

**POETIC SPEECH ACTS.
A HYPOTHESIS OF TWO CONTEXTS**

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THE COACHMAN (*pulls the coach door open*): Wachen Sie auf! Hören Sie! (*two lights in the darkness draw attention to themselves.*) Herr, wachen Sie doch auf, es ist Zeit! (*Shouting.*) Es ist die höchste Zeit! (From the coach door a gentleman in a dark coat emerges, as if still half asleep.)

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Abstract. It is assumed that an utterance can perform several speech acts at a time, which is explicable by the concept of additional force. Thus, the poetic utterance *Hopes are going to turn to rags* can be formalised as an expressive assertive $E_{\text{complaint}}A_{\text{description}}(p)$, in which the assertive act can be understood as performed in full, while the expressive achieves a partial performance by using conditions partly fulfilled by the main act. Also, such concepts as macro-speech act, complex speech act and conversational implicature have to be considered.

In analysing literary language usage the secondary modelling system has to be taken into account, symbolised by the institutionally declarative speech force R with its specifications. According to the theory, linguistic communication takes place on two contextual levels simultaneously. In the narrow (linguistic-semantic) context the type of the utterance is interpreted generally, against the background of possible worlds, while in the broad (pragmatic-semantic) context the particular meaning gets fixed according to the actuality. Figurative language usage explicates the difference of the contexts, by practising the referential function of language in the former (often in a self-defeating manner); as well as amplifying the self-referential function of language in the latter, a real rhetoric context of the author and the reader. Poetic self-referentiality of utterances is not only seen but also shown with the aid of plentiful devices indicating the poetic function R .

In the narrow context, the sincerity condition is reduced to imaginary belief; in the broad context, to actual one. The spontaneously transgressible boundary between the two contexts is signified by the symbol for the caesura \parallel , so the utterance can be described with the help of formulae such as $R_{\text{metaphor(ical hyperbole), assonance}} \parallel EA(p) \dots R_{\text{irony}}(q)$ or the like. The speech force of the broad context is not applicable to the proposition as it is in the narrow

context, but has the whole speech act EA(p) of the narrow scope as its object. Thus, the secondary (partial) speech act of the broad context can rather be described according to the principles of *de dicto* than *de re* speech.

1. Towards analytic poetics

Analytic philosophy (i.e. philosophy that uses logic as its method) that was created by Gottlob Frege in the linguistic turn embraces the idea that language research or semiotics can be divided (according to the well-known distinction by Charles Morris) into three branches – syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The first of them is concerned with the interrelationships of expressions themselves, the second covers their relationships with the world and meanings, the third, the relations apparent in the usage of expressions and meanings. Naturally, this is but an abstract differentiation: although an analysis of the usage of literary language should first and foremost be the province of a pragmatics of poetic language usage (should such a discipline emerge more distinctly some day), no poetics can be conceived of without the data of syntax or semantics. It is within the limits of these two that most of the research has been carried out, with elements belonging to pragmatics having been drawn along intuitively. On the other hand, speech act theory does not belong to the narrow field of linguistic pragmatics, as meaning and usage are bound up inseparably and logically – rather, what we have at hand is general semantics in the framework of semiotics (see also Vanderveken 1990: 65–75).

Poetic speech is more complicated and “higher” than ordinary speech, a language usage governed by numerous new restrictions that is often referred to (e.g. Lotman 1972: 18–23) as a secondary modelling system above or underlying the primary one. Jakobsonian treatments (see Jakobson 1960) clearly show the simultaneous superimposed position, as well as logical precedence of the poetic order as a particular kind of “axiomatics” as to everyday language usage. Of course, it is against the background of ordinary language as the primary system that literary language appears as secondarily modelling; an even more general semiotic approach would rather prefer a hierarchy of three stages. When we unite the natural and conventional meanings (meaning_{NN}) differentiated by Grice (Grice 1989c) and the notions of the tertiary modelling system developed by Thomas Sebeok (Sebeok 1994) we would get the following scheme of functioning of a sign system.

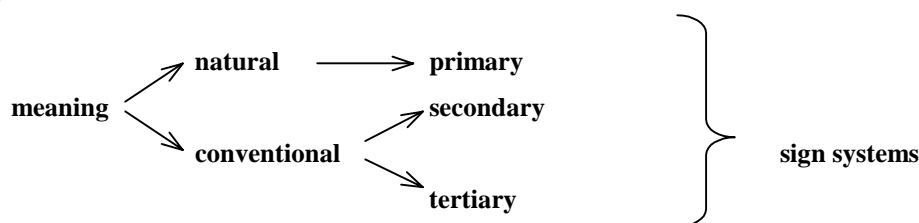


Figure 1.

An analysis of the poetic language usage shows that the theory of speech acts should and can be greatly refined to describe speech of the rhetorical type. But it is possible to do it well, for the illocutionary logic, being a well-formed theory by nature, allows for a successful addition of new formal layers – everything should be definable, reducible and transparent, at least in principle. Study of literature that departs from these premises, i.e. linguistic criticism (q.v. Fowler 1986) would without difficulties fulfil the requirement of scientific quality in the sense of Immanuel Kant.

2. The theory of speech acts

I have been trying to introduce the speech act theory into the Estonian-language mindspace, setting the developing of a respective conceptual network for poetics as my further aim (see Merilai 1998, 2001). As is known, the speech act theory was launched by John L. Austin (see Austin 1984 (1982)), yet it was in the philosophy of John R. Searle (see Searle 1992 (1969)) that it gained its established standard formulation. In co-operation with Searle, Daniel Vanderveken began to develop illocutive logic (see Searle, Vanderveken 1985, Vanderveken 1990, 1991).

