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Östen Dahl

Institute of Linguistics
University of Stockholm
S-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden
EMOTIVE EXPRESSIONS

1. The sentences in (1) all contain, as part of their meaning, a 'subjective', emotive component. Whoever utters these sentences attributes to himself a certain emotive attitude.

   (1) a. Oj!
       (Oh!)
   b. Fan!
       (Hell!)
   c. Vad kallt det är!
       (How cold it is!)
   d. Fan vad kallt det är!
       (Hell how cold it is!)

This paper is an inquiry into the nature of this subjective component of meaning.

2. The classical theory of subjectivity in language emanates from Benveniste (see Benveniste 1966, chs XVII, XX, XXI, XXII, and 1974, chs III, V, XV). Benveniste makes a distinction between linguistic expressions that properly belong to langue and linguistic expressions that need an act of enunciation to come into existence: "Ainsi l'énonciation est directement responsable de certaines classes de signes qu'elle promet littéralement à l'existence." (Benveniste 1974:84). Among the latter expressions we find first and second person pronouns, demonstratives and tenses. Benveniste also argues that certain functions of expressions come into existence only in acts of enunciation. The most famous of these functions is the explicit performative force of sentences that describe a present act by the speaker. e.g. "I second the motion" (see also Ducrot 1981). In Benveniste (1974, ch III, XV) he takes his theory one step further and proposes that "La langue combine deux modes distincts de signification, que nous appelons le mode sémiotique d'une part, le mode sémantique de l'autre...Le sémiotique désigne le mode de signification qui est propre au signe linguistique et qui le constitue comme unité...L'ordre sémantique s'identifie au monde de l'énonciation et à l'univers du discours." (Benveniste 1974:63–64). In other words, linguistic expressions can have both inherent meanings and meanings that they get when they are involved in an act of enunciation.

   Now it seems quite clear that the subjective component I am interested in is a meaning of the second type, one that is acquired by an expression in an act of enunciation. In what follows, I will try to make explicit what exactly this means.

3. A simple assumption is that the subjective component of the sentences in (1) is just the subjective component that accompanies most kinds of illocutionary acts. Searle (1976) argues that in performing an illocutionary act, you also express the psychological state that constitutes a sincerity condition on the felicitous performance of the act. Searle recognizes five major classes of illocutionary acts:

   Representatives: Direction of fit: Words to world; Expressed
psychological state: Belief; Example: "Det regnar." (It is raining).

Directives: Direction of fit: World to words; Expressed psychological state: Wish; Example: "Gå hem!" (Go home!).

Commissives: Direction of fit: World to words; Expressed psychological state: Intention; Example: "Jag lovar att ringa." (I promise to call).

Expressives: Direction of fit: None; Expressed psychological state: Various states; Example: "Tack för din artikel!" (Thanks for your article!).

Declarations: Direction of fit: Both world to words and words to world; Expressed psychological state: None; Example: "Härmed förklarar jag mötet öppnat." (I hereby declare the meeting opened.).

Since the sentences in (1) are typically used to perform expressive acts, we can identify their subjective components with the expressions of psychological states that accompany such acts.

4. Let us now embed this preliminary insight into a more adequate theory of illocutionary force than that elaborated by Searle (1969, 1975) (for convenient summaries of the critique against Searle’s theory, see Levinson 1983, ch. 5 and 6.4, and McLaughlin 1984:63–68). The key concept of such a theory is the notion of language game. This notion, which is ultimately derived from Wittgenstein (1953), has been used in a number of recent studies of linguistic interaction (Severinson-Eklundh 1976, 1983; Dahl 1977, 1981; Carlsson 1983; Anward 1983) to denote rule-governed interaction patterns of varying degrees of generality. The basic idea underlying these studies is that the meaning of an utterance is partly determined by its place in a language game. In particular, the illocutionary force of an utterance is seen as a joint product of the utterance’s own meaning and the meaning ascribed to it as part of a language game (see e.g. Levinson’s analysis of indirect speech acts in Levinson 1983 ch. 6.4, and also Ducrot 1981).

