

VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
APPROVAL SPEECH ACT

Abstract

The paper focuses on verbal and non-verbal characteristics of the approval speech act in English literary discourse. Approval evaluation object has been identified including things, ideas, facts, traditions, weather conditions, events, pieces of news and other phenomena that become evaluated. It has been proved in the article that approval evaluation objects never refer to the addressee's sphere of interests and that the approval recipient and the evaluation object of approval never overlap. The article also dwells on illocutionary aims pursued by approval speech act addressers and the perlocutionary effect of approval speech act. The central part of the paper considers lexical, morphological, syntactic, and stylistic means applied by the personages of fictional literary discourse to express approval of a particular object. Finally, non-verbal means manifesting approval have been identified. It has been found out that in fictional literary discourse, the emotional state of the approval addresser is specified by the verbalised kinemes. The latter also signal whether the approving utterance is sincere or not.

Keywords: evaluation, speech act, approval, verbalised kineme, gesture, facial expression.

The focus of the paper is on verbal and non-verbal characteristics of the approval speech act in English literary discourse. The novelty of the suggested research lies in identifying approval as a speech act, which, along with praise, compliment and flattery, are considered positive evaluative speech acts. The authors of this paper consider approval, praise, compliment, and flattery speech acts to be syncretic illocutionary speech acts, as they simultaneously realise two or more illocutions, among which major and minor illocutions are distinguished in a specific communicative exchange. However, their incorporation in the taxonomy is justified by the fact that their primary illocutionary aim is to express positive evaluation of certain people, things, state of af-

fairs, or ideas.

Unfortunately, approval as a speech act has been the object of few investigations, and the linguists who have been studying it (Goryainova, 2010; Kabankova, 2011; Yaroshevich, 2003) do not differentiate it from praise and compliment speech act, confusing their illocutionary aims, evaluation objects and themes, as well as the perlocutionary effect. Besides, there is a clear need to identify verbal and non-verbal means characteristic of approving utterances.

In N. Bigunova's conception, approval **evaluation subject** means a person who expresses approval. Approval **evaluation object** comprises things, ideas, facts, traditions, weather conditions, events, pieces of news and other phenome-

na that become evaluated. The most crucial fact about approval evaluation objects is that they *never refer to the addressee's sphere of interests*. The latter fact makes approval different from the other evaluative speech acts. Another difference lies in the fact that **the approval recipient (the addressee)** and the evaluation object of approval *never overlap*. Approval **evaluation theme** is that feature of the evaluated objects, which has attracted the speaker's attention and has been evaluated. These features are determined by the speaker's evaluative stereotypes (Bigunova, 2017; Bigunova, 2019).

Let us identify the approval evaluation subject, evaluation object and evaluation theme in the following example from the literary discourse:

"You ought to go," Charlie said to Laura. His wineglass was almost empty already. "You ought to go and do one of her pottery courses. They're very successful. People love them. They come back year after year" (Trollope, 2001, p. 312).

In the provided episode, the approval evaluation subject is Charlie, the addressee (but not the object of approval) is Laura. The approval evaluation object is the pottery courses, the evaluation theme is the success of the courses and the admiration people feel for them.

In N. Bigunova's view, the illocutionary aims pursued by approval speech act addressers are the following:

- 1) the intention to express the speaker's emotional state by referring to the object's features as being adequate/good;
- 2) the intention to establish contact with the interlocutor and to make a positive emotional impact on them;
- 3) the intention to mitigate refusal or criticism and thus save the interlocutor's face;

- 4) the intention to change an undesirable topic and thus save the speaker's face (Bigunova, 2017; Bigunova, 2019).

To illustrate the first point, here is a situation where approval is used twice. In the first case, it is aimed at express the speaker's emotional state (Marijke is happy because she has been promoted), the second approval (*that is excellent*) does not only express the speaker's emotional state but is also intended to establish contact with the interlocutor:

"Marijke..." She stood with the phone pressed hard against her ear. "Marijke, how are you?"

"I'm fine. I got promoted. I have an assistant now."

*"Stellar, **that's excellent**"* (Niffenegger, 2009, p. 126).

The following episode from a novel illustrates the third of the illocutionary aims: the speaker uses an approving utterance to mitigate her refusal to stay the night at Liza's house:

"So, are you staying tonight? I have an extra bed in my room. You're welcome to it."

*Lee shook her head quickly. "**Oh, I'd love to, Liza**, but I've got to catch the last train"* (Cohen, 2010, p. 37).

Furthermore, finally, to illustrate the use of approval in order to change an undesirable topic:

*"**Wonderful news about Jen and Karl, too,**" she added, hoping to steer the conversation away from baby talk* (Parks, 2011, p. 287).

As for the perlocutionary effect of approval speech act, we suggest that it is determined by the place of an approving utterance in a dialogue exchange. If approval is expressed in the form of a responding move, the former completes a communicative exchange and does not need an explicit perlocutionary act. Nevertheless, a desired perlocutionary effect has been achieved: a

ritual speech exchange has been performed following the etiquette regulations. Let us provide an example:

“Well, I hope the trip is worth it for you. Is this new film exciting?”
I focused my eyes on the row of gleaming bottles behind the bar. “Extremely. What do you want to drink?” (Cohen, 2010, p. 35).