The theory divides simple speech acts into five categories: assertives, i.e. saying how things are (A), commissives, i.e. committing oneself to do things (C), directives, i.e. trying to get other people to do things (D), expressives, i.e. expressing one's feelings and attitudes (E) and declaratives, i.e. bringing about changes in the world through one's utterance (T). The latter are achieved primarily within the limits of some extra-linguistic institution. Suitable utterances that have been made in such a context can be considered as creating certain new circumstances. "Saying makes it so," as Austin says. It is clear that belles-lettres, including poetry, should be considered as a certain conventional system, whereas utterances made in its field acquire a status different from the ordinary position – they may be fictitious, they need not express any direct truth nor point at real circumstances, nor need they be sincere in a literal way, but should rather tend towards rhetoric.

The illocutionary force determining the speech act consists of six parts: the illocutionary point (Π_F), the mode of achievement ($\mu\Pi$), the propositional content conditions (Θ), preparatory conditions (Σ), sincerity conditions (Ψ) and the degree of strength of the illocutionary point, as well as of sincerity conditions (degree F). Any illocutionary force is determined when these six components have been fixed. The most important constituent part of the illocutionary force is the illocutionary point, from which the other components derive. Why are there five illocutionary points? The illocutionary point unites the propositional content of the speech act with the world of the utterance. However, there are four directions of fit: the words-to-world direction of fit (assertives), the world-to-words direction of fit (commissives and directives), the double direction of fit (declaratives) and the

empty direction of fit (in expressives; also debatable as a words-to-inner world direction of fit, in which case it would be a certain assertive structure by nature).

On the basis of this Searle and Vanderveken pose their hypothesis of constructibility that presumes a certain finite number of illocutionary points and a primitive illocutionary force for each illocutionary point, which has no special mode of achievement, null degrees of strength and only the general propositional content, preparatory, and sincerity conditions related to this point. All other illocutionary forces can be derived from these primitive forces by applying operations affecting the mode of achievement, the degrees of strength, the propositional content conditions, the preparatory conditions and the sincerity conditions. These are: propositional (\sim) or illocutionary (\neg) negation, addition of propositional content (operation θ), preparatory (operation Σ) and sincerity conditions (operation Ψ), the restriction of mode of achievement of the illocutionary point (operation μ) and changing the degrees of strength of the illocutionary force (operations $+$ and $-$). Thus, the set of all illocutionary forces would be recursively definable from the few primitive forces and the operations applied to them. Such a supposition is valid in case of ideal languages created on the basis of natural languages, but it is certainly not valid for all aspects of natural languages that contain more implicit states, overlaps and errors. The hitherto existing illocutionary formalism views the operations as simple ones, affecting only one component of illocutionary force and retaining the illocutionary point. The derivation of a force (and, accordingly, a respective speech act) from another is possible if the operation is in concordance with the characteristics of the original force and the new speech act can be performed. A new condition cannot be added if it turns out to be in conflict with the conditions of the original force that would result in self-defeat. But it is exactly this result that is important in case of a playful or figurative language usage so that on the next level of theory, that of poetics, description of such objects should be striven for that described self-defeat or non-verbatim usage. As the components of illocutionary force are interrelated, a transformation of one part may cause changes in the remaining parts, and – under certain conditions – apparently even changes in the status of the illocutionary point as the nucleus of the speech act, e.g. by virtualising it, replacing it with another. It is an interpretation of such a switching that poetics is in dire need of, to be able to describe the transition from ordinary speech to a secondary modelling system. Characteristics of the constituent parts of illocutionary force and of the operations that can be used to derive possible new illocutionary forces (resp. speech acts) from a previous one are provided in Figure 2.

Despite particular problems accompanying the interpretation of natural languages the hypothesis has a great capacity for explanation – several horizons of generalisation that have not been used enough as yet will be opened also for philosophy of literature. For instance, what is a metaphoric utterance seen in this light? Is it not achieving a secondary illocutionary point in a particular way, with the help of a self-defeating speech act (see Vanderveken 1980), violating the assumed literalness – the result of operation μ^* . Thus, it is a question of the mode

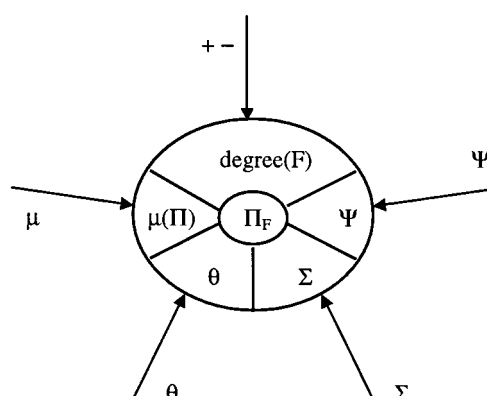


Figure 2.

of achievement. But it can also be interpreted as a result of a certain operation of pretence or make-believe Ψ_{pretense} , resulting in a virtualisation of the original illocutionary point expressed by implicating a new imaginary point beside it. An interpretation concerning the content that proceeds from the given network of concepts is as yet to be carried out, but the tools of analysis have been created for this purpose – if not sufficient, then at least necessary. Most important in this regard is the Gricean theory of implicatures (see Grice 1989a, also, e.g., Searle 1989c, Wilson and Sperber 1991 and Harnish 1991). A metaphor is no longer to be admired from the outside only, it can be penetrated as a certain type of language usage, as the components of linguistic activities become more and more clearly analysable.

