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CORRELATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF "SPEECH GENRE" AND "SPEECH ACT" IN MODERN PRAGMALINGUISTICS

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Rezumat: Articolul vizează problema corelației a două concepte fundamentale ale lingvisticii moderne – actul de vorbire (AV) și genul de vorbire (GV). Cu bună dreptate, întâietatea îi aparține remarcabilului om de știință, marelui filolog și filozof rus Mihail Bahtin, care a adus o contribuție uriașă la dezvoltarea teoriei GV. În linii generale, AV este o acțiune realizată prin intermediul vorbirii. Spre deosebire de AV, un GV este un ansamblu de AV unite printr-un singur scop ilocuționar. AV sunt componente structurale ale unui GV; același AV poate fi inclus în diferite GV. Varietatea GV este foarte mare, ceea ce se explică prin multitudinea situațiilor comunicative și a domeniilor de activitate în care vorbitorul folosește un anumit GV.

Cuvinte-cheie: act de vorbire, gen de vorbire, concepte fundamentale, situație comunicativă.

Introduction

Linguists' interest in the analysis of speech acts (SAs) and speech genres (SGs) lies, first of all, in the fact that these concepts are studied and developed in several fields of the modern linguistic science such as: linguistic anthropology, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, linguistic pragmatics, stylistics, rhetoric, poetry, cultural studies, ethnography, etc. The present article aims at considering and contrasting SAs and SGs based on the available specialised literature in this domain, stress being made on SGs though. Most of the fundamental research on this topic has been done by representatives of the Russian linguistic school, which explains the choice of the consulted bibliography. The theme turned out to be of great interest, as both terms under study are rather confusing.

The Speech Genre

Interest in the study of the SGs is primarily due to the fact that this concept is one of the key structural elements of modern anthropolinguistics. In Russian linguistics, a large number of works have been written on the issue of SGs. Among the studies that particularly marked the study of SGs we can name those of N. D. Arutyunova, A. G. Baranov, M. M. Bakhtin, N. K. Grabovsky, V. E. Goldin, V.V. Dementyey, K. A. Dolinina, M. Yu. Fedosyuk, V. V. Fenin, L. A. Kapanadze, V. I. Karasik, M. N. Kojina, O. A. Krylova, N. A. Kupina, N. B. Lebedeva, L. M. Maidanova, T. V. Matveeva, A. A. Reformatsky, K. F.Sedov, G. Ya. Solganik, T. V. Shmelyova, S. I. Vezner, E. A. Zemskaya, and others. It is undeniable that the remarkable Russian scientist, philosopher of language and philologist Mikhail Bahtin, was the one who made a huge contribution to the development of this theory. It should be noted that in the view of many linguists, the concept of *speech genre* itself appeared in the process of studying the poetic language as one of the reference points in search of its specificity in the works by M. M. Bakhtin, B. Eikhenbaum, Y. Tynyanov, B. Şklovsky, V. V. Vinogradov, etc. Later this concept was used in the scientific works written by M. V. Panov, A. Wierzbicka, E. A. Zemskaya, L. A. Kapanadze, N. K. Grabovsky, M. Yu. Fedosyuk, T. V. Shmeliova, etc. Mikhail Bakhtin affirms that "by pointing to the irony that genres have been studied only in the areas of rhetoric and literature, whereas the enormous ocean of extraliterary genres from which those two disciplines have drawn their forms has remained unexplored" [1, on-line]. In his research Проблема речевых жанров M. M. Bakhtin mentiones: "Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of the 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 to the whole 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" [10, on-line]. According to M. M. Bakhtin SGs can be considered as a category that allows connecting the social reality with the linguistic reality. He called the genres of speech «приводными ремнями от истории общества к истории языка», i.e. "transmission belts from the history of society to the history of language" [10, on-line]. M. M. Bakhtin points out that they are unlimited for the reason that the diverse "possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible", and each area of activity comprises "an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex". Noting the extreme heterogeneity of the oral and written SGs, the researcher claims they "should include short rejoinders of daily dialogue [...], everyday narration, writing (in all its various forms), the brief standard military command, the elaborate and detailed order, the fairly variegated repertoire of business documents (for the most part standard), and the diverse world of commentary (in the broad sense of the word: social, political)". M.M. Bakhtin also suggests including varied forms of "scientific statements and all literary genres (from the proverb to the multivolume novel)" into the SG category, as these genres are so varied "that they do not have and cannot have a single common level at which they can be studied". In Bakhtin's view, on one level of inquiry, numerous heterogeneous occurrences appear; for instance, he mentions "the single-word everyday rejoinder and the multivolume novel, the military command that is standardized even in its intonation and the profoundly individual lyrical work, etc.". The researcher assumes that due to this "functional heterogeneity" SG seem extremely "abstract and empty", that is why they (SGs) have never really been thoroughly studied [10, on-line].

