

Elżbieta Artowicz

## Mapping of Speech Acts and Problems of the Stylistic Differentiation of the Hungarian Language in the New Handbook *Halló, itt Magyarország*

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An analysis within the scope indicated by the title of my paper was inspired by the specific situation of a linguist who is not a specialist in language teaching and who for some time had to teach the descriptive grammar of a non-Indo-European language during the first two years of study. To make it worse, that language had to be learned by my students from scratch. In all probability, my courses had been intended to help them acquire the Hungarian language, but the effects proved unintended. In view of the fact that the model of the description of the Hungarian language in its classical grammar differs considerably from what they were used to, it meant for my students an additional burden as they had to acquire at least rudiments of theoretical knowledge in the sphere of general linguistics, beginning with the classification of parts of speech and definitions of morphosyntactic units. Further the necessity to refer, in the description of the system of Hungarian, to detailed examples drawn from texts turned a course in descriptive grammar into a regular language course, whereas the latter was often confined to the assimilation by the students of agglutinative paradigms of Hungarian, dissociated from any context of communication. The modern repertory of materials for language teaching, rather typical of so called less widely taught language, combined with the frequent lack of experience in teaching which marked the lecturers who were native speakers of Hungarian, induced me first to try to define the minimum socio-cultural knowledge indispensable in a handbook and conditioning a correct language behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Next it encouraged me to attempt to general appraisal of one of the recent books, accessible in this country, from the point of view of pragmatics.

*Halló, itt Magyarország*, a new handbook of the Hungarian language, which is for the second year being used in our department as the basis for the practical teaching of Hungarian, appeared in 1992.<sup>2</sup>

*Szines magyar nyelvkönyv* (A colourful Handbook of Hungarian), which for many years had to be used by us as the main source of language acquisition, had essential shortcomings:

(i) its composition mapped the traditional descriptive grammar, which was due to the fact that it was based on the cognitive method and the resulting emphasis in the process of teaching, on the multilevel organization of language;

(ii) scarcity of socio-cultural context which would determine, in a higher degree than in the case of other languages, correct performance;

(iii) scarcity of dialogues which would illustrate verbal communication.<sup>3</sup>

As compared with the former, *Halló, itt Magyarország* marks a considerable advance in the methodology of language teaching. Nevertheless my own observations made in language teaching, the analysis of the new Hungarian handbook, and my acquaintance with the structure of many analogous for teaching such languages as French and English make me pose certain questions and formulate reflections for discussion in a group of specialists who represent incomparably richer methodological traditions than people engaged in teaching less widely taught languages. (cf. *Allô France, Sans frontières, Blueprint* etc)<sup>4</sup>.

While my paper is not intended to submit a detailed review of an essential instrument in acquiring the knowledge of Hungarian culture, an instrument which arouses optimism when we have advances in our Hungarian studies in mind. I shall take the liberty to give you general information on those thematic and structural solutions to be found in the handbook now under consideration which imply methodological problems as far as the part containing instructions for the teacher, a constant element of sources for the teaching of congress languages, has not been published.

*Halló, itt Magyarország* differs considerably from *Szines magyar nyelvkönyv* by much richer knowledge of the realities of Hungarian everyday and cultural life and by the repertory of situations occurring in verbal communication, to be found in 40 lessons of structured dialogues and descriptions and fixed in tape recorder cassettes (In *Halló, itt Magyarország* there is no grouping together of single lessons into thematico-functional blocks).

Lessons 1-9 include dialogues only. Beginning with lesson 10 there is a growing proportion of narrative texts. This is partly justified by the specific structure of the Hungarian language, marked by a wealth of morphological exponents of spatial and temporal relations, and their diversified and complicated word order in utterances which perform the predicative function only, and those which are definite speech acts.

An essential shortcoming of *Halló, itt Magyarország* consists in that it disregards phonetic and intonational material and exercises built into the structure of the lessons, because the development of correct articulation habits (especially when it comes to the rich system of Hungarian vowels) and of the

skill in recognizing speech is the first and the most serious barrier in the acquisition of Hungarian, the latter being as a rule hampered by the psychological factors and the conviction of the learners that Hungarian is difficult .

The handbook is addressed to foreigners of unspecified age, which has resulted in stylistic eclecticism, especially in the description of formal and informal behaviour, which in Hungarian is very strongly conditioned by the social status of participants in verbal communication, beginning with greetings and forms of address (which have a rich literature intended for native speakers and accessible only to language teachers).