3. A theory of poetic speech acts

I proceed from the fact that with one utterance several speech acts can be performed at a time. Speech acts with additional force are an everyday phenomenon that does not make Ockham's razor dull. For example, the utterance (1) *Hopes are going to turn into rags* can be taken as a simple assertive, expressed formally as A(p). This means that the alleged proposition **hopes are going to turn into rags** expressed by the sentence 'Hopes are going to turn into rags' is applied to by an assertive speech force or function A, that works upon the proposition or the content of the sentence p. With this the speaker expresses in an assertive (stating, claiming, descriptive or other) form her/his belief that hopes are going to turn into rags. But there is an intuitive feeling that (1) is not a simple speech act. In the expressive context of the poem of Artur Alliksaar¹ "Where to, where to,

¹ Artur Alliksaar, one of the greatest Estonian poets of all times, was born on April 15, 1923 as the son of a railwayman. In 1941–1942 he studied law at Tartu University and from there he was conscripted into the German army. After the war he earned his livelihood as a railway official,

ugh!!!” (see Appendix 1) it rather represents a speech act formalised as EA(p), than the more primitive speech acts A(p) or simply E(p). Here, in addition to expressing belief, also a certain expressive act is achieved, e.g. a plaintive assertion or the like. Multi-force speech is characteristic especially of poetry. Thus, obviously, something like a hypothesis of full and partial performance should come to mind.² Namely – if with the main force (in this case the assertive) a full performance is achieved, in case of an additional force we rather get a partial performance that already presumes the satisfying of certain conditions of the performance of the speech act (e.g. preparatory conditions, conditions of propositional content or sincerity) by the main speech act. The partial performance only adds a new illocutionary point and the satisfying of some other condition (e.g. an additional sincerity condition). The assertive expresses the proposition and the belief contained in it, the expressive adds an extra sincerity condition such as sadness, fear, playfulness, etc. and thus, by using the full performance assertion, also the expressive of a mood is performed.

Thus, in case of the formulation $E_{\text{complaint}}A_{\text{description}}(p)$ the assertion could be described as a full act and the expression of feelings as a partial act, for the latter is achieved on the basis of the main speech act. Such a hypothesis corresponds well to the economy principle of language. Estonian grammar is familiar with full and partial performance: ‘sõi torti’, ‘tegi pauku’ (ate the cake, made a bang; Partitive case) – partial performance, ‘sõi tordi’, ‘tegi paugu’ (Possessive case) – full performance. But if we also consider the implicatures proceeding from metaphor, irony, indirect speech acts (q.v. Searle 1989a) or the like, i.e. things that are implied in the discourse, but missing from the text or are there in the mind, but not spelled out explicitly, (1) should be formally described as follows: $E_{\text{complaint}}A_{\text{description}}(p) \dots A_{\text{report}}(q)$ where $A_2(q)$ (or $E_2A_2(q)$) as the assertion would represent the plausible implicature *à la* “Soviet life makes everything sordid”, or the like.

but was declared a criminal by the Soviet authorities because of a deficit. He spent several years in the labour camps in Russia. After 1957 he lived in Tartu and devoted himself mainly to literary activities. He was persecuted and lived in very poor conditions, but nevertheless remained intellectually independent and was widely imitated by the younger generation (Andres Ehin, Paul-Eerik Rummo, Jaan Kaplinski et al.). His best friend was the physicist Madis Kõiv, who is a well-known Estonian philosopher and playwright today. Alliksaar translated German and Russian poetry (R. M. Rilke, S. Jessenin) into Estonian and did odd jobs. He died of cancer in Tartu on August 12, 1966.

Shortly before his death he managed to publish a parabolic play *The Nameless Island*, 1966, which started the innovation of Estonian drama of the 1960s. Three posthumous selections contain the poems Alliksaar left in manuscript: *Nonexistence Could as Well Remain Nonexistent*, 1968 and *Poetry*, 1976, also *A Small Book of Verse*, 1984. A couple of years ago, *The Sun Squanderer* (1997), a volume of his collected poems, was eventually published. Alliksaar is a distinguished representative of philosophic free verse, although he has written excellent traditional poetry, too. His paradoxical conversational multi-layered linguistic poetry with its extremely rich imagery makes a versatile object of analysis for language philosophy, especially for the kind that applies logic (q.v. Merilai 1999, 2000).

² I am grateful to the philosopher Madis Kõiv for this supposition as well as for the reference to the possible broad and narrow contexts.

A speech act with additional force should not be mixed up with the notions of complex speech act in which an act of utterance comprises several consecutive speech acts that could be expressed by an informal conjunction \mathcal{E} (*and*-relationship of the co-ordinate type) or implication \succ (*because* or *for*-relationship of the subordinate type). For example (2) *It doesn't matter – we'll sew them up with the thread of dreams stolen from the bushels of midnight* can be described with the following formula: $E_{\text{consolation}}A_{\text{objection}}(p) \succ E_{\text{boast}} A_{\text{(preliminary) report}}(q)$; or alternatively with the model of an indirectly achieved explanation such as $E_1A_1(p)\mathcal{E}E_2C_{\text{promise}}(q)\dots A_{\text{explanation}}(r)$ or the like. (Firstly: what (1) said is no problem; secondly, after \succ or \mathcal{E} , *because* or *and*, follows a daring or consolatory promise, pledge or prediction, how the situation is to be overcome – as an explanation to the first half of the utterance.) Speech acts with simple or additional forces have merged into a complex speech act.

Let us provide some more models deriving from the analysis as examples. The title (3) *Where to, where to, ugh!!!* could be narrowly seen as a rhetorical question expressing surprise or amazement, a directive expressing also feelings. The appendix *...ugh!!!* hints at the possibility of interpreting the utterance as a complex act, so that beside the form $E_{\text{surprise}}D_{\text{rhetorical question}}(p)$ also a complex relationship with a new (or the same, repeated with an emotional emphasis) expressive of a mood would be conceivable, e.g. $E_{\text{surprise}}D(p)\mathcal{E}E_{\text{surprise}^*}(\emptyset)$, or the like, in which case the additional expressive would not be expressing the proposition any more.

