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THE CATEGORY OF EXPRESSIVENESS IN LINGUISTICS: INTERPRETIVE MODELS, CATEGORIAL BOUNDARIES AND LEVELS OF REALIZATION

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Abstract: Expressiveness is among the most frequently invoked yet least consistently defined categories in linguistics, and this heterogeneity obstructs cumulative research by complicating the determination of what counts as an expressive unit in empirical analysis. Drawing on twelve foundational works representing the Western European, Russian and Uzbek traditions, the study applies definitional, comparative-conceptual and classificatory analyses to order competing interpretations, delimit expressiveness from emotionality and evaluation, and establish the levels at which it is realized. Four interpretive models are identified — emotional-subjective, intensifying-systemic, deviational-stylistic and effect-oriented — which prove complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Expressiveness emerges as a superordinate category integrating emotionality and evaluation, thereby establishing the existence of non-emotional expressiveness and accounting for its presence in scientific and professional registers.

Keywords: expressiveness; emotionality; evaluation; intensification; stylistic markedness; foregrounding; expressive means; levels of the language system.

1. Introduction

Expressiveness belongs to a group of linguistic categories that are universally employed yet rarely defined. As Skrebnev (2003) observes, it lacks a universally accepted definition and falls within the class of phenomena that are intuitively understood but theoretically underdetermined. This is not merely a terminological inconvenience: the definition adopted determines the category's extension and therefore what an investigator will count as an expressive unit. A study proceeding from Bally's understanding of expressiveness as emotional perception and one proceeding from Galperin's understanding of it as intensification will not identify the same items in the same text.

A second consequence concerns the category's domain. If expressiveness is equated with emotionality, it follows that registers that constrain overt affect — scientific, academic, official, and professional — must be inexpressive, and earlier scholarship drew this conclusion. Contemporary research has challenged it, but the challenge requires a principled basis. The present study therefore addresses three questions. RQ1: Which interpretive models of expressiveness can be distinguished in the literature, and are they mutually exclusive or complementary? RQ2: On what basis can expressiveness be distinguished from emotionality and evaluation? RQ3: At which levels of the language system, and through which mechanisms, is it realized?

2. Literature Review

The emergence and development of the concept

The systematic study of expressiveness is associated with Charles Bally (1909), who defined it as the emotional perception of reality, together with the desire to transmit that perception to the

recipient. His more consequential insight is methodological: since a single content can be conveyed by several means, the choice among them produces expressive variation, and it is this variation, rather than any individual unit, that constitutes the object of stylistic description. Roman Jakobson (1960) approached the phenomenon functionally, identifying the emotive function as one that "aims at a direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about". On his account, even neutral utterances retain an element of expressiveness, with the function operating across all levels simultaneously.

Viktor Vinogradov (1963) defined expressiveness as a means of intensifying the image and influencing the recipient, but, more importantly, advanced the thesis that it is not a fixed property of units but emerges in context. Ilya Galperin (1981) provides the most systematic treatment, defining it as "a kind of intensification of an utterance or of a part of it" realized through forms that "exist in the language system for logical and emotional intensification". The formulation is significant on two counts: it separates expressive means, which belong to the system and are inventoriable, from stylistic devices, which are arrangements of those means in a text; and it admits logical alongside emotional intensification, thereby detaching the category from affect.

Irina Arnold (2002) derives expressive effect from the interplay of predictability and unpredictability: expressiveness arises when a norm is deliberately violated, and the resulting deviation foregrounds the norm. The category is thus relational, with no unit expressive in itself but only against the background of what was expected. In Uzbek linguistics, Ashurova and Galieva (2016) treat expressiveness as a stylistic category that reflects the speaker's intention, while Safarov (2008) relates it to conceptualization and to the interaction among language, cognition, and culture.

