COMPONENT NATURE OF THE SEMANTIC EVALUATION CATEGORY IN CH. PAOLINI’S «ERAGON»

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In recent decades, linguists have been increasingly interested in studying the phenomenon of the evaluation category – one of the most relevant in the speaker’s linguistic picture of the world since its semantics contains the system of values of the surrounding world and the value of a person in it, which are objectified in language units. The diversity of approaches to the study of this category is increasing and includes functional-semantic, cognitive, sociolinguistic, linguistic-cultural, communicative-pragmatic, semantic-stylistic ones, etc.

The dynamics of evaluation, reflecting the variability of the world and human attributes, leads to the transformation of linguistic processes and language units, the importance of which is undoubted in linguistic consciousness and speech activity, therefore they need to be described and researched. The development of the pragmatic potential of language units, the strengthening of their influential power, as well as the need for the systematic study of the evaluation semantics determines the relevance of the research topic.

Evaluation semantics is a highly complex structure formed by semantic components – the evaluator, the evaluation subject, the evaluation predicate (according to the nature of evaluation) and the evaluation basis [2]. Each of them performs different roles in the expression of the conceptual category, associated with a number of concepts, images, notions, not always verbalized by a language sign. Aims, areas and forms of evaluation depend on the nature of the subject and subjective attitude, operational nature of evaluation carried out in the mental field of the speaker oriented towards the social field, the emotional state of the evaluator.

These components of categorical evaluation semantics are united by a single semantic dominant – value relation, which has a tonal meaning – good / normal / bad (the thought correlate of value based on discrete elements of the scale of assessment), coordinating and regulating function of which between a person and the world about objects is described in axiological works as follows: “Evaluation refers in the same way to the sphere of reactions as to the sphere of stimuli. It is equally elusive and ubiquitous” [1]. The evaluative approach to reality and the concept of “good” / “bad” form the explicitness of semantic evaluation components – the subject, object, predicate and implicitness or explicitness of evaluation bases. The explicitness of the components in communication is manifested to varying degrees: all components can be expressed in a single statement by means of a language: “Saphira . . . I like the name—fitting for a dragon” [5] (subject “I”, objects – “Saphira”, “name”, predicate – “like”, foundation – “fitting for a dragon”); “It felt wonderful to finally confide in someone” [5] (object – “to confide in someone”, which coincides with the grammatical subject, predicate – “wonderful”, the motivation is unavailable, it is known only to the speaker); Horst rumbled, “A good man. He’ll do fine with Roran” [5] – only the predicate of positive evaluation (evaluation-reaction) is explicit, without which a statement cannot be expressed. Let us take a closer look at the evaluation components.
The evaluation subject attributes value to a certain object (subject, person, event) based on empirical experience (as compared to the norm, ideal), or state – consciousness, as well as on universal standards of being. This process is typical for the subject's thinking - a specific-historical individual, a social group, or human society as a whole. Their evaluation as the results of mental acts related to feelings underlies the concepts of good and evil, justice and injustice, etc. The linguistic representation of evaluations of various kinds is preceded by the intention of the evaluating subject, i.e. his/her verbal intention to accept or not to approve the subject of evaluation. This very intention participates in the formation of evaluation functions of language units. It underlies the division of sentences into deontic and evaluation ones.

The specific property of the evaluation object is the ratio of denotative to conceptual value [3]. The first one is related to the variety of subjects and phenomena of real life, including processes, facts and events. The second one - with notions, a signifying value of the features motivating the assessment. In the example “Smiling, Eragon touched her thoughts with relief and gratitude. It is good to see you well, little one, she said tenderly” [5], the evaluation is motivated by the concept of the usefulness of the action-process as an object of evaluation. The idea of the evaluating subject, his or her knowledge of the conceptual side of the evaluation object is an essential condition for the correct expression of the evaluative thought and success of communication.

The main semantic component, the only thing that is necessarily expressed in the evaluation statement is the evaluation predicate (the evaluation character). Its linguistic content depends on the correlation of the subject and object of evaluation and, accordingly, subjective and objective factors. The subjective component provides an evaluative (positive or negative) attitude of the subject to the object, which is expressed by verbs denoting mental processes and feelings or evaluative adjectives, adverbs, words of the evaluation category, nouns, for example: Her clothes ere unadorned, yet her beauty was undiminished [5]. Here the linguistic content of the predicate corresponds to the property that is attributed to the object of evaluation, and the zero form of connection characteristic for evaluation statements “... makes non-predicative forms analytically predicative” [4]. The objective, evaluative component of a predicate (descriptive, attributive) is the basis of the opinion about the object properties.

The interpretation of a predicate as a character of evaluation differs in two specific properties. First of all, it is in the predicate that the speaker expresses positive or negative assessment to the subject of speech, which often extends to the concept of attitude in general and conditioning the wide range of assessments presented in linguistic research: subjective, modal, emotional, qualitative, quantitative, admiring, persuasive, aesthetic, temporal, existential, etc. Secondly, the predicate concentrates the notion of value/anti-value attributed by the subject to the evaluation object. The regular non-verbalization and therefore linguistic unstructured nature of these components explains the broad understanding of the value in the logic of evaluation: “value, or good is understood as everything that is the object of need, desire, aspiration, interest, etc.” [3].

The next component of the evaluation meaning is the basis of evaluation – “the viewpoint from which the evaluation is performed” [3], i.e., the position or argument of the subject that determines approval, condemnation or indifference to the object, for example: “And,” she raised a small finger, “if I can prove there are only frogs, then toads won’t be able to do anything bad – like make teeth fall out, cause warts, and poison or kill people” [5]. This component is connected both with the object being evaluated and with the evaluating subject: evaluation can be caused by one of his/her emotional and psychological states – hatred, malice, envy, or, on the contrary,
adoration, and then the true properties of the object, its conformity or non-conformity to the model, ideal, standard is neglected.

Thus, all components of the categorical semantics of evaluation are closely interrelated and intertwined in the process of its expression by linguistic means, arranged by the evaluation statement in the functional-semantic evaluation field. The whole concept of evaluation fragment in the language world picture is composed on the basis of the following dependencies: the conceptual notion of evaluation – semantic evaluation category – evaluation function – the actualization of evaluation meaning in the speech act – the form of a language sign. It should be noted that in these dependencies subjective and objective factors in the evaluation are not opposed but are inextricably linked to each other.

References:

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In der Mitte des 18. Jh. war ein verstärktes Interesse an der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und Beschreibung der deutschen Sprache einschließlich ihrer Geschichte zu verzeichnen. Dabei lassen sich folgende spezifische Ausrichtungen des gesellschaftlichen Interesses an Sprachgeschichte ausmachen:
- das Interesse an Sprache in Bezug auf nationalkulturelle und nationalliterarische Traditionen;
- das Interesse an Etymologie und Wortbildung;
- das Interesse an der Philosophie der Sprachwissenschaft.