

On The Concept of “Expressiveness” In Modern Linguistics

Margaret Apresyan

Professor, PhD, Yerevan State University, Yerevan Armenia

**Corresponding Author: Margaret Apresyan, Professor, PhD, Yerevan State University, Yerevan Armenia*

ABSTRACT

Language, being the main tool of communication, is not a mere means of information transfer, but also the way of expressing the subjective attitude of the speaker to the utterances. Expressiveness is a generic linguistic category and as such it is inherent in all language level, as well as appropriate linguistic units. On a broad scale, expressiveness is defined as a magnification of the speech figurativeness and expression. In modern linguistics expressiveness is related to the interaction of the emotional.

Keywords: *category of expressiveness, category of tension, category of evaluation, category of emotiveness, language and speech, language system, transmitter and receptor, expression and figurativeness.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary domains of modern Linguistics is the Syntactic Expressiveness. It is a distinctive interdisciplinary subject interweaving a number of disciplines, such as syntax, stylistics and the study of expressiveness. Having achieved a certain degree of autonomy, in recent years this discipline has elaborated its specific methodological and conceptual apparatus.

THE LINGUISTIC CATEGORY OF FIGURATIVENESS AS A PHENOMENON OF LANGUAGE AND SPEECH

Language being the main tool of communication is not a mere means of information transfer, but also the way of expressing the subjective attitude of the speaker to the utterances. As initiated by R. Jakobson there have been singled out six language functions, namely referential, poetic, emotive, conative, phatic and metalingual (Jakobson, 1975). Thought conceived in speech and hence the text, adorned by different gradations of expressive behavior and tension, is the result of the emotive language function, perceived as “the emotional state of the speaker, his/her subjective attitude towards the phenomena and objects of extralinguistic reality” (Alexandrova, 1984:7). It is worth mentioning that expressiveness is one of the key problems in linguistics, since it is directly related to the individual perspective of human language, particularly the speaker’s emotional attitude to the utterance.

Expressiveness is a generic linguistic category and as such is inherent in all the language levels and the appropriate linguistic units. The content and the nature of the term expressiveness is usually linked to the content of the semantic meaning of the word. Currently, there exist numerous interpretations of expressiveness, elaborated from the perspective of different approaches to the study of the given linguistic category. It is viewed within the framework of lexicography, semantics, nomination, functional stylistics, theory of illocutionary force, poetics, rhetoric, functional linguistics, psycholinguistics and other disciplines. Thus, in functional linguistics “expressiveness” is opposed to neutrality and considered as a norm of deviation (Arnold, 1990: 70, Galperin, 1958: 180). This proceeds from the notion that expressiveness is perceived only where and when the conventional ways of communication come to the fore; these are “the features of figurative speech which differentiate it from the conventional neutral speech and make it vivid, figurative and emotive” (Efimov, 1958:155). “Expressiveness” is also opposed as a “speech structure, fulfilling the communication purposes and aims at attaining the highest degree of communication effectiveness” (Koghina, 1987: 14).

“Expressiveness” is a cluster of semantic-stylistics features of a linguistic unit, and these features enable the given linguistic unit to convey the subjective attitude of the speaker to the content of the utterance or the addressee in speech. It can be characterized as a “logically

non-disintegrated unit” with supplementary loading as related to the lexical or grammatical unit or as an enhancement, highlighting of a meaning. It can also be interpreted as an expressive component of the meaning, a parallel meaning of the referential meaning, which reveals the subjective emotional, personal evaluation of the word. Given the above-mentioned hints at the multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon in question, it cannot cover the whole spectrum of the features of expressiveness. Expressiveness is such a semantic category which ensures the transmission of the speaker’s attitude via the exterior and interior factors. The nature of the category of expressiveness is the transmission of additional semantic connotations as augmented to the lexical and grammatical meaning with the aim of enhancing it.

On a broad scale “expressiveness” is defined as “a magnification of the speech figurativeness and expression, its influence” (Galkina-Fedoruk, 1958: 107, Shakhovskiy, 1987: 58). Thus, for example Galkina-Fedoruk views “expressiveness” as a “magnification of expression and figurativeness, enhancement of the illocutionary force of the utterance” (Galkina –Fedoruk, 1958). Unfolding the study of the concept of expressiveness as a multi-faceted phenomenon, we can state that it is a feature of objectively existing language means which aims at magnifying the pragmatic force of the utterance imparting it with psychological directionality. The latter, via the use of specific language means, creates a peculiar ambience to influence the reader and elicits his/her reasonable and emotional reaction.

