

## LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BASIS OF EMOTIONS

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The Handbook of Emotions contains the famous metaphor about the master and slave with reference to the reason and emotion, thus the emotion denotes something weak and dependent. On the other hand it is considered that emotions are best rendered non-verbally and V.Hugo had found an explanation for that: “The feeling is always new while the word has been always used that is why we cannot express our emotions verbally.”

For a long period of time the linguists had different opinions concerning the study of the emotive function of the language. A part of them thought that the dominant function of the language is the cognitive one thus excluding the possibility of researching the emotional component of the language. In the late 70s of the previous century emotiology as the linguistics of emotions began to appear. Many professors such as V.V. Shakhovsky, A.Wierzbicka, T.V. Larina dealt in the field of emotiology and studied cross-cultural communication. Some of them state that emotions are universal and can be identified in every country, others conclude that the lack of the term denoting a certain emotion in a certain language speaks about the fact that cultures differ emotionally.

In this study we try to identify the terminology used in a research of this kind and clarify whether emotions are culturally dependent or not. The working languages are English, Romanian and Russian and their corresponding cultures – English, Moldovan and Russian.

**Keywords:** *emotiology, intercultural studies, linguistic studies, emotions, feelings.*

**EMOȚIILE: COMPONENTA LINGVISTICĂ ȘI CEA CULTURALĂ**

În lucrarea „The Handbook of Emotions” găsim metafora despre sclav și proprietar cu referință la rațiune și emoție, astfel cea din urmă denumind ceva slab și dependent, iar prima fiind ceva puternic și independent. Se spune că emoțiile/sentimentele se redau mai bine prin mijloace non-verbale și distinsul scriitor francez V.Hugo a găsit o explicație pentru acest fapt, spunând că sentimental este întotdeauna nou, pe când cuvintele sunt tot aceleași.

Pentru o perioadă îndelungată, lingviștii au tratat tema funcției emotive a limbii în mod variat. O parte din ei considerau că funcția superioară a limbii este cea cognitivă, astfel excluzând posibilitatea studierii funcției emotive. La sfârșitul anilor 70 ai secolului trecut a început să apară emotiologia ca ramură a lingvisticii. Mulți savanți, precum V.V. Shakhovsky, A.Wierzbicka, T.V. Larina, au contribuit cu lucrările lor în domeniu în plan intercultural. Unii susțin că emoțiile sunt universale și pot fi identificate în orice țară, iar alții sunt de părere că lipsa termenului ce redă conceptul unei emoții într-un idiom indică faptul dependenței emoțiilor de cultură sau etnie.

În acest studiu ne propunem să identificăm terminologia utilizată într-o cercetare de acest gen și să confirmăm ipoteza despre dependența emoțiilor de cultură. Culturile cercetate sunt cea engleză, moldovenească și rusă, iar terminologia ține de limbile engleză, română și rusă.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *emotiologie, studii interculturale, studii lingvistice, emoții, sentimente, simț.*

The *emotions* represent specific and intense psychological reactions to a certain event. The *emotions* which are often called *feelings* (Rom. *sentimente*) include such manifestations as *love, hate, fury, trust, panic, the state of being afraid, pain*, etc. Researches till nowadays didn't give a definite answer to the questions what are emotions but they all agree that the emotions are composed of *subjective feelings, psychological answers and expressive behaviour* [7].

In the “Handbook of Emotions” by M.D. Lewis, J.M. Laviland-Jones, L.F. Barret [6, p.1] we read about the famous metaphor *the master and slave* with reference to *the reason and emotion*, where the *reason* is positive and strong, while the *emotions* are negative and weak, though Hume David, a Scottish skeptic from the 18<sup>th</sup> century considered that the *reason* has to be the *slave of emotions*. Plato in “Symposium” says that there are emotions involved in reason as well [6, p.4] while E.Bedford noticed that the Aristotelian Society in London made errors of thinking of *emotions* as *feelings*. This common mistake appears nowadays as well and modern linguists such as A.Wierzbicka in her works devoted to the linguistics of emotions points out this fact: many psychologists appear to be more comfortable with the term *emotion* than *feeling* because *emotions* appear to be somehow objective and it is assumed that only the objective is real and amenable to rigorous study. Indeed it is often assumed that emotions have a biological foundation and can therefore be studied objectively while feelings cannot [3, p.23].

Many anthropologists too prefer to talk about *emotions* rather than *feelings* – not because of the former's objective biological foundation but because of their objective social basis. The English word *emotion* seems to combine in its meaning a reference to *feeling*, a reference to *thinking* and a reference to *person's body*. For example one can talk about *a feeling of hunger or a feeling of heartburn*, but not *an emotion of hunger or an emotion of heartburn*, because feelings in question are not thought related. One can also talk about *a feeling of loneliness or a feeling of alienation*, but not *an emotion of loneliness or an emotion of alienation*, because while these feelings are clearly related to thoughts they do not imply any associated bodily events or processes (such as rising blood pressure, tears, etc.). The English word *emotions*, however, with its characteristic combination of three components (related to thinking, feeling and the body) does not have exact equivalents in other languages [3, p.24], so how to speak about other languages in terms of English and vice versa?