Also, the level of the macro-speech act should be observed (q.v. Dijk 1992), in which a major unity of the discourse or the latter as a whole can be characterised as a single speech act: evocation, appeal, manifesto, opening or ending remark, contract, communiqué, bargaining, argument, condolence... If not directly, then as an indirect metaphoric implicatum a literary work often strives for a macro-speech act – the whole story can express the plea “Love (me and) thy neighbour!”, “Thou shalt not slay!”, etc. If the speech act on the level of utterance performs a completely different act as on the level of discourse, we get such probable formulae as $A_{\text{objection}}(E_1A(p)\succ E_2C(q))$. Or else $A_3(E_1A_1(p)\mathcal{E}E_2C(q))\dots A_2(r)$, if (2) were a consolation or objection to (1) on the level of discourse. In this case, $A_2(r)$ would symbolise an implicature within the utterance, $A_3(x)$ (or even $E^*A_3(x)$), but already a meaning of (2) within the discourse. The more we learn about the conversation and its logic, the more the speech acts will reveal themselves as particular instances of the generalities of the discourse. This would be especially important for the poetics because it is quite obvious that in poetry it is rather the whole (or the stylistic principle of selective equivalence, as Jakobson puts it) that determines the particularities of the utterances, and not so much vice versa (q.v. also Preminger, Brogan 1993: 697ff).

4. The narrow and the broad context

A secondary (tertiary) modelling system adds new planes to the common rules of language usage. The theory of speech acts opens an obvious way of access to the hypothesis of two contexts, but is not the only one, of course. It could be also posed from the point of view of perception psychology or philosophy of mind, for which, for example, one can find several promising leads from the writings by Wolfgang Iser or Edmund Husserl (q.v. Sutrop 2000: 46–51, 219). Rhetorical or fictional communication is not “normal”, but more indirect, artificial in the sense of ordinary communication. In literary discourse ordinary communication is just intimated – with unusual, often self-defeating speech acts. Sherlock Holmes does not exist and therefore utterances about him do not express a belief; the Pickwickian bustling in Alliksaar’s poetry may take place in an imaginary fantasy space or in a possible world (in the loose, not in the strict Kripkean sense of the notion), but it definitely is not real as such. These speech acts are often not sincere verbatim, their aim is a mental picture, a play of fantasy, rather than serious communication understood as an ordinary speech act. This activity is serious mostly on a higher plane, but it is no more the sincerity of an ordinary speech act, but rather the hierarchical derivative seriousness of a higher kind that belongs to a complex conglomerate, and which is not required from a primitive speech act in this discourse.

In addition to being a narrow rhetorical question, (3) happens to be a title that establishes the institution of poetry as such, distancing it from the ordinary contexts. Attention is paid not so much to the content, but rather to the form, the language and the kind of style. The critical receiver understands well that the author expressed the utterances in the field established by (3) first and foremost for the sake of a semantic and phonetic playfulness, not necessarily for the sake of the content – look at the sound, word and sentence images, tropes and figures, behold the composition! What a meaningful and unheard-of description: an apple, but what an APPLE – in a special light and shadow, anything but habitual, offering a new experience! Thus, a speech activity is taking place on the broad, actual author-text-reader level that is completely different from that occurring in the narrow context of the text; it reduces or annuls the point of sincere literal speech act, bringing to life the level of play and rhetoric, linguistic self-referentiality.

I shall call it the hypothesis of the narrow and broad contexts of poetic speech acts. The rhetorical speech force of the broad context can be signified with the symbol R, that at the same time also indicates the institutional declaration: “It is poetry (or fiction) that is valid, and in this such and such a situation is also valid”. Just as (4) *A wolf is coming!* When said during a hunting trip, it is a sincere speech act, but in a nursery it is a joke or a proposal to start a game – a self-defeating act, virtualising the literal point of the speech force; an act that sets itself goals totally different from those of ordinary speech. Proceeding from Kendall Walton’s (1990) and Gregory Currie’s (1990) theory of make-believe or John R. Searle’s (1989b) and David Lewis’ (1978) theory of pretence this quasi-directive could be described as an self-defeating instruction $D_{\text{pretense}}(p)$; in opinions like that of Gérard

Genette's (1993) fictional speech acts would be indirect declaratives or directives with the content, "Take the following as a fiction" — symbolically expressed apparently as $D_{\text{warning}}(p) \dots D_{\text{recommendation}}(q)$ or like. The hypothesis of the two contexts, which separates the poetic speech activity onto the two different levels, however, deconstructs these interesting standpoints.

Why two contexts? (Certainly, as a background to the broad context of author-text-reader, a yet broader cultural plane can be drawn in its turn, on which the language activity can be projected. However, this is already the level of interpretative background, rather than the plane of ontological operation.) I am convinced that ordinary communication too covertly takes these two contexts into account: firstly, an utterance is analysed in a narrow linguistic sense from the point of view of its possible semantics, generally, as a type, against the background of possible worlds; after that it is checked from the point of view of reality, as a token, placed in the actual situation. The listener understands well what (4) generally means; adding the contextual conditions to the abstract understanding, he realises if (4) was true in this particular case and successful in relation to reality (e.g. in a hunting situation) or false and unsuccessful (e.g. in a nursery), so that in order to retain a sensible basis for communication another purpose different from what was spelled out should be looked for. The real meaning of what was expressed in the narrow context becomes apparent only when checked in the broad context.

The child always looks the parents in the face to find out how to take things — do they have to run together from the wolf, or was it just a game? The child wants to know two things: is Father/Mother smiling or is his/her face really frightened — p or $\sim p$. So does linguistic communication in general. The possible meanings of the narrow linguistic context are always being interpreted against reality. What does the speaker expect from the listener? 1. A knowledge of the meaning of the used sentence, a narrowly linguistic understanding of the expression. 2. The ability to comprehend the conditions of success, non defective performance and satisfaction of the literal speech act — linguistic competence with its access to possible worlds, thus the ability to postulate a context proceeding narrowly from linguistic data. 3. The ability to take into account the background facts of the discourse in order to decide upon the truthfulness and success of the utterance. 4. The ability to handle the technique of implicatures (hints, metaphors, irony, and other indirect expression) to restore a contextual trust in the speaker or the listener's trust in her/his ability to make conclusions, if what was said was not a verbatim expression. In short: the speaker expects from the listener the ability to master two semantic contexts of communication: a participant in a discourse must understand whether the sentence-meaning and the utterer's meaning coincide or whether they do not (q.v. Grice 1989b).

