

ON LINGUISTIC EMOTIVITY

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Abstract: One of the ways of understanding linguistic emotivity is to use an anthropological approach. The first anthropologist who recognised the emotive aspect of language was the founding father of social anthropology, Bronisław Malinowski, who laid the foundation for future ethnolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. According to these two subdisciplines, the role of speech cannot be defined only in terms of phonology, morphology or syntax; we must also use semantics and pragmatics. Taking into account the above-mentioned aspects of language allows us to find the basic oppositional functions of language: referential and emotive. The latter function corresponds to the impact of the cultural context on language (e.g. a religious cult vs. an academic lecture), as well as the creative role of language in shaping the nature of communication and culture itself. This article follows up on these anthropological considerations by discussing selected approaches from the fields of linguistics, literary studies, philosophy and sociology.

Keywords: language, emotivity, referentiality, social anthropology, linguistics, culture

This article does not aspire to the ranks of a comprehensive theoretical proposal, nor does it construct any particular empirical case study. Rather, its purpose is to analyse the titular linguistic emotivity in the anthropological context of culture as a way of life. This approach is characteristic for ethnology, cultural anthropology and social anthropology. However, the content of the term *way of life* (which includes speech, customs, values, beliefs, religions, thea, ceremonies, styles, fashion, the material world, etc.) is so vast and cognitively inspiring that in order to describe it, the subject literature borrows concepts nominally belonging to the other disciplines of anthropology, including linguistics, literary studies, sociology and psychology. In this article, in addition to making anthropological propositions, I will address some of these concepts. It should be noted that these concepts are far from exhaustive in

terms of the full complement of related approaches (such as Wittgenstein's approach); rather, they seem to be the closest in relation to what this article sets out to achieve. The reason behind this particular choice of concepts is not only their significance to the respective disciplines, but first and foremost, their transdisciplinary substantiveness, because language, as with other spheres of human life, cannot be analysed from just a single viewpoint. In this context, emotivity does not express the state of an individual's psyche, but instead denotes the collective psyche – so to say – or, to invoke a category more grounded in the humanities and social sciences, the collective consciousness or collective imagination. This entails incorporating contextuality and linguistic agency, which are two inseparable elements of the cultural practices of communities, into emotivity.

Let us begin by invoking what is likely the first methodical statement significant to social anthropology that indicates the double function of language. Bronisław Malinowski (1923, p. 312) in his supplement to Ogden and Richard's publication about language noted:

The manner in which I am using [language] now, in writing these words, the manner in which the author of a book, or a papyrus or a hewn inscription has to use it, is a very far-fetched and derivative function of language. In this, language becomes a condensed piece of reflection, a record of fact or thought. In its primitive uses, language functions as a link in concerted human activity, as a piece of human behaviour. It is a mode of action and not an instrument of reflection.

Malinowski expands upon this thought; in short, he points out the existence of a 'narrative speech' in social situations, which is speech that has been extracted from its extralinguistic context over the course of history to finally assume the form of visually intelligible, conventionalised symbols that are referred to as *writing*. However, narrative speech is predated by 'speech in action' which, conversely, is associated with an extralinguistic context, some of which can also be used for communication, albeit through different channels (rhetoric, body language, material surroundings, etc.). The latter form of speech is the genetic antecedent of the former which, despite its derivative-ness, is ennobled through its pursuit of pure referentiality. Narrative speech takes place in storytelling, reporting and describing, especially when it is performed by a researcher who follows the rigours of science by respecting the empirical evidence and theoretical requirements. In turn, speech in action is present in religious ceremonies, magical practices, rituals, political orations or even ordinary situations in everyday life, and is strictly associated with human actions; hence, it has inextricable significance to them. Narrative speech by nature involves linguistic transparency, while speech in action involves linguistic intransparency. Consequently, the former pursues autonomy from other

channels of communication and life practices, whereas the latter is an intrinsic part of extralinguistic communication.