The word *emotion* comes from the Latin *emovere* – *to excite, to make somebody anxious* [9]. When we consult the Collins Cobuild Dictionary we find out that an *emotion* is *a feeling such as fear, love, hate, anger or jealousy* which can be caused by the situation that you are in or the people you are with. The second meaning is the part of a person's character that consists of their feelings as opposed to their thoughts, e.g.: the split between reason and emotion [3, p.461]. If we look up the word *feeling* up in the dictionary we notice almost the same explanation: *a feeling is an emotion such as anger or happiness*, e.g.: *a strong feeling of jealousy; a feeling of panic; guilty feeling, mutual feeling* and the second meaning of this word given by the dictionary is *a way of thinking and reacting to things which are emotional and spontaneous rather than logical and rational*, still another meaning is *a feeling of hunger, tiredness*, i.e. a physical sensation that you experience [1, p.525].

The Romanian equivalent for feelings is *sentiment*. The definition of this word explains it as *a particular affective process which expresses the human's (emotional) attitude towards reality*, the synonyms of this word are: *affect, simțire, pasiune, impresie, senzație, părere* [8]. The word *emotion* is a synonym to *feeling* in Romanian too, but they both do not include the body feelings that are part of the English word *emotion* as A. Wierzbicka said (see above). To render this meaning the Romanian language uses the word *simți*: *a simți foame, frig* or using the verb *to be* alongside the one denoting a state: *mii foame, mii cald, mii dor*, conjugated in person and number, while in English you'll hear *I feel cold, hot, thirsty*, though *I am thirsty, hungry* sounds English-like as well. *A simți* refers only to the body feelings. Nowadays when people have a public speech or an unusual experience and are excited and anxious they say: *am emoții*, in Romanian (English: *I have butterflies in the stomach*), which means that they want to tell the listener about their particular emotive and cognitive state.

The Russian dictionary states that *чувства* (*feelings*) are stable emotional states of a human being which appear in the process of showing his/her attitude towards the world. In comparison with affectives and emotions *чувства* (*feelings*) are dependent on the situation. Besides they are subjective, fact that explains the degree of importance of certain things and phenomena for different people [10]. The word combinations found in the dictionary with the Russian word under analysis is very similar to the English and Romanian examples: *чувство горя* (*a feeling of sadness*), *удовольствия* (*delight*), *голода* (*hunger*), *холода* (*feeling cold*). The Russian example *чувство юмора* has the equivalents *sense of humour* and *simțul umorului* in English and Romanian, both the translations referring to humour have nothing to do with either emotions or feelings, in English and Romanian denoting an ability or a talent of the human being. In Russian the word *чувство* includes the sense [+ sense] in its meaning as well. The Russian *чувства* refers to the feeling while *чувство* refers to both the body and the abilities or talents. The term *эмоции* in Russian is *a particular type of psychological processes or states of a person which can be identified in certain situations of being joyful, felling fear, feeling pleasure*, etc. and the feelings comprise the highest stage of emotions.

What about the genetically related languages? As English is a Germanic language it is worthwhile researching if the languages from the same group have a term that will include the meaning of body feelings, thinking and spiritual feeling contained in the English term *emotion*. A. Wierzbicka mentions that in ordinary German there is no word for *emotion* at all. The word usually used as a translation equivalent of the English *emotion* is *Gefühl* (from *fühlen* – *to feel*) makes no distinction between mental and physical feelings (although contemporary scientific German uses increasingly the word *Emotion*, no doubt borrowed from the scientific English). At the same time the plural form *Gefühle* is restricted to cognitively based feelings similarly to Russian (see above), although unlike the English *emotion* it does not imply any body disturbances or processes of any kind.

It is stated that the concept of *feelings* is universal while that of *emotions* is culture-bound and cannot be similarly based on. Izard explicitly states that the emotions have the cognitive component [quoted from 3, p.26]. If before *the emotions* were not subject of linguistic studies nowadays it is proved that *emotions* comprise the motivational basis of consciousness, thought and behaviour [5, p.16]. The linguist supports A.Wierzbicka's point of view that *emotions* are universal and can be identified in every culture [5, p.17]. Biologically the emotions may be the same but socially, culturally and individually they are different. Many researchers support the idea that emotions are best rendered by non-verbal means, fact that we agree with. Moreover the French writer V.Hugo said that “the *feeling* is always new while the word has been always used that is why we cannot express our *emotions* verbally”. Still about 30 years ago the *Linguistics of emotions* as a direction in Linguistics had appeared. V.I. Shakhovsky calls it **emotiology** [5, p.22]. Even if the English speaking countries demonstrated *reserveness, privacy and indifference to each other* in the XIX-th and XX-th centuries it changed into *sympathy, impoliteness and attention* in the XXI century. Nowadays the norms of behavior and the language differ. T.V. Larina [4, p.387] comes with interesting examples that illustrate the usage of rude words by people that belong to the intellectual layer of the English society. This is typical of young people all over the world due to the process of globalization. A young man of about 20 whose father is a respectable English Philology Professor uses swear words like *fuck* and its derivatives in the presence of his father without any embarrassment, or an adult gentlemen addressing his wife in the presence of Professor T.Larina also uses dirty words: *I can't park here because of that fucker*. Because of the rapid change in technology, because of the quickness of the internet operations people become *impatient* and *nervous* in everyday conversations, expressing their *emotions* in public by using the affectives, i.e. interjections or swear words; the latter even fashionable in the small talk of nowadays.

