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Preface

We are happy to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the success of the Twenty-Fourth Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference, above all the graduate students of the Indo-European Conference Student Organizing Committee (in particular Mattyas Huggard, Chiara Bozzone, Jessica DeLisi, Bernhard Koller, Anna Pagé, and Christina Skelton). We are also grateful for the excellent help of the staff of the Dodd Humanities Group: Carlene Brown, Laura Clennon, Kathy Forero, and Paul Gass, and would like to recognize here the contributions to the conference over many years of the late Diane AbuGheida. We acknowledge once again those who furnished critical financial support: the A. Richard Diebold, Jr. Endowment in Indo-European Studies, the Friends and Alumni of Indo-European Studies, and the UCLA Graduate Student Association.

We are indebted to all those who contributed their papers to this volume for their cooperation and patience throughout the editing process. Not all papers presented at the conference appear here, for the usual variety of reasons, including publication or planned publication elsewhere. We particularly regret the absence of the featured paper by Jeremy Rau of Harvard University.

Last but not least, we again express our thanks to Dr. Ute Hempen for her excellent production of the volume and to Angelo Mercado for his consummate skill and professionalism in the preparation of the camera-ready copy.

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Aspects of the “Expressive Dimension” in Indo-European: Toward a Comparative Grammar of Speech Registers

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Formal semanticists have for some time distinguished descriptive meaning and expressive meaning. The two are perfectly separable; if one says

That bastard Nixon was president.

It is roughly equivalent to two propositions:

(a) Descriptive proposition: Nixon was president.
(b) Expressive proposition: Nixon was a bastard/bad in the speaker’s opinion.

Nothing surprising here. This is part of the notion of implicature (Grice 1975), what is suggested in an utterance without being expressed, nor strictly implied. Pragmaticists like Potts (2005, 2007, et al.), from whom I take some illustrations, speak of conventional implicatures and of so-called “not-at-issue meaning,” what is part of conventional (descriptive) meaning but where some features or lexemes in an utterance are not the principal contribution to the meaning of the sentence. We are dealing here with the expressive dimension of a multi-dimensional semantics. The Expressive Dimension was the title of a collective volume of the journal Theoretical Linguistics (Krifka 2007), and the issue is still current. Formal Pragmatics: Multidimensional Meaning is the title of a course of lectures announced in the Department of Linguistics, UCLA, Winter 2012, by Daniel Büring. The topic is thus of real current relevance in contemporary theoretical linguistics.

This linguistics has created a new technical term in contemporary English, expressive, which is not merely an adjective but also a substantive and count noun: the English expresses ouch and oops (Hilda Koopman, p.c.), exclamations like French zut!, and the long list of swear words, insults, etc. We will return to these later.

One can even now speak of “Filling the Emotion Gap in Linguistic Theory” (Jay and Janschewitz 2007). All this is quite recent and a welcome development; but it is hardly necessary in an historical linguistics context to insist that the capital role of the expressive function in linguistics was already perfectly appreciated by the Parisian school of Michel Bréal, Ferdinand de Saussure, and above all Antoine Meillet. The most developed and most detailed exposition of Meillet’s

views on linguistic expressivity may be found in his brilliant *Esquisse d’une histoire de la langue latine* (1928; 1933:165–90).

Meillet’s enumeration of expressive features begins with two in phonology: doubled or long consonants (geminates) and the vowel *a*. The role of the latter had already been signaled by Saussure in an article of 1912—one year before his death—citing a list of Latin adjectives with root vowel *a* denoting bodily defects or deformities: *caecus, claudus, caluos, balbus, laeuos, plantus,* and still others. Significantly Saussure recognized that some of these went back all the way to Proto-Indo-European, with the *a*-vocalism of *kaikos* ‘blind, one-eyed’, *latigos* ‘left’, *kambos/*kampos* ‘crippled’ attested in several traditions. That was to recognize that the expressive value, the *expressive dimension* of a linguistic feature could have and in fact did have a history.

If contemporary theoreticians of semantics and pragmatics operate with a notion of *expressive* dimension, fully capable of being formalized, it is surely curious that historical linguists since the last quarter of the preceding century have almost completely abandoned expressivity as an explanatory tool in linguistics. For them it is too vague a notion, not rule-governed, non-quantifiable, and not formal enough; in short, fuzzy reasoning. Meillet’s doctrine was still present, more than a generation after his death, in the Greek etymological dictionary of his student Pierre Chantraine, who could write (tome III, 1974): ‘OÏÇΣ [lamentation] est un terme expressif, où la finale δ elle-même doit concourir à l’expressivité, cf. ϊγρας νάκος, ῥάδος.’ Perhaps debatable, to be sure, but you find nothing comparable in the etymological dictionary of Robert Beekes (2010). An excellent article by my colleague Brent Vine on “Initial *mo-* in Latin and Italic,” which appeared in *MSS* 65, 2011, begins with the sentence: “From the perspective of Proto-Indo-European it is a truism to observe that there is ‘too much’ *a*-vocalism in Italic.” But in the rest of the article there is no mention of any putative expressive character of *a*-vocalism. A pity. One mustn’t throw out the baby with the bathwater.