However, this is only a model, because the aforementioned linguistic transparency and intransparency do not exist in pure states. That is why we should instead think of it as a continuum on an axis running from 'narrative speech' to 'speech in action'. The narrative of science – which exemplifies the pursuit of the pure referentiality that is consistent with sensory data and/or the laws of a given theory – is not completely free of the added elements of rhetoric, the speaker's emotional engagement or previous, often non-scientific, biases. Nor are religious formulas, magical spells, political rhetoric or the everyday sharing of one's opinions on all things human free of a referential admixture; in fact, they frequently accompany practical actions. The creator of functionalism in anthropology, by establishing a genetic order of the discrete means of verbal communication, indicates the 'primitive uses' of speech, both those belonging to speech in action and those belonging to the derivative narrative speech, which are created when speech detaches itself from the other, often non-verbal, contexts of culture. Consequently, it is no coincidence that scientific jargon contains the term *abstraction*, which reflects the aim of description and explanation within speech in action very well: elements of the language of science are rendered as neutral as possible; that is, they are free from the contexts that would prevent the achievement of a complete and unrestrained referentiality of a narrative and its transformation into the laws of science.

As a researcher of culture, Malinowski focused primarily on cases of speech in action, which reveals its idiomatic character by being involved in specific 'situational contexts', on account of the fact that speech of action only acquires its meaning through utterances made using other channels of communication and the accompanying actions, attitudes and emotions. Furthermore, speech not only draws significance from other contexts, but also imbues them with specific meanings, as occurs with unified action: 'In this, speech is the necessary means of communion; it is the one indispensable instrument for creating the ties of the moment without which unified social action is impossible' (Malinowski, 1923, p. 310). Let us illustrate this process with one of the many examples provided by Malinowski; namely, fishing in a lagoon on the Trobriand Islands, where Malinowski conducted his research. On the Trobriand Islands, fishing is a tense activity requiring cooperation between a group of fishermen, each with a specific task to perform. The natives use utterances with varying intonations, commands, allusions and gestures, which – while often identical in their expression – have distinct meanings depending on the present situation. Naturally, there are equally good examples besides that of fishing, such as eating lunch, cheering on a football team, a discussion during a university seminar and countless other situations, in which speech enters a

symbiotic relationship with social interactions, emotions or the scenery of a given *theatrum*.

The intertwining between both types of speech leads Malinowski (1923, p. 313) to an even farther-reaching conclusion: ‘the referential function of a narrative is subordinate to its social and emotive function’. Consequently, even in the case of narrative speech, which at first glance is free of any extralinguistic admixtures, it also contains noticeable elements of calmness or excitement, persuasion or arbitrariness, and conviction or uncertainty about one’s own utterances; and even then, all this depends on both the speaker’s and the listener’s character, linguistic competence, social class, religious denomination, gender and political opinions. Let us add that according to Malinowski’s research experience, as well as the experience of whole generations of researchers on culture as a way of life, the most important forms of a narrative are those that refer to the etiological foundations of a given culture: myths, tales and legends recorded in holy scriptures or even only transmitted orally. A different form are the narratives associated with action, tension and an appropriate setting: rituals and magical practices which, in fact, are usually inextricably linked with verbal narration on the part of an officiating priest, mage or master of ceremony. Through word and gesture, these practices support the natural order, such as when a youth becomes a man through a rite of initiation or a betrothed couple become married. Individuals may also act independently to create a new state of affairs, as happens with the ‘political mages’ of today who lead the masses in order to reshape the world, or pop culture stars who set new trends in global fashion.

The creator of modern social anthropology was not the only scholar who reduced the functions of speech to the dichotomous aspects described above. Shortly after Malinowski passed away, Philip Wheelwright also noticed the primary role of the classical genres of cultural narratives. Wheelwright was a slightly-forgotten theoretician and interpreter of writings from antiquity, especially those of the pre-Socratics, whose concepts were particularly strongly connected to the ancient mythical outlook. In his flagship monograph about the language of symbolism, *The Burning Fountain* (1964), first published in 1954, Wheelwright led a Copernican revolution in semantics – as he himself put it. However, this rather immodest proclamation, which was intended to pay homage to another revolutionary, Immanuel Kant, who also claimed to have revolutionised philosophy to a similar magnitude, was not an exaggeration. Wheelwright followed the theoretical tradition only partially, in that he rejected it in order to then modify it. Drawing from the expansive knowledge he collected during his research on the ancient and classical forms of narratives – mythology, religion, literature and metaphysics – he concluded that linguistic emotivity should be sought somewhere else than usual. For instance, a cry of ‘Fire!’ can be translated into a purely referential statement as follows: ‘A fire has started (in this building, in this particular place, etc.)’. While the former

