THE SPEECH ACT

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Abstract
　　Language is nothing but human subjects in as much as they speak, say and know. Language is something coming from the inside of the speaking subject manifest in the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker. A language, on the contrary, is something coming from the outside, from the speech community, something offered to the speaking subject from the tradition in the technique of speaking. The speech act is the performance of an intuition by the subject, both individual and social. It is individual since it is creation. It is social since it is executed using the parameters and means offered to the speaker by the speech community. Human subjects speak because they have something to say. They say because they define themselves before the circumstance they are in. This is so because speakers are able to know. The speech act is nothing but an act of knowing. Language is born when it is executed in the speech act.

Keywords: The speech act, the act of knowing, speaking, saying and knowing

Introduction
Human knowledge and language
　　Human knowledge is nothing but the expression of human intelligence and freedom. It is aimed at dominating and manipulating the thing apprehended[1]. In the act of knowing cognizant subjects will manifest themselves as subjects who
   a) Separate themselves from the sensitive and concrete, something come to them through their senses;
   b) Transform the sensitive and concrete into something abstract and virtual;
   c) In the depths of their conscience;

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[1] This sentence would be interpreted differently if the speaker was a representative of the West (Europe) or the East (Asia, in general). In the West human knowledge is aimed at dominating the object known; but in the East it is aimed at the subject who knows. Because of this in the West the knowledge of things constitute Science. On the contrary, in the East Wisdom deals with the subject's perfection (Cf. Martinez del Castillo 2013c).

d) To overcome the circumstance they are in;

e) Thus creating something new.

   Because of these dimensions, human subjects will create

a) Their own "I", that is, their *conscience*;

b) Virtual things (*contents of conscience*), that is, meanings (*language*);

c) Things and the world, that is *reality*;

d) *The particular language* thus using words not belonging to them but *the speech community*;

In this sense language manifests in a triple reality:

   a. Language as the creation of meanings and thought (*logos, contents*);

   b. Language as something *common* in a speech community thus something shared with others, that is, as *a particular language*.

   c. Language as individual performances, *speech*, manifesting itself in *speech acts*, the only reality of language with concrete existence.

   Saying constitutes the manifestation of *the intentional meaningful purpose of the speaker*. In this sense saying goes beyond speaking and knowing. Saying determines both knowing above and speaking below. It determines knowing above since knowing is orientated and led with saying. It determines speaking below since speaking is the expression of both knowing and saying.

   The human reality of speaking, saying and knowing is given in speech acts. Since human subjects are speakers and at the same time try to understand their own reality, the study of language and speech acts is interpretation, that is, *hermeneutics*, founded and systematic revelation of contents[2] in the conscience of the speaking subject. *Linguistics of saying* studies language in its birth, thus constituting *the hermeneutics of speech acts*.

2. Elements in linguistics of saying

   2.1. The purpose of linguistics of saying is to study language in its birth. Language is executed and born in the speech act, thus answering to the needs of expression of its creators, summarized in *the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker*. Speakers will start with an individual new intuition, called *aísthesis* by Aristotle, something *sensitive* and *concrete*. Because of the free character of human knowledge, this intuition will suffer a series of transformations in its way of being. It will be made something *mental*, *virtual*, *objective*, *true* and finally *real*. All these transformations

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[2] Eugenio Coseriu 2006: 57.

manifest themselves in the linguistic expression. They all are made with a series of intellective operations, thus transforming the *act of knowing* into *a speech act*. In this way a series of historical words, belonging to a particular language, thus historical, common and a-circumstantial, give sense in the way proposed by the individual speaker.

In linguistics of saying we can distinguish two fundamental functions present in all linguistic expressions: *the object of saying*, the motivation of an expression, and *the object of knowledge*, the topic used to express the object of saying. They both answer to the double character of the speech act as an act of knowing and saying of a subject who is in a particular circumstance and has to overcome it.

2.2. These two functions are to be expressed differently in every speech act. Since the speech act is basically an act of knowing the speaker will make a series of mental operations called *intellective operations* to express *his intentional meaningful purpose*. The speech act starts with selecting something from the initial intuition (*aísthesis*) or the whole intuition under a particular perspective (*selection*). The construct selected will be delimited in some way and given reality (*delimitation of a designation*) thus constituting a *semantic object*. The semantic object will be given an essence (*the creation of a class or essence*) thus assigning it to a class of semantic objects. The construct created so far will be related to other semantic objects previously known by the speaker (*relation*) or existing in the tradition of speaking in the speech community. It will be given a name, new or traditional (*giving the construct a name*, *nomination*); it will be determined, that is, orientated to things in the world (*determination*). And finally it will be expressed in words of a language thus offering it to other speakers (*linguistic expression*).

