The Content and Form of Illocutionary Acts*
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As is well known, Searle´s interpretation of speech acts is based on pure pragmatic assumptions. This is demonstrated not only by the fact that he focuses his major attention on sentence and verbs (actually only performative verbs) and their semantics. The pragmatic basis is also shown by the fact that the meaning a particular sentence may have is studied in different situations. This is evident from the attention Searle pays to the analysis of individual illocutionary verbs and the relationships between them. These relationships are illustrated by semantic charts (tabulated in his original version) where it is primarily the succession relationships between these verbs in the given semantic field presented for inspection. The relationship is characterized by raising degree of an illocutionary force, or necessity (1985). However, when the conditions of communication are elucidated and the success of communicative acts is being investigated it can be seen that a communicative aspexct is being significantly applied (though different than in W. Schmidt´s theory). The first sentence of the work already states that the smallest unit of human communication is represented by speech acts of the type denominated as the illocutionary acts (Searle refers to Austin as to the author of this term).

The communicative viewpoint is the basis also for D. Wunderlich (1986), who distinguishes between the illocutionary act (*Ausserungsakt*) and the speech act (*Sprechakt*), accentuating that acts of both kinds are actually single (unrepeated) acts, or events: the illocutionary act is implemented through an utterance, and the speech act constitutes the purpose of the utterance (p. 57).

In this sense also M. Grepl (1986) – following F. Daneš (1983) – distinguishes the utterance and the communicative function. This communicative function is considered the basic unit of an interhuman language action, the goal of the original utterance whilst the utterance itself is secondary, itself being the product of the communicative function. In this sense it seems almost possible to identify Grepl's communicative function with the notion of a rhetoric function (for more information, see the recent survey article by P.L. Rounds 1987), or with that of the communicative procedure – *Kommunikationsverfahren* according to W. Schmidt.

W. Schmidt's theory, however, is based on speech action (not on utterance), and the communicative procedure is defined as the elaboration of the communication object serving the superior intention (Michel 1982).

As seen from these introductory remarks, there is great discrepancy between the various theoretical sources about what is considered to be the basis, the methods and also the terminology. Therefore I find it useful to focus attention on three essential points: the relationship between terms and notions used by different authors, the position of the speech act in relation to the utterance and sentence, and finally, the essential constitutive elements or features of the speech act. With this basis an attempt will be made to construct a system of illocutionary acts.

A speech act, *Sprechakt*, is traditionally the fundamental notion. Its definition still has not been unified. Searle often avoids speaking of the speech act, and instead speaks, more narrowly, of the illocutionary act. This notion is elucidated on the basis of its relationships to such types of speech acts (p. 80) as the elocutionary act, the propositional act, the indirect speech act, the perlocutionary act, and conversation (p. 80). The illocutionary act is

determined by the nature of the illocutionary force of utterance and by propositional content (what is uttered), it is constituted by utterance, i.e. by the implementation of expressions. The actual notion of illocutionary force is not defined verbally, but rather by the set of seven components, namely: intention, mode of implementation, force, conditions of a propositional content, preparative conditions, conditions of success and the degree of success of the illocutionary act.

The basic notion of Schmidt's operational theory – communicative procedure – is motivated primarily by the communicative and operative basis of this theory, with less attention being paid to social and intellectual relations.

For Viehweger (1983), a basic notion is that of *Sprachhandlung*, the basic unit of the action level of discourse (which is singled out from the higher, propositional level of discourse). It is a formation by which the speaker communicates to the addressee his/her intention to achieve a target of action. Elsewhere. D. Viehweger, however, uses the term *Illocutionshandlung* – illocutionary act.

As can be inferred from other assumptions, based not on the analysis of communicative activity, but that of its outcome – the text, the basic notion is the illocutionary act, i.e. the act by which something is uttered about reality, the act carrying the content (proposition) of utterance as a basic communicative sign. On the other hand, it is necessary to distinguish between the illocutionary act and the communicative act: for whilst the communicative act is implemented also by non-linguistic means, the illocutionary act is conveyed by purely linguistic means.

