

THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS THROUGH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article examines the expression of emotions through language, which has been studied as a linguistic object since the second half of the twentieth century. It analyzes various theories and approaches aimed at identifying words with emotional load and their contextual significance. The article discusses factors influencing emotional interaction, the concept of "emotivity," and methods of expressing emotions. Additionally, it covers emotional metaphors, verbalization, and the communication process. The aim of the article is to delve deeper into the complex relationship between language and emotions.

Keywords: Emotions, Language, Emotivity, Verbalization, Metaphors, Psycholinguistics, Cognitive linguistics, Linguoculturology.

INTRODUCTION

The expression of emotions through language began to be studied relatively recently, in the latter half of the twentieth century. Various theories and approaches have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, aiming to identify which words carry emotional weight and which do not. The factors influencing emotional communication within words spark significant theoretical and practical interest. Linguists focus on the meanings of words, their contextual usage, and their capacity to express emotions. Although the term "emotivity" exists in linguistics, it remains somewhat undefined. It is described as "the property of realizing emotional expressions that are inherent to language; the reflection of social and individual emotions in semantics" (Shahovskiy, 1987: 24). Today, the relationship between language and emotions is addressed through multiple fields, including stylistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, and structural semantics. This multifaceted approach aids researchers in delving deeper into how emotions are conveyed through language.

B. Voletsa introduced the term "emotive code," which refers to the expression of human emotional states, feelings, and moods through paralinguistic and linguistic means from a semiotic perspective (Voletsa, 1995: 15-24). According to Voletsa, this code consists of verbal emotive signs, represented by various linguistic units ranging from phonemes to entire texts. Most verbal emotive signs are complex, linking not only to emotions but also to other entities, as there are very few signs that express emotions alone. The most frequently used emotive expressions are nominal complex signs containing only emotive components, such as transmitters and aggressive lexicon.

Some researchers differentiate specific methods for expressing human emotions. The first method is nomination, based on the connection between the sign and its referent. The second method involves describing emotions, where the primary characteristic is the symbolic relationship between linguistic signs and associated emotions, drawing from external changes in a person's speech and facial expressions. It is known that each emotional state has a distinct external expression; however, it is essential to consider additional information related to emotional changes, such as a person's cultural traits and their physical and mental state during speech.

N.D. Byulkina and D.V. Lyusin argue that "there is no one-to-one correlation between emotions and their external expressions" (Byulkina, 2001: 38-48). The third method pertains to expressing emotional reactions—specifically reflecting emotions through linguistic signs. Voletsa emphasizes that "verbalized emotive signs have a symbolic character," meaning that each sign is arbitrary and voluntary, with its meaning determined by the emotional competence of the speaker.

The fourth type involves emotional metaphors, which serve as a means of conceptualizing emotions through language, expressing the unfamiliar through familiar terms (Lakoff, 1980). V.Yu. Apresyan identifies three types of emotional metaphors: physiological, cognitive, and cultural. The physiological type exhibits the highest degree of similarity between the source and the object, sharing the same meaning across languages; the cognitive type shows less similarity and partially matches in other languages; while the cultural type has the least connection, incorporating national characteristics. Despite differences in certain components, all three types of metaphors reflect the symbolic nature of linguistic codes and the phenomena they express. They are descriptive and illustrate emotions that are complex and difficult to understand by comparing them with other feelings.

The systematic nature of signs is crucial in expressing emotions. In actual communication, any sign not specific to an emotion may acquire emotional meaning. Furthermore, lexicon not associated with emotions can include emotional expressions when closely related to emotive words, enriching and intensifying emotional interpretations.

V.I. Shahovskiy posits that "the process of nomination in language cannot occur without understanding its essence—each word both generalizes and names, defining its meaning through its semantics" (Shahovskiy, 2009: 32). Assigning a specific word or phrase for expressing emotions presents challenges for consistent understanding among speakers. However, despite the theoretical complexity of the nomination process, these concepts are generally understood correctly by participants in the communication process.

In this context, V.I. Shahovskiy categorizes lexicon that reflects human emotions into the following types:

Lexicon that names and signifies emotions (e.g., love, fear);

Lexicon that describes emotions (e.g., she is happy, frightened);

Lexicon that indirectly expresses emotions, where feelings are not named directly but conveyed indirectly (e.g., darling, smashing) (Shahovskiy, 2009: 91-94).

The first two groups serve merely as indicators; for instance, words that name emotions—such as happiness, satisfaction, and calm—do not directly reflect the emotional state but

instead relate to a logical thought or notion about it. According to the researcher, the third group constitutes emotional lexicon, which in turn forms the lexical foundation of emotional tools in language.

In cases where verbal expression for emotions is not available, extended descriptive phrases are used to convey them. This process allows both the speaker and listener to recognize and identify their emotional states.

Verbal expression of emotions is the process of reflecting emotions through linguistic means during speech. This can manifest in various forms: lexical, grammatical, and intonational. Each form has its own characteristics and functions, playing a crucial role in the precise and effective expression of emotions.

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