

Doxastic Dialectics

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By

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‘Si, au contraire, on prend comme concept général
de départ, non celui de monde, mais celui de culture,
la question revêt aussitôt tout autre aspect.’

Ernst Cassirer, *La philosophie des formes symboliques*, I: 21

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FOREWORD

Each theoretical construction is a RESPONSE to a demand, implicitly or explicitly engaged by the conclusions formulated in a previous stage of the history of ideas.

The scientific/philosophical *demand* of our moment, to which we intend to answer, has two levels of interest: (a) a fundamental one – to express our point of view regarding the philosophical ground of pragmatics; (b) a general one – to propose a re-evaluation of traditional concepts of linguistics, semiotics and philosophy of language. Our critical attitude requires a conceptual nonconformism!

The modern theory of pragmatics can be summarised in the effort of establishing a model of dialogue, suitable to satisfy both communicative and cognitive issues. Since ancient dialectic regained philosophical interest, pragmatics developed in the direction ‘beyond pragmatics’, by assimilating the results of related domains: of modern semiotics, rhetoric, hermeneutic and especially those of the philosophy of language.

Associated with the collective endeavours in the field of pragmatics and philosophy of language, the present study prepares its answer in re-evaluating the theoretical concepts and conclusions of modern pragmatics.

Some basic books stimulated the conclusions we reached, better said; it was for us a philosophical experience of what ‘dialectics of ideas’ really means. The *critical* analysis of the history of theoretical ideas – our target in order to bring a genuine result – should be positively oriented towards those aspects which uncover the dialectical perception. Our positive attitude is based on two premises: first, the sense in which we speak about a ‘response intention’ represents a philosophical step forward which does not destroy the previous philosophies, but is made with the intention of reaching the original sense of a paradigm, its powerful foundation. Second, in each of the quoted books, we try to find a constructive argument.

1. Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 1957, Tübingen, Neske Verlag. The fundamental proposition, *Der Satz vom Grund*, has ontological power. The *origin of being* dwells in each affirmation. This could be considered the very true rationality of a dialectical enterprise.

Remark: We should not mistakenly assimilate Heidegger's **origin of being**, which is hidden in each affirmation, as 'Satz vom Grund' with the **existential presupposition** from the analytical logic, because for Heidegger *being* is not a propositional content; it is bursting with language.

2. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité*, 1971, Paris, Nijhoff. We may consider this book a deconstructive process of principles of structuralism 'où tout se tient', understood as *totalité*. This book, subject-oriented, introduces a new philosophical perspective where the subject measures thoughts and actions by referring to the open horizon (*l'infini* – 'infinity'), instead of remaining grasped within the closed net of allusions and relationships (*la totalité* – 'totality' = the structure).
3. Michael Billig, *Arguing and Thinking*, 1989, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The author is the supporter of the *soft rationality*, which during the arguing process activates the rhetorical abilities of the speaker, especially their power of arguments, the *inventio*.
4. Paul Grice, *The Conception of Value*, 1991, Oxford: Clarendon. Grice's concept of *metaphysical transubstantiations* was an argument in favour of our thesis concerning the axiological orientation of doxastic dialectics. The doxastic meaning posited in consciousness is transubstantiated into a moral meaning, which finally is equated with an existential meaning, and so on.

In Part I of our study we will present the general premises of pragmatics, more precisely of linguistic pragmatics.¹ *Doxastic dialectics*² is the main issue of Part II of the present study. *Doxastic dialectics* belongs to linguistic pragmatics. The intention to give some important hints about the linguistic pragmatics is to make the main issue of our book – *the mechanism of doxastic dialectics* – easier to understand.

The theoretical deadlock caused by the invasion of extralinguistic facts within linguistics determined a new orientation – the PRAGMATIC studies, especially those regarding the dialogue functions: the communicative function acquired rhetoric relevance or was cognitively oriented. The field was ready to open a new perspective upon what is named the *object-oriented theory* (= the problem of representation). Since this new perspective was cognitively adopted, the necessity to establish the

theoretical place of concepts defining the *argumentative function* of language, which is both *speaker-oriented* and *goal-oriented* (which means the conviction and the persuasion of the interlocutor, conviction formation, discovering the truth and, respectively, constituting the truth).

