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ON THE AUTHOR'S SPEECH
STRUCTURE OF KANT'S
AXIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

The major difference between Kant's axiological and cognitive discourse is that the former contains a greater number of personal pronouns that signify different speech roles of the author. This text is characterised by a more direct expression of the addressee factor, which explains the emergence of the speech acts that are absent in Kant's cognitive texts. Another substantial difference is the explicit imperative modality of this type of Kant's texts.

Key words: Kant, discourse, speech act, axiological, modality, addressee.

Originality of axiological discourse, which distinguishes it from Kant's cognitive discourse, is that the former is aimed at describing the world as it may be rather than it is, so it produces the text with prescriptive modality. Hence it demonstrates the predominance of the conjunction "should" or "should not" over the conjunction "is" or "is not". In other words, this text does not bear the function of identifying the subject of the argument, but the function of its evaluation. Consequently, this difference is primarily functional. The thing is, according to James Moore, that even the most complete list of properties of the object identification does not eliminate the problem of determining its value. So, Kant's axiological discourse differs from the cognitive discourse in the following relevant aspects:

- 1) its communication objective is to assess the world rather than describe it;
- 2) the world is described as it could and should be, but not as it really is;
- 3) this is the text with prescriptive modality (moral imperatives and ethical standards and rules of conduct, moral maxims, etc.);
- 4) his argument is specific: it does not focus on the proof of the truth of any provision in the objective world, but on the necessity of the existence of moral values and the justification of the need for the individual to follow his duty;

5) this text does not answer the question “why” but the question “What for?” In other words, it’s the question about the meaning of human existence in the world rather than the essence of the world.

Axiological discourse, as N. Arutyunova justly observes, is saturated with evaluative predicates and general vocabulary of evaluative connotation [1, p. 145]. Its semantics needs further development and reasoning, i.e., is vectored forward. Logical and compositional construction of Kant’s axiological discourse is also based on the principle of causality, which means that in the beginning of the argument a key provision that constitutes a logical consequence is put forward, and then there is the development of a base, according to which the above mentioned consequence results as having objective significance.

One of the main features of Kant’s axiological discourse is that identifying and estimating speech acts function in parallel, alternating each other and at the same time preserving the relative independence.

This can be well seen in the descriptions with identifying and estimating (characterizing) function in Kant’s treatise “Principles of Metaphysics of Morals” (1785), in which the philosopher, in his own words, seeks to identify and formulate the most supreme principle of morality that underlies all other principles of moral and ethical conduct. Of course, this is an a priori principle for Kant.

Initial passage of the text of this treatise contains speech acts which refer to the object, that is, it starts with an object-directed (descriptive) language, since in order to talk about something, it is necessary for something to exist objectively or in thought, in this case – in the moral mindset of the mankind. The first section of the treatise begins a complex speech act of a statement about the existence of the concept of good will and its characteristics (estimates):

1. (1) There is nothing conceivable in the world and even beyond it, (2) that without any restriction would be seen as a benefit, except for **good will**¹ [2, S. 18].

This speech act, which is the key one to the whole treatise, consists of two parts: the assertion of the existence of the subject of reasoning, that is, the concept of good will (1) and its assessment (2). The discussion below is the development of the good will in the descriptive (identified, referential) and evaluation (axiological) aspects. Thus there is a functional split of the “good will” description (ein guter Wille) into two – identifying and evaluation. The first step is thematic specification, which is formally expressed in further use of the definite article or demonstrative pronoun: (ein guter Wille – *diesem* guten Willen – *der* gute Wille, etc.), and the other one continues to be used in the text, with the indefinite article, getting new evaluative predicates and predicate constructions with evaluation semantics (*ein guter Wille – eines reinen und guten Willens – eines... an sich selbst guten Willens – eines an sich selbst hochschätzenden und ohne weitere Absicht guten Willens – so wie er schon dem natürlichen gesunden Verstande beiwohnt und nicht sowohl gelehrt als vielmehr nur aufgeklärt zu werden bedarf...*).

The entire text of this treatise is further based on the contrast of these two modes of speech – descriptive, describing the current state of affairs, and evalua-

¹ The examples in this article are given in our translation because the known existing translations do not always suit the author and are not always correct. The translations in the article are abridged to save the space. – I. K.

tive (axiological) showing under what conditions this situation can change in a negative or positive way, in case it has a proper moral background. For example:

2. (1) Intelligence, wit, common sense other similar talents or courage, determination, perseverance as manifestations of temperament, no doubt, in some respect are good and desirable, (2) but they can result in extreme evil and harm, if the will, using these natural gifts and unique properties which are therefore called character, will be deprived of such quality as kindness [2, S. 18].

