
WYPOWIEDZI PERFORMATYWNE, Z AKTUALNYCH ZAGADNIEN FILOZOFII JEZYKA
By Eugeniusz Grodziński. Pp. 160. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk,
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The linguistic literature in the 60-ies and 70-ies has been considerably influenced by the writings of the Oxford philosopher J.L. Austin. His book "How to do things with words" /Austin 1962/ has been referred to in so many papers and monographs that its impact upon contemporary linguistic thought is unquestionable.

Austin's ideas have been well-known in Poland, which is reflected in the literature /see, e.g. Wojtasiewicz 1976, Pisarkowa 1976, Bogusławski 1977, 1979, Oleksy 1977, to mention just a few names/. In view of the above, G's statement to the effect that Austin's theory is an untouched, virgin territory in Poland /p.6/ seems somewhat unjustified. Yet, it must be admitted that the book under review/hereafter PU, which stands for the English translation of the title, i.e. "performative utterances"/, though not quite novel as far as the subject matter is concerned, deserves attention of both linguists and language philosophers because its author addresses himself not only to questions originating from Austin's work but also he attempts to substantiate some of the solutions hinted at by Austin, and, most importantly, proposes his own solutions.

G's aim is twofold: a/ to present Austin's conceptions concerning the classification of utterances to the Polish reader, and b/ to demonstrate his own /i.e. G's / classification of performative utterances. The present review will thus concentrate on the evaluation of the above mentioned problems /in fact, they are both reducible to one research problem, namely; classification of utterances/, as they have been dwelled on in PU.

The book is organized in five chapters preceded by Introduction. Appended are extensive Summaries in English and Russian. Index of Proper Names and Index of Terms are very welcome additions. Each chapter is followed by Notes.

The bulk of the book is devoted to G's original classifica-

tion of performative utterances into three classes:

1. Performative utterances with Legal and Quasi-legal significance /FUL and PUQL/
2. Performative utterances which begin with explicit performatives /ExPU/
3. Polite formulas functioning as performative utterances /PF/. PULs, PUQLs, ExPUs, and PFs, are dealt with in the respective chapters: PULs and PUQLs in Chapter I, ExPUs in Chapter II, and PFs in Chapter III.

Chapter IV is devoted to a critical survey of Austin's theory of performative utterances and his later developed theory of linguistic acts. G concentrates his attention on locutionary and illocutionary acts leaving the third category of linguistic acts distinguished by Austin, i.e. perlocutionary acts, unmentioned.

Finally, in Chapter V G shows how the concept of performative utterance can be related to Kantian "categories" /surprisingly enough, no mention is made of Grice's "maxims" though they too are related to Kantian categories/ arbitrary definitions, conventionalism in the theory of cognition, and the role of language in cognition.

In what follows I shall address myself to some of the issues that I find controversial in G's book leaving for the reader the appreciation of all the good things.

A glance at the Table of Contents suffices to notice that G's main concern are utterances. However, upon closer inspection, it turns out that the object of analysis is not defined and G uses the term utterance interchangeably with the term speech. Accordingly, G talks about the communicative, the expressive, and the performative functions of speech /pp. 8-14/ and then, he passes on to the classification of performative utterances /p.15/ without any mention of the kind of relationship that exists between performative function of speech and performative utterances. On the same page /p.15/ he states that his treatment of the performative function of speech is different from Austin's and then, having admitted that Austin was concerned with performative utterances and not with performative function of speech, G borrows Austin's term Performative and bluntly distinguishes

his three types of performative utterances, i.e. PULs and PUQLs, ExPUs, and FFs. /It is worth pointing out at this place that Pisarkowa /1976/ suggested the term "wykonawczy" as the Polish equivalent of the English term "performative"/.

The above alluded lack of precision in the use of generally accepted and widely used linguistic terminology has a negative effect on the whole conception of performative utterances, as it has been put forth in G's book under review. Another illustration of the same lack of definitions for the technical terms that G employs in his book /in fact, one does not know which terms are treated as "technical terms" and which are not / is his use of the term speech act. For G every new law is a speech act /p. 13/ due to its ability of creating new legal relationships that are binding for individuals, social groups, and institutions. He then builds upon this idea and classifies performative utterances as including, among other types, Legal and Quasi-legal. Thus, according to G, a school diploma is an instance of the Legal Act. It therefore follows from the above that a school diploma is a performative utterance. I find it hard to accept that a piece of paper /a solid piece of paper, for that matter/ is considered to be an instance of speech, i.e. a school diploma is an utterance.

