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Specificity of Conveying Emotions Using Non-Verbal Means and Their Descriptions in a Literary Text (a Case Study of the French Language Materials)

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Abstract

This paper describes a study of non-verbal communication components on the examples from modern French literature. In the fictional world of the text using gestures (facial expression) the characters express their attitude (and emotions) to someone or something. Non-verbal communication components are displayed in the text by means of verbal descriptions. The study is dedicated to the problem of the attitude rating rendering by the descriptions of gestures. The appearance of two evaluations simultaneously is investigated: one evaluation is expressed by the character (the internal space) and the other one is expressed by the narrator (the author's representative in the external space of the text). Taking this fact into account will contribute to a more precise definition of the role of the character in the creation of his image and the role of the author in it.

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1. Introduction

In the process of speech activity a person constantly expresses their attitude and emotions towards the objects and phenomena of the world, their interlocutor and their own words, in other words, they give their evaluation to the surrounding world. The evaluation can be carried out by words (i.e., by verbal means), as well as by gestures and facial expressions (i.e. by non-verbal means). T. L. Muzichuk writes: «non-verbal signs can manifest communicative

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intentions and emotions» (Muzichuk, 2013). In other words, non-verbal means can be markers of emotional state of a person. To illustrate the abovementioned let us take a few examples from the “Dictionary of Russian gestures”, compiled under the direction of a prominent Russian researcher in the field of non-verbal semiotics G. E. Kreidlin (Grigorieva, Grigoriev, Kreidlin, 2001). The dictionary contains the most typical gestures and facial expressions of the Russian culture. Each gesture has an entry, which describes its semantic and pragmatic features. For example, according to the dictionary eyes wide open is the expression of surprise, punch on the table - anger, lowering the eyes - shame, etc. Non-verbal signs actively influence the course and outcome of verbal interaction.

If in the real world in order to communicate the interlocutors use gestures and facial expressions, the gestures should also be reflected in a literary text. A well-known Russian linguist E.V. Paducheva writes: “In the literary text a fictional world is created and is represented as a fragment of the real world” (Paducheva, 1996, p. 201). For the study of nonverbal means in a particular culture, Russian researchers often refer to the materials in different languages: Russian, English, German, French, Spanish and others. Non-verbal actions are represented in the text in the form of verbal descriptions. This paper is a case study of non-verbal means and their descriptions in the texts of modern French literature: Daeninckx D. (*Le der des ders*), Pennac D. (*Aux fruits de la passion*), Simenon G., Mauriac F., Nothomb A. (*Antechrista* and others. We have made a corpus of examples consisting of about ninety descriptions.

In the fictional world of the literary text characters express their emotions (surprise, disappointment, anger, joy and so on) and attitude to the world with the help of gestures. Some authors have noted (Gorodnikova, 1980; Nakashidze, 1981) that the descriptions of the gestures (facial expressions) by which the characters express their attitude to the world and give their evaluation, play a major role in creating the image of the character. However, the study has shown that in the text a split of evaluation occurs. This work focuses on the conveyance of emotions by means of description of gestures and facial expressions in literary text. It also aims at identifying the agents of these emotions.

We hold to the opinion of E.M. Volf (2009), according to whom the evaluation consists of: A,B and r; where A is the subject of evaluation, that is someone who expresses their attitude, B – the object of evaluation, something or someone being evaluated and r – the attitude rating (good/bad).

2. Object of research

A leading Russian researcher G. E. Kreidlin, summarizing international and domestic experience in the field of non-verbal semiotics, writes: “non-verbal semiotics first of all includes kinesics – the science studying body language. In addition to kinesics non-verbal semiotics includes paralinguistics – the science studying sound features of non-verbal communication, oculusics – the science of eye-language and visual behavior, proxemics – the science studying the space of communications and haptics – the science of touch and tactile communication” (Kreidlin, 2002, p. 17). Along with the author, we understand kinesics in broad sense, i.e. not only with respect to the science of body movements, but also to the science of other gestures such as facial ones (facial expression, gaze), touch and body position (Kreidlin, 2002, p.43). In this paper to refer to gestures and facial expressions we use the term non-verbal means.