The connection between this line of reasoning and Benveniste’s proposal that language combines two modes of meaning should be obvious. As we shall see, we can make the fit even better, by providing a place for Benveniste’s enunciation in the game analysis, and this move will be precisely the move that will provide us with a source for the subjective components of meaning.

5. I will use the game analysis of illocutionary force proposed by Dahl (1981) as a point of departure. Dahl summarizes his analysis in the following way:

"Every 'round' in a language game ... will be assumed to have the following normal form: It consists of a proposal made by one or more participants and the ensuing acceptance or rejection of the proposal by the group that the proposal was directed to. The content of the proposal is that the participants jointly accept a proposition or a set of propositions as true. In addition, it may involve assigning to one or more participants the responsibility for seeing to it that the proposition(s) come(s) true." (Dahl 1981:79)

When a person, A, asserts something, "S", he thus proposes that the proposition corresponding to "S", <S>, be accepted as true from then on. In more compact form this can be written:

A: "S" / <S>
where A is the speaker, "S" his utterance and <S> the proposition that A proposes should be accepted as true.

6. How do we fit the expression of a psychological state into this framework? The expression of a psychological state is obviously tied to the act of saying something. It is not utterances, but speakers that express psychological states. When a speaker says "oj", it is his saying "oj" that attributes the attitude of surprise to him, not "oj" in itself. Thus, it is the act of enunciation that carries the subjective meaning and not the linguistic expressions that are enunciated. To see this more clearly, consider the consequences of saying that A: "oj" is a proposal that the proposition <the speaker is surprised at something> should be accepted as true. If this were an adequate description of the meaning of "oj", then it would be possible to reject the speaker's proposal simply by saying "nej" (no). However, in the following mini-dialogue B's "nej" can not be interpreted as equivalent to "you are not surprised at anything".

(2) A: Oj!
B: Nej

"Nej" in (2) cannot be a descriptive negation, a truth-functional operator in the classical sense. This does not mean, though, that the dialogue in (2) is ill-formed. "Nej" can follow "oj", provided that it is interpreted as a metalinguistic negation (Ducrot 1972, 1973, Horn 1985), "a means for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatever, including... the way it was pronounced," (Horn 1985:134). "Nej" in (2) can mean "you shouldn't have said oj", "that's nothing to be surprised at", "you shouldn't let your feelings show like that", etc. In all these cases, "nej" relates to the enunciation of "oj", and not to any proposition conveyed by "oj". This is of course exactly what we would expect, if "oj" in fact does not convey any proposition.

The simplest analysis of the meaning of "oj" is then the following one: "oj" does not convey the proposition <the speaker is surprised at something>, or any other proposition that would entail that proposition. Rather, it is the saying of "oj" that allows us to infer that the speaker is surprised at something. Thus, "oj" has a meaning in the semantic mode only.

7. Let us now incorporate this analysis into our language game analysis. One way in which this can be done is the following: Instead of saying that a participant proposes that a proposition is to be accepted as true, we can say that he introduces a proposition that is to be accepted as true. If the proposition is trivially true, it is simply added to the list of propositions jointly accepted by the participants as true. If it is not trivially true (and if the other participants have the right to contest the truth of the propositions introduced by the first participant; Anward 1983, ch. 7), then the introduction of that proposition amounts to a proposal that the proposition should be jointly accepted as true.

We can then let a move in a language game, A: "S", introduce the proposition <A says "S">. We would thus get, in the case of declarative sentences:

(Mdec): A: "Sdec" / <A says "Sdec"> & <Sdec>

Since <A says "Sdec"> is trivially true, only <Sdec> can be denied.

We then need a number of meaning postulates that spell out what inferences we can draw from the fact that A said something. For example:
Commissive and declarational speech acts are normally performed by means of declarative sentences. We can thus recognize two subtypes of declarative sentences, Scom, where Scom designates a sentence with the appropriate 'commissive content', roughly a future act by the speaker, and Sdcl, where Sdcl designates a sentence with the appropriate 'declarational content', roughly a present act by the speaker.

