

# *Stylistic Functions of Expressive Words in a Literary Text*

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0. In this paper we shall present stylistic functions of expressive words in literary texts (our corpora including two plays by Stevan Sremac<sup>1</sup>: the humorous and satirical *Vukadin* and humorous play *Ivkova slava*). The context of the selected works by Stevan Sremac, Serbian writer of realistic and humorous pieces, who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century, provides an indicative corpus which enables one to observe some historical phenomena in the stylistic functioning of the expressive lexis.

1. Having in mind the up-to-date results of the research into the general characteristics of the expressive lexis (expressive and conotational words), and also of the characteristics of some particular types and aspects (which we have presented in our papers<sup>2</sup>), in this paper we shall confine ourselves to the functional-stylistic aspect of the expressive words and particularly to the problem of adequacy of their use in literary texts<sup>3</sup>.

- 1 We chose to analyse expressive vocabulary as used in *Vukadin* and *Ivkova slava* because of their genre characteristics and the complexity and scope of dialectal variants which are encompassed.
- 2 The list of my papers on the subject of expressive lexicon is presented in the list of references and I refer to the results of these pieces of research in this paper.
- 3 When we say that the use is 'adequate' i.e. 'appropriate' we mean that expressive words are used in different language sub-codes in such a way that they follow the rules according to which optimal and explicit common core of the language is transformed in the sense of the amount of the realized information and from the point of view of language productivity and text perception (Jakobson: 1966, 187).

2. In two plays by S. Sremac (*Vukadin* and *Ivkova slava*) mostly nouns and verbs have expressive function<sup>4</sup>.

Thus there are:

I EXPRESSIVE VERBS with the meaning of:

(a) behaviour, the way people act: *mangupirati se* 'to idle', *cifirati se* 'getting dressed up', *napsiti se* 'to fly off the handle', *nagaraviti nekoga* 'prevariti nekoga' - 'to double-cross someone', *guliti i derati nekoga* 'uzimati, otimati od nekoga nešto' - 'to bleed someone white', *zagrditi s nečim* 'upropastiti' - 'to be done for', *odvaliti* 'slagati' i 'izboriti se za kakvo mesto' - 'to drop a brick' and 'to fight for a position' *mlatiti se* 'baviti se nečim neva'nim' - 'to speak to the wind', *nagruvati para* 'steći vecu sumu novca, steći novac na brz ili nepošten način' - 'to coin money';

(b) the manner of speaking; different sorts of sound: *kmeknuti* 'to cry', *zivkati* 'to bother with calls', *džakati, zadžakati* 'chatter', *zakerati* 'to find fault', 'to make fuss', *guknuti* 'squeal';

(c) hitting something: *zvrnuti* 'to buzz', *kljucnuti* 'to peck', *klepiti* 'to hit', *bubati* 'to beat';

(d) taking of food and drink: *gucnuti* 'take a sip', 'žderati' 'to eat like a hunter';

e) effect: *odrtiti* 'postati neizgledan' - 'to become ugly', *nagraisati* 'to suffer, to be ruined';

(f) movement, gestures: *štuknuti* 'pobeći' - 'run away', *vući se* (imperative form) 'get lost', *pljuckati* 'to spit', *bekeljiti se* 'to make faces';

II EXPRESSIVE NOUNS with the function of:

1. naming people:

(a) after some moral and psychological characteristics: *gulanfer* 'bum', *dripac* 'irresponsible person', *nesreća, nesrećnik* i *nesretnik* 'obešenjak' - 'mischievous boy', *obešenjak* 'mischievous boy', *joldaš* 'drug, drugar, saputnik' - 'companion', *ašik* 'suitor', *lola* 'galant', *mangup* 'bum', *ešek* 'blockhead', 'mischievous and restless person', *magarac* 'stubborn person', *kuće* 'dog', *jagurida* 'tvrđica' (instead of more correct *jagorida*) 'stingy person', *kajišar* 'swindler', *izjelica* 'greedy person', *zulumčar* 'tyrant', *grmalj* 'stocky figure', *ajduk* 'outlaw', *izdajica* 'traitor', *tiranin* 'tyrant', *badavadžija* 'lazy bones', *čelebija* 'junak' - 'hero', *lovdžija* 'hunter', *binjedžija* 'dobar, vešt jahač, dobar poznavalac jahaćih konja' - 'horseman', *šaldžija* 'jocular person', *tirijačija* 'strastven uživatelj duvana, kafe etc., meraklija' - 'chain smoker, chain drinker; one who enjoys life', *karadžija*

