UNIVERSITY OF
SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS
IN TRNAVA

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LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Volume X.
Special issue: 1/2025

Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

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This special issue of our journal "Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences" is dedicated to Ad Foolen as a sign of our deep respect for his considerable contribution into these and many others branches of sciences.

Contents

From Brabants to pragmatics: Ad Foolen 75 years[1]

Maarten Lemmens

It was a fairly chilly day in the Netherlands, that April 6, 1950, with a mild wind from the north to north-east, with an average temperature of 8.4°C (minimum 4°C to maximum 13.3° C), no rain fell.[2] Nothing unusual for that time of the year in that part of the world, if it weren't for a small event, in a small village Breugel (province of Brabant), not too far from the city of Eindhoven. There, on that day, was born a child whom, many many years later, I came to meet at one of my first Cognitive Linguistics conferences. Ad Foolen made a strong first impression by not trying to make an impression. Since then, we have met at regular intervals, mostly at the biennial ICLC conferences, in Amsterdam, Leuven, Krakow, Seoul, Xi' an, and so many more to come. I distinctly remember how I managed to impress Ad in the hotel in Seoul that we both stayed out by my capacity to imitate the (to us incomprehensible) Korean sentences that were said in the elevator, most likely referring to doors opening or closing, or to which floor we were arriving at.

Ad Foolen explaining the artwork I received as a gift (ICLC-14 Tartu, Estonia, July 14 2017).

[1] Brabants is the dialect of the province of Brabant (the one in The Netherlands) that is Ad Foolen's native language, as he himself states quite clearly on the website of Radboud University, Nijmegen (https://www.ru.nl/en/people/foolen-a). His research centers mostly around pragmatics (e.g., modal particles) which inspired this title.

[2] Information obtained via historical weather reports on https://weerverleden.nl/19500406-280&all

Later (from 2007 onwards), Ad Foolen and I became much more closely involved as we were both members of the ICLA board, I as a regular member, Ad as the association's treasurer, a job which he took care of diligently. During my ICLA presidency, from 2013 till 2017, our contacts and relationships intensified quite drastically (with many hundreds of email exchanges) and our friendship deepened. It even came to us going to the opera together in Berlin with our respective spouses, when we were there for ICLA business. Ad Foolen was my reliable side-kick, quietly present yet assertive when needed.

The rhythm of contact has decreased over the last years, but that is merely a matter of form. In view of our friendship that I hold dear, it is a great honour for me to write a small word of introduction to this special issue of *Lege artis*, as a present to his 75th birthday.

Congratulations, Ad!

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR OF FEAR IN ENGLISH SLANG

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Received: 10.02.2025 **Reviewed:** 20.02.2025 and 4.03.2025

Similarity Index: 4%

Bibliographic description: Borys, D. (2025). Conceptual metaphor of fear in English slang. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 5-20. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.01

Abstract: The present paper offers a cognitive account of metaphor of fear in English slang. Conceptual metaphor of fear in not uncommon in substandard English, yielding 12 metaphorical patterns, eight out of which remained previously unlisted. The most productive mapping of fear in English slang is found to be FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY. The linguocognitive evidence collected allows for concluding that English slang is androcentric, physicalist, and somatocentric; patientizing and objectifying; abusive, sexist, and racist; dysphemistic and ironic.

Key words: emotion, fear, English slang, conceptual metaphor, conceptual metaphor of fear.

Fear might be one of our greatest allies, saving us from mortal danger,
yet we depict it as a furtive enemy, stealing in like a thief,
derailing rational thought, inflaming latent anxieties, hobbling purposeful action.

Tiffany Watt Smith "The book of human emotions:
An encyclopedia of feeling from anger to wanderlust"

1. Introduction

Emotions are transversal to human physical and mental experience, transcending aesthetics, behaviour, cognition, culture, and perception. They constitute a fairly subtle and, in the meantime, diffuse and dynamic area of human nature (Mizin et al. 2023: 87). **Biologically**, emotions are instinctive, and yet prone to certain internal as well as external regulation and programming. **Psychologically**, emotions are highly subjective, and yet undergo intersubjectivization to be collectively recognizable. **Culturally**, emotions evolve inside cultures as dynamic entities, and yet the vast majority are, to a greater or lesser degree, cross-culturally construable. **Linguistically**,

emotion terms exist in all languages, and yet are quite unevenly distributed, ranging from as few as 7 in Chewong to as many as 2,186 in English (Meiselman 2021: 914), the resulting conceptual asymmetry of emotion vocabulary reflecting both lexical lacunae (like, for English, the Bantu *mbuki-mvuki* associated with the irresistible urge to undress while dancing) and conceptual anisomorphisms (like, for English, the Ukrainian *розпука (rozpuka)*, which can be broadly understood by English speakers as despair or desolation but conveys higher intensity as it implies that the person experiencing it is literally driven to emotion-induced physical self-destruction, based on the denotation of the reconstructed Proto-Slavonic root **pǫk-* 'to pop, to burst' and the resulting image metaphor of a bud bursting open) across languages. **Translatologically**, many emotion terms possess cognitively approximate equivalents in other languages, and yet plenty are borrowed, since the states they designate are either too firmly culture-bound (like, for English, the Persian *gheirat* taken to mean the urge to protect the female members of one's family from unwanted sexual attention and thereby defend one's pride and honour (Bakhtiar 2015), or the Welsh *hiraeth* referring to longing for a romanticized ideal of Wales or Welsh culture (Smith 2015b)), or not yet verbalized and / or conceptualized (like, for English, the German *Torschlusspanik* denoting the feeling that the older one gets, the faster one's window of opportunity is closing, or the Swedish *resfeber* designating nervous anticipation prior to embarking on a journey) in the receptor language, which contributes to the emotion term translatability continuum embracing full equivalence through zero equivalence as its two extremities.

At present, there exists no consensual definition of emotions both within and across the different disciplines exploring their nature, nor is there any unanimity regarding the relevance of the term per se. Researchers tend to use the words ***affect***, ***emotion***, ***feeling***, and ***mood*** as interchangeable, interdefinable, or interrelated within hierarchies based on structurally dissimilar vertical terminological relations. In the present article, the term ***emotions*** is taken to mean "brief, rapid responses involving physiological, experiential, and behavioral activity that help humans respond to survival-related problems and opportunities" (Keltner & Ekman 2000: 163) and is employed as an operational unit in recognition of its long-standing acceptability tradition in cognitive linguistics literature (Kövecses 1990; 2004; 2005; 2020; Stefanowitsch 2006; Wierzbicka 1996; 1999).

The aim of the present research is to provide a cognitive account of conceptual metaphor of fear in English slang. The latter is not confined to any cultural, economic, ethical, political, or social boundaries and, therefore, provides fecund ground for cognitive research (Borys 2023b: 6), serving the expressive function of language (Foolen 1997). As slang is characterized by "terminological vagueness and etymological obscurity" (Borys 2024: 76), the working definition employed in this

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paper is "a substandard (in terms of its normativity), familiar / colloquial (in terms of its stylistic value), and informal (in terms of its register) lect" (Borys & Garmash 2019: 54), which reflects the consecutive superposition of its roles as a cryptolect, a professiolect, and a lect in the course of its lengthy evolution.

2. Theoretical framework

In the past decades, several researchers have addressed conceptual metaphor of fear in English, both independently (Esenova 2011; Kövecses 1990; 2004; 2005; 2020; Stefanowitsch 2006) as well as in translatological contrast with other languages (Ding et al. 2010; Mizin et al. 2021; Rahmanadia & Sa'diah 2023).

Kövecses pioneered the study of conceptual metaphor of emotion in general and of fear in particular, establishing a theoretical framework for mapping emotions as conceptual domains understood in terms of other conceptual domains. The linguist formulated 11 conceptual metaphors of fear in English: FEAR IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER; FEAR IS A HIDDEN ENEMY; FEAR IS A TORMENTOR; FEAR IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING; FEAR IS AN ILLNESS; FEAR IS INSANITY; THE SUBJECT OF FEAR IS A DIVIDED SELF; FEAR IS AN OPPONENT IN A STRUGGLE; FEAR IS A BURDEN; FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE; FEAR IS A SOCIAL SUPERIOR (Kövecses 1990: 74-78; 2004: 23). Furthermore, the scholar differentiated between the general emotion metaphors applicable to fear conceptualization, on the one hand, and the specific metaphors associated exclusively with fear, on the other (Kövecses 1990: 69-87; 2004: 23-24). The cognitologist equally discovered that simple, generic, correlation-based metaphors are powerful enough to override local embodiment, based on examples of metaphors of fear contradicting both the conventional conceptualization and the physiological embodiment of fear; he referred to the phenomenon as ***"cognition over embodiment" override*** (Kövecses 2005: 289-290). In addition to the above, Kövecses designed the first prototypical cognitive model of fear based on conceptual metaphor and metonymy (Kövecses 1990: 79).

Stefanowitsch revisited the conceptual metaphors of fear previously delimited by Kövecses and slightly restructured the original list (most importantly, subsuming FEAR IS A HIDDEN ENEMY and FEAR IS A TORMENTOR under the broader mapping FEAR IS AN ENEMY / OPPONENT and questioning both the deducibility of the mapping FEAR IS AN INCOMPLETE OBJECT from the example *I was beside myself* instead of FEAR IS AN OUT-OF-BODY SITUATION and the relevance of referring the above example to conceptual metaphors of fear at all) as well as discovered the lesser common, hitherto unlisted, mappings. Drawing upon the corpus linguistics procedure of metaphorical

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pattern analysis (MPA), he formulated such metaphors as FEAR IS LIQUID, FEAR IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER (UNDER PRESSURE), FEAR IS MIX, FEAR IS COLD, FEAR IS HEAT, FEAR IS LIGHT, FEAR IS DARK, FEAR IS HIGH / LOW (INTENSITY), FEAR IS PAIN, FEAR IS A SHARP OBJECT, FEAR IS AN ORGANISM, FEAR IS A WILD / CAPTIVE ANIMAL, and FEAR IS A BARRIER (Stefanowitsch 2006: 78-81).

Subsequently, Ding, Noël, and Wolf extended the existing lists of conceptual metaphors of fear in English by applying a corpus-based approach previously designed by Stefanowitsch, which yielded the novel patterns FEAR IS A FOUNDATION, FEAR IS A LEGACY, FEAR IS A LOCATION, FEAR IS A MACHINE, FEAR IS A NUISANCE, and FEAR IS A POISON. The cognitologists equally offered two supermetaphors encompassing the mappings formerly identified by Kövecses and Stefanowitsch, namely FEAR IS AN ANIMATE BEING and FEAR IS AN ENTITY (Ding et al. 2010).

Finally, Esenova complemented the lists of conceptual metaphors of fear proposed by Kövecses, Stefanowitsch, and Ding, Noël, and Wolf with several unlisted mappings, namely FEAR IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER, FEAR IS A COLOUR, FEAR IS A CHILD, and submetaphors, such as FEAR IS A DANGEROUS SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER, as well as a number of unconventional examples and additional evidence from other fields, predominantly evolutionary biology and evolutionary psychology (Esenova 2011: 73-94).

In the meantime, conceptual metaphor in English slang is substantially understudied. Notable mentions include an investigation of conceptual metaphors featuring BLOOD, PISS, and SHIT as target domains in English slang (Turunen 2016) as well as studies on conceptual metaphor and sensory metaphor in English slang phytonyms (Borys 2023a and Borys 2023b respectively). As far as conceptual metaphor of emotions in slang is concerned, it remains an uncharted terrain overall. Discussing the style dimension of within-culture variation in metaphor, Kövecses emphasizes that, in all languages, slang is more metaphorical than neutral or colloquial style, which allows for, firstly, delimiting metaphors chiefly characterizing slang rather than standard usage and, secondly, identifying numerous examples of exaggerated elaborations of existing conceptual metaphors (Kövecses 2005: 96-97). Language "denotes things, objects, properties, signs, processes and phenomena – that is, everything that is meaningful to a person" (Panasenko 2024: 57) and, as such, it constitutes a socially regulated system which constantly balances between foregrounding what is deemed standard, on the one hand, and downplaying what is thought of as nonstandard, on the other. In this regard, Borys points out that "as opposed to language standard, which represents a carefully "pruned", "shaped", and "sculpted" grapholect, slang, in spite of constituting a rather "gnarled",

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"misshapen", and "untrimmed" sociolect, mirrors an accurate projection of its users' cognition just as it is" (Borys 2023a: 80) and as such is far more reflective of basic human emotions (including fear) which stem from what Denton terms ***primordial emotions*** as "the subjective element of the instinctive behavioural patterns" incorporating hunger, thirst, and pain (Denton et al. 2009: 501).

3. Database and methodology

The paper follows a case-study design and delves into conceptual metaphor of fear in English slang. As there is an enduring cognitological tradition of differentiating between language as emotion and language about emotion, compatible with emotional talk and emotion talk (Bednarek 2009: 396), expression of emotion and conceptualization of emotion (Foolen 2023: 33), or affective connotation and affective denotation (Soriano 2023: 490) respectively, the focus of this study bears on the latter, i.e. language about emotion / emotion talk / conceptualization of emotion / affective denotation.

The research data (47 items) is drawn from "The concise new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English" (PDS 2008). The strategy employed for the identification and extraction of the sample manifesting conceptual domains can be described as ***exhaustive keywords-based searching for target domain vocabulary*** (Stefanowitsch 2006: 3). The keywords selected for the automatic annotation included *afraid, angst, coward, dread, fear, fright, horror, panic, phobia, scare,* and *terror* alongside their derivatives. The research is characterized by two significant limitations. Firstly, the keyword *anxiety,* designating the phenomenon which is regarded as closely related to fear in psychology, alongside its derivatives and synonyms was left out of the study, the main reason being the extension of its denotation to include anticipation of positive experiences, whereas the very nature of fear is incontrovertibly threat-oriented. Secondly, the compiled list of conceptual metaphors of fear in English slang may be unexhaustive due to the fact that the keywords-based search does not efficiently apply to the identification of implicit, weak, or complementary metaphors.

The methodology adopted in the present research includes four stages:

1) the extraction of the lexicographic sample related to fear in English slang through automatic keywords-based annotation;

2) the application of definitional and componential analyses in order to single out those research items that imply perceived similarity / resemblance between two entities (conveyed within the original and final senses);

3) the formulation of metaphorical patterns underlying the conceptualization of fear in terms of other entities;

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4) the identification of the referents' properties that are shared by the source domain and the target domain and constitute the ground for metaphorization.

4. Results and discussion

Conceptual metaphor of fear in English slang involves 12 patterns: FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY, FEAR IS TEMPORARY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL INCAPACITATION, FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE, FEAR IS SANITY, FEAR IS LIQUID, FEAR IS AN ANIMAL, FEAR IS DENUDATION, FEAR IS DISORIENTATION, FEAR IS HAPPINESS, FEAR IS LOSS OF CONTROL, FEAR IS MERCHANDISE, and FEAR IS NATURALITY.

4.1 FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY

The mapping FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY proves to be the most productive conceptual metaphor in English slang, with overall 24 slang items identified. The material under analysis blatantly reveals gender conservatism, hegemonic masculinity, and systematic sexism at their vastest and firmest. The hierarchically structured social interaction between men as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group is premised upon "persuasion, enforcement, and consensus" (Walker & Sartore-Baldwin 2013: 306). Once the ideological beliefs of the dominant group have been accepted, adopted, and appropriated by the subordinate group, male superiorization coupled with female inferiorization becomes entrenched in social fabric, reinforced by the concurrent masculinity and femininity stereotypicalization. According to Heise, a stereotypical male is credited with the traits that prioritize his productivity, accomplishment, and readiness for challenges (namely activeness, adventurousness, confidence, energy, independence, industry, stability, strength, and wisdom), whilst a stereotypical female is attributed the opposite set of characteristics (namely, foolishness, inhibition, snobbery, unambitiousness, unstability, and weakness). Yet, as far as altruism and emotion display are concerned, the trend is the reverse: a stereotypical man is normally associated with such negatively evaluated traits as cruelty, egocentricity, hostility, and toughness, whereas a stereotypical woman is deemed to possess such positively evaluated traits as emotionality, gentleness, helpfulness, kindness, sincerity, and sentimentality. Thus, Heise arrives at the conclusion that "stereotypical traits give men a power advantage, and give women a status advantage. Men can get others to please them by setting up punishment-reward contingencies. Women, on the other hand, having the kind of status that derives from others' esteem, may have others pleasing them without instigation" (Heise 2007: 23).

Our findings neatly correlate with Heise's perspective on gender stereotypicality as men are associated with courage, which is considered positive, as the opposite of fear, which is thought of as negative, as illustrated by the slang items *hard man* 'a person not afraid of violent action' (PDS 2008: 322) and

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warrior 'a fearless, violent member of a youth gang' (PDS 2008: 687). Even if a male trait is found in a female fulfilling a masculine role in a homosexual relationship, it is still regarded as positive, as in *butch* 'unafraid, unabashed' (PDS 2008: 108).

The mapping FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY can be further split into five constituent submetaphors, namely FEAR IS MALE FEMINIZATION, FEAR IS MALE HOMOSEXUALIZATION, FEAR IS MALE PROSTITUTIONALIZATION, FEAR IS CASTRATION, and FEAR IS IMPOTENCE.

The submetaphor FEAR IS MALE FEMINIZATION as derivative of the gender-related supermetaphor A MALE IS A FEMALE allows for thinking of a man in terms of a woman based on either his physique or his behaviour. This, in turn, yields two patterns: FEAR IS PHYSICAL MALE FEMINIZATION and FEAR IS BEHAVIOURAL MALE FEMINIZATION respectively.

The former, FEAR IS PHYSICAL MALE FEMINIZATION, pattern identifies a man in three ways: 1) as a woman (as in *big girl* 'an effeminate, weak and / or cowardly male' (PDS 2008: 53), *sissy* 'an effeminate boy or man, especially a homosexual; a coward' (PDS 2008: 584), also *to wimp out* 'to give way to timidity or fear' (PDS 2008: 702) and *wimpy* 'afraid' (PDS 2008: 702) from the earlier sense of *wimp* as a woman (Green 2025)); 2) as womenswear (as in *big girl's blouse* 'an effeminate, weak and / or cowardly male' (PDS 2008: 53)); 3) as a woman's sex organ (as in *cuntish* 'weak, cowardly' (PDS 2008: 179), *pussy* 'a weak or effeminate boy or man; a coward' (PDS 2008: 521), *pussy-ass* 'a weak or effeminate man; a coward' (PDS 2008: 521), and *to pussy out* 'to back out of a task because of fear' (PDS 2008: 521), all based on the vulgar denominations of the female genitalia). Identifying a fearful man as a woman's item of clothing or sex organ relies on the metonymy PART FOR WHOLE and serves the purpose of his further disparagement since such a man is viewed not only as a downward shifter from the dominant group to the subordinate one, but also as unworthy of being associated with a "complete" woman and solely "eligible" for fulfilling the functions of her clothing or reproductive organ.

The latter, FEAR IS BEHAVIOURAL MALE FEMINIZATION, pattern exploits the following stereotypically "feminine" characteristics: 1) dependence on one's mother (as in *milksop* 'a cowardly or effeminate man' (PDS 2008: 430) and *sooky* 'timid or cowardly' (PDS 2008: 604) from dialectal *suck* (Green 2025), both implying a grown man being breast-fed; also in *shmendrick* 'a naive, cowardly person' (PDS 2008: 576) from the name of the 1877 Yiddish comedy "Schmendrik or The Comical Wedding" by Abraham Goldfaden, whose title character was a typical mother's boy); 2) complainingness (as in *clanger* 'a coward' (PDS 2008, 145) and *streak of the squeak* 'cowardice' (PDS

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2008: 625) from the high pitch of a stereotypical complainer's voice); 3) untrustworthiness (as in *finky* 'disloyal, cowardly' (PDS 2008: 251) from *fink* designating an informer, with such behaviour being deemed as unbecoming to a man).

The submetaphor FEAR IS MALE HOMOSEXUALIZATION equally stems from the gender-related supermetaphor A MALE IS A FEMALE. Compared to its counterpart pattern FEAR IS MALE FEMINIZATION, it proves far more demasculinizing and disparaging in that, firstly, it strips a man of his evolutionarily foremost biological function of reproduction, which, if massified, would pose a major threat to the preservation of humans as a species, and, secondly, it leads to the sex objectification of a man and his body resulting from the gender role reversal, since, in the modern phallocratic society, it is a man, and a man only, who is socially entitled to objectify a woman, and not the reverse. The fact that some members of the dominant group opt to fulfil the functions reserved for members of the subordinate group jeopardizes masculine domination per se and erodes the very mainstay of the existing hierarchical organization. The present research contains two examples that are elucidative of the submetaphor FEAR IS MALE HOMOSEXUALIZATION, namely *to quiche out* 'to concede defeat in a cowardly manner' (PDS 2008: 524) and *twink* 'a coward' (PDS 2008: 672). The first example conveys male homosexuality implicitly, through the metonymy linking exquisiteness, Frenchness, and haute cuisine to homosexuality (PART FOR WHOLE), equally tapping into the common Anglocentric ethnophaulic metaphor FRENCH IS HOMOSEXUAL. In contrast, the second verbalization of fear is explicit and straightforward, associating fearfulness with catamitism.

In a similar vein, the submetaphor FEAR IS MALE PROSTITUTIONALIZATION draws upon the supermetaphor A MALE IS A FEMALE. Sex commercialization results in the thorough sexualization and sex (self-)objectification of a person, whether voluntarily or forcibly involved in the sex industry. As sexual services are stereotypically associated with women (men being socially entitled to objectify but not to be objectified unless it is by other men), male prostitutionalization desubjectifies and disempowers men by disestablishing them from the dominant group to the subordinate one, which, in turn, threatens the group's closeness, elitism, and homogeneity. The two items identified within this group derive from slang denominations of sex workers, namely *to punk out* 'to withdraw from a task out of fear' (PDS 2008: 519) from *punk* denoting a young female prostitute and *slack* 'dreadful; awful; pathetic' (PDS 2008: 589) from *slack* designating a promiscuous woman.

In contrast to the three submetaphors discussed above, castration as the source domain of the submetaphor FEAR IS CASTRATION in no way imperils the existence of the modern phallocratic hierarchy, merely foregrounding a man's physical detesticulation and consequent loss of the

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reproductive function. Apart from the now uncommon practice of self-eunuchization, castration is stereotypically regarded as nonvoluntary and, therefore, largely remains beyond a man's control, his dominator and objectifier roles being affected to a far lesser extent. The removal of testes as a symbol of demasculinization underlies the verbalization of one slang item, *bollockless* 'cowardly, lacking in courage' (PDS 2008: 76).

Finally, the submetaphor FEAR IS IMPOTENCE verbalizes fear in terms of a man's loss of ability to achieve or maintain a penile erection which is a prerequisite for sexual intercourse and, consequently, reproduction. Compared to castration analyzed in the previous FEAR IS CASTRATION submetaphor, erectile dysfunction equally results in the loss of the reproductive function without significantly affecting the deep-seated gender hierarchy. However, impotence tends to be socially viewed as a natural concomitant of ageing in males (ageing in females is accompanied by a more or less proportionate decrease in libido) and, therefore, does not normally generate much judgmentalness unless applied to young and middle-aged men, in which case sexual incapacitation and the resulting demasculinization are viewed as powerful disparagement and humiliation tools. This is illustrated by the slang metaphtonym *limp dick / limp prick* 'someone who is weak or cowardly' (PDS 2008: 401).

4.2 FEAR IS TEMPORARY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL INCAPACITATION

The mapping FEAR IS TEMPORARY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL INCAPACITATION is identified in overall nine slang items, which can be further grouped according to whether fear is thought of in terms of (1) a real or fictitious abnormal condition that detrimentally affects the structure and / or function of an organ, an organ system, or an organism as a whole, or else as (2) an altered state of consciousness. This discrimination yields two submetaphors: FEAR IS ILLNESS and FEAR IS INTOXICATION respectively.

The former, FEAR IS ILLNESS, pattern underlies the formation of the slang items *awfuck disease* 'the sense of dread that you feel the morning after doing something that you, upon reflection, wished you had not done' (PDS 2008: 21), *Calumet fever* '(among Ottawa valley lumbermen) fear of riding logs down the slide at Calumet, Quebec' (PDS 2008: 114), *gangplank fever* 'in the military, a fear of transfer to an assignment overseas' (PDS 2008: 280), *to gimp out* 'to panic in the face of great challenge' (PDS 2008: 289), *horries* 'a phobia, a horror of something' (PDS 2008: 343), and *Saturday night syndrome* 'the stress and fear suffered by preachers who wait until Saturday night to write their Sunday sermon' (PDS 2008: 557). The medical reference in all the instances presented is explicit and transparent, being either neutral (*disease*, *fever*, and *syndrome*) or informal (*gimp* and *horries*).