For Scom and Sdcl, the following meaning postulates are needed:

(Pcom): \( \langle A \ says \ "Scom" \rangle \Rightarrow \langle A \ believes \ Scom \rangle \)

(Pdec): \( \langle A \ says \ "Sdec" \rangle \Rightarrow \langle A \ believes \ Sdec \rangle \)

(Pper): \( \langle A \ says \ "Sdcl" \ \& \ A \ is \ in \ an \ appropriate \ position \ to \ say \ "Sdcl" \rangle \Rightarrow \langle Sdcl \rangle \)

These postulates are meant to capture the fact that a promise or a declaration only needs to be uttered to be introduced into a game, as well as the fact that a declaration normally can issued only from a certain position.

A consequence of these meaning postulates is that an Scom like (3) or an Sdcl like (4) can not be contested by means of a descriptive "nej".

(3) Jag lovar att gå hem tidigt
   (I promise to leave early)

(4) Jag förklarar härmed mötet öppnat
   (I hereby declare this meeting opened)

Since \( \langle (3) \rangle \) follows directly from \( \langle A \ says \ "(3)" \rangle \), which is trivially true, \( \langle (3) \rangle \) can not be descriptively negated, even though \( \langle (3) \rangle \) is also proposed as an ordinary \( \langle Sdec \rangle \), through (Mdec). Much the same holds for \( \langle (4) \rangle \), with one important exception. Since \( \langle A \ is \ in \ an \ appropriate \ position \ to \ say \ "(4)" \rangle \) is not trivially true, it is possible to contest (4) by means of a descriptive "nej", which entails that the speaker is not in appropriate position to say "(4)". (4) can thus be followed by (5).

   (No, you don't. It is I who am chairman.)

Directive speech acts can be performed in various ways, but imperative sentences is a special vehicle for such acts. An imperative sentence (Simp) is normally the first move in a game with two moves, where the second move is one whereby another participant directly introduces the proposition corresponding to the declarative version of Simp (roughly "I Xfinite", if Simp is "Ximp"), by acting it out, so to speak. Thus, we would get the following moves in an imperative game (I will adopt the convention that different types of S specified in a certain game are versions of each other):

(M1imp): A: "Simp" / \( \langle A \ says \ "Simp" \ to \ B \rangle \)

(M2imp): B: \( \langle Sdec \rangle \)

The following meaning postulate accounts for the subjective component of a directive act:

(Pimp): \( \langle A \ says \ "Simp" \ to \ B \rangle \Rightarrow \langle A \ wants \ B \ to \ Simp \rangle \)

There is no particular place for questions in Searle's taxonomy. I presume that they would be subsumed under representatives or under
directives, depending on which analysis of questions one prefers. However, interrogative sentences, the most typical question vehicles, are differentiated from other sentence types in most languages, and that would seem to motivate an analysis of interrogative sentences that explicitly contrasts them with imperative and declarative sentences. The following is a preliminary attempt at such an analysis:

(M1int): A: "Sint" / <A says "Sint" to B>

(M2int): B: "E" / <Sdec: Sint(E)>

(Pint): <A says "Sint" to B> ⇒ <A wants B to complete Sdec: Sint(X)>

A declarative version of Sint is a version of Sint with declarative mood instead of interrogative mood and with at least one of the wh-phrase of Sint, if any, replaced with a "normal" phrase. Thus, "He won." is a declarative version of "Did he win?", and "John won." is a declarative version of "Who won?". "E" in (M2int) is what makes Sint into the corresponding Sdec.

While a declarative move immediately introduces a <Sdec>, an interrogative move and an imperative move mediate introduce a <Sdec>. In all these cases, I will say that the <Sdec> in question is the target of the move. We can then say that a simple reaction to a move, such as "ja" (yes) or "nej" (no), serves to accept or reject (the truth of) the target of that move, in the simplest case.

8. The analysis of "oj" would then come out in the following way:

(i) A move whose vehicle is "oj", and nothing more, does not introduce any proposition except the proposition that the speaker said "oj":

(M"oj"): A: "oj" / <A says "oj">

(ii) That proposition entails another proposition, the proposition that the speaker is surprised at something:

(P"oj"): <A says "oj"> ⇒ <A is surprised at something>

An adequate analysis of "oj" should account for two facts about "oj": "oj" can not be descriptively negated, and "oj" can not be embedded.