The assumed universality of the addresses of the handbook in all probability accounts for the idea of differentiating the senders of verbal communiqués, who represent various age groups as well as statuses and occupations (students, businessmen, journalists, physician, police, office personnel, staffs in hotels and tourist services); they are introduced and described by an anonymous narrator. This suggests a comparison with the organization of handbooks of English and French (*Allô France, Sans frontières, Blueprint* etc), with which I am more or less familiar and in which the linking element takes the form of presenters of, or participants in, various events. Reference to them makes it easier to associate new material with that already assimilated. Such composition seems good from the point of view of the dramaturgical coherence of lessons.

The brief introduction to the handbook, written by its authors, stresses, its pragmatic aim: the development of communicative readiness and preparedness in everyday situations. Hence the main principle which organizes the handbook consists in the scope of subject matter and the typicality of situations in which definite speech acts take place and corresponding morpho-syntactic structures are presented.

The repertory of situations changes and is differentiated as the learners acquire better grammatical competence.

Part I (lessons 1-20) is dominated by standard formal situations (hotel, restaurant, shop, apartment hire office office/firm (lessons 1-8), visit in a private apartment, physician's room, official dinner in an elegant, showing the city to a guest from abroad, going to the cinema, an evening in the theatre).

Part II (lessons 21-40) is marked by an increased proportion of informal situations or such which are more strongly contrasted with formal ones (establishing official and social contacts, accidental meeting at the railway station, press interview, post office, traffic accident, troubles with the car and with the police, staying in the hospital, conversation of the patient with his family and the that of his family with the physician, Christmas spent with a

Hungarian family, weather, family plans for holidays, air travel and formalities at the frontier, looking for a job, official contacts, do-it-yourself hobby, small talk with the hairdresser and with the beautician, defects and their repair in one's flat, touring the city by bus, farewell parties and exchange of cordialities).

The acquaintance with the situational contexts of verbal communication, listed above by way of example, may be treated as socio-cultural realities known to the learner, or, to use Searle's terminology, as preparatory conditions which determine fortunate performance of speech acts, whose repertory is, my analysis has shown – rather typical of rather analogous handbooks of foreign languages: introducing oneself: *Nagy János vagyok. Nagyon örülök; Szervusz, Péter vagyok – Szervusz, Éva vagyok.*; identification of persons and objects, of nationality: *Őn angol, ugye? – Igen, én angol vagyok; Te magyar vagy? – Nem, lengyel vagyok. – És te? – Mi a neve? Hány éves? Milyen nemzetiségű? Mi a címe? Mi a foglalkozása? Hol tanul? , knowledge of foreign languages: *És ön milyen nyelven beszél? Beszélek angolul; Csak egy kicsit beszélek magyarul.*; address: *Bocsánat, uram/kisasszony; Kérem szépen* , location in space and time: *Hol van a posta? – ott van, a szálloda mellett/előtt; Hol van a magyaróra?; Hány óra van? – Negyed hét van; Még csak negyed kilenc van? , introduction of third persons and objects: *Igazgató úr, bemutatom Braun urat; Kati, bemutatom Pétert; Tessék parancsolni, Ez az előszoba, A fürdőszoba itt van, balra. Van egy nagy fürdőkád, zuhany, mosdó, polite formulas: *Tessék parancsolni; Mit parancsol?; Tessék.; Mit kér?; Kit tetszik keresni? , greetings: *Kezét csókolom; Jó reggelt/napot kívánok; Szervusz; formulas of thanks: *Köszönöm; Köszönöm nem kérek etc. .<sup>5</sup> It must be emphasized that the now described Part I of *Halló, itt Magyarország* is marked by a wealth of lexical material in the sphere of identification and characteristics of object, whose assimilation is restricted by the phonological barrier and by the wealth of morpho-syntactical exponents of spatio-temporal relationships, typical of the agglutinative Hungarian language. The lexical store of the first five lessons is approximately twice as large as in the English and French handbooks mentioned above. The learners find it very difficult to cope with the semantic identification and the correct use of grammatical agglutinative morphemes, and in the handbook itself it is assigned incomparably more space than in the said handbooks of congress language. It seems that the phonological barrier and the excessive expansion of the lexicon are not conducive to the quick development of culturally correct communicational behaviour.******

In the teaching of Hungarian at the university level the problem was partially solved by the introduction of additional classes in the practical

phonetics and grammar of Hungarian, dedicated to the assimilation of morpho-syntactical structures and separated from classes in descriptive grammar, which begin at a later stage.

