Verbs of Praise in Modern English: Semantic and Etymological Aspects

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Abstract: The study deals with the problems of studying emotional states and some linguistic aspects of their functioning in modern English. The essence of the concept "praise" in the English linguoculture is investigated. This study presents some results of the semantic analysis of the verbs representing the concept mentioned such as to applaud, to approve, to boast, to brag, to commend, to compliment, to eulogize, to exalt, to praise, to resound etc. from the perspective of their semantics and etymology. Verbs of speaking are among the most popular objects in linguistic researches. The interest to this group of lexical units is due to the complexity of the semantic structure as the ambiguity in the allocation of semantic series and thematic groups. Methods of cognitive and etymological analysis are used throughout the article. The complex of cognitive and etymological methods helps to determine the functioning of the verbs in different kinds of discourse. The complex of conceptual and diachronic etymological methods allows tracing important mechanisms in the structure of lexical units' meanings. The results of the cognitive and etymological analysis of verbal lexemes of praise allow to conclude the following: the optimal full study of these emotional verbs can be made only according to both historical and etymological and synchronously conceptual factors in the formation, development and the existence of such meanings. The combined approach to the analysis of these lexemes semantics allows precisely to define the peculiarities of functioning of these lexemes in the discourse and also contributes to find a more precise translation.

Key words: Semantics, emotional states, evaluation, verbs of praise, etymology

INTRODUCTION

Recent linguistic researches often deals with the problem of correlation between emotions and language. Actually, no model of a language is complete without considering a living person's emotional states and their representation by lexical items and grammar structures.

The problem of emotions is complicated by its sensual rather than purely linguistic nature and thus, the vagueness of verbalization. The interest of scholars to this problem can be explained by the fact that language is studied not as a closed system but as a system in which a person participates. Human factor in a language includes people's emotions and "emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1997).

It is known that the main function of language is communication which allows not only to express a human's thoughts but also their personal attitude to the statement as well (feelings will assessment, etc.). The expressive function of language should also be mentioned as it is the widest in its content and can be understood as "the ability to express emotional state of the speaker, their personal attitude to the things and phenomena of reality they mention" (Aleksandrova, 1984).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In accordance, with the dominant cross-disciplinary approach to the linguistic research semantics of the verbs under study is analyzed in correlation with the methods of cognitive and etymological analysis. The complex of conceptual and diachronic etymological methods allows tracing important mechanisms in the structure of lexical units' meanings. It reveals the necessity of using some data of cognitive linguistics together with etymological methods of semantic analysis. The complex of cognitive and etymological methods helps to determine the functioning of the verbs in different types of discourse and to find closest equivalents in other languages, particularly Russian.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most important functions of emotions are: reflective, regulatory, cognitive and evaluative. Most of the modern theories are unanimous that emotions perform the function of evaluation. Emotions are in fact direct appreciation of the reflected object's values and significance. Indeed, emotional attitude includes

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evaluation as its integral element: a person thinks the object is pleasant or unpleasant to them for moral, ethical, social, political or other reasons and the attitude is fixed in the language (Shakhovsky, 2009).

Language nominees of emotional states are used in speech "when the speaker wants to show their inner state" (Yakovleva, 1994) and may refer to the 4 lexical-grammatical classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). Consequently, further linguistic analysis will be based on verbs denoting emotional states of approval, praise and finding correlations between their semantic and etymological aspects.

But before describing the verbs as they are we need to deal with whatever meanings the emotional states "approval" and "praise" have in the English linguoculture. The first step taken in this direction is considering English dictionaries. For example:

- Approval; a positive feeling that you have towards someone or smth. that you think is good or suitable (MEDAL, 2007)
- Recognition; praise, respect or admiration (MEDAL, 2007)
- Approbation; official recognition or approval (LDCE, 2003)
- Appreciation; recognition of the quality, value, significance, or magnitude of people and things; a favorable judgment; "a small token in admiration of your works" (The Free Dictionary by FD, 2008, http://www.thefreedictionary.com)
- Praise; the act of expressing commendation, admiration, etc. (The Free Dictionary by Farlex, 2008, http://www.thefreedictionary.com); the act of making positive statements about a person, object or idea, either in public or privately (Wikipedia, 2010, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/); a verbal expression of admiration, approval, or respect; commendation (Anonymous, 2011, http://www.wordsmyth.net)

As we can see, nouns "approval", "approbation", "appreciation", "recognition" are synonyms representing emotions of approval, praise in modern English. Judging by the definitions above, approval in English is a positive feeling and can be explained through such emotions as respect, admiration aimed at an object (animate or inanimate) of favorable judgment. Also, praise in English linguoculture is not only an inner state of a person but an act of making positive statements about a person, object, a verbal expression of admiration, approval and respect. Lexeme 'praise' is the core among all the lexemes of this category.

