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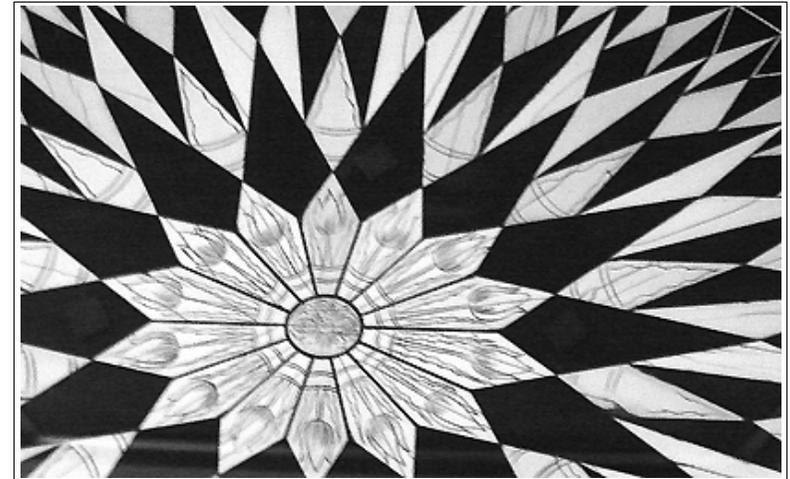
Nationale und transnationale Perspektiven der Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft

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Dimensions of the concept δύναμις in the course of the history of linguistics

This paper deals with various dimensions of the concept δύναμις in the course of the history of linguistics and philosophy. The author takes academic interest in mass communication and texts circulating therein. Stepanov (2003) concerns what might be called a provocative discourse seen as a network of indirect speech genres and regarded as being occasionally unconscious or purposefully conscious symbolic speech actions aimed at demonstrating an addresser's psychological or intentional state and evoking a similar one in his or her counterpart. The intentional phenomenon of provoking is rooted deeply in Ancient Greek philosophy and the concept of δύναμις.

We did a comparative study of English, Russian and Greek texts of several Plato's dialogues (Plato 1990), such as *Hippias (minor)*, *Charmides*, *Meno*, *Cratylus*, *Gorgias*, and commentaries on them. A dictionary of Old Greek language (Veismann 1991) and literature on philosophy of language (Gellner 2005) were also included in the study.

Socrates was the first Greek philosopher who ceased to study the nature that lies around and beyond men and focused on a person as a rational and social moral being. He undertook an analysis of the many concepts which were studied and described beforehand by other scholars though they had done it rather naïvely and uncritically. He was the first to question words and notions used in everyday life and claimed that they were utterly lacking re-evaluation of what their substantial and unsubstantial attributes were, and what kind of general and particular components they were composed of. Aristotle (1976) in the book of *Metaphysics* indicated clearly that Socrates was the first who had succeed in thinking it over and generalizing those general ideas without which everyday speech praxis lacked validity.

In a way, over two and a half thousand years ago Socrates did what analytical philosophy achieved in the 20th century. What Socrates did was a sort of philosophical revolution, and he split to parts traditional human notions by reconstructing them more clearly and rationally. The effect accomplished was similar to what Ernest Gellner described in *Words and Things* (2005). According to Gellner (2005: 14–15), linguistic philosophy developments

jointly presuppose, in turn, a certain way of organising both our concepts and our institutions: they require regular, orderly explanatory schemata and conduct. These

in their turn destroy warmth, idiosyncrasy, individualism, magic, enchantment. These lost traits of course survived in our speech from the past, but the confidence had gone out of them.

Some of those concepts which had avoided such “orderly explanatory schemata and conduct” and consequently saved their confidence were often used in Plato’s dialogues.

Socrates never elaborated on the concept of δύναμις leaving it to the future generations of scholars. This hypothetically indicates that even at that time it was undoubtedly old and its origin had never been questioned. According to Veismann (1991), the word δύναμις is of ionic origin and has several meanings among which are ‘power’, ‘ability’, ‘mighty’, ‘value’.

In *Hippias* (minor), we perceive the description of justice as a psychological inclination of a person. Emphasizing the very necessity of making a strictly logically profound statement Socrates used the word δύναμις applying re-evaluation to the concept ‘justice’ as a power and in the flow of conversation put a question before Hippias (168 b), “Please to answer once more: Is not justice a power, or knowledge, or both? Must not justice, at all events, be one of these?”

Hippias agreed to this indirect statement and Socrates proceeded.

But if justice is *a power* of the soul, then the soul which has the greater power is also the more just; for that which has the greater power, my good friend, has been proved by us to be the better.

