

SEMANTICS OF THE AFFECTIVE WORDS AS PART OF THE EMOTIVE LEXICON

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Various psycholinguistic studies claim that the language is emotive and there is not a single tongue that would contain an emotionally neutral lexicon. The immediate issue connected to it is whether the emotive meaning of a word can render a concept or a notion. Having determined that the emotive components of a word can render concepts, we will proceed with the study of a word emotive meaning.

According to Professor V. Shakhovsky we distinguish four types of word emotive semantics: the conceptual/notional meaning, the denotative one, the emotive meaning proper which refers to the comparison of a concrete emotive word with a concrete social emotion expressed by the subject and the last type of meaning is the functional semantic one. It is found in typical social situations recognized by the individual and associated with an emotive word used to denote it.

At the same time V. Shakhovsky identifies words with different types of emotive meaning status. They are: words with a denotative emotive meaning status (affective words), those with an optional or additional emotive meaning status (the connotatives), and words with a potential emotive meaning status.

In the given paper we analyze the semantics of affective words associated with certain social situations used in "Memories from my Boyhood", Stories and Tales by Ion Creangă in Romanian, English and Russian.

Key-words: *Affective words, connotative meaning, culture specific situation, denotative meaning, emotive lexicon.*

Various psycholinguistic studies claim that the language is emotive and there is not a single tongue that would contain an emotionally neutral lexicon. Consequently, all the human speech is emotionally laden, being marked explicitly or implicitly depending on the situation, the degree of the speaker's sensitivity and his/her ability to express the feeling or attitude to the given situation verbally.

According to V. Shakhovsky the phrase "language expresses human emotions" is metaphorical as the expression itself refers only to speech communication which, in its turn, expresses an idea by making use of the linguistic means found in the given language (Shakhovsky, 2008, p.29), (Translated by the author.).

At the same time, we have to keep in mind the fact that emotion as a concept is not only a psychological and linguistic phenomenon but a more complex one including the environment, in which it developed, is maintained and expressed. Here we mean the type of culture and the society, also the historical period in which the emotion concept was firstly verbalized.

Trying to suggest a definition to emotions we can say that they are the human reactions to the objects in the surrounding physical world. It is supposed that the first man who expressed an emotional attitude towards the object of his state in a verbal way instead of throwing something at it and used a swear word started the beginning of civilization. Thus, based on the human verbal interaction people use linguistic means to communicate their feelings. The word that names a certain emotion concept must contain components associated with the expressed emotions similar for all the speakers of this very language. In other words, these components must be parts of the accepted

meaning of the linguistic unit in this society and the unit itself must be a sign of a concrete emotion or a group of emotions in the same way as the emotion itself represents the internal sign for one or another attitude of the person to surrounding objects and the outer world (Shakhovsky, 2008, p.48). (Translated by the author.)

When putting into discussion the issue about the essence of the emotive meaning of a word which belongs to the emotive lexicon we wonder if it can render a concept or a notion. This fact is dictated by the interjections, means that frequently serve to express emotion states or feelings in a certain language. There are many debates among linguists on this topic (Shakhovsky, 2008, p.62) but we are inclined to adhere to Stankiewicz's opinion who states that the notional meaning of interjections is minimal and diffused but it exists (*ibidem*, p. 63). At the same time, we support V. Shakhovsky's point of view that the emotional meaning of an interjection can be both notional and non-notional. Also, if the emotive word can have a social conceptual interpretation and is associated with a certain social situation, i.e. a cognitive pattern, its emotional meaning can be conceptually determined (*ibidem*, p.65).

The thought which exists in the form of a concept requires a word to express it. This idea suggests that words are bearers of concepts/notions including the emotive meaning. As mentioned above, to express an emotion means to characterize the reflected object, to show one's emotional attitude to it (any conscious emotion is an attitude, i.e. an evaluation) and the attitude has a certain content-conceptual basis due to which the emotional meaning can be interpreted (*ibidem*, p.67).