In the light of the said strong socio-cultural conditioning of the stylistic register of utterances the above described thematic selection of communicational situations automatically results in the domination of the formal style in the initial period of learning. (One of the first expression related to the establishment of communicational contact is *Mit parancsol?* (i.e. *What do you order?*), not quite pertinently used in the context of ordering coffee in the cafeteria. It is true that such formal expressions are consistently accompanied by examples of informal dialogues. The observation of those students who after the such formal expression are consistently accompanied by examples of informal dialogues. The observation of those students who after the initial period of study go to Hungary for six months of the practical study of Hungarian shows that their knowledge of rules of verbal behaviour developed in the manner described is not very useful in the realities of student life, in which they develop their language performance. The unintended effect and problem after their return to Poland, when they have to prove their mastery of the material contained in the handbook taught at that time, takes the form of an excessive colloquialization of utterances and problems with the mastering expressions that belong to the formal register of Hungarian, in the sphere of both the lexicon and the exponents of illocutionary force.

The arrangement and placing of the grammatical and lexical exponents of the illocutionary force of utterances under consideration of at least two stylistic registers of the Hungarian language (formal and informal) in any handbook intended for foreigners is not an easy task, and that, among other things, because of the specific features of sematico-grammatical structures in Hungarian. The exponents of the illocutionary force of utterances which perform such functions in verbal communication: questions (for decisions and for complementation), request, promise, assertion, insistence, proposal etc., take the form of intricate sematico-morphological and syntactic categories, exotic from the point of view of the Polish users of the Hungarian language, who have to cope with the numerical wealth of agglutinative morphemes. This covers the existence of parallel conjugational paradigms connoted in the sentence by a definite or indefinite object of action, conjugation of nouns as exponent of the relation of possessivity, the position of separable verbal prefixes (certain analogies with the German language) conditioned by the thematic-rhematic structure of the sentence, the double function of the grammatical form of the imperative mood (the so-called conjunctive and imperative use), and syntactic structures implied by modal exponents of illocutionary force: *kell* (it is necessary), *szabad* (it is allowed), *tilos* (it is

prohibited), *érdemes* (it is worth while), *fontos* (it is important), *illik* (it becomes – in sense of befit), *sikerül* (it is successful). The grammatical structure which perform such basic pragmatic functions are thus necessarily concentrated in the second, advanced part of the handbook, and are combined with compound formulas expressing politeness so characteristic of verbal communication in formal situations: – official contacts: *Fáradjon a pénztárhoz!*; *Menjen egyenesen ezen az utcán!*; *Ott forduljon jobbra és menjen el a következő zebráig!* *Parancsoljon, uram!* *Nyissa ki, kérem!* ;

- contacts with strangers: *A nevét, legyen szíves!* *Legyen szíves valamilyen igazolványt mutatni!*; *Legyen szíves megmondani ....*; *Mondja el, legyen szíves, mi történt?*; *Hívja a mentőket és a rendőrséget!*

Quite essential difficulties in developing in the learners efficiency in verbal communication are due to the argument and the content of the exercises to be found in the handbook under consideration. It offers a relatively scanty set of exercises envisaged for each lesson. (A separate workbook has not been prepared so far). Those to be found in *Halló, itt Magyarország* are typical exercises in transformational grammar, which to some extent disagree with the main body of each lesson, oriented toward verbal communication. I would like to revert at this point to the previously mentioned composition of lessons based on dialogue and description, where we do not find the now common, it seems, distinction between those exercises which develop skills in the acoustic subcode and the graphic subcode of the language: speaking and listening versus reading and writing. Such being the case, and in lack of a methodological part in the handbook, the mode and the scope in which the material is exploited depends on the ingenuity and didactic competence of the teacher (for instance, making use of simulation and role play).

These critical remarks have in view posing the next methodological problem, namely the indication of, or search for, sufficiently effective methods of developing skills of communicating in a language all subsystems of which differ typologically from the first language of the learners. That considerably acquiring by them of the basic grammatical competence. To make matters worse, the set of methodological aids is relatively modest (which includes the lack of a functional grammar of Hungarian).

An analysis of the repertory of illocutionary functions considered in the dialogues and texts in *Halló, itt Magyarország* and in the index of the lexicon allows one appraise that book positively, from various points of view with some reservations.