cry does contain an element of emotivity, its content can also be expressed using the descriptive style of the latter statement which, in fact, is more precise than the cry itself. However, such a semantic substitution cannot be applied without sacrificing the essence of the message; for example, the message conveyed in poetry. This is because, according to Wheelwright, poetry and other expressive forms of speech contain true emotivity: poetry can only be fully understood and experienced 'in [emotions] and through emotions'. Michel Dufrenne (1983, p. 210) expresses this view well: 'What the poem delivers is not information, it is a world, or rather the atmosphere of a world'. The same is true is for religious experiences, as long as they are distinct from passive acceptance and theological rationalisation, which are founded on the emotive element. From this perspective, both poetic and religious emotions gain a separate, and concurrently a legitimate ontological status that is equivalent to the status of speech used in the referential mode (Wheelwright, 1964, pp. 48-49).

The above thesis motivated Wheelwright to investigate the relationship between referentiality and emotivity, which are elements that come from different ontological orders, not as opposites, but rather as complements to each other. Thus, the opposite of referentiality is not emotivity, but non-referentiality; likewise, the opposite of emotivity is not referentiality, but non-emotivity. Wheelwright permutated all these components, spread across the overlapping planes of referentiality – non-referentiality and emotivity – non-emotivity. As a result, he arrives at four cases of speech: referential/non-emotive (from the descriptive language of everyday life to the formalised language of science)' non-referential/non-emotive (phatic statements, such as 'good morning'); non-referential/emotive (statements such as 'darn it!'); and referential/emotive (poetic and religious narratives). This last case is extremely interesting from the viewpoint of the heuristics of the science of humankind, because it indicates the existence of speech that is both referential and emotive at the same time. In summary, the unquestionable referentiality of the language of description and science creates two cases of speech – descriptive and emotive –along with their model manifestations in the form of science and religion. This also means that the two forms are equally legitimate, even though this legitimacy is validated through different criteria, which are related to the different ontic statuses characteristic for the entities that they encompass.

Thus, on the one hand, we have the natural world that is cognisable through empiricism, experiments and the senses; and on the other, there is the human world, which although it shares the sensory part with the natural world also contains something more – culture, the ontic status of which extends beyond the sphere of sensuality and empiricism, and a result, produces other methods of research. At the same time, the referential legitimacy of poetry and religion (as well as other such spheres including morality, aesthetics, metaphysics, mythology and politics) is equivalent to the referential legitimacy of the usual language of description, which is devoid of emotions, or the unusual language

of science. Wheelwright takes this opportunity to propose another thesis, one that has both an inductive and deductive justification. His thesis is that aforementioned methods constitute partially separate yet overlapping spheres with two primary, analytically discernible components: non-emotive referentiality and emotive referentiality. It should be noted that the latter refers to not only individual emotivity, but also collective emotivity, the scope of which is determined by a given culture and defined as a way of life (*cf.* Wheelwright, 1964, p. 50). However, let us add that a plural form is advisable here: *cultures*, rather than *culture*, because there are as many of these emotive worlds as there are human groups that identify with those worlds. Some individuals, such as philosophers, poets and prophets, can even create these exclusively for their personal use. In this way, Wheelwright opposed the tradition of semantic positivism, which was aimed at finding the one and only semantic objectivity. Unfortunately, he did not expand his concept into a more complex theoretical system. Nonetheless, some scholars of the sociology of knowledge continued his work.

In 1966, or shortly after Wheelwright's proposal was published, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann presented their own understanding of those emotive worlds (despite not referring to them as such). Similarly to Wheelwright, Berger and Luckmann drew from the anthropological findings of Malinowski, Lévy-Bruhl and Lévi-Strauss. According to Berger and Luckmann, the equivalent of emotive referentiality is the symbolic universe: 'the symbolic universe is conceived of as the matrix of *all* socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings' (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 114). It is worth pointing out the specialist terms that were used to formulate the definition: examples of *socially objectivated meanings* are the lexical set of a given language, guidelines of etiquette, the arrangement of the pieces of an outfit or the sequence of actions in a ritual. These meanings involve structures and content for which there is an unwritten agreement, whether intentional or unintentional, that allows the participants in a conversation, party or ceremony to understand one another. These meanings are subjectively real, or even intersubjectively real; that is, they gain legitimacy through the worldview, values, ideals and practices followed by a given group of people. In particular, this definition of the term *subjectively real* proves similar to that of Wheelwright's emotive referentiality, where *subjective* corresponds to *emotive* and *real* corresponds to *referentiality*.