For the study only those non-verbal means were selected that have speech utterances analogues. The famous French researcher in the field of nonverbal communication J. Cosnier calls them quasi-linguistic, since they are able to provide communication without using a verbal language (Cosnier, 1982, p. 263). Here are some examples from two dictionaries: the dictionary of French gestures (Calbris & Montredon, 1986) and from the dictionary of Russian gestures compiled under the direction of G.E. Kreidlin (Grigorieva, Grigoriev, Kreidlin, 2001). *Lift the eyes to the sky* (lever les yeux au ciel) can be an analogue of saying *Leave me alone, I'm tired* (Calbris & Montredon, 1986, p.12). *Shaking one's head* can be an analogue of verbal *this is not good. I do not like it* and indicates dissatisfaction or disapproval. (Grigorieva, Grigoriev, Kreidlin, 2001).

In literary texts non-verbal components of verbal communication are represented in the form of verbal descriptions. There are two types of descriptions: standard and non-standard. The way in which non-verbal means are reflected i.e. how standard the verbal language means that describe them are, serves as a criterion for the classification. Let us consider each type and illustrate it by examples from the corpus, made up from the texts of the modern French literature.

The first type of descriptions are the ones that adequately recreate the non-verbal act, describing its form: *cligner les yeux* (screwing up one’s eyes), *se prendre la tête* (clutch one’s head), *secouer la tête* (shake one’s head), *lever les poings* (double one’s fists), *se frotter les mains* (rub one’s hands / palms) and others. Such kinesic descriptions are called standard (Gorodnikova, 1980; Nakashidze, 1981), as they exist in the language as verbal signs, and are used to identify specific kineme in the text. Standard descriptions may have additional features indicating that a kineme is seen by someone else: *hausser tranquillement les épaules* – shrug one’s shoulders calmly; *serrer vigoureusement les mains* - a firm handshake; *baisser modestement les yeux* - modestly lower the eyes; *secouer la tête avec un entêtement cruel* - shake your head with a brutal obstinacy, and others. The additional features suggest that non-verbal behavior of a person is rendered through the prism of observer’s subjective perspective. Standard descriptions, containing subjectivity of the observer, is in the center of our attention in this work.

In addition, we are interested in the second type of descriptions of non-verbal behavior – non-standard kinesic descriptions. These are descriptions which are made up in the text. They do not have any special lexical designation and therefore are not fixed lexicographically, for example: *regarder avec hostilité* - look hostile, unfriendly, *regarder d'un air dégoûté* – look with dislike, *regarder avec curiosité* – to quiz, *regarder avec intérêt* – look with interest, *regarder d'un air fin* – look slyly, *regarder avec une convoitise* – gaze longingly/ stare in envy; *demander ironiquement* - ask ironically; *dire d'un air supérieur* - speak arrogantly, *dire pensivement* - speak thoughtfully; *prendre un air rêveur* - take a thoughtful look; *le visage s'éclaircit* – someone’s face brightened; *regarder comme un chien regarde son maître* – to look at someone like a dog does at its owner . These descriptions may be replaced with corresponding phrases. For example: the description *X regarde Y comme un chien regarde son maître* (X looks at Y like a dog does at its owner) can have the following meaning: X tells Y: “I am devoted and loyal to you”.

Such descriptions contain the meaning of non-verbal actions and do not describe the way the action is performed. For example, in the nomination *dire d'un air supérieur* (to speak arrogantly) it is not specified what this kineme looks like. But it is possible to imagine the arrogant look: head up high, look down the nose at others, smirk, etc. Clearly, in this case, the gestures are described subjectively.

Thus, for the research the gestures (facial expressions), capable of providing the flow of communication without the use of language were selected. In a literary text they can be displayed in the form of descriptions that: 1) either recreate the form of the gesture, 2) or describe the meaning of the gesture. Such descriptions are often subjective and include the observer’s point of view.

To determine who is an observer, let us consider the structure of narrative communication.

The study of several works (Schmid, 2003; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980; Charaudeau 1983; Genette 1983) revealed that narrative communication includes two main spaces (Charaudeau 1983): the internal space depicted (the space of the story) and the external space (the space of the narrative process). It is not the author themselves who tell s the story, but the narrator (Schmid, 2003; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980; Paducheva, 1996) For the narrator there are two options.