I have based my cursory analysis on the classical study *Speech Acts* by Searle, B.Fraser's taxonomy of illocutionary acts presented by him in the *Syntax and Semantics* series <sup>6</sup>, and so called categories of communication

singled out in practical confrontative grammars such as T. Krzeczowski *Gramatyka angielska dla Polaków* ('English Grammar for Poles').<sup>7</sup>

The illocutionary acts mapped in handbooks for beginners who study foreign languages naturally concentrate first on presenting their morphosyntactic exponents, with a limited presentation of functional ones, which imply the use of complex syntactic structures. B. Fraser in his taxonomy of speech acts singles out eight classes that map the intention (attitude) of the sender of a verbal communiqué:

(i) acts of asserting with two subclasses which express the speaker's assessment of how the proposition expressed fits into the conversation and the speaker's strength of conviction in the truth of the proposition expressed, such as *add, announce, comment, declare, inform, notify, point out, mention, remark, remind, reply, say, state, tell, accuse, acknowledge, admit, affirm, agree, argue, claim, confirm, confess, object, predict*.

(ii) acts of evaluating the truth of the sentence expressed with the specification of the basis of this judgement, such as: *analyze, appraise, assess, calculate, call, certify, choose, classify, conclude, declare, describe, formulate, find, guess, insist, postulate, speculate*.

(iii) act reflecting speaker's attitude toward the appropriateness of the state of affairs resulting from some prior act expressed by the sentence, such as: *accept, agree, complain, compliment, congratulate, disagree, excuse, object to, protest, recognize, regret, thank, toast, wish*.

(iv) acts of stipulating expressing the speaker's desire for the acceptance of the naming convention expressed by the proposition, such as: *begin, call, choose, declare, describe, distinguish, identify, nominate, select, specify*.

(v) acts of requesting expressing the speaker's desire for the hearer to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition such as: *appeal, ask, beg, bid, command, demand, direct, forbid, insist, inquire, instruct, invite, order, pray, prohibit, request, require, solicit*.

(vi) acts of suggesting, expressing the speaker's desire to consider the merits of the action expressed in the proposition such as: *advance, advise, caution, propose, recommend, suggest, urge, warn*.

(vii) acts of exercising authority expressing the speaker's proposal to create a new state of affairs by exercising certain rights or powers such as: *accept, adopt, agree to, allow, apply for, approve, authorize, bless, cancel, declare, deny, dismiss, downgrade, excuse, forgive, greet, permit, prohibit, recognize, reject, surrender, withdraw*.

(viii) acts of committing, expressing the speaker's proposal to place himself under an obligation to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition such as: *accept, assume, assure, commit (oneself), dedicate*

(oneself), give one's word, guarantee, obligate (oneself), offer, pledge, promise, swear, volunteer.

That taxonomy also covers illocutionary acts typical of verbal communication in everyday situations (vernacular), with the exclusion of the so-called ceremonial performatives which are formulas (sentences) used in codified legal, religious, political and sports actions eg. *I hereby pronounce you man and wife*. They seem essential from the point of view of the knowledge of civilization where a given language is used, but they are rarely included in handbooks of the kind discussed here.

The following performative verbs were selected from the index of *Halló, itt Magyarország*:

- Part I: *ajánl, akar, bemutat, bemutatkozik, beszél, elbúcsúzik, emlékszik, felel, felhív, gondol, ígér, kér, kérdez, kíváncsi, kínál, megbüntet, meghallgat, mond, óhajt, örül, parancsol, remél, rendel, sajnál, szól, tud, üdvözl, visszatér, kell;*

- Part II: *bán, beleegyezik, beleszól, búcsúzik, diktál, elismétel, elkér, elmond, elhisz, elismétel, elkezd, elmesél, eltéved, említ, fél, felír, felolvas, folytat, függ, gondolkodik, haragszik, hiányzik, igyekszik, javasol, kikérdez, kikeres, megállapít, megbeszél, megbocsát, megenged, megért, megkérdez, megmond, megszólít, mesél, nevez, panaszkodik, tanácsol, udvarol, utál, vállal.*

The appraisal of the scope of the mappings of the speech acts considered in *Halló, itt Magyarország* is based on the categories singled out in functional confrontative grammars, such as:

(i) obtaining information by interrogative sentences; general: *Tetszik a lakás?; Szeretsz táncolni?; Információt szeretnék kérni.; Ó már négy óra van!* particular: *Kit tetszik keresni?; Mit csinálsz?; Kinek írsz? Hova is megyünk?; És mi az esti program?; Mikor indul a legközelebbi vonat?;* conveying in declarative sentences: *A mai esti programunk meglepetés.; Levelet írok.; Kovács Péterhez megyek.; Igen, szeretlek.;* and lexically: *bemutat, bemutatkozik; beszél; felel; (meg)kérdez; mond; keres; kikeres;* etc.