Clearly, G's understanding of the term performative utterance is different from what one finds in the literature on the subject. Unfortunately, G does not make it clear in his book what exactly he means by such terms as performative utterance, speech and speech act. Thus, the lack of definitions of the basic conceptual apparatus that he employs in PU must inevitably undermine one's confidence in G's approach to performative utterances.

Another controversial point in G's analysis of performative utterances is his discussion of the logical status of these utterances. Contrary to Austin, G holds that performative utterances have truth values /see pp. 28-29/ but then he states /p.77/ that interrogative and imperative sentences do not have truth values although he admits that these two types of sentences are performative utterances. /Here again, G does not make any difference between "sentence" and "utterance"; he simply does not

distinguish between syntactic categories and communicative categories/.

Generally speaking, G's threepartite classification of performative utterances raises questions pertaining to the methodological assumptions underlying his classification. The first category of performative utterances that G distinguishes are PULs and PUQLs. Their "performativity" rests in their ability to call forth legal relations. Although it must be admitted that G has devoted a lot of attention to this type of performative utterances, it must be mentioned that his typology of performative utterances is guilty of incompleteness because he fails to distinguish, as for instance Fraser /1975/ does, other types of performative utterances, e.g. religious performative utterances, business performative utterances, government performative utterances, sports performative utterances.

The second category of performative utterances that G distinguishes are these which begin with what G calls "explicit performative verbs", i.e. his ExPUs. It is easy to notice that the first category, PULs and PUQLs, is distinguished on the basis of what these utterances do, what is their /in this particular case, legal/ effect whereas in the case of the second category of performative utterances i.e. ExPUs, the criterion for belonging to this category is no longer the effect but the formal /syntactic/ characterization of the utterance, namely, that they begin with a special class of verbs. In connection with the second category of performative utterances distinguished by G, i.e. ExFUs, the following observations can be made:

1. G, unlike Austin, distinguishes a class of verbs which he calls explicit performative verbs, or, in short, explicit performatives and in doing so he implies that there exists a class of performative verbs which are not explicit; otherwise the use of a qualifying term "explicit" is not motivated.
2. G fails to notice that his "performative utterances which begin / my own underlying/ with explicit performative" do not always begin with a performative verb in Polish and it is counterintuitive to assign 1-2 below to different

categories of performative utterances, as G would have to do.

1. Pytam, która godzina ? /I ask /you/, what time is it ?/
2. Która godzina, pytam ? /What time is, it, I ask /you/ .

In view of the above, it must be pointed out that Austin's use of the terms explicit performative, implicit performative, and performative verb is much more convincing than G's. As is well known, Austin distinguished between explicit performative utterances and implicit performative utterances, and he proposed to distinguish a class of verbs which he called performative verbs.

In G's approach there is no room to account for the fact that both utterances which contain performative verbs /Austin's explicit performative utterances/ and the ones which do not contain them /Austin's implicit performative utterances/ belong to the same category of utterances if their illocutionary force is the same, i.e. if it is possible for the speaker to perform the same speech act with both of these utterances.

3. Proszę cię, żebyś mi podał sól. /I request you to pass me the salt/
4. Podaj sól. /Pass the salt/.

And thus, both 3. and 4. belong to the same category of performative utterances and the difference between them is related to the presence /absence of the performative verb.

Chapter III, in which G deals with the third category of performative utterances that he distinguishes, i.e. PFs, is undoubtedly the most interesting part of his book. Firstly, polite formulas have as yet attracted little attention of language philosophers in Poland. Secondly, in this chapter G presents an interesting account of synchronic and diachronic aspects of the use of polite formulas in Polish.

Despite the critical remarks and objections that I voiced in this review against PU I still think that G's book can be a stimulating source of inspiration for both linguists and language philosophers.

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