That "oj" can not be descriptively negated follows directly from my analysis. Saying "oj" introduces only two propositions: <A says "oj"> and <A is surprised at something>. The first is trivially true and can not be contested by means of a descriptive negation. The second proposition can not be so contested, either, because < NOT: A is surprised at something> entails <NOT: A says "oj">, and thus gives rise to a contradiction.

That "oj" can not be embedded is shown in the following examples. Note that the examples in (7) and (8) are quite all right.

(6) a. *Han kände oj
(He felt oh)

b. *Oj oroade honom
(Oh worried him)

(7) a. Han kände (min) förvåning
(He felt (my) surprise)

b. Han kände sig förvånad
(He felt surprised)
c. Han kände att han/jag var förvånad  
(He felt that he/I was surprised)

(8) a. (Min) förvåning oroade honom  
((My) surprise worried him)
b. Att han/jag var förvånad oroade honom  
(That he/I was surprised worried him)

In order to account for the fact that "oj" can not be embedded, I must refine my analysis somewhat. So far I have said that a move A:"S" may introduce <A says "S">, a proposition entailed by <A says "S">, and <S>. Let us now sharpen this and say that A:"S" may introduce <S>, only if <S> is detachable and complete. <S> is detachable if <S> can be detached from the proposition entailed by <A says "S">, i.e. if that proposition contains a 'part' that corresponds to the vehicle "S". For example: <A believes Sdec>, which is entailed by <A says "Sdec">, clearly contains a part, <Sdec>, that corresponds to the vehicle "Sdec". <Sdec> can then be detached from <A believes Sdec>, and is thus detachable. <S> is complete simply if <S> is a complete proposition. Note that <S> need not be complete in order to be detachable.

Given the notion of detachability, we can now formulate the simple principle (9).

(9) "E" can be embedded with the meaning <E>, only if <E> is detachable

Why can't "oj" be embedded, then? "Oj" corresponds to the entire <A is surprised at something>, i.e. to a proposition that makes reference to A, and that seems to be what prevents "oj" from being embedded. In general we can say that <E> can be detached from a proposition entailed by <A says "E" (to B)> only if E is free from references to A or B. Only in that case can "E" have meaning independently of its use as a vehicle for a certain kind of move.

However, "oj" can be embedded in metalinguistic and direct quotation contexts, as in (10).

(10) Oj är en interjektion  
(Oj is an interjection)

How can we account for that? Suppose we change our definition of 'detachable' slightly and say that <E> is detachable if it can be detached from a proposition introduced by A:"E". <"E"> is then always detachable, since it can be detached from <A says "E">. "Sdec" can then be embedded with the meaning <Sdec> or with the meaning <"Sdec">, while "oj" can only be embedded with the meaning <"oj">.

9. Let me now summarize what I have proposed so far. I have argued that an adequate analysis of meaning in natural languages must recognize two modes of meaning: the semantic mode and the semiotic mode, following Benveniste. I have also, though implicitly, argued that the semantic mode is in a sense primary to the semiotic mode. Thus, every move A:"S" introduces <A says "S">, but not every move introduces <S>. Rather, it is only certain species of A:"S" that can introduce an independent proposition <S>. These species of S are also those that can be embedded in more complex utterances, in accordance with (9).

What I have said so far about the interjection "oj", and, implicitly, about other interjections and other types of emotive expressions is then simply that they are a species of "S" that can not be detached from A:"S". Hence, they can not be embedded and they can not be descriptively negated.
10. Let us now look more closely at the meaning of Swedish interjections. Idefors (1928) recognizes three classes of interjections: 1) impositions such as "aj" (ouch) and "oj" (oh); 2) imperations, such as "ssch" (hush) and "schas" (used to chase away an animal); and 3) imitations, such as "pang" (bang) and "krasch" (crash). To these classes is normally added a fourth class of response words, such as "ja" (yes) and "nej" (no) (see e.g. Thorell 1973:192-3).