(ii) exponents of propositional and quantitative negation (so-called double negation *ne – nem, se – sem* being specific to Hungarian language.

(iii) exponents of options and beliefs communicated lexically and grammatically: *hisz, véleményem szerint, valószínűleg, mint tudjuk; szerintem;* including consent or non-refusal: *igaz, igazad van, dehogy, remek, szívesen, az az igazság; az igazat megvallva; sajnós; fogalmam sincs; nekem más a véleményem,*

(iv) exponents of persuasion and suggestion, both grammatical and lexical: *légy szíves/legyen szíves; add fel a levelet! hívd ki a vízvezetékcsatlakozást! – imperative mode, verbal derivatives and modal structures as exponents of*

possibility: *bemehetünk?* – *Gyertek csak!* , certainty: *fogadjuk csak!* ; necessity: *Be kell mennem a múzeumba; Fontos beszélnem; El kell intéznem;* and will: *Azt javaslom, hogy.....*

- wishes / intentions: *Vigyázz magadra; jobbulást kívánok* , forms of insistence both lexical: *kér, kíván, óhajt, rendel* and grammatical: *hallottad?; értsd meg; és ne felejsd el a könyvet!*; optative mode: *nem volna-e kedves? conditions: attól függ....; mit csinálnál, ha nyernél néhány milliót? – végigjárnam Európát!*

(v) instructions, orders, injunctions, obligations, represented lexically and grammatically, especially in formal situations: policeman – *Jó napot kívánok, a jogosítványt és a forgalmi engedélyt, legyen szíves!*; instructions of administrative authorities – *Zárják el a gázt, és ne nyúljanak a tűzhelyhez! Kiküldök egy szerelőt. A nevét és a címét legyen szíves!; Tessék ezt kitölteni!; Itt tetszik fizetni!* or of service – *Hogyan cseréli ki a filmet? Nyomja be a gombot! Nyissa ki a hátlapját! Vegye ki a régi filmet és tegye be az újat! Csukja be a gép hátlapját!*, recommendations of the physician – *Csak szedje a gyógyszereket és pihenjen! Ne dohányozzon és tartson diétát! Ne egyen nehéz ételeket!; Kérem, fejezzék be a látogatást!*

(vi) expressions of permission or prohibition, represented in particular by modal structure – *Megengeded, hogy rágyújtsak? – Persze, gyújts rá nyugodtan!* . The scope of the representation of these illocutionary categories is self-evidently much more comprehensive in the second part of *Halló, itt Magyarország* and it is comparable with that in the French and English handbooks quoted earlier.

Similar results are obtained from an analysis of the repertory of exponents of personal emotions expressed by various lexical and syntactic means and set phrases:

(i) regret, refuse – *sajnálom; Ilyen rövid idő alatt erre nincs lehetőség.; Igazán sajnálom, de nem tudom odaadni; Ne haragudj, de nem tudok elmenni, ugyanis vendégek jönnek hozzánk;*

(ii) hope – *Remélem, beengednek.*

(iii) astonishment – *Mi történt?; Mi a baj?; Micsoda?; De miért?; Talán valami hibát követtem el?; Ne mondd!*

(iv) satisfaction – *Na látod.*

(v) disappointment *Kár!; Miért?; Mi az, talán nem tetszem? Egy vagyont fizettem a szépségemért! – Ezt igazán megtakaríthattad volna .*

(vi) gratefulness – *Még egyszer köszönöm a segítségedet!*

(vii) wishes and congratulations – *Szívből gratulálok!; Boldog karácsonyt!; Fiatok születéséhez szeretettel gratulálunk!*

(viii) exclamations and emotional expressions – *jaj, úristen; isten hozott!; Most mi az ördögöt csináljak!; Milyen jó!; Jaj nekem!; De gyönyörű!; Jaj de szép!*

The scope of their presentation is analogous to that I indicated above.

One feels a lack in *Halló, itt Magyarország* of simple instructions (hints) connected with the study of a foreign language, also belonging to the class of performatives: ask, check, close, rewrite, describe, explain, pronounce, read, repeat, which in all probability may be explained by the intention of the authors to minimize the burden of grammatical knowledge required from the learners.

The reflections and comments presented above will perhaps help one solve a number of problems in the light of the measures verified in the teaching of other language. One of the sources of those problems is certainly to be seen in the scanty interest in pragmatics on the part of Hungarian linguists.

#### Literature

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