According to Professor V.I. Shakhovsky *emotions* can be expressed psychologically (laughing, crying, trembling) and verbally (i.e. named, expressed and described), thus he means the body language and the verbal language [5, p.18]. Every language has an emotive function thus every language contains special emotive signs, which are part of its cognitive-emotive structure of its cultural-linguistic code. The category of emotivity is present in every language on all the levels of its systems and is found on the phonetic, lexical, phraseological, word-building, morphological, syntactic, stylistic, supra-phrasal and text levels [5, p.28].

In spite of the fact that *emotions* are rendered in different ways in various cultures being conditioned by the specific national linguistic norms and rules the emotional essence of the man is considered by cognitology as a psychological universal [quoted from 5, p.29]. In a conversation the emotive component is always accompanied by the expressive one and the appreciation of the speaker is being added, while expressiveness and appreciation are not necessarily accompanied by the emotive component. Emotions and their rendering depend on the situation and also on the means used in speech or the signs of the body language, i.e. they are situational. The social researches show that the whole of the speech activity is either stereotypical or creative, the latter being based on the former. When born children develop the emotional image while thinking and use it to perceive the world and its role in this world. This fact speaks about the emotional dominant of innate deep structures as a component of innate *emotional intelligence* of a person [quoted from 5, p.44].

According to D.Goleman *emotional intelligence* implies the totality of emotions inside oneself; being aware of what I feel I can see myself and the others in a positive and objective way. The *emotional intelligence* is the ability to interact with the people in a receptive and proper way and to control the feelings in the right way. These abilities include control of *feelings* and *emotions, empathy, motivation and quickness of the mind*. These are the qualities that help building a character which can adapt well in the society. Certain *emotions* are associated with women (crying) and others with men (fury, rage). *Emotions* are also culturally dependent [11].

In order to prove that emotions are culturally dependent we would start with the analysis given by the famous Polish linguist A.Wierzbicka. She tries to explain the difference between the Polish words *teżknota* (Russian – *моска*, Romanian – *dor*, English – *no equivalent* (added by V.L.)), *tesknic* (Russian – *московать*, Romanian – *a fi dor*, English – *to miss* (added by V.L.)) and the English *to miss*.

If we decompose them into small parts that have equivalents in English we see that X *teżkni do* Y= (X feels ‘*teżknota*’ to Y=X is far away from Y; X thinks of Y; X feels something good towards Y; X wants to be together with Y; X knows s/he cannot be together with Y; X feels something bad because of that. While the English word *to miss* implies neither *pain* nor *distance* in comparison with the mentioned Polish word [2, p.587]. We disagree with A.Wierzbicka in this respect as Collins Cobuild Dictionary gives the following

explanation to the meaning of the word miss: 1) *you regret that they are no longer with you because you like them very much or feel lonely without them*. E.g.: *The two boys miss their father a great deal*. Only the second meaning of *to miss* is 2) *to notice that they are not present* [1, p.924], meaning that A. Wierzbicka takes it as a primary one. Very good examples to show the difference between the two types of missing are the Russian *тосковать* and *скучать*. The first one is very close in meaning to the Polish *tesknić* and implies X knows he cannot be with Y, while the second one is more positive and doesn't contain this meaning being closer to the English *to miss*.

Referring to the Romanian *dor*, *a fi dor* we found out that it can be decomposed in the following senses: 1) *a strong desire to see somebody very dear again, nostalgia*; 2) *a suffering caused by the love for somebody who is far away*. So as we see it implies distance and pain as in the case of the Polish word.

To sum it up we can say that both linguists and anthropologists agree on the fact that emotions are objective and feelings are subjective, thus using the term emotions and not feelings for research.

The English term "emotions" contains the three components in it: the feelings, the body and the cognitive component. This term was borrowed into other languages to render the same meaning in scientific language so as to cover the specific cultural differences of the words that denote the feeling, the body and cognition differently. As seen from the analysed examples it is the word 'feeling' that is used in everyday speech in English, 'simț' appears in various expressions in Romanian and 'чувство/а' expresses feelings and bodily states in Russian.

The category of emotivity as a linguistic one is expressed at every level of the language. The emotions can be named, expressed and explained. The necessity to study emotions gave birth to a new direction in linguistics called emotiology, psychologists and sociologists on the other hand the term emotional intelligence as an art of controlling one's emotions.

The analysis of the word "to miss" and its equivalents in Romanian, Russian and Polish showed that the English "to miss" becomes very close to its equivalents in other languages implying pain and distance as the Polish, Romanian and Russian examples. This can be explained by the global use of English and the influence of other cultures on the English one, thus contributing to the change of the initial meaning of "to miss".

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