The *speaker-oriented theory* – especially the way this theory developed by cumulating the rhetorical aspects of the context – brought to the theoretical attention a concept with many approach possibilities: the *subjectivity in language*.

As this concept will be the central theme of a special chapter in Part I of the study, we want to underline only its principal features:

- 1 According to Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*: ‘Die Subjektivität ist nichts subjektives in dem Sinne, daß damit nur das auf einen einzelnen Menschen Beschränkte, das zufälliger seiner Besonderheit und Beliebigkeit gemeint sein könnte’ (p. 137). With Heidegger, subjectivity is not a category of being, but a possibility condition of the ontological categories (2006: 215).
- 2 The subject has two dimensions: *pragmatical and ontological*, and consequently the language has similar dimensions. In this new perspective, pragmatics is confronted with its own deconstruction. New contradictory aspects demand solutions, a situation which weakens the theoretical unity of pragmatics.

The pragmatic dimension of the subject facilitated the understanding of language as *energeia*, in the way Humboldt defined the idea of language *energeia*. The locutor is the **agent of a linguistic act**; that means speech intentionality (il/locutionary intention), self-referentiality, speech force, intention to establish the rationality of the dialogical interaction, cooperation.

The ontological dimension of the subject means the transformation of the *illocutionary intentionality* into *cognitive intentionality* (remark: we shall explain the difference between illocutionary intentionality and cognitive intentionality in a special chapter, see below).

- 3 The fundamental interrogation discovered by cognitive subjects goes far from requiring the justification of affirmations by virtue of the sufficient reason – *der Satz vom Grund*. Their dialogical involvement is led towards an ontological justification, when arguments allow the subjects to be confronted with their own consciousness. Language/speech is the way that covers or uncovers

– certainly partially – the subject’s final cause. We may consider this affirmation the main argument of Part II of this book. Starting with this thesis we shall develop the idea in conformity to which the *doubt* represents the cognitive force which pushes ahead the cognitive process. Consequently, the doxastic dialectics acquires new territories of reflection.

Notes

¹ Traditionally, the most clear definition of **pragmatics** was given by Charles Morris in semiotic terms (see *Signs, Language and Behaviour*, New York, 1946). According to Morris, pragmatics is one of the three components of **linguistics**: **syntax** – the relationship of signs between themselves; **semantics** – the relationship between signs and their objects of reference; and **pragmatics** – the relationship between signs and their users.

² *Doxastic dialectics* is based on the *doxastic logic*, a field developed by Jaakko Hintikka.

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Rodica Amel

PART I

PRAGMATICS – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

There is no intention to explain the pragmatic problems against the background of other disciplines, nor to study the connection between pragmatics, anthropology, social psychology, studies regarding artificial intelligence or other cognitive studies, a connection which seems included within the framework of doxastic dialectics itself. The target of the first part is to prove the paradigmatic limits of pragmatics, its stability or instability paradigmatically speaking. The main problem that should be solved is the following: to question the nature of theoretical shortcomings that the pragmatical analyses uncover. Are the discovered shortcomings signs of a paradigmatic saturation, are they able to push the research beyond the conventional bounds in which pragmatics has been defined until now, towards a theoretical extension, eventually, towards the redefinition of the grounding premises of this discipline?

Our enterprise presupposes a re-examination of the theoretical metalanguage, considering the following aspects:

1. The general design of pragmatics, such as it was stipulated by those researchers involved in the field;
2. The definition of those concepts which compose the theoretical frame (metadialogue, negotiation, subjectivity, etc.);
3. Problems regarding the communicative procedure and the cognitive one as well.

The proposed approach will be dialectic. Each historical step of a science, as any cognitive enterprise, stands in the opening of an interrogation, a heuristic interrogation that engenders a dialectical process of both theoretical and metatheoretical elucidation. The heuristic interrogation regards the paradigmatic autonomy of the science raised for discussion.

The lesson of our critical enterprise has been improved by the experience of different theoreticians or philosophers and their effort to develop classical methods. Regarding pragmatics, its present statute is still dilemmatic. The study of conversation/dialogue, for instance, launches successive interrogations concerning the 'grounding proposition/premise'. We quote in this respect the study *(On) Searle on Conversation*, a book which gathered the papers of many specialists, linguists and philosophers,

participants at a round table on the issue nominated in the title. The volume was coordinated by Herman Parret and Jef Verschueren and appeared in 1992, at Benjamins, Amsterdam. It seems that, instead of giving a metatheoretical answer, the researchers tried to extend the field of pragmatic from the cognitive point of view in a direction where the concept of *paradigm is no longer relevant*.