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The latter, FEAR IS INTOXICATION, pattern accounts for the metaphorization of *to freak out* 'to panic' (PDS 2008: 268), *freak-out* 'a complete panic and loss of control' (PDS 2008: 268), and *prang* 'scared' (PDS 2008: 513), which all refer to substance intoxication, namely psychoactive drug abuse, the metaphorized senses including *to freak out* 'to experience an altered state of consciousness from the unpleasant effects of a hallucinogenic drug' (Green 2025) and *prang(ed)* 'extremely intoxicated, especially by crack cocaine' (Green 2025).

Cognitively, physical or mental incapacitation results in one's inability to manage one's life properly and, consequently, strongly correlates with the agent's patientization.

4.3 FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE

The mapping FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE accounts for the formation of three slang items, namely *to get / to have the wind up* 'to be nervous or scared' (PDS 2008: 702), *to put the wind up someone* 'to make someone afraid' (PDS 2008: 702), and *windy* 'afraid; very nervous; ill at ease' (PDS 2008: 702). In all the instances detected, fear is thought of in terms of wind. As wind represents a natural circulation of air, fear constitutes a natural circulation of hormones, primarily epinephrine, norepinephrine, and cortisol. Both wind and fear can be controllable or uncontrollable, constructive or destructive, barely perceptible or overwhelming. Given that, in the phrases *to get / to have the wind up* and *to put the wind up someone*, the person experiencing fear is metaphorically thought of in terms of a container for fear, the pattern FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE implies the experiencer's patientization as severe weather phenomena such as hurricanes and tornadoes have always remained beyond human control, destroying property and bearing lethal consequences since the dawn of civilization.

4.4 FEAR IS SANITY

The mapping FEAR IS SANITY has contributed two items to English slang, namely *insane* 'fearless; willing to try anything for fun' (PDS 2008: 355) and *mad dog* 'a fearless, aggressive, uninhibited criminal' (PDS 2008: 415). Evolutionarily, fear serves the vital purpose of protecting intelligent life forms from their enemies and predators, thus assuring maximum life preservation and succession of generations, which, in turn, contributes to biodiversity on the planet. In this respect, lack of fear equals high probability of untimely death and, consequently, inability to fulfil one's primary evolutionary function of reproduction.

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4.5 FEAR IS LIQUID

The mapping FEAR IS LIQUID is equally detected in two slang items, namely *dripping* 'cowardly, ineffectual' (PDS 2008: 220) and *to go to water* 'to be overcome with fear; to fail to maintain a resolve' (PDS 2008: 688). Although otherwise totally incompatible, liquid and fear prove to share certain characteristics in our embodied cognition, based on diverse image schemas. Firstly, liquid has the ability to flow, and so does fear, albeit metaphorically, with the fear-induced physiological reactions being regulated by an unhindered circulation of hormones within the human body (the Path image schema). Secondly, liquid does not have a fixed shape, and so is fear difficult to accurately verbalize, given an array of physiological responses, behavioural patterns, and background knowledge involved (the Containment image schema). Thirdly, liquid does not generally yield to pressure applied to it, retaining a more or less constant volume, and so is fear difficult or impossible to control (the Blockage image schema). Conceptualizing fear as liquid reflects human incapacity to bend or counteract scientific laws, on the one hand, and to manage one's fear, on the other.

4.6 FEAR IS AN ANIMAL

The mapping FEAR IS AN ANIMAL is found in one slang item, namely *beastly* 'bad (to whatever degree), unpleasant, horrid' (PDS 2008: 41). It conceptualizes fear as a dangerous / monstrous animal, which provokes an instinctual fight-or-flight response from the person confronted with the potential threat, thus deagentizing him or her.

It is equally crucial to distinguish the mapping FEAR IS AN ANIMAL from the closely related A COWARD IS AN ANIMAL, as in the slang items *to bug* 'to panic, to be anxious' (PDS 2008: 98), *chicken* 'scared, cowardly, afraid' (PDS 2008: 133), *chicken run* 'the exodus of people from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) for fear of the future; hence, the exodus of people from South Africa for fear of the future' (PDS 2008: 133), *dingo* 'a cowardly, treacherous or despicable person' (PDS 2008: 201), *to dingo* 'to behave in a treacherous or cowardly manner' (PDS 2008: 201), and *to pussyfoot* 'to act with such caution that your behaviour appears evasive or cowardly' (PDS 2008: 521). With regard to *to bug*, it is of metaphtonymical nature, linking the behavioural patterns of animals, conceptualized as a source domain, to the physiological response to fear in humans, conceptualized as a target domain (in compliance with the PART FOR WHOLE pattern). Therefore, in *to bug*, seemingly disorderly insectile movement is associated with psychomotor agitation involving restlessness and unintentional movements of a person experiencing fear. As far as *chicken* and its derivative *chicken run* are concerned, the physical weakness and vulnerability of hatchlings and fledglings are misconstrued as their fearfulness. In *dingo* and *to dingo*, the resourcefulness and quick-wittedness of the animals is wrongly associated with their fearfulness by Australian farmers and doggers (Smith 2015a), the

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negative image of unconventional cowardly predators being generated by their high intelligence and excellent hunting skills, which, when combined, have historically posed a threat to local livestock. Similarly, in *to pussyfoot*, fearfulness is misattributed to feline digitigradism, i.e. ability to quietly yet quickly walk on one's toes and the ball of the foot, which is essential for both evading natural enemies and hunting for prey.

4.7 FEAR IS DENUDATION

The mapping FEAR IS DENUDATION also underlies the metaphorization of one slang item, namely *to frighten / scare the pants off someone* 'to frighten or scare someone, especially severely or (when horror is presented as entertainment) thrillingly' (PDS 2008: 482). Throughout world history, nakedness has acquired a number of connotations, both positive (as simplicity, lack of artifice, or worldliness; as honesty or openness; as innocence, humility, or childhood; as freedom; as nature or "naturalness"; as authenticity or truth) and negative (as exposure; as sinfulness or criminality; as sex; as death; as shame; as anxiety; as punishment, humiliation, or degradation; as poverty, wretchedness, or vulnerability; as savagery) (Barcan 2004: 83-138). Historically, the negative connotations of nudity with shame and sinfulness constitute the cultural legacy of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Unequivocally negative is nonvoluntary (enforced) denudation, which forcibly erases the boundaries between the private and the public, thus patientizing or even objectifying the person coerced into nudity. Metaphorically, in the phrase *to frighten / scare the pants off someone*, fear equally assumes the role of an "abuser" who violates social taboos by exposing the genitals and / or genital area of a person experiencing it in defiance of his or her will.

4.8 FEAR IS DISORIENTATION

The mapping FEAR IS DISORIENTATION is similarly found in one slang item, namely *to weird someone out* 'to frighten someone; to cause someone emotional turmoil' (PDS 2008: 691), which derives from the earlier substandard sense 'to cause someone to feel confused or at a loss' (Green 2025). In this case, disorientation, based on a deviance from, or even a rupture with, the norm, represents confusion deriving from incompatibility between the socially established standards and the reality that fails to comply with them. Evolutionarily, normativization is an essential prerequisite for socialization and subsequent state-building, pervading literally all spheres of life. As a result, what is evaluated as not conformant to the norm becomes immediately labelled countersocial and subconsciously construed as threat, whence the association of disorientation with fear as a natural response to threat.

4.9 FEAR IS HAPPINESS

The mapping FEAR IS HAPPINESS is equally verbalized in one slang item, namely *combat-happy* 'deranged by the horrors of combat' (PDS 2008: 155). Both happiness and fear constitute basic emotions whose intensity makes them difficult to control or suppress, which, consequently, patientizes a person experiencing either of the two. Yet, happiness reflects a wide range of positive feelings resulting from overall life satisfaction, a sense of achievement, or even a spontaneous surge of joy, whereas fear represents a response to a potential or real threat, thus causing stress. Therefore, the happiness-related component of the compound *combat-happy* undergoes ironic pejoration, in which case a life-threatening experience is linguistically disguised as a life-affirming one, which stems from denial as both avoidance of a psychologically uncomfortable truth, on the one hand, and a stress-management technique geared to successfully live through the experience and to ultimately accept that truth, on the other.

4.10 FEAR IS LOSS OF CONTROL

The mapping FEAR IS LOSS OF CONTROL is also detected in one slang item, namely *clutched* 'scared, anxious' (PDS 2008: 149). The proper sense of the verb *to clutch* as 'to grip or grasp tightly' along with its transitivity implies the presence of an agent as the initiator to the action (holding tightly) and a patient as the undergoer of the action (being held tightly). Since the word *clutched* constitutes a participial adjective, it is the patientization of the person experiencing fear that underlies the metaphor FEAR IS LOSS OF CONTROL.

4.11 FEAR IS MERCHANDISE

The mapping FEAR IS MERCHANDISE has similarly contributed one item to English slang, namely *panic merchant* 'a person who habitually panics' (PDS 2008: 481). Cognitive "commodification" of extreme fear consists in ironically construing it as a tradable tangible good, the irony feeding off the clash between the saleability, tangibility, and utility of a prototypical commodity, on the one hand, and the unsaleability, intangibility, and disutility of panic, on the other.

4.12 FEAR IS NATURALITY

The mapping FEAR IS NATURALITY underlies the metaphtonymization of one slang item too, namely *Kodak courage* 'a brief burst of fearlessness encountered when being photographed' (PDS 2008: 388). Whilst photography is thought of in terms of a camera brand (the consecutive double metonymic pattern is "KODAK FOR CAMERA → CAMERA FOR PHOTOGRAPHY"), courageousness is construed as a transitory characteristic that needs fairly specific conditions for its manifestation. However, given that in front of the camera no real or false threat is involved, the resulting concept of

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courageousness proves to be blatantly ironic, implying fearfulness as the normal state of being for a person described as displaying Kodak courage.

5. Conclusions

The present study was designed to provide a cognitive account of conceptual metaphor of fear in English slang. The evidence from this research reveals several important trends.

Conceptual metaphor of fear in English slang involves 12 patterns: FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY, FEAR IS TEMPORARY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL INCAPACITATION, FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE, FEAR IS SANITY, FEAR IS LIQUID, FEAR IS AN ANIMAL, FEAR IS DENUDATION, FEAR IS DISORIENTATION, FEAR IS HAPPINESS, FEAR IS LOSS OF CONTROL, FEAR IS MERCHANDISE, and FEAR IS NATURALITY. Eight out of the twelve patterns have not yet been listed by Kövecses, Stefanowitsch, Ding, Noël, and Wolf, or Esenova, namely FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY, FEAR IS SANITY, FEAR IS DENUDATION, FEAR IS DISORIENTATION, FEAR IS HAPPINESS, FEAR IS LOSS OF CONTROL, FEAR IS MERCHANDISE, and FEAR IS NATURALITY.

The most productive mapping, FEAR IS LACK OF MASCULINITY, accounts for the formation of a half of the number of the conceptual metaphor instances analyzed (24 items out of 47) and heavily rests on the gender conservatism, hegemonic masculinity, and systematic sexism of English slang users. The pattern rests on five constituent submetaphors: FEAR IS MALE FEMINIZATION, FEAR IS MALE HOMOSEXUALIZATION, FEAR IS MALE PROSTITUTIONALIZATION, FEAR IS CASTRATION, and FEAR IS IMPOTENCE.

Finally, the summary cognitive analysis of the findings examined in the present research indicates that English slang denominations of fear are androcentric, physicalist, and somatocentric; patientizing and objectifying; abusive, sexist, and racist; dysphemistic and ironic.

Abbreviations

PDS – The concise new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English

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LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

HARRIS, FIRTH, AND DISTRIBUTIONAL SEMANTICS

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Received: 31.01.2025.2025 **Reviewed:** 10.02.2025 and 14.03.2025

Similarity Index: 2%

Bibliographic description: Geeraerts, D. (2025). Harris, Firth, and distributional semantics. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 21-36. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.02

Abstract: The direct influence of Zellig Harris and John R. Firth on present-day distributional corpus semantics is so limited that attributing a direct foundational role to them (as is often done in distributional semantic papers) is somewhat misleading. Conversely, they did have a considerable indirect influence, which is specifically important in the case of Firth: a line of development can be drawn from Firth's notion of collocation to Sinclair's Cobuild Dictionary of Contemporary English, and from there to the formulation of the Point-wise Mutual Information measure of collocational strength and the emergence of probabilistic Natural Language Processing.

Keywords: John R. Firth, Zellig Harris, distributional semantics, collocation, history of linguistics.

1. Introduction

Zellig Harris and John Rupert Firth are often mentioned as founding figures of distributional semantics. "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth 1957a: 11) and "Difference of meaning correlates with difference of distribution" (Harris 1954: 156) appear as inspirational aphorisms in many an introductory passage to distributional work in computational semantics, and a rough Google Scholar count on papers from the period 2020–2024 carrying *distributional semantics* in their title shows that one in three refers to at least Harris or Firth, and one in five to both. However, in spite of publications digging deeper into Harris's and Firth's relevance for computational semantics, like Brunila & LaViolette (2022) and Lenci & Sahlgren (2023), the historical and conceptual trajectory of their influence is seldom examined. In this short contribution, then, I will have a look at their work from the perspective of the history of linguistics, more specifically with an eye on the

emergence and internal development of distributional semantics. I believe such a historical perspective is a fitting tribute to Ad Foolen, whose own work has always exhibited a keen (and in the current context of linguistics, exceedingly rare) awareness of the history of linguistics and its relevance for present concerns.

Continuing the discussion in Geeraerts et al. (2024: 42-49), I will argue that the direct influence of both Harris and Firth on present-day distributional corpus semantics is so limited that attributing a foundational role to them is somewhat misleading. Conversely, they did have a considerable (and in some respects surprising) indirect influence, which is specifically important in the case of Firth. Accordingly, three steps will be taken. I will first point out that distributional semantics is more than vector space semantics (the currently dominant type of distributional semantics). An awareness of the diversity of distributional semantics is important because the influence of Harris or Firth may involve other forms of distributional semantics than contemporary vector semantics. This is, in fact, what will be argued in the third step of the argumentation, after the second step has made clear that neither Harris nor Firth are founding figures of vector space semantics in any straightforward sense: indirectly, both have been influential for distributional semantics at large (but Firth more so than Harris).

2. The protagonists

But let me first introduce the two scholars. John Rupert Firth (1890-1960) was a leading figure in British linguistics in the 1950s. From 1944 to his retirement in 1956, he held the first chair in general linguistics at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. He worked primarily on prosody and phonetics, and further developed his theory of the 'context of situation'. Taking its inspiration from the anthropological linguistics of Bronisław Malinowski, the theory (to which I will come back below) captures the idea that the meaning of linguistic acts is context-dependent, and in particular, depends on the social nature of the usage situation. For instance, a set phrase like *How do you do?* does not derive its meaning from a compositional process combining the lexical meanings of its constituent words, but from its conventional role in a more or less ritualized social interaction. Firth's books targeting a wider audience (*Speech* of 1930 and *Tongues of men* of 1937) were highly successful, but in comparison he published relatively little scholarly work during his lifetime. A collection of his most important articles, *Papers in linguistics 1934–1951*, appeared in 1957. Among the 'neo-Firthians' that carried on his ideas, Michael Halliday is probably the most influential one, through his development of Systemic Functional Grammar. But for the story to be told here, John Sinclair (though technically not a student of Firth's) will be most relevant, as a pioneer in corpus linguistics – more on that below. In the pages that follow, I will draw primarily on three

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papers: 'The technique of semantics' of 1935, 'Personality and language in society' of 1950, and 'A synopsis of linguistic theory 1930–1955' of 1957. (The first two are included in Firth 1957; page numbers refer to the 1957 volume.)

Zellig Harris (1909–1992) was a major figure of American structuralism. From his student years to his retirement in 1979, he was affiliated with the University of Pennsylviana, where he founded the Linguistics Department. Originally working on Semitic languages, in the 1940s and 1950s he focused on the methodology and metatheory of linguistics. His distributional methodology aims to provide a procedure for a rigorous justification of linguistic descriptions: taking a correlation between linguistic form and linguistic information as a basic premise, limitations on combinations of elements, and the patterns of those combinations, allow to define the phonological and morphogrammatical structure of a language. Harris's most influential student is Noam Chomsky, but Chomsky's introduction of generative grammar led linguistics away from the perspective embraced by Harris. In the final decades of his career, Harris worked very much in isolation from mainstream linguistics. He elaborated his thinking about language in terms of restrictions on combinations into a theory combining a dependency-type grammar with a usage-oriented conception of language acquisition and information-theoretical principles (1982; 1988; 1991). The publications at the basis of the following discussion are Harris's book *Structural Linguistics* of 1951, and the paper 'Distributional structure' of 1954, i.e. the discussion is restricted to the 'early' Harris. The later developments of Harris's thought are not covered, not because they are intrinsically irrelevant, but because they do not constitute the focus of contemporary references to Harris. (A confrontation of the later works with current corpus approaches would definitely be worthwhile, but it falls beyond the scope the present article.)

3. The scope of distributional semantics

We can get a grip on the diversity of distributional semantics if we take into account that a distributional method essentially consists of two steps: the identification of relevant context elements, and next, finding patterns in the occurrence of those elements. For instance, one may first note that *bank* regularly occurs in the neighbourhood of *cashier, sand, deposit, river, financial, money, left, water, overdraft*, and next observe that these context words fall in two sets (*cashier, deposit, financial, money, overdraft* versus *sand, river, left, water*) that are each representative of a specific meaning of *bank* ('financial institution' versus 'sloping ground near water'). Each of these two steps can itself be taken in a predominantly manual, or in a statistical or computational way. This is a gradual, not a categorial distinction, but if we use it as a frame reference, we should be able to distinguish between four major traditions of distributional semantics, according to the methodological choices they make.

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The two extremes are easy to identify. Current computational distributional semantics (roughly, vector space semantics) is maximally computational, with minimal manual intervention. At the opposite end, the tradition of lexicographical and philological description of meaning was manual only. For instance, the great historical dictionary projects that were started in the mid-19th century were all, in their own painstakingly manual way, corpus-based: a dictionary like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the German *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, or the Dutch *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* rests on a huge collection of quotations extracted from historical texts, and in that sense, these lexicographers were doing corpus linguistics *avant la lettre*. And at the same time, the method used by the historical lexicographers for analysing and classifying those quotations was distributional, i.e. based on the principle of interpretation in context, on an (again, painstakingly manual) examination of the elements co-occurring with the target word in the attested usage cases and the identification of relevant patterns among those co-occurrences.

Given these two extremes, can we also identify types of distributional semantics that predominantly use quantitative information and mathematical operations with regard to only one of the two steps mentioned above? On the one hand, corpus lexicology as it developed in Britain in the 1990s restricts the quantitative perspective to the first component, focusing on the statistical identification of collocating features, and then interpreting the patterns (the second component) chiefly in a manual way. This approach was influenced by Firth (a point that we will come back to in section 5), but it was developed primarily by John Sinclair and his students. In theoretical terms, the essential concept for this approach is the Firthian notion of *collocation*, defined as 'a lexical relation between two or more words which have a tendency to co-occur within a few words of each other in running text' (Stubbs 2002: 24). Collocations in this broad sense may take different shapes, depending on the level at which the co-occurrence of words (and sets of words) is defined. Sinclair (1991; 1998) for instance distinguishes four types: collocation, colligation, semantic preference, and semantic prosody. Collocational analysis for lexical description was developed not just in a descriptive direction (as for instance in Hoey 1991; 2005; Partington 1998; Stubbs 2002) and in a statistical direction (as by Church and Hanks 1989 – see section 5), but also in practical terms, as a software tool for lexicographers (see Kilgarriff & Rundell 2002, Kilgarriff et al. 2004).

On the other hand, round the turn of the millennium a different type of combination of quantitative analysis and corpus data came to the fore, in which usage cases are manually (or semi-automatically) annotated for a wide array of potentially relevant characteristics, and in which subsequently patterns are explored by statistical means. This method can be applied to a broad range of phenomena, and it actually emerged in a grammatical rather than lexical context, when the dissertations of Stefan

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Grondelaers (see Grondelaers, Speelman & Geeraerts 2002) and Stefan Gries (see Gries 2003) independently pioneered the use of regression techniques to model grammatical phenomena. In the lexical domain, the multifactorial approach (i.e. a method that applies a statistical analysis for finding patterns and similarities to a dataset that is annotated for a variety of features fitting the purpose) is often identified by two names: the Behavioural Profile Approach (as in Gries 2006; 2009; 2010) or the Multifactorial Usage-Feature Analysis (as in Glynn 2008; 2009; 2014; 2016). In theoretical terms, this overall approach to distributional semantics marks a methodological shift in Cognitive Linguistics, towards more quantified empirical research, a shift that was later dubbed the 'quantitative turn' in Cognitive Linguistics (Janda 2013, and compare Geeraerts 2005 for an early discussion of the shift.)

We can bring the various types of corpus linguistics together in the overview chart of Figure 1. The table distinguishes between the two components – assigning context features and grouping tokens based on those features – and cross-classifies this distinction with the distinction between a chiefly manual and a chiefly statistical methodology. While the inspirational influence of Firth on collocational analysis was already mentioned, we will now try to paint a more detailed picture of the influence of Firth and Harris on the various components of the field of distributional semantics.

		PRIMARY DISTRIBUTION	
		manual	*statistical*
SECONDARY DISTRIBUTION	*manual*	lexicographical & philological tradition	collocational corpus linguistics
	statistical	behavioral profile approach	vector space semantics

Figure 1. The scope of distributional semantics

4. Firth and Harris as forefathers

Now, what could be the reasons for claiming that the Firthian or Harrisian inspiration for computational distributional semantics is at best remote and indirect? Why can we not say that there is a direct link from Firth and/or Harris to the lower right corner of Fig. 1? Three observations play a role here (see also Geeraerts 2017 for a more detailed discussion of Harris).

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First, if we think of distributional semantics as a specific type of contextual meaning determination, then neither the idea of contextualized interpretation nor the idea of distributional analysis was invented by either Harris or Firth. As indicated above, contextual meaning determination as such is a basic mechanism of language use. It is, ultimately, simply what you do when you read, and as a professional approach to text interpretation and language description, it has for many centuries been part and parcel of the lexicographical and philological tradition. Likewise, distributional analysis belongs to the legacy of structuralism as it emerged in the early 20th century, and in particular of structuralist phonology. A basic question for the latter is how to identify sounds that have a systemic function: which differences between sounds and articulations have a distinctive role in the language? Distributional criteria are paramount in answering that question. On the one hand, if two distinct lexical items differ in just a single sound, the differing elements in such a minimal pair have phonemic status, as the *o* and *i* in the pair *top/tip*. On the other hand, if two similar articulations are in complementary distribution, i.e. if the environments of their occurrence do not overlap, their presence can be predicted on the basis of the context in which they appear, and they need not be postulated as separate phonemic entities. For instance, the unaspirated *t* in *top* and the highly aspirated *t* in *pot* can be considered combinatorial variants of an underlying phoneme, because their degree of aspiration follows from their (word-initial or word-final) position. Harris's distributional methodology can be seen as a systematization of this way of thinking, applying it to all levels of language structure.

Second, neither Harris nor Firth is primarily or dominantly interested in methods of lexical analysis. To consider Harris first, his purpose – as we have seen – is to identify the formal structure of a language with a procedure that is scientifically rigorous, in particular, that relies maximally on the available data and minimally on intuition. That specifically applies to intuitions about meaning: "Here we will discuss how each language can be described in terms of a distributional structure (…) and how this description is complete without intrusion of other features such as history or meaning" (Harris 1954: 146). This purpose is achieved by a procedure that is multi-tiered and incremental, in the sense that the identification of elements on a given level of analysis is achieved by analyzing how the elements of the next lower level are restrictively but regularly combined on the level under consideration. For instance, "when the distribution of phonemes is considered over longer stretches of speech, they are found to be highly restrictive; (…) we can state these limitations by setting up new (morphemic) elements" (Harris 1951: 156), that is to say, morphemes are identified on the basis of the distribution of phonemes. This procedure can be generalized across the grammar: the distribution of sounds identifies phonemes, the distribution of phonemes identifies morphemes, and so on.