11. Imperations are very close to imperative sentences in meaning. An imperation such as "ssch" could thus be regarded as the vehicle of a straightforward directive move:

(M1"ssch"): A: "ssch" / <A says "ssch" to B>

(M2"ssch"): B: <B is silent>

(P"ssch"): <A says "ssch" to B> => <A wants B to be silent>

Since imperations, like imperative sentences, have declarative targets, they can be contested by means of a descriptive "nej":

(11) A: Ssch!
    B: Nej.

However, imperative sentences and imperations can't be embedded. This follows if they correspond to <B to P> in <A wants B to P>.

12. Imitations are not easy to analyze. In the simplest case, they seem to report something that the speaker has just heard, either in his role as speaker or in his role as narrator of a story. Thus, if A says (12),

(12) Och så stängde han dörren. Pang!
    (And then he closed the door. Bang!)

"pang" can either be report of what the narrator heard as he saw someone close the door, or it can be a report of what the speaker just heard as he was telling the story. We might then essay an analysis of imitations along the following lines:

(M"pang"): A: "pang" / <A says "pang”>

(P"pang"): <A says "pang”> => <A just heard a bang>

Imitations also have a more 'performative' use, as when a child ups with a toy gun and says "pang". However, it is not really necessary to regard such uses as performative. We can just as well say that the child reports what he just 'heard' in the fictive activity that he is engaged in.

It is probable that this analysis of 'performative' imitations can be carried over to the 'ludic' speech acts described by Strömqvist (1984, ch. 3). We would then have to generalize the account from cases of hearing to cases of witness in general.

13. A sample list of Swedish impulsions is given in (13) (for a complete list, see Idefors 1928:129-281):
These impulsions have three distinct uses: they can be used to express bodily sensations, they can be used to express emotive reactions to something, and they can be used to indicate the speaker’s relation to the hearer.

"Aj" and "brr" have rather clearcut uses as expressions of bodily sensations, "aj" indicating pain, and "brr" indicating being cold. Other impulsions can also be used to express bodily sensations, but then only the rather indistinct categories of general well-being ("ah", "oj", "äh") or discomfort ("ah", "asch", "tvi", "oj", "usch", "fy", "äh", "äh", "äsch").

All impulsions in (13), except possibly "aj", "brr" and "öh", can be used to express emotive reactions to something. The exact content of these reactions is rather hard to determine, though. It seems to me that there are three distinct aspects of such reactions coded in the impulsions in (13): a) the reaction involves an element of surprise; b) the reaction is intense; and c) there is an element of rejection, or negative appraisal, in the reaction. Let us attempt an analysis of the individual impulsions in (13) (except "aj", "brr" and "öh") in terms of these three aspects:

"tvi", "fy" and "usch" all express a reaction that contains an element of rejection or negative appraisal. Thus, if you find a dead fly in your cup of coffee, any one of these impulsions can be used to express your disgust at the find. On the other hand, if you step into your office and find a brand new computer on your desk, you can’t use any of these impulsions, unless, of course, a computer is the last thing you want to see in your office.

"Oj" expresses a reaction that contains an element of surprise, regardless of whether the reaction is positive or negative. Thus, if your latest book is reviewed, and the review is either more positive than you had expected or more negative than you had expected, you can use "oj" to express your reaction. "Aha" and "ähä" also express a reaction that contains an element of surprise. But these two expressions also seem to indicate something more: that you have found something that you were looking for, that what you are reacting to was not totally unexpected. "Aha" and "ähä" seem to be neutral with respect to the positive-negative dimension, too. Thus, if you hit upon a new definition of government that seems to solve all your problems, you may use "aha" or "ähä", as well as if you later find a crucial counterexample to that definition.

"Ah", "äsch" and "asch" seem to express a mild rejection of something, "that’s nothing", roughly. They thus contrast with the more intense rejection expressed by "tvi", "usch" and "fy". "Ah" and "ah", finally, are the most unmarked of the impulsions in (13). I don’t think that they can be used to express intense rejection or intense surprise, but otherwise they seem to serve as some kind of all-purpose impulsions.

The preceding discussion may be summarized in the following way:

(14) (reaction): ah, äh
(reaction, surprise): aha, ähå
(reaction, rejection): asch, äh, äsch
(reaction, surprise, intense): oj
(reaction, rejection, intense): usch, fy, tvi
"Ah" and "åh", being the least marked impulsion, may substitute for all other impulsion that are not maximally marked.

