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# Structure and semantics of verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension in english publicistic texts

Структура і семантика вербальних засобів вираження станів емоційного напруження в англійських публіцистичних текстах

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#### **Abstract**

The aim of the research is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role and functioning of verbal means of expressing emotional tension in journalistic texts. Methods. The research involves such methods as comparative analysis, transformational analysis, contextual analysis, pragma-semantic analysis. Statistical processing and validation of the obtained data was carried out using Cronbach's alpha and mean square. Results. The results of the study helped to identify the linguistic features of expressing states of emotional tension. A total of 272 interjections that reflect emotional stress were found in the studied corpus. In general, 589 contexts of the use of modal words, which have the colouring of emotional tension, were also analysed. Conclusions. The study found that emotional stress in journalistic texts is strongly dependent on the context in which it is used. Understanding emotional expressions requires

#### Анотація

Мета. Дослідження має на меті допомогти більш глибокому розумінню ролі та функціонування вербальних засобів у вираженні емоційного напруження в публіцистичних текстах. Методи. роботі використано такі методи, компаративний аналіз, трансформаційний аналіз, контекстуальний аналіз, прагмасемантичний аналіз. Статистична обробка і валідація отриманих даних проводилася за допомогою альфа Кронбаха та середнього квадратичного значення. Результати дослідження допомогли виявити мовні особливості вираження станів емоційної напруженості. Так, у корпусі, що досліджувався виявлено 272 вигуки, які відображають емоційне напруження. Також проаналізовано 589 контекстів вживання модальних слів, що мають забарвлення емоційної напруженості. Висновки. Дослідження виявило, що емоційне напруження в публіцистичних текстах має сильну залежність від контексту, у використовується. Розуміння якому воно

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taking into account the sociocultural context, the goals of communication, and the relationship between communicators. Prospects. Further research can expand the scope and diversity of the corpus of journalistic texts, which will enable obtaining more representative results. Adding different genres, time periods, and authors will give a more complete picture of the verbal means of expressing emotional tension.

**Keywords:** emotivity, linguistics, communication, journalistic discourse, text corpus.

## Introduction

The research is aimed at analysing emotional expressions from the perspective of linguistics and communication, with the aim of clarifying the specifics and features of their expressiveness, which reflect states of emotional stress. This study is intended to aid in the understanding of the emotional dimension of speech acts and contribute to the further development of linguistics, communication sciences, and related fields (Ozel, 2023; Predelli, 2020).

There are different ways of expressing emotions in writing, determined by national, cultural, historical, and linguistic characteristics. Despite these differences, the verbal expression of emotions in different languages has a number of similar features, as a result of which emotivity can be considered a universal category of language (Stepanchenko, 2020).

Speakers of all languages experience such emotions as joy, happiness, hatred, sorrow, disappointment, anger. These emotions are universal for most languages. However, these emotions can manifest themselves more or less intensely depending on the specifics of the culture (Song, 2019).

Emotivity, in contrast to emotionality that occurs at the psychological level, is a linguistic category. Emotionality in this case reflects the mental state of a person, and emotivity is the expression of the speaker's emotions at the language level (Balakleiets, 2021).

The need to define the category of emotivity in language was determined by the growing interest of researchers in this language category and the development of the linguistics of emotions (Aytug et al., 2018). There is no unity of opinion regarding its definition among linguists who study emotivity as one of the linguistic categories. Choosing such a definition that could емоційних висловлювань вимагає урахування соціокультурного контексту, цілей комунікації та відносин між комунікантами. Перспективи. Майбутні дослідження можуть розширити обсяг і різноманітність корпусу публіцистичних текстів, що дозволить отримати більш репрезентативні результати. Додавання різних жанрів, періодів часу та авторів дозволить отримати більш повне уявлення про вербальні засоби вираження емоційного напруження.

Ключові слова: емотивність, лінгвістика, комунікація, публіцистичний дискурс, корпус текстів.

cover all the features of the category of emotionality and express the essence of this concept is a rather difficult linguistic task, because the term itself contains many aspects (Vent, 2022).