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For a proper understanding, the position of meaning in the Harrisian framework needs to be specified. On the one hand, meaning only plays a minimal methodological role. In the interest of scientific rigor, a methodological reliance on semantic intuitions needs to be avoided: "In those cases where the procedure seems more complicated than the usual intuitive method (often based on the criterion of meaning), the reason for the more complex procedure is rigor" (Harris 1951: 8). This does not rule out a limited reference to meaning, as in the identification of minimal pairs at the basis of a phonological analysis: before it can be decided that *l* and *r* are different phonemes, it needs to be clear that *life* and *rife*, for instance, are different elements of the language. Harris describes this bootstrapping part of the distributional procedure in terms of repetition: "In principle, meaning need be involved only to the extent of determining what is repetition. If we know that *life* and *rife* are not entirely repetitions of each other, we will then discover that they differ in distribution (and hence in 'meaning')" (Harris 1951: 7).

On the other hand, the distributional structures so discovered are intrinsically meaningful because they carry information in the sense of Shannon's information theory (Shannon 1948). The distributions targeted by Harris are deviations from equiprobability: if certain co-occurrences or patterns of co-occurrences are recurrent, the likelihood of appearance of the elements of the language is not the same. And in information-theoretical terms, a deviation from equiprobability is informative because it reduces entropy. When all outcomes are equally probable, entropy is maximized because uncertainty is at its highest, but when the probabilities of outcomes deviate from being equal, the uncertainty decreases: patterns of predictability emerge, which can be interpreted as carrying information about the system. So, while Harris intends to minimize the role of semantic intuitions in the process of linguistic description, he does aim to describe meaning – albeit only in the abstract information-theoretical sense of a distribution diminishing equiprobability, not in the sense of, say, a lexical definition. Indeed, if meaning is equated with information (itself defined as a reduction of entropy) all entities with an equal degree of informativity have the same meaning. This is a depleted and unintuitive view meaning.

In the case of Firth, too, the main focus is not on lexical meaning. Firth's purpose is to describe of language in 'contexts of situation': "The central concept of semantics considered this way is the context of situation" (Firth 1957b: 27), with a context of situation described, with reference to Malinowski, as "a bit of the social process which can be considered apart and in which a speech event is central and makes all the difference, such as a drill sergeant's welcome utterance on the square *Stand at – ease*" (Firth 1957b: 182). Firth refers to Wittgenstein's 'language games' as a related concept, but other links can be found in the ambit of contemporary linguistics. To name just a few,

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the pragmatic notion of speech act (in the tradition of Austin and Searle), the sociolinguistic notion of register (in the tradition of Halliday and Biber), or the notion of communicative event in the ethnography of communication (in the tradition of Dell Hymes) may all be related to the Firthian 'context of situation' because they focus, with different levels of granularity and different conceptual toolkits, on conventionalized forms of linguistic expression coupled to specific social interactions. Such theoretical similarities are however not often a topic for detailed scrutiny, which may at least in part be due to the fact that Firth did not develop his ideas into a full-fledged system of description.

One major descriptive concept that Firth *did* introduce, though, is that of collocation (and this is where the link with distributional semantics emerges). First introduced in the paper 'Modes of meaning' of 1951 (Firth 1957b: 194), collocation refers to the habitual co-occurrence of words: 'As Wittgenstein says 'The meaning of words lies in their use'. The day-to-day practice of playing language games recognizes customs and rules. It follows that a text in such established usage may contain sentences such as *Don't be such an ass!, You silly ass!, What an ass he is!* In these examples, the word *ass* is in familiar and habitual company, commonly collocated with *you silly–, he is a silly–, don't be such an–*. You shall know a word by the company it keeps! One of the meanings of *ass* is its habitual collocation with such other words as those quoted above" (Firth 1957a: 11).

This quotation provides the context of the oft repeated *You shall know a word by the company it keeps*. On closer inspection, it reveals two sides of the notion of collocation. On the one hand, collocations have a link with language games and more broadly (as Firth describes further on in the text) with any kind of "restricted language" – understand: any type of discourse with specific communicative and linguistic characteristics (ranging over, for example, language for special purposes, register, or the style of an individual poet). The context of situation theory combines specific types of social interactions with specific types of language use. Collocational behaviour, then, is an aspect of that linguistic specificity; the language game in which you find collocations like *you silly ass* (with *ass* equivalent to "stupid, obnoxious person") is different from one in which *ass* is used in its literal meaning for "donkey", and in which it occurs in combinations with the names of other farm animals. On the other hand, collocations are not just indicative of context of situation, but also of meaning. Firth invokes lexicography to clarify the concept. Next to providing regular dictionary-style definition, lexicographical reference works often illustrate senses with exemplary expressions or full sentences instantiating those senses. These illustrations characteristically show words in a typical context – the type of co-occurrences that Firth captures under the label "collocation". So, collocational behaviour not only fleshes out the idea that contexts of situation come with a specific kind of language use, but it also captures a specific dimension of meaning. Whether collocational behaviour alone

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would be enough to identify or characterise meaning is not stated explicitly in Firth's texts, but at least it is indicative of meaning – a recognition to be exploited in the development of distributional semantics.

A third observation concerning the foundational role of Harris and Firth is perhaps of less importance than the previous two, but it serves to complete the picture: Harris and Firth disagree in certain fundamental respects. In particular, Firth explicitly opposes Harris's (and more broadly, American structuralism's) incremental, phonology-inspired procedure. With a direct reference to Harris (1951), Firth remarks that "This does not mean that the analysis of discourse – of the paragraph and the sentence, for example – can be directly developed from phonemic procedures or even devised by analogy from such procedures (…) At the present time, descriptive linguistics is suffering from a pre-occupation with phonemics and other forms of segmental phonology" (Firth 1957a: 21-22). Firth's disagreement with Harris goes further than a mere dissatisfaction with a method dominated by a phonological model. Their outlook differs in fundamental respects to the extent that Harris explicitly pursues an essentially mathematical description of linguistic structure, whereas Firth sees language from a social, in a sense even humanistic point of view: "The object of linguistic analysis as here understood is to make statements of meaning so that we may see how we use language to live" (Firth 1957a: 23).

In short, shallowly referring to Harris and Firth as 'founding fathers' of current distributional approaches paints a slightly distorted picture of their specific interests and outlook, of the differences between both, and of the prehistory and wider context of distributional semantics. But then how should their influence be more adequately described?

5. Firth's influence

Firth's influence can be traced along two trajectories, a linguistic and a computational one. The linguistic one was already introduced in section 2, but less us now look systematically at both of them. Both trajectories start from John Sinclair, the Birmingham professor who is not only one of the pioneers of corpus linguistics as a descriptive discipline in linguistics, but who also produced a sea change in lexicography as editor of the *Cobuild dictionary of contemporary English* (1987). On the side of descriptive linguistics, Sinclair was the driving force behind a "neo-Firthian" approach that applies the idea of collocation (recurrent patterns of cooccurrences) to corpus data. As mentioned, Firth did not provide a highly systematised framework for the study of collocational behaviour. Sinclair filled that gap, and his associates further expanded the framework, as in Stubbs' work on lexical meaning in discourse, Hunston's development of a "pattern grammar" (a precursor to current

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construction grammars), Louw's application of collocability to connotations and emotive values (semantic prosody), or Hoey's Lexical Priming approach. Gradually, statistical measures of collocability were explored, as in Church and Hanks (1989) – a seminal paper to which we will return presently – together with user-friendly tools for a quantitative analysis of collocational behaviour in a corpus (in particular, see Kilgariff et al. 2004 as the basis of the popular SketchEngine tool).

In summary, the neo-Firthian Birmingham School of corpus linguistics was instrumental in filling out the upper right-hand cell of figure 1. Indirectly (and by way of opposition, so to speak) the collocation-centred approach to lexical corpus analysis also contributed to the lower left-hand cell of the figure. When the quantitative turn in cognitive linguistics was taken in the early 2000s, the existing methods of corpus analysis were felt to be insufficient for the linguistic data at hand. The move toward statistically more sophisticated forms of analysis, going beyond the practices and assumptions of the Birmingham School, is witnessed by handbooks like Baayen (2008), Gries (2009), Levshina (2015), together with the foundation of the journal *Corpus linguistics and linguistic theory* as a counterweight to the *International journal of corpus linguistics*, which was a main channel of the Birmingham School.

As for the lexicographical side of Sinclair's profile, the Cobuild dictionary was groundbreaking not only because it was the first modern dictionary based on a corpus compiled specifically for that purpose, but also because collocational patterning plays a prominent role in the lexicographical description in the dictionary entries. For the evolution of distributional semantics, the Cobuild dictionary proved genuinely important in an unexpected way. The 1989 Church and Hanks paper mentioned a moment ago was the result of a collaboration between a computer scientist – Kenneth Church, then at AT&T Labs, and Sinclair's coeditor Patrick Hanks, a major figure in international lexicography of the past decades. The paper introduces the Point-wise Mutual Information measure as a statistical test to separate significant collocations from random cooccurrences. This was a major step for corpus linguistics (other measures of association strength would follow) but also for computational linguistics. When in the 1990s natural language processing started to move away from the initial rule-based models inspired by Chomskyan grammar towards probabilistic, corpus-based models, the Church and Hanks paper showed how a quantitative approach to large amounts of usage data could be developed. In 1993, Church and Mercer edited a special volume of the Association for Computational Linguistics introducing and defending the change of computational paradigm. In their introduction to the volume, they compare both approaches; the summary table pitting both approaches against each other contains a conspicuous reference to Firth and Harris. In fact, in light of the widespread recognition of the Church and Mercer volume as the symbolic start of a new era in NLP,

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there is some plausibility to the hypothesis that the recurrent references to Harris and Firth in the computational literature on distributional semantics were mediated by the introductory text of Church and Mercer. And that text in itself would likely have looked differently without Church's acquaintance with the neo-Firthian corpus linguists and lexicographers.

This is not to say, of course, that the linguistic, Firthian influence was the only or even a major factor in the emergence of probabilistic NLP, but at least there is an actual influence that can be traced in the relevant publications. After the early 1990s, the ties between the NLP community and corpus linguistics became much looser, and NLP went its own successful way with the idea of a probabilistic analysis of associations and co-occurrences in large amounts of text. With the intermediate steps recalled above, this eventually led to the current generation of LLMs.

6. Harris's influence

As mentioned earlier, Harris worked in a relatively isolated position in the later stages of his career. Unsurprisingly, his influence on the emergence and expansion of distributional semantics is even more indirect than Firth's. The recognition of Harris as a forerunner by the community of computational linguists and NLP researchers has not led to an active engagement with Harris's actual thought. In particular, his focus on linguistic structure is largely alien to current approaches. Even so, his influence, however indirect, has been profound. It is mediated through the role of meaning in the evolution of Chomskyan and post-Chomskyan linguistics; Harris's insistence on semantic minimalism in the methodology of linguistics has reverberated throughout the recent history of linguistic theory formation. Several steps can be distinguished in this process, with the position of meaning in generative grammar as a driving force. (The story to be briefly told here is not new; see Geeraerts 2010; 2015 for earlier accounts.).

In the first formulation of generative grammar (Chomsky 1957), Chomsky follows his mentor Harris in keeping the role of meaning at a minimum; meaning is not an explicit object of description and it has no overt methodological function. Even though transformational pairs like active and passive constructions may seem to be selected on the basis of their semantic similarity, the motivation offered by Chomsky is purely formal and syntax-oriented; the rationale for linking actives and passives through transformations lies in the similarity of their syntactic structure, in combination with general considerations about the optimal organisation of a formal grammar. But in the early 1960s, papers like Katz and Fodor (1963) suggest that a formalised description of meaning may be included in a formal grammar. In Chomsky's *Aspects of the theory of syntax* (1965) a distinction between syntactic deep structures and surface structures is introduced, with surface structures derived from deep

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structures through transformation, and with deep structures seen as input for a semantic component yielding semantic representations. This triggered an often-fierce debate about a more central role for semantics. If transformations are meaning-preserving, as suggested by the *Aspects* model, couldn't deep structure be simply equated with semantic representation? This was the position taken by the so-called Generative Semantics movement, which changed the representational format of deep structures from a purely syntactic one into a hybrid of formal syntax, formal logic, and formalised componential analysis. But the Generative Semantics format did not convince, and the debate about meaning eventually lead three positions that to a large extent still shape the current theoretical landscape of linguistics.

First, formal grammar, epitomised by the successive iterations of generative grammar, maintains the original (to a large extent structuralist and Harrisian) ideal of a semantically minimalist grammatical description, or at least one focusing on the formal aspects of language structure.

Second, formal semantics embraces the idea that meaning is essential to language, but describes that meaning consistently in the representational and conceptual framework of formal logic. In a modular conception of formal grammar, a formal semantic module might latch onto the formal grammatical description produced by a formal grammar module (very much like the "semantic component" of the *Aspects* model). But in a more outspoken form, formal semantics takes shape as a meaning-based categorial grammar, thus more or less achieving the ideal of a semantic syntax first formulated (but unsuccessfully enacted) by the Generative Semanticians. In all of these guises, the meaning conception of formal semantics is truth-theoretical i.e. it is confined to describing how sentences can be compositionally assigned truth conditions, i.e. the conditions that made a sentence true in a referential model of the world.

Third, cognitive semantics shares a focus on meaning with formal semantics, but does not participate in the primacy of formalisation that is common to formal grammar and formal semantics. In addition, it rejects the truth theoretical framework formal semantics as too restrictive, in favour of a psychological and pragmatic conception of meaning. And as we have seen when the cognitive semantic movements took its quantitative turn, it contributed in a specific way to expanding the scope of distributional semantics.

So, the generativist debate that is to some extent a legacy of Harris's insistence on semantic minimalism led to three different positions with regard to the question of meaning: continuing the tradition in the form of a semantically minimal formal grammar, prioritizing meaning within the

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constraints of logical semantics, and going all out for a pragmatic conception of meaning. From this point of view, the path of Harris's influence is rather ironic; it results from a switch to a maximalist conception of meaning that was triggered indirectly, through the internal tensions in the Chomskyan framework, by Harris's semantic minimalism.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, the pathways of influence described in these pages are summarised in Fig. 2.

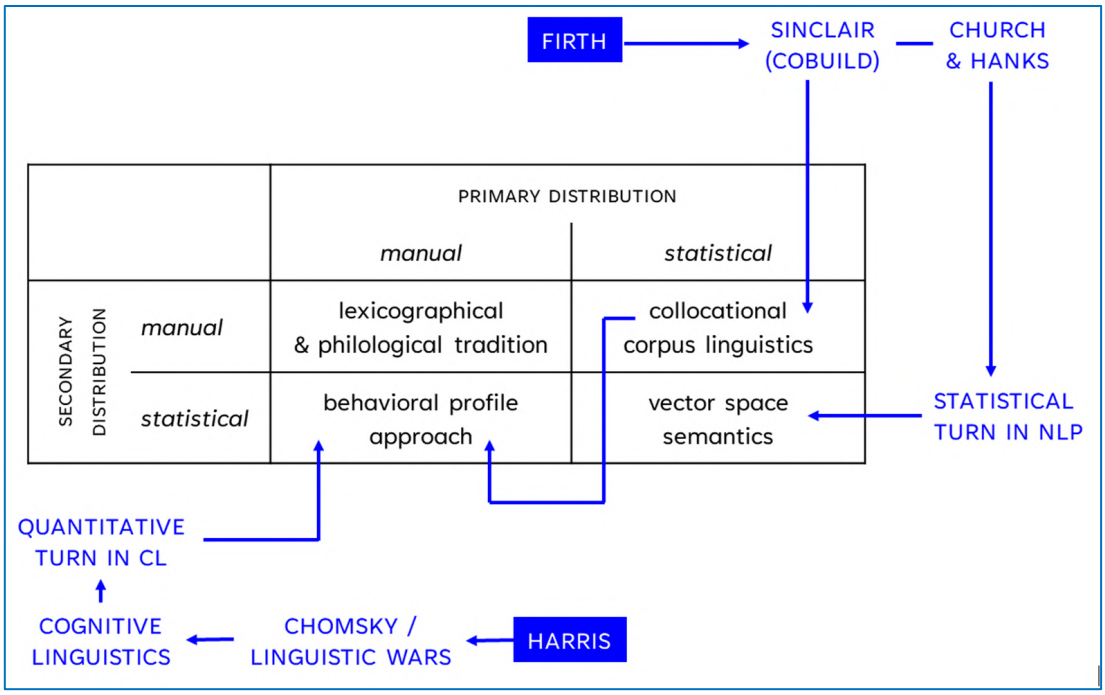

Figure 2. The influence of Firth and Harris on the development of distributional semantics

The least it shows is that the impact of Firth and Harris on distributional semantics is complex and indirect, and can only be well understood against a broad conception of distributional semantics, i.e. one that recognises its internal diversity. Against that background, the influence of Firth on distributional corpus approaches in a broad sense is clearly recognizable, while at the same time neither Firth nor Harris is a direct forefather of computational distributional semantics. The figure thus provides a correction to a simplistic, largely ritual reference to Harris and Firth. Yes, taken out of context "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" and "Difference of meaning correlates with difference of distribution" are useful and fitting signposts to introduce distributional semantics. But to be true to itself, distributional semantics should also put back these aphorisms in their original context, and explore the complexities that hide behind a pithiness that is as deceptive as it is attractive.

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Abbreviations

LLM – Large Language Model

NLP – Natural Language Processing

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 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

COGNITIVE INTERPRETATION OF VISUAL METAPHOR: THE INTERFACE OF RELEVANCE THEORY, CONCEPTUAL BLENDING, AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORIES

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Received: 7.10.2024 **Reviewed:** 20.11.2024 and 4.12.2024

Similarity Index: 0%

Bibliographic description: Kravchenko, N. (2025). Cognitive interpretation of visual metaphor: The interface of relevance theory, conceptual blending, and conceptual metaphor theories. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 37-53. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.03

Abstract: The paper introduces the hybrid method for analyzing visual metaphor, which integrates approaches from Relevance Theory, Conceptual Blending, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The analysis relies on a visual metaphor that, in terms of conceptual integration, represents Multiple-Scope Networks. The article proposes specific modifications to explanatory tools of Relevance Theory, such as ad hoc concepts, emergent properties, and meta-representations, considering the cognitive processing of visual metaphors.

Keywords: visual metaphor, Relevance Theory, Conceptual Blending, Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

1. Introduction

Ad Foolen (2019, p. 39, 44) rightly notes that pragmatics and cognitive studies are being recontextualized toward each other. Due to the efforts of modern cognitive linguistics to shift toward the socio-pragmatic dimension, it is increasingly converging with pragmatics. This article attempts to explain the interpretation of visual metaphor through the use of a hybrid analytical method that combines explanatory tools from Relevance Theory (RT), Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT), and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The research focus is justified by the observation that Relevance Theory alone does not provide exhaustive answers to several questions arising during the inference of metaphorical meanings – for example, how emergent properties of a metaphor arise, or how different levels interact within complex metaphorical structures. Conceptual Blending and

Conceptual Metaphor Theory offer structural and cognitive mechanisms that can aid us in understanding the processes of creating and adapting ad hoc concepts from RT, adapting ad hoc properties to purpose, and partially mapping one conceptual domain onto another. The idea of enhancing Relevance Theory (RT) with the tools of Cognitive Metaphor Theory has been suggested in several works. For example, researchers have noted that mapping can access the contextual assumptions of utterances (Gibbs & Tendahl 2009), enabling the hearer to obtain as many cognitive effects as possible following a path of least processing effort (Romeo & Soria 2014: 502). Conversely, a relevance-theoretic approach "leads us to the more appropriate way to carry out the matching of connected relations from source to target" (op. cit.). It can enrich the research mechanisms of CIT and CMT by explaining how the current context and cognitive goals influence the selection and interpretation of metaphorical mappings and blends, how ambiguity in metaphorical mappings is resolved depending on context and relevance, and why certain metaphorical mappings or blends are more preferred in certain contexts, corresponding to cognitive economy and maximum relevance – taking into account the cognitive expectations and assumptions of the interpreter.

In several studies, deriving metaphorical meaning equates to searching for implicatures and other cognitive effects (Bambini & Domaneschi 2023; Raoud 2022) along with considering varying levels of cognitive effort in processing metaphorical references and predications (Carston & Yan 2023). Regarding visual metaphors, attempts were made to link the levels of explicature and implicature in their interpretation with various stages of blending processes, evaluating the success or failure of metaphorical advertising according to sequentially applied criteria: "the level of metaphorical polysemy and ambiguity", "the presence of relevant interpretive context", and "the level of optimal innovativeness" (Kravchenko & Yudenko 2021). Attempts were also made to examine multimodal advertising in terms of ostensive stimuli triggering interpretive hypotheses on the cognitive processing of metaphor and the restoration of implicature in the blend (Kravchenko & Yudenko, 2023). Extended visual metaphors containing several sub-metaphors were explored in a similar vein, using an analysis algorithm that connects Grice's inferential pragmatics, interpretive hypotheses guiding conceptual integration in multiple blends that arise from the processing of a single metaphor, and contextual assumptions related to the cognitive context of brand values (Kravchenko et al. 2024; Kravchenko & Zhykharieva 2023).

The novelty of the article lies in the fact that visual metaphors have not yet been studied in terms of their cognitive processing and the creation of relational structures between domains from the perspective of a comprehensive approach that integrates elements from all the three theories. The article introduces new modifications to the Relevance Theory toolkit, specifically regarding primary

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and secondary ad hoc concepts derived through multistage inference, and metarepresentations as conceptual structures within the cognitive context of the viewer, which are "held" for testing propositional format representations. These modifications are discussed in detail in the methodological section of the article.

2. Literature review

In theoretical and methodological terms, the article relies on the study of metaphor within the framework of Relevance Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory.

2.1 Metaphor from the Perspective of Relevance Theory

According to RT, the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure (Wilson & Sperber 2004: 259) involves following a path of least effort to compute cognitive effects and test various interpretive hypotheses (such as disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, enrichments, and loosening) in order of their accessibility until the interpretation meets the current expectations of relevance. During processing, the addressee follows the path of least cognitive effort and completes the interpretation when they reach an optimal balance between the effort expended and positive cognitive effects. The relevance-theoretical approach interprets metaphor in the same way as other loose uses of non-metaphorical language (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 233-237), with a broad range of weak implicatures that are derived at the propositional level and prompt further processing of metaphor until it meets relevance expectations (Wilson & Sperber 1995: 222). In metaphor analysis, RT employs explanatory tools such as ad hoc concepts, emergent properties, and metarepresentations (Carston 2010a; 2012; Romero & Soria 2014; Stöver 2010; Wilson & Carston 2008).

'Ad-hoc concepts' are defined as concepts that are not linguistically given, but constructed pragmatically by hearers in the process of utterance interpretation "in response to specific expectations of relevance raised in specific contexts" (Carston 2002: 322). An ad hoc concept extends or narrows the scope of a source concept by manipulating the associated encyclopedic information in order to metaphorically adapt the source to the target and partially map one conceptual domain onto the other. To construct an ad hoc concept, the interpreter selects relevant ad hoc properties from either the logical or encyclopedic entry (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995: 86) of the source concept. The logical entries specifying the logical relations that the concept has with other concepts (Vega Moreno 2007: 46) are finite, relatively stable, independent of speakers and times, and not "fully complete" (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995: 88). The encyclopedic entry contains information about the denotation of the concept, including assumptions, cultural beliefs, and personal experiences stored in the form of propositional representations, scenarios or mental images, which are in constant flux (Sperber &

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Wilson 1986/1995: 89, 93). In the terminology of Rubio-Fernandez (2008: 381-382), ad hoc properties are divided into core and non-core. Core properties correspond to a core semantic interpretation of the word, which would be constant across contexts. Non-core properties are activated in those contexts where they are relevant for interpretation. In turn, core and non-core ad hoc characteristics correlate with context-independent and context-dependent properties (Barsalou 1982). The paper will use the terms ***core*** and ***non-core properties***, as they allow us to indicate the strong and weak association of the chosen ad hoc characteristics with the source concept and, accordingly, are associated with strong or weak implicatures.

However, ad hoc concepts are not sufficient as an explanatory tool for deriving meaning in "category crossing" metaphors, where a literal interpretation of the predicate is incompatible with a literal interpretation of the subject (Wilson & Carston 2008: 14). In such cases, inference is proposed as a process of mutual adjustment of explicit content, context, and contextual implications, resulting in the emergent properties of the metaphor. The derivation of such properties determines the inferential transition from the encoded concept to the communicated concept and from the communicated concept to implicatures (op. cit.: 19).

