

Linguistic approaches

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The core: emotions and language

- What is language? Why did it develop and how do we use it?
- Language and thought are two faces of the same coin. And emotions are an integral part of thought and beliefs.
- Emotions influence beliefs, according to Frijda et al. (2000)

I remember having thought about emotions a long time ago, especially about the relation of emotions and epistemic attitudes, at the time when cognitive theories of emotion were in vogue. The point was that emotions relate to feelings the same way as smell relates to taste: there are only a handful of different tastes, the rest are really smells. Analogously there are a legion of emotions that are epistemic attitudes caused by and causing a handful of gut feelings. I did publish a little piece about the meaning of “good” once, basically listed a half dozen parameters of goodness (good for what, in what respect, compared to what, for whom, in whose opinion). A story about good and bad must go into a story of emotions (emotions basically judge “good” or “bad”, and direct action (toward good and away from bad). In the end, emotions combine my old friend game theory with some biology.

Linguistic approaches in the course

- The approach by Wierzbicka
- The cognitive linguistics approach (Kövecses, Lakoff)
- The Hallidayan approach
- The corpus-based approach (Maia)
- Expression by swearing (Dewaele)

How do we study language? And what do we study?

(The corpus-based approach, my view.)

Let us use an empiricist approach, and look at language from corpora.

sentir	192203
sentimento	81828
emoção	36081
emocionar(-se)	4706
emocionante	4168
comover(-se)	4059
comoção	3017
emocionado	2642
comovente	2220
comovido	1583
comovedor	275

Which words are more used in Portuguese?

Which feelings/emotions do we call feelings/emotions?

	culpa	1176	guilt
	pertencimento	381	belonging
	insegurança	378	insecurity
	impotência	322	impotence
	perda	313	loss
<i>o sentimento de</i>	solidariedade	303	solidarity
	pertença	276	belonging
	frustração	264	frustration
	identidade	263	identity
	inferioridade	233	inferiority
	revolta	221	
	medo	192	fear
	medo	6	fear
<i>emoção de</i>	tristeza	6	sadness (all in academic text!)
	raiva	5	anger

The most complex linguistic task: what can it tell us about differences in emotion talk?

- In order to be able to study it broadly, we need corpora with independently analysed emotions in both source and translation... Still, we can get some examples by browsing corpora only annotated in one half.
- One thing that immediately gets apparent is the difference in expressing emotions, even in translation (where supposedly it should be the same!)

My contention in a.o. Santos (1996) is that looking at real translations is one of the best sources for semantic data.

Translation data

- Even related (both Indo-European, and with Latin substrate) languages like English and Portuguese show huge differences in the expression of emotion. (See “divergences” file.)
- Evidence for difficulty if we look at cases in CorTrad where the same translation has been revised:

My daughter will be quite disgusted if I don't see it.

- 1 Minha filha ficaria desgostosa se eu não for ver.
- 2 Minha filha ficaria chateada se eu não fosse.
- 3 Minha filha ficaria arrasada se eu não fosse.

He thought flashingly of the priest saying «It's all a sham,» and he knew all at once that the priest was wrong.

- 1 Ele pensou rapidamente no padre dizendo «É uma hipocrisia» e percebeu, de repente que o padre estava errado.
- 2 Pensou subitamente no padre dizendo «É uma grande mentira» e percebeu, de imediato, que o padre estava errado.

Now with the Norwegian-Portuguese pair

- *kjekk* - saudável; bonito
- *frisk* - saudável
- *flink* - ter jeito para; ser inteligente, estudioso; ser bom em...
- *god i* - bom em, bom para

These are evaluative concepts which are linked in some words and not in others, and this makes it hard to translate (both? only one?).

A vexing issue

Separation of emotion and evaluation

- Can one evaluate without emotion?
- Can one feel without evaluating?
- Expression of opinions is hard to disentangle from expression of tastes/emotions/feelings

So this is one reason why one tries to annotate feelings & opinions, and not only one of them.