Each language has special groups of words to express the emotional state of a person. Emotivity, like many other linguistic categories, is subject to sociocultural influence and reflects the individual traits of individual peoples. At the same time, there are a number of common features that are inherent in the verbal way of expressing emotions in different languages (Ozel, 2023; Palacios-Martínez, 2020).

Emotionally coloured vocabulary is a constituent part of the vocabulary of the language represented by lexemes that describe emotional states and processes. At the lexical level, emotions can be expressed using the following parts of speech: affective nouns, verbs, adjectives, modal particles, adverbs, caressing and swearing words (Voina et al., 2020).

# Aim

The aim of the study is to determine the features of the use of the structure and semantics of verbal means that express emotional tension in journalistic discourse.

## **Objectives**

- Select the corpus of journalistic texts.
- Identify markers of verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension.
- Analyse the frequency of using specified markers in the selected corpus.



### Literature Review

Tomenchuk and Kotlyarova (2022) determined different ways of verbalizing positive emotions in speech. The authors studied and covered the means that people use to express their positive emotions, in particular, in conversational speech. The study focused on the analysis of linguistic characteristics accompanying positive emotional states of a person.

Akkurt et al., (2021) identified the peculiarities of the use of persuasive prosody in the prosecutor's speech, in particular in Ukrainian and English. The researchers analysed the prosodic characteristics used to achieve persuasiveness in speech. This study gives grounds for an idea about the specifics of the persuasion prosody and its influence on communicative effectiveness.

Khudoyberdievna (2021) studied the language that expresses the psycho-emotional state of a person. The author considered the linguistic means used to express psycho-emotional states in speech. The study focused on the role of language in the expression and communication of human psycho-emotional states. The author analysed various linguistic features, such as the use of specific lexical units, means of expression, syntactic constructions and other elements of language that help to express psycho-emotional states.

Kostusiak et al., (2022) considered the concept of crisis in the modern media and information field. The researchers analysed the ways of using and perceiving the concept of crisis in media texts, in particular in connection with military invasion.

Koch and Kaleniuk (2021) investigated the psycholinguistic possibilities of political concepts in the election campaign using the example of the slogan "Army. Language. Faith". The research analyses the influence of political concepts on the perception and conviction of voters. This article reveals the psycholinguistic aspects of political discourse and their role in the formation of emotional attitudes to political concepts in the election campaign.

Golovnia (2020) analysed lexical and stylistic means of emotional impact on readers of perfume industry texts. She covered lexical and stylistic means used to create an emotional impact on the audience.

Majid (2012) reviews current perspectives on emotions in linguistics. The researcher analysed

various aspects of emotions, including their effects on speech, language perception, and communication. This expanded the understanding of the role of emotions in speech and revealed their influence on human communication.

Bezrukov and Bohovyk (2021) studied communicative space and textual reality through the use of emotogenic means. The researchers identify the role of emotions in creating a language atmosphere and emotional mood. This article reveals the importance of emotional means in forming an aesthetic impression and perception of a work.

Struhanets et al., (2021) examined the expressive nature of national television broadcasting as a means of psychologically influencing society. Specific linguistic characteristics and language tools used in television broadcasting to enhance the emotional impact on the audience were analysed. The study identifies the role of expressiveness of speech in the media and its influence on public perception and behaviour.

Tomenchuk and Kotlyarova (2022) focused on ways of verbalizing positive human emotions in speech. The authors considered various linguistic means used to express positive emotions in speech.

Depraetere (2019) provides critical assessments of the principles of categorization of modal meanings. The author considers various approaches to the classification of modal meanings and their influence on the semantics and pragmatics of the English language. The article contains a critical analysis of the existing approaches to the categorization of modal meanings, their advantages and disadvantages.

Despite the considerable number of studies in the field of emotions in linguistics, there are some questions that remain open. The influence of different cultural contexts on the perception and expression of emotions in speech has not been sufficiently studied. Research into cross-cultural differences in the expression of emotions can help to better understand the role of cultural factors in communication (Panasenko et al., 2020).

Given the growing popularity of social media, it is important to examine how emotions are expressed and perceived in this context. The study of language and emotional expressions in social media can reveal the characteristics of



interaction and communication in the digital environment.