Carston (2010) proposes a slightly different model for the inference of meaning in "category crossing" metaphors, which includes a dual processing approach that combines propositional and metarepresentational levels. The idea of metarepresentations is further developed in Stöver's (2010) research, which distinguishes two types of structures at the metarepresentational level: categorization-based (conceptual metaphors) and sensory-based (undifferentiated representations based on sensorimotor experience related to emotions and feelings). The inclusion of conceptual metaphors in the metarepresentational level does not align, in our view, with Carston's idea of metarepresentations, which are rather understood as imagistic representations that do not fit into conventional structures. Furthermore, the integration of categorization-based and sensory-based representations at the same metarepresentational level seems questionable, given their differences in formation mechanisms, activation, level of structuring, stability, etc. However, the discussion of the mental architecture of the metarepresentational module is beyond the scope of this study.

The article will use the term "metarepresentation" in its first meaning, referring to categorization-based structures, utilizing these structures (conceptual metaphors) as relevant cognitive assumptions for testing hypotheses about permissible correlations between the source and target. This approach aligns, in our opinion, with Carston's idea that metarepresenting is held for *further processing* – of inspection of implications and associations (Carston 2010). That is, metarepresentations do not

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directly participate in inferences but assess them if relational relationships of ad hoc properties with the target can activate general-level conceptual structures, which become a cognitively relevant mechanism for confirming implicit assumptions. Modifications to such RT concepts as ad hoc concepts, emergent properties, and metarepresentations are proposed in the methodology of the study. In turn, the involvement of metarepresentations in Conceptual Blending processes is explained by their role as part of the generic space, which includes abstract structures and elements that are common to all input spaces.

2.2 Metaphor from the perspective of Conceptual Integration Theory

According to CIT, a conceptual integration network includes a set of mental spaces where processes of conceptual blending occur (Fauconnier & Turner 1998): input spaces, containing structures of elements to be integrated; a generic space, including abstract structures and elements that are common to all input spaces; and a blended space, which selects elements from inputs and combines them into unique structures not present in the inputs. Cross-space mappings as a mechanism for establishing connections between inputs and creating a foundation for integration include conceptual processes such as matching and counterpart connections, selective projection from the inputs, composition, completion, and elaboration (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 47-48). The formation of a blend begins with Composition – the integration of projected elements from the inputs into the blended space, and continues with Completion – the addition of missing elements or relationships to the blend based on prior experience or knowledge. In the Elaboration stage, the blend undergoes further development through its application to new contexts or situations, to other conceptual domains, scenario construction, and so on.

Relations within the network are defined by principles of optimality as a set of constraints on the process of conceptual integration (Fauconnier & Turner 2000; 2002): (1) Integration Principle: representations in the blend can be manipulated as a single mental whole; (2) Topology Principle: the relational structure is preserved throughout the network; (3) Network Principle: consistency and compatibility of all projections must be maintained; (4) Unpacking Principle: the ability to recover input spaces from elements and connections in the blended space; (5) Relevance Principle: any element in the blend acquires meaning even if it is not present in the input spaces' structure; (6) Metonymic Compression Principle: compression of the "distance" between elements in the blend. Alongside the "compression" of what is inherently dispersed, the blend also performs the "unpacking" of what is compressed (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 119).

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Structural connections when projecting elements from inputs into the blended space are based on vital relations: Change, Identity, Time, Space, Cause-Effect, Part-Whole, Representation, Role, Analogy, Disanalogy, Property, Similarity, Category, Intentionality, and Uniqueness (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 101). These relations may undergo compression from one into another – e.g., Analogy into Category or Identity, Cause-Effect into Part-Whole, Identity into Uniqueness. The types of networks vary in increasing complexity, including: (1) Simplex Networks: one space contains a role structure, while another fills it with values; (2) Mirror Networks: each mental space has a shared organizing framework, such as in spaces related to the split self; (3) Single-Scope Networks: dominated by one input space, which establishes the structure for integration, filling the structure of the other input; (4) Double-Scope Networks: both input spaces have different frames and a combination of both frames becomes the organizing frame for the blend; (5) Multiple-Scope Networks: feature multiple levels of input spaces. For analysis in the article, we have chosen a visual metaphor that is processed as a Multi-Scope with three inputs, as such a metaphorical structure allows for demonstrating the potential of complementing the Relevance Theory approach with tools from CIT and CM.

Despite the differences in approaches to metaphor in cognitive linguistics – focused on cognitive motivation, conceptual organization, and inference patterns – and the relevance-theoretical approach, which emphasizes the role of context in the adjustment of concepts, they are not mutually exclusive, since both approaches involve the conceptual adjustment of encoded information. Foolen notes that contemporary research clearly demonstrates "a wider movement aiming at the exchange and integration of Pragmatics on the one hand and Cognitive Linguistics" on the other (2019: 21). Productive for an integrative approach is the idea of combining the principle of relevance with mapping (Romero & Soria 2007; 2014). According to this idea, mapping is formed based on searching for properties that allow the listener to achieve the maximum cognitive effects while following the path of least effort in processing. Positive cognitive effects are achieved through the unusual conceptualization of some propositional component, which depends on a mapping that modifies the cognitive environment by downplaying, adding, or strengthening certain properties of the target concept in an analogical way (Romero & Soria 2014: 502). The ad hoc concept, obtained as a result of the pragmatic adjustment of the source domain, forms the basis of mapping.

3. Methods

The article employs the method integrating CIT and CMT analysis models, which are combined with RT explanatory tools such as ad hoc concepts, emergent properties, and metarepresentations. The possibility of including stable knowledge structures – conceptual metaphors – in the integrative analysis model can be explained as follows. From the perspective of CIT, we proceed from the idea

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that, despite the dynamic nature of processing as "dynamic cognitive work in real-time" (Fauconnier & Turner 2008: 368), there is an element of conventionality in the conceptual integration model, since constructed blends utilize the structure of more stable, complex, and traditional conceptual structures. They (a) can be part of the generic space, which includes abstract structures and elements common to all input spaces; (b) maintain relational structure throughout the network, satisfying the topology principle and correlating with Lakoff's (1990) invariance principle; (c) support the unpacking principle through the use of traditional metaphorical and metonymic mappings (Coulson & Oakley 2003). From a RT perspective, the inclusion of conceptual metaphors represented in long-term memory in integrative analysis models is suggested by the hybrid metaphor theories by Tendahl (2009) and Stöver (2010). The former theory is generally presented within cognitive linguistics but incorporates the ad hoc concepts from RT. The latter theory proposes a model for processing metaphors based on the relevance-theoretic principle of modularity, incorporating conceptual metaphors at the metarepresentational level of processing. Conceptual metaphors, when available, can be "held" as part of the cognitive context of the interpreter to check implications and associations.

The analysis algorithm for visual metaphor includes three parts, defining the three-component structure of the main part of the article:

1. Analysis of the visual metaphor within the framework of Conceptual Blending Theory.
2. Analysis of the same metaphor using the relevance-theoretical approach.
3. Integrative analysis combining tools from RT, CIT, and CMT.

The article proposes some modification of the metaphor analysis method used in RT, in particular, the derivation of primary and secondary ad hoc concepts when processing visual metaphors containing numerous or incongruent visual details. Primary concepts are inferred during the explicature stage, propositionally linking the source to the target. If the explicature does not account for certain visual details or does not fit the constraints of the local or encyclopedic context, secondary ad hoc concepts are inferred to allow for metaphorical adaptation of the source to the target. In this process, the assumption associated with the primary ad hoc concept is maintained, interacting with contextual assumptions and weak implicatures from secondary ad hoc concepts.

A modification is also proposed concerning the possible connection between ad hoc concepts and the emergent properties of a metaphor. In the case of selecting a peripheral, context-dependent ad hoc property from the encyclopedic entry of the source concept, the ad hoc concept inferred on the basis of this property can, when aligned with the goal, generate an emergent property of metaphor. The

creation of other emergent properties may involve other peripheral ad hoc properties associated with the selected one or weak implicatures from secondary ad hoc concepts.

The integrative method for analyzing visual metaphors includes the following stages:

1. Derivation of Explicature – the inference of visually encoded inputs using reference assignment and enrichment.

2 (i). Construction of the ad hoc concept of the dominant input space (in case of integration as a Single-Scope network).

2 (ii). Inference of ad hoc concepts from two or more input spaces (in Double-Scope and Multi-Scope networks).

3 (i). Projection of ad hoc properties of the selected ad hoc concept into the blend as structures for integration; matching implicatures from the ad hoc concept of the dominant input with elements or relations from the structure of the non-dominant input; creating mappings in the Composition of the blend (in Single-Scope networks).

3 (ii). Projection of ad hoc properties of ad hoc concepts from two/multiple inputs into the blend as structures for integration – with the selection of matching for mappings in the Composition of the blend (in Double-Scope and Multi-Scope networks).

4 (i). Verifications of mappings for relevance to contextual constraints and generic-space conceptual metaphors from the viewer's cognitive context (if metarepresentations are available and relevant for maintaining mappings as assumptions) (in Single-Scope networks).

4 (ii). Verifications of mappings for relevance to generic-space metarepresentations and contextual constraints. If implicatures from ad hoc properties do not meet the presumption of optimal relevance due to contextual constraints, processing continues with the inference of secondary ad hoc concepts from inputs that satisfy constraints and are projected into the blend as emergent properties of the metaphor (in Double-Scope and Multi-Scope networks).

5 (i) Completion of the Blend: Selection of new ad hoc properties associated with the concept of the dominant input but not encoded by the verbal and visual codes of the metaphor. Projection of implicatures based on ad hoc properties into the blend, filling in additional structures from another input and forming new mappings. Inference of additional meanings (in Single-Scope networks).

5 (ii) Completion of the Blend: Selection from the encyclopedic entry of multiple input concepts of additional ad hoc properties, projected into the blend as new mappings (in Double-Scope and Multi-Scope networks), with the inference of possible emergent properties of the metaphor.

6. Elaboration of the Blend: Development and refinement of elements and connections based on the context processing related to the new conceptual domain accessible to interpreters, provided that its interaction with the blend requires minimal cognitive effort and delivers cognitive gains.

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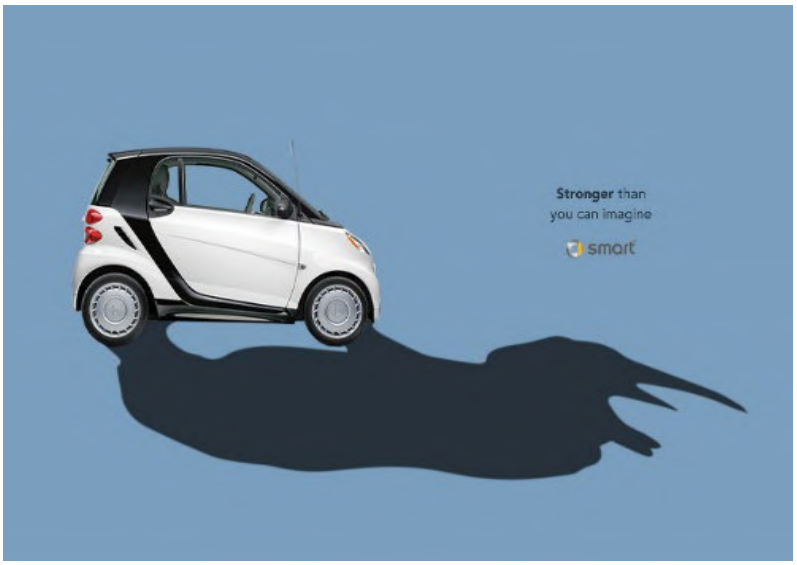
4. Results and discussion

4.1 Visual metaphor analysis within the framework of Conceptual Blending Theory.

By type of conceptual integration, the metaphor, visualized by Picture 1, refers to a Multiple-Scope network, which involves three inputs, the combination of which results in a blend.



Picture 1. Visual metaphor "Smart is Bison".
Source: https://www.behance.net/gallery/23874955/Print-Ads/modules/178130745

Input Space 1 (Smart): car, compact, small, maneuverable. Input Space 2 (Bison): animal, large, strong, enduring; power, wild nature, speed. Input Space 3 (Shadow): reflects the object, conceals or symbolizes its hidden properties. The Generic Space includes conceptual structures CARS ARE ANIMALS, EXTERNAL APPEARANCE IS COVER, ABILITIES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE, and image-schemes Force and Transformation, Container, Entity, and Surface. The integration of the inputs is based on the vital relations of Similarity, Property, Part-Whole, and Cause-Effect. The Smart input projects structural elements "compact, small" into the blend; the Bison input accounts for strength, power, and endurance; the Shadow input projects into the blend the ability to reflect the object, including its hidden, invisible properties.

The alignment of relations is possible based on the vital relationship of Properties, achieved in the blend through a series of compressions: metonymic compression "Shadow for Bison", "Shadow for Car", "Bison for Strength", reducing the mental distance between the car and its shadow, and ensuring compression in the blend: the bison stands for the car's strength. The projection of strength and power properties from the Bison input into the Car input, mediated by the Shadow input, visualizing the strength of both the animal and the car, resolves the conflict between physical size and power. Thus, the conflicting elements of the inputs are aligned on the Strength (Property) component, compressed

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into the vital Similarity relation, and projected into the blend as Car's Power Is Bison's Strength. Simultaneously, such a projection is supported by decompression in the blend based on the vital cause-effect relationship: if the bison is large, then it is powerful – if the shadow reflected by the car is as large as the bison's shadow, then the car is powerful. In other words, the car's shadow stands for its power (corresponding to the bison's strength).

At the same time, the new structure in the integrated space, A Car's Power Is a Bison's Strength, does not resolve the conflict between the input frames Car and Shadow. The visualization of the shadow instead of the animal becomes a stimulus for further conceptual integration, since car advertising often visualizes an animal that symbolizes cars. In this metaphor, the element 'invisibility' or 'hiddenness' is projected from the Shadow input, adding a new level of interpretation in accordance with the concept of shadow as a symbol of hidden properties and qualities (compare with linguistic metaphors like 'shadow economy', 'shadow side of the personality'). In this case, Part-Whole relations become vital, projected into the blend as the decompressive relation "the shadow is what is hidden" (in the car). The projection "Hides strength" is supported by the elements from Input 1 – small and compact – and the background knowledge that the power of a car is provided by its internal component, the engine, meaning that the power may not correspond to the visible form of the Smart car and may be hidden. The projection from Input Shadow – "shows the hidden property" – fills the frame structure of the Smart car, creating mappings: the Power of the Smart Car Is the Hidden Strength of the Bison; the Car's Appearance Is a Cover, hiding its strength. These mappings align with general-level conceptual metaphors in the generic space: ABILITIES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE and APPEARANCE IS COVER.

The Completion of the blend is possible by projecting onto the Car input such properties of the Bison as speed (runs faster than a horse), implying that the Smart car is faster than other cars whose power is measured in horsepower. The Elaboration of the blend is carried out as its Expansion – projecting from the Car input such properties of the Smart as high maneuverability, economy, etc., developing the blend with new elements: a small car combines power, maneuverability, and economy. The integration of the concepts encoded by the visual metaphor is presented in Fig. 1.

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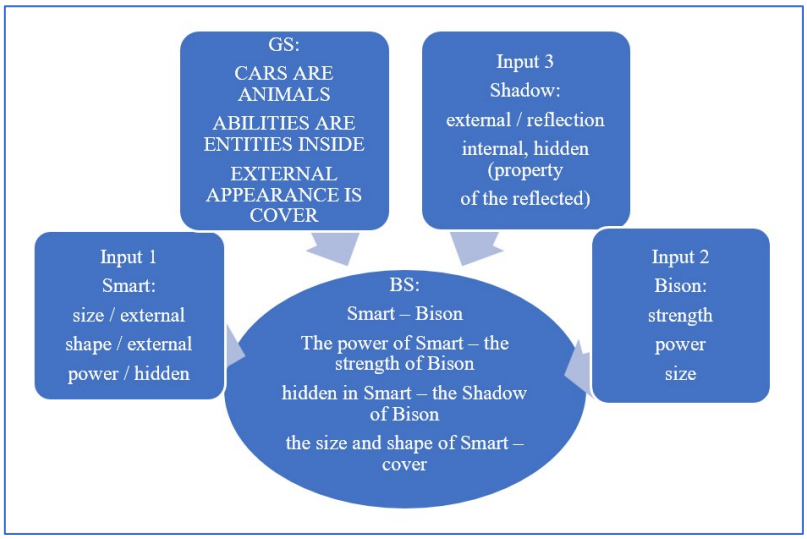

Figure 1. Conceptual integration in Multiple-Scope Networks. Source: Own processing

The integration corresponds to optimality principles. According to the unpacking principle, the depiction in the blend 'Smart car hides the strength of the Bison' unequivocally refers to such elements of the Shadow input as reflecting the hidden quality of the car, to such an element of the Bison input as strength, and to such an element of the Car input as the compactness of the Smart. According to the web principle, the relationship in the blend 'hides the strength of the Bison' is compatible with the strength element from the Bison input, coordinating with the element 'small with a big shadow' from the Car input and the element 'hidden' from the Shadow input. The blend equally satisfies the topology principle: the bison's strength is transferred to the compact car; the shadow projects the car's strength and the bison's strength; as well as the principle of integration – a small car hiding the strength of a powerful animal forms a holistic mental image. According to the relevance principle, the blended space includes elements relevant to the blending goal, i.e., allowing the explanation of the disproportion between the object and its shadow. The Metonymic Tightening occurs with the compression of roles, properties, and possessions, allowing the compression of the Smart to its Identity, hiding the strength of the Bison.

4.2 Visual metaphor analysis using the relevance-theoretical approach

The source (Bison) and the target (Smart Car) are visualized, with the Bison's shadow referring to the Smart Car. When processing the metaphor, the viewer initially hypothesizes about the explicature requiring minimal processing effort: Smart Car is a Bison. The reference assignment of the Bison to the Smart Car is ensured by visualizing the bison's shadow as the shadow of the car and is supported at the metarepresentational level by the conceptual metaphor A Machine Is an Animal. Assigning the shadow to the car aligns with core characteristics of shadow provided in the encyclopedic entry, such as being near the reflected object.

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However, the explicature decoding the target and source does not allow for inferring the metaphor's meaning, as the viewer needs to establish the basis for such a comparison of the Smart and the Bison. At this stage of processing, it is possible to infer the ad hoc concept Bison*, selecting from the encyclopedic entry of Bison an ad hoc property such as Strength, which is reinforced in the verbal anchor: "Stronger than you can imagine". Nevertheless, inferring the implicature that the strength of the car is equivalent to the strength of the bison does not yet meet the presumption of optimal relevance due to local-contextual and encyclopedic contextual constraints. In the local (visual) context, the shadow is larger than the car and does not replicate its shape, which aligns with the encyclopedic context – knowledge that the Smart Car is a small vehicle by design. Therefore, further processing in search of implicature here is triggered by a violation of the relevance maxim.

The inferential processing of the metaphor involves two interpretative hypotheses related to the search for relevance (with the first loosening "The power of the Smart is the Bison's strength" held in working memory) – to align the source with target. The first implicit premise, associated with the entry Car, utilizes the contextual assumption that power is attributed to what is "inside" the car (the engine), and, accordingly, "strength" may not correspond to its visible form, i.e., it might be invisible. Here, the second loosening occurs, deriving the ad hoc concept Strength* (invisible in the car). The second hypothesis, associated with the first, relates to the entry Shadow, treating this concept as a third loosening based on selecting from the encyclopedic entry such a non-core characteristic as invisible, hidden (cf. with the linguistic metaphor "to be in the shadow" as 'to be in a position of being unnoticed'). The ad hoc concept Shadow* (reflection of the invisible, hidden in the Smart) is inferred. The implicit assumption associated with the additional ad hoc concept Shadow* relates to the target as "reflecting the hidden strength in the Smart." The weak implicature is checked for relevance to the conceptual metaphor ABILITIES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE. In constructing both hypotheses about the implicit content of the metaphor, the ad hoc characteristics of Bison* (powerful and strong) are still retained in working memory. The ad hoc concept Shadow* allows for inferring the emergent property of the metaphor – the small car hides the strength of the bison, supported by the conceptual metaphor APPEARANCE IS COVER.

Thus, the inferential transition occurs as the process of the mutual alignment of the explicature (Smart is Bison), contextual implications, strong implicature, and two weak implicatures. The source properties inferred through the ad hoc concepts Bison* (strength), Strength* (invisible), and Shadow* (reflection of the invisible/strength) are metaphorically applicable to the target, becoming implicit assumptions for a strong implicature corresponding to the emergent properties of the metaphor: a

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small Smart hides the strength of a bison. This interpretation is optimally relevant, stopping metaphor processing.

The stages involved in the metaphor processing include:
1. The decoding of the explicature Smart is Bison and its verification through the metarepresentation CARS ARE ANIMALS.
2. The inference of the strong implicature based on the ad hoc concept Bison* (Strength).
3. The utilization of local context regarding the mismatch in size and shape of the shadow compared to the reflected object – Smart, and the encyclopedic context (Smart is a small car).
4. The inference of the weak implicature based on the ad hoc concept Strength* (invisible in the car) and verification of its relevance through the metarepresentation APPEARANCE IS COVER.
5. The inference of the weak implicature based on the ad hoc concept Shadow* (hidden strength in the Smart), checked at the metarepresentational level by the conceptual metaphor ABILITIES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE.
6. The inference of the optimally relevant implicature, i.e. the emergent property of the metaphor: the small Smart hides the strength of a bison, and the verification of its relevance through the metarepresentation APPEARANCE IS COVER.

4.3 Integrative analysis combining tools from Relevance Theory, Conceptual Blending, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The integrative analysis of the visual metaphor, combining methods from Relevance Theory, Conceptual Blending, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, involves six stages.
1. The decoding of the explicature "Smart is Bison" requiring minimal processing effort based on visualizing the bison's shadow as the shadow of the car. Testing the inference through the metarepresentation – conceptual metaphor CARS ARE ANIMALS and contextual assumption, based on the verbal anchor.
2. Continuing the processing with the search for a basis relevant for comparison. Inferring the ad hoc concept Bison* from Input 1, selecting from the encyclopedic entry of Bison the ad hoc property Strength*, which, to align with Input 2 "Smart", in turn, becomes the ad hoc concept Strength*, with the selection from its encyclopedic entry of the non-core ad hoc property "invisible", referring to what is inside. The relevance of this property is determined by three contextual assumptions associated with Input 3 (Smart Car): **encyclopedic**, including (a) power is attributed to what is "inside" the car (the engine), and, accordingly, "strength" may not correspond to its visible form; (b) the Smart Car is a small vehicle by design; and **local-contextual**, incorporating (c) the shadow is larger than the car and does not replicate its shape, marked by in the local (visual) context. The alignment of the ad hoc

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property "invisible" with the elements of the input Smart (size and shape) generates weak implicatures: the size and shape of the car – visible, the power – invisible.

3. The projection of the ad hoc properties of the selected concepts into the blend as structures for integration. From the input Bison, the structural elements such as size, strength, and power (visible) are mapped, whereas, from the input Smart, size, shape (visible, external), and power (hidden, invisible) are projected. Establishing matching for mappings in the Blend Composition: power of Smart – strength of Bison; hidden in Smart – Bison; power of Smart (invisible) – strength of Bison (visible).

4. Checking mappings for relevance using metarepresentations of the generic space and contextual constraints. The mappings are successfully tested by the conceptual metaphor ABILITIES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE, but do not match the presumption of optimal relevance, conflicting with the input Shadow. In terms of the principle of relevance, the conflict is explained by contextual constraints, i.e. the available encyclopedic information that the shadow should reflect the object, and its mismatch with the local visual context, namely the size of the shadow and its discrepancy with the shape of the reflected object, since the shadow represents not the car but the bison. The context processing directs the refinement of the blend to obtain the most relevant information. Resolving the uncertainty and confirming the existing assumptions is achieved through the inference of the secondary ad hoc concept Shadow* with the ad hoc property "reflection of the invisible, hidden" (supported by linguistic context, as in language metaphors like "shadow economy", "shadow side of personality", etc.). Expectations of relevance direct the interpreter's attention to certain aspects of the blend, stimulating the establishment of correspondences between (a) the previously inferred ad hoc concepts Bison* (strength) and Strength* (hidden), (b) the mappings performed through their ad hoc properties – Power of Smart – Strength of Bison; Hidden in Smart – Bison; Power of Smart (invisible) – Strength of Bison (visible), and (c) the ad hoc concept Shadow* with the ad hoc property "reflection of the invisible, hidden". The result of this interaction is the inference of a strong implicature: 'The car's appearance is a cover, hiding its strength projected by the shadow'. This inference is supported in the generic space by the conceptual metaphors ABILITIES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE and APPEARANCE IS COVER.