In the provided example, the approval of the film is expressed in the form of a responding move, which completes a communicative exchange and does not need an explicit perlocutionary act. The speaker immediately proceeds to the following communicative intention – offering a drink.

If approval is expressed as an initiative move, a typical response is an agreement or disagreement, as it is in the following examples:

1) *“This is one of Father Lydell’s favourite dishes,”* said Beth, bringing a covered casserole to the table. *“Poulet Nicoise – I hope you like it.”*
“Oh, yes,” Letty murmured, remembering the times she had eaten pou-

let Nicoise at Marjorie’s house (Pym, 1989, p. 124) (agreement);
 2) *The taxi crawled along.*
“Nice place,” said the driver.
“You obviously never lived here. Turn right here, please” (Cohen, 2010, p. 103) (disagreement).

The disagreement in the example above is caused by the speaker's (the taxi driver's) wrong perception of the object (the street his addressee lives in).

In general, the analysis of the data shows that disagreement to an approving phrase can be caused by the speaker's wrong perception of a specific object, by the irrelevance of an approval, or the recipient's antipathy towards the approval addresser.

The lexical filling of approving phrases is characterised by the extensive usage of the adjectives which denote positive evaluation, including affective adjectives (those combining the evaluative seme and the intensification seme). The following table represents the relative usage of positive evaluative adjectives:

Table 1.

The Relative Usage of Positive Evaluative Adjectives in Approving Utterances

#	Lexeme	Average frequency, %	#	Lexeme	Average frequency, %	#	Lexeme	Average frequency, %
1	good	18.6	21	gorgeous	0.7	41	imaginative	0.23
2	lovely	16.5	22	spectacular	0.7	42	incomparable	0.23
3	nice	11.0	23	charming	0.46	43	inspiring	0.23
4	great	9.6	24	cheerful	0.46	44	joyful	0.23
5	fine	6.2	25	delightful	0.46	45	kind	0.23
6	beautiful	3.68	26	fabulous	0.46	46	nourishing	0.23
7	wonderful	3.45	27	happy	0.46	47	peaceful	0.23
8	brilliant	2.3	28	lucky	0.46	48	reasonable	0.23
9	fantastic	2.3	29	marvellous	0.46	49	refreshing	0.23
10	perfect	2.0	30	pleasant	0.46	50	romantic sensual	0.23
11	pretty	1.84	31	popular	0.46	51	smart	0.23
12	excellent	1.6	32	right	0.46	52	smashing	0.23
13	cool	1.38	33	satisfactory	0.46	53	stunning	0.23
14	delicious	1.38	34	sensible	0.46	54	superb	0.23
15	interesting	1.15	35	terrific	0.46	55	sweet	0.23
16	splendid	1.15	36	attractive	0.23	56		

17	fascinating	0.92	37	desirable	0.23	57	thoughtful	0.23
18	glad	0.92	38	exciting	0.23	58	thrilling	0.23
19	amazing	0.7	39	funny	0.23	59	unusual	0.23
20	favourite	0.7	40	handsome	0.23			

Apart from the adjectives *good, lovely, nice, great, fine, beautiful, wonderful, brilliant, fantastic, perfect* that are characteristic of any evaluative speech act the research shows the use of the adjectives which are typical for approval speech act only, such as *glad, favourite, cheerful, happy, lucky, popular, desirable, exciting, imaginative, incomparable, inspiring, joyful, nourishing, refreshing, sensational, thrilling*. These are the adjectives that express the positive evaluation of ideas, bits of news, cultural phenomena, nature, weather, environment, i.e. the items that do not refer to the interlocutor’s spheres of interests. To illustrate, in the following episode the personage of the fictional literary discourse uses the adjective *desirable*, as well as the affective-evaluative adjective *great*, to express the approval of the guidebook, and in the second example the adjective *lucky* expresses positive evaluation of the circumstances: the presence of the interlocutor at a particular place:

- “I’ve got the brochure for *High Place in here. Nosy-parker, pure and simple.*”
“*It looks great. Very desirable.*” (Trollope, 2002, p. 152);
- “*Lucky you were here*” (Mansell, 2008, p. 282).

In the following episodes the positive evaluative adjectives help the approval addresser to express his emotional state and share it with the interlocutor, which happens when the speaker approves of meeting a person (example #1) or of life unexpected joyful moments (example #2):

- “*I’m glad we finally get to meet,*” *Buddy Boy says in a low tone* (Cohen, 2010, p. 14);

- “*Isn’t it exciting when life does this, just takes a lovely new turn when you’re least expecting it?*” (Trollope, 2001, p. 131).

Positive evaluation, including approval, can get intensified by adding modal colouring to the evaluative statement (Kolegaeva & Strochenko, 2018). This is achieved through the use of modal words and intensifying adverbs. Their functional role is seen as modifying the meaning of a statement in terms of its necessity or possibility.