Analogically, we may look for an appropriate term that corresponds to Wheelwright's non-emotive referentiality, or a description that exclusively uses everyday language or the language of science. *Objectively real* is closest to *subjectively real*, relationship-wise, although it gains legitimacy not through an internalised collective agreement, but through a shared heritage of senses and/or quantitative data. These senses and data are what help us to determine whether it is a tree that we see before us during a stroll, or a babbling river, or

whether the tree is thirty feet tall and the river six feet deep. There is a presupposed relative agreement among the potential participants in the stroll, who may include Catholics and Buddhists, European and Asians, socialists and conservatives, etc. A different matter, this time falling under the order of subjective reality, is whether that particular tree or river is the manifestation of a spiritual force, divine power or even divinity itself. At this point, we enter the domain of emotive referentiality/subjective reality, which lends itself to imaginative and qualitative, rather than sensory and quantitative, testing. This may engender diverse responses. For instance, there may be an intent to cut down the tree in order to make a raft with which to cross the river; or conversely, an intent to direct one's prayers to the tree, perhaps combined with vehement protestations against the other individual's intent to cut it down. Of course, this difference in intents may result in a conflict between the two opposing parties. It is worth adding that in both cases, each individual's behaviour will be viewed as 'natural', i.e. aspiring to the status of objectively justified, objectively real or – as the jargon of everyday life often puts it – 'normal'. However, it must be noted that the etymology of the word *normal* points to a norm (a moral, religious, aesthetic or linguistic standard), and thus to a certain agreement and convention.

Dell Hymes, in a similarly normative approach that also underlines the social framework of referentiality, and consequently legitimacy, proposed a concept that belongs to the framework of linguistic emotivity. Hymes (1980, p. 41) called his concept the *ethnography of communication* and expanded it into a theory of speech as a system of cultural behaviours. This concise formulation of the interpretation of the functions of language directly indicates a relationship with Malinowski's concept of speech in action. In contrast to the authors of the linguistic classics, such as Ferdinand de Saussure who investigated the word, or Noam Chomsky who focused on the sentence, Hymes was interested in the act of speaking, which to him was a discursive practice perceived not only through the aspect of linguistic formalism, but also through linguistic and non-linguistic pragmatism and multifunctionality.

Consequently, Hymes (1980, p. 58) stated that acts of speaking are situated structures; that is, they are structures related to cultural and personal events that contain a degree of the significance and internal framework of those events. In light of this definition, the ethnography of speech concerns types and opportunities for speaking, depending on the situation (a trade union meeting vs. an academic debate), the participants' features (labourers vs. intellectuals), goals (labour rights vs. a scientific concept), mood (a crowd's emotions vs. the logic of a scientific explanation), means of making an argument (persuasive tricks vs. logical arguments), channels of communication (chanting slogans vs. presenting scientific equations), standards of interaction (flattery vs. providing evidence) and standards of interpretation (beliefs vs. hard empirical data). These two situated acts of speaking provided as examples are inex-

trically linked with very specific contexts of utterances, which force the speakers to use a particular type of lexis, syntax and arguments, as well as gestures, facial expressions, body language or even the external setting. Consequently, it would be suspicious to see a labourer wearing a suit at a factory workers' meeting and calmly ending his speech with the following words: 'In light of the present theoretical interpretation, as supported and corrected by the empirical data, I wish to submit a hypothesis that our severance pay is insufficient' (we would rather expect to hear: 'So it's clear that our severance pay is too low, lads!'). Likewise, it would be suspicious for a gender studies scholar to give a speech wearing overalls and emotionally yelling out, 'You get it now, lads? Everyone can spend their lives with whomever they want!' (we would rather expect to hear: 'Considering the intercultural comparative perspective, I posit a hypothesis that there exists no single model imposing the gender of married individuals'). In fact, neither the factory worker nor the scholar would have been able to deliver their conclusions as described in the manner above at all, because the listeners would have left the meeting or denied the two individuals their right to speak (for more reasons than just the sexist form of address to the scholar's listeners).