At the same time, the problems of the SGs differentiation criteria inevitably arises, as well as the creation of a widely accepted classification of SGs. The results obtained in the study of the topic show that the definition of the concept of SG remains controversial. V.V. Dementyev has detected that even within the thematic collection \mathcal{K} ahph peuu [19, online] different concepts of the genre are presented [18, p.11]. For example, V.E. Goldin states that the concept of SGs is somehow 'squeezed in' between the concepts of speech act, text type, communication tone, etc. It is impossible to determine the essence of genre as a special phenomenon without comparing and correlating it with related phenomena and concepts" [14, p. 5].

M.M. Bakhtin suggests dividing the entire corpus of speech genres into primary and secondary. *Primary genres* "legislate permissible locutions in lived life", in other words they can be attributed to the lower, everyday layer of the general continuum of everyday communication, i.e. to everyday ideology. For instance, chatters, quarrels, etc. belong to primary genres. *Secondary genres* belong to the upper level of the speech area. They gravitate towards public and official types of communication [23, p. 19]. As M. M. Bakhtin writes "secondary genres made up out of these that constitute not only literary but all other text types (legal, scientific, journalistic) as well" [10, on-line]. Secondary (multifaceted) genres arise in conditions of a more complex and relatively highly developed and organized cultural communication, mainly in the written one. In the course of their formation, they absorb and process various (simple) genres that have developed in the conditions of direct communication. The primary and secondary genres, in the coordinate system of the genre forms classification are located on different (opposite) poles.

Based on Bakhtin's opposition of primary and secondary SGs, A. G. Baranov recommends the following classification: (1) *primary* (simple) SGs, that are close to speech acts; (2) *primary* (complex) SGs, that are equal to the dialogical text; (3) secondary (simple) SGs, that are functional and semantic elementary texts (description, narration, etc.); (4) secondary (complex) SGs, i.e. texts that include lower SGs in a transformed form [9, p. 8].

Considering the tendency either towards the upper or to lower pole, K. F. Sedov suggests dividing the entire genre continuum into *rhetorical genres* and *non-territorial genres* [23, p. 20]. *Rhetorical genres* are ways of shaping public, 'extra-practical' socially significant interaction between people, while *non-rhetorical* genres serve typical situations of the unofficial, non-public, predominantly everyday behaviour, i.e. natural, unaware interaction of the members of the society [23, p. 20]. The correlation of *rhetorical* and *non-rhetorical* genres normally corresponds to Bakhtin's secondary and primary genres. At the same time, in some cases, the same genre, depending on the degree of awareness (rhetoric) of speech behaviour, can act both as rhetorical and non-rhetorical genre.

While discussing SGs, intermediate cases can be also considered, when SGs are compared, for instance, on the basis of preparedness / unpreparedness. Accordingly, in everyday communication, a request, for example, can be realized via a SA, while the genre of request in the business sphere acquires the forms of refined rhetoric. In this regard, M. M. Bakhtin affirms that "speech genres are quite easily re-accentuated" [10, online].

The outlined universality of the concept of the SGs for various spheres of communication sets the task of differentiating SGs that vary in volume¹⁶. For instance, M. Yu. Fedosyuk proposes to distinguish between *elementary* and *complex* genres [25, p. 104].

E. V. Komleva shares K. F. Sedov's view on SGs, regarded as verbal interactions between communication partners, usually representing a rather long interaction that generates a dialogical unity or a monologue statement that contains several additional phrasal unities. They include the genres of requests, orders, sermons/ preaching, advice, recommendations. In order to denote these genre forms representing one-act statements, the term *subgenre* is used. Subgenres are the minimum units of the typology of SGs, equal to one SA [Sedov, apud Komleva, p. 297].

When categorizing SGs researchers often rely on the well-known methodology of the SAs classification, deciding on the addressee's intention as a starting point for their study and using the relevant terminology, which has led to the convergence of the theory of SGs and the theory of SAs. For this reason, the theory of SAs is sometimes regarded as the Western analogue of the theory of SGs [13, p. 108; 25, p. 105-108; 26 p. 92; 3, p. 74-77].

T. V. Shmeleva suggests considering the communicative goal of the SGs when classifying them, proposing four types of SGs: (1) *informative SGs*, whose purpose is operating with the information (its presentation or request, confirmation or refutation); (2) *imperative SGs*, causing the implementation / non-implementation of events that are necessary, desirable, dangerous for some of the participants in communication; (3) *etiquette SGs* aiming at the implementation of a special event, an act in the social sphere, provided for by the etiquette of a given society (apologies, thanks, congratulations, condolences, etc.); (4) *evaluative SGs*, whose intention is to change the well-being of the participants in communication, correlating their actions, qualities and all other manifestations with the scale of values accepted in this society" [26, p. 81-90].