Modal words that denote the subjective attitude of the speaker to a specific object express certainty/uncertainty in the choice of some fact or event evaluation (Prihodko, 2016). Thus, modal words act as modifiers of the pragmatic meaning, and they can reinforce or weaken the impact upon the recipient. Indeed, expressing evaluation in a convincing, assuring, manner, the speaker intends to persuade the addressee in the reliability of his / her perception of the evaluation object.

Intensification is realised employing such modal words and patterns, whose semantic structure is based on the seme “conviction” (*must, should, ought, sure, to be sure, for sure, surely, assure, to be certain, for certain, certainly, of course, indeed, no doubt*), e.g.:

“You ought to go and do one of her pottery courses. **They’re very successful.** **People love them.** They come back year after year” (Trollope, 2001, p. 312).

Another common way of intensification of approval is the modification of an adjective denoting the evaluation object through the following intensifying adverbs: *very, quite, pretty, perfectly, totally, absolutely, frightfully, highly, ex-*

tremely, heartbreakingly:

“I am really pleased about Charlie. As long as he’s good to you” (Trollope, 2001, p. 268).

Moreover, positive evaluation gets intensified by the use of evaluative verbs, the relative usage of which is represented in *Table 2*:

Table 2.

The Relative Usage of Evaluative Verbs in Approval Speech Act

The evaluative verbs	The relative usage
like	31.7
love	34.2
prefer	9.8
enjoy	9.8
approve	4.9
fascinate	2.4
please	2.4
adore	2.4
appreciate	2.4

Per the data represented in *Table 2*, the most widely used verbs are *like* i *love*, for instance:

1) *“You’ll like it in here. There’s an incredibly friendly personal service”* (Parks, 2011, p. 169).

2) *Herbert was extremely pleased. “Marvelous! Jess will be beside herself – she does love guests”* (Morton, 2010, p. 23).

Another evaluative verb typical for approval speech act is the verb *prefer*, and it denotes approval that has some recurrent character and reveals the speaker’s habits:

Glenda said, as she always said, “I’d prefer tea, please” (Trollope, 2002, p. 83).

The evaluative verb *enjoy* expresses the pleasure that the speaker feels doing something, for example, having meals at a restaurant:

“I will take you to the best restaurant, and with the best Maharashtra foods. You will enjoy it” (Roberts, 2008, p. 22).

The evaluative verbs *approve* and *please* are never used in such positive evaluative speech acts as praise or compliment. However, they are common for approval speech act, as the follow-

ing episodes testify:

- *“But Matthew never entered a church in his life, so perhaps **the drinking would be all he’d approve of**”* (Pym, 1989, p. 81).
- *“Nothing would **please** him more than to see one of his dogs win the National against the best dogs in Australia”* (Parsons, 2010, p. 405).

We suggest that the use of the evaluative verb *please* in approval speech act is determined by its capacity to express the positive evaluative perception of a particular object or event, for example, the dog’s winning the race, as in the example above.

The use of the verb *fascinate* makes the explication of approval uniquely expressive, which is determined by its semantic meaning: it presupposes interest and delight that the approval addresser feels towards the approval object, as it is in the episode showing the doctor’s fascination of multiple personality disorder:

*The most famous case of multiple personality disorder was **Bridey Murphy**. Since then, there have been an endless number of cases, **but none as spectacular***

or as well-publicised. It's a subject that's fascinated me for a long time (Spark, 2010, p. 105).

Among other parts of speech, approval is intensified by the adverbs *well, amazingly, discreetly, exactly, highly, incredibly, nicely, perfectly, wonderfully*, and the adverbs of frequency *always, ever, never* that the recurrent character of certain features. To illustrate:

- “Hello,” *Sophy said to the statue, putting a hand on her. “She’s lovely,” Tony Turner said. “So discreetly coy”* (Trollope, 2002, p. 135) (approval of the statue).
- “*You’ll like it in here. There’s an incredibly friendly personal service.*” (Parks, 2011, p. 169) (approval of the restaurant).
- “Are you all right?” *Jen asked. “Fine,” she said, straightening up. “Perfectly fine”* (Highmore, 2009, p. 393) (approval of the speaker’s health).

The following speech episodes illustrate the use of the adverbs of frequency *always, ever, never* that intensifies the uniqueness of the approval object:

- “*My best holiday ever actually*” (Barr, 2007, p. 36) (approval of the holiday);
- “*The small ones have always been my favourites,*” a voice said from behind her shoulder. “*Neat, inconspicuous, but when you look closer, there’s always something you’re not expecting*” (Ruston, 2010, p. 177) (approval of small hats);
- “*It’s fantastic!*” says *Suze, staring at it with wide eyes. “I’ve never seen anything like it!” She fingers the sequins on the shoulder* (Kinsella, 2002, p. 37) (approval of the dress).