The English word *power* in this context refers to the concept δύναμις and reveals some kind of a psychological attribute of a person whose soul is enriching him with a something greater among his equals.

The same idea underlay Socrates’ reflection depicted in another dialogue though the concept about which discussion had been sprung up is different. But it is certainly a further development of the psychological dimension of the concept δύναμις.

In *Meno* (78b), counterparts are having a conversation about virtue. Socrates is giving consideration to the concept of ‘virtue’ that is ‘the desire of good’ among men and in that respect constructing the definition of virtue as ‘the power of attaining good’:

Soc. But if this be affirmed, then *the desire of good* is common to all, and one man is no better than another in that respect?

Men. True.

Soc. And if one man is not better than another in desiring good, he must be better in *the power of attaining it*?

Men. Exactly.

Soc. Then, according to your definition, virtue would appear to be *the power of attaining good*?

Men. I entirely approve, Socrates, of the manner in which you now view this matter.

Soc. Then let us see whether what you say is true from another point of view; for very likely you may be right: — You affirm virtue to be *the power of attaining goods*.”

Later, Aristotle in *Ethica Nicomachea* made a remark on the same subject referring to the same concept as Socrates and his counterparts did in *Meno*. The Aristotle’s view revealed the same set of components in his claim that virtue is not only a pure knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), nor a pure potential of a spirit (δύναμις), but an inner conscience of a person, his fortune (ἕξις).

Thus, δύναμις in those contexts indicates some kind of a human trait, an attribute that is implemented in a person’s soul but is beyond human origin and originated from an outer source. A person is revealed as an object for receiving power, or ability from an outer source and a subject gaining an attribute on its own.

In *Charmides* (168 b), Socrates indicated the subject which was a science with that what was translated into English as ‘nature’, “Well then, this science of which we are speaking is a science of something, and is of *a nature to be* a science of something?”

Socrates added a new layer of meaning to the word δύναμις that is a ‘nature to be somewhat’ which refers to “the particular combination of qualities belonging to a person, animal, or thing” (Webster 1993:603). Something that is revealing inherent tendencies of substance.

We are underlining pure ontological sound of this definition and stressing a sort of ontological dimension of the concept δύναμις.

The traits of beyond human origin embodied by the concept δύναμις were even more explicitly shown in *Ion*. The counterparts took poetical art as the subject for their conversation (531a–536d).

According to their approach, poetical art is processed with the help or move of a divine might (θεῖα δύναμις) while a poet falling under its power, that in other parts of the same dialogue called a ‘divine inspiration’ and even ‘possession’ (533e, 534c), or a ‘divine determination’ (θεῖα μοῖρα).

In describing it, Socrates used as an argument by analogy a stone that not only attracts iron rings, but also

imparts to them a similar power of attracting other rings; and sometimes one may see a number of pieces of iron and rings suspended from one another so as to form quite a long chain: and all of them derive their power of suspension from the original stone.

Thus, this power, or inspiration, or possession, and even determination, as came Socrates to a conclusion, is activated not through a person’s right mind but occurred to be of pure physical although superior origin that a person is being inspired of or even possessed by and from these inspired persons a chain of other persons is suspended, who take the inspiration like a magnet attracting rings in a chain (533e–535a),

Soc. I perceive, Ion; and I will proceed to explain to you what I imagine to be the reason of this. The gift which you possess of speaking excellently about Homer is not an art, but, as I was just saying, *an inspiration*; there is *a divinity moving you*, like that contained in the stone which Euripides calls a magnet, but which is commonly known as the stone of Heraclea. ... In like manner the Muse first of all

inspires men herself; and from these inspired persons a chain of other persons is suspended, who *take the inspiration*. For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are *inspired and possessed*. And as the Corybantian revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not *in their right mind* when they are composing their beautiful strains: but when *falling under the power of music and metre they are inspired and possessed*; like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are under the influence of Dionysus but not when they are in their right mind. And the soul of the lyric poet does the same, as they themselves say; for they tell us that they bring songs from honeyed fountains, culling them out of the gardens and dells of the Muses; they, like the bees, winging their way from flower to flower. And this is true.

And so Socrates went on concluding,

For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is *no invention in him* until he *has been inspired and is out of his senses*, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and is unable to utter his oracles.