The speaking subject with this creates something in his *conscience*, transforms it in its nature of being (*sensitive and concrete* into *mental* or *abstract*, *virtual*, *objective, real* and *true*), goes out of himself thus making himself human and participating with other speaking subjects. The speech act (*language*) is born when the words uttered are given back to the subject in some way, that is, when words *reverberate*[3].

The speech act is, then, the *synthesis of sensibility and intellect* (Kant), an act of knowing, making possible the definition of the subject before the circumstance he is in, using words of a particular language,

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[3] Cf. Humboldt 1970: 77. Donatella Di Cesare (1999: 38) interprets Humboldt's words in the following way: "The performance of *sensibility* and *intellect* [Kant] is not the pure and simple manifestation of a representation already given […]. It is rather simultaneous happening in the very *synthetic act* [Kant]; it is even the condition for the synthesis to be given, since without that sensitive form unification of features would not happen, nor would the result of that unification (the representation) acquire a stable existence. It is only by means of sounds that representation, once determined, is separated from the internal activity producing it" (my translation).

making it an act of saying and speaking because it is basically an act of knowing.

3. An illustration: *the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker*.

To illustrate the relationships of signification in the speech act I am going to analyse the following expression constituting a possible speech act,

Global Multidisciplinary Unesco World Science Day e-Conference[4].

To understand speech acts speakers will proceed *intuitively*, that is, they will contemplate the thing being said (the signification of the linguistic expression) and find out necessary connections in it (necessity and universality). On the contrary, linguists or those speakers trying to explain rationally the linguistic expression will be forced to use technical words and proceed with a justified method to find out the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker who formulated the expression. As said above, the linguist's explanation will result in interpretation since linguists are necessarily speakers of a particular language. They must find out the necessary connections an ordinary speaker does and justify them thus adding something new not directly expressed, that is, their work will result in the *hermeneutics* of the speech act.

3.1. Syntactic analysis.

The combination in the example above is constituted with a noun phrase with no determiner, in the singular, made up of a headword and different modifiers preceding the headword. The peculiarity of this particular speech act consists in the number of modifiers characterizing the head, every one in a different way. The headword is a compound one: it is made up of the combination noun + noun (*e*[*lectronic*]*-conference*). The first noun (*electronic*) modifies the second one (*conference*) thus specifying its contents in a particular sense. Since the combination has no determiner, we cannot speak of individual things belonging by definition to a particular class of things but of an individual thing belonging to a class created on the spot. An *e-conference* is something belonging to the class of e-conferences, a class of semantic things to be included in the historical or traditional class of semantic objects "conferences".

This procedure of modifying a headword with a noun is repeated in the example in different ways. First, the established headword (*e-conference*)

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[4] This statement was composed using two statements in the internet: "Global Multidisciplinary, e-Conference" and "Unesco World Science Day Celebration". The composition now being used is a specification of an aspect in the contents of both. In the analysis I am going to make, I want to discover the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker who created it and analyse the means used in order to achieve the purpose proposed by him. With this, based on analogy, I want to interpret *speech acts* (*language*) as the manifestation of something said (*lektón*, *lógos*), using historical means of expression (a *language*), something born at the moment of speaking.

is modified with another noun acting as the head of a new word group (*day*); second, *day* is modified with another noun (*science*); third, the combination *science day* is modified with another noun, *world*. Because of this, *world* and *science* modify *e-conference* but indirectly through *day*; fourth, *Unesco* as a noun modifies the group constituted with the headword *day*; and finally, fifth, *global* and *multidisciplinary*, as two adjectives modify *e-conference* directly. We can represent these syntactic relationships in the following way:

[[[global [multidisciplinary]]: [[Unesco] [world science day]]: [e-conference]]]

The conclusion we can draw from this analysis is that, since all modifiers are either nouns (*day*, *science*, *world*, *Unesco*) or denominal[5] adjectives (*electronic*, *global*, *multidisciplinary*) the combination refers to permanent conditions defining the different headwords, that is, they all play a classifying function[6] thus creating classes of semantic objects or permanent characteristics of the headword.

3.2. Intellective analysis

Now, then, our problem consists in finding out *the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker* and the reason for the subsequent success of the speech act: *what is the aim of this speech act?* Or considered from the perspective of the hearer, *what is said in the combination?*

In the combination we can see the following relationships of signification created with the following intellective operations,

   a) a *semantic construct* in as much as it is *selected* out of the *initial intuition* of the original speaker.