Expressiveness, emotionality and evaluation

The relationship between expressiveness and neighboring categories is the most persistent point of disagreement in the literature. Galperin (1981) states that expressiveness "should not be confused with emotiveness," the latter representing only one of its components, while Galkina-Fedoruk (1958) establishes the asymmetry from the opposite direction: emotional elements are invariably expressive, but expressiveness can occur without emotional coloring, notably in scientific discourse. Shakhovsky (1987) separates emotivity, the linguistic expression of emotion, from expressiveness, a means of influencing the recipient, thereby relocating the criterion from the speaker's inner state to the effect produced. Arutyunova (1988) introduces a third term, explaining evaluative meaning as the correlation between objective reality and its ideological interpretation, while Telia (1986) treats expressiveness as determined by intentions oriented toward the addressee.

A body of work still treats emotivity and expressiveness as synonymous. The persistence is informative: the categories co-occur in most actual utterances, and their distinctness is a matter of criterial definition rather than of observable co-presence.

Research gap

Two gaps emerge. First, the competing definitions have never been ordered by the criterion each employs; they are customarily listed in succession, which leaves the impression of unresolved disagreement even when the disagreement may be only apparent. Second, although the distinction between expressiveness and emotionality is frequently asserted, its principal consequence — the

existence of non-emotional expressiveness, and hence of expressiveness in registers that restrict overt affect — has not been systematically derived from the definitions themselves.

3. Methodology

The material comprises twelve scholarly works in stylistics and semantics, published between 1909 and 2016, representing three traditions: Western European and structuralist (2 sources), Russian (8), and Uzbek (2). Each work had to advance an explicit definition of expressiveness or of a category immediately bounding it, rather than merely employing the term descriptively.

Three methods are applied sequentially. Definitional analysis extracts from each source its operative definition and the criterion on which it rests. Comparative-conceptual analysis establishes the relations among these definitions along three parameters: orientation (toward the speaker, the utterance, the text, or the addressee), ontological status (a property of the language system or a contextually emergent effect), and relation to emotionality. Classificatory analysis orders the exponents by level of the language system, admitting a level only when at least two sources attest to its membership. The study is conceptual and does not test its conclusions against corpus data.

4. Results and Discussion

Four interpretive models of expressiveness

Definitional analysis yielded four interpretive models, each defining expressiveness by a different criterion. The emotional-subjective model (Bally) locates the category in the speaker's affective relation to the referent. The intensifying-systemic model (Galperin) treats it as a property of the language system, inventoriable across levels, and does not restrict intensification to the emotional domain, since the same mechanisms strengthen logical and evaluative meanings. The deviational-stylistic model (Arnold) is relational: expressive effect arises from departure from an expected pattern. The effect-oriented model (Shakhovsky, Telia) defines the category neither by the speaker's affect nor by the formal status of the unit, but by the influence exerted on the recipient.

Table 1. Interpretive models of expressiveness by defining criterion

Model	Defining criterion	Orientation	Ontological status	Principal exponents
Emotional-subjective	Emotional perception of reality	Speaker	Property of expression	Bally; Jakobson (emotive function)
Intensifying-systemic	Intensification of meaning	Utterance	Property of the language system	Galperin
Deviational-stylistic	Violation of the norm; foregrounding	Text	Relational, contrast-dependent	Arnold
Effect-oriented	Influence upon the recipient	Addressee	Contextually emergent	Shakhovsky; Telia;

Model	Defining criterion	Orientation	Ontological status	Principal exponents
				Vinogradov (transitional)

Source: compiled by the author.

Vinogradov occupies an intermediate position. His insistence that expressiveness emerges in context marks the transition from the systemic to the effect-oriented conception. At the same time, Jakobson bridges the first and fourth models, since the emotive function is defined simultaneously by speaker orientation and by the response it elicits. The four models are not in contradiction: they answer different questions about the same phenomenon — where expressiveness originates, what it does to meaning, how it is recognized, and what it achieves. The terminological disunity noted by Skrebnev therefore reflects not a deficiency of theory but the objective multidimensionality of the category, and the practical remedy is for each study to declare its operative model rather than to seek a single consensus definition.

Juxtaposing the second and fourth models yields a further result. Galperin locates expressiveness in the system, while Vinogradov locates it in the context; together, they entail a distinction between systemic expressiveness, carried by units marked independently of the environment, such as interjections and diminutives, and contextual expressiveness, acquired by neutral units placed in an unaccustomed environment. The distinction is methodologically necessary, since the two are identified by different procedures: the first by lexicographic marking, the second only by analysis of the surrounding text.