14. Before I discuss the relational use of impulsion, I would like to point out one consequence of the preceding analysis of Swedish impulsion. A priori, it might be thought that a semantic analysis of impulsion is a rather simple task. All we would have to do would be to map our set of impulsion onto a set of suitably chosen basic emotions. Philosophers and psychologists have proposed several sets of basic emotions, and some of these proposals have been taken up by linguistics (see e.g. Blount 1984 and Hirsch 1985). Hirsch (1985:71), for example, settles for the following set of basic emotions:

(15) Anger, Joy, Surprise, Fear, Disgust, Grief

The discussion in paragraph 13 indicates, however, that no simple mapping of the impulsion in (13) onto the emotions in (15) exist. While there are impulsion that express surprise, there are no impulsion that are specialised to express any of the other emotions in (15). Those impulsion that express intense rejection might be mapped onto the negative stance emotions Anger, Fear, Disgust and Grief. However, the impulsion that express mild rejection can not be mapped onto any of these emotions, for the simple reason that all emotions in (15) are pretty intense emotions. The all-purpose impulsion "ah" and "åh", finally, can only be mapped onto Joy and Surprise, since they cannot express intense rejection. Moreover, they can not be mapped onto all varieties of Surprise, since they cannot express intense surprise.

In other words, the distinctions made in (13) are not the same as the distinctions made in (15). This might be taken to indicate that the apparently basic emotions are not so basic after all, that there is a deeper level to uncover, a level where the distinctions made in (13) and the distinctions made in (15) can be described by means of a single set of notions. The three-dimensional emotional space, defined by the parameters surprise, intensity and rejection, that I tentatively identified in paragraph 13, might be taken as a very preliminary suggestion as to which notions might be relevant on such a deeper level of analysis.

15. At least "ah", "åh", "äh" and "åh" might be used to indicate the speaker's relation to the hearer. In that use, impulsion are analogous to English "please", and are most characteristically used together with directives. As can be seen from the examples in (16) and (17), all four impulsion are compatible both with asking favors and with dissociating oneself from someone.

(16) Ah/Ah/Xh/Oh, klia mig på ryggen! (..., scratch my back!)

(17) Ah/Ah/Xh/Oh, dra åt helvete! (..., go to hell!)

The differences between the four impulsion seem to lie on a single dimension (Anward 1977): while "åh" and "ah" are unmarked with respect to lack of consideration, "äh" and "åh" indicate lack of consideration. Of the latter two impulsion, "äh" is milder than "åh". Thus, the "åh"-versions of (16) and (17) are clearly the rudest versions of these directives. Moreover, when "äh" and "ah" are used with a directive that implies a positive relation to the hearer, they seem to take on a meaning roughly equivalent to
"please". Thus, the unmarked terms may be used to unambiguously indicate the positive, unmarked end of the scale.

We may summarize the relational use of these four impulsions as in (18), where I have used (nonconsideration) to indicate lack of consideration and (intense) to indicate the stronger force of "öh".

(18) (relation): ah, åh
   (relation, nonconsideration): åh
   (relation, nonconsideration, intense): öh

Now, if we return to (14) above, we note that "åh" and "ah" are unmarked there too, while "äh" is marked for rejection and unmarked for intensity. If "öh" were to be used to express a reaction, it would clearly be marked for both rejection and intensity (there is in fact a sub-standard use of "öh" with just these properties). We find, in other words, an analogy between the use of "åh", "ah", "äh" and "öh" to express a reaction and the use of these impulses to indicate a relation.

If we attempt to summarize the use of impulses to express sensations, we might come up with something like (19).

(19) (sensation): ah, åh, oj
   (sensation, discomfort): asch, äh, äsch
   (sensation, discomfort, intense): usch, fy, tvi
   (sensation, discomfort, being cold): brr
   (sensation, discomfort, pain): aj

Again we find an analogy, this time between the use of impulses to express reactions and the use of impulses to express sensations. The three uses of impulses are thus clearly systematically related: if an impulse is marked for the negative feature (discomfort, rejection, or nonconsideration) in one semantic field, it is also marked for the negative feature in the other fields, and if an impulse is marked for intensity in one field, it is marked for intensity in the other fields, too.