4 In both cases only two expressive adjectives have been used: *čoškasto* and *ubavačko*.

'opsenar' - 'illusionist', *fantazija* 'phantasy', *meraklija* 'one who enjoys life', *mustra* 'good-for-nothing', *ispičutura* 'drunkard', *kockarin* 'gambler', *zaludnjak* 'idler', *filadelfija* 'snalazljiv, promućuran čovek; stručnjak' - 'know-how', 'Jack of all trades', *budala* 'fool', *pangaloz* 'skitnica' - 'rover', *rospija* 'bitch', *ćutalica* 'tongue-tied', *neznalica* 'ignorant person', *tamničarka* 'figuratively: ona koja osvaja, zarobljava muška srca, zavodnica' - 'seducer', *šalvaruša* 'figuratively: ona koja se često pokazuje na javnim mestima radi zavodjenja muskaraca' - 'seductive woman';

(b) naming people after their mood and status: *veselnica* 'cheerful person', *kukavac* (sinji) 'wretched man', *jađenik* 'miserable', *siromašak* 'pitiful person', *bednik* 'unfortunate person', *šuša* 'insignificant person', *gospodčić* 'snob', *beskućnik* 'homeless person', *gurbet* 'Gipsy', pejorative), *sorta* (gurbetska) 'pejorative name for Gypsies', *bagatela* 'trifle', *zelje* 'knickknack', *boranija* 'small fry', *element* 'worthless person';

(c) age-group: *babac* 'middle-aged (but spry) woman', *šiparac* 'young, immature person';

(d) looks: *sitne* 'ž' 'skinny', *debeljko* 'plumpish', *bucov* 'stocky';

(e) kinship: *ćaćko* 'daddy';

2. naming objects: *mučenica* (za rakiju) 'martyr' for brandy), *zelje* 'bezvredne stvari' - 'worthless things', *đubre* 'ono što je loše po kvalitetu' - 'rubbish';

3. naming action: *džumbus* 'pandemonium', *moljkanje* 'begging', *advociranje* 'advocating'.

3. In line with the general characteristics of expressive words<sup>5</sup> in both works by Sremac (*Vukadin* and *Ivkova slava*) their usage is anthropocentric and regardless of the differences in genre and dialectal branching of the language it is based upon stereotypes concerning 'good' and 'bad', 'positive' and 'negative' characteristics of people and especially (as our examples show) their psychological and moral characteristics, acts, behaviour, condition and status<sup>6</sup> (see examples in Section 2).

These stereotypes, which are characteristics not only of the language of the time of Sremac but of the contemporary Serbian language as well, are realized in a regular way in the system of expressive words in the way of the positive and negative expressiveness (like accidentals in music: flats and sharps) and also in

<sup>5</sup> See Ristić: 1994, 537-542; 1996, 57-78.

<sup>6</sup> About the stereotypes in expressive lexicon and about the domination of expressive words with negative meaning over those with positive meaning in contemporary Serbian see Ristić 1996: 63, 75-76.

the way of different word-formation patterns. In a literary text different aspects of expressiveness make stylistic functions of expressive words possible. In this way, Stevan Sremac uses expressive words of primary high intensity in humorous contexts as stylistic means of diminishing (and making less strong) the negative content of words. This stylistic procedure (producing euphemisms) can be illustrated by the following examples: *guknuti, zvrnuti, kljucnuti, gucnuti, pljukati, ašik, gospodčić, debeljko, bucov, ćačko, fantazija, filadelfija, mangupirat se, cifrati se, bekeljiti se, lola, mangup, kuče, badavadžija, ispičutura, veselnica, kukavac, siromašak, babac, šiparac* and *simež*. All these examples function as means of familiarization, for showing consent, favour, sympathy and pity.