According to I.P. Pavlov, the words and the psychological state of the human are connected in the following way: words represent one of the superior forms of a nervous human activity while emotions are forms of its manifestation (*apud*, 4 p.68). The expression of human emotions in words has a psycho-physiological and social basis as emotions reflect the human's typical psychological states by means of words as components of a real world in his/her linguistic picture (4, p. 68).

Before we identify the *affective words* in the whole emotive lexicon of a given language we have to explain the meaning of various terms we use to discuss the proposed issue. If *emotion* and *sensitivity* are terms that characterize the human feelings in Psychology, *emotivity* is a notion used to render the expression of emotions by a word, i.e. in Linguistics. This term was introduced by the Russian scholar V. Shakhovsky (*ibidem*, p. 69) and is widely used by researchers who deal in the study of emotion concepts in intercultural or multi-cultural communication. Similar to V. Shakhovsky, Monika Bednarek speaks about the *emotive language* when discussing the verbal expression of emotions (Bednarek, 2008, p.7) and studies the *emotions terms* in the broad meaning of the word (focusing solely on adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs) (*ibidem*, p.17).

Moreover, *emotivity* refers to the semantic ability of a word to express emotions in comparison with its ability to name and describe them. It means that the emotive component in the semantics of a word is recognized to express emotional attitude by all the speakers of a given language. A word with an emotive component is called an *emotive word* (Shakhovsky, 2008, p.68) and is part of the emotive lexicon of a language (Lifari, 2020, p.47).

Having determined that the emotive components of a word can render concepts, we will proceed with the study of a word emotive meaning. According to Professor V. Shakhovsky we distinguish four types of word emotive semantics. The first is the *conceptual/notional meaning* which implies a synchronous process of logical and emotional evaluating attitude of the human towards the world, attitude expressed in the semantics of the word. The second is the *denotative* one. The emotive semantics of a word is a (specific) reflection of the world. The human emotions as part of the world are conditioned by certain objective or subjective signs of the named object. This is the case when a word from the common vocabulary with no emotive meaning obtains an emotive meaning in a certain context (connotative meaning). The third meaning is the *emotive* one proper and refers to the comparison of a concrete emotive word with a concrete social emotion expressed by the subject. And the last type of meaning is the functional semantic one. It is found in typical social situations recognized by the individual and associated with an *emotive word* used to denote it (Shakhovsky, 2008, p.72).

The style used by the speaker to render some idea may imply as well the emotive meaning contained in the semantics of the used words, e.g. *famous* and *notorious* are synonyms only their emotive-evaluative component delivers a good meaning in the case of *famous* and a bad one in the case of *notorious*, the main meaning of these words being “a well-known person”. Sometimes for a pragmatic effect the author of an utterance may use words in the emotive-connotative meaning, thus putting into application the names of the figures in chess to refer to real life people. This effect is obtained due to the emotive semantics of the given words.

While analyzing emotivity as a semantic component of a word we suppose that its smallest meaningful components, i.e. emotive semes do exist in the semantic system of the language similar to other types of semes and consider the determination of the semantic status of emotivity an ontological category.

The emotive semes express the subjective (emotional) reality which becomes objective for the word. Within the meaning of the word the emotive seme is opposed to the other types of semes thus forming the inter-semantic paradigm (apud: Shakhovsky, 2008, p.74).

V. Shakhovsky identifies words with different types of emotive meaning status. They are: words with a denotative emotive meaning status (*affective words*), those with an optional or additional emotive meaning status (the connotative meaning of a word), and words with a potential emotive meaning status (Shakhovsky 2008, p.74).

Emotive semantics can be contained in the denotative macro-component and comprise the only content of the word meaning. Such an emotive semantics has a meaningful status and is compulsory for the *affective word*. The emotive meaning of such linguistic units is compulsory as their unique semiologic function is to express the intense emotions of the speaker. This category of emotivity is represented by interjections, swear words, vulgarisms, emotive-evaluative adjectives, adverbs and addressing words. All the mentioned above classes of words whose denotative meaning is emotive are called *affective words* (ibidem, p.75).