In fictional discourse, approval gets explicit by the use of the verb of communicative seman-

tics *approve* and its derivatives. They are seldom used in the personage’s direct speech, being observed in the author’s speech or the inner personage speech and serve to label the illocutionary aim of the speech act:

- “*Good,*” *Mr. Pugh kept saying approvingly at the carefully recessed electrical sockets and the waxed flagstones in the kitchen. “Good”* (Trollope, 2002, p. 163).
- “*And Jasper making you feel all warm and fuzzy about spilling your guts, don’t forget that.*” – “*You paid attention,*” he smiled *approvingly* (Meyer, 2009, p. 276).
- “*I must be protected from the sight of the telephone. I have spoken to Lettie, and she approves my decision. Mrs. Pettigrew thinks, too, it will be the best course – don’t you, Mabel? Everyone is agreed*” (Spark, 2010, p. 169).

The analysis of the data shows that around 10% of evaluative adjectives in approving utterances are used in comparative or superlative degrees of comparison. In approving statements, the comparative degree of an adjective implies a change of state for the better, as it is in the episode provided below:

I come outside and parade around in front of Suze.

“That’s fantastic!” she says. “Even better than the one with the little straps.”

“I know! But I still quite like that one with the lace sleeves off the shoulder...” (Kinsella, 2002, p. 139).

In the provided example *Suze*, helping her friend to choose a wedding outfit, rates one of the dresses higher than the previous one they saw, using the comparative degree of the adjective *good*.

The following speech episodes serve to il-

illustrate the use of evaluative adjectives in the superlative degree of comparison, which enables the approval addresser to point out the highest degree of some quality that some object possesses, e.g. a) a personage has experienced the most wonderful thing: he has fallen in love; b) Charmian’s idea to go to a home is met with approval by her nurse, Mrs Pettigrew, who fancies Charmian’s husband:

- *The most wonderful thing has happened. There’s this girl here. Fantastic. I’m in love*” (Beaton, 2009, p. 59).
- *Charmian said, “I’m getting feeble in mind as well as body, Godfrey. I shall go to the nursing home in Surrey. I’m quite decided”.*
“Perhaps,” said Mrs Pettigrew, “that would be the best” (Spark, 2010, p. 133).

The investigation of the syntactic level of approval speech realisation has enabled us to find out some predicative units typical for fram-

ing approval. These predicates, labelled as axiological by G. Prihodko (2016), are built into the structure of evaluation, they add explicit subjectivity to the utterance, pointing out the subject of evaluation and linking it to the object of evaluation, which belongs to the conceptual world of the speaker.

Axiological predicates can be represented by verbs expressing opinions, feelings, verbs of reporting which may perform two functions: determining a mental process and being used as modal words qualifying the ideas of the utterances (Hooper & Thompson, 1973, p. 477). In the latter case, axiological predicates express an evaluative meaning conveyed in the utterance and show a certain attitude of the speaker to the contents of the utterance through a lexical meaning (Wolf, 2002, p. 34).

The quantitative representation of the predicates that frame positive evaluation in approval speech act is shown in *Table 3*.

Table 3.

The Quantitative Representation of the Predicates Characteristic of Approving Utterances, %

No	Syntactic pattern	Frequency
1	Prn/N+BE+(intens.)+Adj	49.3
2	Prn/N+BE+(intens.)+Adj N	19.9
3	Prn/N+like/love/adore/enjoy	8.2
4	Prn/N+LOOK+Adj	3.6
5	What+Adj.+Noun	3.6
6	Prn/N+Vtr+(Adj)+N	3.5
7	Prn/NPhr+SOUND+Adj+(Noun)	3.5
8	Prn/N+V+Adv	2.2
9	How+Adj	1.6
10	Prn/N+SEEM+Adj+(N)	0.8
	Other patterns	3.8

The analysis of the data summed up in *Table 3* shows that approval is realised mainly by predicative patterns #1 (49.3 %) and #2 (19.9%):

1) **Prn/N+BE+(intens.)+Adj:**

- *“Glass of water?” she asks eventually.*

“That would be lovely, thank you”
 (Williams, 2010, p. 66).

2) **Prn/N+BE+(intens.)+Adj+N:**

- *“Vintage! A vintage ring! That’s such a cool idea!”* (Kinsella, 2002, p. 87).

It is noteworthy that evaluative adjectives perform a certain syntactic function: they define the noun-classifiers that identify the aspect of evaluation.

Pattern #3 **Prn/N+like/love/adore/enjoy**, that has already been analyzed from the point of view of evaluative verbs, is used in 8.2% of approving utterances.

The syntactic patterns # 4 – 10 are less characteristic of approval speech act. Pattern #4 **Prn/N+LOOK+Adj** is used in 3.55% of the data, e.g.:

- “Anything worth buying?” “Well,” I say, playing for time. “It depends. **They all look great.**” “They do, don’t they?” (Kinsella, 2000, p. 163).
- She turned the little silver stud she had just had inserted in the side of her nose. “**It looks great!**” she’d shouted (Trollope, 2001, p. 45).