It should be pointed out that an utterance bound to a certain communicative situation (a situational utterance) is considered a basic unit of discourse (and communication) (Horecký 1988). Such an utterance as a whole is the basis of the text. Its function is to stand for the given situation, which means to be its sign. As any ideal object-sign, the situational utterance must have its content and its form. While the form of utterance is sentence (its further classification is presented in the cited paper), the content of utterance consists of predication, that is what is uttered about reality, what is attributed to it. Predication itself is then divided into content and form: the content is a proposition, the form is an illocutionary type. The content of the illocutionary type is given by a (specific) propositional content, the form by the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is determined by a set of features (e.g. by intention, standpoint), a performant is its form. It can be explicit, if expressed by a special performative verb of the type: *I order, report,* or implicit, if expressed by a grammatical category, e.g. by the imperative. The tree graph in Figure 1 shows the classification.

This specification of the illocutionary act shows that it is useless to investigate temporal or linear relationships between utterance, sentence and illocutionary act, as it cannot be determined which of these elements precedes or follows. The relationship of succession in the graph is only illusory, it is in no way essential as utterance is always implemented as a whole, all its elements occurring simultaneously. Kubriakova (1982) reaches this conclusion too stating that the nominating and syntactic components of the formation of utterance are most probably implemented at the same time.

D. Wunderlich places a concept of speech act into the position of our predication act. This notion comes from the assumption that illocutionary and speech acts (he makes a distinction between them, as stated above) are unrepeated events and only their generalisation brings us to the type, to a generic speech act. Thus it appears that D. Wunderlich takes a specific speech act, or a series of speech acts, as his basis. Similarly, M.

Grepl speaks of a kind of communicative function. D. Viehweger (In Viehweger and Motsch 1983) uses the term 'Handlungstyp'.

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                         utterance
                    _____I_____
                    I               I
                predication      sentence
             _____I_____
             I             I
         proposition   illocutionary act
        _____I_____
        I                          I
   propositional content     illocutionary act
   _____I_____
   I                 I
set of symptoms    preformant
                 _____I_____
                 I          I
              explicit   implicit
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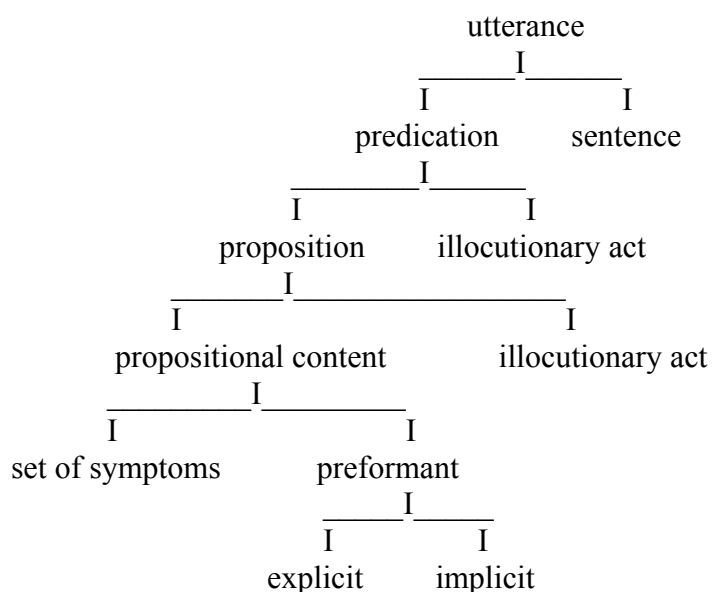
Figure 1

The content of the illocutionary act has been defined in many ways. According to M. Grepl (1986) it comprises partly a summary of interaction conditions, partly a set of elementary semantic components (i.e. presuppositions), or more accurately – knowledge or predictions of the speaker about the addressee and situation, further the attitudes of the speaker to the content of utterance and finally a communicative intention of the speaker.