I tend to believe that poetry is based on a free movement between these two scopes, having developed a special technique for this purpose. The force of the utterance in a broad context could thus be expressed by the symbol R , marking the rhetorical declarative or simply the act of rhetorical saying as such. The kinds of force could be naturally specified: R_{metaphor} , R_{metonymy} , $R_{\text{comparison}}$, $R_{\text{repetition}}$,

$R_{onomatopoeia}$, $R_{litotes}$, $R_{alliteration}$ etc. Thus the utterance (1) could be described by a formula such as $R_{metaphor(ic\ hyperbole),\ assonance} \parallel EA(p)$, adding, if needed, the implicature of the broad context: $R_{metaphor(ic\ hyperbole),\ assonance} \parallel EA(p) \dots R_{irony}(q)$ or the like. The speech forces of the narrow context are applied to the propositional object p , but the object of the R -forces of the broad context is something different: the utterance of the narrow context as a whole, or $EA(p)$ itself. Therefore, a speech act of the broad context cannot be interpreted as speech *de re*, but its content is the utterance of the narrow context as a general semantic whole: with its syntax, semantics and pragmatics, that is to be described rather in terms of speech *de dicto*, for it is speech itself that is its object of expression. On the secondary level it is not the possible matters of fact that are referred to as in the first context, but the speech activity itself is implied; it is the modes or meanings of pointing devices that are referred to, not their contents. The form of the utterance becomes the content. In case reference means only the explicit activity, then indicating, that perhaps signifies also an implicit demonstration, seems to be a more (shown but not seen) suitable term in a situation in which there need not be a direct reference to something, although a certain demonstration of the linguistic object can be observed with the help of some conventional (rhetoric) devices, the result of which is a clear recognition of the language phenomenon indicated.

The symbol signifying the boundary of the two contexts is borrowed from metrics where \parallel signifies the caesura or a verse pause, that is by no means a strict line of division that could not be transgressed when necessary – just as there is no strict division between the narrow and the broad contexts, although both are completely different from each other, phenomena with a logical hiatus. Thus expression (2) could be formalised as follows: $R_{antithesis,\ metaphor} \parallel E_1 A_1(p) \succ E_2 C(q) \dots A_2(r)$; (3) in its turn as $R_{alliteration\ (\&assonance),\ repetition} \parallel E_1 D(p) \text{ et } E_2(\emptyset)$ or like. The final utterance of the poem (5) *The branching out of fingers and toes, of thoughts and memories has neither beginning nor end* could be described as something like: $R_{hyperbole,\ zeugma,\ paradox} \parallel A_{summary}(E_{admiration} A_{assertion}(p)) \dots R_{point}(q)$.

The hypothesis seems to have explanatory power. According to it, linguistic activity is concentrated around two (maybe even three, when seen from the level of discourse) centres similar to ellipse – one utterance, two centres of force (Figure 3).

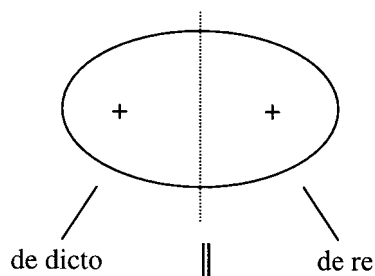


Figure 3.

The provisional boundary between the contexts can be transgressed, with both of them merging into each other (Figure 4).

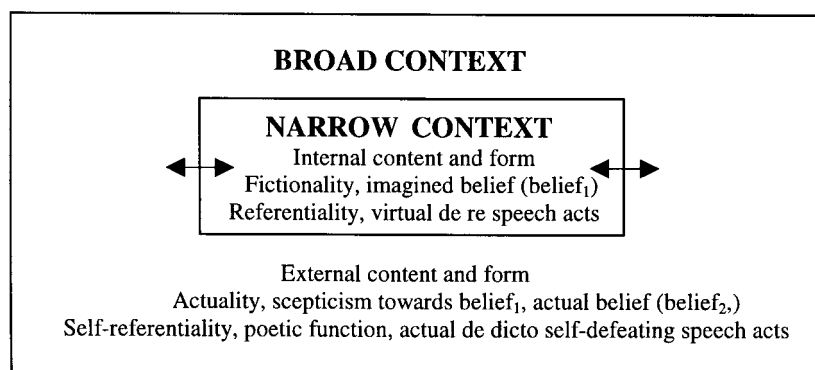


Figure 4.

Thus, the hypothesis is concerned with poetry operating simultaneously in two contexts: in the narrow one or in the world of make-believe inside a text (that at times can coincide with actuality), and, in addition, in the broad context or the world of the actual belief of the author-text-reader. The attention shifts spontaneously between the contexts in which the imagined belief (belief₁) is constantly alternating with the actual belief (belief₂), the relation of which to the former may often be sceptical. Such mental roundabout traffic could be called a game of make-believe borrowing the notion from Kendall Walton (1990) and Gregory Currie (1990), where it has a nearly similar content, which, nevertheless, does not explicate the idea of the two contexts. That concerns Gareth Evans' philosophy (1982) – it is easier to follow his treatment of fictionality, if it is projected on the hypothesis of the two contexts that also there gets an embryonic expression.

