

THE BENEFACTIVE AND MALEFACTIVE USE OF WISHES IN THE POLISH AND GERMAN LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC SPACE (SPECIFICALLY IN PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES)

Summary

Dr. Magdalena Jurewicz's book presents a contrastive analysis of the use of wishes in the Polish and German language in public space, specifically in parliamentary speeches. Wishes in this specific genre, i.e. a parliamentary speech, may become not only benefactive, but also malefactive, as evidenced by numerous examples given by the author, taken from speeches made by MPs in Polish Sejm and German Bundestag. Therefore, wishes are made not only in situations usually associated with making wishes (e.g. various kinds of occasions), but also in an ironic way, when they are used primarily to scorn political opponents.

The author analyzed the nature and position of wishes in a particular type of text, namely a speech of a member of parliament, from a pragmatic and phenomenological perspective, which allowed her to shed light on multiple functions of these forms in public speeches, such as parliamentary speeches, resulting from the fact that such texts have many different recipients. Particularly interesting was the change in the illocution of wishes, which, under the influence of the irony present in them, may be used by opposition politicians to ridicule politicians from the ruling party, and thus indirectly to discredit them, which may be caused also by the general persuasive function of all political speeches.

In the case of wishes, it seems necessary to take them into account in the analysis of a specific communication situation, because the role of wishes in specific texts may be different. For example, e.g. in a vote of no confidence a wish is a benefactive act from a class of directives (a request, an exhortation to choose or avoid choosing a particular person), while a wish with ironic elements may become a malefactive act targeting one of the addressees of the statement.

There have been few studies, either by Polish or foreign researchers, on wishes. Pragmatic classifications (e.g. Austin 1962, Searle 1969, Wunderlich 1972, Rosengren 1979, Klaus 1964, Schmidt 1981, Michel 1985, Grzegorzycowa 1991, Tabakowska 2001, Engel 2004, Avdeev and Habrajska 2004 and 2006), as well as criticism of these classifications (e.g. Kalisz 1995, Prokop 2010) show that wishes are a marginal part of research on speech acts. An approach to wishes from a phenomenological perspective, following the concept of Adolf Reinach, allowed for an analysis of the place of wishes

among taxonomic entities defined by other representatives of the speech act theory. It turns out that the classification of this act of speech under a given category, e.g. the beneficial acts of speech according to Prokop (2010), may turn out to be problematic in the light of the present considerations. Moreover, an attempt to describe wishes in detail with the use of categories distinguished by Reinach highlights the aspects which have so far gone unnoticed. In describing a priori social acts, Reinach focused on a specific legal aspect. It seems justified to take account of a particular type of text in the classification of speech acts: considering speech acts without specifying the type of text in which they appear may be rather ineffective. Therefore, the categories used to analyze wishes in this research project were extended to account for the type of text, which made it possible to include in the present study additional categories used in text analysis.

The body of texts subject to qualitative analysis (cf. the analysis of texts as a method of qualitative research in Silverman 2007: 43–44) consists of examples of wishes expressed in the Polish and German parliaments, extracted from statements of politicians from opposition parties in the Polish Sejm of the fifth and sixth terms and in the Bundestag of the seventeenth and eighteenth terms, published in writing on the websites of both parliaments.

In order to distinguish between benefactive and malefactive speech acts in MPs' statements, a description of the concept of wishing (something to someone) in Polish and German was developed on the basis of the available literature, together with possible similarities between such speech acts and other speech acts in this category.

The Internet search engines of both parliaments, as well as the TextSTAT2 computer program, were used to search for statements containing wishes.