In humorous and satirical context the writer uses expressive words which have high negative intensity for naming some less negative content - the purpose being that of exaggeration and a hyperbole. For this stylistic procedure - pejoration he uses the expressive words of the type: *guliti, derati, zderati, klepiti, bubati, nagraisati, bednik, jađenik, beskućnik, gurbet, sorta, gulanfer, dripac, magarac, budala, neznačica, nesrećnik, kajišar, izjelica, zulumčar, tiranin, izdajica, ajduk* etc. These words function as means of making the effect of: humour, mockery, irony and self-irony.

In this way, the expressive words in the context of Sremac's comic plays, regardless of their primary quality and tonality, function mainly as stylistic means of euphemization and pejoration<sup>7</sup>.

4. Conotational nature of lexical meaning of expressive words with predominant emotional and expressive components is the basis according to which they are classified as units which have expressive function. All those who do the research into stylistic functions of expressive words are obligated (from the point of view of Jakobson's theory of stylistic functions - Jakobson: 1966: 289 - 295) to take into account extralinguistic parameters (the subject which is being named, emotions and intended effect on the reader (Ristić: 1996, 61). All this can also be expressed as a tendency towards creating the impression of an emotion (real or false) so that emotional tonality functions as a major characteristic of functional and stylistic marking of the texts which incorporate this kind of lexis (Jakobson: 1966: 290-292).

7 The use of the euphemisms and pejorative words is a frequent device in familiar (colloquial) language style and it is present in approaching children and pets. Pragmatic aspects which are realized in such situations deserve special approach and more serious examination.

For the stylistic functioning of expressive words in a literary text it is of primary importance that proper 'emotion is used in rhetoric speech' (сыгранаая экспресия). This 'emotion-playing' means that the subject which is being named (either the author or the character in a play) intends to conceal (by choosing right expressive words) his real feelings and to make an effect on the reader (Vinokur 1989: 17). The skill to hide and to disguise rhetorical intention can be characterized as a stylistic skill and the skill of creative use of expressive words<sup>8</sup>. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

(1) Vukadin's cunning hypocrisy (in the play *Vukadin*): "Dođoše kajšarlucci gazda-Milislavljevi, pa (...) ne mogu, brate, da gledam, kako *gule* i *deru* onoga jasnoga i veseloga seljaka! (113). Krajevi kršni i siromašni, pa se čovek bavi o svojoj nevolji, a ko će da *se mlati* i dangubi s travama! (123). Mene su poslali ovamo da učim i državi i ovom ojađenom narodu koristim, a ne da se *mangupiram* (154). Ja znam iz istorije (...) da su gusle Srpstvo očuvale, i da se gusala boje samo *zulumčari, izdajice* i *tirjani* (152).

(2) Kalca's jocular word-play with his companions (in *Ivkova slava*): "Čuvaj ga (vino), ne iznosi ga pred svaku *šušu!* (54). Za ništo me, ete, Sike, na ovaj svet ne je tol'ko žal kako što me je, ete, žal za teb'! Sike, *tamničarke!* (65). *Čelebija* sam, ete (...) reče Kalča (...) i stade sukati svoje tanke a duge brkove (68). Pa, ete, i *lovdžija* sam, i *binjedžija* sam, i *šaldžija* sam, i *tirijačija* sam, i meraklija sam (70). Nesam *džampir*, nesam *kockarin*, *gurbet* nesam, gospodine (117). Poskoro ovam', *kuče* nijedno (...) A znaš li, *jagurido* dek je danas slava na našoga Kurjaka?! Ne znaješ, je li, *nesrećo* pobratimska! (140). Može, kakva je *budala*, da se oženi za inat sas neku štumadlu, pa biva li (...) takvu snajku da si dobijemo? (146). Sag si, vikaš, *ženet*, Sika će mi je *domaćica*, pa što mi veće treba i taj Kalča, i to društvo, i tija *bagatele* (168). Može, sag ću te poljubim (...) ako dofatim ovuj lopatu iz budžak, *nesrećo* pelivanska! *Karadžozlijo* nikakav! *Fantazijo!*' (181).

