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Speech Genres and Other Late Essays

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The Problem of Speech Genres

1. Statement of the Problem and Definition of Speech Genres

All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity. This, of course, in no way disaffirms the national unity of language.[1] Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects—thematic content, style, and compositional structure—are inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication. Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*.

The wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex. Special emphasis should be placed on the extreme *heterogeneity* of speech genres (oral and written). In fact, the category of speech genres should include short rejoinders of daily dialogue (and these are extremely varied depending on the subject matter, situation, and participants), everyday narration, writing (in all its various forms), the brief standard military command, the elaborate and detailed order, the fairly variegated repertoire of business documents (for the most part standard), and the diverse world of commentary (in the broad sense of the word: social, political). And we must

also include here the diverse forms of scientific statements and all literary genres (from the proverb to the multivolume novel). It might seem that speech genres are so heterogeneous that they do not have and cannot have a single common level at which they can be studied. For here, on one level of inquiry, appear such heterogeneous phenomena as the single-word everyday rejoinder and the multivolume novel, the military command that is standardized even in its intonation and the profoundly individual lyrical work, and so on. One might think that such functional heterogeneity makes the common features of speech genres excessively abstract and empty. This probably explains why the general problem of speech genres has never really been raised. Literary genres have been studied more than anything else. But from antiquity to the present, they have been studied in terms of their specific literary and artistic features, in terms of the differences that distinguish one from the other (within the realm of literature), and not as specific types of utterances distinct from other types, but sharing with them a common *verbal* (language) nature. The general linguistic problem of the utterance and its types has hardly been considered at all. Rhetorical genres have been studied since antiquity (and not much has been added in subsequent epochs to classical theory). At that time, more attention was already being devoted to the verbal nature of these genres as utterances: for example, to such aspects as the relation to the listener and his influence on the utterance, the specific verbal finalization of the utterance (as distinct from its completeness of thought), and so forth. But here, too, the specific features of rhetorical genres (judicial, political) still overshadowed their general linguistic nature. Finally, everyday speech genres have been studied (mainly rejoinders in everyday dialogue), and from a general linguistic standpoint (in the school of Saussure and among his later followers—the Structuralists, the American behaviorists, and, on a completely different linguistic basis, the Vosslerians).[2] But this line of inquiry could not lead to a correct determination of the general linguistic nature of the utterance either, since it was limited to the specific features of everyday oral speech, sometimes being directly and deliberately oriented toward primitive utterances (American behaviorists).

The extreme heterogeneity of speech genres and the attendant difficulty of determining the general nature of the utterance should in no way be underestimated. It is especially important here to draw attention to the very significant difference between primary (simple) and secondary (complex) speech genres (understood not as a functional

difference). Secondary (complex) speech genres—novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth—arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, sociopolitical, and so on. During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. For example, rejoinders of everyday dialogue or letters found in a novel retain their form and their everyday significance only on the plane of the novel's content. They enter into actual reality only via the novel as a whole, that is, as a literary-artistic event and not as everyday life. The novel as a whole is an utterance just as rejoinders in everyday dialogue or private letters are (they do have a common nature), but unlike these, the novel is a secondary (complex) utterance.

The difference between primary and secondary (ideological) genres is very great and fundamental,[3] but this is precisely why the nature of the utterance should be revealed and defined through analysis of both types. Only then can the definition be adequate to the complex and profound nature of the utterance (and encompass its most important facets). A one-sided orientation toward primary genres inevitably leads to a vulgarization of the entire problem (behaviorist linguistics is an extreme example). The very interrelations between primary and secondary genres and the process of the historical formation of the latter shed light on the nature of the utterance (and above all on the complex problem of the interrelations among language, ideology, and world view).

A study of the nature of the utterance and of the diversity of generic forms of utterances in various spheres of human activity is immensely important to almost all areas of linguistics and philology. This is because any research whose material is concrete language—the history of a language, normative grammar, the compilation of any kind of dictionary, the stylistics of language, and so forth—inevitably deals with concrete utterances (written and oral) belonging to various spheres of human activity and communication: chronicles, contracts, texts of laws, clerical and other documents, various literary, scientific, and commentarial genres, official and personal letters, rejoinders in every-day dialogue (in all of their diverse subcategories), and so on. And it is

here that scholars find the language data they need. A clear idea of the nature of the utterance in general and of the peculiarities of the various types of utterances (primary and secondary), that is, of various speech genres, is necessary, we think, for research in any special area. To ignore the nature of the utterance or to fail to consider the peculiarities of generic subcategories of speech in any area of linguistic study leads to perfunctoriness and excessive abstractness, distorts the historicity of the research, and weakens the link between language and life. After all, language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well. The utterance is an exceptionally important node of problems. We shall approach certain areas and problems of the science of language in this context.