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3. (1) Some properties of it [character] can even contribute to this good will and help it with its task (2) ... but despite this, they do not have an internal absolute value, and always assumed more and good will, which is... but despite this, they do not have an internal absolute value, and always assume good will, which is... [2, S. 18].

In these examples, speech acts in paragraphs (1) refer to the existing state of affairs, and in (2) — to the concept of good will as a condition of their objective moral significance.

Further development of object-directed (descriptive) discourse provides a transition to the concept of duty, which contains, according to Kant, the concept of good will, so that the concept of good will is further discussed as “duty” (Pflicht).

Speech acts which constitute the object-directed (descriptive) speech, are varied; in particular, a rather large group is represented by the defining acts, the ones which contain some definition:

4. The idea of an objective principle as it compels the will is called a command (of reason), and the formula is called an imperative [2, S. 41].

Object-directed speech (i.e., descriptive discourse) is special for it implicitly for the author who carries his own theory, whose presence is detected immediately, as soon as there is a need to make certain adjustments to the line of reasoning, such as:

5. (1) However, this idea of the absolute value of pure will, without extracting any benefit from praising it, holds something so unusual that, in spite of complete agreement with it even by the ordinary mind, it can give way to suspicion if it hides secretly some irrepressible fantasy, and then the goal of nature, which ascribed the good sense of a master to our will, might be misunderstood.

(2) That is why, *we* try to check it from this point of view as well² [2, S. 19f.].

The author of the text, bearing in mind the presence of the recipient and his alleged involvement in the argument, is trying to eliminate possible objections from the addressee or uncertainties that may have been raised by an opponent, and appear in the discourse under an exclusive, ie, excluding the addressee, name of “we” (see paragraph 2), focusing on the further consideration.

Shifting the author as the carrier of his own ethical theory to the forefront of discourse is usually preceded by explaining the necessity of this, as we have seen in paragraph (1).

The addressee is not only involved in the theoretical argument, following the line of reasoning of the speaker (s) and opposing him, as he is the bearer of

² Highlighting here and further in the article is ours. — I. K.

experience (empirical knowledge) himself, and the author of the text often accepts this inclusive “we”, embracing himself into the area of the addressee so that to get his support in the reasoning. Let’s study the following example:

6. Among the natural inclinations of an organized, or adjusted to life, being, we accept as basic the idea that it can fail to hold a single instrument (Werkzeug), designed to achieve a goal, which would not be most suitable and relevant for this purpose. [2, S. 20].

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7. Indeed, *we* find that the more cultivated mind focuses on the pleasure of life and the pursuit of happiness, the more and more people move away from the true satisfaction [2, S. 20f.].

Using in this case the “we”-form, Kant, as empirical subject, appeals to his life experience and the experience of the reader, thereby expanding the argument evidence base for his statements and increasing their objective value and universal significance. Therefore, the “we”-form is used frequently in *reasoning or argumentation* speech acts. For example:

8. (1) But in this case the mind would cross all the borders, if it dared to explain to itself how it be practical, and then it would be equivalent to the problem of figuring out how freedom is possible <...>

(2) For *we* can not explain anything else, but the fact that we can derive from the laws, the subject of which can only be given in some possible experience [2, S. 96].

As proceeds from the example above, the reasoning speech act (2) results from the inclusive (universal) subject “we”, to which Kant as the subject of empirical thinking includes himself.

However, prospective or retrospective speech acts generally result from “we-subject”, as they are constructed by the author as the bearer of his theory and the organizer of his discourse, such as:

9. Now the suspicion, which *we* have noted above, is that in *our* conclusion contained in a hidden form a logical circle, bringing the autonomy [will] out of freedom, and the the moral law out of the latter... [2, S. 89].

This example shows that it is the author himself as the bearer of the theory who stands behind the name “we” and finalizes the given reasoning.

If there is a necessity to clarify some points of the reasoning or to comment on them, such speech acts are specified by “I”, which defines Kant himself as the author, commentator to his theory and the monitor of the discourse. For example:

10. So, intending to provide in due time the metaphysics of morals, I want to precede it with this essay <...>.

That's why I'm not using the title "Critique of Pure Practical Reason" but the title "Foundations of metaphysics of morals" [2, S. 15f.].

What follows is usually justification on why the author does so. Speech acts, like the ones above, perform, as a rule, regulatory, explanatory (introducing) function. They do not involve the participation of the recipient, and become the prerogative of the author as the bearer of his theory and the organizer of his own text.