5.1. Realization of different stylistic effects by means of expressive words is the primary characteristic of both literary and everyday language (colloquial speech). Stylistic shading by means of expressive words in literary language can be thought of as a method of simulating (and imitating) colloquial speech and the situations in everyday communication. In case of our corpora the method applied is the one of imitation of certain colloquial idioms in the speech of the time of

<sup>8</sup> We have already pointed out the stylistic functions of this type of expressive words, which can all be a separate subject of research (see Ristić 1996: 76 and e.g. 16; also 1996a, e.g. 4; also 1996b, Section 4).



Sremac. These are, besides idiosyncratic colloquial idioms of Sremac's language the idioms of the language milieu of Belgrade and Niš which were familiar to Sremac.

Artistic (i.e. esthetic) achievements of the imitation method are measured by the degree of the authenticity of the colloquial idioms in literary piece of work and this degree is significant from the synchronic and diachronic research point of view.

Creativity in the imitation of the colloquial idioms is realized on two levels: (1) the level of the authentic colloquial idiom (where the author, led by his communicative competence, chooses the words freely and spontaneously thus creating his artistic style on the basis of the language reality) and (2) on the level of the artistic creation of the language of the characters by allowing them to choose language means by which they will create the illusion of everyday speech by using a particular dialect of the period. On both levels, as our research shows, adequate use of expressive words makes everyday communication authentic, which can also be analysed as their specific stylistic function<sup>9</sup>.

5.2. Most of the examples from Sremac's works represent expressive vocabulary which belongs to common idiom, which is counter to what is expected (having in mind the locality of the plots and different dialects of Serbian which the characters use)<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, the citation forms of expressive words do not differ from those the writer's uses. This can be illustrated by the examples that follow.

Examples from *Vukadin*: "Ded, čato, *gucni* malo ove *mučenice*, pa viđi u knjigu, prouči, pa nam kaži (6). Bože, Bože, kad ga *klepim* njome (pesnicom), ne treba mu (...) ni taj doktor, ni apoteka (78). Ja da sam pismen, ne bi mi ni prvo (dete) *kmeknulo* u kući, a toli trinaesto! (13). Ne sme profesor da te *kljucne*, odma padneš pa se obeznaniš (103). Ala će da *nagruva* para, mislio je Vukadin, dok ga ne dohvati san (263). O, *gulanferu* jedan, od tebe zar da kradem!? (42). Kuku, šta zbori *nesrećnik*, - veli Čaja. - *Nesrećo* jedna, ne gledaš tvoj dućan, no ti je pamet sve za rđavstvo! (...) mogla bi mu majka biti; *nesrećniče*, da bi *nesrećniče*! (62). Za

9 Appropriate use of expressive words, as has been shown by our research, asks for full linguistic and communicative competence like the one of native speakers or fluent speakers of the language (Ristić 1996: 63-64; 1996b, Section 4). Their creative use is conditioned by many extralinguistic factors and above all by the psychological and intellectual characteristics of a language user, the degree of his knowledge about the subject of communication and his ability to vary the words along the intensity scale (on this see Turanski 1990: 13-19; 32-33).