In a book of the German writer Walter Moers (2007), *Die Stadt der Träumenden Bücher*, the author is speculating upon the so called metaphor of a book as a symbol of life, and world, and a person, etc. It seems to be significant due to the discourse of this paper recalling some conversations between the characters in the book. For example, one of them spoke on the nature of writing and gave a classification of those who can write. According to the character, those are a writer, the writer, a poet, and something without a name given,

“Jeder kann schreiben”, sagte er. “Es gibt welche, die können ein bisschen besser schreiben als die anderen – die nennt man Schriftsteller. Dann gibt es welche, die besser schreiben können als die Schriftsteller. Die nennt man Dichter. Und dann gibt es noch Dichter, die besser schreiben können als andere Dichter. Für die hat man noch keinen Namen gefunden. Es sind diejenigen, die einen Zugang zum Orm haben.”

The dividing line for those categories is an inspiration of a superior nature that overtakes a writer. It sounds rather Platonic, “Die kreative Dichte des Orms ist unermesslich. Es ist ein Quell der Inspiration, der nie versiegt – wenn man weiss, wie man dorthin gelangt.” Here we are at almost word-for-word Platonic description of how a person might be inspired by a superior power,

Es gibt einige Dichter, die das Orm erreichen. Das ist schon ein grosses Privileg. Aber die wenigsten von ihnen beherrschen das *Alphabet der Sterne*. Das sind die Auserwählten. Wenn du es beherrschst, dann kannst du, wenn du zum Orm gelangst, dort mit allen kunstlerischen Kraefften des Universums kommunizieren. Dinge lernen, von denen du im Traum nich glauben wuerdest, dass es sie gibt.

In *Cratylus* (405a), Socrates approached the concept of δύναμις as what was translated later as an attribute of a God and endeavoured “to explain that the name of Apollo could not have been better adapted to express *the attributes of the God*, embracing and in a manner signifying all four of them, music, and prophecy, and medi-

cine, and archery”. And δύναμις in this context explicitly indicates ‘the attributes of the God’ alike what occurred to be attributing a person.

In the dialogue “Γοργίας” Plato expressed his view of the nature of rhetoric and such of its components as δύναμις, τέχνη, εἶδος. The concept of δύναμις introduced in the dialogue is interconnected with those of τέχνη (art, 509e) and εἶδος (idea, or sample, 503e) via rhetoric which is intended to lead to acquire βέλτιστον (the highest weal, or good), according to Socrates. Here we assume unveiling another dimension of the concept δύναμις, a social one, a social turn in the discussion.

Socrates unveiled the essence of the ‘good’ in its relation to the ‘pleasant’,

Soc. Listen to me, then, while I recapitulate the argument: — Is the pleasant the same as the good? Not the same. Callicles and I are agreed about that. And is the pleasant to be pursued for the sake of the good? or the good for the sake of the pleasant? *The pleasant is to be pursued for the sake of the good.*

Both rhetoric and art were mentioned as instruments of δύναμις (Γοργίας 509e) that forwarded human life to a maximum of perfection and created for this purpose highly precise forms of εἶδος as a standard,

Soc. Yet, surely, Callicles, if you look you will find such a one. Suppose that we just calmly consider whether any of these was such as I have described. Will not the good man, who says whatever he says with a view to the best, speak with a reference to some *standard* and not at random; just as all other artists, whether the painter, the builder, the shipwright, or any other look all of them to their own work, and do not select and apply at random what they apply, but strive to give a definite form to it? The artist disposes all things in order, and compels the one part to harmonize and accord with the other part, until he has constructed a regular and systematic whole; and this is true of all artists, and in the same way the trainers and physicians, of whom we spoke before, give order and regularity to the body: do you deny this?

According to Plato, εἶδος is of rational nature as it is stated in Γοργίας (503e). It is what a person keeps in mind and referred to as a mental model or a scheme of a speech act or even a behavior to some extent in rhetoric. It is not only a language or text sample what was assumed over many centuries afterwards but rather a behavioral model to be followed by a person. As Socrates proved by his life, μαευτική, maeutics, is an art of assisting a person in delivering a thought to be pure and right.

It is represented as a result of a person’s multiple experiences that have been often observed in his or her social and speech environment and acquired from it. It laid the foundation for teaching and learning rhetoric as an art (τέχνη) seeking the highest social weal (βέλτιστον).

Thus, δύναμις, though originated from a superior power, belongs to an inner sphere of a person, and is a person’s inner state enforcing and motivating his or her activities. Socrates gave a thoughtful consideration to a doing injustice taken as a sample to prove his statement,

Cal. He must have provided himself with the power; that is clear.

Soc. And what do you say of doing injustice? Is the will only sufficient, and will that

prevent him from doing injustice, or must he have provided himself with *power and art*; and if he has not studied and practised, will he be unjust still? Surely you might say, Callicles, whether you think that Polus and I were right in admitting the conclusion that no one does wrong voluntarily, but that all do wrong against their will?