First of all, stylistics. Any style is inseparably related to the utterance and to typical forms of utterances, that is, speech genres. Any utterance—oral or written, primary or secondary, and in any sphere of communication—is individual and therefore can reflect the individuality of the speaker (or writer); that is, it possesses individual style. But not all genres are equally conducive to reflecting the individuality of the speaker in the language of the utterance, that is, to an individual style. The most conducive genres are those of artistic literature: here the individual style enters directly into the very task of the utterance, and this is one of its main goals (but even within artistic literature various genres offer different possibilities for expressing individuality in language and various aspects of individuality). The least favorable conditions for reflecting individuality in language obtain in speech genres that require a standard form, for example, many kinds of business documents, military commands, verbal signals in industry, and so on. Here one can reflect only the most superficial, almost biological aspects of individuality (mainly in the oral manifestation of these standard types of utterances). In the vast majority of speech genres (except for literary-artistic ones), the individual style does not enter into the intent of the utterance, does not serve as its only goal, but is, as it were, an epiphenomenon of the utterance, one of its by-products. Various genres can reveal various layers and facets of the individual personality, and individual style can be found in various interrelations with the national language. The very problem of the national and the individual in language is basically the problem of the utterance (after all, only here, in the utterance, is the national language embodied in individual form). The very determination of style in general, and indi-

vidual style in particular, requires deeper study of both the nature of the utterance and the diversity of speech genres.

The organic, inseparable link between style and genre is clearly revealed also in the problem of language styles, or functional styles. In essence, language, or functional, styles are nothing other than generic styles for certain spheres of human activity and communication. Each sphere has and applies its own genres that correspond to its own specific conditions. There are also particular styles that correspond to these genres. A particular function (scientific, technical, commentarial, business, everyday) and the particular conditions of speech communication specific for each sphere give rise to particular genres, that is, certain relatively stable thematic, compositional, and stylistic types of utterances. Style is inseparably linked to particular thematic unities and—what is especially important—to particular compositional unities: to particular types of construction of the whole, types of its completion, and types of relations between the speaker and other participants in speech communication (listeners or readers, partners, the other's speech, and so forth). Style enters as one element into the generic unity of the utterance. Of course, this does not mean that language style cannot be the subject of its own independent study. Such a study, that is, of language stylistics as an independent discipline, is both feasible and necessary. But this study will be correct and productive only if based on a constant awareness of the generic nature of language styles, and on a preliminary study of the subcategories of speech genres. Up to this point the stylistics of language has not had such a basis. Hence its weakness. There is no generally recognized classification of language styles. Those who attempt to create them frequently fail to meet the fundamental logical requirement of classification: a unified basis.[4] Existing taxonomies are extremely poor and undifferentiated.[a] For example, a recently published academy grammar of the Russian language gives the following stylistic subcategories of language: bookish speech, popular speech, abstract-scientific, scientific-technical, journalistic-commentarial, official-business, and familiar everyday speech, as well as vulgar common parlance. In addi-

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[a]The same kinds of classifications of language styles, impoverished and lacking clarity, with a fabricated foundation, are given by A. N. Gvozdev in his book *Ocherki po stilistike russkogo jazyka* (Essays on the stylistics of the Russian language) (Moscow, 1952, pp. 13–15). All of these classifications are based on an uncritical assimilation of traditional ideas about language styles.

tion to these linguistic styles, there are the stylistic subcategories of dialectical words, archaic words, and occupational expressions. Such a classification of styles is completely random, and at its base lies a variety of principles (or bases) for division into styles. Moreover, this classification is both inexhaustive and inadequately differentiated. All this is a direct result of an inadequate understanding of the generic nature of linguistic styles, and the absence of a well-thought-out classification of speech genres in terms of spheres of human activity (and also ignorance of the distinction between primary and secondary genres, which is very important for stylistics).

It is especially harmful to separate style from genre when elaborating historical problems. Historical changes in language styles are inseparably linked to changes in speech genres. Literary language is a complex, dynamic system of linguistic styles. The proportions and interrelations of these styles in the system of literary language are constantly changing. Literary language, which also includes nonliterary styles, is an even more complex system, and it is organized on different bases. In order to puzzle out the complex historical dynamics of these systems and move from a simple (and, in the majority of cases, superficial) description of styles, which are always in evidence and alternating with one another, to a historical explanation of these changes, one must develop a special history of speech genres (and not only secondary, but also primary ones) that reflects more directly, clearly, and flexibly all the changes taking place in social life. Utterances and their types, that is, speech genres, are the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language. There is not a single new phenomenon (phonetic, lexical, or grammatical) that can enter the system of language without having traversed the long and complicated path of generic-stylistic testing and modification.[b]

In each epoch certain speech genres set the tone for the development of literary language. And these speech genres are not only secondary (literary, commentarial, and scientific), but also primary (certain types of oral dialogue—of the salon, of one's own circle, and other types as well, such as familiar, family-everyday, sociopolitical, philosophical, and so on). Any expansion of the literary language that results from drawing on various extraliterary strata of the national lan-

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[b]This thesis of ours has nothing in common with the Vosslerian idea of the primacy of the stylistic over the grammatical. Our subsequent exposition will make this completely clear.

guage inevitably entails some degree of penetration into all genres of written language (literary, scientific, commentarial, conversational, and so forth) to a greater or lesser degree, and entails new generic devices for the construction of the speech whole, its finalization, the accommodation of the listener or partner, and so forth. This leads to a more or less fundamental restructuring and renewal of speech genres. When dealing with the corresponding extraliterary strata of the national language, one inevitably also deals with the speech genres through which these strata are manifested. In the majority of cases, these are various types of conversational-dialogical genres. Hence the more or less distinct dialogization of secondary genres, the weakening of their monological composition, the new sense of the listener as a partner-interlocutor, new forms of finalization of the whole, and so forth. Where there is style there is genre. The transfer of style from one genre to another not only alters the way a style sounds, under conditions of a genre unnatural to it, but also violates or renews the given genre.