10 On the function of stereotypes in expressive lexicon as means of language openness to a higher or a lower degree see Ristić 1996, 62-63; 1966a, Section 4.8.

momci mi lako, bar toga *zelja* dosta! (92). Ima ovde dosta toga *zelja*, to jest jeftinih i udobnih kvartilja! (200). Ej, *kukavče*, i ja ti nisam bolji! - veli Micko (...) - Pa sad ti, ako mi ne pomogneš, kud ću *kukavac*! (128). Ti se ništ' ne brini! Nećeš se ti više onim *kajišarima* vraćati (115). Tri hiljade žučaka (...) potrošio je (...) moj *čaćko* na me, na moje (...) vospitanje i izobraženje (129). Ama, vide li ga, kako se ponaša (...) Najpre, veli, ukaz pa posle svadba, mesto mi od njega to da zahtevamo, zahteva on od nas!!! Pravi *grmalj* i *ajduk*" (248);

Examples from *Ivkova slava*: "Uzo ja da biram (duvan) (...) sitno, brate, ko burmut (...) Pa ovo je *đubre*, sitno! (39). Treba da se čuvaš (...) zaradi nas da se čuvaš, *ešeku* nijedan! (49). Ti da ćutis, *rospijo* jedna! (49). More kakva tvoja čast (...) *gulanferu* nijedan, i ti će' pa nekoga da častiš?! (77). Stra' me (...) mlogo, će se nađe neki *mangup* i *zaludnjak*, pa će me turi u dopis u novine (117). Gospoja Kevo, molim vas, nemojte mu više davati slatkiša. Halav je i *ždere* pa ne zna šta je dosta (21). Kalčo brate, *odvalio* si; brate, lažeš! (54). Ej, grešni Ivko, jesi ti *nagraisao*. I kako to baš tebe da snađe (119). Ama reko' li ti da se ne *mlatiš* kad ja radim, vidiš hvala Bogu" (145).

Examples of the writer's expressive vocabulary:

From *Vukadin*: "Vukadin je rastao i *đikao* bez ikakve prepone i ušao već u sedmu godinu (21). Talijan se samo klanja i odlazi, majmun na ledjima mu *pljucka* i *bekelji* se na svet (38). Prođe tek neko pa mu *zvrncne* prstom cigaru, a ova odleti bestraga (44). I tek se oko Preobraženja Vukadin opet *napsi* i stade tražiti i to mnogo odlučnije svoj ajluk (93). Sve su to bili stari *matadori*, koji su *moljakanjem* i *advociranjem*, a ne dobrim odgovorima, gledali da dobiju dobru belešku (149). Sutra dan dođe Vukadin u gimnaziju na prijemni ispit. Polagao je s nekim *sitnežom*, među kojima je izgledao kao tučak među kašikama (133). Stade (...) skupljati oko sebe sve nezadovoljne *elemente* i podbati ih da jednako prave smetnje profesorima, a naročito onom kratkovidom *debeljku* (153). Beše inače (...) ograničen čovek ali gde se kakva čara i *čelepira* tiče, tu beše prosto '*Filadelfija*' (166). *Babac* prolazi kroz kirajdžijinu sobu i ima strast da noću dolazi, da pokriva kirajžiju" (201);

From *Ivkova slava*: "Kalča i Smuk dele bakšiš Ciganima koji *džakaju*, ali ne smeju mnogo zbog predsednika, a još više zbog pandura, ali čim izađose iz avlije, *zadžakaše* strahovito i počеше *se bubati* i tući (149). Baš je tu između gostiju (...) Trifun, liferant, sa svojom ženom i decom, sa (...) jednim glavatim i bucmastim *bucovom* (18). Smuk je (...) bio slavna *ispičutura*, junak na piću (53). Istrči tek poneka čupava *šalvaruša*, pa na bunaru mije belo lice (81). Bio je to stari *joldaš* i *ašik*, o čijim se veseljima rado pričalo i još radije slušalo" (121).

5.3. Local idiosyncrasy of idiolects is more present in expressive vocabulary of *Ivkova slava*. This is understandable having in mind the fact that there is more dramatic action in this play, which resulted in more frequent dialogues and citation as part of Sremac's artistic procedure in presenting the characters who create their emotional speech in dramatic situations using expressive words which belong to local dialects. In this way the writer manages to achieve the desired authenticity of simulated colloquial idiom. Such expressive words are, e.g.: *ešek, čelebija, binjedžyija, tirijačija, gurbet, džampir, joldaš, ašik, jagurida, karađozlija*, or the examples which belong to the idiolects: *tamničarka, šalvaruša, fantazija* (see also the examples from Kalca's speech, Section 4.2).

