

kataliza omińniętego wyrazu bądź frazy jest lingwistycznie zde-terminowana (reguły opuszczenia muszą być nie tylko syntaktyczne, ale również semantycznie ograniczone, aby ją wyderzywać). Analiza interpretacyjna konstrukcji eliptycznych, chociaż nie rozwiązuje wszystkich problemów związanych z elipsą, traktuje zjawisko elipsy w sposób prosty i jednorodny: wszystkie zdania i wypowiedzi są generowane przez bazę składnika syntaktycznego gramatyki, a ich znaczenie jest określano przez reguły interpretacyjne składnika semantycznego.

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Pragmatic Interpretation of Verbal Jokes -
a Study in the Humour of Some Speech Acts

We do not normally realise that a great part of our everyday communication is performed nondirectly¹. Apart from the strictly linguistic significance that this fact may have, it is also interesting because nondirect utterances can often be a source of humour. It is our intention in this article to examine several examples of such laughter-provoking language use and try to indicate the reasons for their being funny. The method employed for this purpose is the pragmatic theory of speech acts. As it is still comparatively recent, we shall first introduce it to the extent required by the present paper and only then get to the actual analysis.

According to Searle /1969: 16/, "speaking a language is performing speech acts, acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, and so on; and more abstractly, acts such as referring or predicating." In fact, the production of any symbol, word or sentence in appropriate circumstances can be a speech act. Provided that it is produced by a human being and with certain intentions, Searle /1969/ regards speech act as the basic or minimal unit of linguistic communication.

It is in Austin /1962/ that we first come across the following tripartite division of speech acts: locutionary acts are the acts OF saying something, illocutionary acts are performed IN saying something, and perlocutionary acts are achieved BY saying something. The utterances which result from the performance of the three acts are respectively called locution, illocution and perlocution.

Sadock /1974/ says that locutionary acts are performed with the purpose of communicating something. Illocutionary acts are achieved if our intention to achieve them is commu-

indicated. This intended illocution is also called illocutionary force and it can be of different kinds, e.g. the force of a promise, of a question or of a request; hence different kinds of illocutionary acts, such as promising, asking, re-questing, etc. The simplest way to convey the intended force of an utterance is by means of an explicit performative, i.e. an utterance of the form: "I promise you that I'll..."; and so on. Of course, not all illocutionary acts have such explicit form.

Perlocutionary acts are called in Sadock /1974/ the by-products of acts of communication. Indeed, it is their effect on the hearer which is important, whether intentional or not. One utterance can often have more than one such effect, or different ones depending on the context. A few examples of perlocutionary acts could be: intimidating, inspiring, irritating, etc.

As stated in Akmajian /1979/, illocutionary acts are much more important in linguistic communication than perlocutionary acts. The latter are even performed by means of performing the former, for instance we might offend or frighten someone, i.e. perform perlocutionary acts, by means of stating or threatening, which are illocutionary acts. Because of that, as well as due to their significance for verbal humour, illocutionary acts will be given the most attention here.

In Akmajian we further read that according to the way in which they are performed, speech acts can be divided into four main types: literal /if a speaker means what he says/, nonliteral /if a speaker does not mean what his words mean literally/, indirect /if a speaker performs an act by performing another speech act/ and direct /if an act is not performed by means of performing another act/. This distinction is especially important for illocutionary acts in the case of which the speaker's illocutionary intent must be recognised for an act to be properly understood. Of course, literal and direct acts are the easiest to understand because they are the simplest. They require the minimal amount of inference from the hearer. Nonliteral direct acts are more complicated in this respect because not only must the hearer realise that the literal meaning of the speaker's words is not what the speaker means, but also infer what he does mean.

With indirect acts the number of speech acts performed at a given time doubles. In such a case, one utterance of a sentence means performing two acts, the first of which is direct and the second indirect. Additionally, each of them can be either literal or nonliteral, which increases the number of possible combinations even more.

This being so, the following question arises: how, at least in most cases, does the hearer know what the speaker really wanted to say, especially when he performed two, often very different, acts?

In Searle /1969: 16/ we read that "speech acts are in general made possible by and are performed in accordance with certain rules for the use of linguistic elements." These rules demand that for a speech act to be properly performed certain conditions must be met. They are the so-called felicity conditions - the prerequisites of a speech act's felicitous performance. And so, for instance, the act of requesting has the following conditions:

- a. Propositional Content Condition. A future act A is predicated of the hearer H.
- b. Preparatory Condition. H is able to do A.
- c. Sincerity Condition. The speaker S wants H to do A.

