LINGUISTIC FORM BETWEEN SYSTEM AND USE

1. The cognitive value of "symptomatic facts"

"The goal of theoretical linguistics is the discovery of facts that are crucial for determining the underlying structure of language and hidden abstract principles and laws" (Shaumyan, 1984: 239). There is a twofold relationship between facts and theory: on the one hand, a theory makes it possible to identify facts and to classify them into categories, but on the other hand there exist so-called symptomatic facts, which cannot be incorporated within the framework of an obsolete scientific paradigm, but have a constructive value with respect to a new theory, since in the ways in which these facts appear they disclose abstract principles and laws which would otherwise have remained hidden. In the development of science, the discovery of such facts is of exceptional importance. A new scientific paradigm originates from the contradiction which occurs between the discovery of a symptomatic fact (the latter presenting a previously hidden aspect of the phenomenon concerned) and the use of the explanatory methods of the old paradigm. The paradox lies in the fact that the symptomatic fact is opposed to these very, obsolete explanatory procedures, and, by its existence, reduces their validity. For this reason, such symptomatic facts are usually reduced to "an exception which proves the rule". Thus, for instance, Chomsky discovered the existence of deep structure by studying pairs of sentences such as John is easy to please, John is eager to please. But he described them in terms of the surface structure. It was only later that Fillmore (1968) introduced the basic concepts of deep-structure description by proving that, through the role of the surface structure subject, various semantic roles can be expressed, such as agent, patient and instrument.

Austin (1962) undoubtedly established the fundamentals of the theory of speech acts and, via this theory, of the pragmatic investigation of language. He posed the most important question of language use: How to do things with words?, as opposed to the previous method of analysis, which was interested in how to represent the world with words. However, as was the case with Chomsky, neither Austin nor his followers succeeded in following up this discovery by deriving the fundamental laws of language use. Austin dealt with the question posed, and with the symptomatic fact which made the question possible, and provided an answer to it, i.e. introduced performatives and declaratives, as categories of speech acts and as the opposite of constatives. According to Austin, the uttering of performatives makes it possible to do something, whereas the uttering of constatives makes it possible to assert something which can be either true or untrue.
The constative utterance *I am running* is only effective if it is true. If, however, its speaker said it while lying down, then a listener would either not take it seriously, or else doubt the seriousness or mental soundness of the speaker. The performative *I apologize* is fully realized within the framework of an interpersonal or performative relation. The speaker of this utterance admits that he has acted unsuitably, and regrets it. Such an apology, whether the regret is sincere or not, is effective only if the addressee believes the speaker and accepts the apology. The effective uttering of a performative has produced a change in the psycho-social reality in which the speaker and addressee are involved. Thus, by the effective uttering of performatives social reality is created (to say something is to do something).

As opposed to this approach, we will assume that performatives and constatives are just two extreme and only apparently separated forms of the realisation of the same fundamental constitutive principle in the field of language use.

The relation between words and the world was used by Searle (1975) as one of the criteria for categorizing illocutionary acts. According to Searle, assertions belong to the group of illocutionary acts in which there is a mind-to-world direction of fit, whereas requests and promises belong to the group in which there is the opposite, world-to-mind direction of fit. However, it is postulated here that what is involved are not two independent directions, but rather two contradictorily connected and hierarchically arranged relations, which are constitutive in the formation of every sense. The performative or interpersonal dimension is superior to the cognitive dimension, and uses it as a means of achieving a certain effect in social interaction. When these two dimensions go their separate ways, and become independent — this is just an extreme form of their discordant co-existence — then we are dealing with pure performatives and pure constatives.

In contrast with Leech (1980: 230), who considers that performatives are not something abnormal or atypical, and that they are "by no means a suitable yardstick for the general run of conversational behaviour", we shall try to prove the opposite, i.e. that it is performatives which reveal a new and fundamental dimension of language use (to be called a performative or interpersonal dimension, P_d), and that the representational or cognitive dimension (C_d), as represented by the constatives, is subordinate to this dimension.

The following hypotheses will be supported by means of examples:

— It is not possible to distinguish between constatives and performatives on the basis of the form of the utterance, since performatives, too, can be expressed in the constative form.
— Constative utterances can be interpreted in performative terms.
— Thus social reality is created not only by means of declaratives and performatives, but occurs as the consequence of intentions and effects of constative utterances.
Effect is based on the belief that the propositional content is true.