Delimitation of expressiveness, emotionality and evaluation

Comparative analysis along the orientation parameter yields a consistent three-term delimitation. Emotionality denotes the expression of the speaker's feelings and is oriented toward the speaker's inner experience; evaluation denotes the speaker's judgment of the object of discourse and is oriented toward the referent; expressiveness denotes intensification directed at communicative impact, is oriented toward the recipient, and incorporates the other two without being reducible to either.

Table 2. Delimitation of the three categories

Category	Object expressed	Orientation	Relation to the others
Emotionality	Feelings and psychological states	Speaker's inner state	Component of expressiveness
Evaluation	Judgment of the object of discourse	Referent	Component of expressiveness
Expressiveness	Intensification and communicative impact	Recipient	Superordinate, integrative category

Source: compiled by the author based on Galperin (1981), Galkina-Fedoruk (1958), Shakhovsky (1987) and Arutyunova (1988).

The decisive consequence is the admission of non-emotional expressiveness. Were the category coextensive with emotionality, the traditional exclusion of expressiveness from scientific and official registers would be legitimate. The asymmetry established by Galkina-Fedoruk dissolves that: what institutional norms restrict is one class of exponents, not the category itself. Such registers should therefore be expected to display not an absence of expressiveness but a redistribution of its means, toward intensification of logical and evaluative meaning and toward syntactic emphasis.

The levels of realization

Classificatory analysis of the inventories proposed by Galperin, Vinogradov, Arnold, and Jakobson confirms that expressive means are distributed throughout the language system rather than concentrated at any one level.

Table 3. Expressive means by level of the language system

Level	Expressive means	Principal source
Phonetic	Intonation, stress, pitch, rhythm	Galperin; Jakobson
Morphological / word-building	Diminutive suffixes; affixes of subjective evaluation	Vinogradov
Lexical	Epithets, interjections, slang, poetic and archaic words, connotatively marked vocabulary	Arnold; Galperin
Phraseological	Idioms, proverbs, set expressions	Galperin
Syntactic	Repetition, inversion, parallelism, gradation, ellipsis	Arnold
Textual/cognitive	Transposition (grammatical metaphor), foregrounding, metaphorical motivation	Arnold; Vinogradov

Source: compiled by the author based on Galperin (1981), Vinogradov (1963), Arnold (2002) and Jakobson (1960).

Galperin regards the phonetic level as the most powerful expressive resource because the human voice can convey nuances of meaning that no other means can attain. At the lexical level, Arnold demonstrates that units such as smote, shock, or clang possess inherent expressive potential by virtue of their connotative content, salient only in contrast with neutral vocabulary. The textual level differs from the others in kind: its mechanisms are not inventoriable units but operations performed upon units — transposition places a form in an unaccustomed context and thereby generates supplementary connotation, foregrounding elevates a selected element against its environment, and metaphorical motivation derives expressiveness from the internal structure of the lexical unit.

Two consequences follow. Expressiveness cannot be measured by counting isolated devices because its effect arises from the interaction of units across different levels; thus, any empirical procedure must be multi-level, and the textual mechanisms cannot be identified from an inventory at all, requiring analysis of the environment in which the unit occurs.

5. Conclusion

Four interpretive models of expressiveness were identified — emotional-subjective, intensifying-systemic, deviational-stylistic, and effect-oriented — which prove complementary rather than mutually exclusive (RQ1); their juxtaposition further yields the distinction between systemic and contextual expressiveness, required because different analytical procedures establish the two types. A consistent delimitation of the neighboring categories was established based on orientation, with expressiveness functioning as a superordinate category integrating emotionality and evaluation, thereby implying the existence of non-emotional expressiveness (RQ2). Expressive means were shown to be distributed across six levels of the language system, with the textual level consisting of operations upon units rather than of units themselves (RQ3).

The framework is conceptual and awaits verification against textual material. Two directions are indicated: the examination of non-emotional expressiveness in scientific and professional registers, where the redistribution hypothesis can be tested directly, and the contrastive study of expressive means across typologically distinct languages.

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