Firstly, the narrator tells the reader a story and in the process of narration is situated in the external space. And the characters are in the internal space.

Secondly, the narrator can split into the narrated I and the narrating I. In the external space the narrator tells the reader about themselves (1st person narrative). The internal space is where the characters are, along with the narrator. Due to the spatial shift the narrator can return to the past or run into the future and see themselves from the side. (Schmid, 2003, p. 124). The narrator sees themselves in the internal space and tells about himself as one of the characters. Let us represent it schematically (Fig. 1):

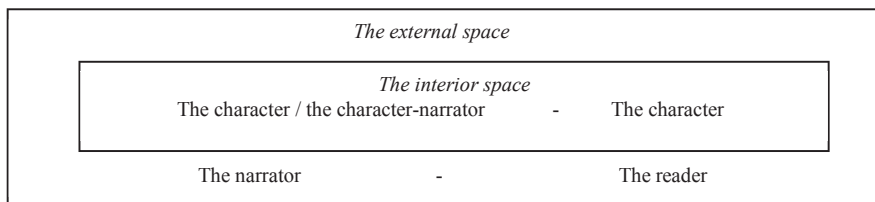


Fig. 1. The structure and the participants of the narrative communication.

3. Method and Results

The analysis of examples from French literature suggests that evaluative information is transmitted from the two spaces, and the evaluation can include emotions. Both spaces can have their own subject (and object) of evaluation. In the introduction it was noted that the evaluation consists of several elements: A, r and B, where A is the subject of evaluation, that is someone who expresses their attitude, B – the object of evaluation, something or someone being evaluated and r – the attitude rating (Volf, 2009). Let us look at the example:

(1) On lisait une joie enfantine dans les yeux du musicien qui avait plus que jamais l'air d'un chien affectueux rapportant un morceau de bois à son maître. (Simenon, 1968, p. 51)

In the example (1) character (internal space) makes a visual action: *avoir une joie dans les yeux* (to watch with joy). The character expresses his attitude - joy. According to the formula by E.M. Wolf, the subject of evaluation A (the one who evaluates) - is the character; the object of evaluation B (something or someone being evaluated) - is either an interlocutor (another character) or a situation described in the fragment; the attitude rating r - joy (the meaning of the visual action contained in a verbal description).

Verbal description of visual actions contains details of visual behavior: *l'air d'un chien affectueux rapportant un morceau de bois à son maître* (like loyal dog, bringing a stick to the owner) Those details are given by the narrator (external space) He acts instead of the author and the author “not only sees and knows everything that each character sees and knows separately and all the characters see and know together, but he knows even more. He sees and knows something that is unavailable to them” (Bakhtine 1986, p.16). As it was noted above, due to spatial shift he is able to see himself (Schmid, 2003, p. 124). In the example (1) due to the “omnipresent” narrator details (term “omnipresent” - (Schmid 2003, p.65)) we can conclude that the look of the character is an expression of devotion. German researcher in the field of theory of narrative V. Schmid believes that there is a correlation between the vision and the evaluation (Schmid, 2003 p.123). Therefore, the omnipresent narrator can be considered as the subject of evaluation or A; the object of evaluation B is the nonverbal action of a character; the rating r is the desire to give those details of character's non-verbal behavior, which are considered the most important for his portrait.

Moreover, in the example (1) describing the character's look (in the external space) the narrator uses stylistic figure - comparison. The choice of language means for the gesture description (neutral means or words with the stylistic coloring) shows the attitude of the speaker (writer) to the referent. That is, the narrator once again becomes the subject of evaluation A, and the character and their gestures (facial expressions) - the object of evaluation B. It is just left to determine the attitude rating r.

In order to determine the attitude rating r, we turned to the work by Russian expert in the field of linguistic theory of emotions V.I. Shakhovski. To determine the attitude of the speaker (writer) to what he says (writes), he offers a particular method (Shahovski, 2008, p.70). His method consists in the following: defining the components of the word meaning we give a detailed evaluation of the concept. As an example, the author gives an expression *unexpected guest* and determine what speaker's attitude lies behind this expression: unexpected guest = man coming to visit unexpectedly, uninvited +it is not the norm, and therefore is undesirable + it brings inconvenience to the host, because it oversets his plans + it makes him discontent (Shahovsky, 2008, p.60). We performed an analysis of examples using this method as well:

(2) - Alors vous niez ? demanda le type.
- Et comment.