Interchangeability of performatives and constatives is built into the language system: with regard to their semantic-syntactic frames, the verbs know and believe show some similarities and some differences. The differences are motivated cognitively, and the similarities pragmatically.

The verb know is directly related to the propositional content, whereas believe is related to the latter via the speaker. In this way the meaning of an utterance encounters the motives and intentions of the speaker/addressee. Having got into contact with the desire, the meaning of the utterance is translated into performative categories.

For this reason it is best not to talk about two categories of utterances (i.e. constative and performative), but rather about a cognitive and performative relation, which together constitute sense.

A paradigmatic expression of the performative relation is the verb tell. It indicates two interpretational directions: the motivational-intentional direction and the direction concerning the true-value of the propositional content. As a rule, the speaker does not say "I am telling you in order to...", but instead realizes his intentions and desired effects by suitably choosing the content of his speech. The relationship between why and what is instrumental.

The intentions and effects of what the speaker has said are interpreted by the addressee through his translating of the text into illocutionary and perlocutionary, i.e. performative categories.

Thus the meaning of constative utterances has three pragmatic interpretational values: a truth value, an intentional value and a perlocutionary value. The task of pragmatics is to describe the complex relations between these values, which together make up communicational reality.

2. Constatives in the role of performatives

Žižek (1986) has pointed out an example of an utterance which clearly indicates the difficulties involved in differentiating performatives from constatives. By the utterance

(1) The meeting is closed

an actual state of affairs is described, i.e. what is involved is an apparent constative. However, this state of affairs only occurs after the utterance has been spoken. Thus the utterance turns into a reality only when the chairman of the meeting has uttered it, and those present have agreed that the content of the utterance is true. Reality is created retrogressively, as a consequence of the utterance's effect:

\[
\begin{align*}
S: & \text{ performative} \rightarrow \text{effect} \leftarrow A \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{constative form} & \\
(\text{The meeting is closed})
\end{align*}
\]

Several questions arise from the above example. Why did the speaker not use
the declarative formula "I declare the meeting closed", but replaced it by a description of the actual state (a constative) which occurs after the performative has been uttered? In this way the speaker has concealed his authority, but yet achieved the same effect. Do other constative utterances, too, have the power "to do things with words"? If it is possible to "do things" with constatives, then it should come as no surprise that only rarely, in exceptional circumstances, do speakers use declarative and performative formulas.

However, let us draw some conclusions from this, only ostensibly exceptional fact. The performative was uttered through a constative, and, vice versa, the constative had the illocutionary force to match the world with the content of the words spoken. This means that the differentiation of performatives and constatives is a much more difficult task than it might at first appear to be, if it is indeed possible at all. Thus one should not talk about two categories of utterances, but rather about two relations which are constitutive in the formation of every sense. "Pure" performatives and "pure" constatives are formed within the field of their divergence.

At the same time, our example shows that symbolic reality is created in two ways: in the cognitive way, which builds on the congruence of the spoken and the actual, or in the performative way, when social reality is created as the consequence of the effect of words on man's desires and values. The only difficulty occurs because the construction of the utterance most frequently does not express this difference, since both possibilities are spoken in the form of apparent constatives.

3. The two constitutive dimensions \((P_d, C_d)\) in the creation of sense

Let us illustrate this statement by means of an example. A mother wishes to tease her daughter, so she chooses her most sensitive spot, and says to her:

(2) **Daddy doesn't love you, he loves me.**

The daughter is hurt, and complains to her father:

(3) **Daddy, Mummy says that you don't love me, but that you love her.**

Of course, her father comforts her, and says:

(4) **You know that Mummy is only teasing you. You must judge for yourself whether what she says is true or not.**

Let us investigate the relationship between the prevailing circumstances and the spoken text. It is clear that the meaning of the spoken text *Daddy doesn't love you, he loves me* is just a means for achieving the communicational intention, i.e. the desire to tease. The daughter's utterance is spoken as a complaint, and the father's utterance as a comfort.