Thus, both individual and general language styles govern speech genres. A deeper and broader study of the latter is absolutely imperative for a productive study of any stylistic problem.

However, both the fundamental and the general methodological question of the interrelations between lexicon and grammar (on the one hand) and stylistics (on the other) rests on the same problem of the utterance and of speech genres.

Grammar (and lexicon) is essentially different from stylistics (some even oppose it to stylistics), but at the same time there is not a single grammatical study that can do without stylistic observation and excursus. In a large number of cases the distinction between grammar and stylistics appears to be completely erased. There are phenomena that some scholars include in the area of grammar while others include them in the area of stylistics. The syntagma is an example.

One might say that grammar and stylistics converge and diverge in any concrete language phenomenon. If considered only in the language system, it is a grammatical phenomenon, but if considered in the whole of the individual utterance or in a speech genre, it is a stylistic phenomenon. And this is because the speaker's very selection of a particular grammatical form is a stylistic act. But these two viewpoints of one and the same specific linguistic phenomenon should not be impervious to one another and should not simply replace one another mechanically. They should be organically combined (with, however,

the most clear-cut methodological distinction between them) on the basis of the real unity of the language phenomenon. Only a profound understanding of the nature of the utterance and the particular features of speech genres can provide a correct solution to this complex methodological problem.

It seems to us that a study of the nature of the utterance and of speech genres is of fundamental importance for overcoming those simplistic notions about speech life, about the so-called speech flow, about communication and so forth—ideas which are still current in our language studies. Moreover, a study of the utterance as a *real unit of speech communion* will also make it possible to understand more correctly the *nature of language units* (as a system): words and sentences. We shall now turn to this more general problem.

II. The Utterance as a Unit of Speech Communion: The Difference between This Unit and Units of Language (Words and Sentences)

Nineteenth-century linguistics, beginning with Wilhelm von Humboldt, while not denying the communicative function of language, tried to place it in the background as something secondary.[5] What it foregrounded was the function of thought emerging *independently of communication.* The famous Humboldtian formula goes like this: "Apart from the communication between one human and another, speech is a necessary condition for reflection *even in solitude.*" Others, Vosslerians for example, emphasize the so-called expressive function. With all the various ways individual theoreticians understand this function, it essentially amounts to the expression of the speaker's individual discourse. Language arises from man's need to express himself, to objectify himself. The essence of any form of language is somehow reduced to the spiritual creativity of the individuum. Several other versions of the function of language have been and are now being suggested, but it is still typical to underestimate, if not altogether ignore, the communicative function of language. Language is regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were only *one* speaker who does not have any *necessary* relation to *other* participants in speech communication. If the role of the other is taken into account at all, it is the role of a listener, who understands the speaker only passively. The utterance is adequate to its object (i.e., the content of the uttered thought) and to the person who is pronouncing the utterance. Language essentially needs only a speaker—one speaker—and an object for his speech. And if language also serves as a means of communication, this is a sec-

ondary function that has nothing to do with its essence. Of course, the language collective, the plurality of speakers, cannot be ignored when speaking of language, but when defining the essence of language this aspect is not a necessary one that determines the nature of language. Sometimes the language collective is regarded as a kind of collective personality, "the spirit of the people," and so forth, and immense significance is attached to it (by representatives of the "psychology of nations"),[6] but even in this case the plurality of speakers, and others with respect to each given speaker, is denied any real essential significance.

Still current in linguistics are such *fictions* as the "listener" and "understander" (partners of the "speaker"), the "unified speech flow," and so on. These fictions produce a completely distorted idea of the complex and multifaceted process of active speech communication. Courses in general linguistics (even serious ones like Saussure's) frequently present graphic-schematic depictions of the two partners in speech communication—the speaker and the listener (who perceives the speech)—and provide diagrams of the active speech processes of the speaker and the corresponding passive processes of the listener's perception and understanding of the speech. One cannot say that these diagrams are false or that they do not correspond to certain aspects of reality. But when they are put forth as the actual whole of speech communication, they become a scientific fiction. The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (the language meaning) of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on. And the listener adopts this responsive attitude for the entire duration of the process of listening and understanding, from the very beginning—sometimes literally from the speaker's first word. Any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive, although the degree of this activity varies extremely. Any understanding is imbued with response and necessarily elicits it in one form or another: the listener becomes the speaker. A passive understanding of the meaning of perceived speech is only an abstract aspect of the actual whole of actively responsive understanding, which is then actualized in a subsequent response that is actually articulated. Of course, an utterance is not always followed immediately by an articulated response. An actively responsive understanding of what is heard (a command, for example) can be directly realized in action (the