5. In the Completion stage of the blend, additional ad hoc properties are selected from the encyclopedic entry of Bison, such as speed (runs faster than a horse), which are core but not encoded by the verbal and visual code of the metaphor. The new ad hoc concept Bison* (speed) creates an implicature that is projected into the blend, filling the structure of the Smart frame with the mapping "Speed of Smart" – "Speed of Bison". A new structure emerges in the blend: the Smart car is faster than other cars whose power is measured in horsepower.

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6. The elaboration of the blend, as its extension is possible through the selection of core ad hoc characteristics from the encyclopedic entry of Smart, such as high maneuverability, fuel efficiency, etc. The implicature from the new ad hoc concept Smart* develops the emergent structure "hides strength within" with new elements: a small car combines power, maneuverability, and economy.

4. Conclusions

The hybrid method for analyzing visual metaphor integrates approaches from Relevance Theory, Conceptual Blending Theory, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Metarepresentations used for processing metaphors in Relevance Theory as structures "held" for the process of verifying implications and associations include conceptual metaphors, which simultaneously constitute categorization-based structures of the metaphor's generic space. Primary ad hoc concepts, adapted to the goal, form the first group of mappings in the blend's Composition. If such processing is insufficient to align with contextual assumptions of local (visual details) and encyclopedic contexts, secondary ad hoc concepts are inferred based on non-core ad hoc properties from the encyclopedic entries of the input concepts. The non-primary ad hoc properties of the inputs are projected into the blend, providing structures and elements for another group of mappings in its Composition, ensuring metaphorical alignment with contextual constraints. The groups of mappings are evaluated for relevance by metarepresentations, which, in the conceptual integration network, form the structures of the generic space. At the stage of Blend Completion, missing elements are added to the blend, based on the inference of additional non-core ad hoc properties of input concepts. These properties are not encoded verbally or visually but are derived from the previous knowledge of the interpreters and project implicatures into the blend, matching structures from other inputs. New mappings in Completion may create emergent properties of the metaphor. At the stage of Elaboration, contexts related to new conceptual domains are processed.

List of abbreviations

CIT – Conceptual Integration Theory

CMT **–** Conceptual Metaphor Theory

RT **–** Relevance Theory

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 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

IDIOGESTS: GESTURAL IDIOLECTS REVEAL VARIATION IN DISCURSIVE FOCUS*

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Received: 01.02.2025 **Reviewed:** 20.02.2025 and 14.03.2025

Similarity Index: 5%

Bibliographic description: Lemmens, M. (2025). Idiogests: Gestural idiolects reveal variation in discursive focus. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 54-69. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.04

Abstract: This paper discusses a particular kind of gestural interspeaker variation, revealing the individual speaker's "gestural idiolects", which we term *idiogests*. While partly attributable to *ad hoc* individual preferences and style, our data show that these idiogests are also indicative of a certain semantic focus or perspective that the speaker takes on the scene and maintains throughout the discourse. Our study is based on elicited picture descriptions by L1 speakers of Belgian Dutch.

Keywords: co-verbal gestures, gestural idiolects, idiogests.

1. Introduction

The last decades have witnessed an increased interest in a multimodal approach to language where in particular co-verbal gestures have received an increasing amount of attention. One of the basic claims of gesture researchers (e.g., Kendon 2004; McNeil 2000; 2014) is that co-verbal gestures should not be regarded as decorative elements that merely serve a rhetorical or

* This article is written for the special issue of the journal *Lege Artis* in honour of Ad Foolen's 75th birthday. As Ad Foolen's work testifies of a strong interactional focus, the topic of idiogests discussed here seems quite appropriate. This article is the first publication of my idea about the existence of idiogests.

emphatic purpose. Certain gestures, such as beats, do indeed relate to emphasis – and are therefore also probably more recurrent in persuasive language (be it public or private), but most co-verbal gestures are considered to be part and parcel of the linguistic and/or communicative act. The planned, communicative confluence of language and gesture is what McNeil (2000) calls "growth points". That language and gesture are conceptualised as a single communicative unit is evidenced by the fact that gestures either perfectly align with or precede the words in the verbal stream that they semantically correspond with. For example, an iconic gesture representing a tree during a verbal recount will typically coincide with the word *tree*. Similarly, beat gestures serving to emphasize elements in the discourse typically coincide with prosodic word stress (in the case of languages that have (variable) word-stress). Kelly et al. (2010) propose the "integrated-systems hypothesis" which not only holds that speech and gesture are tightly integrated, but also interact so as to enhance language comprehension. Arguing for gestures and language to be a single unit of meaning or communicative intent does not, however, mean that they are essentially the same: language expresses meaning sequentially via (conventional) symbols; gestures express meaning holistically using (possibly iconic) images. In sum, language and gesture both conspire to make meaning, and suppressing one to the benefit of the other leads to impoverished speech production and understanding.

Such a unified account aligns quite nicely with a cognitive, usage-based view on language which posits that 'language' is learned in and emerges from concrete usage-events, predominantly in interaction with other speakers. These usage-events are by definition rich in detail where verbal and gestural elements combine. Iconic gestures usually feed the interaction by facilitating the expression and comprehension of the descriptions of reality (e.g., by expressing their shape or size) or ideas about reality (e.g., metaphorical conceptualization of time as a directed line moving from left to right). Pragmatic gestures, ranging from hand gestures over shoulder shrugs to frowning one's eyebrows, contribute to expressing and understanding the speaker's epistemic stance. Via cognitive processes of abstraction and pattern-finding, coupled with intention reading, language users build more schematic structures of these usage-events that eventually function as patterns allowing the creation of novel utterances. If the integrated-systems hypothesis holds, then language and gesture are both learned in such usage events, via similar processes.

 ISSN 2453-8035

Despite all these cognitive and communicative benefits, there is considerable variation in speakers' individual gestural behaviour, especially concerning the frequency with which speakers gesture: some speakers gesture a lot, others do not. Concerning such individual differences in gestural behaviour, Gullberg et al. (2008: 165) observe that "[m]any aspects of individual variation in adult, native gesturing are not well understood, such as why some speakers gesture more than others, and why the same speaker sometimes chooses to gesture and sometimes not". There have been some suggestions in the literature about the causes for such individual differences. Some of this variability can be attributed to the usual socio-linguistic variables, such as the speaker's age (Alibali et al. 2009), to the speaker's culture (Kendon 2004; Kita 2009), or to the speaker's individual traits (cf. Hostetter and Potthoff 2012 who see gesture production in relation to "extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience"). Psychopathology and cognitive disorders also play a role (Gillstrom & Hare 1988; Bello et al. 2004). Hostetter and Alibali (2007) point out that the frequency of gestures can also be related to the speaker's communicative skills: lower verbal frequency (both in L1 and in L2) usually leads to more gesturing, even if it has also been pointed out that different levels of proficiency may also lead to different *types* of gestures (rather than their mere frequency), where one typically sees a change from lexical-representation to emphatic/rhythmic gestures as proficiency increases (Kida 2005; Lemmens & Perrez 2017; Taranger & Coupier 1984).

Most of the studies mentioned above center around the presence of absence of co-verbal gestures. This article presents a qualitative study of another type of gestural interspeaker variation, i.e., the repeated or sustained use of exactly the same kind of gesture used by a given individual, which could be termed a "gestural idiolect". We will use the term *idiogests* to refer to such gestural idiolectal variation, a term we borrow from the work by choreographer Brannigan, who defines this as "the gestural parameters, the performative domain, the corporal specificity of the dance star" (2011: 142). Also, with respect to co-verbal gestures, idiogests are attributable to a personal gestural style which may have to do with the speaker's "corporal specificity" (e.g., the way a speaker bends their fingers given their physiology) or particular motor habits that a speaker may have settled on in the course of their life (for whatever reason). However, the elicited data that our study is based on suggest that some of these idiogests do find a semantic or discursive motivation and reveal a speaker's (temporary) perspective on a given scene. It is this perspective, we hypothesize, that triggers speakers to reproduce a high

degree of recurrence for particular types of gestures, leading to a certain 'gestural style'. In particular, we refer to recurrent formal similarities (or even near-identity) of gestures across different contexts that somehow can still be related semantically or discursively. At first sight, idiogests may seem similar to what McNeill (2000) has called "catchments" (recurrences of gesture form features over a stretch of discourse), but we will show that they are still different.

In the next section, we will briefly describe the data on which our analysis is based, followed by a more detailed description of the observed idiogests.

2. Material and methods

The data on which this article is based are drawn from elicited descriptions of five pictures from two wordless picture books for children. Each picture depicts a different kind of environment: (1) a clothing shop for kids, (2) a shoe store, (3) a bedroom where a family is getting dressed for a party, (4) a street market, and (5) a butcher's shop. Each picture thus has a typical array of objects, respectively clothes (Picture 1), shoes and shoeboxes (Picture 2), furniture and clothes (Picture 3), vegetables (Picture 4; at three vegetable stands), and meat and delicacies (Picture 5). However, they also show people interacting with objects, such as a shop assistant carrying shoe boxes, a market woman holding up a bunch of carrots, a woman folding clothes on a counter, people trying on shoes, a man tying his tie in front of the mirror, or a butcher slicing meat or laying it on a dish.

The subjects who participated in the quasi-experiments were asked to describe each picture, one after the other, on the basis of a lead-question, targeting particular entities. For example, for Picture 3 (the one on which this article is based, see Figure 1), the lead-question was *Here we're interested in the clothes and the furniture. Can you tell me where they are?*

 ISSN 2453-8035

Figure 1. Picture 3: the bedroom (Source: Capdevila 1984, reproduced with permission)

The resulting descriptions are (short) descriptive monologues, told to the experimenter, situated in front of them. The subjects were presented one picture at a time, in a random order for different participants to avoid any order cross-over effect. The subjects were seated on a chair without armrests. Before starting the description, they could hold the picture for a while to study it and then were asked to place it on a stand placed slightly to the right of them (at about 1m distance) and start their description. The productions were video-taped and transcribed verbatim. Afterwards the data were annotated in ELAN, which also allows analysis of co-verbal gestures.

This "picture description project" has been conceptualised as a larger contrastive study where speakers of different languages would be involved (French, English, Dutch, and Swedish) and learners of these languages (see also Lemmens 2021: Ch. 9; Lemmens and Perrez 2012). Given the time and labour-intensive process of gesture coding, for this paper, only the descriptions of Picture 3 by Dutch speakers were considered. There were 12 participants who participated for Dutch; they were undergraduates at the University of Leuven, Belgium (following a course in L2 Swedish taught by the author). Of these 12 participants, one speaker (DU-L1-01)[1] was excluded because of the simple fact that he never made any gestures at all for picture 3 (but was similarly "gesturally mute" for the other pictures), apart from occasionally tapping the fingertips of his spread-open hands against each other (see Fig. 2) which, however, was not semantically meaningful; it merely indicates a slight degree of nervousness.

 ISSN 2453-8035

Figure 2. Non-communicative holding gesture (speaker DU-L1-01)

Strikingly, this particular participant was also verbally quite modest, having very short descriptions and speaking in a quiet voice, in line with his more introvert character.

3. Idiogests in oral picture descriptions

While analyzing the gestures in the elicited descriptions of picture 3 in more detail, I couldn't help being struck by an undeniable recurrence of the same (or highly similar) gestures with one and the same speaker, to the extent that I could even assign particular names to the participants, like "the mute" (mentioned above), "the oscillator", "the pulser", "the swayer", etc. What started out as a humorous description of the participants, slowly developed into a more serious consideration of these speaker consistencies in their gestural behaviour, giving rise to the idea of idiogests as defined above. Looking at the gestural occurrences in more detail, as well as at the verbal stream with which they were aligned, it became clear that these idiogests were possibly more than just formal, stylistic variations between speakers or differences related to gestural motor habits. The latter would be similar to repeated, non-communicative gestural habits, like repeatedly scratching one's head, rubbing one's ear, or adjusting one's hair. Rather, these idiogests also seemed to reflect what the speaker tended to focus on while describing the picture, which thus provides a further, context-specific motivation for the formal similarity. For example, as we will describe in more detail below, the "oscillator" is recurrently using an oscillating gesture to express a binary locative relation, the "pulser" is using a flick of her hand each time she mentions an entity that she feels is relevant in answer to the leading question (the

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location of the clothes and the furniture). In the following section, we present a few of these idiogests in more detail, organised via the labels that we have assigned to the participants; after these descriptions we will have a more general discussion.

3.1 The oscillator: expressing locative semantics

The recurrent gesture used by this speaker (DU-L1-03) is a gesture with the thumb and index finger in a C-shape (see Fig. 3) which comes in two variants: one in which index and thumb oscillate in a fairly fast movement, the other where they do not oscillate. As illustrated by the three stills in Fig. 3, the gesture is made with the (dominant) right hand, but occasionally also with the left hand, or even with both hands.

Figure 3. The oscillator (DU-L1-03); three different gestures LH, RH, LRH

What is striking is that the verbal stream with which the oscillating variant of this gesture is aligned invariably talks about the location of a particular entity, mostly in the form of a Basic Locative Construction (Wilkins & Levinson 1998) of the form *Figure* + <*verb*> + <*relator*> + *Ground*, e.g., *de kast staat naast de deur* 'the cabinet is (litt. stands) next (to) the door'. The oscillating C-gesture thus visually relates the located entity (Figure: *cabinet*) vis-à-vis the reference point (Ground: *door*). Moreover, these C-gestures are typically not located in the center space which represents the space being described (the bedroom), but more in the higher periphery (left or right). This indicates that the speaker's gesture is not anchoring the location of the entities in the represented space, but expresses merely the proximal relationship between the Figure and the Ground. This is why, in other work (see Lemmens & Perrez 2017), we have made the systematic distinction between gestures that express locative semantics *in abstracto* (typically a holding gesture made at the height of the chest) and 'true' locative gestures that

situate (i.e., anchor) an entity in the gesture space (typically situated a bit lower but also with a downward movement). In terms of Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, the latter type of gesture could be seen as "grounding predications" which he defines as follows:

"*a grounded instance [is] an instance distinguished from others and situated with respect to hearer/speaker knowledge* […] *Semantically, [grounding predications]* **anchor the type conception in time (relative to the ground)** *and tie it to specific participants, thereby converting it into the conception of an instance*". (Langacker 1991: 33, emph. added)[2]

Applied to our example, the semantic notion PROXIMITY, also verbally expressed by *next to,* remains a gestural type, and is not translated into an "instance" as it is not spatio-temporally tied to a location (grounded) in the gesture space. Such grounding occurs when the gesture (with a downward movement) situates the two entities in the gesture space, for example if the speaker had pointed at a specific location in the gesture space (e.g., to the right) simultaneous to saying *next to*. This would identify the location of either the Figure (cabinet) or the Ground (door), or both. The typical gestural expression of such locative grounding of 3D objects (in our data at least) is via a CLAW-gesture, palm down and fingers lightly spread as if holding a tennis ball), as shown by the two (different) gestures in Fig. 4 (for another speaker as the oscillator never made such a gesture).

Figure 4. Non-communicative holding gesture (DU-L1-06)

The oscillating idiogest is invariably *not* grounded which strengthens the idea that this is a mere semantic focus on the proximity itself, which is further highlighted via the oscillating back and

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forth where the thumb represents one entity and the index the other; the wiggling expresses the (enduring) spatio-temporal interrelationship between Figure and Ground.

The non-oscillating variant is less frequent, but invariably aligns with the Figure; it could thus be interpreted as representing the Figure as a 3D-object, yet one which is still in a relationship with the Ground.

In and by itself, the occurrence of a C-shape, typically oscillating gesture is not a remarkable fact. What is remarkable, however, is the ***recurrence*** of this gesture over different contexts (i.e., with different Figure-Ground relationships); on a total of 18 gestures that occur in his description of the bedroom scene, 8 are this oscillating C-gesture (about every 2.5 gestures is this idiogest) and they invariably co-occur with semantically similar verbal expressions such as *next to*, *to the left/right*, etc. In other words, throughout the description, the speaker (surely unconsciously) maintains a semantic focus on the (non-grounded) locative relationship between the Figure and the Ground which makes this oscillating C-idiogest more than 'just' a stylistic feature.

3.2 The swayer: representing 3D-objects

The swayer (DU-L1-02) is, as the name suggests, using an idiogest where she sways with both hands in a wavy downward movement, which she does whenever she mentions one of the type objects that she feels are to be mentioned in response to the leading question ("locate clothes/furniture") (See Fig. 5).

Figure 5. The Swayer (three different phases of single gesture)

 ISSN 2453-8035

This idiogest has representational value since it represents, in a somewhat unclear way, the three-dimensional objects that she refers to. While the gestures are representational, they are not fully iconic as the swaying gesture is only an approximation of what could be regarded as a visualization of the entities' formal properties (like their shape). Half of the 10 gestures she makes in her description of picture 3 are these swaying idiogests, and they co-occur with lexical items referring to objects such as cabinets or clothes. Precisely the latter is important, since the idiogests occur mostly when mentioning the two types of entities that figure in the instructions (furniture and clothes), which are thus the key elements to be mentioned in the description if the speaker wants to perform the description task correctly. As such, the idiogest acquires a pragmatic value as well, highlighting the fact that she is complying to the instructions. The (fairly monologic) setting is important here, as the participants are describing pictures to the experimenter (standing behind the camera) and on his instruction, often also looking at him after having completed a particular locative event. In sum, her idiogests serve a dual purpose: they (somewhat sloppily) represent the located objects, but they also express a pragmatically motivated compliance to the experimenter's instructions. Despite the monologic nature of the description (the experimenter never comments or reacts on their discourse), the speaker adds recurrent gestural expressions that serve an interactional function. This is unsurprising, as it is at the heart of what we use language and gesture for. The interactional function is even more outspoken in the following series of idiogests, discussed together as they serve a similar purpose.

3.3 The indexer, the pulser and the beater: a pure pragmatic value

The idiogests produced by the indexer (DU-L1-12), the pulser (DU-L1-10) and the beater DU-L1-7) are formally different (hence the different names), but they all serve a similar pragmatic function (see Fig. 6, 7, and 8).

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Figure 6. The indexer

Figure 7. The pulser

Figure 8. The beater

The indexer (Fig. 6) uses a pointing-shaped idiogest with the (dominant) right hand with a stretched index finger (the other fingers are bent in a loose fist, with the thumb mostly resting on the middle finger); the hand moves from the resting position to pointing at a vague location to the further left of the speaker's left ear (i.e., it is a (fairly fast) move from center to upper-left. As such, it remains clearly detached from any representation of the bedroom in the gesture space (in front of the speaker) or from any pointing to the picture itself (on a stand to the front-right of the speaker). The speaker also has a tendency to maintain that handshape even when not gesturing. Of the 29 gestures that she makes during the description, 16 are such pointing idiogests (just over half). The gesture invariably coincides with the naming of located entities. This confirms that it clearly is not representational or deictic, but has pure pragmatic value: it functions more like a "gestural bulleted list", visualizing the enumeration via an upward pointing gesture.

The pulser (DU-L1-10, Fig. 7) and the beater (DU-L1-7, Fig. 8) similarly use pragmatic beat gestures that occur each time they mention an item of furniture of clothing. The pulser does this with a gesture where the hand is in a loose, sloppy open claw-like shape, palm down, the hand flicks up in a quick movement from the wrist only which rests on her knee. The beater similarly does beat gestures with more undefined handshapes, mostly with the palm (half) up and fingers in neutral, loose position, and a movement also mostly from the wrist, even if sometimes a bit larger. Her idiogest is formally less well-defined, yet does have sufficient similarity across different contexts to consider it as such. In both cases, the idiogest is again nearly exclusively pragmatic, as they occur each time an entity is mentioned that is relevant to the task at hand

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(describing furniture or clothes). From a more general perspective, these gestures could be interpreted as epistemic, as they relate to contextually induced obviousness or self-evidence (from the point of view of the speaker). Bressem and Müller (2014) consider this to be a recurrent gesture, typically made as a PUOH gesture (Palm Up Open Hand), mostly with both hands. The beater does use such a more open hand gesture (mostly single handed, sometimes with two hands); the pulser's gesture does not conform to this, which, however, does not strike us as invalidating the possibly epistemic meaning of her idiogest.

4. Discussion

The above description of idiogests illustrates that in their gestural behaviour, speakers use *individually specific* recurrent gestures with a striking similarity of form. These formal properties line up with those that have been observed in the literature; for example, Bressem and Müller (2014) mention recurrent gestures (across different speakers) that are quite similar to the ones described above, such as the index-thumb oscillating gesture, the double-handed PUOH gesture, etc. However, what is striking in our data is that there is a higher-than-normal recurrence of the same gesture in the description of a single speaker, turning it into an index of the speaker's idiosyncratic gestural style, a *gestural idiolect* or an *idiogest*. Such idiogests can be attributed to corporal properties or individual habits of the speaker, comparable to one's pitch of voice or the use of fillers like *uhm* in the verbal mode. However, what we see here goes beyond such mere corporal or habitual phenomena, as the idiogest seems to be semantically or discursively motivated. One of the speakers in our data set, the oscillator, nicely illustrates a more semantic (i.e., representational) focus on the interrelation between the described entities, a focus that he maintains throughout his entire description. Similarly, the swayer gesturally represents the (3D) objects she is referring to in the verbal stream but does so with a non-iconic swaying gesture; as such, her idiogest holds the middle between a clear iconic representation of the object and a (more schematic) expression of its location in the gesture space which is typically done with a pointing gesture or claw-gesture (cf. Fig. 4). The gesture invariably aligns with the mentioning of the items of furniture or clothing as asked for in the task, which adds a pragmatic layer to this gesture whereby the speaker expresses that she conforms to the instructions. A similar pragmatic or even fully epistemic function is argued to apply to the idiogests of the indexer, the beater, and the pulser, as if they are working through a gestural bulleted list for each of the items that they considered necessary to be mentioned in response to the task.

In sum, the data strongly suggest that these idiogest reveal a (subtle) semantic or discursive focus that the speaker maintains throughout the description. This could in fact be compared to recurrent small verbal phrases that are often added in interactional discourse, such as the interactionally motivated additions at the end of a sentence that speakers often intersperse their oral discourse with, such as the (rhetorical) questions *you know?* or *you see what I'm saying?* that speakers may add at the end of their utterances. Or consider the university lecturer who intersperses their explanation to the students with *Does that make sense?* to the extent that it becomes a striking individual (i.e., idiolectal) feature of that lecturer's discourse[3]. These phrases fulfill a particular discursive function yet their *recurrent* use also creates a particular individual verbal "style". It is in this sense that idiogests should be interpreted.

At first sight, idiogests may seem to be similar to what McNeill (2000) has termed *catchments,* recurrent gestures with the same form features, which speakers use to combine things into larger discourse units:

> "*A catchment is recognized from a recurrence of gesture features over a stretch of discourse. It is a kind of thread of consistent visuospatial imagery running through a discourse segment that provides a gesture-based window into discourse cohesion.* […] *Thus, working backwards, the catchment offers clues to the cohesive linkages in the text with which it co-occurs*". (McNeill 2000: 26)

It is through catchments that one sees "what [the] speaker is combining into larger discourse units" (McNeill et al. 2001: 2), i.e., what a speaker groups together as semantically similar (visible via the catchment) or distinct (put into different catchments). McNeil (2000) illustrates such catchments when a speaker is describing a scene from a Sylvester cartoon depicting Sylvester climbing up a drain pipe and a bowling ball moving down in it. One of the catchments that McNeill identifies is when the speaker uses the same single-hand gesture at different places in the description when describing the bowling ball; another recurring gesture (made with two hands) serves to indicate the relative position of the two entities in the drain pipe (Sylvester and the bowling ball). These two examples of catchments clearly show that they are not the same as the idiogests discussed here, which apply across *different* contexts, describing totally different entities or events. McNeil does add that "[i]ndividuals differ in how they divide the world into related and unrelated components" and that thus "[c]atchments give us a way of detecting these individual grouping patterns, which are a version of one's cognitive style"

(McNeill et al. 2001: 2), but this is again quite different from idiogests which are part of a personal style that is, however, revealing a particular semantic of pragmatic focus.