5. Referential and self-referential functions of language

By way of generalisation it can be said that language fulfils two main functions: the referential and the self-referential function, where the latter usually is an implicit, although especially characteristic of indexicality, the former an explicit one (q.v. Searle 1991: 218–230, also Merilai 1995, 2001). Roman Jakobson, of course, speaks of six functions (Jakobson 1960), but these can be philosophically reduced to two: emotive, referential and conative to referential, poetic, phatic and metalingual to self-referential or poetic one. Covertly, Jakobson also expresses the idea of two contexts by saying that in addition to the poetic message (that is simultaneously referential and self-referential), also the poetic sender and receiver are ambiguous. Besides the external plane of the author and

the reader, there is another – that of the lyrical hero or fictional author, the “I” (who actually is not the author) and the implicit receiver, “you” (who is not the real reader).

It seems to be clear that the expressives tend to satisfy mainly the emotive function (i.e. lyrics), while the assertives mainly the referential one (epics), whereas the directives and the commissives lay stress more on the conative role (dramatics). But as the most essential property of the art of poetry one should treat the fact that it poses the self-referential function as primary, while the referential function recedes. The broad context actualises the linguistic self-referentiality that is relatively covert in ordinary speech, and turns the seemingly or actually referring utterances of the narrow context into an aim in itself, e.g. into a (self-defeating, paradigmatic) game or joke, secondary from the literal point of view; often fictional, empty or false in reality. In case of belles-lettres it is even “good” if the truth or success of an utterance in the narrow context does not pass the test of reality, which shows that something else has been striven for than the referential *de re* speech – for instance, the shift of attention from the content of the expression to its linguistic nature. The randomness of reference slows down the reception, there are delays in understanding what is said, its meaning provokes investigation into itself and therefore the covert *de dicto* function is activated. Art boosts (linguistic) self-referentiality. Slowing down the process of reception, its defamiliarisation is the very nature of the aesthetic as has been claimed already since the Russian formalists, especially Victor Shklovsky. The rhetorical acts (which are often self-defeating, too) would not have a significant importance if there was no poetic function – if the reference is secondary or empty and the ordinary communication absurd, it is the general meaning of the expression or the mode of indicating that remains (of course indirectly, e.g. metaphorically; the reference to the real world can be (re)constructed as the next logical step, but this is already a third level.) And it is this, the attentiveness to the meaning itself, or rather the whole syllogistic process of reaching this result, that is aspired for. “The most important is the game,” as one of the titles by Artur Alliksaar declares. One relation is that of Alliksaar and a person interested in his poetry; the other is a Pickwickian “we”-polylogue inside the text, in which there is no real poet or aesthete, only their possible substitutes, although on a broader plane all this as a whole has been created for sake of the former. “Why do children play hide and seek?” we ask together with the poet Jaan Kaplinski.

6. Three philosophical parallels

It is not problematic to perceive one and the same utterance at times as one linguistic act, proceeding from the narrow scope, and, when this exhausts itself, there can be a spontaneous shift to the reception of a completely different linguistic act of the broad scope. Everybody has mastered this activity, only it is a bit difficult to explain. You know very well what it feels like to be carried to Baker

Street or to the country of dwarfs in your mind, to be awakened from this magic sleep when turning a page or nibbling at a biscuit – you “believe” and then again do not believe the story. The attention automatically switches from the narrow context of fantasy to the broader context of critical reflection, and back again. How can this complex intentional phenomenon – the appearance of one and the same act of utterance in two aspects simultaneously, these having different and even contradictory ontologies – best be illustrated? As a comparison we can introduce three parallels, taking one from the ordinary theory of speech acts, the other from psychology of perception and the third from the field of indexicality.

Ambiguity is a most ordinary phenomenon of speech and language, be it derived from homonymy or the principles of economy or play. To kill two birds with one stone, to convey several contents in one utterance (either to a single target group or to different ones) is a characteristic feature of linguistic competence. By saying (6) *It is hot in the room*, the speaker may attempt to find affirmation from the part of the listeners to the belief that it has become hot in the room (p); at the same time conveying an indirect request as an implicature: “Please open the window!” (q) to the person sitting next to the window. With (6) the speaker can aim at either the one or the other (both the literal or non-literal content), or also both at the same time (p...q). In addition, the utterance can hide a metaphor or irony in the sense that there is a mentally heated or else cool atmosphere in the room etc ((p...q)...r). One meaning, e.g. r, can be more important than the rest, explaining the occurrence of the others, but they can also be equal — thus, in addition to the propositions conveyed, also the whole itself that has been deduced and presented in this way, the compound meaning of the meanings and the mental movement in establishing it, is of major importance. Both Aristotle and Paul Grice have been instrumental in describing these phenomena.

The other parallel has to do with the psychology of perception – the example of the visually ambiguous object. Art seems to share perceptibly two different contexts of fulfilling the main functions of expression, playing with their automatic alteration. The analogue would be Necker’s cube from Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and the drawing of the rabbit/duck from his *Philosophical Investigations* (1996: 5.5423; 1953: II, 10). Either Vestmann on top and Piibelegt below, or Piibelegt on top and Vestmann below, as the Estonian author Eduard Vilde puts it in one of his plays (Figure 5).