execution of an order or command that has been understood and accepted for execution), or it can remain, for the time being, a silent responsive understanding (certain speech genres are intended exclusively for this kind of responsive understanding, for example, lyrical genres), but this is, so to speak, responsive understanding with a delayed reaction. Sooner or later what is heard and actively understood will find its response in the subsequent speech or behavior of the listener. In most cases, genres of complex cultural communication are intended precisely for this kind of actively responsive understanding with delayed action. Everything we have said here also pertains to written and read speech, with the appropriate adjustments and additions.

Thus, all real and integral understanding is actively responsive, and constitutes nothing other than the initial preparatory stage of a response (in whatever form it may be actualized). And the speaker himself is oriented precisely toward such an actively responsive understanding. He does not expect passive understanding that, so to speak, only duplicates his own idea in someone else's mind. Rather, he expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution, and so forth (various speech genres presuppose various integral orientations and speech plans on the part of the speakers or writers). The desire to make one's speech understood is only an abstract aspect of the speaker's concrete and total speech plan. Moreover, any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. He is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances—his own and others'—with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances.

Thus, the listener who understands passively, who is depicted as the speaker's partner in the schematic diagrams of general linguistics, does not correspond to the real participant in speech communication. What is represented by the diagram is only an abstract aspect of the real total act of actively responsive understanding, the sort of understanding that evokes a response, and one that the speaker anticipates. Such scientific abstraction is quite justified in itself, but under one condition: that it is clearly recognized as merely an abstraction and is

not represented as the real concrete whole of the phenomenon. Otherwise it becomes a fiction. This is precisely the case in linguistics, since such abstract schemata, while perhaps not claiming to reflect real speech communication, are not accompanied by any indication of the great complexity of the actual phenomenon. As a result, the schema distorts the actual picture of speech communication, removing precisely its most essential aspects. The active role of the *other* in the process of speech communication is thus reduced to a minimum.

This disregard for the active role of the other in the process of speech communication, and the desire generally to bypass this process, are manifested in the imprecise and ambiguous use of such terms as "speech" or "speech flow." These deliberately indefinite terms are usually intended to designate something that can be divided into language units, which are then interpreted as segments of language: phonetic (phoneme, syllable, speech rhythm [*takt*]) and lexical (sentence and word). "The speech flow can be broken down . . ."; "Our speech is divided . . ." This is the way those sections of grammars devoted to the study of such language units are usually introduced into general courses in linguistics and grammar, and also into special research on phonetics and lexicology. Unfortunately, even our recently published academy grammar uses the same indefinite and ambiguous term "our speech." Here is how the section on phonetics is introduced: "*Our speech* is basically divided into sentences, which in turn can be broken down into phrases and words. The word is clearly divided into small sound units—*syllables* . . . syllables are divided into individual speech sounds or phonemes. . . ."[7]

But what sort of thing is this "speech flow" and what is meant by "our speech"? What is the nature of their duration? Do they have a beginning and an end? If their length is indefinite, which of their segments do we use when we break them down into units? These questions have not been raised or defined at all. Linguists have not yet transformed the imprecise *word* "speech"—which can designate language, the speech process (i.e., speaking), the individual utterance, an entire long indefinite series of such utterances, or a particular speech genre ("he gave a speech")—into a definite (defined) *term* with clear-cut semantic boundaries (similar situations also exist in other languages). This can be explained by the almost complete lack of research into the problem of the utterance and speech genres (and, consequently, of speech communion as well). What we almost always

find is a confused play with all these meanings (except for the last). Most frequently the expression "our speech" simply means any utterance of any person. But this meaning is never consistently sustained throughout.[c]

And if it is indefinite and unclear just what it is that is divided and broken down into units of language, this lack of definition and confusion also spread to these units themselves.

The terminological imprecision and confusion in this methodologically central point of linguistic thinking result from ignoring the *real unit* of speech communication: the utterance. For speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, speech subjects. Speech is always cast in the form of an utterance belonging to a particular speaking subject, and outside this form it cannot exist. Regardless of how varied utterances may be in terms of their length, their content, and their compositional structure, they have common structural features as units of speech communication and, above all, quite clear-cut boundaries. Since these boundaries are so essential and fundamental they must be discussed in detail.

The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a *change of speaking subjects*, that is, a change of speakers. Any utterance—from a short (single-word) rejoinder in everyday dialogue to the large novel or scientific treatise—has, so to speak, an absolute beginning and an absolute end: its beginning is preceded by the utterances of others, and its end is followed by the responsive utterances of others (or, although it may be silent, others' active responsive understanding, or, finally, a responsive action based on this understanding). The speaker ends his utterance in order to relinquish the floor to the other or to make room for the other's active responsive understanding. The utterance is not a conventional unit, but a real unit, clearly delimited by the change of speaking subjects.