Cal. Granted, Socrates, if you will only have done.

Soc. Then, as would appear, *power and art* have to be provided in order that we may do no injustice?"

A person can learn and acquire such power outfit as a result of imitation, or mimicry. It cannot be an issue of bringing it up in a broad sense. According to a character from *Die Stadt der Träumenden Bücher*:

Ich kann dir auch nicht beibringen, das Orm zu erreichen. Entweder du schaffst es eines Tages, oder du schaffst es nie. Manche schaffen es einmal und dann nie wieder. Manche schaffen es immer wieder, aber sie beherrschen das Alphabet nicht. Andere gelangen jederzeit mühelos zum Orm und kommunizieren dort durch das Alphabet. Das sind die ganze wenigen.

Δύναμις values social circulation and is itself a part of social practice. It has ability for self-development, a discourse structure as it might be put here according to nowadays developments with its own significance. And it is expressed in actions including those of speech. That is how a human soul creates τάξις καὶ κόσμος by means of rhetoric heading to a state of harmony. Socrates maintained, that

the virtue of each thing, whether body or soul, instrument or creature, when given to them in the best way comes to them not by chance but as the result of *the order and truth* and art which are imparted to them: Am I not right? I maintain that I am. And is not the virtue of each thing dependent on order or arrangement? Yes, I say. And that which makes a thing good is the proper order inhering in each thing? Such is my view.

In consequence, rhetoric together with other arts holds on to a standard (εἶδος) aimed at achieving the good will (βέλτιστον) and designed to create some order and harmony, or truth, (τάξις καὶ κόσμος) in a person's soul and lead it away from the state of disorder, or chaos, to the state of harmony where the law and lawfulness rule (νόμιμον καὶ νόμος),

Soc. And "lawful" and "law" are the names which are given to the regular order and action of the soul, and these make men lawful and orderly: — and so we have temperance and justice: have we not?

Thus, rhetoric is the power and art (δύναμις καὶ τέχνη) determined to lead a person to perfection, at least to some kind of it, and create for that purpose a most just and fair environment.

We came to a conclusion and main findings. The concept of δύναμις occurred to be ambiguous and exhibited a few layers of its meaning, such as,

firstly, an inner psychological attribute, or characteristic, of a man, or, secondly, that of a god;

thirdly, a potential of a person, or an animal, or a thing;

fourthly, a nature to be something, and,

fifthly, a kind of inspiration, or possession, or determination of divine origin.

Our study of the concept of δύναμις introduced in the Plato's dialogues revealed its multidimensional structure including philosophical, ontological, psychological, social and linguistic dimensions.

In the prospect of this multidisciplinary research, one may trace the course of the history of this concept studies to the 19th century, when it was re-established and re-evaluated by German philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt in the concept of *Geist* revealed in human language and culture by its *energeia*. In Moers' *Die Stadt der Träumenden Bücher*, both these concepts *power* and *energy* are intertwined and set in the same context from the point of view of power receiving and energy penetrating,

Ich spürte eine Kraft, die herkömmlichen Büchern abging, eine Energie, die sich beim Lesen auf mich übertrug. Als ich das Buch zu Ende gelesen hatte, fühlte ich mich gleichzeitig erfüllt und leer. Ich musste unbedingt mehr von dieser Energie spüren, und zwar so schnell wie möglich.

It was given a further development in the works of Austrian scholar Franz Brentano represented through the concept of *Intentionality*. British scholars John Austin and John Searle in the 19th century represented it in *illocutionary force* and *intentional state*.

Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin made this relation and line of inheritance with δύναμις even more obvious with reference to *speaker's will* inspiring a speech genre to be constructed and interconnected with others in the process of social interaction. It underlies speech genre representing typical situation embodied in a typical speech form.

A new aspect appears in the research of a speech impact of provocative genres that issued intentional and emotional likeness in the addressee alike to that of the addresser.

As a final conclusion, the concept of δύναμις over the history of linguistics and philosophy has passed through some stages and achieved bound substitutes and issues, such as *Geist*, *Intentionality*, *intentional state*, *illocutionary force*, *speaker's will*, revealing its rhetorical, philosophical, ontological, psychological, social and linguistic dimensions. A person is viewed as an object for penetration with an energy flow embodied in a substantial genre form and is gaining by this some prominent poetical genius, or a psychological attribute, or a power, etc. This protruding power influences people who are being penetrated and attracts them in a chain suspended one another in a psychological order of those who have accepted the provocation.

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