Andrzej Bogusławski
(University of Warsaw)

On limitless diversity of functional types of utterance

S u m m a r y

The author adopts the concept of "functional type of utterance" where the relevant set is based on features other than coincidental co-occurrence of utterances (as, e.g., used by someone at a certain time) or their including a specified expression (specified expressions). The concept subsumes traditional kinds of utterance such as declaratives vs. hypothetical statements, questions, promises, etc., but also, e.g., utterances where vocatives addressed to the recipient(s) are used with varying frequency (which gives rise to the corresponding subtypes of utterance).

It is claimed that the existence of a closed and at the same time objectively exhaustive list of functional types of utterance depends on two alternative ***necessary conditions which are not and will never be satisfied***. One of the conditions has a formal or mathematical character. It amounts to the presence of some **contradiction** in the conjunction of the following constituents: (i) the claim of ***non-existence*** of such an exhaustive objective list of types, (ii) any element of knowledge. The other necessary condition belongs to the domain of nomological / natural sciences. It would consist in our knowledge of organisms and their ***factual*** (albeit contingent) *constraint* which necessitates production of a *finite* number of functional types of utterance, on the pattern of what is proper to apprehension of sounds by creatures belonging to different species, e.g., humans or bats (as limited to a certain, varying, frequency of oscillation in the air environment).

The author submits a formalized schema of the reasoning where a hierarchy of functional types and subtypes of different degrees is assumed.

Key words: utterance, type of utterance, subtype of utterance, finite list, necessary condition, formal, nomological.

S t r e s z c z e n i e | *O nieskończonej różnorodności funkcjonalnych typow wypowiedzi*

Autor rozważa pojęcie „funkcjonalnego typu wypowiedzi" jako zbioru opartego na cechach innych niż przygodna współobecność wypowiedzi (tzn. gdy zostały one użyte przez tego czy innego mówcę w określonym czasie) lub analizuje je jako fakt – że są to wszystkie wypowiedzi, w których występuje wskazane wyrażenie (lub w których występują wskazane wyrażenia). Tak rozumiane pojęcie obejmuje tradycyjnie wyróżniane rodzaje wypowiedzi, takie jak oznajmujące vs. rozkazujące, stwierdzenia kategoryczne vs. hipotetyczne, pytania, obietnice itd., ale także wypowiedzi, w których używa się wołaczy adresowanych

do odbiorcy (odbiorców) z określoną, różną częstotliwością (co prowadzi do powstawania odpowiednich podtypów wypowiedzi).

Autor twierdzi, że istnienie zamkniętej i zarazem wyczerpującej listy tak rozumianych funkcjonalnych typów wypowiedzi wymaga spełnienia dwóch alternatywnych **warunków koniecznych, które nie są i nigdy nie będą spełnione.** Jeden z nich ma charakter formalny – matematyczny. Polega on na tym, że zachodzi taka czy inna **sprzeczność** między składnikami następującej koniunkcji: (i) twierdzenia o **nieistnieniu** takiej wyczerpującej obiektywnej listy typów, (ii) jakiegokolwiek elementu wiedzy. Drugi warunek konieczny należy do dziedziny nauk nomotetycznych / przyrodniczych. Polegałby on na naszej wiedzy o organizmach i ich **faktycznym** (chociaż przygodnym) ograniczeniu, które powoduje, że mówiący produkują skończoną liczbę funkcjonalnych typów wypowiedzi, w trybie podobnym do tego, co dotyczy odbioru dźwięków przez organizmy należące do różnych gatunków, takich jak ludzie lub nietoperze (z różnym zasięgiem częstotliwości drgań w ośrodku powietrznym).

Autor przedstawia sformalizowany schemat rozumowania, w którym przyjmuje się istnienie hierarchii typów i podtypów funkcjonalnych różnego stopnia.

Słowa kluczowe: wypowiedzenie, typ wypowiedzenia, podtyp wypowiedzenia, lista skończona, warunek konieczny, formalne, nomologiczne.

<p align="center">*</p>

The central and universal functional type of utterance has the shape which is reported in English by means of the expression *said that* _ where, in addition, phrasal stress can, according to the inherent, non-corrective, norm, fall, **alternatively**, on the word *said* or on some component of its propositional supplement.

This type of utterance is in a salient contrast with utterances reported in phrases based on the quotation functor *said* followed by a pause or, in writing, by colon. The denotata of utterances based on this functor are represented by extremely variegated speech acts. But even these do not yet exhaust the space of speech manifestation in its entirety. For there is a multitude of further utterances which are denotata of descriptions other than *said* (or else, in certain cases, descriptions other than *said* which just c o m p e t e with *said*), cf.: *cited*, *added*, *recalled*, *repeated*.

An account of all acts of this kind and their nomenclature, in ordinary speech or in linguistics, even in a rough approximation, would require a separate (perhaps many-volume) analysis.

Below, I shall try to show that *wholesome* utterances belong to *extremely* ramified functional *types* and *subtypes* (of various levels) whose diversity knows no limits. More than that: I shall try to show that this is by no means

a contingent fact. On the contrary, there is an ontic principle behind it, a principle rooted in the inherent nature of utterances as such.

When I talk about "wholesome utterances", what I have in mind are utterances well isolated by speaker herself, utterances *spontaneously* isolated by her, in their contradistinction to *fragments* of speech which either are functioning as non-self-contained proper *parts* of broader wholes or emerge as outcomes of external circumstances or physiological factors.