[c]And it cannot be sustained. For example, such an utterance as "Ah!" (a rejoinder in dialogue) cannot be broken down into sentences, phrases, or syllables. Consequently, not just *any* utterance will do. Further, they divide up the utterance (speech) and obtain units of language. Frequently the sentence is then defined as the simplest utterance and, consequently, it cannot be a *unit* of the utterance. It is tacitly assumed that there is only one speaker, and dialogical overtones are thus ignored.

As compared to the boundaries of the utterance, all other boundaries (between sentences, phrases, syntagmic units, and words) are relative and arbitrary.

jects, which ends by relinquishing the floor to the other, as if with a silent *dixi*, perceived by the listeners (as a sign) that the speaker has finished.

This change of speaking subjects, which creates clear-cut boundaries of the utterance, varies in nature and acquires different forms in the heterogeneous spheres of human activity and life, depending on the functions of language and on the conditions and situations of communication. One observes this change of speaking subjects most simply and clearly in actual dialogue where the utterances of the interlocutors or partners in dialogue (which we shall call rejoinders) alternate. Because of its simplicity and clarity, dialogue is a classic form of speech communication. Each rejoinder, regardless of how brief and abrupt, has a specific quality of completion that expresses a particular position of the speaker, to which one may respond or may assume, with respect to it, a responsive position. We shall discuss further this specific quality of completion of the utterance, one of its main markers. But at the same time rejoinders are all linked to one another. And the sort of relations that exist among rejoinders of dialogue—relations between question and answer, assertion and objection, assertion and agreement, suggestion and acceptance, order and execution, and so forth—are impossible among units of language (words and sentences), either in the system of language (in the vertical cross section) or within the utterance (on the horizontal plane). These specific relations among rejoinders in a dialogue are only subcategories of specific relations among whole utterances in the process of speech communication. These relations are possible only among utterances of different speech subjects; they presuppose *other* (with respect to the speaker) participants in speech communication. The relations among whole utterances cannot be treated grammatically since, we repeat, such relations are impossible among units of language, and not only in the system of language, but within the utterance as well.

In secondary speech genres, especially rhetorical ones, we encounter phenomena that apparently contradict this tenet. Quite frequently within the boundaries of his own utterance the speaker (or writer) raises questions, answers them himself, raises objections to his own ideas, responds to his own objections, and so on. But these phenomena are nothing other than a conventional playing out of speech communication and primary speech genres.[d] This kind of playing out is

[d] The seam of boundaries in secondary genres.

typical of rhetorical genres (in the broad sense, which would include certain kinds of scientific popularization), but other secondary genres (artistic and scholarly) also use various forms such as this to introduce primary speech genres and relations among them into the construction of the utterance (and here they are altered to a greater or lesser degree, for the speaking subject does not really change). Such is the nature of secondary genres. But the relations among the reproduced primary genres cannot be treated grammatically in any of these phenomena, even though they appear within a single utterance. Within the utterance they retain their own specific nature, which is essentially different from the nature of relations among words and sentences (and other language units, i.e., phrases and so forth).

Here, drawing on material from dialogue and the rejoinders that comprise it, we must provisionally pose the problem of the *sentence* as a *unit of language,* as distinct from the *utterance* as a unit of speech communication.

(The question of the nature of the sentence is one of the most complicated and difficult in linguistics. The clash of opinions regarding this question continues in our scholarship to this day. Of course, the task we set for ourselves here does not include an investigation of this problem in all its complexity; we intend to mention only one of its aspects. But it seems to us that this aspect is essential to the entire problem. It is important for us to define precisely the relationship between the sentence and the utterance. This will give us a clearer picture of both the utterance and the sentence.)

But this will come later. Here we shall simply note that the boundaries of the sentence as a unit of language are never determined by a change of speaking subjects. Such a change, framing the sentence on both sides, transforms the sentence into an entire utterance. Such a sentence assumes new qualities and is perceived quite differently from the way it would be if it were framed by other sentences within the single utterance of one and the same speaker. The sentence is a relatively complete thought, directly correlated with the other thoughts of a single speaker within his utterance as a whole. The speaker pauses at the end of a sentence in order then to move on to his own next thought, continuing, supplementing, and substantiating the preceding one. The context of the sentence is the speech of one speaking subject (speaker). The sentence itself is not correlated directly or personally with the extraverbal context of reality (situation, setting, prehistory) or with the utterances of other speakers; this takes place only

indirectly, through its entire surrounding context, that is, through the utterance as a whole. And if the sentence is not surrounded by a context of the speech of the same speaker, that is, if it constitutes an entire completed utterance (a rejoinder in dialogue), then it (itself) directly confronts reality (the extraverbal context of the speech) and the different utterances of *others*. It is not followed by a pause that the speaker himself designates and interprets. (Any pause that is grammatical, calculated, or interpreted is possible only within the speech of a single speaker, i.e., within a single utterance. Pauses between utterances are, of course, not grammatical but real. Such real pauses—psychological, or prompted by some external circumstance—can also interrupt a single utterance. In secondary artistic genres such pauses are calculated by the artist, director, or actor. But these pauses differ essentially from both grammatical and stylistic pauses—for example, among syntagmas—within the utterance.) One expects them to be followed by a response or a responsive understanding on the part of another speaker. Such a sentence, having become an entire utterance, acquires a special semantic fullness of value. One can assume a responsive position with respect to it; one can agree or disagree with it, execute it, evaluate it, and so on. But a sentence in context cannot elicit a response. It acquires this capability (or, rather, assimilates to it) only in the entirety of the whole utterance.