Although we feel great interest in discovering the shortcomings in this field, we do not contest the results obtained until now. By following the scientific history of this discipline, the moments of theoretical saturation become inevitably visible. The necessity to offer a reply, which could change the interpretative horizon, is clear. In the light of a new horizon, old theses and axioms could acquire new pertinence, more suitable for a larger perspective than the old one. In the framework presented above, the following theses will be discussed further:

1. the argumentative inherence of human beings;
2. the reciprocal relationship between *language and thought (concept; idea)* and the dynamic approach of this relationship: *language and thinking (argumentation)*.

CHAPTER ONE

PARADIGMATIC (IN)STABILITY

1.1. Pragmatics – definitions

1.1.1. Scientific paradigm

Thomas Kuhn's book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) was the source from which we have borrowed the scientific definition of the concept of *paradigm*. This quoted philosopher of science has two types of definitions.

- A definition that equates the paradigm with a *sociolect*, the sociolect being the language shared by the members of a social group, which reflects the ideology of the respective social field in a certain period of time. 'A paradigm governs, in the first instance, not a subject matter but rather a group of practitioners. Any study of paradigm-directed or of paradigm-shattering research must begin by locating the responsible group or groups.' (Kuhn's *Scientific Revolutions*, 180)
- A *scientific* definition, in its full sense: 'For present purposes I suggest 'disciplinary matrix': 'disciplinary' because it refers to the common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline; 'matrix' because it is composed of ordered elements of various sorts, each requiring further specification. All or most of the objects of group commitment that my original text makes paradigms, parts of paradigms, or paradigmatic are constituents of the disciplinary matrix, and as such, they form a whole and function together.' (Kuhn's *Scientific Revolutions*, 182)

The concept of 'disciplinary matrix' is for Kuhn both a scientific programme and a group commitment; in other words, it represents *the shared knowledge* of a scientific group regarding the laws and definitions that configure a certain scientific **theory**. Kuhn proposed to substitute the concept of paradigm with the terms *matrix* or *pattern*, given their *exemplary* character, what means to recognise the matricial structure of the

paradigm. The paradigm is a *model*, in the sense of an abstract representation of the theoretical essence of the field under research.

Regarding Kuhn's two definitions mentioned, it is important to add the following commentaries:

The scientific commitment of a social group – scientific researchers or even a larger community – concerning a paradigm represents a coefficient of stability of the respective scientific project. The scientific commitment, equated with the shared knowledge of the members interested to find solutions for the main questions, ensures the scientific communication. The shared commitment is an *authoritative argument* in favour of the common effort, but it can simultaneously obstruct the scientific dialogue by an eventual rigidity. In this case, the scientific matrix becomes a kind of *scientific dogma*, hindering the disputable aspects of the research.

To the second definition, which refers to the theoretical issues of a research field, we add: *In a concise form, a paradigm can be defined by the **explicative principle** followed by the researchers in their research of the respective field. The **explicative principle** is the means of interpretation and understanding of the issues under research.*

The explicative principle comprises a theory, which is based on axioms, theses, hypotheses, laws, norms, procedures – methods and concepts – definitions. All these means constitute the *theoretical metalanguage of the respective matrix/paradigm*.

Katz and Fodor (1963) formulated the same exigencies, which influenced our scientific approach. Here further, the criteria which define the *stability* of a paradigm will be opposed to the criteria which signal the *paradigmatic instability*.

Paradigmatic stability

The explicative principle is affirmed
THEORY or a theoretical model

Paradigmatic instability

The explicative principle is
– confused.

- extremely general
- partially valid

The exigencies regarding the stability of a **theory** is manifested by being **unitary** – economic and concise, **exhaustive** and **noncontradictory** – clear.

The instability is manifested by: **puzzles**, **anomalies** and **theoretical crises**.