The researchers note the significant role of the subject for the category of expressiveness. The category under discussion not only serves the function of relating extralinguistic reality with its emotional perception, but also ensures the realization of the illocutionary effect on the addressee. Hence, some researchers adhere to the view that “expressiveness does not express information concerning the subject, but rather determines the effectiveness and nature of the perception of the information” (Galkina-Fedoruk, 1958; Shakhovskiy 1987; Teliya, 1991). It is noteworthy that in theoretical literature the term “expression” is often used along with “expressiveness” which is the equivalent of the Latin term “*expressio*”. Expression is a **stylistic** category.

Taking into consideration all the features of expressiveness as covered in the whole

spectrum of its definitions, in the given paper we are leaning towards the definition of “expressiveness” as a “cluster of all the language/speech units”, as well as a text unity, due to which the speaker (writer) expresses his/her attitude to the utterance content or the addressee. Obviously the category of expressiveness is manifested in all the language levels.

Generalizing different views on “expressiveness” in modern linguistics, it is obvious that “expressiveness” is interpreted along with:

1. emotionality and evaluation;
2. figurativeness, tension and stylistic coloring;
3. quantitative loading;
4. imagery.

All these subcategories never function separately, but rather they co-function bringing about emotionality, evaluation and tension. Research shows that the classification and re-occurrence of these subcategories varies across different text genres and the specific approach of the researchers. For example, “emotionality” can re-occur with “evaluation”, “figurativeness”, and “stylistic coloring”; “evaluation” can go with “emotionality”; “figurativeness”, “tension”, “stylistic markedness”; “figurativeness ” is accompanied by “tension”, “emotionality”, “stylistic markedness”, “horizontal peculiarities of the text” and so on.

EXPRESSIVENESS AND EMOTIONALITY

Etymologically numerous linguistic means of expressiveness derive from the emotional peculiarities of the speech. As mentioned by Ch. Baillieu “Live speech brings forth the critical and emotional aspects, presented in different proportions depending on the emotional state of the speaker, specific situation and public atmosphere” (Ch. Baillieu, 1961: 29). However, it should be mentioned that emotions reflect the attitude of the speaker not only to the possible situation, but also their role and functionality in the given situation.

Initially “expressiveness” was equated with the “expression” and was related to the emotional state of the speaker, his/her personal experience, attitude to the subject transferred or the public evaluation. However, in 80-90s of the previous century linguistic dispute uncovered the necessity to differentiate the two concepts based on the speech/language dichotomy. The necessity for the demarcation of “expressiveness” and

“expression” was first demonstrated in Russian Linguistics (Galkina- Fedoruk, 1958).

So, what is the interrelation of expressiveness and emotionality. “Emotionality” is a component of the word meaning and is based on the speaker’s attitude, the subject matter, the phenomenon, the situation and represents a part of the expressiveness. Judging from the standpoint of intentionality, it should be mentioned that the intentional separation is the demonstration of emotionality. Emotionality serves to represent the psychological state of the speaker, whereas the expressiveness is a means for the magnification of the communicative function of the utterance. By saying “emotionality” we understand the supplementary meaning of the word expressing an emotion; moreover, the emotion is related to the word meaning. So some linguists state that the category of emotionality is narrower than that of the expressiveness (Galkina-Fedoruk, 1958:107). Being a psycholinguistic category, emotionality is ranked along with reason and will, and is a component of the linguistic unit, however in the flow of speech it may be neutralized. In fact, emotionality is an intended manifestation of feelings.

Emotionality is possible both in the process of information transfer, and in special emotional instances. Emotions are expressed as a kind of experience, serving the key function of governing the behavior. These functions are fulfilled both by extralinguistic and linguistic, particularly pragmatic, means.

THE ROLE OF EVALUATION FOR EXPRESSIVENESS

Any means of expression has explicit and implicit evaluation. This is how the category of expressiveness is related to the category of evaluation. Evaluation is present in any situation and act wherein the subject cognizing the world deals with the objective reality. Linguistics has borrowed the concept of “evaluation” from “logic of evaluation”, where evaluation is perceived as an utterance about values (Ivin, 1970: 12). Often evaluation is quite fairly interpreted as a subjective category (Aroutyunova, 1999), assuming that the nature of evaluation is to express subjective attitude towards the extralinguistic reality, neglecting features of objective reality.