16. What I have said so far about impulses is consistent with the view that emotions are shown rather than said, in the Tractarian sense of these terms (cf Linell 1985). However, what is shown by means of one expression may be said by means of another expression. Let us now look at ways in which a language may acquire means to say propositions which previously could only be shown.

The general strategy seems to be to coin expressions that correspond to a part of a proposition that is entailed by <A says "S">. That involves two steps: analysing the proposition in parts, and coining an expression that corresponds to such a part. Let us go back to A:"oj". A:"oj" introduces, via entailment from <A says "oj">, <A is surprised at something>. This proposition might be regarded as an unanalyzed whole. However, it can be analyzed into smaller parts. First, we may separate out an 'object' part, so that we get <A is surprised at y; y:something>, where 'y:something' indicates what binds the y position in 'A is surprised at y'. We have now created a slot which allows expressions to be embedded in an expression headed by "oj". A:"oj X" may then introduce <A is surprised at y; y:X>. Impulsions may, in other words, have objects, as they have in "usch för den" (pffui on that) and "fy på dig" (shame on you). Note that <A is surprised at y> can not be detached, since it makes reference to A.

17. We may also analyze the relation contained in the proposition entailed by <A says "S"> and separate out a 'small clause' part of that proposition. <A is
surprised at something> may then be reanalyzed as something like <A finds <something surprising> >, or rather <A finds <x:something; x surprising>>. In order to introduce such a proposition, a new expression must be coined, e.g. an emotive adjective such as "konstigt" (strange, surprising). We would then get:

(M"konstigt"): A:"konstigt" / <A says "konstigt">
(P"konstigt"): <A says "konstigt"> => <A finds <x:something; x surprising>>

<x:something; x surprising> is then detachable, and can be introduced by A:"konstigt", since it is complete. Furthermore, we may embed expressions in the expression headed by "konstigt", so that we get, for example, "konstigt, det där" (strange, that). A: "konstigt, E" will then introduce, via entailment from <A says "konstigt, E">, <A finds <x:E; x surprising>>. Since <x:E; x surprising> is both detachable and complete, it may be introduced by A:"konstigt, E" and, at least in principle, embedded. (In practice, "konstigt, det där" can not be embedded, since the expression lacks a verb.). This analysis can be generalized to all emotive adjectives, and we can then formulate the following general move with emotive adjective phrases as vehicles:

(MAm): A:"Am E" / <A says "Am E"> & <x:E; x Am>
(PAm): <A says "Am E"> => <A finds <x:E; x Am>>

Emotive adjectives can also be freely embedded in attributive positions.

18. A similar analysis can be made for invectives such as "jävlar" (devils), "satan" (satan) and "helvetet" (hell). Let us look briefly at "jävlar" (for a much more detailed analysis of Swedish invectives, see Teleman 1985). "Jävlar" is basically an impulsion, which expresses an intense reaction. We then have a related form "(för) jävligt" ((too) devilish), that can be used as an emotive adjective, except that it can't be used attributively. For attributive use we have a third form: "jävla". There is also a fourth form: "jävel", which is used as an epithet, in the way that words such as "idiot" and "bastard" are used.

Basically, the relation between "jävlar" and "jävligt/jävla" is of the same kind as the relation between "oj" and "konstigt". We might tentatively assume that <A reacts intensely to something> is reanalyzed as <A finds <x:something; x intensely provoking>>.

19. In order to understand the relation between "jävlar" and "jävel", we must develop an analysis of epithets. Epithets are obviously related to vocatives, so let us first consider what might be an appropriate analysis of simple vocatives such as "John"in "Come here, John!". These may be analyzed in the following way:

(Mvoc): A: "NPvoc" / <A says "NPvoc" to B>
(Pvoc): <A says "NPvoc" to B> => <B is NPvoc>

Note that signatures, identifications and self-introductions may be analyzed in a similar way, as NP moves that introduce, via entailment from <A says "NP">, <A is NP>. 