Figure 5

Attention is spontaneously divided between the two centres – you may have the aspect of the duck in your mind’s eye, followed by the aspect of the rabbit; at one moment, the front side of the cube is in the bottom right-hand corner, then in the top left-hand corner, although in terms of expression we are dealing with one and the same object. Thus in one drawing, the act of expression the coinciding representations of two different objects have been coded (see Searle 1991: 45–53). There are two objects of two different contexts in one in the sense of expression, while the aspect of being represented by one object that becomes apparent thanks to the other, coincides with the other object’s aspect of being represented in an expressive homonymy, without being the same in its content, and its context. Thus also the aspect of representing aspects, a higher dimension enters – the intention to present several things (and finally on different levels) at a time as separate and more general object of attention. If the representations of different aspects of one and the same utterance token (e.g. the semantic meaning of the narrow context and the pragmatic meaning of the broad context that diverges from the former) can also be viewed as objects, it becomes necessary to acknowledge the existence of an aspect of a new level through which the previous ones have been presented. So this turns out to be a most interesting riddle of intentionality or *Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen?*

Thus it is the aspect of presenting objects, the aspect of representation that becomes the object of attention instead of the objects themselves. It is not so much the represented that is important – be it a girl or a crone, a rabbit or a duck – but rather the way of representation, the mode of presenting the represented or, in other words: it is not the contents, but rather the form or meaning of expression through which the contents were reached that catches our attention. As Searle explains it, it is inevitable that the objects are perceived from a certain aspect and usually it is the objects that are represented, not the aspects of their representation. Usually, the aspect does not place itself between the perceiver and the object – the aspect is an important intentional phenomenon, but generally not the intentional object itself. But, as we can see, aspects themselves can on certain conditions also become targets just as the means of reference, its composition and meaning can themselves become indicated. Thus, also the aspect can be in full view or even shown (being represented from a new aspect of a higher category to which no metalanguage is applied – the said, but unsayable, as it is not objectified for being said), engaging the main attention and putting the original objects off as secondary. The sense of the first level, *Sinn*, through which the reference, *Bedeutung*, is achieved, becomes itself the content on the second level and the indicated in one way or other – obviously a wholly Fregean idea (q.v. Frege 1892). Precisely the meaning of expressions is the content of art and its real object, the real indication; references to the actual world as an aim become virtual, and are made secondary. Apparently trained receivers can also find themselves in intermediary states, observe several contexts at a time and so on, but this is less a problem of ontology than one of psychology. It ought to be clear that the differentiation of contexts is not strictly exclusive, as these are manifestly reflected

in one another. It is obvious that the lyrical characters of poetry typical of Alliksaar can enjoy their language games also in the narrow context, although the revelling in images is first and foremost addressed at the analytical reception of the broad one, the more literal part being reserved for the narrow plane.

The third parallel would be that of indexicality. Deictic expressions clearly show that linguistic activity satisfies two main functions: referential and self-referential (q.v. Searle 1991: 218–230). I consider a deictic utterance as a part of its own truth conditions, for its meaning always refers also to the expression itself. By this, an indexical expression indicates that its intended content shows a relation between the referred object and the utterance itself, being simultaneously both referential and autoreferential. The expression ‘I’ first and foremost refers to itself, its semantics are the following: ‘I’ refers to the person who utters the expression ‘I’. ‘You’ refers to the person who is the addressee of the utterer of ‘you’ etc. According to the context of usage on the basis of this self-referential semantics a particular reference is determined. When I use the word ‘I’ I refer to the author of this paper, when you say ‘I’ you point at a reader of this paper, very familiar to you – the expression is semantically the same, but the reference changes from user to user even in the framework of the same discourse. ‘Today’ when written on the day when this paper was prepared pointed at the *fin de siècle*, ‘today’ when read on the day when this paper is published, refers to the new millennium. Thus the ontology of indexical expressions splits. Poetic speech tends to satisfy the referential function in the imaginary area of the narrow context, toying with the linguistic self-referentiality in the expert reception of the broad context.

7. The possibility of a speech act in the broad context

In the preceding part an important locus crucis for the hypothesis of the two contexts was obtained. Namely a deictic expression refers to itself not explicitly but implicitly; yet its denoting to the referent is explicit, demonstrative, pointing out with the finger in essence. Although the self-referentiality of the utterance takes place, it does not mean that the referential act to the utterance took place, nor is the utterance explicitly represented in itself. As the self-referentiality of the visual experience is *shown* but not *seen*, the self-referentiality of the indexical utterance is *shown* but not *stated* (Searle 1991: 223). A deictical self-reference can be comprehensible, but it is not postulated. Thus, concerning the poetic self-referentiality: are the R-speech acts of the broad context rather implicit than explicit, thus not genuine acts in comparison with ordinary speech acts? Are these quasi speech acts? Some important etiolating in comparison with ordinary language usage can indeed be characteristic of these, but does it rule out being a speech act?

It can be stated that the poetic utterance goes further than the cases of (ordinary) indexical self-referentiality. Poetic language does not have to be referential, but the lack of this requirement amplifies the explicit requirement to be

self-referential, in a contrary case the creation of a poetic utterance could be altogether senseless. A poetic utterance often rather expresses the non-relationship between itself and the world, with the aim of foregrounding the strong relation to itself and the user. The poetic utterance has a prominent obligation to speak artificially and in images, i.e. to express or show clearly the rhetorical truth about itself at the expense of not having an obligation, although there is the possibility to speak truthfully about the circumstances of the world. And even if it does express the truth about the world in the narrow context, it does not do this so much in the assertive sense, but rather by establishing in the declarative sense the possible worlds in which things said in this way or that could be true or become true in the truly Aristotelian sense – *Stiften* in a competitive hermeneutic tradition. It could be argued that even if a poetic speech act is not always fully explicit, it is not in the least implicit in its self-referentiality. Or does it thus belong to the intermediary scale with a tilt towards the explicit? At any rate, in case of texts as self-conscious as those of, e.g. Walt Whitman, Paul Verlaine, Rainer Maria Rilke, Artur Alliksaar or hundreds of others, the poetic explicitness is clearly an a priori.