The classification of the *emotive lexicon* in various researches is not similar and uniform. Aneta Pavlenko, for example, speaks about two groups of *emotive words* and entitles them as *emotion words* and *emotion-laden words*. “Emotion words are seen as words that directly refer to particular affective states (“happy”, “angry”) or processes (“to worry”, “to rage”), and function to either describe (“she is sad”) or express them (“I feel sad”). In some contexts, these words may also elicit emotions and in others they may function just like abstract words ... Emotion-laden words are seen here as words that do not refer to emotions directly but instead express (“jerk”, “loser”) or elicit emotions from the interlocutors (“cancer”, “malignancy”). The following subcategories are commonly differentiated among emotion-laden words: (a) taboo and swearwords or expletives (“piss”, “shit”), (b) insults (“idiot”, “creep”), (c) (childhood) reprimands (“behave”, “stop”), (d) endearments (“darling”, “honey”), (e) aversive words (“spider”, “death”), and (f) interjections (“yuk”, “ouch”). The boundaries of these subcategories are somewhat fuzzy for two reasons. On the one hand, some words may cross categories. For instance, taboo and swearwords that commonly function as insults may in some contexts appear as friendly terms of affection. On the other hand, words that are not commonly viewed as emotion-laden may acquire emotional connotations in discourse. For instance, in some contexts, words like “liberal” or “elite” may appear as insults or as aversive words (Pavlenko, 2008, p.148).

The classification of the emotion lexicon given by Professor V. Shakhovsky and the method of semantic analysis he applied showed that the semantics of emotive words can be interpreted as follows: the lexical semantics of a word is made up of three components: logical-objective, emotive and functional-stylistic. The first component names the object, the second has a double status (denotative meaning and connotative meaning) and the functional-stylistic component regulates the choice of the word. As we see from above the semantic components belong to different sources of formation and unite themselves in the word semantics. At the same time these sources enhance all the spheres of reality – the world of objects, that of human emotions and the world of the human’s language.

The different combinability of the three mentioned above components form the variants of lexical semantics of separate words. At the same time the internal structure of the lexical meaning of various types of emotive lexicon is not similar. It depends on the combinability of the semes that belong to the three semantic components mentioned above. In the case of *affective words* the structure of the lexical meaning is made up of two macro-components: the emotive and stylistic. The emotive macro-component in the semantics of *affective words* is primary. It is correlated with a concrete emotion which is expressed linguistically and has the role of the object of speech. To compare the denotative emotive meaning and the connotative emotive meaning we have to point at the different types of semes that compose the emotive meaning: in denotation evaluative and the expressive semes are emotional while in connotation these semes are rational. Also, emotivity in the semantics of *affective words* has the status of a macro-component, while in the semantics of connotative emotive words emotivity has a status of component. In connotative word meaning emotive meaning is combined with the primary meaning, while in the *affective words* emotive meaning is independent (Shakhovskiy, 2008, pp.79-81). In the context the denotative meaning of a word interacts with the connotative one and there is no distinct separation of meaning. Moreover, we have to keep in mind the fact that the text can have a potential emotive meaning status that interacts with the denotative or connotative emotive meanings of emotives and influences the semantics of the primary word meaning.

Having discussed the main issues of the emotive lexicon in the papers of several researchers we decided to study the given phenomenon on the cross-cultural level. Our purpose was to identify the lexicon used with different types of emotive meaning status and to compare them cross-culturally. Also, we will look at the semantics of emotive words that can be interpreted as logical-objective, emotive and functional-stylistic.