A clear overlap is revealed between Hymes's category of situated structures and Malinowski's situational contexts. Indeed, the latter strongly advised against only listening to what people say; according to Malinowski, one should also pay attention to whether a person's words match their actions, which led to the concept of participant observation as an important research technique. The following remark made by Malinowski (1935, p. 8) based on the experience from his field research in the Trobriand Islands reflects this view well:

Speech is equivalent to gesture and motion. It does not function as an expression of thought or communication of ideas but as a part of concerted activity. If we jotted down the words spoken there and treated them as a text divorced from its context of action and situation, the words would obviously remain meaningless and futile. In order to reconstruct the meaning of sounds it is necessary to describe the bodily behaviour of men, to know the purpose of their concerted action, as well as their sociology. Speech here is primarily used for the achievement of a practical result.

Individuals taking action in specific contexts that they internalise during the process of enculturation, which ultimately provides them with communicative competences, only part of which – even if it is an important one – are linguistic competences. Even in an academic speech, certain extralinguistic limitations are enforced, which are necessary in order to achieve an adequate level of referentiality. Without a doubt, the referentiality in this case is founded on data and appropriate argumentation; that is, on criteria related to an objective reality, even if the appropriateness of the speaker's attire or tone of voice cannot be ignored. Conversely, in the case of the workers' meeting the referential emphasis is placed differently, and so we should expect the primary role to be

played by what Berger and Luckmann considered to be subjectively real, along with the many situational elements that extend far beyond descriptive or theoretical language. Namely, these elements are shared beliefs, meaningful gestures and looks, memorable slogans or the appropriate stylistics of speech, the participants' attire and the *theatrum* where the meeting is taking place. It should also be noted that these standard communicative competences are comprised of numerous individual competences, which are necessary for successful communication not only in the relatively rare circumstances of a union meeting or an academic speech, but also in one's workplace, cafeteria, store, temple, cinema, clinic or hospital, and at a party or a bus stop.

Hymes showed a tendency for defining the act of speaking primarily in terms of varied registers, modes or stylistics of the utterances. However, individuals can also express themselves in a specific manner through their behaviour or appearance, while even the setting may send a specific message. This aspect of communication was pointed out by Erving Goffman, who treated culture – the theatrical scene of human life – as a tool for all forms of intermediacy (a concept he arrived at to a large extent by observing the 'actors' in the clinics and hospitals). The comparison to a theatre is justified here, because Goffman interpreted human endeavours as performances that take place through the 'social façade', or a setting that we use in the various scenes of life. This façade is made of 'props' (the immovable part of expressions, e.g. the hospital interior) and a 'personal façade' (expressions that move alongside the actors, e.g. clothes, manner of speaking, facial expressions or gestures). In turn, the personal façade is divided into superficiality (expressions that indicate the social status of the actor, e.g. a physician's white coat) and demeanour (expressions that indicate the role that the actor plays in a given interaction, e.g. a categorical formulation of a medical diagnosis). According to Goffman (1959), the mutual congruence between the latter three components creates an ideal situation. In other words, each expression must be – as we say today – compatible, in order to ensure that the communication progresses smoothly. Importantly for the subject of this article, the significance of the linguistic aspect of communication also depends on extralinguistic (emotive in Wheelwright's sense), subjective real components, including visual, material, axiological, behavioural and worldview-related components.

Again, it is worth invoking the words of Malinowski (1935, p. 7) that legitimise a social scientist's approach: 'The main function of language is not to express thought, not to duplicate mental processes, but rather to play an active part in human behaviour'. In turn, the example invoked above from a concept originating in social sciences indicates the need to take into account that unusual – to use anthropological jargon – cultural emotivity, which manifests itself not only in the sphere of individual intents and idiosyncrasies, but also in the sphere of objectivisation. As has already been mentioned, this is of fundamental significance for an understanding of Hymes's acts of speaking, which

are useful and effective – in other words, communicable – but only within situated structures. We may even propose that a continuous intracultural translation takes place among its communicatively competent participants during their everyday interactions. However, if this rather automatised interaction does not exist, neither does this competence; for instance, due to ignorance of the rules of communication. This is particularly true for the actors who hail from other cultures. Malinowski (1935, p. 17) discusses this issue based on the following general (cultural) understanding of translation:

Translation in the sense of *defining a term by ethnographic analysis*, that is, by placing it within the context of culture, by putting it within the set of kindred and cognate expressions, by contrasting it with its opposites, by grammatical analysis and above all by a number of well-chosen examples—such translation is feasible and is the only correct way of defining the linguistic and cultural character of a word.