One must recognize from the outset that expressivity in language exists, it is only common sense. We had no need for semanticists and pragmatists to assure us that expressivity exists, though it is fine that they admit it to linguistic theory. The simple fact of the existence of grammatical categories like the verbal intensive in Vedic and other languages (type *carcariti, guniýgantí*) and the existence of grammatical processes cross-linguistically widespread from onomatopoeic reduplication (type *bibi, mini, pépé, kiki*) to the formal rules of Indo-European reduplication (types δίδουν / ἱλάσω / διδόλαι) prove that expressivity is a category of *langue* and not just *parole*. Some thirty years ago at the first East Coast Indo-European Conference the young Sanskritist Stephanie Jamison remarked that “most Vedic intensives are very satisfying to say.”

I return to my title to reiterate the importance of speech registers. Register as used by M. A. K. Halliday (1971, 1978) seeks to explain the relations between language and its context, in particular the choices made by the speaker. The essential of register is *variation*: the variations available to the speaker in different societal contexts, for example along parameters of formality. All these are part of the expressive dimension in pragmatics, and what the anthropologist and linguist Dell Hymes called since 1962 “Ethnography of Speaking” in sociolinguistics.

Consider a case that is cross-linguistically very common, namely diminutivization. In the Armenian Gospels there is only a single instance of a diminutive, *ordi-k* ‘*my* son’, functioning as a vocative. But in the pre-Christian songs of Gotin cited by Moses of Chorene, such as “the birth of the god *Vahagn,*” there is one in almost every line. Potts (2007) includes “repeatability” among his six characteristics of expressive content: the repetition of an expressive feature normally results in reinforcement of its expressivity, and not redundancy. This accounts for the phenomenon of double diminutivization: for example in the song of the birth of Vahagn the young god is a young boy *patani* + dim. *-ak* + dim. -ik: *pataneiktik ‘lad, petit bonhomme’.*

Once in Poland some fifty years ago in a bar in Kraków I ordered a beer, Polish “*piwo.*” The bartender replied “*pikoko,*” and drawing one from the tap he presented it to me with the words “your *pivczeko.*” The cases of German *le + -in* > *-lein,* or Latin -ko + -lo > -culus are well known. Compare in Texas and elsewhere in the American South the double affectionate epithets *li’ ol’, big ol’.*

In morphology it often happens that the expressivity of a morpheme is gradually weakened and must be renewed, like Latin *canere,* frequentative *can-ta-re.* The weakening of the expressivity of the latter provokes the creation of a new frequentative *can-ti-ta-re.* *Cantare* ends up losing its expressivity completely, and becomes the ordinary, unmarked verb ‘to sing’ in the Romance languages, ousting *canere.* For Latin *por-ta-re,* exactly the same process was completed in prehistoric times; in *portare* the original expressive content has become extinct.

We can observe that the notion of expressive content beside descriptive content has much in common with the notion of *mark* (or *semantic mark*) in Prague School linguistics, though the two are hardly identical. Especially in phonology the role of relative frequency is common to both: the marked member is rare, as is the expressive type. There is correlation, without insisting on causality.

Consider the classic system of vowels and stops reconstructed for Indo-European: the rarest vowel is *a*, which only rarely participates in morphophonemic
alternations. The rarest stops are *b and *gʷ, and their expressive value is still perceptible in some attested languages of the family; André Martinet used to say he could perceive it in the b of French imbécile. For the murmured labiolar note the expressive Vedic mythological formula ahāṃ dīh, which goes back to Proto-Indo-European (Watkins 1995 passim): alliteration, two voiced h’s, and a geminate nn.

Expressivity may be carried by a single consonant where this consonant results from a change. In several languages of northwestern North America a hissing sibilant affricate [ts] may change to a hushing [tʃ] to affect an augmentative sense: the process is notably used in Chinook in the word for ‘penis’ of the trickster Coyote in a well-known tale, in order to impregnate a woman lying on the other side of the river. This consonant deformation can go in the opposite direction: in colloquial Polish the nickname for Wojciech [voi’tɛɛx] is Wojtek [voi’tek], and in English for the last five hundred years at least the nickname for Christ(opher) has been Kit.