Pattern #6 **Prn/N+Vtr+(Adj)+N** is used in 3.5% of all the researched episodes. It predominantly includes the verb *have*, while the object is expressed by evaluative adjectives and nouns that denote the approved features or qualities:

“Come up to my room!” says Suze, tugging my hand. “Come and see my dress! It’s just perfect! Plus you have to see, I’ve got the coolest corsety thing from Rigby and Peller ... and these really gorgeous knickers...” (Kinsella, 2002, p. 35).

However, some other verbs are possible in pattern #6:

- “What about here? **You won’t find a prettier place**” (Beaton, 1998, p. 20).
- “How do you like the singing, Mr. Lin?” Khaderbhai asked me. “**I like it very much. It’s incredible, amazing. I’ve never heard anything like it. There was so much sadness in it, but so much power as well**” (Rob-

erts, 2008, p. 193).

The investigation of syntactic patterns inevitably engages the researcher into the sphere of text, as in the latter one has to reach beyond the limits of separate sentences (Kolegaeva, 1996, p. 4), as the description of evaluation is impossible without reference to sentences cohesion and the whole situation of the utterance.

The typical syntactic means of expressing approval in fictional literary discourse are exclamatory sentences, especially those including the patterns #5 **What+Adj+Noun** and # 9 **How+Adj.:**

- “**What a delightful garden,**” said Charmian (Spark, 2010, p. 153);
- “See that little church on the hill there? It’s dedicated to Our Lady of Rugby, the virgin supporter of rugby teams from the Landes.” “**How fabulous!**” She laughed (Barr, 2007, p. 223).

In the provided examples *what* and *how* are signals that label the focus of information that is located in the second part of the utterance: approval.

Unlike the previously mentioned patterns, pattern #7 **Prn/NPhr+SOUND+Adj+(Noun)** can be used only in approval speech act (3.5%). It is not common for other positive evaluative speech acts. To illustrate:

- “Today we’re also offering tea, coffee, or a glass of champagne.” Champagne? Free champagne? “Ooh!” I say. “Well actually – that sounds really good. Yes please!” (Kinsella, 2001, p. 227);
- “He thinks I might be able to get a job there as a kind of housekeeper.” “That sounds an excellent idea,” I said. “Where is it?” (Pym, 2009, p. 178).

Pattern #8 **Prn/N+V+Adv** is characteris-

tic only of 2.2% of approving utterances, e.g.:

- “You must be tired after all your exertions in the Sanctuary this evening. **Everything seemed to go very well.** And such a lot of strangers here, too” (Pym, 1989, p. 224).
- “Oh, I’m so glad you enjoyed it. **Yes, the ice cream rounded off the evening nicely, didn’t it? Take care! See you soon!**” (Cohen, 2010, p. 175).

Pattern #10 **Prn/N+SEEM+Adj+(N)** has been registered in 0.8% of approving utterances:

“I don’t want to boss anyone and I don’t want to be bossed.”

“That seems reasonable” (Niffenegger, 2009, p. 246).

This pattern can get extended by the use of a comparative structure with the particle “like”:

“It’s a sunny day,” said the major cautiously, “and even Drim seems like a nice place” (Beaton, 1998, p. 51).

Thus, among all the registered syntactic patterns, typical for approving utterances, the most widely used one are the following: *Prn/N+BE+(intens.)+Adj*, and *Prn/N+BE+(intens.)+Adj+N*. Apart from these constructions, the pattern *Prn/N+like/love/adore/enjoy* is quite common (8%), less often the pattern *Prn/NP+SOUND+Adj+(Noun)* is used (3.5%).

The main body of approval speech act utterances consists of statements and exclamations (as the examples above indicate). However, approval is also expressed by negative interrogative sentences that make about 4% of all the sentence types:

- *I reach for a pair of soft cashmere trousers. “Aren’t these beautiful? Much better than the Ralph Lauren ones. And they’re cheaper”* (Kinsella, 2001, p. 231).
- *Joss returned with an old crumpled supermarket bag. She thrust it at*

Kate. Kate drew out the black hat with its veil and glittering diamante bows. “Oh!” “Isn’t it delicious?” James said (Trollope, 2001, p. 67).

Another common syntactic structure used to express approval is question tags:

- “**Looks good, doesn’t it?**” he says cheerfully (Kinsella, 2000, p. 248);
- “*The Bevington Triptych*,” says the elderly woman. “**It simply has no parallel, does it?**” (Kinsella, 2001, p. 69).
- “I have just received the book jackets,” began Patricia. “**Great, aren’t they?**” (Beaton, 1998, p. 35).

Negative interrogative sentences, as well as question tags, do not only inform the recipient about the speaker’s positive evaluation of a particular object but also fulfil the contact-establishing function, they nudge the addresser towards agreement with the speaker, sharing his/her point of view, involve the addresser into cooperative creativity in terms of evaluating the world, thus making the communication more intimate.