Some emotions, which may be multifaceted or complex, may require more detailed investigations. For example, research into ways of expressing conflicting or ambivalent emotions can lead to new insights into language strategies and tools used in such situations.

## Methods

## Design

The first stage of the research involved two methods component analysis transformational method — to identify lexical and syntactic markers of emotionality in text fragments. Lexical markers of emotionality are formal signals of emotions in the text.

The second stage provided for a linguistic analysis of the texts using the following methods. Transformational analysis was applied to identify the syntactic characteristics of emotional expressions, which distinguish them from other communicative and pragmatic language units. This analysis established syntactic similarities and differences between emotive expressions, which served as the basis for their structural classification. Contextual analysis was used to identify the specifics of emotional experience, which is reflected in emotive expressions. Pragma-semantic analysis revealed the place of emotional expressions in the system of speech

## **Participants**

The authors of the study followed the rules for selecting the text corpus to ensure the reliability of the obtained results. The methods of mathematical statistics were used for this purpose. The text corpus was selected in accordance with the rules of forming a representative sample, and the obtained results of the analysis of the texts were subject to statistical verification.

The composition of the sample was determined using the probability sampling in order to ensure the representativeness of the sample from the journalistic entire collection of (Washington Post, 2022; USA Today, 2022; New York Times, 2022). This method involved a random and equally probable selection of texts from all units of the general population. This approach helps to reduce systemic errors, because random selection minimizes

differences between the characteristics of the sample and the general population.

Sampling based on the random selection principles is a common approach in mass research in mathematical linguistics. This approach makes it possible to obtain reliable results and ensure the objectivity of text analysis.

## Instruments

The data were entered and processed was carried out using Microsoft Excel and SPSS Statistics 18.0. All data are given in relative (% of the number of respondents) values.

## Data Collection

- 1. Comparative analysis is a method used for the comparative study of two or more objects, phenomena, qualities or parameters in order to identify their differences and similar features. It helped to identify negative and positive emotion markers and revealed a quantitative preference for emotional statements that express emotional evaluation.
- Transformational analysis was used to identify emotional markers in the text. Transformational analysis involved a systemic study of text fragments in order to identify lexical and syntactic features indicating emotional expressions. These were certain words, phrases, constructions or changes in the structure of emotionally coloured sentences.
- Contextual analysis. This method was aimed at revealing the specifics of emotional experience, which is manifested emotional expressions.

Contextual analysis involved a detailed study of the contexts in which emotional expressions occurred. Such factors as the situational context, the role of the interlocutors, the atmosphere and other factors affecting the perception and expression of emotions were considered. In the process of contextual analysis, a detailed classification and categorization of emotional expressions was carried out depending on their contextual meaning.

Pragma-semantic analysis involved studying the interaction between the speaker and the addressee, as well as their contextual environment. The study was conducted to find out how emotional expressions affect the communicative processes between people. The role of emotions in the

performance of various speech acts, such as persuasion, warning, wish, etc., was studied. Pragma-semantic analysis helped to consider emotional expressions as an important aspect of speech communication. It revealed how emotions affect the perception and interpretation of language messages, as well as how they are formed and transmitted within the communication process.

## Analysis of Data

- 1. Statistical mean of the frequency of use.
- 2. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient indicates the internal consistency of the test assignments. The Cronbach's alpha is calculated according to the formula 1:

$$\frac{N}{N-1}\big(\frac{\sigma_x^2-\sum_{i=1}^N\sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_x^2}\big)\quad \ (1)$$

Where  $\sigma_{\rm x}^2$  – total test score variance;  $\sigma_{\rm Y_i}^2$  – variance of *i* element. Values in the range of 0.7 - 0.8 are considered satisfactory.

## Ethical criteria

Data collection from journalistic texts complied with anonymity of sources and confidentiality rules. The authors determined that the data of the texts will be used for scientific purposes only and will not be disclosed in order to violate privacy or influence the authors of the texts. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards that require careful and objective use

of data. The authors sought to avoid any form of data manipulation or distortion of results in order to obtain the desired conclusion. The authors respected copyright when using journalistic texts. Citation and appropriate recognition of authorship contributed to the protection of intellectual property and ensured academic integrity. Inviolability and immutability of the sources of the texts were maintained during the analysis of the texts.