The same should be applied to the speech acts of the definitive function because they express a personal theoretical position of the author, for example:

11. Under the notion of practical reason I understand the idea of the object as a possible product (result) of freedom [3, S. 174].

The name "I" also refers to the speech acts that are intended to emphasize the author's view, such as:

12. And I say: man and generally any rational being exists as an objective in itself, rather than just as a means to whatever use by any will... [2, S. 59].

The above speech acts are particularly expressive, they usually consist of propositional attitudes (I see / say / think that...), which points to the subjective attitude of the speaker to the propositional content, and propositions (dictum), usually introduced by the conjunction daß.

A particular emphasis should be given to speech acts, standing under the name "I", but with the reference of the author as a subject of empirical thinking. They are, as a rule, introspective, that is, self-reflective: the author puts himself in the position of the observed object. This subject-object relationship in axiological discourse serves as the source (instrument) of developing a proper moral and ethical behavior, subjective moral maxims, etc. by the subject himself, like in the following example:

13. Meanwhile, to ask yourself the question, if the false promise agrees with the debt, in a concise but at the same time doubtless way, I have to ask myself: would I be satisfied if my maxim (with untrue promises to get out of the predicament position) will be a universal law (both for me and for others), and whether I can say to myself: let everyone who is in a difficult position, gives a false promise if otherwise he cannot get out of trouble? However, soon I would say that even though I was lying, yet I can't wish it to become a universal law, for... [2, S. 29f.].

In this case, under the name "I" Kant bears in mind not only himself, but also any other subject of moral behavior; he speaks for them himself, but as an empirical subject of morality in general, rather than the bearer of ethical theory.

The fact that these are different "I" is indicated by the cases in which both of them "clash" in the discourse within a supra-phrasal unity. For example:

14. (1) Third statement (as a consequence of the first two), as I would formulate it, is that debt is the need to take some action out of respect for the law. **(2)** As for the object conceived as the result of my action, I can be bear some disposition, but never respect, because... [2, S. 26].

In the example above in paragraph (1) under the name "I" Kant stands as the bearer of his theory, and in paragraph (2) — as an empirical introspective subject. Speech acts of this subject are usually used to prove justification or illustration of theoretical positions, they are argumentative.

Speech acts with the reference to the "I-subject" are usually of subjective significance, although it is thought of as a generic entity. But to make their provisions more universal, Kant uses the "we-subject". For example:

15.... And if *we* now at any breach of duty look at ourselves, *we* will find that *we* do not want *our* maxim become a universal law, for it is impossible for *us*, so let the opposite stay a universal law... [2, S. 55].

As it follows from the above example, speech acts of “we-subject” are used with the pragmatic purpose — to make the wording of axiological character more absolutely and universally significant. The speech subject “we” helps Kant to implement the principle of objectification, or, as he puts it, the principle of “universal voice”.

Sometimes the author as a theoretical entity holds the name “I”, but as an empirical subject he holds the name “we”, for example:

16. (1) Out of humanity, *I* would agree that (2) that still the majority of *our* actions comply with the duty [2, S. 35].

Here in paragraph (1) the author appears as the bearer of the theory, and in paragraph (2) — as a general empirical subject. The name “I” makes a speech act with concessive modality, and the name “we” forms the judgments with propositional modality, which reduces the degree of affirmative modality of a statement.

The empirical “we-subject” is usually referred to by speech acts with a rhetorical function, which make the argument more expressive. For example:

17. Why *we* should exercise the infinite respect for the fact that, perhaps, is only valid for the random conditions of existence of mankind, but that acts as a universal prescription for every rational being, and in whatever way may be the laws governing *our* will, the laws which determine the will of all sentient beings in general, and as such, determining our will if they were merely empirical and would not have completely a priori originated from pure but practical reason? [2, S. 36].

The fact that the speech act has an argumentative function, suggests introducing «denn» (as), which serves as a rule, a signal for transition to reasoning.

We have mentioned that the axiological discourse as distinct from cognitive discourse (with cognitive function) is characterized by prescriptive, or prescribing, modality. This is especially valid for axiological texts of Kant, abundant in speech acts with a peremptory modality. This implies the fundamental for such Kant’s texts role of “you”-subject with a reference to him, i.e. to the recipient himself. For example:

18. Therefore, the categorical imperative is the one and only, namely: *Do accordingly to such a maxim whereby you can desire it to become a universal law* [2, S. 51].