The expressive dimension of onomastics, Indo-European and other, is too well known to linguists to spend much time on. We have mentioned geminate consonants and the a-vocalism, for example, in Latin names like Acca, Accius, Appa, Appius, Attā, Attīlius. One should note something similar in English nicknames for females like Kitsy, Patsy, Mitzi, Tisya, Betsy, Nancy, which recall the Germanic hypocoristics with original devoted geminate stops like Fried(rich) / Fritz, Lud(wig) / Lutz (*d- → *-tt > ts ), Matth(ias) → Matz. The grammar of personal names is very important too for the study of child language. We are all familiar with Roman Jakobson’s “Why ‘Mama’ and ‘Papa’?” (1960). But it is also important to revisit Benveniste (1969:121, 11:85ff.) on the role of the foster father in the early Indo-European societies that practiced fosterage: Celtic, Germanic, and Greek. Beside the words for natural parent, Old Irish athair and māthair (common Celtic *atār, *māthār), the words for foster parent showed the striking expressive features of geminate consonants, a-vocalism, and reduplication: Old Irish aite, meim(m)e from *addios (Mod.Ir. oide), *mammiā.

The expressive value of a geminate consonant is evident there where it results from the prolongation of a single consonant, thus a deformation. One of the many manifestations of iconicity in language is the reinforcement of particular semantics by this vocal gesture: colloquial English OVER and OVER, colloquial German immer wieder, Ancient Greek (Hom., Hes., Bacchyl.) συνεχείς; ‘continually, without stopping’. Equally evident is the expressive value of “spontaneous,” non-iconic gemination, documented since the dawn of Greek literature in Iliad 12.208 αἰώνον ἄγειν ‘wriggling SNAKE’ (see M. L. West’s edition).

Here the phonetic form of the adjective as well, all vowels and a liquid, contributes to the expressivity.

At times it is possible—borrowing a vivid phrase from the young Saussure—“to be present at the formation” of an expressive valorization. In Proto-Indo-European itself there existed a sort of conspiracy of phonological rules to eliminate geminates. The laws of dental + dental (TT → TsT), s + s → s, the “μέταπτω” rule and extrasyllabicity (Byrd 2010), the absence of *-men- suffixes to roots in -m, the absence of *-ro- suffixes to roots in -r (Schindler apud Mayrhofer/Cowgill 1986:§5.1.4 with n.99) are all means of eliminating possible geminates from high-register Indo-European. Given the aforementioned correlation of expressivity and frequency it is hardly surprising that the role of geminates would proliferate in lower-register expressive speech, like child language and onomastics, as a counter-reaction. Hittite preserved the old child-language kinship terms with original gemination, like attas ‘father’, annas ‘mother’, pappanegnes ‘brother by the same father’. Hittite contrasted stops -T- : -TT- and the laryngeals -H- : -HH- word-internally. But liquids and nasals, and the sibilant s, also regularly distinguished simple and geminate -R- : -RR-, -s- : -ss- word-internally; a sort of conspiracy of phonological rules in Hittite caused a proliferation of geminates to the point where they approached parity vis-à-vis the single consonants. This increase entailed the loss, or the non-development, of their potential expressive value. Accordingly, when Hittite created new expressive words it had recourse to total reduplication or pure onomatopoeia: harsiharisi- ‘thunderstorm’, tastaysi-whisper’, akuwakisua- ‘small amphibian, perhaps a frog’ (Hoffner and Melchert 2008:49).

In the domain of the lexicon we must mention deformation as a particular case of speech register. On the level of verbal play there are everywhere in the world deformations like English Pig Latin → igPay atinLay, French le Javanais or verlan (à l’inverse), or in American English insertion of the string [gadi]: I’d rigidi-aither b-igidi-e an-igidi eskim-igidi-o with f-igidi-ur up-igidi-on my h-i-gidi-ea-d than f-igidi-ind long sp-igidi-ids be-igidi-tween my sh-igidi-eets each t-igidi-ime I g-igidi-o to b-igidi-ed.

Particularly widespread are taboo deformations, particularly dear to Meillet, to avoid, disguise, mock, or render unintelligible, intelligible, or harmless a word, for example old timers’ disease [Alzheimer’s], Hail Mary full of grapes [grace], Our Father who aren’t [art] in heaven. There are everywhere techniques of rendering inoffensive the names of the divinity in expressive creations of swearwords, in which American English is particularly rich: Judas Priest, Jeezum Crow, Jimmy Cricket, Jeepers Creepers, etc., goldurned, gosh darned,
dadgummed, etc. The techniques range from acrophony (heck! sugar! shucks!) to fusion (tarnation < tarnal damnation [19th cent.]) and paraphrase: the N-word.