As shown above the research results done on the concept of SGs are sometimes rather controversial, though most assumptions are based on Bakhtin's theory of speech genres.

The Speech Act

Anna Wierzbicka writes that scholars' awareness with reference to SAs has progressively grown. Though research on this topic is still emerging, linguistics has not even set itself the goal to develop a generally accepted methodology for describing SAs. She adds that literature, the repertoire of theoretical 'proposals' and models are growing, but all the empirical results of this activity still do not go beyond the analysis of individual, randomly, as it seems, selected types of statements and direct observation, which is difficult to synthesize. The researcher affirms that "the universe of speech is not formed by words or sentences: it is formed by statements (speech acts)" [13, p. 99].

¹⁶ Note: M.Yu. Fedosyuk uses the term "объем".

The SA concept itself is a very interesting and sophisticated topic for examination and discussion. It is considered that John Austin was the first to introduce the term speech acts in linguistic use. He recognised that "some ordinary language declarative sentences, contrary to logical positivist assumptions, are not apparently used with any intention of making true or false statements. These seem to form a special class" [Austin apud Levinson, p. 228]. John Searle came up with the idea to refer to each type of SAs as to a group of rules describing the required conditions for "sincerely and non-defectively" performing such acts [5]. Searle proposes to use three essential dimensions claiming that numerous classes of SAs vary from each other, and created a new SAs taxonomy. At the same time, N. D. Arutyunova sees a SA as "an elementary (minimal) element of linguistic communication, i.e. the product of a sentence actualization in a definite communication situation; it aims at achieving a definite illocutionary aim" [8, p.136]. David Crystal refers to a SA as to "a communicative activity defined with reference to the intentions of the speaker while speaking and the effects achieved on a listener" [2, p. 314]. Correspondingly L. S. Gurevich defines a SA as "a complex linguistic and psychological formation, in which interlocutionary forces are involved, where the responsestimulus and the response-reaction actualize a meaningful, constructive and situational community, and where the pragmatic component is dialogical unit" [16, p. 400]. George Yule describes speech acts as "actions performed via utterances" [6, p. 47], while according to V. B. Gudkova, "a speech act is a unity of the social (objective) and the individual (subjective) that contains a whole complex of facts of a linguistic and extralinguistic nature" [15, p. 2].

All things considered a SA is seen as an intentional, purposeful, conventional action of information, which is one of the components of the communicative act, along with the communicative action, the receiver of information and the communicative situation [24, p. 172]. It is thought that within the time the theory of SAs has been both highly appreciated or excessively criticized. As researchers seem to be at an impasse when explaining some issues (such as their length) while dealing with SAs, A.Wierzbicka comes with the idea of changing the focus from SAs to SGs.

Speech Genres vs. Speech Acts

Anna Wierzbicka cites M. M. Bakhtin's assertion according to which "One of the reasons for ignoring the forms of utterance in linguistics is the extreme heterogeneity of these forms in their compositional construction and especially in their size (speech length) - from a one-word replica to a large novel. A sharp difference in size also takes place within oral speech genres. Speech genres therefore seem to be incommensurable and unacceptable as units of speech" [Bakhtin, apud Wierzbicka]. She thinks that "in order to break the deadlock in the theory of speech acts, which is extremely important for linguistics (as well as many other humanities), it is necessary to start with the shift of emphasis from the concept of 'speech act' to Bakhtin's concept of 'speech genre'" [13, p. 99]. There have been several (less successful) attempts to mutually integrate the SG theory and the SA theory into a rather new concept, which would have a higher explanatory potential than each of them separately. It obvious that applying formal models, in particular, the monologic-logical-grammatical methodology of the theory of SAs when studying SGs and considering the illocutionary goal as the main criterion for their classification, turns out to be insufficient, since the same SA can be a structural element of several SGs and, vice-versa, different SAs can be found in one SG.

The idea of comparing SAs and SGs seems very appealing, as they have got both similar and different characteristics. Solid research in this domain has been done by numerous reputable Russian linguists, whose results are worth considering. The classification of SAs is, first of all, a taxonomy of speech actions, while researching SGs from the perspective of their illocutionary goal, i.e. from the position of the addressee; the dialogical, communicative aspect itself was excluded from the study. However, we should also mention some classifications of SAs, where the stimulus-response/reaction sequences are considered, that is, the taxonomies of units are outlined not for actions, but for interactions [7; 12; 20]. A brief review of the