## Results

Interjections occupy a special place in the language not only because of their syntactic properties, but also because of their semantic and functional characteristics. Interjections have been found to lack a subject-logical meaning and a nominative function. At the general level, three groups of units are distinguished depending on their main functional and semantic level: 1) emotions and emotional assessment (the widest group of interjections); 2) manifestation of will; 3) etiquette. This semantic classification gives reason to propose the nuclear status of interjections with the meaning of emotions and emotional assessment within the field of expressiveness that we constructed.

A complete selection of one-word interjections from modern journalistic texts is presented. Vocables with the grammatical marks "interjection" (interj) / "exclamation" in the definition of which contained the signs emotivity and emotional tension were subject to removal. The analysis of dictionary entries was the basis for making a list of units uniquely identified as "exclamation" (Table 1).

**Table 1.**A dictionary selection of interjections with the meaning of emotions and emotional tension.

1. aargh 2. ah 3. aha 4. bah 5. eek 6. eh 7. eww 8. faugh	10.gee 11.ha 12.heh 13.hey 14.hm 15.ho-hum 16.hooray / hurrah	18.humph 19.o 20.oh 21.oho 22.ooh 23.oops 24.ouch 25.ow	28.phew 29.phooey 30.phwoar 31.pooh 32.tut (-tut) 33.ugh 34.uh-oh 35.um	38.whee 39.whew 40.wow 41.yay 42.yikes 43.yippee 44.yoi 45.yuk
8. raugn 9. fie	17.huh	26.pah 27.pfui	36.umph 37.urgh	45.yum

Source: created by the authors of the research

Contextual analysis of expressions of emotions and emotional assessment reveals a wide range

of emotive meanings realized in utterances. We systematize the results of the analysis in Table 2.



**Table 2.** *The results of the statistical analysis of interjections with the meaning of emotions and emotional tension.* 

New York Times	USA Today (2022)	Washington Post	Statistics	Contextual
(2022)		(2022)		meaning
				anger
	aargh – 15	aargh-5	38	irritation
aargh – 18				panic
aargii – 16				confusion
				despair
				fright
				anxiety
				panic
	ah – 28	ah - 20	70	embarrassment
ah – 22				surprise
uii 22				mockery
				inspiration
				sympathy
				pleasure
eek – 2	eek – 1	eek-2	5	fear
CCR 2				fright
ha – 0	ha – 9	ha-2	11	mockery
nu o				irony
				disapproval
	humph – 14	humph – 12	50	annoyance
humph – 22				disappointment
р.:				neglect
				doubt
				distrust
pah – 10	pah - 7	pah - 8	25	neglect
ugh – 20	ugh – 26	ugh – 24	70	irritability
4511 20	-511 20	-5.1 21		disgust
			Total: 272	

Source: created by the authors of the research

Interjections of the English language express different clusters of emotions and feelings, which are interpreted as varieties of emotional meanings in terms of linguistic realization. The fusion of the formal side of the linguistic sign and the emotional experience conveyed in speech is a characteristic feature of the realization of emotivity. Interjections manifest themselves both as a verbal emotional tool and as a direct realization of emotion. In the analysed contexts emotivity is revealed more fully with interjections than in case of other expressive grammatical means. The emotive meanings of expectation and forecast — excitement, anxiety, fear, despair — are found.

Lexico-grammatical means of expressing subjective modality, which form a zone of interaction between the fields of modality and expressiveness, deserve special attention. An independent lexico-grammatical group of units is often singled out, which is called "modal words".

As there is a lack of unambiguous means of identifying modal words in English explanatory dictionaries, the circle of these units was determined and clarified with the help of grammatical sources and a sample of literary texts. This was followed by the analysis of their semantics and functioning. We systematize the statistics obtained as a result of the analysis in the form of a table (Table 3).