Le type sourit diaboliquement, comme au cinéma. (Queneau, 1995, p.62)

(3) - Ce que vous pouvez avoir l'esprit mal tourné, dit Gabriel en rougissant.

- Non mais, vous voyez pas tout ce qui vous pend au nez ? dit le type avec un air de plus en plus vachement méphistophélique: prossénétisme, entolage, hormossexualité..., tout ça va bien chercher dans les dix ans de travaux forcés. (Queneau, 1995, p.66)

The words *diaboliquement* (like the devil) and *méphistophélique* (like Mephistopheles) are the descriptions of non-verbal means; they belong to the narrator (the external space). Let us look at their meanings:

1) diaboliquement (adv.) - d'une manière diabolique.

diabolique (adj.) - qui rappelle les attributs physiques ou moraux du diable.

diable (n.m) - démon, personnage représentant le mal. (Le Petit Robert)

2) méphistophélique - syn. Diabolique. (Larousse)

The word *diaboliquement* is associated with evil. We can assume that choosing this word the author expresses their emotional attitude to such a behavior (i.e., smile a smile, as if X was the devil). If we apply Shakhovski method, then we can say that the author wanted to render the following information: “A smile is designed to express goodwill, rather than guile, mockery and perverted thoughts. Such a smile reminds of the devil’s smile. I condemn such a behavior and I want my reader to know it”. A similar procedure can be carried out for the adjective *méhistophélique*, because it belongs to the same semantic field – demon, evil.

Table 1. Structure and means of evaluation.

Structure of evaluation and the space	Role	Means for evaluation rendering and the attitude rating
Subject of evaluation A – a character, object of evaluation B – another character (situation) (the internal space)	The one, who performs nonverbal actions	Evaluation (with emotions) is expressed by means of gestures and facial expressions. The attitude rating r – different feelings and emotions (joy, anger, etc.)
Subject of evaluation A – the narrator, object of evaluation B – gestures (facial expressions) of the character (the external, internal spaces)	Omniscient narrator	Details of nonverbal actions are related to the expression of the attitude. The rating r - to give certain details of the character’s gesture
Subject of evaluation A – the narrator (acts instead of the author), object of evaluation B – the character (the internal space)	The one, who makes the selection of language means in the description of nonverbal actions	Careful selection of language means for the description of gestures (facial expressions) shows the attitude rating. Attitude rating r - a variety of feelings and emotions (conviction, compassion, contempt, irony, etc.)

Thus, in a literary text up to three subjects of evaluation can be distinguished:

1. The character (the internal space) - the subject of evaluation. By means of non-verbal actions expresses their emotions and feelings to someone or something.
2. The narrator (the external space) can be the subject of evaluation twice. Firstly, the evaluation is connected with knowledge, the object of evaluation – gestures (facial expressions) of the character. The omnipresent narrator interprets in detail the meaning of non-verbal behavior of the characters. Secondly, the evaluation is connected with the use of subjective language for the description of non-verbal means (stylistically marked language means and emotive syntax (ellipsis, repetition, etc.)). The choice of language means serves to express the narrator’s attitude and emotions to the character – the object of evaluation.

4. Conclusion

On the one hand, those authors who claim that the description of the non-verbal means by which the characters express their attitude to the world, play a major role in creating the image of the character are right. On the other hand, they do not specify what in a character’s description is from the character himself, and what - from the narrator.

The study has proven that the conveyance of attitude and emotions by non-verbal means and their descriptions in the text is more elaborate. There takes place two evaluations – one is given by the character (the internal space), the other one is given by the narrator (the external space). Paying attention to such a decomposition of evaluation will help us better define the role of the author in creating the image of the character. The author (through the narrator) expresses their attitude toward the gesturing character (contempt, irony, condemnation, and so on.). This information is implicit and is part of the dialogue between the author and the reader. The ability to identify implicit meanings will promote a more adequate interpretation of the meaning of the text in the framework of the “author-reader” model.

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