The speech act starts with selecting something out of the original intuition (*aísthesis*), something you may have or may not, initially sensitive and concrete now being made mental, that is, abstract with the mere fact of being selected out of the sensitive and concrete. The human subject selects, that is, creates or adopts a construct in order to apply to it what he is going to fabricate. Since the construct made so far has been changed in its mode of being thus being transformed from the sensitive and concrete and made abstract, the subject attributes semantic character to it. It is no longer sensation but something new added to the image selected out of sensation. What the subject has selected is nothing existing out of his conscience. This selection involves then three aspects:

   1. Creating something new,
   2. Making it mental thus attributing semantic character to it, and

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[5] Cf. Quirk *et al.* 1985: 432.
[6] Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1340.

    3.   Considering it independent from the speaker who created it.

Sensation (intuition, aísthesis) was something lived by the subject. The fabrication and consideration made is something in our conscience, based on the character of intuition itself. The thing selected by the mere fact of having been selected is something extracted[7] out of the thing it was given in, the initial intuition.

With the intellective operation of selection we execute the synthesis explained by Kant: the union of the thing which in principle was sensitive and concrete, the initial intuition, and something not yet meaning but belonging to the world of meanings.

Selection can be made in different ways. It can start with sensation or it can be constituted with a mental fabrication as in the case of metaphor and pure creation. In both cases it starts with intuition, something you may or may not have. In the former selection is connected with designation, something to be defined as well mentally in the very act of speaking, saying and knowing; in the latter it has to do with a particular point of view created and added by us to create the construct mentally.

In our analysis so far we have nothing but the base to construct something new. We need to add something on it created in our conscience. Back to the example we can see the subsequent relationships of signification.

    b) The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being and thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, in as much as it is delimited and referred to the *world of meanings* thus made *a semantic object*.

The semantic construct once made semantic must be delimited, that is, given limits in some way. Because of *delimitation* the construct is attributed reality in some way thus making it belong to the world of meanings. Delimitation thus involves two intellective operations: giving limits to the construct created so far and giving it reality. In this sense it is no longer a mere mental construct but a semantic object.

The intellective operation of delimitation is an entirely free, fantastic, mental, imaginative operation with no base on the real. The speaking saying and knowing subject delimits and attributes reality to the construct made so far because he wants to and in the way he does.

Once created the semantic object, it is necessary to define it. This is something to be made with the following intellective operation, *the creation of a class or essence*.

    c) The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, delimited and referred to

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[7] For Ortega y Gasset *to abstract* means extracting something out of the thing it is given in (cf. Ortega y Gasset 1992a: 57-58).

the *semantic world of meanings* thus made a *semantic object*, in as much as it is *assigned to a class of semantic objects*.

An essence is nothing but the mental image of the semantic object it defines. So it has to do with the semantic class the object belongs to. The peculiar thing in the combination being analysed is that the semantic object referred to has many modifiers. As we saw in the syntactic analysis, the semantic object *e-conference*, just a compound noun, is modified with two nouns (*day* and *Unesco*); *day* is the head of a new group of modifiers (*World Science Day*) and *Unesco* modifies the headword *e-conference* but not directly but through *day* (*World Science Day*). Apart from these, the denominal adjectives *global* and *multidisciplinary* complete the definition of the headword, *e-conference*. Since all modifiers are either nouns or denominal adjectives, they all imprint a permanent character on the headword, very apt to create a class of semantic objects, but with a slight difference. Noun modifiers in the combination semantically determine the semantic object created, but the denominal adjectives *global* and *multidisciplinary* define, that is, describe the type of semantic object. At the same time since both adjectives are denominal they cannot be intensified: *What is the e-conference like? Global and multidisciplinary*. As a consequence, the description they convey is very much like determination. Because of this, the essence of the semantic object and the class of objects to be created with it has this double character: it is made both with semantic determination and description, with the restriction said.