All these completely new qualities and peculiarities belong not to the sentence that has become a whole utterance, but precisely to the utterance itself. They reflect the nature of the utterance, not the nature of the sentence. They attach themselves to the sentence, augmenting it until it is a complete utterance. The sentence as a language unit lacks all of these properties; it is not demarcated on either side by a change of speaking subjects; it has neither direct contact with reality (with an extraverbal situation) nor a direct relation to others' utterances; it does not have semantic fullness of value; and it has no capacity to determine directly the responsive position of the *other* speaker, that is, it cannot evoke a response. The sentence as a language unit is grammatical in nature. It has grammatical boundaries and grammatical completedness and unity. (Regarded in the whole of the utterance and from the standpoint of this whole, it acquires stylistic properties.) When the sentence figures as a whole utterance, it is as though it has been placed in a frame made of quite a different material. When one forgets this in analyzing a sentence, one distorts the nature of the sentence (and simultaneously the nature of the utterance as well, by treat-

ing it grammatically). A great many linguists and linguistic schools (in the area of syntax) are held captive by this confusion, and what they study as a sentence is in essence a kind of *hybrid* of the sentence (unit of language) and the utterance (unit of speech communication). One does not exchange sentences any more than one exchanges words (in the strict linguistic sense) or phrases. One exchanges utterances that are constructed from language units: words, phrases, and sentences. And an utterance can be constructed both from one sentence and from one word, so to speak, from one speech unit (mainly a rejoinder in dialogue), but this does not transform a language unit into a unit of speech communication.

The lack of a well-developed theory of the utterance as a unit of speech communication leads to an imprecise distinction between the sentence and the utterance, and frequently to a complete confusion of the two.

Let us return to real-life dialogue. As we have said, this is the simplest and the most classic form of speech communication. The change of speaking subjects (speakers) that determines the boundaries of the utterance is especially clear here. But in other spheres of speech communication as well, including areas of complexly organized cultural communication (scientific and artistic), the nature of the boundaries of the utterance remains the same.

Complexly structured and specialized works of various scientific and artistic genres, in spite of all the ways in which they differ from rejoinders in dialogue, are by nature the same kind of units of speech communication. They, too, are clearly demarcated by a change of speaking subjects, and these boundaries, while retaining their *external* clarity, acquire here a special internal aspect because the speaking subject—in this case, the *author* of the work—manifests his own individuality in his style, his world view, and in all aspects of the design of his work. This imprint of individuality marking the work also creates special internal boundaries that distinguish this work from other works connected with it in the overall processes of speech communication in that particular cultural sphere: from the works of predecessors on whom the author relies, from other works of the same school, from the works of opposing schools with which the author is contending, and so on.

The work, like the rejoinder in dialogue, is oriented toward the response of the other (others), toward his active responsive understanding, which can assume various forms: educational influence on the readers, persuasion of them, critical responses, influence on followers

and successors, and so on. It can determine others' responsive positions under the complex conditions of speech communication in a particular cultural sphere. The work is a link in the chain of speech communion. Like the rejoinder in a dialogue, it is related to other work-utterances: both those to which it responds and those that respond to it. At the same time, like the rejoinder in a dialogue, it is separated from them by the absolute boundaries created by a change of speaking subjects.

Thus, the change of speaking subjects, by framing the utterance and creating for it a stable mass that is sharply delimited from other related utterances, is the first constitutive feature of the utterance as a unit of speech communication, a feature distinguishing it from units of language. Let us turn to this second feature, which is inseparably linked to the first. This second feature is the specific *finalization* of the utterance.

The finalization of the utterance is, if you will, the inner side of the change of speech subjects. This change can only take place because the speaker has said (or written) *everything* he wishes to say at a particular moment or under particular circumstances. When hearing or reading, we clearly sense the end of the utterance, as if we hear the speaker's concluding *dixi*. This finalization is specific and is determined by special criteria. The first and foremost criterion for the finalization of the utterance is *the possibility of responding to it* or, more precisely and broadly, of assuming a responsive attitude toward it (for example, executing an order). This criterion is met by a short everyday question, for example, "What time is it?" (one may respond to it), an everyday request that one may or may not fulfill, a scientific statement with which one may agree or disagree (partially or completely), or a novel, which can be evaluated as a whole. Some kind of finalization is necessary to be able to react to an utterance. It is not enough for the utterance to be understood in terms of *language*. An absolutely understood and completed sentence, if it is a sentence and not an utterance comprised of one sentence, cannot evoke a responsive reaction: it is comprehensible, but it is still not *all*. This *all*—the indicator of the *wholeness* of the utterance—is subject neither to grammatical nor to abstract semantic definition.