The essential is that these expressive creations are in no way purely synchronic; they have a history, and diachronic consequences that can go back millennia in human history and prehistory. Consider an example from Roman Jakobson (1985:16-24): the head of the pagan Baltic pantheon was Lithuanian Perknas. The head of the Slavic pantheon was Perun, with -u- from *-au-. But Slavic also has a word Perryv in place names designating a high hill sacred to Perun. Slavic -v> *-u- and the suffix -uno- appears also in the old Latin divine names Neptunus, Mutunus Tutunus.

Latin quercus is the name of the oak, tree sacred to Jupiter. According to the old rule *p...k> *k...k, quercus goes back to *perk*wur-. What then should we reconstruct for the name of the head of the Balto-Slavic pantheon? A variable form:

*per(k)i/auon-

plus metathesis *perk- > *ker-, then loss of the second stop in Greek: *kerp- > ker-

The confirmation, due to Gregory Nagy (1974), is the Homeric epithet of Zeus τερπικέραυνος ‘who takes pleasure in the thunderbolt’. This epithet was originally an Indo-European type of intensive expressive reduplication with the totality of the initial syllable, onset + coda: *kerpi-ker(p)auonos first lost the underlying stop p, *kerpikeraunos, then substituted the r- for k-, terpi-kerauonos by folk etymology (τέρπημα ‘enjoy, take pleasure in’). We are a long way from “Ausnahmslosigkeit,” but our linguistics is richer for it.

We pass now from the expressive function in phonology to morphology. We find apparent variations that are “violations.” In the “classical” system of Benveniste 1935 the simplest form of a root was C1EC2, where C1 and C2 are different and E is the fundamental vowel *e/o/o. The rare variations in vocalism like *sal- ‘salt; dirty; willow’ or *sak- ‘sacred’ are expressive words by this very fact. (The views of the Dutch school of Leiden on the categorial absence of a phoneme a in Indo-European are to me inadmissible and irreconcilable with the data of the present study.)

In the rare cases of consonantal violations where C1 = C2, we have to deal with expressive words with reduplication borrowed from child language. The root *ses- ‘sleep’, of guaranteed Indo-European date by the agreement of Vedic and Hittite, shows reduplication of the *s of *swep and *seyu just like French faire dodo. The root *mems- ‘meat’ probably originally imitated by the reduplication of *m a vocal gesture like English yumyum, French mim-mimim.

The rules for the syllabification of sequences of resonant R are known (Schindler 1977; Byrd 2010): Ved. śūnas – svābhīs < *kāṃsas – *kṣābhī. The “violations” of the apophonic weak stems of nasal-infix verbs (*jungs-, not **jungs-) function to preserve the unity of the paradigm. But in effect sequences of ilu + non-syllabic RR/RT are avoided in roots, and rare even where they can be generated by apophony: Ved. caturbhas caturbhas caturdham ‘4’, caturaha-.

Rarely increases expressivity, and register is sensitive to it. Consider the charged semantic field of words for young animals, babies, and sometimes females. English foal reflects Germanic *ful-ôm-, a weak masculine stem. The l must be suffixal, a root *pul- being impossible for Indo-European. The residue *pu does not exist as an independent lexeme, but appears elsewhere with a further suffix, with or without expressive value: Ved. putrā-, Sabellic puko- ‘son’ from *put-tlo with variant *put-slo- in Latin pullus (diminutive pusillus), French poule.

The -ko- of Hittite kārkas (ka-u-ur-ko-as) ‘foal’ (Forssman 1980) must be suffixal, *kir-ko- beside *kār-no- ‘foal’ in middle and modern Iranian. Greek Kúpros with the same suffix -no- and the same root accent is a personal name, the erōmenos of the poet Theognis. This name does not belong to the high-register compound type Themistokles, but it is an affectionate expressive term like colt or filly. This masterly etymology by Forssman is most solidly grounded, *kûr-no- and *kâr-ko- in the three oldest branches of the Indo-European family, though the words are not to be found in the etymological dictionaries of Beckes (2010) or Kloekhorst (2008). We find the same two suffixes in Italic and Celtic: Latin cascor, Casca, from *kas-ko-, and *kas- no- in Latin cānus, cānitus ‘hoary’, Paellignian casnar ‘old man’, and Welsh ceinach ‘hare’ (feminine noun) from *kas-nih (of the female). The expressive semantics of a little animal and the expressive phonetics of the a-vowel of *kas-ko- and *kas-no-, the same suffixation, and the form of the root mark the two pairs as belonging to the non-high, non-formal register already in the proto-language.