**Table 3.**Statistical interpretation of modal words in journalistic texts.

	New York Times (2022)	USA Today (2022)	Washington Post (2022)
Actually	45	65	37
Apparently	32	35	21
Astonishingly	2	0	1
Certainly	8	17	24
Clearly	0	3	0
Definitely	2	0	0
Fortunately	0	4	3
Frankly	4	1	2
Honestly	6	8	8
In fact	22	54	34
Ironically	4	6	3
No doubt	0	3	6
Obviously	16	9	2
Perhaps	23	43	45
Sum:	164	248	186
Total	598		

Source: created by the authors of the research

A total of 598 contexts of the use of modal words were analysed. Apparently, the large corpus of units that researchers recognize as modal words was not involved. Functional and stylistic marking in these units may be one of the reasons for uneven statistics.

Besides, the frequency of use of modal words in the analysed texts is influenced by the author's preference factor: the choice of lexicogrammatical units with the meaning of modality is determined to some extent by artistic tasks. The analysis of the speech realization of the selected units shows the diversity of their functional semantics.

Modal words are non-specific (non-special) expressive means, as they do not clearly express the semantic dominants "emotivity"/"intensity", they combine several semantic functions. Considering this, they occupy a peripheral position in the model being built, and formally represent the intersection of the fields of expressiveness and subjective modality.

The category of expressiveness is revealed in the communicative act at the sentence level. In syntactic theory, repeated attempts were made to build a classification of sentences based on the principle of emotional and expressive certainty.

The sentence itself is the sphere of functional realization of units of lower linguistic levels and

concentrates their emotional "charge". Despite the fact that the sentence shows the accumulation of the values of its components, the expressiveness of this syntactic unit is not reduced to the sum of "non-neutral" actualizations of linguistic means. The sources and mechanisms of expressiveness of a sentence as an independent speech unit were identified through the analysis of the structural and semantic characteristics and functioning of traditionally distinguished communicative types of sentences in terms of emotional impact.

The functional semantic analysis of expressive grammatical means of the English language reveals groups of objects for which the expression of the dominant values of "emotivity" and "tension" is a linguistic, primarily, semantic function. It is a combination of paradigmatic and syntagmatic units (morphological, lexicogrammatical and syntactic), forming two centres of the field model of the category of expressiveness.

In conclusion, we note the productivity of the analysis of expressive grammatical means of the English language. The study confirmed the functional activity and significance of grammatical units and tools during the objectification of the emotional and sensory sphere of a person in speech communication (Figure 1).



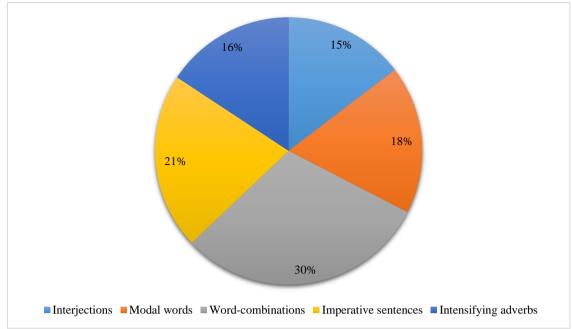


Figure 1. Functional activity and significance of grammatical units and means of expressing emotional tension

Source: created by the authors of the research

The "emotionality" centre is represented by lexico-grammatical (interjections) and syntactic units (exclamatory sentences) that express the emotional experiences of the subject of speech, thereby affecting the addressee. These means do not enter into a relationship of synonymy with neutral linguistic units and in speech actualization represent an expressive version of the linguistic norm.

## Discussion

Structuring of the category of emotional intensity of verbal means of the English language made it possible to consolidate different language units and speech means of emotional influence: morphological, lexico-grammatical, syntactic. As part of the study, the mechanisms and methods of explication of the main and secondary meanings of the category of emotional tension by grammatical means of the English language during their use in speech were determined. Aytug et al., (2018) and Bezrukov (2020) conducted similar studies. As in this study, the above-mentioned authors determined the frequency of using features of emotional vocabulary in journalistic English-language discourse. The research resulted in a broader understanding of the lexical and grammatical means of expression of journalistic texts.