Thus, the investigation of the *morphological* level of approval realisation has resulted in finding out a tendency to use evaluative adjectives in the comparative or superlative degree of comparison (about 10% of all the adjectives). The pragmatic reasons for this tendency are seen as an ability of the degrees of comparison to denote a change of state, change of circumstances for the better or the highest proportion of some positively evaluated feature. The investigation of the *syntactic* level of approval realisation has enabled us to refer exclamations, negative questions and question tags to the most common syntactic structures. As for the predicates framing approval, they are predominantly *Prn/N+BE+*

(*intens.*)+*Adj* and *Prn/N+BE+ (intens.)+Adj+N*.

Furthermore, let us address lexical stylistic and syntactic stylistic means expressing approval in fictional literary discourse. The lexical stylistic means expressing approval include epithet, met-

aphor, hyperbole, metonymy; less often understatement and oxymoron are used. The quantitative representation of these tropes in approval speech act language structure is displayed in *Table 4*.

Table 4.

The Lexical Stylistic Means of Intensifying Positive Evaluation in Approving Utterances, %

Trope	Frequency
Epithet	97.7
Metaphor	1.4
Hyperbole	0.3
Metonymy	0.6
Total	100

The data displayed in *Table 4* proves that the dominating trope is epithet (97.7% of all the tropes). Affective epithets are used far more frequently (about 99% of the epithets), than figurative epithet, nearly always metaphorical:

- “*I’m changing planes in Miami for Bolivia. I’m going llama trekking.*” “*Oh, that’s interesting. And is this something that you’ve always wanted to do?*” (Cohen, 2010, p. 582) (affective epithet).
- “*Your British sense of humour!*” says Kent. “*It’s so refreshing!*” (Kinsella, 2001, p. 179) (metaphorical epithet).

The rest of the tropes cannot be qualified as typical for approval speech realisation, they are used far less often: metaphor – 1.4%, metonymy – 0.6% and hyperbole – 0.3 %. To illustrate hyperbole:

“*How did it go last night?*” “*Fine. It was the party of the century*” (Kinsella, 2001, p. 228).

It is noteworthy that such trite, standard hyperboles are characteristic of all types of positive evaluative utterances.

Metonymy, that makes only 0.6 % of all the tropes in approval speech act, can be observed in

the following speech episode, where the “progress” of the list of desired presents made by the bride and the groom has been positively evaluated. The guests invited to the wedding reception have been actively purchasing the items on the list, thus showing love for the wedding couple:

“*And I have good news for you!*”

“*Good news?*” *I say stupidly.*

I can’t remember the last time I heard a piece of good news.

“*Your list has been going very well.*”

“*Really?*” *In spite of myself I feel the same twinge of pride I used to experience when Miss Phipps said my plies were going well* (Kinsella, 2002, p. 320).

The observation of the fictional discourse has enabled us also to find out how the *non-verbal* means are used alongside with the verbal ones, expressing the same content; how they introduce additional information, which can sometimes oppose the verbally expressed information content and, finally, non-verbal means can totally substitute for the verbal ones.

In fictional discourse, evaluative utterances said by the personages are often accompanied by the author’s commentary that clarifies the intentions of the personages, their relationship, back-

ground knowledge and presuppositions, as well as their view of the situation.

Evaluative meaning is expressed not only by the verbal devices discussed above, but also by non-verbal components of the interaction, that have been long considered crucial. In case verbal and non-verbal means used by a fictional literary discourse personage contradict each other, the reader believes the latter ones.

In fictional literary discourse the author's qualifiers of non-verbal means are called *verbalised kinemes* (in the terminology offered by I. Popik). They got their own linguistic status as non-verbal signs of the personage speech, modelled by the author in order to add some extra content and expressiveness. I. Popik defines *the kineme* as a gesture used semiotically and *the verbalised kineme* as a language unit that means sign gesture. "The verbalised kineme implies a word, a word collocation or a phrase that are used for verbal definition of the individual's kinetic behavior" (Popik, 2008).

Approval speech act explication is characterised by the intimate zone of communication, i.e. a small distance between the communicants. Moreover, the approval addresser does not only come up closer to the approval addressee but also touches him/her. Touching is aimed at emphasizing open-hearted, friendly, or intimate attitude to the interlocutor, establishing and maintaining contact with him/her. In such a case the applied verbalised kineme is *touch*, e.g.:

"It scared me when you were gone like that."

I touch her elbow and try to sound like Dad. "Everything is going to be all right" (Cohen, 2010, p. 21).

In the given above example the son is soothing his mother, approving the family situation. He is touching her elbow and trying to sound like his father.

In the following speech episode the speaker who approves of the black tulip comes up to the interlocutor and touches her, which is again realised by the verbalised kineme *touch*:

She walks over to the urn of black tulips and touches a flower lightly. "Lovely." I smile, trying not to make ugly snotty noises as I sniff. The tulips do look rather beautiful, surprisingly so considering the uniformity of their darkness (Williams, 2010, p. 71).

As for facial expression, it is worth mentioning smile, as it is a sign of any positive evaluative utterance, sincere or insincere. Let us provide an episode from the fictional discourse which involves smile as a verbalised kineme, highlighting the speaker's worry:

She returned her gaze to the bride's angular face and smiled at her, making sure her expression betrayed nothing of her worries. "There you go, perfect" (Ruston, 2010, p. 258).