A speech act of the broad context seems to be real and unmediated, it is indicated by sufficiently explicit conventional signifiers – conventional markers. A self-defeating game-reference itself is one of the first markers to denote the poetic function; sonority, tropes and figures, rhythmic devices, the increased paradigmatic unity of the whole of the linguistic material make up the rest. These devices indicate the rhetorical speech force. The more aware the receivers are, the clearer and more conventional the signifiers appear to them. So intuition as well as practice do not allow an explanation of the poetic acts that use these markers only by indirect or macro-speech acts, rather, these poetic (perhaps partial) speech acts are immediate and independent, and therefore the R-formulae, that are applied to propositions as additional functions of the second level, should pass an Ockham test in full terms of speech acts. The secondary modelling system that has concentrated around the poetic function enters the horizontality of ordinary language usage on the vertical axis, whereas the secondary is the main aim and therefore primary; the primary can be made virtual and therefore it remains secondary – a springboard, a backdrop, a stage prop, although not only that. It is an important inductive basis to this theory whether Anna comes to a happy end or ends up under a train; however, the eyes of a seasoned deductivist literary scholar easily tend to glide over this level and can thus be mistaken to the detriment of the whole.

Poetic speech uses the rich supply of devices indicating the rhetoric function that has been developed during centuries to demonstrate the artistic (maybe quasi or partial) speech forces. A poetic speech act does not manifest itself implicitly like an ordinary speech act, but rather performs itself explicitly, using various generally recognised markers – thus it does not only seem, but also uses clear-cut devices of (self-)referentiality. A poetic utterance represents itself and the whole discourse sufficiently conspicuously and therefore presents no difficulties in recognising it. When developed, it has all the characteristics of a speech act, at

least similarly to the partial performance described above. However, poetic *de dicto* speech does not have to resemble an ordinary speech act, but only originate from the latter. It is a different conventional or unconventional peculiarity (with the conventions or surprises of transgressing it) that is expected from the poetic speech act.

The audience does not run onto the stage to save Othello and Desdemona from their dire straits or to chastise Harpagon, although some people whose personal pain is touched by the situation would like to stop the play. It is common knowledge that the story is presented via a fictional author who is neither the author nor the producer using the actors to embody the script, but just an implied construct in our game of make-believe – a well-informed imaginary mediator who is forwarding the event unravelling in front of the spectator's eyes. This is just imagined or make-believed. On the broad plane, however, the absorbed acting and expression of the performers is observed, an attempt is made to participate in a dialogue with Shakespeare or Molière themselves as best one can, or failing that, then at least in one with the producer and his company. The deep sources of explaining language, mind and art lie in poetry, literature and the analysis of these. Linguistics and language philosophy without poetics do not always make sense, just like poetics does not make sense without them – it is not only Roman Jakobson who presents this opinion. Alliksaar and his friends (be they actual or virtual) always knew this, too.

Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead wrapped in the clouds of the dandelion fluffs of your wish-dreams. What happens if we move beyond the Alliksaar-like “analytic” language poetry towards more “synthetic” types of texts, which, as a matter of fact, are much more common? Then the question obviously arises whether one should launch R as a sentence operator or rather as a text operator? Is it $R_{\text{metaphor}} \parallel EA(p)$ or just $\text{metaphor} \parallel EA(p)$ in which a general R-operator precedes the discourse as a whole, rather than being a prefix to the utterances in particular? Regarding more “synthetic” kind of poetry the latter idea seems quite plausible. It corresponds well to the basic principle of poetic systematicity in stylistics, according to which not only the sequences can build an equation, as expressed by the metalinguistic equational sentence $A = A$ (“Lamb is the young of the sheep”), but also an equation is used to build the sequences (q.v. Jakobson 1960: 358ff). Informally, ad hoc perhaps even so: $= \rightarrow A_1, A_2, \dots, A_i, \dots, A_n$, as is common in poetic parallelism: *Look, how many pretend to be dumb! / Look, how respectably they make fools of themselves! / Look, how benightedness is boasted about! / Look, how many take muck for marmalade!*

8. Conclusion

It can be assumed that an utterance may express several speech acts at a time; this can be characterised by the notions of the complex speech act, macro-speech act, implicature and speech act with additional force. The latter will also lead to

the hypothesis of the full and partial performance of a speech act, which has a probable role in the interpretation of the secondary, poetic level of speech activity.

Poetic speech activity seems to take place on two spontaneously alternating levels simultaneously: on the one hand, in the narrow linguistic-semantic imaginary context and, on the other hand, in the broad semantic-pragmatic context of the author-work-reader reality. In the former, fancied *de re* context it is the referential function of language that is operating, in the other, actual *de dicto* context it is rather the self-referential or poetic function that is made primary by the figurative discourse.

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APPENDIX

ARTUR ALLIKSAAR (1923–1966)

**WHERE TO,
WHERE TO,
UGH!!!**

Time-tables.

Hail-tables.

Gain-tables.

Are the trains still going to hurry to the parties of strikingly struggling joys?!

Breath-nets.

Heat-nets.

Death-nets.

Are the shins still going to spray the blue sparks of spring?!

Hopes are going to turn to rags.

It doesn't matter – we'll sew them up with the thread of dreams stolen from the bushels of midnight.

The charm is going to grow thinner.

It doesn't matter – it can't vanish anywhere from the tight tin cup of our tribulations.

Yet the spell is really going to fade!

With more tension and greater gulps let us drink then its dusky brightness!

The soul is worn to holes like a prehistoric engine.

Never mind — we will race forward in a canoe carved out of the trunk of the future-tree.

You, wind, are a very frolicsome insect indeed!

For ever with us, chasers of captivations, for ever with us, trackers of transfigurations.

Never falling behind.

Look, how many pretend to be dumb!

Look, how respectably they make fools of themselves!

Look, how benightedness is boasted about!

Look, how many take muck for marmalade!

You can understand everything because you can jumble up things, in order to put them in proper order.

A fly is walking on the time-table and believes it is in Bergen and Berlin and Baku.

There is no moment when no one feels killed.

There is no moment when no one reaches out for an embrace.

There is no moment when no one is on the road.

Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead wrapped in the clouds of the dandelion-fluffs of your wish-dreams!

The branching out of fingers and toes, of thoughts and memories has neither beginning nor end.