In our opinion, this order of features should be changed, turned or, at least, modified. The major symptom of illocutionary act should be seen in the speaker's intention ('point' according to Searle). It may be an intention to influence the state of consciousness of the addressee by transferred information (in order to change or tighten the existing state), to evoke a certain physical or verbal response by the addressee, or not to transfer information at all (contact, phatic illocutionary acts). Viehweger (1983) distinguishes four features here: the speaker informs on a certain fact, the speaker requires a certain act to be performed, the speaker informs that he is going to perform an act, and the speaker informs that he is assessing a certain act.

It is easier to formulate a classification based on whether the transferred information I requires or does not require a physical reaction F or a verbal reaction V. The basic classification would be as indicated in Figure 2.

$+I -F -V$ message
$+I -F +V$ question
$+I +F -V$ command
$-I -F (+V)$ greeting

Figure 2

Certainly, sometimes when giving commands, a verbal reaction occurs too, expressing a reaction of social character (*Give me a kilo of that meat. – Here you are*). In addition to these essential features, there are the speaker´s attitudes to the transformed content: positive/negative, emphatic/mild, etc.

It is disputable, however, whether presuppositions (shared knowledge or knowledge of a situation) may influence the formation or formulation of an illocutionary act. The presuppositions stated by Viehweger (1983), ensuring that the addressee is able to perform the required act and that the speaker knows this ability of his, may only influence the narrowness or density of the utterance: if the addressee is not able to perform the act, the speaker has first to find out.

Searle and Vanderveken (1985), as already mentioned, present seven characteristic features in connection with illocutionary force (rather than with the actual illocutionary act): intention, mode, degree of mode, condition, preliminary conditions, success and degree of success. As far as intention is concerned, the illocutionary force is given by a Cartesian product of a set of propositions and a set of possible illocutionary contexts. The mode is based on the truth and falsity of the utterance (which is a considerable simplification, since the speaker's attitudes are not taken into account); it is not known how the degree of intention can be measured. The conditions of a propositional content, however, are obviously not part of the language area; this also holds of success of the act and the degree of success. This objection is also applicable to Grepl's and Viehweger's characteristics of presuppositions.

Each of the quoted authors focusses on the kinds or types of illocutionary acts. A broadly accepted classification is that formulated by Searle, who, by attending to the aim of illocutionary acts, distinguishes the assertive acts (the addressee has to know or to believe their content), the commissive (the addressee is to be oriented about the future behaviour of the speaker), the directive (the addressee has to do something), the declarative (a certain reality is to be retained or altered), and the expressive acts (a personal or social fact of satisfaction/dissatisfaction is to be eliminated).

D. Wunderlich adds to these types of Searle's also illocutionary satisfactive acts (apologizing, reasoning, thanking), retroactive (correction, retract of promise) and vocative (addressing) acts. As can be observed, many communicative procedures characterized by W. Schmidt and his followers are seen here but they are unsystematically arranged, like in the operational theory of communicative procedures.

M. Grepl is satisfied with a simple classification into traditional illocutionary acts of announcement, question and challenge, but he adds here such illocutionary acts as objection, reproach, wish.

A detailed and systematic classification of illocutionary acts was presented by Wilske (1984). He distinguishes informative-descriptive illocutionary acts (dealing with information transfer), illocutionary acts of activisation (evocation of actions, requiring response), inventive (finding out status or result), and contactive (establishing contacts) illocutionary acts. Before that, Wilske (1980) attempted a more detailed classification of operations. The first group comprises informational (descriptive) operations with a prevailing intention to transfer knowledge to the addressee. The second group consists of activating operations carrying information on the intention to perform an act; nevertheless, they are sub-classified into activating-directive (incitative) and activating-commisive (where an obligation to perform an actual act is reported). In the third group, there are operations explaining a problem (inventive), in which the addressee is shown a process of disclosing connections, gaining pieces of information. Finally, the fourth group contains contactive (sociative)

operations, which are divided into contactive-regulative (regulating social processes in accordance with the speaker´s intention) and contactive-expressive (feelings towards the addressee).