Utterances understood in the way I have just suggested are meant to be *acts*. Along with them, there appear utterances *as "products"* of the acts, more or less in the sense of Brentano's, Twardowski's and Bühler's distinction of *Sprechhandlung* and *Sprachwerk* (Bühler's terms). Such acts and their products admittedly can be absolute "hapaxes" whose plurality is in no way constrained; cf., as an example, V. Vysotski's individual, unique onomatopoetic sound imitation *plik* (as used in one of his songs in reference to a squadron's shooting). But in the overwhelming majority they represent tokens of certain *types* or *subtypes* of multiple phenomena.

It is necessary to preliminarily fix the way the concept of *functional* type or subtype of utterance ("utterance" understood in harmony with the remarks above) is going to be used.

To begin with, it is, clearly, the set theory that should be adopted here as the general conceptual framework of our reflection. Thus, our first premise will consist in the assumption that there are *sets* of "utterances" to be defined as *types of utterance*; each element of such a set will be referred to by means of the symbol *u* (from the word *utterance*).

The first, most elementary, idea about *u*s as elements of the sets forming "types" or "subtypes" of utterance amounts to the claim that the sets we are interested in are *non-unary*. Thus, we are going to deal with sets which are equal to at least $\{u_i, u_j\}$.

According to the second assumption our intuitive understanding of a *functional* type (or subtype) U excludes from its denotation:

(i) contingent sets of *u*s having their common feature in the form of being produced, say, by a certain individual speaker, by an individual speaker in a time interval $t_i - t_j$, of occurring in a certain moment of time, in a certain space, etc.,

(ii)   sets of *u*s that are determined by their embracing some *specific* item /
       group of *specific* items in a given language (code or subcode) and
       in a certain space or domain of its / their usage;

to exemplify: one can envisage the set of *u*s based on the unique fea-
ture of their being constituted by the phrase *it is not the case that*; such
sets are coextensive with the given element of the code, and, ultimately,
with the code itself;

what we envisage as types or subtypes of utterance are **kinds of use** *of
expressions* marked for certain **particular** features which **reappear** in
different *sets of utterances whose linguistic constituents* <u>other than those</u>
<u>possibly materializing the features mentioned in the paragraph above</u>
do not overlap; obviously, the non-overlapping sets we have in mind
trivially presuppose the presence of these elements or other of the rele-
vant code in the respective utterances, i.e. they presuppose their embrac-
ing definite units of language (in the saussurean or postsaussurean sense
of the term); but the special features of the sets are in no way reduci-
ble to the functional properties of certain individual units of language.

Here are some examples of "utterance" and "type of utterance" as I under-
stand the terms. One of them is a declarative, interrogative or imperative
utterance with an arbitrary vocative optionally added to the rest and repre-
senting Malinowski-Jakobson's "phatic function" (the vocative sometimes
includes, in addition, an honorific apposition, cf. *the distinguished ambas-
sador [Ponomarenko]*, or some other apposition, cf. Mickiewicz's incipit in
his *Pan Tadeusz*, viz. *Litwo, ojczyzno moja* "Lithuania, my home country").
Another example is furnished by a sequence of repetitive vocatives, either
accompanying all sentences in a discourse in question, or accompanying any
sentence in such a discourse which can be marked by a successive *even* num-
ber (2, 4, etc.), or accompanying 1/3 of sentences in such a discourse, and
so on. Theoretically speaking, such numerical measures, for long discourses,
may belong to a set of an enormous power, without any practical possibil-
ity of indicating a precise number of constituents of that kind of alternative.
A similar approach is valid for the Polish insertion *proszę ciebie* [prošeć|ee]
(including its varying frequence of iteration in a discourse).

One more example. Suppose we have a dialogue in the following shape: "– Give me an example of a Polish loan-word from German. – Gwint.". Here, a report on the answer given by the person asked: *He said: gwint.* would be inadequate; we would rather say that the type of utterance in question can be described as "offering an example of the requested sort". Thus a proper description of the type would rather be: *he answered: ...* or *he gave / offered the requested example.* (Otherwise, a report based on the expression *said* in the case now under consideration may be claimed to be possible, after all, but only as a metonymical abridgement of, in our illustration, "he said that an example of a Polish loan-word from German is *gwint*").

I shall repeat: there is no possibility in sight of creating an exhaustive catalogue of *functional* types of utterance as conceived of here.

More than that: what has been presented above as a probably convincing impression can and must be taken to be a logically derivable truth.

The aim of my deduction to be presented in the sequel of course is not to cast doubt on the meaningfulness of establishing these types of utterance or others, for example, interrogative utterances, requests, orders, ironical, sarcastic utterances, curses, and so on, but rather to offer a general frame of the relevant investigations. The general frame amounts to the claim that there is *no possibility of providing an exhaustive list* of functional types of utterance.

The corollary of this claim is the statement that none of the relevant taxonomies known from the past was complete, and that the same thing applies to any future attempt at creating such a taxonomy. In the antiquity, important proposals concerning the domain we are interested in were offered by the stoics. An outstanding theoretician dealing with the classification of utterances was, in the 5th century, Ammonius of Alexandria. A great deal in this domain of linguistic descriptions has been accomplished by French specialists in grammar, rhetoric and philosophy of the 16th – 18th centuries. In the 20th century, outstanding achievements belong to Austin, Searle, Vanderveken; further contributions were offered, inter alia, by Wierzbicka's inquiries into so called "genres of speech" and "speech acts" (in particular, in her work of (1987)). All the thinkers have been far from offering a relevant exhaustive list of types of utterance.