty of determining the general nature of the utterance should far to be in any ways. He differentiated speech genres learning from simple and complex perspective. Novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth-arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, sociopolitical, and so on. Complex which is secondary speech genres understood not as a functional difference, but during the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. Bakhtin described that these primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. For example, rejoinders of everyday dialogue or letters found in a novel retain their form and their everyday significance only on the plane of the novel's content. They enter into actual reality only via the novel as a whole, that is, as a literary-artistic event and not as everyday life. The novel as a whole is an utterance just as rejoinders in everyday dialogue or private letters are (they do have a common nature), but unlike these, the novel is a secondary (complex) utterance (Bakhtin 1986).

By Bakhtin's assumptions, it seems to us that a study of the nature of the utterance and of speech genres is of fundamental importance for overcoming those simplistic notions about speech life, about the so-called speech flow, about communication and so forth-ideas which are still current in our language studies. Moreover, a study of the utterance as a real unit of speech communion will also make it possible to understand more correctly the nature of language units (as a system): words and sentences.

"We use the term 'utterance' to refer to complete communicative units, which may consist of single words, phrases, clauses and clause combinations spoken in context, in contrast to the term 'sentence,' which we reserve for units consisting of at least one main clause and any accompanying subordinate clauses, and marked by punctuation (capital letters and full stops) in writing."(Carter& McCarthy2006).

- "An utterance can take sentence form, but not every sentence is an utterance. An utterance is identifiable by a pause, a relinquishing of the floor, a change of speaker; that the first speaker stops indicates that the utterance is, temporarily, complete and awaits, invites a response."(Green 2007).

"For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on."

(Mark Antony in William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Act 3, scene 2)

- "An utterance can take sentence form, but not every sentence is an utterance. An utterance is identifiable by a pause, a relinquishing of the floor, a change of speaker; that the first speaker stops indicates that the utterance is, temporarily, complete and awaits, invites a response." (sharingculture.com).

Bakhtin's concept of the utterance includes the responsive, contextualized, and dynamic aspects, but emphasized sociality. It finds support in a number of critical ideas posited by Bakhtin about the utterance in *The Problem of Speech Genres*. Language arises from man's need to express himself, to objectify himself. According to Bakhtin (1986), the essence of any form of language is somehow reduced to the spiritual creativity of the individuum. Several other versions of the function of language have been and are now being suggested, but it is still typical to underestimate, if not altogether ignore, the communicative function of language. Language is regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were only one speaker who does not have any necessary relation to other participants in speech communication. If the role of the other is taken into account at all, it is the role of a listener, who understands the speaker only passively. The utterance is adequate to its object (i.e., the content of the uttered thought) and to the person who is

pronouncing the utterance. Language essentially needs only a speaker-one speaker-and an object for his speech. And if language also serves as a means of communication, this is a secondary function that has nothing to do with its essence. Of course, the language collective, the plurality of speakers, cannot be ignored when speaking of language, but when defining the essence of language this aspect is not a necessary one that determines the nature of language. Sometimes the language collective is regarded as a kind of collective personality, "the spirit of the people," and so forth, and immense significance is attached to it (by representatives of the „psychology of nations"), but even in this case the plurality of speakers, and others with respect to each given speaker, is denied any real essential significance.

When reading *The Problem of Speech Genres*, more than finding definite answers to these questions, one gets the sense that the author is posing the problem. The fact that Bakhtin did not offer a solution (Haye&Larrain 2011). From the Bakhtin's work it can be seen that that language and culture are to be understood as living discourse, and not as formal systems (Bakhtin 1986); that the living unit of discourse is the utterance, neither the sentence nor the proposition (Bakhtin 1986); that each utterance is an unrepeatable event of interaction of different voices (Bakhtin 1986); that each utterance is a response to other utterances, so that it has a meaning in the context of other utterances pre-existing one's word, or anticipated in the shaping of one's word (Haye&Larrain 2011).

CONTEXT has been understood in various ways, for example to include 'relevant' aspects of the physical or social setting of an utterance. Leech (1983) considered context to be any background knowledge assumed to be shared by speaker and hearer and which contributes to hearer's interpretation of what speaker means by a given utterance. He preferred to talk of a goal or function of an utterance, in preference to talking about its intended meaning, or speaker's intention in uttering it. The term goal is more neutral than intention, because it does not commit its user to dealing with conscious volition or motivation, but can be used generally of goal-oriented activities. The term intention can be misleading on this score (Leech 1983). In *Principles of Pragmatics* (Leech 1983), the utterance defined as a form of act or activity and as a product of a verbal act. Whereas grammar deals with abstract static entities such as sentences (in syntax) and propositions (in semantics), pragmatics deals with verbal acts or performances which take place in particular situations, in time. In this respect, pragmatics deals with language at a more concrete level than grammar.

"The word utterance . . . can refer to the product of a verbal act, rather than to the verbal act itself. For instance, the words *Would you please be quiet?*, spoken

with a polite rising intonation, might be described as a sentence, or as a question, or as a request. However, it is convenient to reserve terms like sentence and question for grammatical entities derived from the language system, and to reserve the term utterance for instances of such entities, identified by their use in a particular situation." (Leech 1983:14).

From this perspective, we can say that utterances are the elements whose meaning we study in pragmatics. In fact, we already know to correctly describe pragmatics as dealing with utterance meaning, and semantics as dealing with sentence meaning. Leech explained the confusions between the difference describing *Would you please be quiet?* as an utterance (as a product of a verbal act), and describing the act of uttering *Would you please be quiet?* as an utterance (as a form of activity). The confusion can be alleviated, since it is generally convenient to say that 'utterance' in the sense of latter corresponds to 'speech act', or more precisely to *ILLOCUTIONARY ACT*, in the sense of that term employed by Austin (1962).

Leech tried to work out the meaning of an utterance which come to think of as an attempt to reconstruct what act, considered as a goal-directed communication, was it a goal of the speaker to perform in producing the utterance.

Context is any background knowledge shared by speaker and hearer which contributes to the interpreter's interpretation of an utterance. Leech (1983) preferred to talk of a goal or function of an utterance, rather than its intended meaning. In *Principles of Pragmatics*, the utterance is defined as a form of act or activity and as a product of a verbal act. The word utterance can refer to the product of a verbal act, rather than to the verbal act itself. Language arises from man's need to express himself and objectify himself, and is regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were only one speaker who does not have any necessary relation to other participants in speech communication. The language collective, the plurality of speakers, is denied any real essential significance when defining the essence of language.

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