For this purpose, we selected examples of contexts in which the emotion lexicon was used and identified 51 samples in English, 51 sentences in Romanian and 47 in Russian, in the Romanian book of tales by Ion Creangă “The Memories of My Boyhood” and its translations into English and Russian. The quantitative analysis and the number of contexts selected may indicate that the Russian version of the tale “Memories of my Boyhood” is less rich in affective meaning or otherworldly saying certain social situations that are emotionally charged in English and Romanian are neutral in Russian. But in order to draw a well-grounded conclusion, it is worthwhile providing examples.

E.g.: (1a) “Well, well we’d lost master Vasile.” (6, p. 18).

(1b) “Ei, ei pe bǎdița Vasile l-am pierdut.” (5, p. 20).

(1c) Вот и лишились мы своего дяди Василе ... (5, p.21).

The given instances show that the English utterance lost the tender addressing to *Master Vasile* expressed in Romanian and changed it from an affective attitude of the speaker into a respectful one. In the Russian translation the affective term *bǎdița* is adapted to “дядя”, losing its emotional meaning, but as well showing kinship relation or closeness by means of lexeme “свой”. The use of interjection “ei, ei” at the beginning of the sentence expresses “sadness” and “regret” in Romanian and so standing for a negative feeling but representing an affective according to professor V. Shakhovskiy; while the English “well” appears to be a context dependent interjection that can render some thought, is used to conclude something or to attract one’s attention, and so not expressing a definite concept out of the context.

An important issue to be stated about the form of affective terms is the fact that English does not put into use affectives formed by affixation similar to Romanian or Russian, thus very often adjective “little” antecedes the denoted noun used connotatively. Quite common when expressing the meaning of [+Astonishment] towards someone’s wrong behavior we make use of an exclamation that addresses the Lord or the Heavens; this phenomenon being found cross-culturally in the analyzed examples. However, the verbs that stand for the action of the given context are emotionally charged in the two translations.

E.g.: (2a) Good Lord, David, what will you be up to next? (6, p.29).

(2b) *Oiu, Doamne, Davide, cum nu te mai astâmperi ; de ce-ai scos băiatul din casă pe vremea asta?* (5, p.36).

(2c) *Ой, Боже мой, Давид, никак ты не образумишься ! Да можно ли было брать ребёнка в такую непогоду !* (5, p. 37)

Though the usage of affectives addressing the “Lord” seems not to be the norm or a rule in all the cases and the situations of [+Despair] and [+Hesitation] are noticed to be expressed differently cross-culturally, for instance:

(3a) *What in Heaven’s name was to be done?* (6, p.32).

(3b) *Ei, ei! Ce-i de făcut ?* (5, p.40).

(3c) *Вот тебе и раз ! Что же нам теперь делать ?* (5, p.41)

Frequent expressions to denote [+Pity] or [+Compassion] are the ones that contain lexeme “poor” and its equivalents in Romanian (“bietul”) and Russian (“бедный”) all of them being used connotatively, for example:

(4a) *He was not to blame, poor man, and as he himself used to say...* (6, p.30)

(4b) *Nu era vinovat bietul preot, și după cum spunea el ...* (5, p.36)

(4c) *Но, понятно, бедный поп не был виноват, и как он сам говорил...* (5, p.37)

Following this idea, we have noticed some other emotional contexts in which the English adjective “poor” accompanies various nouns (some being affective initially) in such a way intensifying the emotion of “pity” towards the addressee, for instance:

(5a) *Just look at the sores on them, poor darlings! The scab has eaten into them among those strangers, poor lambs!* (6, p.35)

(5b) *Încă ce rană-i pe dânșii sărmanii băieți! Cum i-a mâncat râia, prin străini, mititeii!* (5, p.44)

(5c) *Бедные мальчики, какие на них болячки! Как разъела их, сердечных, короста у чужих-то людей.* (5, p.45)

Or another context with reference to children when expressing [+Pity] and [+Admiration] in which adjective “poor” + a noun appears in the English sentence while a single word in its diminutive form is found in the authentic text in Romanian and in the Russian translation, for example:

(6a) *I did wonder why they’re so good, poor dear;* (6, p. 40)

(6b) *Mă miram eu, de ce-s și ei așa de cumiți mititeii ;* (5, p.54)

(6c) *А я еще удивилась в чего это у нас такие послушные деточки !* (5, p. 55)

Coming back to the idea that the addressing to the “Lord” has turned into an interjection and thus an affective denoting a concept we would like to mention the opposite in meaning lexeme, its antonym “devil” with reference of expressing an attitude to the bad behaviour of children while being angry or irritated, for instance: (7a) *Take that and behave yourself, you devil!* (6, p.40); while in Romanian and Russian this idea is expressed by associating the bad behaviour of children with the horse’s galloping, thus metaphorically: (7b) *Ei, taci, taci! Ajungă-ți de-amu herghelie!* (5, p.54); (7c) *Ну тише, тише хватит жеребят.* (5, p.55), and in the Russian translation as a tender expression “жеребят” which in its denominative meaning refers to the child of a horse which is pleasant and small.

Still other contexts illustrate apparently similar affectives cross-culturally with reference to children’s wrongdoings, for example:

(8a) *All the devilish tricks that come into their minds they put into practice.* (6, p.39)

(8b) *Câte drăcării le vin în cap, toate le fac.* (5, p.52)

(8c) *Какая бы чертовщина не взбрела им в голову обязательно сделают то что надумали.* (5, p.53)

Definitely English being an analytical language puts into application mostly appreciating adjectives formed from the noun “devil” that accompany nouns to render an affective attitude of the speaker toward the given situation or its participants while Romanian and Russian being synthetic languages with certain elements of analytic structure employ various derivatives from the root of lexeme “devil” to form emotive nouns or derived affectives.

The expression of “grief” and “sorrow” is verbalized in Romanian by the idiom “vai și amar de capul lui/ei” and often instead of using a long phrase; the speaker reduces it to interjection “vai” employed with the same meaning, for example:

(9a) *But woe to him who gives in too much thoughts!* (6, p.37)

(9b) *Însă vai de omul care se i-a pe gânduri!* (5, p.50)

The English translation in this case is done by means of using lexeme “woe”, a synonym of “grief” and “sadness”; a similar way of expressing the given concept is found in Russian, thus employing no affective, but employing an emotion term:

(9c) *Но горе, тому кто чересчур много думает!* (5, p.51)

When expressing [+Anger] and [+Irritation] towards an object that causes this state, the speaker often uses affective vocabulary with initial emotional meaning, among these are such lexemes as “pughitale spurcate / rascals / негодники”; “strigoî / hobgoblin / ведьма”; “porcine / swine / поросёнок”; “duglişule / lazy boy / соня”; “coropcarule / tramp”; “coşcogeme coblizan / idle fellow / верзило”; “uşernic / idle wretch / бездельник.”

From the enumerated instances, we can state that the Romanian way of expressing “anger” is quite intense and stylistically colored, fact that is also highlighted by the equivalents carefully fitted into the English and Russian translations and so underlying the intense emotive character of a Romanian individual and correspondingly a rich colloquial vocabulary to render “anger” in Romanian by employing affective words, while in the English translation we have the contexts with emotive words used in their connotative meaning, some cases use affectives proper and still other instances include an appreciating adjective followed by a noun. In Russian, in some contexts, the affective is omitted totally as no equivalent was found (*coropcar/tramp*).

A quite curious example of an occasional affective word used by Ion Creangă as a joking creation “Dicţionarul cuvintelor inexistente” addressed to the nephew translated by being associated with the “pig” or “piglet” in English and Russian:

(10b) *He, he! Vine-ai venit, nepurcele!* (5, p.62)

(10a) *Hi! Welcome young pig’s chap!* (6, p.45)

(10c) *Ага, добро пожаловать внучок-поросёнок!* (5, p.63).