6. Related to the adequacy of the use of expressive words we shall point at one more essential aspect of that adequacy which concerns normative aspect rather than stylistic<sup>11</sup>. The use of expressive words, as our research has shown so far, also reflects language norm and etiquette, which can be illustrated extensively with the examples taken from Sremac's works. In both *Vukadin* and *Ivkova slava* there are some conflicting situations in which some characters, regardless of their status and age-related relations, show lack of tact, tolerance and politeness. They stop at nothing: they use force, fight with sticks, threaten each other and behave aggressively (they cheat, deceive and settle their accounts violently in *Vukadin*; in *Ivkova slava* the guests, who are tipsy, behave in a violent way in the house of master Ivko and they are particularly aggressive towards women and the Gypsies). They use expressive words in such situations (see examples in Sections 4. and 5.2) but the contexts of the words which are used do not overstep the boundaries of decency. Owing to the writers skillful method of using humour, irony, pejorative words and euphemisms to decrease the tonality of negative expressiveness, the indecent use of vulgar, obscene and swear words is avoided. In this way the language of Sremac's heroes is not only authentic but normative as well. When he created that language he had in mind language norm of his time. Judging by the use of expressive words this norm sanctioned indecent words not only in their written form but also in prestigious colloquial urban dialects. The writer followed the guidelines of the norm and when he imitated the dialects of his heroes he chose only 'permitted' expressive words. By his skillful use of expressive words the writer preserved not only the authenticity of some idioms of colloquial speech but also the language normative principles.

11 On the function of stereotypes in expressive lexicon as means of language openness to a higher or a lower degree see Ristić 1996: 62-63; 1966a, Section 4.8.



7. Stylistic functions of expressive words in the corpus of selected Sremac's literary works which we have presented in this paper are very indicative of the historical development of the Serbian language on the level of expressive vocabulary. Most of these expressive words which appear in Sremac's works, in spite of the fact that their naming function is marginal and that their use is conditioned by the individual and subjective criteria, represent general functional-stylistic characteristics of this type of vocabulary which is shown to constitute a stable layer of the lexicon of the Serbian language and its individuality. The importance of such continuity lies in the fact that expressive words as units of a higher cognitive and motivational level of language individuality<sup>12</sup>, from the point of view of pragmatics, accumulate and preserve the stereotypes from everyday life of the native speakers of the Serbian language with its specific cultural, social and historical characteristics. Such characteristics can be important not only from the point of view of the diachronic research into the Serbian language in the domain of expressive lexicon but also from the point of view of the typological and contrastive characteristics of the Serbian language in relation to other languages.

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12 Cognitive, psychological and motivational foundation of functioning of expressive words on the synchronic level of contemporary Serbian has already been presented in our papers dealing with the problem of lexical meaning (see Ristić 1996: 61-64; 1996а, Section 4.8 and 4.9; 1996b, Section 4).

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### *Стилистические функции лексических экспрессивов в художественном тексте*

В настоящей работе показано, что лексические экспрессивы в художественном тексте используются как средства для реализации стилистических приемов эвфемизации и пейоризации, художественного воплощения авторской речи и речи персонажей в процессе стилизации разговорной речи, имитации повседневных ситуаций общения, а также для создания норм речевого поведения персонажей.

Анализом выбранного материала из литературного творчества С. Сремаца (*Букадин; Ивова слава*) выявлено, что рассматриваемые аспекты использования экспрессивов делают язык произведений Сремаца репрезентативным в отношении речевой экспрессии в сербском языке писательской эпохи. Стилистические характеристики функционирования экспрессивов отличаются преимуществом по отношению к современному состоянию языка, что приобретает особое значение в наблюдении за ходом исторического развития сербского языка и его речевого своеобразия в сфере лексической экспрессии.