The study of the nature of evaluation often requires a recourse to the semiotic aspect of the language, which in its turn makes apparent the

necessity for the examination of the correlation between the objective and subjective factors of evaluation, as well as the demarcation of the descriptive and evaluative components of the meaning. In this respect Aroutyunova writes “Descriptive referential meanings establish the relation between the language and objective reality, whereas evaluative meanings characterize the correlation between the objective reality and its ideological framing, the presence or absence of the consistence between these two domains” (Aroutyunova, 1999: 182). It is worth mentioning that it is the revelation of the differentiation between the evaluative and descriptive components that underlies the division of sentences as descriptive, referential and evaluative, based on the functional analysis of sentences. While referential sentences purport the aim of information transfer and the description of objective reality, evaluative sentences come to stress what is perceived as appreciable, valuable, negative, indifferent, contributing to the establishment of trust between people. The category of evaluation adheres to the sphere of pragmatics. The semantics of the evaluation in speech is determined by the situation wherein it is realized. The semantic and pragmatic components in the evaluation are inseparable; its use is reflected exclusively via the interplay of the semantic (unity of sentences included) and pragmatic (conditions for the realization of the communication) aspects.

Simultaneously, evaluation by its structure, also contains objective features of the phenomenon named. In evaluation the subject relies not only on the individual attitude to the object, but also on the stereotypes related to that object. Speech can be rife both with logical and emotional components of the evaluation, which is not always quite clear-cut and evident. “Natural speech cannot be characterized by the emotional evaluation exclusively, since language itself presupposes logical reasoning” (Wolf, 1985: 40). As is known only the judgment which evaluates the speaker’s utterance to this or that object, is purely logical. Judgments usually go through the prism of conscious deliberation before they get mould in language and speech. Evidently, anyone evaluates this or that phenomenon from his/her own perspective, his/her expertise and moral experience, individual and group interests, professional peculiarities. Taking into consideration the wide spectrum of views on the interrelation of the categories of expressiveness and evaluation, the link between these two categories is indivisible,

in that the category of evaluation introduces numerous slight description-evaluations into the speech to complicate and guide the speech.

THE INTERRELATION OF EXPRESSIVENESS AND TENSION

The category of expressiveness, a sophisticated notion, comes forth only in conjunction with tension. In modern linguistics there are various terms to refer to this category, such as “grading”, “gradation”, “scaling”, “Intensivierung”, “Verstaerkung”, “Steigerung”, “Graduierung”, “Grad” ansion have been investigated based on tnd others.

There are diverse classes of words to impart tension to the content, comparison constructions, gradations of comparison and other means. Many issues connected with the category of the English corpus (Kirschner 1955, Spitzbart 1961, Greenbaum 1970, Bolinger 1971, Gnutzman 1975, Bagdasaryan 1987). However, the problem of the interrelation of te two categories mentioned is a subject matter of a separate investigation.

The interpretation of the given category arises in the works of Ch. Ballieu and B. de Courtenay, who deemed “tension” as a particular type of the category of number. Having analyzed it B. de Courtenay singled out the quantity and degrees of tension (B.de Courtenay, 1963:313). The scholar notes that “the meaning of the tension of certain elements of language and thought are highlighted both in the spheres of logical reasoning and sensory perception” (B.de Courtenay, 1963:323). Ballieu proposes a broader concept of tension based on the differences which result in “...number, quantity, magnitude, and other categories, irrespective of the fact whether we deal with tangible images or abstract ideas” (Ballieu, 1961:202).

It should be noted that some units of language levels can simultaneously reflect both emotionality and tension, with a clear distinction between the two. Thus it seems prudent to include the category of tension into the notion of expressiveness. Expressive words semantically have the additional meaning of “over”, “higher degrees” which transfer the reflection of quantitative or qualitative superiority of this or that feature. The use of these units with the high-tension utterances always conveys expressiveness due to the unconventional, non-trivial character of the latter. It should be mentioned, however, that the interrelation between the tension and expressiveness is not only of inherent character but also has cause-

effect implications. The presence of the component of tension in the meaning of the word is one of the numerous criteria for the demarcation of the word. Expressiveness, as a category is a text-specific feature of the attribute, its description. In speech expressiveness is its qualitative aspect, whereas tension is the quantitative description of the quality, i.e. expressiveness. Moreover, incremental expressiveness presupposes the increasing process, namely intensification. Intensification is an indicator of increasing expressiveness and represents the quantitative description of the qualitative aspect of speech and demonstrates the extent to which expressiveness intensifies as related to the referential meaning of the utterance. Taking into consideration that “expressiveness” reveals the quantitative aspect of the utterance, which in its turn is the reflective feature of the utterance essence, we find it reasonable to interpret tension as an attributive feature, or a quantitative description of expressiveness.

CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the interpretations of the linguistic category of expressiveness in modern literature and adhering to different views, the interrelation of expressiveness with other linguistic categories such as emotionality, evaluation, and tension, can be reiterated as follows:

1. “Expressiveness” is the enhancement of the utterance, its figurativeness and illocutionary force.
2. “Expressiveness” is classified among the means of subjective modes of communication.
3. Evaluation is a linguistic category which reflects the speaker’s/writer’s evaluation of certain objects or phenomena of the objective reality.
4. Tension is a linguistic category which reflects and nominates the objective quantitative characteristics of this or that attributive feature. Tension indicates the quantitative nature of this or that phenomenon or object.
5. Expressiveness is a complex linguistic category permeating all the language levels. It is realized both in language and in speech, reflecting the speaker’s/writer’s subjective attitude to the content of speech or its addressee. So it is a matter of lively disputes in scholarly works.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alexandrova O. (1984). Problems of Expressive Syntax. - Moscow: State University Press, 212pp.
- [2] Arnold I.V. (1990) Stylistics of the modern English language. – Moscow: Prosveshenie, 346 p.
- [3] Arutyunova N.D. (1999). Semiotic concepts. Text.//Human Language and World – Moscow, 182pp.
- [4] Bagdasaryan V. (1987). Lexical Means for the Expression of Indefinite Quantity in Modern English Language. PhD dissertation summary, Moscow.
- [5] Bally Ch. (1961). Stylistics of the French Language. Moscow.
- [6] Baudouin de Courtenay I. (1963). Selected Writings in Linguistics. Moscow.
- [7] Wolf J. (1985). Functional Semantics for Evaluation. Academy of Sciences, USSR Publisher’s, Moscow.
- [8] Galkina-Fedoruk E. (1958). On the Expressiveness and Emotion in Language// Papers on Linguistics. Moscow.
- [9] Galperin I. (1958). Stylistics. Moscow.
- [10] Yefimov A.I. (1959). A Journal of Papers on Linguistics.
- [11] Ivin, A. (1970). Principles of Logic Evaluation. Moscow: Prosveshenie.
- [12] Kozhina M.N. (1987). On Linguistic and Speech Expressiveness, its Extralinguistic Basis// Problems of Expressive Syntax. Moscow.
- [13] Teliya V.N. (1991). Expressiveness as a Reflection of the Subjective Aspect in Language and its Pragmatic Meaning//Human Aspect in Language. Linguistic Mechanisms of Expressiveness. (ed.by Teliya). Moscow, pp.5-52.
- [14] Shakhovsky V.I. (1987). Classification of Emotions in Lexico-Semantic System of Language. Voronezh.
- [15] Jakobson R. (1975). Linguistics and Poetics// Structuralism. Moscow.
- [16] Bolinger D. (1971). Intensification in English / D.Bolinger//Language Sciences N 16, pp. 2-5
- [17] Gnutzman C. (1975). Some aspects of grading/ Gnutzman//English Studies. Amsterdam, vol. 56, N5, pp. 421 – 433.
- [18] Greenbaum S. (1970). Verb intensifier collocations/ S. Greenbaum. – the Hague – Paris:Mouton
- [19] Kirschner G. (1955). Gradadverbien, Restriktiva und Verwandtes im heutigen Englisch./G.Kirschner.Halle/Saale, Niemeyer.
- [20] Spitzbart H. (1961). Lebendiges English. Stilistisch syntaktische Mittel der Ausdrucksverstaerkung/ H. Spitzbart. – Halle/Saale, Niemeyer. <http://www.editorialmanager.com/aral/default.aspx>

Citation: Margaret Apresyan. “On The Concept of “Expressiveness” In Modern Linguistics”. *Annals of Language and Literature*, 2(4), 2018, pp. 8-12.

Copyright: © 2018 Margaret Apresyan. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.