Or:

19. ...Universal imperative could also be formulated as follows: *act as though the maxim of your action through your will should become a universal natural law of nature* [2, S. 51].

The above examples define the imperatives of moral conduct, which by virtue of their contents refer to a recipient, and at the same time to all sentient beings, seeking a moral way of life and behavior. Such speech acts decorate all axiological discourse of Kant, in contrast to his cognitive discourse, with *imperative (prescriptive) modality*.

But the highest degree of generalization is achieved through transition to the name “he”, that is, the “he —subject”, which is on the pragmatic axis farther than the “I (we)-Subject” and “you-subject”. For this subject Kant positions a

man or any other sensible being, under the idea of freedom and the autonomy of the moral laws of the intelligible world. In this case, the “he –subject” becomes the object of reasoning:

20. As a sensible, that is, belonging to the intelligible world, creature, man can think because of the reasons of his own will rooted solely in the idea of freedom, because... [2, S. 88].

Speech acts like the one above, is characterized by the use of universal quantifiers such as *immer*, *jederzeit*, *niemals*, etc., so that the entire text of Kant’s treatise “Principles of Metaphysics of Morals”, as macro-speech act is the reference of the transcendental “I-subject” with a value of a reasonable moral being in general, or having intelligence (*Intelligenz*), i.e., an intelligible being, abiding to the laws, which are incorporated in the mind and in the principle of autonomy (freedom) of will.

This transcendental subject in the text sometimes gets the name “I”, as in the following passage:

21. For since he [man] doesn’t create himself and comes to his knowledge empirically rather than a priori, then it is natural that he gets information about himself through the inner sense and, therefore, only through the manifestations of his nature and the way his consciousness gets affixed, then, in addition to the need of its own entity, which consists entirely of phenomena, he has to suggest the existence of another, background, personal “I”, such as it is in itself and, therefore, to identify himself in simple perception and ability to feel the world of sense, as well as to what is the pure activity (what comes to consciousness directly rather through affixation) to the intellectual world, which he, however, is not available for the knowledge [2, S. 87].

As it follows from this example, the personal pronoun “I” in Kant’s axiological discourse has variety of meanings. Apart from the values which were discussed above, it also acts as the name of the transcendental subject, that is, of the whole mankind, which involves a man as intelligible entity.

“He –subject” enables the author of the text to show the difference between the two types of duty: 1) the duty to yourself and 2) the duty in relation to other people. In this case, the speech acts function as **illustrations** and have the reference to an empirical “he –subject”, for example:

22. (1) Does one person who is experiencing the pressure of a number of fatalities, the number of which increases to despair, gets disgusted with life, still have enough reason to ask himself whether it would be a violation of duty to himself to commit a suicide?..

(2) The other one, driven by need, is forced to borrow money. He knows that he won’t be able to repay the debt... but does he still have enough conscience to ask himself, if it would not be inexcusable to violate the duty and fight the need this way?.. [2, S. 52].

As follows from the examples above, the empirical “he-subject” and his speech acts are used by Kant to formulate the subjective maxims of conduct and the subsequent verification of their unsuitability (or suitability) to serve as universal laws of moral behavior, if they are (or are not) check general moral law. This is achieved by an act of self-reflection of the subject, for which the author makes him speak (as in the examples above).

Interestingly, Kant often builds his arguments about the categorical imperative using various empirical subjects and speech acts. In such case, the argument is based on the model of the categorical syllogism. For example:

23. (1) But *suppose* that there is something the mere existence of which is in itself an absolute value and as a goal in itself it could be the basis of certain laws...

(2) And then *I* say: man and any sensible being exists as an goal in himself, but not as some means in somebody's disposal...

(3) ... Hence, it is both an objective principle, which serves as a supreme practical reasons to possibly and necessarily formulate the laws of will... Therefore, the practical imperative will be as follows: act so that you on behalf of yourself or on behalf of any other person can treat humans as a goal but never as means... [AA, IV, 428].

For constructing this text syllogism, the author use speech acts which refer to the following subjects:

- major premise (1) – to “you-subject” (recipient),
- minor premise (2) – to the author as theoretical “I-subject”,
- conclusion (3) – to “you-subject” and to all subjects on his behalf, i.e. to the humanity in general..

So, the main difference between Kant's axiological discourse and the discourse of cognitive orientation is that the former significantly increases the proportion of personal pronouns, which introduce the names for various speech roles of the author of the text. This is the text with the higher intensity of recipient factor, resulting in the emergence of the speech acts, which are not represented in Kant's cognitive texts. Striking imperative modality of this type of Kant's text distinguishes it from the others.

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