Once all modifiers are applied to the headword (e-*Conference*) we have a very complex class of semantic objects, to be decomposed in different semantic classes, starting with the higher to the lesser:

1) The one constituted with the noun *conference*.
2) The one constituted with the combination of *e-(lectronic)* and *conference*: *e- conference*.
3) The one constituted with the combination of *science day* and *e-conference*: *science day e-conference*.
4) The one constituted with the combination of *world* and *science day e-conference*: *world science day e-conference.*
5) The one constituted with the combination of *Unesco* and *world science day e-conference*: *Unesco world science day e-conference*; and
6) The one constituted with the combination of *global* and *multidisciplinary* with *Unesco world science day e-conference*: *global multidisciplinary Unesco world science day e-conference.*

That is, the definition of the semantic object in the combination is made with the assignment of it to different semantic classes, they all keeping a hierarchy with one another. This hierarchy can be explained in terms of

inclusion and, the contrary, implication, in the following way: the class at the left includes the one at the right and vice versa, the class at the right implies the one at the left:

conference: e-conference: science day e-conference: world science day e-conference: Unesco world science day e-conference: global and multidisciplinary Unesco world science day e-conference

That is, all semantic classes stated belong to the semantic class of conferences. The concept of the semantic class conference is progressively specified in the sense stated in the other semantic classes thus defining the semantic object created. So this relationship of signification can be stated in the following way:

d) The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, delimited and referred to the *semantic world of meanings* thus made a *semantic object*, assigned to the class of semantic objects of *conferences*, including the class of *e-conferences*, including the class of *science day e-conferences*, including the class of *world science day e-conferences*, including the class of *Unesco world science day e-conferences*, in as much as it is defined as *global* and *multidisciplinary*.

Semantic objects become *things* when they are assigned to a particular semantic class of objects. For a human subject to apprehend something as a thing means assigning the thing apprehended to a particular class of semantic objects. In other words: a particular semantic object is nothing unless it is referred to a class either existing in the tradition of speaking in force in the speech community (*the world of meanings*) or created, that is, invented owing to the intuition lived at the moment. Because of this, there may be semantic classes with only one item; for example, proper names.

The assignment of semantic objects to a class thus making them *things* is something we can verify in the verbal behaviour of speakers. The first thing a human subject would typically ask when apprehending something new is, *what is this?* The semantic object with its individual characteristics is before the speaker to be contemplated by him but this fact does not guarantee the intellection of it. To understand what that new semantic object is it is necessary to assign it to a class of semantic objects, or else the human subject would understand nothing.

With the intellective operation of creation of a class or essence we have discovered what is the essence of the semantic object, but we do not yet know the exact signification of it: *what is the sense of the example being analysed? What is the intentional meaningful purpose of the speaker who stated it?* In order to know this we must *relate* the example to other

meanings we may know either retrieved from our individual tradition in knowing or from the tradition in force in our speech community.

e) The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, delimited and referred to the semantic world of meanings thus made a *semantic object*, assigned to the class of semantic objects of *conferences*, including the class of *e-conferences*, including the class of *science day e-conferences*, including the class of *world science day e-conferences*, including the class of *Unesco world science day e-conferences*, defined as *global* and *multidisciplinary*, in as much as it belongs to *a piece of the world of meanings*.

Relating a semantic object to other semantic objects, they all belonging to the world of meanings, means separating it from others and considering it as identical with itself, that is, as unique and different. This has to do with a theory of knowledge.

Things given are things in so far as they are given. In a theory of knowledge things exist in so far as they are assigned to a particular *speech universe*. For Coseriu, a speech universe has to do with the basic and fundamental modes of knowing of human knowledge[8]. Modes of knowing are closely connected with the different modes of thinking in force in a particular speech community. Both the modes of knowing and the modes of thinking have to do with the mode of being in the conception of things. Speakers will accept the world of knowledge, the modes of thinking and the implicit modes of conceiving of things in force in their speech community. In the world of meanings the different speech universes are considered to be independent[9] from one another. In this sense every speech universe has its peculiarities in connection with the modes of knowing by virtue of which the things said are true or not. For example, if I say the verses by Shakespeare *an hour before the worshipp'd sun / peer'd forth the golden window of the east, / a troubled mind drave me to walk abroad*[10], I'll have to say that the contents in it are true although we all know that there are no windows either in the East or West. It belongs to the speech universe of fantasy, that is, the speech universe of creation and imagination. In the same sense if I say, *Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven*, I shall have to admit as well that it is similarly true in the speech universe of Christian Faith, however contrary to facts it may appear.

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[8] Eugenio Coseriu 2006: 73.
[9] Cf. Ibid.
[10] *Romeo and Juliet,* Act I, scene I.

In the example analysed the combination belongs to the speech universe of *cultural contexts*. So we can state this new relationship of signification:

> f) The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, delimited and referred to the semantic *world of meanings* thus made a *semantic object*, assigned to the class of semantic objects of *conferences*, including the class of *e-conferences*, including the class of *science day e-conferences*, including the class of *world science day e-conferences*, including the class of *Unesco world science day e-conferences*, defined as *global* and *multidisciplinary*, assigned to a piece of *the world of meanings*, in as much as it is assigned to the *speech universe* of *cultural contexts*.