The communicational intention and the desired effect (to tease, to hurt, to comfort) is not expressed by any of the utterances explicitly and performatively (I am teasing you, I am comforting you), but they are rather revealed from the interpreta-
tional context, and are always communicated by someone else, not by the speaker of the message. The intentions expressed in these verbs, and the desired effects, can only be achieved indirectly, by hiding the intention and choosing such a communicational content which concerns the addressee, his (or her) desires and interests. Thus, during communication, the meaning of the utterance (i.e. the communicated content of the utterance, the proposition) depends on the communicational purpose and the desired effect. Is what we are concerned with here a randomly chosen example, or a generally valid rule of communicational interaction? We are inclined to accept the second possibility.

It was already Austin who pointed out that the uttering of perlocutionary acts is not determined by convention, and that it is not possible to express them by means of explicity performative formulae, e.g. *I am insulting you*. Such an utterance would be pragmatically ineffective, and would have no sense. The perlocutional act and the desired effect, at which every message is aimed, must remain hidden. However all linguistic means are directed towards this effect. The point towards which language in use gravitates cannot be expressed. Let us try, by means of an example, to find an answer to the question of why this point must remain hidden, undetermined by convention, performatively inexpressible, and thus completely left open to the speaker's judgement concerning the choice of linguistic means. Why should the utterance:

(5) *I want to hurt you, so that's why I'm telling you that Daddy doesn't love you, but he loves me* be ineffective?

The reason is that in this utterance the desired effect and intention would directly encounter the asserted proposition, and thus it would be unlikely that the addressee would, after this dubious encounter, still believe in the assertion's truth. In order for the proposition to be effective, the desired effect must remain hidden.

Let us now present, by means of the diagram given below, the dimensions of the communicational situation within which the sense of an utterance is generated:
The intention of the message is not necessarily the truth of the proposition, but rather the effect achieved through its locution.

On the basis of the above discussed examples, it will be assumed that semiotic reality is created in two ways: firstly, in the cognitive way (on the basis of congruence between words and the world) and, secondly, in the performative way, as a consequence of the effect of words. If words have an effect, and if we believe them, then they create a semiotic reality which exists for man regardless of their truth value. Thus language is a means for the creation of a social-cultural reality, which differs from actual reality. Man belongs to both of these realities: according to his biological constitution, he is a part of Nature, but through speech he has become a social being.

Can these two dimensions be discovered within the structure of language, too? It would be difficult to defend a hypothesis about the existence of these two realities, and about their importance, if they were not expressed in the semantic and syntactic structure of the most important, basic elements of the linguistic-semantic system, in the system of verbs, which, by definition, express relationships. There is no doubt that two types of verbs exist in language: verbs which describe reality, without taking into account man's relation to it, e.g. *John is stealing apples*, and verbs which express social relationships between the speaker/hearer and their relation to the world, requiring a propositional complement, e.g. *John's classmate told the teacher that John was stealing apples*.

These two simple examples already go to show that social relationships are described by the speech-act or so-called attitude verbs. These verbs are always superordinate to the propositional content, although, on the other hand, they cannot become the main verb of simple sentences. In this paper particular attention will be paid to the verbs *know, believe* and *tell*, in an attempt to find an answer to the question of whether the linguistic structure or semantic-syntactic frame of these verbs can reveal any more about the nature of man's cognitive relation to the world and the dimension of his belief which is essential in the creation of social reality. Let us once again pose the question first put by V. Vendler (1980: 277): "How do I know that I know something rather than merely believe it?“

4. Know, believe, tell

Let us assume that *know* expresses a cognitive relation to the world, created on the basis of congruence between what is stated and actual fact, whereas *believe* makes possible the creation of a social "truth" as the consequence of belief and the effect of words. In trying to formulate this assumption we have drawn on the findings of Vendler (1980: 273—290). Vendler has tried to prove two hypotheses. According to him, the verb *know* cannot be a performative verb in the same sense as the verb *promise* (as was supposed by Austin). Furthermore, Vendler considers that know-
ledge and belief cannot have a common basis, since it is not possible to know, and to believe something at the same time. Although know and believe can both be followed by that-clauses, only know is amenable to the formation of wh-nominals.