This finalized wholeness of the utterance, guaranteeing the possibility of a response (or of responsive understanding), is determined by three aspects (or factors) that are inseparably linked in the organic whole of the utterance: 1. semantic exhaustiveness of the theme; 2.

the speaker's plan or speech will; 3. typical compositional and generic forms of finalization.

The first aspect—the referential and semantic exhaustiveness of the theme of the utterance—differs profoundly in various spheres of communication. This exhaustiveness can be almost complete in certain spheres of everyday life (questions that are purely factual and similarly factual responses to them, requests, orders, and so forth), in certain business circles, in the sphere of military and industrial commands and orders, that is, in those spheres where speech genres are maximally standard by nature and where the creative aspect is almost completely lacking. Conversely, in creative spheres (especially, of course, in scientific ones), the semantic exhaustiveness of the theme may be only relative. Here one can speak only of a certain minimum of finalization making it possible to occupy a responsive position. We do not objectively exhaust the subject, but, by becoming the *theme* of the utterance (i.e., of a scientific work) the subject achieves a relative finalization under certain conditions, when the problem is posed in a particular way, on the basis of particular material, with particular aims set by the author, that is, already within the boundaries of a *specific authorial intent*. Thus, we inevitably come to the second aspect, which is inseparably linked to the first.

In each utterance—from the single-word, everyday rejoinder to large, complex works of science or literature—we embrace, understand, and sense the speaker's *speech plan* or *speech will*, which determines the entire utterance, its length and boundaries. We imagine to ourselves what the speaker *wishes* to say. And we also use this speech plan, this speech will (as we understand it), to measure the finalization of the utterance. This plan determines both the choice of the subject itself (under certain conditions of speech communication, in necessary connection with preceding utterances), as well as its boundaries and its semantic exhaustiveness. It also determines, of course, the choice of a generic form in which the utterance will be constructed (this is already the third aspect, to which we shall turn next). This plan—the subjective aspect of the utterance—combines in an inseparable unity with the objective referentially semantic aspect, limiting the latter by relating it to a concrete (individual) situation of speech communication with all its individual circumstances, its personal participants, and the statement-utterances that preceded it. Therefore, the immediate participants in communication, orienting themselves with respect to the situation and the preceding utterances, easily and

quickly grasp the speaker's speech plan, his speech will. And from the very beginning of his words they sense the developing whole of the utterance.

Let us turn to the third and, for us, most important aspect: the stable *generic* forms of the utterance. The speaker's speech will is manifested primarily in the *choice of a particular speech genre*. This choice is determined by the specific nature of the given sphere of speech communication, semantic (thematic) considerations, the concrete situation of the speech communication, the personal composition of its participants, and so on. And when the speaker's speech plan with all its individuality and subjectivity is applied and adapted to a chosen genre, it is shaped and developed within a certain generic form. Such genres exist above all in the great and multifarious sphere of everyday oral communication, including the most familiar and the most intimate.

We speak only in definite speech genres, that is, all our utterances have definite and relatively stable typical *forms of construction of the whole*. Our repertoire of oral (and written) speech genres is rich. We use them confidently and skillfully *in practice*, and it is quite possible for us not even to suspect their existence *in theory*. Like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain who, when speaking in prose, had no idea that was what he was doing, we speak in diverse genres without suspecting that they exist. Even in the most free, the most unconstrained conversation, we cast our speech in definite generic forms, sometimes rigid and trite ones, sometimes more flexible, plastic, and creative ones (everyday communication also has creative genres at its disposal). We are given these speech genres in almost the same way that we are given our native language, which we master fluently long before we begin to study grammar. We know our native language—its lexical composition and grammatical structure—not from dictionaries and grammars but from concrete utterances that we hear and that we ourselves reproduce in live speech communication with people around us. We assimilate forms of language only in forms of utterances and in conjunction with these forms. The forms of language and the typical forms of utterances, that is, speech genres, enter our experience and our consciousness together, and in close connection with one another. To learn to speak means to learn to construct utterances (because we speak in utterances and not in individual sentences, and, of course, not in individual words). Speech genres organize our speech in almost the same

way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do. We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and, when hearing others' speech, we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length (that is, the approximate length of the speech whole) and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end; that is, from the very beginning we have a sense of the speech whole, which is only later differentiated during the speech process. If speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible.