Now the rules entailing the fulfilment of these conditions are shared by both the speaker and the hearer and it is owing to this fact that the two can successfully communicate. The latter recognises the intentions of the former and the former expects the latter to do so. At least this is true of literal and direct acts.

The way indirect illocutionary acts are properly understood is, according to Searle /1975/, this. Suppose someone makes an utterance directed to someone else. If the hearer finds the speaker's words contextually inappropriate, then he has reasons to believe that the speaker performed not only the sort of act that would result from the literal meaning of his words, but also some other one. It is the act whose conditions are fulfilled by the speaker's utterance.

After this very general introduction to the theory of speech acts, let us now see what possibilities there are in the analysis of verbal humour. The scope of our analysis will be several utterances, most of which are hints, that is, to say nondirect statements or questions. One of them appears in the following dialogue:

Author - "Have you read my new book?"
Friend - "Yes."
Author - "What do you think of it?"
Friend - "Well, to be candid with you, I think the covers are too far apart."

What kind of speech act is it that the author's friend performs? He certainly means to say that the covers are too far apart, but this is not all. He also, and in fact primarily, wants to say that the book is simply too long, but instead of doing that literally he says what he does about the covers. So he leaves it for the author to infer that the work is excessively large. Now the friend's intent was to tell the author about the size of the book and he did it through the act of telling him about its covers. The friend, therefore, performed an illocutionary act of telling which, although nonliteral, was direct because it was done by means of an act of telling. The joke is funny to us as soon as we notice that it is a simple message to the effect "Your book is too long" which is conveyed in a roundabout and yet none the slower way of a nonliteral and direct illocutionary act of telling.

The next two examples of hints are perhaps even more interesting. The first one is this:

A customer sat down at a table in a smart restaurant and tied a napkin around his neck. The scandalised manager called a waiter and instructed him, "Try to make him understand, as tactfully as possible, that that's not done."
Said the thoughtful waiter to the customer:
"Pardon me, sir. Shave or haircut, sir?"

To be able to say what speech act the waiter performs we must look at the real meaning of his words. What he wants to tell the customer is: "Please, untie the napkin." Instead, however, he asks him what he does and the act performed is

nonliteral. What is more, it is indirect, because it is a request, albeit appearing as a question. Now if we assume that the customer understood the waiter's intentions, the natural question to come to our mind could be: how did it come about? Or, more generally, how is it possible that an utterance with the surface form of an interrogative can be taken as a request, the normal form of a request being an imperative sentence?

The point is that the waiter's utterance meant literally, i.e. as a question for information, would be inappropriate in the context in which it appears. Certainly the waiter did not mean to shave the customer or cut his hair. Nor can we easily imagine a man who in such a situation should find a similar suggestion as anything but a surprise. Therefore, if a question about a barber's service in a restaurant is bound to amaze a customer, it is also most likely to make him wonder about the possible reasons for asking it. Gradually, though in reality the process takes fractions of seconds, the customer will associate the barber with the napkin he had tied under his neck and the waiter's question will appear to him as the request to remove it. The roundaboutness of the waiter's utterance, consisting in his surprising, though not illogical, association, is already a source of humour in itself. Together with his rather doubtful tact it contributes to the unexpectedness of the solution of the joke, which provokes our laughter.

The other example is an interesting and very promising way of requesting:

A Paris theatre has found a means of making ladies remove their hats. Before the performance a strip appears on the screen curtain. "The management wishes to spare elderly ladies inconvenience. They are permitted to retain hats." There follows a general stampede to remove hats.

Let us, for our convenience, consider the notice to be one sentence: "Elderly ladies are permitted to retain hats." It does not matter here that the words appear on the curtain - they could just as well be uttered. And what sort of speech act would then be performed? First of all, seeing the results, one must admit that it is a perlocutionary act - it has a clear effect

on the hearers. As such, however, it is also illocutionary /cf. earlier explanations/. Then, it is nonliteral, because the speaker means something exactly opposite to what he says. It is also indirect because it has the form of a statement and is really a request. In spite of this nonliterality and indirectness, however, this cunning notice is very effective. How is it possible this time?