Moreover, a quick and non-systematic glance at some of the other descriptions by the five speakers discussed above has revealed that they do this in these other descriptions as well, which confirms the above idea that these really are idiogests, i.e., features of an individual gestural style. Also, only these 5 speakers (of the 11 participants) revealed such a striking gestural style; the others did not have such a clear gestural idiolect or simply did not gesture enough. As our data are limited to the descriptions of five pictures, it is impossible to determine whether or not the idiogests extend beyond this quasi-experiment.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed examples suggesting the existence of idiogests, i.e., recurrent gestures that a speaker may use that have a very strong formal resemblance such that they can be considered signalling a gestural idiolect. While being tied to a personal style or habit, we showed how idiogests are furthermore semantically or discursively meaningful, as they reveal a particular focus the speaker maintains in their description. They are thus not unlike the recurrent use of stock phrases that speakers may repeatedly use, especially for pragmatic interactional purposes, like *you know?* added at the end of a sentence to enhance or suggest a stronger interactional orientation of their discourse.

The data on which our study is based remains limited in scope as it concerns a (monologic) picture description by speakers who have only been recorded in one single session and not at another occasion. We can thus not determine whether their idiogests extend beyond this experiment even if we suspect they do. Despite this more limited character, the observed idiogests are quite salient in the narrations which strongly confirms their validity and invites that a more targeted study be set up to study this further.

Notes

1. The code identifies each speaker in the data set: DU refers to Dutch, L1 to it being an L1 speaker (as opposed to L2), the last number is the (randomly assigned) speaker number.
2. When introducing the concept of grounding, Langacker is not talking about gestures, but about, for example, tense marking on verbs where a form like *worked* is the grounded instance

of the type expressed by the verb *worked*. Similarly, articles and other determiners (e.g. ***a*** *job*, ***no*** *job*) create grounded instances of the noun *job* which expresses a type. See Langacker 1991: Ch.2 for more details.

3. This is based on a real-life example of a lecturer that we once had at the university of Lille whose discourse was riddled with this question for which he didn't really expect an answer but which still gave students the possibility to respond or engage in a discussion.

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fields of interest:	Cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, multimodality.

 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

SPECIFICITY OF GUILT, SHAME, AND EMBARRASSMENT IN NORTH AMERICAN AND GERMAN CULTURES: CORPUS DATA

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Received: 21.01.2025 **Reviewed:** 22.02.2025 and 14.03.2025

Similarity Index: 3%

Bibliographic description: Mizin, K. (2025). Specificity of guilt, shame, and embarrassment in North American and German cultures: Corpus data. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 70-84. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.05

Abstract: The article employs a corpus-based methodology that has been used to identify the peculiarities of the conceptual structures of the emotion concepts SHAME, GUILT, and EMBARRASSMENT in North American vs. SCHAM, SCHULD, and VERLEGENHEIT in German cultures. The application of the methodology involved qualitative and quantitative analysis of samples formed on the basis of English (COCA) and German (DWDS) corpora, allowing the determination the level of cross-cultural equivalence of these emotion concepts.

Keywords: emotion concept, cross-cultural equivalence, conceptual structure, semantics, language corpus.

"Zonder gevoel geen taal ('without emotion no language')".

Jos van Berkum

1. Introduction

The "emotional turn" at the end of the last century (Foolen 2022: 47) contributed to the rise of the "affectivism era" (see more details in: Dukes et al. 2021), during which the emotions have been actively studied not only in psychology (e.g., cognitive psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy), but also in a number of other sciences that focus on humans and their emotional world (e.g., cognitive science, neuroscience, sociology). This scientific symbiosis led to the emergence of *affective science*, addressing the diverse issues of emotion-related affects. Affective science has in fact become a scientific field that

has encompassed more than a dozen scientific disciplines, which is why researchers are increasingly using the term *affective sciences* (Handbook of affective sciences 2003). The inclusion of linguistics in the affective sciences indicates that the latter's interdisciplinary methodology is quite objective in the study of emotions. The basis for this is the assumption that emotion labelling can play a role in the cognitive processes of processing emotional experiences, since through cognition, there is a correlation between a person's emotional level and the level of language (Foolen 1997). Therefore, words for emotions are key indicators of the knowledge about them (Barrett et al. 2011).

Emotions can be viewed as a complex phenomenon – emotion concepts (ECs) – manifested at the cognitive and linguistic levels (Kövecses 2020; Mizin et al. 2021b; Panasenko 2012; Wierzbicka 1999). ECs are sensitive to the influence of culture (Wilson & Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2019: 92), so culture-specific meanings contain both "culture-dependent" (derived from basic) and "culture-independent" (basic) emotions (Foolen 2012; Mizin & Ovsiienko 2020; Ogarkova et al. 2013). Cultural marking of ECs is the basis for treating them as cultural concepts (Kollareth et al. 2018; Mizin et al. 2023; Ogarkova 2013; Panasenko et al. 2023; Soriano 2015).

The relevance of studying linguistic objectification of cultural concepts, in particular ECs, is primarily determined by today's globalization processes requiring successful intercultural communication (Kapranov 2016). The latter can be achieved only on condition of correct identification in the target culture (TC) of the cultural concepts most similar in their semantic structure to the concepts of the source culture (SC).

Finding cross-cultural equivalents for the EC of any SC is an extremely difficult task, as due to the dynamic and diffuse nature of the human emotional world, representatives of different linguistic societies encode, remember, and respond to emotions in different ways (Russell 1991: 427). This can be explained by the fact that the emotional world of a human balances between an individual and a group to which this individual belongs. On the one hand, the expression and experience of even universal emotions is somewhat subjective, as each person has a unique physiology as well as a different level of mental and moral development, which affects the way a particular emotion is expressed and perceived by an individual. On the other hand, the expression and perception of emotions depends to some extent on ethnic and socio-cultural factors, since each individual is part of a certain linguistic community.

The cultural marking of ECs is the reason why there are no complete equivalents among them, even in typologically close cultures (Mizin & Slavova 2023). Therefore, one of the acute problems that

arise in the cross-cultural transfer of ECs is the differentiation by representatives of the TC of the semantically similar concepts of the SC. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that even the bearers of the SC themselves cannot always fully distinguish between some ECs. For example, the ECs JEALOUSY and ENVY are so close in Anglo-Saxon culture that researchers are still working out the exact criteria for their distinction (Mizin & Slavova 2023). An illustrative example, characteristic not only of Anglo-Saxons, is the ECs that represent self-conscious emotions of shame, guilt, and embarrassment. This is obviously linked to the fact that due to the diffuse nature of the SHAME, GUILT, and EMBARRASSMENT ECs, it is difficult for individuals at the level of "naïve" worldview to clearly determine whether they feel shame, guilt or embarrassment in various shameful and unpleasant situations (Mizin & Slavova 2024). It is even more difficult for representatives of "foreign" cultures to distinguish between the ECs that reflect these three close emotions, as each culture has its own set of values and guidelines.

Cultural psychologists have found that cultural differences in emotions correlate with the basic value orientations in a particular language community. A comparison of Japanese and North American cultures (NAC), for example, revealed that the most common and intense emotions are those that correspond to the basic value orientations in these cultures. For example, anger is more relevant for the individualistic NAC, as this emotion denotes individual entitlement and establishes clear boundaries between individuals. In contrast, shame has a greater cultural significance for the collectivist Japanese community, as it plays an important role in maintaining social ties and adaptation of individuals in the community (Boiger et al. 2013a). These emotions can be culturally specific even within similar communities. Thus, there is a slight difference in the perception and expression of anger and shame between NAC and Dutch-speaking Belgians, as the former tend towards competitive individualism, while the latter prefer a more egalitarian version of individualism. Therefore, cultural practices promote the development of beneficial emotions (anger in the US, shame in Belgium) and the avoidance of harmful ones (shame in the US) (Boiger et al. 2013b). It is noteworthy that different levels of individualism in similar cultures can influence the formation of some specific characteristics of shame and guilt. For example, among Anglo-Saxons, a high individualism index (Hofstede Insights 2024) determined a greater privacy of shame, which brought the EC SHAME closer to GUILT in terms of sanctioning. As a result, the connection between the ECs SHAME and GUILT is highly relevant for Anglo-Saxons, which emphasizes their belonging to "guilt cultures". On the other hand, in German culture (GC), which also belongs to "guilt cultures" but has a lower index of individualism, shame is more public, i.e., it has a noticeable external sanction (Mizin & Slavova 2024: 246).

 ISSN 2453-8035

Against the background of the above, it remains unclear how similar/different are the semantic structures of those ECs that represent the self-conscious emotions of guilt, shame, and embarrassment in the individualist NAC and GC.

2. Aim, material, and methods

The aim of the proposed article is to identify, using a corpus-based methodology, the distinctive features of the conceptual structures of the ECs SHAME, GUILT, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHAM, SCHULD, and VERLEGENHEIT with the subsequent determination of the level of equivalence between these ECs in NAC and GC. The tested methodology involves qualitative and quantitative analysis of samples formed on the basis of data from the corpora of English (American version) and German – The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (DWDS).

The following considerations are methodologically relevant for the proposed study:

(a) Shame, guilt, and embarrassment are social emotions. However, it should be noted that scholars still have no consensus concerning the distinction between basic and social emotions. Therefore, some emotions, such as shame, are defined as basic emotions in some works, and as social emotions in others. This is probably due to the "dual" nature of shame, as despite the fact that it is not innate, it has at least several characteristics of basic emotions, primarily a clear physiological expression (facial flushing, gaze averting, head lowering, etc.) (Tracy & Matsumoto 2008: 11655).

(b) Shame, guilt, and embarrassment are related but different emotions. This fact should be emphasised because Anglo-Saxons have a close connection between shame and guilt at the level of "naïve" worldview, so the lexemes *shame* and *guilt* can be interchangeable (Kollareth et al. 2018). Semantically close to them is the lexeme *embarrassment*. Despite the similarity in the meanings of these three lexemes in English, the emotions they denote are quite distinct (Krawczak 2018; Merkin 2017; Peeters 2020; Tangney 2003; Tracy & Robins 2004). The difference between these emotions is clearly demonstrated in Table 1, which shows their prototypical elements.

(c) Methodologically important is also the idea that each EC, as a dynamic mental construct, is a "cocktail" of various meanings. These meanings indicate the connections of ECs with other cultural concepts – emotional, moral and ethical, ethno-cultural, etc. As a rule, each EC is dominated by emotional meanings, which, in turn, represent those ECs that closely correlate with it. It is therefore possible to identify in the conceptual structure of an EC the *emotional conceptual proximates* (ECPs) that are closest to it (Mizin et al. 2021a: 82). The hierarchy of the most relevant ECPs in the semantic structure of ECs can provide a clear idea of their content, which in turn makes it possible to detect rather imperceptible semantic differences when determining their cross-cultural equivalence.

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Table 1. Prototypical elements of guilt, shame, and embarrassment used to create the different scenarios. Source: Giorgetta et al. 2023

	Scenarios		
Elements referred to the protagonist of the story	Guilt	Shame	Embarrassment
Feeling an emotional experience	+	+	+
Feeling responsible for the actions	+	–	–
Thinking that there is a victim (unjust damage)	+	–	–
Self-criticism	+	–	–
Tendency to take action to repair the harm	+	–	–
Feeling tightness in the chest and restlessness	+	–	–
Thinking that there is a shared value	–	+	–
Thinking that there is a damage in the self-image	–	+	–
Desire to disappear	–	+	–
Looking down	–	+	–
Feeling blushing and hot flashes	–	+	–
Thinking that the situation is uncertain and unclear	–	–	+
Feeling not knowing what to do	–	–	+
Doubts on the correct action	–	–	+
Thinking that the self-image might be damaged	–	–	+
Thinking that the self-image might be damaged in presence of familiar, known people	–	–	+/–*
Thinking that the self-image might be damaged in presence of unknown people	–	–	–/+*

*The presence/absence of these prototypical elements is the basis for distinguishing two types of embarrassment (Giorgetta et al. 2023).

In view of the above, the proposed research methodology is based on the following procedures:

(a) Identifying similar and different meanings in the conceptual structures of the ECs GUILT, SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT in American and SCHULD, SCHAM, VERLEGENHEIT in German cultures by determining their most relevant ECPs. The latter are identified based on the frequency of the occurrence forms of their names in the COCA and DWDS corpora. To this end, for each of these ECs, a sample of 20 lemmas was formed, but only those that denote emotions. These lemmas were selected manually in accordance with the principle of the highest frequency (Table 2 and Table 3) on the basis of automatically generated lists of the occurrence forms of the query words *guilt, shame, embarrassment, Schuld, Scham,* and *Verlegenheit* (functions "Collocates" in COCA and "Wortprofil 2024" in DWDS). A sample of 20 lemmas is, in my opinion, quite sufficient to get a fairly complete picture of the semantic organisation of the analysed ECPs. Moreover, the lists in Wortprofil 2024 are limited to 100 collocates and co-occurrences of query words, so it is somewhat problematic to select from these lists more than 20 nominal lemmas denoting emotions.

(b) Establishing semantic similarity of the ECs GUILT, SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHULD, SCHAM, and VERLEGENHEIT, along with determining the level of cross-cultural equivalence between the ECs SHAME vs. SCHAM, GUILT vs. SCHULD, and EMBARRASSMENT vs. VERLEGENHEIT (Table 4).

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(c) Verification of the results of the first two procedures by comparing the conceptual structures of the ECs GUILT, SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHULD, SCHAM, and VERLEGENHEIT based on two characteristics of their ECPs – valence and arousal (Table 5 and Table 6). The inclusion of these characteristics is explained by their importance in revealing the nature of emotions (Foolen 2015; Russell 2003). Valence describes the degree to which a stimulus causes a positive or negative emotion; arousal refers to the intensity or level of energy inverted in the emotion (Citron et al. 2014). The distinction between the notions of "arousal" and "intensity" is not essential for achieving the goal of the proposed study because the term *intensity* is synonymous with *arousal* (cf. also, e.g., Citron et al. 2014).

3. Results

The fulfillment of the proposed research's objectives required that the following criteria be taken into account when selecting corpora of English and German: a) the availability of the function to automatically generate a list of occurrence forms of the query word by frequency index; b) the proportionality in the size of the compared corpora; c) compliance with the time frames of the corpora creation; d) limiting the corpus material to one language variant (important due to the presence of a number of variants in English and German). COCA and DWDS meet these criteria to a large extent, since:

(a) In these corpora, by entering a query word, one can obtain lists of occurrence forms ordered by frequency (the "Collocates" function in COCA and the "Wortprofil 2024" function in DWDS). It is the frequency index that allows determining the relevance of both the studied ECs in the compared cultures and the ECPs that represent these ECs.

(b) COCA has a vast volume of 1 billion words. This means that the word frequency processed by the "Collocates" function is quite objective. The Wortprofil 2024 involves an even larger amount of material – 6 billion words, based on 12 corpora, e.g.: Die Welt (1999–2023); Die ZEIT (1946–2023); Wikipedia (2023). These corpora largely encompass the 8 genres (e.g., popular magazines, newspapers, Wikipedia) whose texts are balanced in COCA. The difference in the amount of material processed by "Collocates" and "Wortprofil 2024" is not fundamental to the proposed study, as it does not affect the determination of the relevance of the ECs and ECPs in NAC and GC on the basis of lemma frequency indicators. Moreover, the author of the study to some extent balanced the collocates frequency shown in the study samples (Table 2 and Table 3) by presenting them in terms of per 1 million words (pmw).

(c) "Collocates" and "Wortprofil 2024" process a significant part of contemporary texts, which is important in establishing relevant associations (conceptual links) of the representatives of NAC and GC.

(d) Both English and German have regional variants and there are significant differences between some of them (cf., e.g., Austrian and Swiss variants of German). Therefore, when comparing English and

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German, a certain degree of proportionality should be observed and only one of the variants is to be chosen. Such proportionality exists between COCA and DWDS, as the former represents the American variant of English and the latter reflects the main (literary) variant of German.

Table 2. The most relevant ECPs of the ECs SHAME, GUILT, and EMBARRASSMENT. Source: Own processing

N	SHAME		GUILT		EMBARRASSMENT	
	CPs	F./ pmw	CPs	F./ pmw	CPs	F./ pmw
1	GUILT	0.69	SHAME	0.69	SHAME	0.22
2	FEAR	0.23	FEAR	0.25	HUMILIATION	0.07
3	EMBARRASSMENT	0.22	REMORSE	0.16	FEAR	0.07
4	HUMILIATION	0.09	DOUBT	0.16	FRUSTRATION	0.04
5	ANGER	0.09	GRIEF	0.13	GUILT	0.04
6	PRIDE	0.07	ANXIETY	0.13	ANGER	0.04
7	REMORSE	0.06	ANGER	0.12	PRIDE	0.03
8	GRIEF	0.06	REGRET	0.08	DISAPPOINTMENT	0.03
9	REGRET	0.05	DEPRESSION	0.07	SHOCK	0.02
10	SORROW	0.05	SADNESS	0.07	CONFUSION	0.02
11	RAGE	0.04	RESENTMENT	0.07	ANXIETY	0.02
12	CONFUSION	0.04	SORROW	0.06	AWKWARDNESS	0.01
13	SADNESS	0.03	RELIEF	0.04	TENSION	0.009
14	ANXIETY	0.03	EMBARRASSMENT	0.04	ANNOYANCE	0.009
15	PITY	0.03	CONFUSION	0.04	CHAGRIN	0.008
16	DISGUST	0.02	FRUSTRATION	0.04	HORROR	0.007
17	HORROR	0.02	DESPAIR	0.04	DISTRESS	0.007
18	SELF-LOATHING	0.02	PLEASURE	0.03	SADNESS	0.007
19	FRUSTRATION	0.02	RAGE	0.03	DISGUST	0.007
20	DESPAIR	0.02	STRESS	0.02	RAGE	0.006

Table 3. The most relevant ECPs of the ECs SCHAM, SCHULD, and VERLEGENHEIT. Source: Own processing

N	SCHAM		SCHULD		VERLEGENHEIT	
	CPs	F./ pmw	CPs	F./ pmw	CPs	F./ pmw
1	ANGST 'anxiety'	0.06	SCHULD 'guilt'	0.07	SCHAM 'shame'	0.006
2	SCHULD 'guilt'	0.04	SCHAM 'shame'	0.07	ÄRGER 'anger'	0.005
3	SCHANDE 'ignominy; shame'	0.04	REUE 'remorse'	0.02	ANGST 'anxiety'	0.005
4	REUE 'remorse'	0.03	SCHANDE 'ignominy; shame'	0.02	PEINLICHKEIT 'embarrassment'	0.004
4	SCHULDGEFÜHL 'sense of guilt'	0.02	LEID 'suffering'	0.01	SCHANDE 'ignominy; shame'	0.004
5	WUT 'rage'	0.02	ANGST 'anxiety'	0.01	VERÄRGERUNG 'annoyance'	0.003
6	TRAUER 'sorrow'	0.02	LIEBE 'love'	0.009	VERZWEIFLUNG 'despair'	0.003
7	STOLZ 'pride'	0.02	TRAUER 'sorrow'	0.005	TRAURIGKEIT 'sadness'	0.003
8	ZORN 'rage'	0.01	SCHULDGEFÜHL 'sense of guilt'	0.005	SCHRECKEN 'horror'	0.003
9	VERZWEIFLUNG 'despair'	0.01	VERZWEIFLUNG 'despair'	0.003	UNRUHE 'restlessness'	0.002
10	FURCHT 'fear'	0.009	SORGE 'worry'	0.003	LANGWEILIGKEIT 'boredom'	0.002
11	EKEL 'disgust'	0.007	ÄRGER 'anger'	0.003	PANIK 'panic'	0.002

12	ENTSETZEN 'horror'	0.006	PEINLICHKEIT 'embarrassment'	0.002	ENTTÄUSCHUNG 'disappointment'	0.002
13	PEINLICHKEIT 'embarrassment '	0.004	WUT 'rage'	0.002	BITTERKEIT 'bitterness'	0.002
14	EMPÖRUNG 'indignation'	0.004	EKEL 'disgust'	0.002	ZWEIFEL 'doubt'	0.002
15	BEDAUERN 'regret'	0.003	DEPRESSION 'depression'	0.002	AUFREGUNG 'excitement'	0.002
16	ÄRGER 'anger'	0.002	FRUST 'frustration'	0.002	VERWIRRUNG 'confusion'	0.002
17	VERLEGENHEIT 'embarrassment'	0.002	PANIK 'panic'	0.001	EMPÖRUNG 'indignation'	0.002
18	BETROFFENHEIT 'shock'	0.002	STRESS 'stress'	0.001	FRUSTRATION 'frustration'	0.001
19	LIEBE 'love'	0.002	TRAURIGKEIT 'sadness'	0.001	NEID 'envy'	0.001
20	SCHAM 'shame'	0.002	FRUSTRATION 'frustration'	0.001	EKEL 'disgust'	0.001

Table 4. Percentage of close ECPs in the conceptual structures of the ECs SHAME, GUILT, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHAM, SCHULD, and VERLEGENHEIT. Source: Own processing

ECs	**SHAME & GUILT**	**SHAME &EMBARRASSMENT**	**GUILT & EMBARRASSMENT**
%	67.5	75	62.5
ECs	**SCHAM & SCHULD**	**SCHAM & VERLEGENHEIT**	**SCHULD & VERLEGENHEIT**
%	75	62.5	65
ECs	**SHAME vs. SCHAM**	**GUILT vs. SCHULD**	**EMBARRASSMENT vs. VERLEGENHEIT**
%	77.5	67.5	72.5

As mentioned in Section 2, data verification (Tables 2, 3, and 4) is carried out by comparing the conceptual structures of the ECs GUILT, SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHULD, SCHAM, and VERLEGENHEIT based on two characteristics of their ECPs – valence and arousal. Valence and arousal indicators of ECs GUILT, SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHULD, SCHAM, and VERLEGENHEIT are established on the basis of the data presented in Bradley and Lang (1999).

According to the conception of the study, ECs and ECPs that represent them are cultural concepts. This means that in the process of cross-cultural study of these concepts, it should be taken into consideration that their names may not have complete equivalents in the target languages. This fact may affect the results of our research to some extent, since due to the lack of a list of German words with their valence and arousal, processed by the ANEW method, the author presented in Tables 5 and 6 the data of the English equivalents of these words. At the same time, the author realizes that the data in these tables may be somewhat inaccurate. However, for the purposes of this study, such inaccuracy is considered irrelevant.