Thus, the verbs study can be analyzed as verbs of speech denoting emotional attitude and characterizing the psycho-emotional sphere of the individual.

Generally, emotional states of approval, praise are rationalized feelings showing individual or social positive evaluation of personal and professional qualities, talent, activity, merits and achievements of a person (Pogozhaya, 2011).

As mentioned above, verbal units denoting praise, particularly their semantic and etymological features are in the focus of this study. This semantic group includes such verbs as applaud, approve, belaud, commend, compliment, eulogize, exalt, extol, laud, praise, panegyrize, resound, sphere (poetic). All these words form a synonymous set based of their general meaning "to express strong approval or admiration for someone or smth., praise smb. or smth" (MEDAL, 2007).

These verbs can be considered evaluative verbs as their dominant semantic element includes the act of evaluation, the sign of evaluation and mode of evaluation. The agent is a person who makes their judgment in order to approve good things or condemn bad things; to cause changes in the listener's emotional state when a third party is being evaluated. Consequently, we can speak about the aim of the speech act: to cause changes in the listener's attitude.

We should remark that rather bookish verbs like belaud, eulogize, laud, panegyrize, vaunt add to the meaning of praise the sense "to praise highly in speech or writing, glorify" (The Free Dictionary by FD, 2008, http://www.thefreedictionary.com) thus expressing the highest degree of evaluation. This process is usually loud and furnished with great pomp which is reflected in the meaning of the verb resound: "to celebrate or praise, as in verse or song" (The Free Dictionary by FD, 2008, http://www.thefreedictionary.com). The same feeling can be found in poetry, as the verb sphere (poetic) indicates. The verb commend ("to praise, to recommend") differs from all the previous items as it can express a desire to help people get a place they aspire "to represent as worthy, qualified or desirable; recommend" (The Free Dictionary by FD, 2008, http://www.thefreedictionary. com).

The verbs like boast, brag, gasconade, rodomontade, swank, vaunt form a separate group with the meaning "to speak boastfully; to talk about your achievements or possessions in a proud way that annoys people" (MEDAL, 2007). All these lexical items belong to the sphere of emotions affecting the scope of personal feelings. It is known that such human quality as boasting is not usually welcome in communication as it often

causes a negative evaluation from others. Therefore, the verbs of this group can be considered as emotional-evaluative items with a negative semantic component.

In accordance with the dominant cross-disciplinary approach the linguistic research of the emotional tokens needs data of modern linguocultural studies, psychology, psycholinguistics etc. Historical research is rather important, since "etymological data reveal the mechanism of formation of this or that concept, speaking metaphorically the first steps in the verbal-cognitive field of culture" (Krasavsky, 2008).

The lexical category considered in this paper has the following historical and etymological characteristics:

Belaud; "load with praise" (COD, 1956): The stem of the verb laud can be used without the prefix with the meaning "praise, celebrate" (COD, 1956). It is dated XIV century (ODEE, 1966) and referred to L. laudare "to praise, to extol" (LRS, 1952). This verb has connections with the IE. root *klçu-hear", "something much heard about, glorious" (EWD, II, 1989).

Boast; "extol oneself, brag of, vaunt" (COD, 1956): It is dated XIII century in the meaning "threat, threaten". This meaning existed till XVIII century. It is difficult to determine the date of the transition to vainglorious speaking, for which OE. gielp, gielpan, ME. ros, rose, later ME. glory (ODEE, 1966). It allows to assign this lexeme to the autochthonous vocabulary.

Brag; "boast of" (COD, 1956): It is dated XIV century in the meaning "arrogant, boastful or pompous behavior". The similar F. words braguer and brague are recorded only some three centuries later than the Eng. Word (ODEE, 1966). It allows to assign this lexeme to the autochthonous vocabulary.