Once again, Malinowski's concept is the main point of reference for considerations about the anthropological interpretation of linguistic emotivity. Our analysis of the different approaches from extralinguistic disciplines now brings us to a pertinent quote from Malinowski: 'Speech is a mode of action, not a countersign of thought' (1923, p. 312). Regardless of whether we invoke Berger's and Luckmann's symbolic universe that revolves around subjective reality, or Hymes's acts of speaking that are sanctioned by the given stylistics of the speech, or Goffman's theatre of everyday life, where utterances gain meaning through different settings and decorations, we will reach the conclusion that language (perhaps except the language of mathematical logic) constitutes an element of culture as a way of life; in other words, it is an element of activity. Malinowski pointed out this creative function of language with respect to old myths, whereas Wheelwright referred to it from the perspective of emotive referentiality. We may expand the old religious myths, which are still powerful to this day, with newly established myths: political, racial, subcultural, gender-related, literary, artistic and musical. As Wheelwright observed, the superficially simple or even clichéd political mottos, scenes in films, literary passages or lyrics of a song provide the listener with such cognitive experiences that they are able to create moods, perceptions and visions that are often transformed into action, such as political upheavals, social initiatives, spiritual awakening or the downfalls of individuals and groups. Sometimes, such actions may even lead to real wars.

A specific case of action-inspiring words is magic. However, it should be noted that while the practitioners of magic believe that their incantations have a mystical effect on extralinguistic reality, their actual purpose is to affect the participants in these magical rites; again, words are only a part of them. This is how Stanley Tambiah interpreted Malinowski's stance on magic, who never stated his view on the subject explicitly. Tambiah added, 'Malinowski's an-

swer, when pushed to it, was that magic was “objectively” false but that it was “subjectively” true to the actors. But is also true in the sense of being a “pragmatic” truth, that is in a sense that we may find stated in William James’s *Pragmatism*’ (Tambiah, 1990, p. 81). In fact, Edmund Leach, Malinowski’s student, believed that his teacher was inspired by James’s philosophy. However, from the perspective of linguistic emotivity, it would be more reasonable to look for a connection with the musings of a different pragmatist – Charles Sanders Peirce, who proposed a system of semiotics that was focused on meaning, including linguistic meaning. Hence, a special role is ascribed to the *indexes*, which are the modes of meaning related to a particular rather than universal dimension of communication (Peirce, 1997). According to Hymes, when a trade union activist addresses his co-workers using the index ‘lads’, the word also refers to a given situation, as well as its participants’ features, goals and standards of interaction and interpretation. An important aspect in such a case is the metonymic situational motivation, as opposed to metaphorical universal arbitrariness.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that aforementioned concept of emotive referentiality emerged from American thought, as did – perhaps primarily due to the efforts of Berger – the notion of subjective reality. Indeed, Malinowski, in the quote invoked above after Tambiah, used the phrase ‘subjective truth’, although again, the matter was not limited to the magical practices of the Trobriad natives among whom Malinowski developed his method of ethnographic field research. The magic of the word can also be found in contemporary political slogans, advertisements, religious services, prayers, maledictions, proverbs, superstition, stereotypes, doping in sport and the lyrics of a popular song, or even in official and formalised statements made by not only mages or priests, but also ordinary officials; for instance, a judge announcing a verdict of guilt or innocence, thus using the power of the spoken word to determine the defendant’s fate as a prisoner or a free individual. John L. Austin (1975), perhaps the most refined of all the continuators of Malinowski’s concept of language as a mode of action, was aware of these exceptional properties of the word. Austin translated Malinowski’s intuition into a mature philosophical concept of *performatives*, which are specific acts of speaking that exert their effect in the present moment.

The above selective overview of the classical approaches to language, some of which were only expressed indirectly, indicates that – to use Alfred Schutz’s nomenclature – the human life-world is intrinsically holistic. Malinowski’s thought did not appear here by accident: the ethnographic field research conducted by the creator of modern anthropology allowed him to become presumably the first empiricist to observe this holism. It was Malinowski who, after and in opposition to de Saussure’s proposal, discovered that language cannot be reduced to an imaginary pipe, the only purpose of which is to transmit set-in-stone meanings. Rather, he determined that language is mallea-

ble and changeable, and that it both determines and is determined by extralinguistic components. Malinowski's approach to language remained uncontested even following attempts at finding a universal grammar underlying all languages in the world, which were made mostly by Chomsky as early as in the second half of the 20th century. In this respect, a prominent role was played by a contemporary of Chomsky, Hymes, who during the period dominated by the aforementioned universalism patiently demonstrated his opponent's reductionism, i.e. reducing the use of language to the sphere of competences at the cost of performance.