‘For a scientific theory to succeed admirably it does not mean to succeed completely’ (Kuhn, 1986: 112). Kuhn was accused by his followers of relativism. We share this relativism, because it gives the possibility to refer the concept of paradigm to the whole field of doxastic dialectics (science, philosophy, art etc.), where ‘relativism’ actually means the unfinished synthesis of axiological concepts.

1.1.2. The paradigmatic extension of pragmatics

From the linguistic point of view, the pragmatic study has two points of approach:

pragmatic level of language – a speaker-oriented theory, and
pragmatic function of language – a goal-oriented theory.

What can be called ***pragmatic level of language*** represents the first step of theoretical extension beyond the classical linguistics. The contextual autonomy of language has been unable to explain all linguistic elements: the imperative, the vocative etc. The contextualisation of language elements, which means a kind of *oriented semantics*, opened the chances of an integrative study; language is introduced inside the referential coordinates imposed by speakers, as for instance: *indexes* (Bar-Hillel, *Indexical Expressions*, who studied this issue as part of the analytical logic; Montague, *Pragmatics*, who developed a similar idea to that of Bar-Hillel); the *contextualised interpretation of meaning* had linguistic consequences, by operating semantic distinctions: see the direction mentioned by Grice (*Meaning*, the pragmatic meaning is opposed to the referential one, in Grice’s formulation *natural vs. non-natural sense*); or that mentioned by Ducrot (*Dire et ne pas dire*, the *explicit meaning* is coupled with an *indirect meaning*, in Ducrot’s formulation: *literal sense vs. implicit sense*).

What can be called ***pragmatic function of language*** has led to a new theoretical perspective upon pragmatics, based on concepts such as *energeia* of language, *intentionality* and (il)locutionary *force*. Once the ‘contextualisation’ of language facts was accepted, a new linguistic ‘reality’ raised the problems of dynamic dimension:

- Herman Parret (1981) highlights the difference between *referential meaning* and *intentional meaning* (the meaning which carries the locutor’s speech intentions);

- John Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, in a philosophical approach introduces the concept of force: *locutionary*, *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary*.

The substitution of the concept of *sense/meaning* by that of *force* means a change of linguistic paradigm. The same things are differently interpreted. The words do not relate or refer to things any more, but they perform acts (see Amel, 2016). The name of this new paradigm is **PRAXIOLOGY**, or the theory of action.

Linguistic praxiology – the theory of speech acts – has two levels of research: (a) the *speech acts*, the study of their constitutive conditions (cf. Austin, ‘felicity conditions of performance’); (b) the *contextualisation of speech acts*. The *speech act* is associated with some concepts:

Act – the change of state or the forbearance to change it, done by an **agent** (see George von Wright, *Norm and Action*, London, 1963): **doing**: pT~p or ~pTp; **forbearance**: pTp or ~pT~p.

Agent – the locutor in the case of speech acts – the efficient cause of a change of state, or of the forbearance to change it. Example: the locutor (the agent) utters a *prayer*, or a *verdict* or *forbears* (= *remains silent*) from expressing words, in both cases.

The study of speech acts raises the problem of the conditions in which the performance of a specific linguistic act is ‘felicitously’ performed, respectively: a certain social and cognitive identity of interlocutors, a certain relationship between the interlocutors, the codes they share, etc. All these conditions represent the *presuppositions* of the felicitous performance of a speech act. For instance, a *verdict*, or a *sentence* in a court, should be performed by a person legitimated to accomplish the respective function.

When a linguistic act is oriented towards one of the parameters of communication, the locutor performs a linguistic act charged with a specific **function**. In linguistics, **function** is a polysemantic concept. Roman Jakobson (*Linguistics and Poetics*) translated the communicative parameters in functions of the communication. By starting from the communicative paradigm – and not from the psycholinguistic paradigm as Bühler did – Jakobson was near to the pragmatic approach:

The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to (‘referent’ in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), sizeable by the addressee,

being either verbal or capable of being verbalised; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. All the factors that are inalienably involved in verbal communication may be schematised as follows:

Parameters of communication language functions

Parameters of communication	Language functions
CONTEXT	REFERENTIAL
MESSAGE	POETIC
ADDRESSER-----ADDRESSEE	EMOTIVE-----CONATIVE
CODE	PHATIC
CONTACT	METALINGUAL

Amel (2016) reorganised the relationships between the language functions, by making a subordination of their forces in a way they could explain the interaction both from the communicative and cognitive points of view. Two modifications are important: the first one – to allow the functional circularity (fc), and the second one – new definitions for each function. Regarding the *phatic* function, it refers both to the physical and socio-psychological channels of communication, comprising the \pm institutionalised relationships between interlocutors.