The morphological, lexico-grammatical, and syntactic systems of the English language have specific units at their disposal, the semantic

functions of which are reduced to the category of expressiveness. This is also stated in the studies of Kots (2021) and Kuang et al., (2019). The authors call this type of units system-linguistic expressive grammatical units of the English language. Predelli (2020) and Shestakova (2023) clarified expressive means and came to the conclusion that this issue is insufficiently studied in the context of journalistic and scientific discourses.

English language systems also include semifunctional units. Their expressive function is secondary or acquired: ungrammatical intensifier adverbs, modal words, word combinations, imperative clause. This can be confirmed in the works of such authors as Slavova et al., (2021) and Song (2019). The authors define lexicogrammatical units (grammaticalized adverbs of measure and degree of feature), which can be recognized as occasionally expressive, acquiring an expressive function in contexts with emotional and evaluative vocabulary.

The functional semantic field of expressiveness is structured by outlined paradigmatic and syntagmatic units and speech means. Zabolotna (2023), Kopera and Rudina (2021) confirmed that it has a polycentric structure with a distinct core. According to the authors, this is caused by two types of semantic functions within the general category of expressiveness — emotivity and intensity.



The theoretical results of the study reveal the main structural features and semantic characteristics of verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension. The study revealed that journalistic texts use a variety of lexical, grammatical and stylistic means to convey emotional tension. For example, intensive adjectives, verbs, adverbs, as well as idioms, metaphors and irony may be used.

The practical results of the research are important for journalistic practice. Knowledge of the structure and semantics of verbal means of expressing states of emotional stress allows journalists, writers and other authors to effectively convey their emotions and create an emotional sound of texts. The use of appropriate lexical and grammatical constructions can increase the intensity of the impression, which contributes to effective communication with readers or listeners.

Besides, the study emphasizes the importance of context in understanding verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension. The understanding of semantic nuance and emotional stress can change depending on the context, so authors need to take into account contextual features and adapt their choice of verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension to a specific text.

So, the theoretical results of the study reveal the structure and semantics of verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension in English journalistic texts, and the practical results provide useful instructions and recommendations for writers, journalists and other authors on the effective expression of their emotions and the creation of emotional colouring in texts.

The study may be limited by the scope and diversity of the sample of journalistic texts, which may affect the generalization of the results to a wider corpus of texts. Research can be limited to a specific time period, specific authors or genres of journalism. The definition and categorization of states of emotional tension can be subjective, as they are based on the researcher's perception. Different researchers may have different ideas about emotional states, which can affect the objectivity of the results. The research concerns the verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension in English journalistic texts, which may create limitations in the translation of the results into other languages. Linguistic features, such as grammatical structures, lexical nuances and phraseology, can vary in different languages and affect the

expressiveness and effectiveness of expressing emotional tension.

#### **Conclusions**

The relevance of this study is determined, on the one hand, by the active research interest in the human factor in language in general. On the other hand, it is determined by insufficiently studied functional semantic specifics of the category of emotional tension, lack of a systematic analysis of expressive grammatical means of the English language. Research findings. The study confirms the assumptions of linguists regarding the superiority of the linguistic expression of the semantics of "deviation from the norm". It is proven that English journalistic texts use a wide range of verbal means to express states of emotional tension. This includes expressive vocabulary, intensive adjectives and verbs, metaphors, rhetorical devices and other linguistic tools. It was also confirmed that the structure of verbal expressions interacts with their semantics in expressing states of emotional tension. Phrasal structure features, syntactic structures, and semantic connections between words affect the emotional impact of the text on the audience. Applications. The results of the study can contribute to the expansion of the theoretical understanding of the semantics and structure of verbal expressions of emotional stress. They can also serve as a basis for further linguistic research in the field of emotional linguistics and journalism. Understanding the verbal means of expressing emotional tension can be useful for communication and media professionals. They can use this knowledge to create effective iournalistic texts that can convey intense emotional states and influence the audience. Prospects for further research. Further research may examine the effects of different contexts on the expression of the states of emotional tension. Understanding of the effect of different situations, topics, and audiences on the use of specific verbal tools can reveal new aspects of communication and emotional impact.

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