The latest generations of scholars have followed in Hymes's footsteps. For example, Bonnie Urciuoli conducted research among African Americans and Puerto Ricans living in New York that demonstrated the significance of the attitudes of state authorities for the use of language. Furthermore, her research also showed that whether a speaker alternated between English and Spanish, or used either language exclusively, depended on the social distance between the groups for which either English or Spanish was the ethnic language, and that such a use of language served to either eliminate or maintain this social distance (Urciuoli, 1996). Alessandro Duranti demonstrated a similar social and political function of language (albeit with a different emphasis) based on his research with Samoans: the choice of the particular linguistic forms not only is a result of the authorities' attitude, but also creates this attitude (Duranti, 1994). In turn, Marjorie Harness Goodwin contested the fairly popular belief about the relatively permanent differences in the use of language between genders. Goodwin's thorough observation of interactions between African American teenagers revealed a considerable complexity that depended on subject of the conversation, the situation and its participants, with an affiliation to a gender being only one of many variables (Goodwin, 1990).

The criterion of gender was shown to be extremely nuanced, especially from a multicultural perspective, which underlines the importance of the anthropological understanding of language. While gender is not the only determinant of language, let us treat it as emblematic and standard. There is a relatively widespread belief that is often rooted in episodic personal experience rather than on systematically collected empirical data, even among some scholars, in a view that can be generalised as 'All women speak like Venusians, and all men speak like Martians' (Ahearn, 2016, p. 226). In this case, the saying suggests female subservience, cooperativeness, intimacy and a facilitative attitude, as well as male assertiveness, competitiveness, independence and authoritarianism – which are all universal traits that can supposedly be found in how the representatives of different genders speak. Goodwin's research showed that this distinction is difficult to uphold, even within a single cultural circle, and a multicultural analysis demonstrated its completely illusory nature. In a recently published linguistic anthropology textbook, Laura Ahearn provided numerous examples of the richness of gender-related styles of commu-

nication. For instance, women in Madagascar usually behave and speak in a straightforward and open manner, while the men speak discretely and indirectly. A similar style of speaking that combines language, gender and emotions was found to be present in New Guinea:

Women are considered less capable of controlling their *hed* [the negative aspect of the self] than men, and one result of this perceived inability is that it is only women villagers who will engage in an angry, obscene shouting match known as a *kros*. Far from being the cooperative, consensus-seeking, accommodative speakers that some scholars (...) have assumed all women are (...) In contrast to this sort of confrontation, the styles of communication favored by men in Gapun emphasize cooperation and the importance of community (Ahearn, 2016, pp. 224-225).

These are only a few of the many possible examples of intercultural differences, including those concerning age, religious beliefs, social class and occupation. Ahearn (2016, p. 225) reached the following conclusion to her thoughts: ‘The gendered nature of these linguistic expressions of emotion demonstrates the need to study such interactions ethnographically as they occur in actual social interactions’. Indeed, language is only one of the components that make up the larger whole of culture interpreted as a way of life. This way of life evades any understanding – whether agent-oriented or object-oriented – if we focus exclusively, as with the classical approaches to language, on the structural aspect of language (phonology, morphology and syntax) while ignoring its transient and changeable semantics and pragmatics, which differ in each use and practice. Even these seemingly persistent structural qualities are situational, i.e. related to a given social context, psychologically defined emotions or a legal system, examples of which have been provided above. Consequently, this serves to confirm Malinowski’s discovery that language is, first and foremost, a mode of action, or more specifically, it achieves its meaning and effect only in combination with other modes of communication with varying degrees of encoding. For a linguist, the ultimate cognitive horizon is culture itself, defined as a way of life and something greater than the sum of its parts (languages, customs, values, social relations, etc.). Culture is both an emergent phenomenon and, contrary to what structuralists propose, inherently indefinite (an observation made a long time ago by Clifford Geertz, who emphasised that creating a general theory of culture is impossible). It is only through this perspective that the functions of language are fully revealed, including emotivity, the inclusion of which in linguistic research seems indispensable for an understanding of human beings themselves.

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