The generic forms in which we cast our speech, of course, differ essentially from language forms. The latter are stable and compulsory (normative) for the speaker, while generic forms are much more flexible, plastic, and free. Speech genres are very diverse in this respect. A large number of genres that are widespread in everyday life are so standard that the speaker's individual speech will is manifested only in its choice of a particular genre, and, perhaps, in its expressive intonation. Such, for example, are the various everyday genres of greetings, farewells, congratulations, all kinds of wishes, information about health, business, and so forth. These genres are so diverse because they differ depending on the situation, social position, and personal interrelations of the participants in the communication. These genres have high, strictly official, respectful forms as well as familiar ones.[c] And there are forms with varying degrees of familiarity, as well as intimate forms (which differ from familiar ones). These genres also require a certain tone; their structure includes a certain expressive intonation. These genres, particularly the high and official ones, are compulsory and extremely stable. The speech will is usually limited here to a choice of a particular genre. And only slight nuances of expressive intonation (one can take a drier or more respectful tone, a colder or warmer one; one can introduce the intonation of joy, and so forth) can express the speaker's individuality (his emotional speech intent). But even here it is generally possible to re-accentuate genres. This is typical of speech communication: thus, for example, the generic form of greeting can

[c]These and other phenomena have interested linguists (mainly language historians) in the purely stylistic level as a reflection in language of historically changed forms of etiquette, courtesy, and hospitality. See, for example, F. Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900*, 10 vols. (Paris: A. Colin, 1905).

move from the official sphere into the sphere of familiar communication, that is, it can be used with parodic-ironic re-accentuation. To a similar end, one can deliberately mix genres from various spheres.

In addition to these standard genres, of course, freer and more creative genres of oral speech communication have existed and still exist: genres of salon conversations about everyday, social, aesthetic, and other subjects, genres of table conversation, intimate conversations among friends, intimate conversations within the family, and so on. (No list of oral speech genres yet exists, or even a principle on which such a list might be based.) The majority of these genres are subject to free creative reformulation (like artistic genres, and some, perhaps, to a greater degree). But to use a genre freely and creatively is not the same as to create a genre from the beginning; genres must be fully mastered in order to be manipulated freely.

Many people who have an excellent command of a language often feel quite helpless in certain spheres of communication precisely because they do not have a practical command of the generic forms used in the given spheres. Frequently a person who has an excellent command of speech in some areas of cultural communication, who is able to read a scholarly paper or engage in a scholarly discussion, who speaks very well on social questions, is silent or very awkward in social conversation. Here it is not a matter of an impoverished vocabulary or of style, taken abstractly: this is entirely a matter of the inability to command a repertoire of genres of social conversation, the lack of a sufficient supply of those ideas about the whole of the utterance that help to cast one's speech quickly and naturally in certain compositional and stylistic forms, the inability to grasp a word promptly, to begin and end correctly (composition is very uncomplicated in these genres).

The better our command of genres, the more freely we employ them, the more fully and clearly we reveal our own individuality in them (where this is possible and necessary), the more flexibly and precisely we reflect the unrepeatable situation of communication—in a word, the more perfectly we implement our free speech plan.

Thus, a speaker is given not only mandatory forms of the national language (lexical composition and grammatical structure), but also forms of utterances that are mandatory, that is, speech genres. The latter are just as necessary for mutual understanding as are forms of language. Speech genres are much more changeable, flexible, and plastic than language forms are, but they have a normative significance for the speaking individuum, and they are not created by him but are

given to him. Therefore, the single utterance, with all its individuality and creativity, can in no way be regarded as a *completely free combination* of forms of language, as is supposed, for example, by Saussure (and by many other linguists after him), who juxtaposed the utterance (*la parole*), as a purely individual act, to the system of language as a phenomenon that is purely social and mandatory for the individuum.[1] The vast majority of linguists hold the same position, in theory if not in practice. They see in the utterance only an individual combination of purely linguistic (lexical and grammatical) forms and they neither uncover nor study any of the other normative forms the utterance acquires in practice.

Ignoring speech genres as relatively stable and normative forms of the utterance inevitably led to the confusion we have already pointed out between the utterance and the sentence, and it had to lead them to the position (which, to be sure, was never consistently defended) that our speech is cast solely in stable sentence forms that are given to us; and the number of these interrelated sentences we speak in a row and when we stop (end)—this is completely subject to the individual speech will of the speaker or to the caprice of the mythical "speech flow."

When we select a particular type of sentence, we do so not for the sentence itself; but out of consideration for what we wish to express with this one given sentence. We select the type of sentence from the standpoint of the *whole* utterance, which is transmitted in advance to our speech imagination and which determines our choice. The idea of the form of the whole utterance, that is, of a particular speech genre, guides us in the process of our speaking. The plan of the utterance as a whole may require only one sentence for its implementation, but it may also require a large number of them. The chosen genre predetermines for us their type and their compositional links.

One reason why forms of utterances are ignored in linguistics is that these forms are extremely diverse in compositional structure, particularly in size (speech length)—from the single-word rejoinder to a large

¹Saussure defines the utterance (*la parole*) as an "individual act. It is wilful and intellectual. Within the act, we should distinguish between (1) the combinations by which the speaker uses the language code for expressing his own thought; and (2) the psychological mechanism that allows him to exteriorize those combinations" (*Course in General Linguistics* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966], p. 14). Thus, Saussure ignores the fact that in addition to forms of language there are also *forms of combinations* of these forms, that is, he ignores speech genres.