The type of smile (broad, bright, tender, relieved) is specified in the author's commentary:

"I'm fine. Not to worry. I'm a brave soldier." She smiled at me, a bright, relieved smile, and I hoped I had said the right thing (Gaiman, 2013, p. 81).

A strained smile is a signal for the reader that the approval voiced by the personage is insincere, e.g.:

"How am I feeling?" Dulcie forced herself to concentrate. She even managed a smile. "Great. Bit sick ... you know, but otherwise fine. Looking forward to the big day." (Mansell, 2008, p. 132).

The expression of approval is accompanied by the author's description of the personage's face countenance: the speaker's face "beams", "lights up", illustrated in the episodes below:

1) *"I've been to see Beatrice. I had tea with her. She came to see me at*

Mansfield House."

His face lit up. "My dear Kate! How terrific. I'm so pleased" (Trollope, 2001, p. 318).

- 2) *"I never knew that making ice cream would be so dramatic," Anabelle beamed. "Or so interesting. What do you think we're going to make next? Something wild and crazy, too?"* (Cohen, 2010, p. 527).
- 3) *James watched Liza's dark eyes glaze over. Sympathising totally, he reached past the noisiest of the social workers and touched her arm. He was rewarded by her face lighting up. "James! How lovely to see you"* (Mansell, 2008, p. 422).

On the other hand, facial expression can reveal the speaker's insincerity, as well as the difference between the evaluative utterance he/she produces and his/her evaluative judgment formed in their minds. For example, when Patrick, Dulxie's ex-husband, is informed that she is going to marry another man, he says that it is good news, thus expressing approval, though his countenance described by the author contradicts his words (*not looking it*):

"Well, that's good news. I'm happy for you," said Patrick, not looking it. "You've got what you wanted. I really hope it all works out" (Mansell, 2008, p. 132).

The situation above is an example of positive evaluative verbal text followed by negative evaluative body language: verbalised kinemes add new information which contradicts the verbal content. As we have mentioned earlier, in a case of such a contradiction, it is the personage's non-verbal behavior that the reader believes: it explicates the true feelings of the communicants.

It has been long reported in the academic literature that a crucial component of nonverbal

communication is eye behaviour. Eye contact opens communication channels, signals availability for interaction, listening, immediacy, and intimacy. The neuroscientist A. Anderson and his co-authors believe that certain eye behaviours have become tied to personality traits or emotional states, as illustrated in phrases like "hungry eyes," "evil eyes," and "bedroom eyes" (Lee, Mirza, Flanagan, & Anderson, 2014).

Closed eyes during food tasting, for instance, ice-cream tasting, accompanied by saying "Mmm", signal that the food is delicious, which should be interpreted as a compliment or flattery in case the addressee has cooked the food by himself/herself, or as approval, as the communicant have meals at the restaurant, as a mother and a daughter do in the following episode:

"That looks incredible, can I have a taste?" I pushed my plate towards her, and she took a forkful of my food. She put it in her mouth, closing her eyes as she savoured it. "Mmm. That's really, really good" (Cohen, 2010, p. 47).

The approval of the room offered to the sisters by their granny expands into delight not only due to its expressive syntactic form but also due to the author's description of the girls' wide as plates (the author uses the hyperbole):

"Wow!" The girls launched themselves into their room like little rockets, dropping their rucksacks on the floor and racing to the balcony, their eyes wide as plates, trying to take everything in all at once. They had twin princess beds, pink silk draped in swathes over the white-painted metal of the four-posters, they each had their own little dressing-table, and they had their own bathroom.

"This room is the best room in the world ever, like a princess's castle before the giant comes to get her," Ellie said breathlessly (Ruston, 2010, p. 48).

The positive emotive mood of the speaker is expressed by the author's description of the impression it makes on the recipient, without specifying the facial expression. It is achieved by the use of the verb *look* and the adjectives that denote the speaker's emotional state: *happy, radiant, amused, interested*, as well as many others, as the following approval contexts illustrate:

- 1) "Are you really happy?" I asked Mary, unnecessarily, for her face was radiant.

"Oh Wilmet, **life is perfect now! I've everything that I could possibly want. I keep thinking that it's like a glass of blessings life, I mean,**" she smiled. (Pym, 2009, p. 274).

- 2) Freya pulled her chair closer to Izzy's. "**Freya did brilliantly with her French,**" Izzy added. "I don't need to help her at all. Just to encourage her."

Tamsin looked interested. "Do you do French at school, then, Freya? In our day we didn't start it until about ten at least. **It's wonderful if you do it sooner. Finally, Britain starts moving in the right direction**" (Barr, 2007, p. 235).

- 3) I went down to breakfast. My mother looked happy. She said, "**Good news, darling. I've got a job. They need an optometrist at Dicksons Opticians, and they want me to start this afternoon. I'll be working four days a week**" (Gaiman, 2013, p. 89).