theoretical framework has shown although J. Searle's directive SAs [24, p. 180] and T.V. Shmeleva's imperative genres [26, p. 82] have got a common component, the illocutionary function of motivation to action, it does not lead to a complete identification ¹⁷ of SAs and SGs. There are opinions, according to which the SA theory is focused on the grammar of the language (sentences), whilst the SG theory is based on communication; a SA is inherently monological, whereas a SG is dialogical, sociological and interactive. E. V. Komleva considers that the dialogical aspect of SGs regarded as one of the main criteria of their classification, transfers the perspective of the study from the influence of the addresser to the addressee (as in the case of a SA) to the level of their interaction in the process of verbal communication. The classification of SAs, in this regard, is a classification of speech actions isolated from real communication. A SG correlates with a situation, event, text, it has got a quantitatively and qualitatively more complex nature, even if it is a subgenre the volume of which is equal to a one-act statement such as "No Parking!" [22, p. 298]. The emerging of such texts belonging to primary genres is due to the peculiarities of the communicative situation, which consists of both linguistic and various extralinguistic factors. Moreover, the structure of secondary SGs is quite complex and includes a totality/set of SAs. E. V. Komleva further claims that based on the researches done by M. N. Kojina [21], V. V. Dementyev [17], T. V. Shmelyova [26], and A. Wierzbicka [13] a SA can be considered as a structural element of a SG [22, p. 298-299]. In M. N. Kojina's view the relationship of inclusiveness is the one to connect secondary SGs and SAs, though she acknowledges that primary SGs are, obviously, a frame-connecting tool for the construction of secondary SGs. E. V. Komleva highlights the point that there is no direct transition from a SA, viewed as a unit of action and impact (not as interaction) to discourse (which comprises participants' communicative strategies, tactics and extralinguistic factors that determine its features). Correspondingly, for proper understanding of the nature and organization of any discourse, an additional category is required, that will help consider not only the speakers' most general intentions, but also other components of their communicative activity. For this purpose the category of the SG is appropriate [22, p.299].

In the meantime, M. N. Kojina's opinion on the main difference between a SA and a SG seems reasonable, when "interpreting/explaining verbal communication and its units, it is the SG that stands on sociological positions, and not on the psychological ones" [21, p. 55]. A. Wierzbicka considers that the concepts of SAs and SGs are related as static, short, one-time and dynamic, long-term, multiple. She believes the study of this problem should be carried out only within the framework of the SGs, and not of the SAs particularly. In this regard, the scholar supports the idea that a SA is an integral part of a SG, and expands on the possibility of creating formulas for different SGs, consisting of specific SAs, thus the choice of structural elements of the SG, i.e. SAs is determined by such a formula [13, p. 101]. In other words, A. Wierzbicka comes with the idea of using universal semantic language to describe SGs.

In consequence, different SGs can refer to the same SAs, but transform them in their own way. The concept of a primary SG is close to the concept of a SA. On the other hand, secondary SGs are understood as a type of texts, primarily dialogical, the structural element of which is the primary SG (speech act). The SG is usually seen as a systemic-structural phenomenon, which is a complex set of many speech acts, selected and combined for reasons of some special expediency and related to reality not directly, but through the SG as a whole.

As researchers have not come to a consensus on the nature, form and content of the SGs and SAs, there is still room for discussion. Scholars sometimes do not know what 'camp/group' to stick to, however they acknowledge that 'a considerable asset of the SAT lies in the detailed terminology corpus that the SGT lacks [25, p. 105]. We subscribe to A. Wierzbicka's opinion that the concept of Bakhtin's SGs seems very productive both for literary and linguistic studies

¹⁷ Note: отождествления

¹⁸ Note: многократное

(as well as for cultural studies in general). Research has shown that there is much in common between SGs and SAs, for example the terms themselves seem similar, as well as the methodology used for their study. On the one hand, scholars highlight the diversity of SGs and the relative homogeneity of the SAs area, on the other hand the proximity of the SAs towards all SGs. As V.V. Dementyev rightly assumes the broad understanding of SGs "allows" the convergence of SAs and SGs with the leading position of the latter. Furthermore, the SAs mainly converge and are even equated with a certain type of SGs – conventional primary simple speech genres [18, p. 129].

Conclusion

Although Bakhtin's SG theory was, for some reason, ignored / not known by Western scholars, the results of his research has had a huge impact on the Russian and later world linguistics. We agree with the scholars who consider all subsequent research on this topic can be classified into three groups. The first includes researchers who, following M.M. Bakhtin's theory distinguish two concepts – *speech act* and *speech genre*. The second group of scientists critically opposes these two concepts. The third group of linguists correlates the *speech genre* and the *speech act*, remarking the intersection axes of these two concepts and highlighting the differences between them. Obviously, the concepts of SGs and SAs are related to each other. Numerous researchers agree that the SA can be considered as a structural element of the SG. At the same time, it is fundamentally important to emphasise that one and the same SA can be included in different SGs. A complex SG consists of elementary structural components (SAs) that represent the speaker's speech intentions. Generally speaking, the most common and systematically used SAs, expressing the main meanings of a particular SG, constitute its core. Moreover, the concept of SGs presupposes obligatory communication, since it can only be achieved in a dialogue.

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