Commend; "praise, remember me kindly to (person)" (COD, 1956): It was fixed in English in the XIV century (ODEE, 1966). It should be assumed that the initial element of the verb is L. mandare (EWD, II, 1989) "to give, to share, to trust, to entrust" (LRS, 1952). It is likely that the stem of this verb goes back to the IE. root *do- "to give, to present". A characteristic feature of this root appears "in the presence of its derivatives both meanings, converse in relation to each other "to give" (in most Indo-European languages, including Slavic) and "to take" (in the Anatolian languages)" (Ivanov, 1975).

Eulogize; "extol, praise, in speech or writing" (COD, 1956): It should be assumed that the verb refers to eulogy dated XVI century (ODEE, 1966). The second

version of the development of the verb is its connection with L. Eloquens, derivation from/of eloqui "speak well of, say, report" and L. loqui "say, speak, tell" (Leit and Pfeifer, 1989). gasconade "boast" (COD, 1956). The verb is associated with the noun-transparent and dated XVIII century. The related word is found in F. gasconnade "to speak like a Gascon" (ODEE, 1966).

Panegyrize; "speak, write, in praise of, eulogize" (COD, 1956): The verb is referred to panegyric. According to the lexicographic sources (ODEE, 1966) the verb is dated XVII B. (S. Daniel). In the stem of it is the L. noun panegyricus and Gr. panegurikos "public eulogy, public assembly; laudatory, praising" (LRS, 1952). The L. stem is formed by two roots initially neutral form of the Gr. adjective pan "every, whole" (Leit and Pfeifer, 1989) and Gr. agora "general assembly" (ODEE, 1966).

Praise; "express warm approbation of, commend the merits of; glorify, extol the attributes of" (COD, 1956): It is dated XIII century. Related words are observed in OF. preisier, Pr. prezar, Cat. prehar, It prezzare: late L. pretiare (ODEE, 1966).

Resound; "repeat loudly (usu. The praises etc. of)" (COD, 1956): It is dated XIV century in the XVI century it develops the meaning "to proclaim to glorify" In late ME it has the form resoune after OF. resoner or L. resonare "to sound, to utter" (LRS, 1952; ODEE, 1966).

Rodomontade; "brag, talk big" (COD, 1956): It is dated XVII century. Related words are observed in F. rodomontade and it rodomontada (ODEE, 1966).

Sphere; "(poet.) exalt to the (celestial)" (COD, 1956): The stem should be seen as a noun, "sphere, spherical body or shape". The noun is dated XVII century. Through OF espere the relationship with Gr.-L. sphere can be found (ODEE, 1966). The meaning "to puff up" can be developed on the metaphorical transfer "celestial sphere"→"zenith".

Swank; "(sl.) swagger, bounce, bluff" (COD, 1956): It is fixed in English in the XIX century (ODEE, 1966). Through the cross-language parallels the initial IE. root *sueng-,*suenk "to bend, to swing in a circular motion/movement, joke" is reconstructed (EWD, III, 1989).

Vaunt; "boast, brag" (COD, 1956): It is dated XIV century (ODEE, 1966). Through, OF. vanter: late L. vanitare with the stem vanus "vain, frivolous" (LRS, 1952).

The ongoing research shows that the verbs of praise mainly preserve their semantic meaning "to boast, praise". The most part of these lexemes appeared in XIV (4 lexemes) and XVII (3 lexemes) centuries, XIII and XVI centuries give only two lexical units each, XVIII and XIX centuries one lexical unit each. The extension of the verbal part of the vocabulary in the 13th and 16th centuries is associated with the improvement of the allocation of discrete representations of speech activity and the development of language contacts, primarily with the adaptation of the Romance borrowings. Items of Romance origin are dominant in the group presented above eight lexemes, three lexical units have IE. roots, two refer to the category of the autochthonous vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

Emotionality as a complex mental process requires an integrated approach to its study, combining the efforts of scholars from different areas and reflecting on the results of its study in allied sciences. An adequate picture of the object is scarcely possible as a whole or in its parts without interdisciplinary approach to the study of emotions and their linguistic representation as a "stitch" problem. Any study of emotions, including the study of their linguistic expression, requires a comprehensive approach. Etymology is by no means the last thing to be studied for the purpose of investigating mechanisms of verbalization. The etymological analysis gives at least a narrow chance to recreate elements of the language pattern of the world and reconstruct the history of the mentality of a people.

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