She knows \{ that p \\
She believes \}

But:

She knows \{ who stole the money \}
She believes \{ why he did it \}
She knows \{ how he did it \}
She believes \{ what he did with it \}

For this reason he concludes: “The conclusion seems to be unavoidable: in spite of the surface identity of the that-clauses following know and believe, they are different; and only one of them is amenable to the formation of wh-nominals“ (1980: 297). Vendler also reveals a similar difference in the two verbs’ connections with certain nouns, which can replace that-clauses. Thus nouns such as opinion, theory, assertion, and prediction can replace that-clauses following believe, whereas nouns such as fact, reason, result, and outcome can provide suitable replacements for that-clauses following know.

Vendler terms know a factive verb, and result a factive noun, whereas he terms believe a non-factive verb and prediction a non-factive noun. He considers that the clearest sign of factivity is the capability of a verb to be connected to wh-nominals. If somebody says: He knows who killed her, this utterance is connected to a fact, whereas if somebody says: He believes that John killed her, the utterance only describes a mental state. A frequent answer to the question How do you know that p? is John told me so. “It seems to be the case, therefore, that quite often the casual link connecting the fact and the knowing subject consists, in part at least, in the relation of X’s telling that p“ (1980: 283). But what kind of a verb is tell? Is it factive, like know? Vendler has succeeded in proving that this is not the case. Tell behaves ambivalently. True, it can be connected to that-clauses, as well to wh-nominals, and thus it is similar to the verb know. However: “One cannot know falsehoods, but one can tell falsehoods“. It is not possible to say, consistently, that X knows that p, but this is not true. On the other hand I can report that X has told me that p. However, nothing prevents me from saying that p is not true. Tell is factive in relation to wh-nominals, but not necessarily so in relation to that-clauses.

The above explanation is instructive from the pragmatic point of view: with respect to known propositions, know and believe are interchangeable. If these propositions are not known, then we are only interested in the relation know. If somebody told us in advance that he only believes and does not know p, then we would no lon-
ger be interested in his "knowledge". Known, asserted propositions become available to both semantic categories, know and believe.

The semantic-syntactic differences between the verbs know and believe are cognitively motivated. By what is their interchangeability in relation to known/asserted propositions in that-clauses motivated?

We will try to answer this question by supplementing Vendler's research with one more fact. Whereas the verb know occurs only together with that-clauses and wh-nominals, and does not permit the presence of any other participant (it expresses a direct relation between man and a propositional content, and the reference contained in the latter), the verbs believe and tell make possible (although not obligatory) the presence of one more participant. Both of the two verbs, believe and tell, are connected to the deep-case Dative. The latter denotes, in the case of tell, the addressee, and, in the case of believe, the speaker: He told me and I believed him. The result of this analysis will be illustrated by the following diagram:

The verbs tell and believe enter the relation with the propositional content via an inter-personal social relationship. The latter, as we know, is always motivated and intentional. It is within this relationship that the asserted proposition encounters the speaker's and the addressee's motives, desires, needs, interests, values and feelings. It is this contact which motivates the speaker to subordinate the proposition to the desired effect, and leads the addressee either to believe it, even if it is not true (I know it is not true, but I still believe it), or not to want to believe a true proposition (I know it is true, but I don't want to believe it.) Thus the semantic structure of language includes the possibility of interchanging knowledge and belief, while man's accepting of communicated propositions includes his readiness to believe even contrary to cognition. Desires, interests, motives, values, and feelings: these are the points where a readiness to believe can be established regardless of, or even contrary to, cognition.

During communication, the basic possibility to which we are exposed is the conversion of an interest into truth. The gap between desire and truth is spanned by pushing what is unpleasant into one's sub-conscious.

The verb tell has two dimensions, a dimension of content (what I tell) and a
motivational-intentional dimension (why I tell something). The verb believe has an identical structure: the content of belief, and the reason for belief. This is confirmed by the conversion of direct speech into reported speech. Whereas in direct speech the speaker, as a rule, does not reveal his motives and intentions, and never expresses the desired effect, the person reporting speech explices whatever was not said, and was hidden, in the main clause of the reported speech.