This status of *kir-no- and *kâr-ko- invites the comparison of other forms in different languages of the family which rhyme, which present the same root
structure, which seem to offer a certain expressivity, and which have no etymology. Such are Greek *πύρμο- in the Homeric beggar’s formula (Od. 3*): τῶρνον καὶ κοτότην / κοτότην καὶ τῶρνον “food and something to drink” (affectionate social situation); Celtic *duirnu- ‘fist’ in Old Irish dorn (also legendary male and female personal name), Welsh dwrn, and Gaulish PN Dago-duirnus ‘good fist’; Latin (and Italic legendary) PN Turnus; and *turko- in Irish torc, Welsh twrch ‘young male pig, boar’ (also the name of the legendary boar Twrch Twrthyn). These are all forms to think about.

To conclude I want to call attention to an exclamation, an “expressive” in the language of pragmatists as we have seen, whose documentation in different branches of the family spreads over nearly four millennia: the cognates of Latin uae, English woe, Indo-European *uai. This *uai is assuredly a vocable of Indo-European date: see the etymological dictionaries of Emout-Meillet, Pokorny, Falk-Torp, and Walde-Hofmann. The Latin and Indo-European words are absent from the etymological dictionaries of de Vaan, as well as, regrettably, from my American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots. The a-vocalism diphthong is guaranteed by the agreement between Old Latin (Plautus, passim, later replaced by eheu) and Welsh gwae (Schrijver 1995:130–2). Irish fé, òfae is ambiguous.

The complete list of cognates, including some probable neologisms, may be found in any Indo-European dictionary except the modern ones, which take no account of exclamations. Of the oldest branches of the family it is absent from Greek, perhaps because of the premature loss of the phoneme /w/. Its semantics in Greek and its expressive dimension are continued by Homeric ο γ ο, later ομοι (Theogn., Aristoph. passim). The expressive value of the latter therefore resides in the diphthong οι: ομοι κυκλοδίων τογ γερομοί βοσδίων (Aristoph. Achar. 1038 with restoration of the sandhi). In Old Indic *uai was replaced by hayé (RV 10.95.1 Pururavas and Urvaśī) ‘ach, oh weh!’ (Hoffmann 1967:199 n.177), then by ḫa ḫa (MBh.+).

Old Hittite already shows the pair ain (ū)wāin ‘pain and woe’ (Kloekhorst 2008:939, Watkins 2010) and especially Hittite and Luvian (ū)wa ‘woe’ (Kloekhorst 2008:38 n.71) in the quasi-compound verbs with Hittite tiškianan ‘create woe’ (Melchert 1993:250) from dāi- (*dā-). In Luvian (ū)wa-i- is the subject of a lost verb in a birth ritual KUB 35.87, 7 ūwāiḥa=du niš “and let [ ] woe not [ ] for her.” Old Anatolian is the only branch of the family to still attest the inflected *wai in nominative (-s) and accusative (-n): a unique archaism.

These Anatolian verbal compounds recur in Germanic, where *wai behaves in some respects like a separable preverb: Gothic wai-đeđa ‘rober, malefactor’, Old English mē wā dydon “did me woe,” German weh tun. The exclamation is pan-Germanic: Gothic wai, Old Norse vei, Old English wā, modern woe, Old Saxon, Old High German wē, Yiddish vey. Note that they all obey regular laws of phonetic sound change. To German oh weh cited above corresponds in Yiddish oy vey, with the same expressive phonetics as in Greek οἰοίον. The expressive force of woe in English resides now in its semantics, not in its phonetics. But it is there; note the media program Lake Wobegon of the humorist Garrison Keillor, a fictitious place name in Minnesota which evokes an American Indian origin (cf. Oregon) while just saying woe be gone.

The exclamation *uai is well represented in Old Avestan, with three variants in a single formulaic topos in the Gāthās, Y. 45.3 aēbiiō aŋhāhū aŋhū aŋhāt aŋpōm “for those ‘woe!’ will be the last (word) of (their) existence,” Y. 53.7 at vā vāiāhū aŋhāt apōm vacō “But for you ‘woe!’ will be the final word,” Y. 31.20 aŋuētās vacō “(his final destiny will be) ... cries of ‘woe!’ of the voice.” The alliteration in these moving verses attributed to Zoroaster reinforces the expressive value of these varied Old Iranian ways of saying “woe!”

It is wrong for modern etymological dictionaries to neglect or suppress such words and exclamations, for their expressive dimension has a history. It is the duty of historical linguistics to be concerned with these and to give an account of that history.

References