THE INTERACTION OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

METALANGUAGE fc

AXIOLOGIC field

(cognitive codes, philosophical options, etc.)



PHATIC fc

the degree of institutionalisation
of role relationships

(socio-psychological conventions)



POETIC fc

A discursive structure

(creative means; sediments of phatic and metalanguage functions;
connotations)

EXPRESSIVE fc.
DOXASTIC field

CONATIVE fc.
DEONTIC field

REFERENTIAL fc.
EPISTEMIC field

(language adequacy to the truth of things)

CRITICAL fc.

Jakobson's definitions of each linguistic function are only a point of departure for a more flexible interpretation, suitable for the pragmatic point of view. The priority of performative over interactive functions, is realised by the generalised use of a speech act as a functional means. Since the il/perlocutionary forces have a complex structure in themselves, they are capable of accomplishing several linguistic functions simultaneously. Our affirmation is tantamount to Jakobson's idea that 'we could hardly find verbal messages that would fulfil only one function.'

In conformity with Searle's definition, and including the interactive dimension, a speech act is characterised by the following parameters:

- (a) referential function, corresponding to propositional content;
- (b) pragmatic function, corresponding to illocutionary forces;
- (c) pragmatic-conversational function, corresponding to conversational demand.

The order in which the analysis of language functions will be performed, is the order relevant for the idea of interaction. The CONATIVE FUNCTION corresponds to Bühler's appellative function. In conformity with both Bühler and Jakobson, the respective function is focused on the interlocutor (receiver, hearer). In a very primitive way, we can say that Jakobson's concept equates to Austin's illocutionary act: 'The conative function finds its purest grammatical expression in the vocative and imperative, which syntactically, morphologically and often even phonetically deviate from other nominal and verbal categories' (Jakobson, 1985: 152).

In contradistinction to Jakobson's model, the conversational approach requires the dissociation of the language force which is directed upon the interlocutor in two functionally distinctive orientations: The ACTIVE and REACTIVE powers of language. It is necessary to extend the conative function to include the interlocutor's disposition to respond. When a

speech act is directed to the interlocutor it has an appellative force. Simultaneously, it accomplishes a transformation of the mental (psychological, cognitive) or social state of the addressee. The active transformation makes the appellative force reactively efficient, an opposition corresponding to the already mentioned difference: illocutionary versus conversational.

We propose an extension of Jakobson's model of language functions by supplementing it with what we call critical function. The CRITICAL FUNCTION represents the reactive position of the interlocutor whose conversational attitude is both retrospective (= critical), and prospective (= active), regressive and progressive, interpretative and innovative. The interlocutor's critical position accomplishes a reactive act of validation of a speech act with respect to its fundamental functions: conversational – to accept or hinder the progression; illocutionary – to evaluate the felicitous performance of an act from the point of view of a formally prescriptive procedure, and to justify it from the point of view of the conversational demand, and semantic – to evaluate the truth and relevance of a propositional content.

By including the critical function among Jakobson's concepts, we intend to offer a balanced model of interactional functions of language. We refer to the critical function as a reversible perspective upon the conversation, from the interlocutor's dialogical position back to the speaker's previous intervention. Actually, the critical function is associated either with the active or reactive position, being the selective means of strategic intervention.

Within rhetoric, the critical function is used as a *normative* argument. We accept this point of view, with all of its theoretical consequences regarding the analysis of interaction.

The analysis of the **functional hierarchy** of the dialogue UNCOVERS two important aspects: (a) the structure of dialogue is not homogeneous and (b) the progression is discontinuous.

The reorganisation of the language functions according to a hierarchical scheme emphasises the functional interaction during the dialogue and points out the opposition between *active* and *latent functions*.

Active functions: referential, expressive, conative.

Latent functions: phatic, metalingual, poetic.

We have added a new function – the *critical function*.

Remark: the critical function activates the latent functions at the moment the dialogical saturation cuts the conversation.