Table 5. Mean value of indicators of valence (V.) and arousal (A.) of the most relevant ECPs of the ECs SHAME, GUILT, and EMBARRASSMENT. Source: Own processing

N	**SHAME**			**GUILT**			**EMBARRASSMENT**		
	CPs	**V.**	**A.**	CPs	**V.**	**A.**	CPs	**V.**	**A.**
1	GUILT	2.63	6.04	SHAME	2.50	4.88	SHAME	2.50	4.88
2	FEAR	2.76	6.96	FEAR	2.76	6.96	HUMILIATION	2.24	6.14

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3	EMBARRASSMENT	3.03	5.87	REMORSE	2.28	5.74	FEAR	2.76	6.96
4	HUMILIATION	2.24	6.14	DOUBT	3.27	5.55	FRUSTRATION	2.48	5.61
5	ANGER	2.34	7.63	GRIEF	1.65	4.81	GUILT	2.63	6.04
6	PRIDE	7.00	5.83	ANXIETY	2.76	6.96	ANGER	2.34	7.63
7	REMORSE	2.28	5.74	ANGER	2.34	7.63	PRIDE	7.00	5.83
8	GRIEF	1.65	4.81	REGRET	2.25	5.75	DISAPPOINTMENT	2.39	4.92
9	REGRET	2.25	5.75	DEPRESSION	1.85	4.54	SHOCK	3.12	7.02
10	SORROW	1.65	4.81	SADNESS	1.61	4.13	CONFUSION	3.27	5.55
11	RAGE	2.41	8.17	RESENTMENT	3.76	4.47	ANXIETY	2.76	6.96
12	CONFUSION	3.27	5.55	SORROW	1.65	4.81	AWKWARDNESS	3.03	5.87
13	SADNESS	1.61	4.13	RELIEF	7.07	3.93	TENSION	3.56	6.53
14	ANXIETY	2.76	6.96	EMBARRASSMENT	3.03	5.87	ANNOYANCE	2.74	6.49
15	PITY	3.71	3.48	CONFUSION	3.27	5.55	CHAGRIN	2.79	5.64
16	DISGUST	2.45	5.42	FRUSTRATION	2.48	5.61	HORROR	2.76	7.21
17	HORROR	2.76	7.21	DESPAIR	2.19	5.72	DISTRESS	1.65	4.81
18	SELF-LOATHING	2.45	5.42	PLEASURE	8.00	6.20	SADNESS	1.61	4.13
19	FRUSTRATION	2.48	5.61	RAGE	2.41	8.17	DISGUST	2.45	5.42
20	DESPAIR	2.19	5.72	STRESS	2.09	7.45	RAGE	2.41	8.17
$\bar{x}$		**2.70**	**5.86**		**2.96**	**5.74**		**2.80**	**6.09**

Table 6. Mean value of indicators of valence (V.) and arousal (A.) of the most relevant ECPs of the ECs of the ECs SCHAM, SCHULD, and VERLEGENHEIT. Source: Own processing

N	**SCHAM**			**SCHULD**			**VERLEGENHEIT**		
	CPs	**V.**	**A.**	CPs	**V.**	**A.**	CPs	**V.**	**A.**
1	ANGST	2.76	6.96	SCHULD	2.63	6.04	SCHAM	2.50	4.88
2	SCHULD	2.63	6.04	SCHAM	2.50	4.88	ÄRGER	2.34	7.63
3	SCHANDE	2.50	4.88	REUE	2.28	5.74	ANGST	2.76	6.96
4	REUE	2.28	5.74	SCHANDE	2.50	4.88	PEINLICHKEIT	3.03	5.87
4	SCHULDGEFÜHL	2.63	6.04	LEID	1.65	4.81	SCHANDE	2.50	4.88
5	WUT	2.34	7.63	ANGST	2.76	6.96	VERÄRGERUNG	2.74	6.49
6	TRAUER	1.61	4.13	LIEBE	8.72	6.44	VERZWEIFLUNG	2.19	5.72
7	STOLZ	7.00	5.83	TRAUER	1.61	4.13	TRAURIGKEIT	1.61	4.13
8	ZORN	2.41	8.17	SCHULDGEFÜHL	2.63	6.04	SCHRECKEN	2.76	7.21
9	VERZWEIFLUNG	2.19	5.72	VERZWEIFLUNG	2.19	5.72	UNRUHE	4.81	6.92
10	FURCHT	2.76	6.96	SORGE	1.55	6.20	LANGWEILIGKEIT	4.61	3.18
11	EKEL	2.45	5.42	ÄRGER	2.34	7.63	PANIK	3.12	7.02
12	ENTSETZEN	2.76	7.21	PEINLICHKEIT	3.03	5.87	ENTTÄUSCHUNG	2.39	4.92
13	PEINLICHKEIT	3.03	5.87	WUT	2.34	7.63	BITTERKEIT	3.95	4.24
14	EMPÖRUNG	3.52	6.83	EKEL	2.45	5.42	ZWEIFEL	3.27	5.55
15	BEDAUERN	2.25	5.74	DEPRESSION	1.85	4.54	AUFREGUNG	2.48	4.73
16	ÄRGER	2.34	7.63	FRUST	2.48	5.61	VERWIRRUNG	3.27	5.55
17	VERLEGENHEIT	3.03	5.87	PANIK	3.12	7.02	EMPÖRUNG	3.52	6.83
18	BETROFFENHEIT	3.12	7.02	STRESS	2.09	7.45	FRUSTRATION	2.48	5.61
19	LIEBE	8.72	6.44	TRAURIGKEIT	1.61	4.13	NEID	2.51	6.36
20	SCHAM	2.50	4.88	FRUSTRATION	2.48	5.61	EKEL	2.45	5.42
$\bar{x}$		**3.24**	**6.55**		**2.74**	**6.14**		**3.06**	**6.01**

4. Discussion and conclusions

The data analysis (Tables 2, 3, and 4) revealed that both the ECs SHAME, GUILT, and EMBARRASSMENT in NAC and SCHAM, SCHULD, and VERLEGENHEIT in GC demonstrate significant semantic similarities. This finding is in line with the widespread thesis of psychologists about the close connection between the corresponding self-conscious emotions. The fact of these ECs "overlapping" in NAC is indicative here, since GUILT is the most relevant ECP in the conceptual structure of the EC SHAME, while SHAME

appears to be the most relevant ECP in the EC GUILT and also in the EC EMBARRASSMENT. Though not completely identical, but a very similar trend can be observed in GC, where the "overlapping" ECPs SCHULD and SCHAM hold the second position in the ECP hierarchy of the ECs SCHAM and SCHULD. This suggests that in the naïve perception of the representatives of NAC and GC, there is no clear boundary between the studied ECPs, so in numerous affective situations these representatives cannot be quite sure whether they are experiencing shame, guilt or embarrassment. This is especially true of the SHAME & EMBARRASSMENT ECs, whose semantic similarity among Americans reaches as much as 75%.

The close correlation between the ECs SHAME & GUILT (67.5%) and SCHAM & SCHULD (75%) confirms the opinion widespread among anthropologists (see, e.g., Benedict 1946) that Americans and Germans belong to "guilt cultures". At the same time, the stronger correlation of SCHAM & SCHULD does not indicate that the German community has a more pronounced characteristic of a "guilt culture". This can be explained, first of all, by the high occurrence of the phrase *Scham und Schuld* in various contexts, which is due to the socio-historical background, namely the atonement in Germany for the criminal consequences of World War II. The main role in this "national atonement" is assigned to the concepts of SCHAM & SCHULD (see, e.g., Brogle 2017).

The frequency indicators (Table 2 and Table 3) clearly show that both the ECs SHAME & GUILT and SCHAM & SCHULD are more culturally significant than the ECs EMBARRASSMENT & VERLEGENHEIT. This is especially true of the EC VERLEGENHEIT, which demonstrates low relevance in GC (according to DWDS data, there is a significant decrease in the frequency of the lemma *Verlegenheit*, as in 1960 it had an index of 6.34 (per 1 million tokens), and in 2024 – 0.86). This can probably be explained by the fact that the emotion represented by the EC VERLEGENHEIT contains more positive and less intense shades of embarrassment (Table 6), i.e. it is more neutral than, for example, the EC EMBARRASSMENT. However, stronger expressions of embarrassment, such as bewilderment, confusion or shock, are likely to be in demand in today's German community.

Despite the semantic similarity of the ECs GUILT & SHAME, each of them has its own semantic hierarchy, in which dominant meanings are clearly distinguished. If we disregard the above-mentioned "overlapping" ECPs of these ECs, which occupy the first positions in their hierarchies, then the common dominant meaning for them is fear (ECP FEAR). Below fear are the dominant meanings that provide an idea of the main semantic differences between the GUILT & SHAME ECs: for the former, these meanings are remorse, doubt, and grief, and for the latter – embarrassment, humiliation, and anger. It can be assumed that Americans associate guilt primarily with deep sadness

ISSN 2453-8035

(grief) that results from "mental anguish" – remorse and doubt. Shame, on the other hand, is perceived as an "angry" emotion that arises from embarrassment and humiliation. It is noteworthy that the distinction between the ECs SCHAM & SCHULD is not so clear among Germans, although the semantic outline of the EC SCHAM being an "angry" emotion (ECP WUT) and the EC SCHULD being a "suffering" emotion (ECP LEID) can be traced here.

Not only is there a noticeable similarity in the semantic structures of the studied ECs within NAC and GC, but also a rather high level of their cross-cultural equivalence. The data in Table 4 show that the highest level of equivalence is demonstrated by the ECs SHAME vs. SCHAM (75%), the lower one – by EMBARRASSMENT vs. VERLEGENHEIT (72.5%), and the lowest – by the ECs GUILT vs. SCHULD (67.5%). It is notable that the EC SHAME is perceived by Americans as a "heavy" (negative) and "deep" (non-intense) emotion (Table 5), which is associated with humiliation (ECP HUMILIATION) of human dignity (ECP PRIDE). For Germans, by contrast, the EC SCHAM is more positive and intense, although here, too, there is a conflict of dignity (ECP STOLZ) with the emotion that combines feelings of disgrace and shame (ECP SCHANDE). It is noteworthy that Germans have a strong association of shame with remorse (ECP REUE), which can probably be explained by the influence of the aforementioned "national atonement" on the formation of this concept. The latter fact might be the reason why the EC SCHULD is somewhat more negative and intense than the EC GUILT. Besides, one more factor should not be overlooked here: different levels of individualism in American and German cultures. Thus, the higher competitive individualism of Americans compared to Germans may have contributed to a more positive perception of guilt and a more negative perception of shame.

Overall, the results of comparing the conceptual structures of the ECs GUILT, SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT, SCHULD, SCHAM, and VERLEGENHEIT based on the valence and arousal indicators of their ECPs (Table 5 and Table 6) serve as a rather objective confirmation of the results of the first two procedures of the proposed research methodology:

(a) Based on the 10-point scale used to measure valence and arousal of the ECPs, an indicator of 5 reflects a certain neutrality of the emotion represented by the corresponding ECP with respect to these two characteristics. Therefore, indicators below 5 reflect a negative valence and low arousal of emotions (increasing negativity and decreasing arousal from 5 to 0), and indicators above 5 imply a positive valence and high arousal (increasing positivity and arousal from 5 to 10). Given this, emotions of shame, guilt, and embarrassment show noticeable negativity and low arousal in both NAC and GC.

(b) The minor differences in the valence and arousal of shame, guilt, and embarrassment between Americans and Germans can be explained by the likely influence of cultural factors on the expression

 ISSN 2453-8035

and perception of these emotions. So, the greater negativity of the EC SHAME compared to the EC SCHAM is fully consistent with the tendency to avoid the emotion of shame in NAC. On the other hand, the lower arousal of the EC GUILT compared to the EC SCHULD may be due to the fact that for Americans the emotion of guilt is more private (internal sanctioning).

Notes

All the examples are borrowed from the following corpora:

1) English: COCA https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/;

2) German: DWDS (Wortprofil 2024) https://www.dwds.de/wp/.

All German examples have been translated by the author.

List of abbreviations

COCA – Corpus of Contemporary American English

DWDS – Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache

EC(s) – emotion concept(s)

ECP(s) – emotional conceptual proximate(s)

GC – German culture

NAC – North American culture

pmw – per 1 million words

SC – source culture

TC – target culture

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 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

GRAPES OF WRATH: ANGER TERM SEMANTICS IN UKRAINIAN VS. RUSSIAN[1]

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Received: 6.02.2025 **Reviewed:** 25.02.2025 and 14.03.2025

Similarity Index: 3%

Bibliographic description: Ogarkova, A. (2025). Grapes of wrath: Anger term semantics in Ukrainian vs. Russian. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 85-100. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.06

Abstract: This paper reports the results of two psycholinguistic studies on the meaning of anger words in Ukrainian and Russian. In Study 1, meaning profiles of nine Russian anger terms were obtained from L2 Russian speakers from Ukraine (Kyiv) and monolingual Russian speakers from Russia (Volgograd). In Study 2, the meanings of five anger-related emotions were evaluated by two groups of Ukrainian bilinguals (L1 Ukrainian and L1 Russian). The results show that Ukrainians (in both their L1 and L2) consider anger-related emotions to be less likely subjected to regulatory control and societal disapproval, which may highlight cultural differences between Ukraine and Russia.

Keywords: emotion, anger, semantics, Ukrainian, Russian.

1. Introduction

This study evolves at the intersection of two movements that have shaped the scientific landscape in the humanities and social sciences in the last several decades. The first one is the paradigmatic shift referred to, by analogy to the "cognitive revolution" of the 1960s (Mandler 2002), "the affective revolution" (Handbook of affective sciences 2003), or "the era of affectivism" (Dukes, Foolen et al. 2021). The second trend is the cognitive view on the meaning of lexicalized emotion – that is,

[1] The results of this study were first reported at the 19th Sociolinguistic Symposium, Freie Universität Berlin, on 22-24 August (2012). This work was supported by grants from the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS) and Swiss Centre for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva. The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance of Dr. Volodymyr Yermolenko and Dr. Tetyana Ogarkova (Kyiv National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy"), Dr. Yana Volkova, Dr. Svetlana Ionova, and Prof. Viktor I. Shakhovskyy† (University of Volgograd), for their valuable assistance in obtaining some of the data samples.

words labeling emotional experiences (Ogarkova 2013). Endorsed by both Cognitive Linguistics (e.g., Foolen 1997; 2012; 2022; see also reviews in Soriano 2013; 2022), which seeks to account for language as a socio-cognitive phenomenon (Cognitive linguistics… 2006; Janda 2010), and psychological research on emotion categorization (e.g., Jackson et al. 2019; Russel & Fehr 1994; Shaver et al. 2001), the cognitive view on emotional meaning approximates linguistic and conceptual representation (Soriano & Ogarkova 2009) and submits that language plays an important role in establishing emotion categories. On this view, words denoting emotions in various languages not only provide speakers with a default matrix to categorize emotional reality (Harré 1986; Soriano & Ogarkova 2009; Watson 2004), but also signpost culture-embedded cognitive categories, or "folk" emotion concepts, thereby creating a bridge between linguistic and cultural studies.

This cultural aspect of emotional meaning has come to the forefront in much of the previous scholarship on language and emotions (e.g., Dylman et al. 2020; Handbook on language and emotion 2022; The Routledge handbook of language and emotion 2019). However, earlier studies frequently conflated the impacts of language and culture on emotion conceptualization. As Tsai et al. (2004: 1227) put it, "many scholars believe that cultural ideas and language are inseparable because language is the primary vehicle through which cultural ideas are transmitted". Attending to this concern, researchers have started to disentangle this nexus by exploring emotion meaning construction in languages as spoken in different parts of the same country, such as Italian as spoken in northern vs. southern Italy (Mortillaro et al. 2013), Spanish as spoken in southern Spain vs. in the Basque Country (Alonso-Arbiol et al. 2013), or Portuguese as spoken in continental Europe and in Brazil (Soares da Silva 2020). Another typical limitation of both linguistic and psychological research on lexical emotion has been prioritizing pairwise comparisons of emotion conceptualization in (very) dissimilar languages and/or cultural communities (e.g., Goswami & Yadav 2024; Kahumburu & Matsumoto 2024; Zhou et al. 2022). However, in recent years, several studies have explored the much finer variation within typologically close languages where less variation would *a priori* be expected, such as Finno-Ugric languages (Realo et al. 2013) or Slavic languages (Ogarkova et al. 2013).

This paper continues this strand of research by focusing on emotion meaning construction in Ukrainian and Russian, two Eastern-Slavic languages spoken in Ukraine and Russia. Our specific focus is on anger-related emotions. As a universally lexicalized confrontational emotion (Hupka et al. 1999) elicited by a demeaning offense against the self or relevant others or by the obstruction of one's pertinent goals or needs (e.g., Lazarus 1991; Ortony & Turner 1990), anger is an interesting emotion to explore because of its cultural variability. Two major dimensions commonly assumed to contribute to cross-cultural variation in anger experience and expression are

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individualism/collectivism and power distance (see Ogarkova & Soriano 2022 for a review).[1] The former dimension sets apart cultures where individuals are viewed upon as more independent, as contrasted to societies favoring interdependence (Hofstede 2001). Accordingly, in individualistic societies, anger is more likely perceived as emphasizing personal assertiveness and healthy pursuit of personal goals; by contrast, in collectivistic groups, it tends to be perceived as a socially threatening or potentially disrupting emotion that requires regulatory control (Markus & Kitayama 1991). The other dimension – power distance – juxtaposes more egalitarian, low-power-distance societies against high-power-distance ones where large power gaps between subordinates and authority figures are expected and tolerated. In the latter cultures, manifesting anger towards higher-status people is socially sanctioned (Hofstede 2001).

The Ukrainian vs. Russian contrast is an interesting case in this respect. While direct cross-cultural comparisons of Ukraine vs. Russia have been scarce (but see Akaliyski & Reeskens 2023; Borysenko 2017; Starodubska 2022), several studies involving a *tertium comparations* – a Western, typically English-speaking society – suggest that Ukrainians may be more individualistic than Russians. For instance, available research shows that, while Russians are clearly more collectivistic than British (Tower et al. 1997) and Americans (Realo & Allik 1999), Ukrainian females showed a more pronounced tendency for individualism than American women (Shafiro et al. 2003). Some evidence is also available showing that Russians scored significantly higher than Ukrainians on power distance (e.g., Temirbekova et al. 2014: 795), suggesting that Ukrainians are less tolerant of inequality in power among institutions, organizations, and people.

In this study, we explore whether the aforementioned divergence on cultural dimensions between Ukrainians and Russians bears an impact on how language speakers understand the meaning of anger-related words. The data were collected in 2008–2010 within the framework of two large-scale psycholinguistic projects: the GRID project,[2] a large-scale international collaboration focused on the meaning of 24 emotion words in over 30 languages (Fontaine et al. 2013) and its extension and refinement the ELIN project,[3] concerned with the meaning of anger, shame/guilt, and pride lexicons in 7 languages as spoken in 13 countries (e.g., English as spoken in the USA and the UK, Russian as spoken in Ukraine and Russia, etc.). In the elicitation-based methodology shared by both projects (see Section 2 for further detail), language speakers were directly inquired about the meaning of emotion terms in their languages using a set of prototypical features deemed relevant for the characterization of the emotion domain (Scherer 2005; Soriano et al. 2013). These ratings, averaged across a language group, were then used to construct semantic profiles of emotions words for further analysis and comparison (Fontaine et al. 2007; 2013).

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2. Methodology

2.1 Study 1

In Study 1, we focused on nine anger experiences lexicalized in Russian. Term selection was guided by the emic approach in cross-cultural research (Mostowlansky & Rota 2023), meaning that only culturally relevant and frequently used lexemes were included in the analysis. To this end, we relied on the results of a previous situation-labeling study (Ogarkova et al. 2012) where native speakers of five European languages, including Russian, were presented with a balanced and varied set of anger-eliciting situations and were asked to provide an emotion label (a noun or an adjective) that would best fit to describe the way they would feel in those situations. The most salient anger terms in Russian that emerged in this study were as follows: *razdrazheniye*[4] "irritation", *obida* "resentment/hurt", *zlost'* "anger", *gnev* "justified anger/wrath", *dosada* "frustration/vexation", *vozmuscheniye* "indignation", *negodovaniye* "indignation", *jarost'* "fury", and *serdityj* "cross".

To obtain the semantic profiles of these anger words, the ELIN questionnaire was used. Created in 2009 as a refinement of the GRID tool (Soriano et al. 2013; see Section 2.2 for further detail on GRID), this instrument was constructed to measure the meaning of four broad families of emotion terms (anger, shame, guilt, and pride). The instrument comprises a total of 95 features (46 from GRID and 49 new) across 6 emotion components: event appraisals (26 features), bodily experiences (11 features), expression (vocal, gestural, and facial; 14 features), action tendencies (14 features), subjective feelings (10 features), and regulation (3 features). In addition, 17 more features address more general issues about emotion conceptualization, such as social acceptability of the emotion, frequency of experience, the social status of the emoter with respect to the offender, and so on. The questionnaire concludes with several questions on demographic characteristics (age, gender, education level, country of residence, and family migration history).[5]

In Study 1, the ELIN questionnaire was completed in a controlled Web-study (Reips 2002) with two groups of university students: Ukrainians (National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy", Kyiv, Ukraine; $N = 41$; 29 females; mean age 26.1; L1 Ukrainian, L2 Russian) and Russians (University of Volgograd, Russia; $N = 40$; 19 females; mean age 21.2). Each participant was presented with 4 to 5 emotion terms and asked to rate how likely it was that a number of features were part of the meaning of those words. The features were presented one at a time. The ratings were done on 9-point Likert scale (1 = "extremely unlikely"; 9 = "extremely likely"). To control for possible cross-cultural differences in the use of the scale (Chen et al. 1995), all data were centered before executing the analyses. Concretely, this meant that, for each term, the average score was computed across all 95 features and then this mean score was subtracted from each of the observed scores (Park 2008).

2.2 Study 2

Study 2 focused on five anger-related terms in Ukrainian and Russian. The data were initially collected within the framework of the GRID project that focused on a larger set 24 emotion words representative of the overall scope of the emotion domain (Scherer et al. 2004). Among them, the original GRID list contained 4 confrontational emotion terms related to anger: *anger, irritation, resentment,* and *hate*. All four terms in English and their glosses in other languages consistently emerged in prototype research on anger categorization in different world languages (Alonso-Arbiol et al. 2006; Grant 2023; Russel & Fehr 1994; Shaver et al. 1987; 1992; 2001). In Ukrainian and Russian, the following translation equivalents of English *anger, irritation, resentment,* and *hate* were used: Ukr *zlist'* / Ru *zlost',* Ukr *rozdratuvannya* / Ru *razdrazheniye* "irritation", Ukr *obraza* / Ru *obida*, Ukr *nenavyst'*/ Ru *nenavist',* respectively. In addition, taking into consideration many linguists' controversy over a noun in Russian that would match the meaning of English *anger* (Pavlenko 2008; Wiezrbicka 1998), additional data were collected for Ukr *gniv* / Ru *gnev* "justified anger/wrath". All five pairs of anger terms included in the analyses were mutual cognates.

The semantic profiles of Ukrainian and Russian anger words were obtained using the GRID tool (Fontaine et al. 2007; 2013). This instrument is a 144-item inventory with the features, derived from a broad range of emotion theories, proven relevant to discriminate between a large and varied set of emotion categories. In the questionnaire, 31 features referred to emotion event appraisals, 18 to bodily experiences, 9 to facial expression, 12 to vocal expression, 5 to gestural expression, 40 to action tendencies, 22 to subjective feelings, and 4 to regulation. An additional 3 features represented other qualities, such as frequency of experience.[6]

The rating was performed by two groups of Ukrainian students: L1 Ukrainian (National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy"; *N* = 147; 89 females; mean age 22.3) and L1 Russian (Russian Philology; Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; *N* = 166; 102 females; mean age 23.7) using the procedure identical to the one used in Study 1.

3. Results

3.1 Study 1

The differences between how Ukrainian and Russian speakers evaluated the meaning of nine anger-related words in Russian were explored using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation, a technique used to identify the dimensions of greatest variance in a dataset and represent each observation by its coordinates along these dimensions. The 18 anger terms (9 per each group) were treated as observations, while the mean scores of the 95 emotion features as variables. A two-

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dimensional solution accounting for 55.4% of the total variance was selected on the basis of the scree plots and the interpretability of the emerging dimensions.

Dimension 1 (Fig. 1, vertical axis), which accounted for 38.7% of the total variance, juxtaposed the least aroused and potent anger subtypes, such as *dosada* "vexation" and *obida* "resentment", to the anger varieties implying a higher degree of arousal and virulence, such as *jarost*' "fury" and *gnev* "justified anger/wrath". On this arousal/power dimension, which was previously documented to structure anger experiences across various languages (Ogarkova et al. 2016; Ogarkova & Soriano 2022; Soriano et al. 2013), no significant differences between the two groups were observed (ANOVA, p = .931). By contrast, significant languages differences (ANOVA, p = .023) were found on Dimension 2 (Fig. 1, horizontal axis), which accounted for 17.2% of total variance. Specifically, as can be seen in Fig. 1, anger terms as rated by Ukrainians are visibly shifted towards the positive pole of this dimension.