Reinforcement of evaluation is also achieved by the author's description of phonatory paraverbal means, such as voice transformations (*whisper, cry*):

"Mory and I could take it, I suppose, to help you out".

"**But that would be wonderful,**" cried Liffey. "I'd be so grateful! You'd look af-

ter everything and it would all be safe with you" (Weldon, 1985, p. 38).

In the following context approval is intensified by the metaphorical description of the voice as an explosion:

"We can get married in Oxshott after all."

"What?" Suze's voice explodes down the line. "**Oh my God! That's incredible! That's fantastic! Bex, I've been so worried!**" (Kinsella, 2002, p. 340).

Voice transformations are manifested by means of the noun *voice* and emotive-evaluative adjectives that define it and perform the stylistic function of the epithet. In formal situations approval manifestation is usually accompanied by the description of the voice as "pleasant, friendly", as it is in the following examples:

- 1) She said in a pleasant friendly voice, "Would you wait in here, please? **What lovely day it's been, hasn't it?**" (Pym, 2009, p. 175).

- 2) "**I'm feeling wonderful,**" said Annie cheerfully (Wickham, 1996, p. 176).

On the whole, the description of the approval addresser's voice reveals his / her genuine attitude to the evaluation object, evaluation recipient and the addresser's aims in terms of the recipient. To illustrate, the verbal component in the episode below is suggestive of approval, but the voice timbre, described by the author, signals that the approving utterance is insincere and contemptuous:

"**Nice house,**" Anthony said and his voice was faintly sneering. "**Lovely wife. Three children. Solid job. Getting on nicely. Pillar of the community. Good old Martin**" (Trollope, 2014, p. 144).

If neither the verbal component nor the speaker's voice show his / her genuine attitude to what he/she is saying, the author might inform the reader about the effort the speaker has made to make an approving utterance sound sincere, as

it can be observed in the situation below:

Martin said to her bent head, "Would you come for Christmas? To Dummeridge?"

There was a pause. Oh, Martin thought, you cool, cool customer, don't keep me dangling, don't, don't. Say yes, say yes, say...

"Love to," Alice said. Her voice was warm but not in the least eager. It betrayed nothing of what she was feeling, nothing of the sudden fury that had seised her, a fury against Martin (Trollope, 2014, p. 31).

When Bella comes to know that her friend Mike, whom she is starting to fall in love with, is going on a date with Jessica, she tries "to save her face" and responds approvingly, trying to make her voice sound звучав *bright and enthusiastic*, though the very fact of such effort is suggestive of quite a contrary perception of the date:

"That's great." I made my voice bright and enthusiastic. "You'll have a lot of fun with Jessica" (Meyer, 2009, p. 61).

A positive evaluation is also reinforced by the author's description of the personages' actions and gestures. The most widely used verbalised kineme that reinforces approval (especially when a communicative situation involves a large number of communicants) is applause. To illustrate, the approval of the idea to create a new ice cream flavour at the factory gets the highest degree of emotivity and expands into admiration by applauding:

"We're going to make a new flavour for Edmund Jett's restaurant."

*Mouse actually clapped her hands. "A new flavour? Really? Oh my God, **that's so exciting!** I've always wanted to help make a new flavour!" (Cohen, 2010, p. 423).*

Furthermore, the expression of approval in

literary fictional discourse is manifested by the verbalised kineme "nodding", which accompanies, for instance, Miss Marple's approval of the doctor's written description of what has happened in the village:

*"**Very clear,**" said Miss Marple, nodding her head in approval. "Very clear indeed. Gentlemen always make such excellent memoranda" (Christie, 2010, p. 222).*

Here is another example of the use of the verbalised kineme "nodding" alongside with the verbal manifestation of approval by the personage:

"Mum, I'd like to go with you so I can thank Mr and Mrs Campbell for the saddle in person."

*Anne nodded. "**I think that's a splendid idea**" (Parsons, 2010, p. 192).*

Approval of an event, for instance, such as acquiring a new job can be framed as a toast, and the non-verbal sign of approval is raising the glass, which serves as the verbalised kineme:

"I've started."

Cecily stared. "Darling!"

"Two days ago."

*Cecily raised her glass. "**It's wonderful!** Here's to you. Tell me all about it, exactly what happened" (Trollope, 2014, p. 118).*

The degree of expressiveness of approval becomes higher if its manifestation is accompanied by hugging of the interlocutor:

*"Oh, Lin!" he cried, squeezing his head into my chest in an affectionate hug. "I have a news for you! **behaviour have it such a fantastic news!** I was looking for you in every place, every hotel with naked ladies, every drinking bar with black-market peoples, every dirty slum, every-" (Roberts, 2008, p. 522).*

Thus, in the course of our investigation we

have identified the verbal (lexical, morphological, syntactic, and stylistic) means applied by the personages of literary fictional discourse to express approval of a certain object. Besides, non-verbal means manifesting approval have been investigated. They are represented by the verbalised kinemes that specify the emotional state of the approval addresser and signal whether the approving utterance is sincere or not.

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