20. In Swedish, there is a contrast between two types of vocative NP:s (Kjellmer 1976). The first type of NP consists of a bare N, i.e. an NP that cannot contain an article, optionally preceded by "du/ni" (you). For example: "rörmokare(n)" (plumber), "lilla flicka" (little girl), "du rörmokaren" (you plumber), "du lilla flicka" (you little girl) (cf. the ordinary "rörmokaren" and "den lilla flickan"). The second type of NP consists of bare N, often preceded by "din/era" (your). For example: "din rörmokare" (your plumber), "din stora idiot" (your great idiot). The first type of vocative NP is descriptive: you can only address someone with "rörmokare(n)" that in fact is a plumber. The second type, however, is not descriptive in the same way. Rather, when you address someone with "din rörmokare", you imply that he is not a plumber but has certain, negative or positive, qualities that are typical of plumbers (Kjellmer 1976). The second type of vocative NP:s are thus effectively epithets, and can be taken as vehicles of the following move:

(MNPeP): A: " (din/era) N" " / A says " din/era N" " to B

(PNPeP): A says " (din/era) N" " to B \rightarrow A finds B similar to a N"

Note that a similar type of NP, used for self-reference, is also available in Swedish: "min stora idiot" (my great idiot). Such NP:s can be analyzed in the same way, with the exception that they introduce A finds A similar to a N rather than A finds B similar to a N.

21. There is no reason to assume that NP:s normally originate as vocative NP:s, ontogenetically. But some may do. It is conceivable, for example, that an epithet such as "idiot" is first acquired as a kind of impulsion, where A says "idiot" to B entails A reacts intensely to B, and that the latter proposition is later reanalyzed, first as A finds B provocative and then as A finds B similar to a provocative kind of person. The same kind of derivation accounts for the relation between "jävlar" and "jävel". Note that provocative kind of person is detachable, which means that "idiot" and "jävel" can be embedded with that meaning.

22. We may also create a subject slot in a proposition entailed by A says "S", by analyzing A P as x:A; x P. We can then coin an expression "P" which introduces, via A says "P", x:A; x P. x P is now detachable and can head an ordinary Sdec, in which an NP can be embedded. Thus, from A:"brr", which introduces, via A says "brr", A is cold, we can get to A:"fryser" (freeze), which introduces, via A says "fryser", x:A; x is cold, and further to A:"Sdec: NP fryser", which introduces x:NP; x is cold. Note that it is also possible to get a move A:"NP P" which introduces both x:A; x P, via A says "NP P", and x:NP; x P, if the NP is one that refers to the speaker: either a designated name, the name of A, or a first person singular pronoun: A:"jag fryser" (I am freezing) will then introduce both x:A; x is cold, via A says "jag fryser", and x:jag; x is cold.

Once the route from A:"S" / A says "S" => A P to A:"Sdec:NP P" / x:NP x P has been established, we can directly coin expressions that correspond to x P, and, also, expressions that correspond to x says "S". The latter type of derivation, dubbed 'delocutionary derivation' by Benveniste (1966, ch. XXIII), is what lies behind Swedish verbs such as "heja": to say "hej" (hello), i.e. to greet (someone), and "oja sig": to say "oj", i.e. to complain. Such verbs are often generalized to express x P, where P is the relation included in the proposition entailed by A says "S". Thus, "heja" no longer means strictly 'to say "hej"', but rather 'to greet someone'. That is, you can "heja" without saying "hej". "Heja" has thus
come to mean \(x\) greets \(y\), a meaning sanctioned by the entailment \(\langle A \text{ says } \text{"hej" to } B \rangle \Rightarrow \langle A \text{ greets } B \rangle\).

A more complex case of delocutionary derivation was kindly brought to my attention by Brita Bergman: "uscha", which does not mean 'to say "usch"', but 'to cause someone to say "usch"', i.e. 'to make doody'.

23. In conclusion: By providing a place for Benveniste's 'enunciation' in a language game analysis, we can explicate a broad range of 'non-standard' meanings in rather simple terms, including the subjective component of emotive expressions. Moreover, we can begin to study ways in which non-standard meanings sanction standard meanings.

Footnote

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References


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