As a consequence the character of this speech act is in accordance with the speech universe of *cultural contexts*. Once we know this, it is necessary to specify its individual character,

> *g)* The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, delimited and referred to the *semantic world of meanings* thus made a *semantic object*, assigned to the *class of semantic objects* of *conferences*, including the class of *e-conferences*, including the class of *science day e-conferences*, including the class of *world science day e-conferences*, including the class of *Unesco world science day e-conferences*, defined as *global* and *multidisciplinary*, assigned to *a piece of the world of meanings*, assigned to the *speech universe* of *cultural contexts*, in as much as it is an *invitation* to participate in the event stated.

The combination analysed is not a statement or an announcement. It is a long message said with the intention of inviting scientists all over the world to participate in the event being organized in the way stated. With this we found out *the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker* who formulated it. All scientists and researchers of any branch of knowledge are invited to participate. But, you watch, it is an e-conference to be celebrated with all the prerequisites and conditions proper of the semantic class of objects and the speech universe the semantic object belongs to. The original speaker needn't say these prerequisites and conditions before hand. They are given for granted or expected to be specified in another speech act. Besides, these types of invitations are usually accompanied with a separate text explaining the pre-requisites and conditions. Things known or supposed

to be known are not usually said or said at the opportune occasion[11]. With this, the invitation in the combination is *true*.

In order to complete our analysis it is necessary to mention two other intellective operations in the speech act, *giving the construct a name* and *orientating it to real things*. The former has to do with the central fact in linguistics: "it consists in the eminently mental faculty of establishing a functional nexus between signifier and signified"[12]. Language is nothing but the mental activity of speakers executed with the intentional meaningful purpose of saying something. Human subjects speak because they have something to say and they say something because they define themselves before the circumstance they are in.

Finally, the last intellective operation affecting the speech act is determination, that is, it is necessary to orientate the new expression to things in the world thus making it *real*. The last relationship of signification to be remarked in the combination is,

> *h)* The construct *selected*, transformed in its way of being thus *abstract*, attributed *semantic character*, delimited and referred to the semantic world of meanings thus made a *semantic object*, assigned to the class of semantic objects of *conferences*, including the class of *e-conferences*, including the class of *science day e-conferences*, including the class of *world science day e-conferences*, including the class of *Unesco world science day e-conferences*, defined as *global* and *multidisciplinary*, assigned to *a piece of the world of meanings*, assigned to the *speech universe* of *cultural contexts*, an *invitation* to participate in the event stated, in as much as it is *orientated to real things*.

In effect, the combination has no grammatical determiner. This means that the following semantic objects are implicitly referred to, a) some semantic objects to be included in the semantic class *e-conference*, b) some semantic objects not to be included in the semantic class *e-conference*, mentioned implicitly as opposing the first ones, and c) this semantic object is one of those to be called *e-conference*. In this sense this one is the only one having been created and singled out in the world of meanings and the speech universe it belongs to. With this the semantic object is made *real*, an event likely to happen on the date stated.

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[11] Cf. Coseriu 1992: 114. Cf. also Ortega y Gasset 1970.
[12] Coseriu 1986: 58-59.

4. Conclusion

The speech act is an act of speaking, saying and knowing, an act of creation, of establishment of connections in the thing perceived, apprehended and purposefully created in the conscience of the speaking, saying and knowing subject. Initially the thing perceived is sensitive and concrete (*sensation*, *aísthesis* [Aristotle]), then it is transformed in its way of being (*abstract, mental, virtual*); then it is made *objective*, *true*, and finally it is orientated to things in the world thus made *real*. Language thus is nothing but *cognizant activity*[13], performed in the speech act. Knowledge and thus language then is the union of opposites (*sensibility* and *intellect*, Kant).

As a consequence all aspects having to do with language and knowledge are to be revised: language is the *creation of meanings*[14]; meaning is *contents of conscience, lógos, thought*[15]. Things are *pragmatic businesses* (*prágmata*)[16], that is, *something created on the interest of human subjects*. Reality is the *set of things created by cognizant subjects thus synthesizing sensibility and intellect*. Truth is *the adequacy of things said* (*lektón*) *to the speech universe they are assigned to*. And the speech act is *the execution of the intentional meaningful purpose of the individual speaker*.

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[13] Coseriu 1985: 42.
[14] Coseriu 1985: 205-206.
[15] Coseriu 1985: 40.
[16] Ortega y Gasset 2002: 131-132.

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