The given proposals (our list is by no means complete) clearly show that a mode of the addressee's reaction is a basic criterion both for the transfer of information and for dialogue operations. The relevant criteria, however, cannot be applied equally in all illocutionary acts, or types of illocutionary acts. Therefore the property of the act being a dialogue or a monologue is considered a basic criterion. The dialogue illocutionary acts, mostly operational, are subdivided primarily into contact acts, in which no physical or verbal response by the addressee is expected, at most a formal verbal response given by social etiquette: *good morning – good morning.* The contact illocutionary acts are opposed by the acts requiring reaction. In the directive (regulative) illocutionary acts an obligatory physical reaction is expected (the performance or non-performance of the required activity), whereas in some cases a verbal reaction is possible: in commands – *Yes, sir!,* or the repetition of the command, in requests – (*Give me one kilo of that meat – Yes, madam.*). In erotetic illocutionary acts a verbal reaction is expected.

In monologue, or informative illocutionary acts, information about new elements or attitudes is being conveyed. If the intention of the illocutionary act is to introduce new elements, they may be new facts or knowledge. In this case we speak about narrative illocutionary acts (in the case of events) or descriptive illocutionary acts (in the case of objects). If the intention is to convey new knowledge, explicative acts are performed.

The formation of new attitudes in the addressee is the intention of argumentative illocutionary acts; cf. the schema in Figure 3.
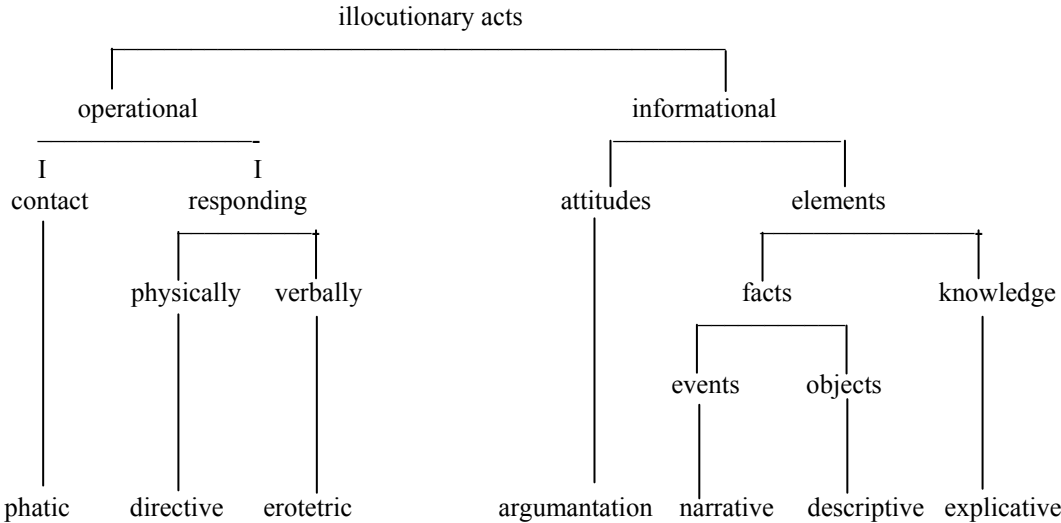

Figure 3.

It is obvious that the above classification is based on content criteria. Formal criteria appear to be very heterogenous and individual contents can be conveyed through various forms. For instance, the directive illocutionary acts may have an explicit form (*I order, I advise that, I wish that*), and also an implicit form (*go, be healthy*), and various additional implicit indirect forms (*Sir! – we will go – we should go – shan't we go?*) may be occasionally used.

Note

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