Other instances of expressing emotions in a differentiated way cross-culturally in this collection of tales and its translations are the way the children address their mother. Neither in Romanian, nor in English do we identify any emotional attitude of the speaker in the form of the word or the context as he uses the term “mamă” / “mother” correspondingly, while in the Russian translation this endearment term is adopted to the reality of Christianity and thus the diminutive form the term is used:

(11c) *Когда матушка наша, наработалась до упаду, ложилась... (5, p.51)*

Alongside the commented above context, we would like to continue with the situations in which the narrator expresses his “affection” towards aunt Mărioara:

(12a) *But how should I climb down when hell and destructions were down below at the foot of the tree?* (6, p.46)

(12b) *¡Dar cum să te cobori, căci jos era prăpădenie!* (5, p.64).

The Russian variant used no affective just using lexeme “death”. The “affection” towards the aunt is continued in:

(13a) *That crazy aunt Mărioara rushed after me ... (6, p.47)*

(13b) *Şi nebuna de mătuşa Mărioara, după mine ... (5, p.64)*

(13c) *А эта сумасшедшая тетка Мэриора кидается за мной ... (5, p.67).*

As we notice in the above sentences, a qualifying adjective in its initial absolute form is used to denote the noun in all the three languages; very often positive affectives are employed for a pragmatic effect, a similar idea we encounter in the following examples:

(14a) *Are you selling that birdie, sonny?* (6, p.52)

(14b) *De vânzare e găinuşa ceea... măi băiete?* (5, p.72)

(14c) *Эй, мальчуган, продаешь свою курочку?* (5, p.75)

It is worth while mentioning that (14a) is an example of a morphologically coined affective found in the English language similar to many addressing words as “sweetie” and other endearment terms like baby, honey, love, etc., a phenomenon not so often present in English as highlighted before.

In the context of the story of the Armenian cuckoo we would like to introduce the words of Ionică addressed to the bird when he was trying to get it out of the hole and thus expressing satisfaction for his action:

(15b) *Taci, leliță, că te-am căptușit eu.* (5, p.70)

(15a) *Sit still my pretty, for I've got you at last; ...* (6, p.50)

(15c) *Ага голубчик попался – говорю я, очень довольный.* (5, p.71)

Besides the endearment terms used here these instances are interesting examples to be analyzed from gender point of view as the noun denoting the “bird” is of different gender in all the three languages under analysis; being called “a young woman” in Romanian, in a diminutive form, used ironically and being named as a masculine creature in Russian, also in an ironic way; the English variant also expressed ironically and affectively but not stating the gender.

Having studied the linguistic ways of rendering various affective states expressed by the characters of the tales “Memories of my Boyhood” by Ion Creangă and their cross-cultural equivalents we can conclude that the source text is the one most rich in using culturally specific affective vocabulary among which are the interjections, endearment terms, affective lexemes used denotatively and words employed connotatively.

The authentic Romanian text was adapted to the linguistic reality of the English and Russian linguistic pictures by using the existing equivalents or by omitting the affective context in the target text as the sociolinguistic reality is different in it. We also noticed cases of reverse linguistic context: no emotive meaning in the authentic text and acquired affective meaning in the target text. As the role of intercultural communication by means of translation is to adapt one linguistic reality to another and as well to preserve the initial denominative meaning.

The functional semantic meaning of the emotive lexicon covers a larger area of research as it is culturally specific on the one hand and creative on the other hand placing the reader in two realities: the familiar associations of the emotive reality associated with certain expressions that give the subjective experience an objective character and the personalized or linguistic contexts created by the author of the text to associate with the existing socially emotive situations by means of nonce words. Thus, in this sense we agree with professor V. Shakhovschiy who claims that the emotions are always new while the linguistic arsenal does not change so quickly and the role of the speaker or writer is to contribute to the new meaning with new expressions that would be the objective reality of the given subjective concept.

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