A, to B: *The neighbours have a fierce dog.*
B reports: *A told me that the neighbours have a fierce dog.*

Two kinds of questions can be related to the verb tell:

*What did A tell you?*
*Why did A tell you that?*

The first question is a request for the content of the message, and is related to checking its truth-value. The second question is concerned with the aim of the message, and can be answered by expressing this intention with the speech-act verb: *He wanted to warn me of the danger.* Or, possibly: *He wanted to frighten me.* The interpretation of the speaker’s intention is subject to the projection of the addressee’s motives, and it is here where differences in interests are expressed, and misunderstandings arising from them occur.

The above discussion can be summed up as follows:

— In the process of use, the language system functions in such a way as to make possible the representation and cognition of the world, as well as the creation of semiotic reality through the effect of words on man’s desires and values. “How to do things with words?”
— This question posed by Austin, which is the central question of the pragmatic study of language, cannot be fully answered by the identification of the so-called “illocutionary force indicating device”, nor by one kind of speech act — the declaratives. These speech acts are only the so-called symptomatic facts, which reveal the performative dimension of language use in a radical form occurring within the institutionalized social context. The performative force, however, is inherent in constatives, too. How, then, is the performative force of such ostensible constatives generated?
— In language, the uttering of a perlocutionary act is not determined by convention, and the speaker can choose from all linguistic means to achieve an effect.
— The communicated proposition has three possible values: that originating from the speaker’s desire, that aimed at an effect on the addressee, and that caught between the asserted and the real, which determines its truth-value. Thus, the communicated proposition has three pragmatic values: a truth-value, an intentional value, and a perlocutionary value. Which of three values has priority? Scientific discourse is governed by the desire for truth, whereas political discourse is dominated by the desire for effect.
— The message is aimed at the desire of the addressee, and if the contact is feli-
citous, the addressee is prepared to believe the truth of the message even though the
latter may, in fact, not be true at all (I know that it is not true, but nevertheless I be-
lieve it — prejudice) or vice versa (I know it is true, but I don’t want believe it — a
denial of reality). The contact of the communicated proposition with desires and va-
ues can transform interest into truth.

— The semantic-syntactic frames of the verbs know and believe have a built-in
capability for interchangeability in relation to the asserted propositional content in
that-clauses. The verbs believe and tell enter the relation with the asserted proposi-
tional content through an interpersonal relationship, the latter being motivated and
intentional. However, the interpersonal nature of the relation of these two verbs
does not necessarily have to be explicated, which contributes to ostensibly objective
reporting.

— In this way language in use adapts itself to pragmatic needs, spanning be-
 tween desire and truth.

Prevod: Milena Milojević-Sheppard

REFERENCES

Ballmer Thomas and Brennenstuhl Waltraud 1981 — Speech Act Classifica-
tion. New York: Springer Verlag.
Bierwisch Manfred 1980 — “Semantic Structure and Illocutionary Force“. In John
R. Searle, Ferenc Kiefer and Manfred Bierwisch (eds.), Speech Act Theory and
Leech Geoffrey N. 1983 — Principles of Pragmatics. London and New York: Long-
man.
Shaumyan Sebastian 1984 — “Language as an instrument of cognition and the law
of semiotic relevance“. In Copeland (ed.), New Directions in Linguistics. Am-
Searle John R. 1979 — Expression and Meaning. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press.
Vendler Zeno 1980 — “Telling the Fact. In John R. Searle, Ferenc Kiefer and Man-
Žižek Slavoj 1986 — “Imenovanje in naključnost ali Hegel s Kripkejem“. Razpol
24:2.34-125.
Povzetek

JEZIKOVNA OBLIKA MED SISTEMOM IN RABO

Konstativnih in performativnih povedi ni mogoče vselej razlikovati na podlagi oblike, saj se tudi performativi izrekajo v konstativni obliki, navidezne konstative pa interpretiramo v performativnih kategorijah razlogov, namer in učinkov. Možnost njihovega zamenjevanja je vgrajena tudi v jezikovni sistem, in sicer v pomenskoskladenjske okvire glagolov *vedeti*, *verjeti* in *povedati*.

Zato ne kaže govoriti o dveh kategorijah povedi (Austin) niti o dveh smereh med besedami in svetom (Searle), ampak o dveh razmerjih, ki sta konstitutivni pri tvorjenju smisla.

Performativno razmerje je kognitivnemu nadrejeno in z njim protislovno povezano, zato je izbira pomenskih vrednosti motivirana in intencionalna, podrejena želji po učinku.