The case seems to be different from the previous one, because a remark to the ladies about their hats before a play is not really contextually inappropriate. It is customary that women often retain their hats indoors and so, very likely, the theatre would not be an exception. To make the ladies remove their hats, therefore, the management of the theatre did not suggest it by surprising them with some apparently out-of-context notice, but instead have resorted to the common knowledge of women's psychology. The key word here is "elderly" and it is so significant it even allows the management to produce a notice whose literal meaning is just the reverse of what it really means, which is either you take your hat off or else you will pass as elderly. Hence the rush among half of the audience and as the result no hats are likely to obscure anybody's view.

Beside the extralinguistic sources of humour present in this joke, a lot of its fun results from the great discrepancy between what is said and meant, in much the same way as in the previous example.

It will be noticed that all the utterances analysed above, for all their nonliterality and/or indirectness, could easily be understood by the addressees. Not always, however, are speech acts interpreted so faultlessly. Indeed, many a time they are subject to confusion, which can often evoke much hilarity. Let us have a look at some examples of the hearer's erroneous interpretation of the speaker's act. The first one is the following:

A politician was invited to give a talk on Americanism to the pupils of the grammar school he had attended as a boy.
 "When I see your smiling faces before me," he began in the accepted oratorical style, "it takes me back to my childhood. Why is it, my dear girls and boys, you are all so happy?"

He paused for the rhetorical effect, and instantly up went a grimy hand from the front row.
 "Well, my lad, what is it?"
 "The reason we're so happy," replied the boy, "is if you talk long enough we won't have Geography lesson this morning."

It is the case of an indirect illocutionary act mistakenly understood as a direct one. The politician's question "Why is it, my dear girls and boys, you're all so happy?" is a rhetorical question. What he really is performing is a declarative to the effect: "I wonder why you are all so happy." Therefore, although in the form of a question, his statement requires no reply. The fact that we do get an answer, and a clever one, too, makes us laugh.

The opposite case also frequently takes place, namely when the act which is direct is thought to be an indirect one, e.g.

The young man had been sitting in the drawing room alone with her for a long time and it was getting late. Suddenly, the door opened and her father entered. He coughed a little, cleared his throat, and then said:
 "Do you know what the time is?"
 The young man arose hurriedly, stammered a few words and in a moment or so was gone.
 "Is your young friend an idiot or what?" asked the father of the girl, who stood looking into the mirror.
 "Why?" queried the daughter, a trifle irritated.
 "Well, I just asked him if he knew the time, because my watch has stopped, and he simply bolted."

Here, the father, as he later explains to the daughter, by uttering the question "Do you know what the time is?" merely wants to know how late it is and in order to get to know that he performs a direct act of asking. However, the young man, probably a little apprehensive of his would-be father-in-law, takes the latter's question as a hint to leave, i.e. perceives an indirect act of requesting where there is actually none. This misunderstanding of the speaker's intentions, together with the hearer's reaction, results in our laughter.

A different example of confusing speech acts is when an indirect act is taken for another indirect act, e.g.

"Waiter, there's a dead fly in my soup."
 "Yes, sir, I know - it's the heat that kills them."

The customer is probably shocked at the sight of a dead fly in his soup. In any case, he wants something to be done about it and is not in the least interested in the reason for which flies die. The waiter, however, instead of replacing the plate with another one, pretends to take things for granted and provides his explanation which is quite irrelevant under the circumstances. Looking at it from the point of view of pragmatics, the customer utters a request which is indirect because it has the form of a declarative. The waiter, though, chooses not to see it as a request, but as an indirect question concerning the dying of flies. We can infer it from his words, which are the answer to such a question. Thus, by refusing to see what the customer means, the waiter tries to wriggle out of his responsibility for there being a fly in the soup. His wit lies at the foundations of the joke.

Now the confusion of speech acts in the last three examples appears to be contextually determined. Coming back to the classroom, a little schoolboy's answer to the politician's question "Why is it you are all so happy?" was possible because it so happened that the children were still to have a geography lesson later on and hoping to skip it if the politician talked long enough they were actually happy. If the visitor had come to their last class, they would most probably have been anxious to go home and no answer to the rhetorical question would have arisen.

Similarly, the girl's question about the time in the following joke could only be ambiguous for someone who had indeed been sitting with the girl till late. In other words, the circumstances quite understandably entitled the father to make a hint to the young man to leave. An additional factor contributing to the misunderstanding was probably the young man's oversensitivity, apparent from the way he left the house.

Finally, in the third example quoted it is fairly evident that the waiter's misinterpretation of the customer's remark is purposeful. In the situation in which they appear, the words "there's a dead fly in my soup" can hardly mean anything else than a request for a new plate. Unless, then, as we suggested, he wants to escape his responsibility, the waiter, by conscious disregard of the customer's obvious intentions, appeals to his sense of humour, hoping that laughter will help to relieve the incident.

Throughout this article we have dealt with several jokes based on the use of nondirect speech. In the attempt to answer the question why they were amusing, the pragmatic theory of speech acts has been applied. At this point we can already say that the choice of the method seems well justified, since the adopted approach has proved very useful in indicating the difference between what the speaker means, how he says it and, frequently, how the hearer interprets it. This discrepancy is essential for the type of humour we have chosen to analyse. Looking at jokes as at speech acts has also made it possible to notice the ambiguity of nondirect utterances, which - unless the context prevents it - can often lead to misunderstandings and consequently to humorous effects.

Finally, we must stress again that the theory of speech acts is presented here only to the extent we find it useful for what we have called nondirect speech. We are aware that there is more to it and that other types of verbal jokes could possibly be analysed in light of this approach. For the time being, however, this remains a subject of articles yet to be written.

Footnotes

¹ The word "nondirect" introduced here is meant to comprise the terms "indirect" and "nonliteral" which occur later.

² For more information on it see especially Grice /1975/.

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Streszczenie

Artykuł zawiera próbę analizy kilku przykładów humoru słownego wyliczającego z posługiwania się językiem w sposób pośredni /nonliterally/. Termin ten, wprowadzony przez autora, nawiązuje do pragmatycznej teorii aktów mowy i oznacza każdy taki akt, który jest bądź niedoświadczony /nonliteral/, bądź pośredni /indirect/, albo posiada obie te cechy. Wspomniana teoria omówiona jest w ogólnym zakresie w pierwszej części artykułu, a następnie wykorzystana do badania humoru językowego. Zastrowanie jej do tego celu wydaje się celowe, gdyż ukazuje wyraźnie różnicę między intensywną mową, sposobem ich wprowadzania oraz, niestety, sposobem ich interpretacji przez słuchacza. Rozbieżności tego typu są zasadnicze dla rodzaju humoru analizowanego w tym artykule. Sprostowanie na dowód słowny jako na akt mowy rozwinął również zarobek uważa na niejednoznaczność wyrowiedzi pośrednich. Może ona, jeśli tylko nie przedkładała temu kontekst, prowadzić do zabawnych nieporozumień.

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История изображения чисел и летоисчисления на Руси и в Польше

Обозначение чисел и летоисчисление в Древней Руси отличались существенным образом от обозначения чисел и летоисчисления, принятого в то время в Польше. И если теперь в этом нет никаких различий, то процесс унификации длился несколько столетий. Настоящая статья знакомит читателя с различными в обозначении чисел и летоисчисления на Руси и в Польше и прослеживает процесс их унификации.

Обозначение чисел и летоисчисление были приняты Русью в тоды ее крещения вместе с кирилловским письмом из Болгарии, где они, в свою очередь, были заимствованы из Византии.

Числа в греческом письме обозначались буквами, по буквам которых ставились точки, а над буквами титло. При этом каждая буква обладала числовым значением, даже и такие, которые потеряли свое звуковое значение и в классический азиатит из 24 букв не входили: дигамма (Ϛ), копса (Ϙ) и сампи (Ϡ).

Как известно, кирилловское письмо насчитывало 43 буквы, так как для обозначения таких звуков старославянского языка, которые не имели параллелей в греческом языке, ее изобретатели — Кирилл Философ, а позднее Киммент Охридский — выужжены были создать новые значения. Эти новые буквы, как предполо, лишены были числового значения, буквы же, взятые из греческого азиатита, получили те же самые цифровые значения, что и в греческой пифии. Цифровые значения дигаммы, копсы и сампи переняли зело, червь и юс малый, замененный позже буквой ци.

Цифровые значения букв кириллицы были следующие: А - 1, В - 2, Г - 3, Д - 4, Е - 5, З - 6, И - 7, Й - 8, Ф - 9, Т - 10, Р - 20, Л - 30, М - 40, Н - 50, С - 60, О - 70, П - 80, Ч - 90, Ц - 100, С - 200, Т - 300, Ф - 400, Х - 500, X - 600, Ч - 700, С - 800, А - или Д - 900.

Числа от 11 до 20 выражались соединением показателей едн-