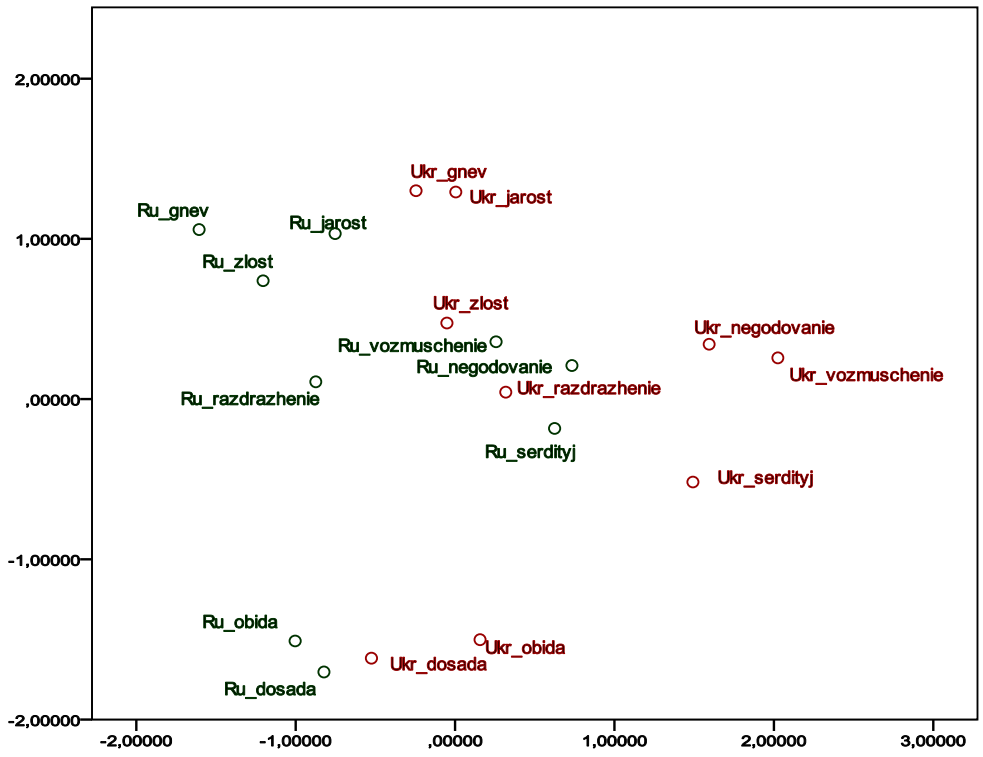

Figure 1. Two-dimensional solution (PCA) based on the feature-based profiles of anger terms in as rated by Ukrainian and Russian speakers. Source: Own processing

Subsequent analysis of the highest loading features (≥ 0.6, Hair et al. 2009; Table 1) on this dimension revealed that Ukrainians and Russians hold different views on many social aspects of anger. Specifically, compared to speakers of Russian, their Ukrainian counterparts saw anger varieties denoted by *vozmuscheniye, negodovaniye, jarost', gnev, zlost', dosada, obida*, and *razdrazheniye* as

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(1) more socially acceptable in terms of both showing them to others (# 89) and actual experiencing (#88, #94);
(2) egalitarian emotions experienced towards offenders of any social standing, including superiors (# 83, #84, #85);
(3) more frequently experienced in society (# 86);
(4) more explicitly manifested in society (#87);
(5) more likely social (i.e., shared and collective) feelings occurring in other people's presence (#92), co-felt with others (#91), and attributed to others (# 95).

Table 1. Rating features with highest loadings on Dimension 2. Source: Own processing

#	Features	Score
92	Emotion happens when other people are present	,908
85	Emotion experienced towards a superior/someone with a higher social status	,886
83	Emotion experienced towards someone who is equal in social status	,860
87	Emotion frequently openly manifested in your society	,848
91	Emotion experienced together with other people	,837
94	Emotion attributed by people in your society to themselves	,819
84	Emotion experienced towards someone who is inferior in social status	,808
89	Emotion highly acceptable in your society as to showing it to others (regardless of whether or not it is sincerely felt)	,800
86	Emotion frequently experienced in your society (regardless of whether or not it is shown to others)	,740
88	Emotion highly acceptable in your society as to actually experiencing it (regardless of whether or not it is shown to others)	,731
95	Emotion attributed by people in your society to others	,638

Interestingly, the terms that differed the most on Dimension 2 were the lexemes denoting "righteous" anger types such as *gnev* "righteous anger/wrath", *vozmuscheniye* "indignation", and *negodovaniye* "indignation" (Table 2).

Table 2. Differences in loadings on Dimension 2 between anger words as rated by Ukrainian and Russian speakers. Source: Own processing

Words	*Dif*	Scores	
		Ru	Ukr
gnev "justified anger"	1.36	-1.60	-0.24
vozmuschenie "indignation"	1.29	0.73	2.02
negodovanie "indignation"	1.21	0.25	1.47

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razdrazhenie "irritation"	1.19	-0.87	0.31
obida "hurt/resentment"	1.16	-1.00	0.15
zlost "anger"	1.15	-1.20	-0.05
serdityj "cross"	0.86	0.62	1.49
jarost "fury"	0.76	-0.75	0.01
dosada "vexation/frustration"	0.29	-0.82	-0.52

Note: Dif = difference in the scores on Dimension 2; Ukr = Ukrainian; Ru = Russian.

3.2 Study 2

Semantic similarity between Ukrainian and Russian anger terms as understood by L1 Ukrainian and L2 Russian students from Ukraine was first assessed using Pearson correlations, all of which were rather high: 0.89 for Ukr *zlist'*/ Ru *zlost'*, 0.85 for Ukr *rozdratuvannya* / Ru *razdrazheniye* "irritation", .84 Ukr *obraza* / Ru *obida*, 0.90 Ukr *nenavyst'*/ Ru *nenavist'*, and 0.91 for Ukr *gniv* / Ru *gnev*. However, computing the correlations of the GRID emotion features across 10 anger words revealed that 27 features that correlated below 0.7, and thus were clearly deviant in meaning between the samples. These features pertained to all emotion components (except Feeling), but were unevenly spread across the GRID feature inventory. For instance, while Bodily reaction features were deviant in 16.6% of cases, 26.9% of the emotional Expression features correlated very low across the samples. The main regularity, however, was that all emotion regulation features correlated below 0.7, and the correlations were very small, ranging from 0.13 on "showed a weaker degree of emotion than he/she actually felt" (#140) to maximally 0.53 on "showed a stronger degree of emotion than he/she actually felt" (#139). These findings suggest a consistent, pattern-like deviation in emotion regulation as part of the meaning of Russian and Ukrainian emotion terms as rated by the two bilingual student groups.

To investigate the nature of variation on emotional regulation between the two sets of words, Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted on the four regulation features across the Russian and Ukrainian samples. The results clearly pointed at one bipolar factor: *controlling expression* ("tried to control the intensity of the emotion", "showed a weaker degree of emotion than he/she actually felt", and "hid the emotion by a smile") vs. *enhancing expression* ("showed a stronger degree of emotion than he/she actually felt"), with Russian labels for anger emotions scoring significantly higher on the control side (p = 0.006). Regulation scores of Russian and Ukrainian translation pairs on this emotional control factor are shown in Table 3.

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Table 3. Regulation scores of Russian and Ukrainian emotion terms. Source: Own processing

Words	Dif	Scores	
		Ukr	Ru
rozdratuvannya / razdrazheniye "irritation"	-1.4	-0.52	0.92
obraza / obida "hurt/resentment"	-1.1	-0.63	0.51
nenavyst'/ nenavist' "hate"	-1.08	0.02	1.09
zlist'/ zlost' "anger"	-0.80	-1.72	-0.92
gniv / gnev "righteous anger"	-0.65	-0.92	-0.27

Note: Dif = difference in the scores on Dimension 2; Ukr = Ukrainian; Ru = Russian.

The largest divergence was observed between irritation (*rozdratuvannya / razdrazheniye*), resentment (*obraza / obida*) and hate (*nenavyst' / nenavist'*) terms, with smaller differences between cognates denoting anger (*zlist' / zlost'*) and justified anger/wrath (*gniv / gnev*).

4. Discussion and conclusion

This study explored emotion meaning construction in Ukrainian and Russian, two Eastern-Slavic languages spoken in Ukraine and Russia – a language contrast where, unlike in much previous research on emotion language on variation between distant languages and cultures (e.g., Goswami & Yadav 2024; Sharma 2018; Zhou et al. 2022), semantic variation in emotional meaning would be expected to be rather small or unsystematic. This assumption makes sense considering that Ukrainian and Russian belong to the same language subfamily (Eastern-Slavic languages) within a broader family of Slavic languages. As demonstrated by Jackson et al. (2019: 1517) on a representative sample of 2474 languages from 20 major language families, similarity of emotion terms could be predicted based on "geographic proximity of the languages they originate from". Yet another factor that would have contributed to similarities between Ukrainian and Russian anger concepts was that, in Study 2, we focused on cognate anger terms in the two languages – that is, emotion words from a common origin that have retained similar spellings, pronunciations, and meanings. Moreover, in Study 1, two student groups from Ukraine and Russia rated the same set of Russian anger words.

However, instead of overwhelming similarity, and supporting the hypothesis that emotions are culturally constructed, we observed systematic and robust differences between Ukrainians' and Russians' understanding of anger concepts. Compared to monolingual Russians, L2 Russian Ukrainians viewed anger varieties as significantly more socially acceptable, egalitarian, explicitly manifested, and frequent emotional experiences. These observations were further reinforced by the results of Study 2 showing that Ukrainian anger words scored significantly lower on repressive regulation of anger, implying that culture display rules permit such "anger-out" behavior. Taken together, the results of Studies 1-2 highlight that speakers of Ukrainian – in both their L1 Ukrainian

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and L2 Russian – consider angry emotions as less socially threatening and thus less likely subject to societal disapproval and regulatory control. That being said, L1 Russian Ukrainians' conceptualization of anger showed a stronger affinity to that of monolingual Russian speakers from Russia than to that of their L1 Ukrainian fellow citizens.

This variation in how Ukrainians and Russians understand anger concepts largely agrees with cross-cultural divergence on individualism/collectivism and power distance dimensions previously reported between the two cultural groups at stake. As would be expected in an alleged higher-individualism and lower-power-distance society, Ukrainian speakers see anger as a less socially tabooed emotion. Interestingly, owing to the present study's focus on a broader set of anger concepts – nine varieties in Study 1 and five in Study 2 – rather than on a generalized anger prototype, we obtained a rather granular insight into which specific anger experiences differ the most between the two groups. According to our results, it is not *any* kind of anger that markedly diverges in Ukrainian vs. Russian conceptualizations. Rather, remaining rather small in conceptualizing *dosada*, a petty anger defined as "a feeling of irritation, dissatisfaction that arises from a mishap" (Словарь русского языка 1990), the difference between the two conceptualizations gradually increases to become the most pronounced in beliefs about the collectively experienced righteous anger at a justified cause (e.g., a perception of injustice or moral lapse) referred to by *vozmuscheniye*, *negodovaniye*, and *gnev* – the feelings akin to those experienced by all Ukrainians towards the aggressor when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 (e.g., Ash & Shapovalov 2024).[7]

Along with contributing to cross-cultural research, the present results offer useful insights into research on bilingual emotion concepts. Consistently with several previous studies (Alonso-Arbiol et al., 2013; Davitz 1969; Pavlenko 2008), in Study 1, we observed lexical acculturation and cultural diffusion processes whereby bilingual individuals applied the characteristics of their L1 concepts to their L2. Accordingly, an important implication of these findings is that a realistic account of emotion conceptualization is hardly possible without incorporating lectal variation into the linguistic study of emotions, be it through large-scale corpus analyses of how emotions are conceptualized in different regions speaking the same language (Soares da Silva 2020; 2021) or via accessing speakers' intuitions about emotional meanings (as in the approach used in this study). While this may contradict Anna Wierzbicka's (1995: 32) point that "to think that untrained native speakers can tell us what a word (e.g. [Italian] rabbia) means …. would be as naïve as to think that an untrained patient can make the best diagnosis of his or her own illness", on the cognitive view on lexical meaning endorsed by Cognitive Linguistics, the way we talk or reason about emotions reveals something about the way we mentally represent them. Accordingly, as aptly phrased by Geeraerts (2005: 163), "if Cognitive

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Linguistics embraces a social conception of language, it should not restrict itself to an intuitive methodology…, but it should adopt the observational approach".

This being said, several limitations of our investigation should be acknowledged. First, both studies were exploratory and the observations, particularly those in Study 1, should be replicated using the ELIN-based semantic profiles of Ukrainian words that are yet to be collected.

Another limitation is that the data are from 2008–2010, the period well before the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the full-scale invasion of Russia in Ukraine in February 2022. In the context of the ongoing de-Russification of Ukraine, on the one hand, and the growing autocracy in Russia, on the other hand, it would be reasonable to expect further dissociation of anger concepts in Ukrainian vs. Russian. Obviously, this also highlights the need for a longitudinal exploration of such evolution in emotion semantics.

Third, our research design does not allow to rule out the possibility that the systematic differences in the emotion regulation component in Study 2 are caused by factors other than cultural divergences between Ukraine and Russia. One potential explanation of the findings could build on the argument about the sub-cultural effect. Specifically, the two student groups that participated in the GRID survey can be said to represent two distinct student subcultures. L1 Ukrainian group were students of the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla academy", the first university in Ukraine to adopt, back in 1992, the Western system and style of education, including the system of earning credits, free choice of the disciplines to be studied, more individual student work, as well as more emphasis on individual initiative and critical thinking. By contrast, the L1 Russian group was recruited among the students of Russian philology at Kyiv National Taras Schevchenko University, a most reputed yet conservative university characterized by a more authoritative style of teaching that promoted emotional control, obedience, and recognition of academic hierarchy among the studentship. This suggests the need to extend the present research to non-student populations.

Finally, the conclusions drawn in this study are limited to the outcomes afforded by only one methodology. Yet, in the affective sciences, there is a broad understanding that any advance in the current understanding of emotion should entail a close collaboration between disciplines and the use of mutually informative methodologies. To date, several attempts have been made to compare the outcomes of psycholinguistic research using the GRID/ELIN approaches with those afforded by other psycholinguistic research designs (Ogarkova et al. 2016), corpus linguistics (Soriano & Ogarkova 2025), and metaphor research (Ogarkova et al. 2018). In the context of recent linguistic research on

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Ukrainian emotion concepts in corpus linguistics (Mizin & Ovsiienko 2020; Mizin et al. 2021a; 2021b), metaphor studies (Pinich & Morozova 2024), and phraseology (Zahnitko & Krasnobayeva-Chorna 2022), it would be meaningful to explore whether our findings can be substantiated using other methodological approaches.

Notes

1. Originally developed in international research on business culture (Hofstede 2001), the cultural dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism and power distance are widely used in cross-cultural psychology.
2. More information about the GRID project is available here: https://www.unige.ch/cisa/research/current-specific-research-projects/language-and-culture/grid-project/
3. For further detail on the ELIN project, please see https://snis.ch/projects/the-impact-of-emotion-language-on-international-negotiation-elin/
4. To increase readability of this paper to the audience unfamiliar with the Cyrillic script, Ukrainian and Russian words used in Studies 1-2 are transliterated by the present author throughout the paper. During the data collection, however, the words were presented to the participants in the corresponding source languages in Cyrillic.
5. The complete version of the ELIN questionnaire is available at: https://www.unige.ch/cisa/files/9614/9372/8273/Ch_22_-_Table_SM_1.pdf
6. The complete version of the GRID questionnaire is available at: https://www.unige.ch/cisa/files/7214/9371/2318/Grid_questionnaire_Aug_2013.pdf
7. References to righteous anger that Ukrainians have experienced from the early days of Russia's invasion into Ukraine made it to many English headlines in the media coverage of the war. To provide just a few examples: "Ukraine is traumatised, but it is filled with a deep, burning anger and its people won't surrender" (John Lyons, *ABC News*, 20 April 2023); "One year on, Ukrainians are full of anger and a sense of duty" (Nataliya Gumenyuk, *The Guardian*, 23 Feb 2023); "Anger and shock after Russian attacks pound Ukraine's Kharkiv" (Federica Marsi, *Al-Jazeera*, 1 March 2022).

Abbreviations

PCA – Principal Component Analysis

Ru – Russian

Ukr – Ukrainian

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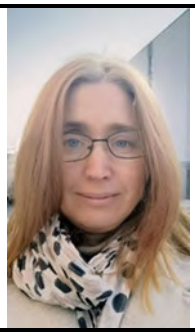

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 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

A FOLK SONG AS A KNOT OF POETIC TEXT, CULTURE, HISTORY, AND EMOTIONS

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Received: 20.02.2025 **Reviewed:** 3.03.2025 and 4.03.2025

Similarity Index: 1%

Bibliographic description: Panasenko, N. (2025). A folk song as a knot of poetic text, culture, history, and emotions. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1). p. 101-121. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.07

Abstract: The article presents the results of a song discourse analysis highlighting such basic discourse modules as poetic text and music, author and addressee, arrangement and performance. A folk song describes events which take place in society at a definite time and in a definite place and reflects the spiritual and emotional worlds of people. In some cases, only due to musical expressive means (tonal, dynamic, and temporal) a listener can properly decode the author's messages hidden in the text and have emotional impact.

Keywords: folk song, emotions and feelings, song discourse, poetic text, musical expressive means.

To Ad Foolen with sister love and tenderness

1. Introduction

A folk song is a multisided cultural phenomenon which is constantly in the focus of research of linguists, musicologists, ethnologists, and specialists in affective sciences, because it reflects not only history, life and material culture, beliefs, rites, traditions, and features of thinking, but the mentality of the nation as a whole. Folk songs, often passed down through generations, strengthen group identity and create shared emotional experiences. A song consists of a poetic text and music, but in reality, the connection between words and music is more complicated. If a poet chooses a set of words and stylistic devices (SD) as a conscious choice with the purpose of having a certain influence on a reader, the music of a song affects a listener due to a set of musical expressive means (EM): tonal, dynamic, and temporal.

If we consider the place of a folk song in the song discourse, we will see some features adherent to any discourse, such as space, time, culture, and society reflected in the text. If a reader understands the language of the poetic text, then one can admire the rich vocabulary consisting of poeticisms, archaisms and numerous SD which are used by the author for different purposes: to create images, describe people and events, express emotions and feelings. Cross-cultural studies confirm that even when listeners do not understand the lyrics, the emotional impact of folk music is widely shared across cultures; it is only due to musical EM.

Using semantic, stylistic, contextual, and auditory analyses in combination with musical analysis I want to explain how emotions and feelings are named, described, and expressed in poetic texts and in music; which modules of the song discourse are most important in decoding the information in the text and music; how tonal, dynamic, and temporal characteristics of music function in creating an emotional contact between an author and addressee. For this purpose, I have chosen examples of sheet music and variations of its performance and arrangement belonging to British, American, Ukrainian, Russian, and Georgian folklore, the most interesting of which are given below.

2. Folk song across cultures

Folklore is an integral part of the culture of many peoples. It reflects traditions and beliefs, rites, customs, and historical events. Song is a folkloric genre that is a complex unity of words, melody, and performance. Folk songs have features of composition, melody, and text depending on their genre and reflect history, life and material culture, beliefs, rituals, traditions, thinking features, and in particular, musical, and the mentality of the nation as a whole.

I am interested in the folk song culture of the British Isles, American culture, and the culture of the Slavic and Georgian peoples. British song folklore is represented by English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh songs. Introducing a collection of folk songs, William Cole writes that

> *"these songs from the British Isles have always seemed to me the most beautiful songs in the world. They are shot through with the poetry of the people; they celebrate love and nature, the flair of the hero and the pride of the simple man. They are sometimes killingly humorous, sometimes jaunty or unashamedly amorous. Each song grew out of a deep feeling one man once had"* (Folk songs of England…1969: ix).

In American song culture, through the polyphony of genres and styles, the history of the formation of the American nation is reflected. American folklore is unique in nature: it intertwines country music, rooted in the folk music of Britain and Ireland, African-American music (souls, spirituals, gospel), songs and folklore of the indigenous people of the North American continent – Indians and jazz (Kingman 1990). As for the theme of American folk songs, they are traditionally classified into

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songs about love and friendship ("Long time ago"), children's ("Hickory, dickory, dock"), lullabies ("All the pretty little horses"), songs of workers ("Pick a bale of cotton"), songs of the West that appeared during the development of the wild West ("On top of old Smokey", "Oh! Susanna"), songs of war and protest ("John Brown's body"), and songs of religious themes ("Do, Lord, remember me!").

Ukrainian song folklore stands out from other folklores due to its rich melodic structure, emotional depth, and deep connection to nature, history, and everyday life. Here are some key characteristics that make it unique: melodic and harmonic complexity – wide vocal ranges and melismatic singing; wide combinations of minor and major keys creating a melancholic yet expressive sound (see the examples below); the use of polyphony is more prominent in Ukraine than in many other European folk traditions (the exception is Georgian polyphonic singing). It has a very strong connection with nature and agriculture.

Songs of Slovaks by theme and genre composition have some common features with the Czech. The musical folklore of Slovakia is rich in song genres (lyrical, epic, every day, ritual, labour songs, and ballads). Historical songs that chant the era of heroic resistance to the Turkish conquerors are interesting. Like other Western Slavs, the Slovaks did not have a heroic epic, though lyrical-epic creativity is highly developed. Slovak ballads have high artistic merits. Their plot basis is the life of the family and the village, echoes of historical events, etc. Folk songs are distinguished by developed melody and rhythmic diversity.

One of the most famous Slovak folk songs is "Tancuj, tancuj, vykrúcaj, vykrúcaj" ("Dance, dance, twist, twist"). This lively song is often performed at celebrations and folk festivals and is known for its catchy melody and danceable rhythm. You may listen to it performed by a children choir: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIiILTTOhbY. Another notable song "Kopala studienku" ("She was digging a well") is the base of the Slovak anthem (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEmHhNFrKAY&ab_channel=Hromnica). The performance is accompanied by typical Slovak musical instruments; the singers of different sex and age wear authentic national costumes representing different parts of Slovakia.

Georgian folklore is one of the most outstanding parts of global cultural heritage. Georgia is the classical country of vocal polyphony, and vocal polyphony is the starting point of Georgian musical thinking. Georgian folk polyphonic song has gone through a long period of development and improvement. Georgian musical folklore accumulated over time, changing qualitatively and quantitatively. Folklore itself assumes syncretism and incorporates dance, song, music and poetry

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into its organic whole. Georgian folk music is characterized by free improvisation, variability and a lively creative process (Грузинский фольклор, *s.a.*). Among the main genres of folk music can be distinguished labour songs ("Gutnuri", "Kevruli", "Urmuli", "Gerio"), cult songs ("Lashari", "Chona", "Alilo"), and household songs ("Sabodisho", "Dideba", "Dala").

A detailed analysis of a plowman's song "Gutnuri" is done by Marika Chikvaidze (2020: 82-83). It is a two-voice work, with a long (bourdon) bass song performed during plowing the earth. It has a connection with ancient agronomic traditions and holidays. "Gutnuri" originated on the basis of collective labour and describes the whole process of agriculture, characterizes the plowman, driver and, in general, the working peasant, conveying their thoughts and moods. You may listen to the performance of this song by Vasil Nanobashvili and a male ensemble (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzDS2o5ftYI&t=7s)[1]. In the lyrics, a peasant appeals to the plowman. The vocal part of the soloist is pronounced; the melody is ornamental and requires skill from the vocal artist. The song displays a monotonous workflow and the bleak life of a peasant. The ensemble of the singers presents this Georgian working song in harmonious development.

Now let us discuss how folk songs are connected with affective sciences.

3. Affective sciences and folk songs

Folk songs are deeply connected with affective sciences, which study emotions, moods, and their influence on human behaviour and cognition. This connection can be explored in several ways: emotional display and regulation, because folk songs often convey deep emotions, such as joy, sorrow, nostalgia, or longing. This especially concerns lyrical songs, which express the complex emotional world of a person, shades of their moods, feelings and experiences. They serve as a means of emotional catharsis, helping individuals and communities process emotions.

We can also speak about linguistic and emotional resonance, because folk songs often use simple but emotionally charged lyrics, making them effective in emotional communication. This communication is provided by such components of intonation, as rhythm, pitch, and melody, which will be discussed below.

As Winco claims (2023: 1433), "[t]oday one can find numerous literary scholarly contributions in the field of literature and emotion", which she divides into four groups: production-oriented theories, reception-oriented theories, text-centred theories, and context-centred theories. Making detailed

analysis of these theories, the scholar studies interrelations between emotional research and stylistics, which is logical, because the SD of different language level (phonetic, morphological, semasiological, etc.) in their harmonic combination evoke strong emotive reader's/listener's responses.

As noted by Panasenko et al. (2023: 1531), Foolen (2012: 349) claims that the relevance of emotion for language and linguistics may be considered from three perspectives: the conceptualization of emotions, the expression of emotions, and the grounding of language. This idea correlates with the points of view expressed by Shakhovskij (2008) that human emotions are verbalized by the language in the three ways: emotions may be **named**, **described,** or **expressed** by the language.

Let us illustrate it with some examples.

3.1 How emotions and feelings are named in folk songs

The first two examples come from the English songs "O Waly, Waly": "*There is a ship sailing on the sea, / She's loaded deep as deep can be, / But not so deep as in love I am*" and "Lavender's blue": "*Lavender's green, diddle diddle, / Lavender's blue, / You must love me, diddle diddle, / 'Cause I love you*". Other interesting examples are in Irish songs "The lark in the clear air" – *my soul's adoration, joyous elation*; "Farewell! But whenever you welcome the hour" – grief(s), happiness, hope or in the Scottish song "Robin Afair" – "*Where all the joy and mirth / Made this town heav'n on earth*?"

3.2 How emotions and feelings are described in folk songs

The author of the words of the Irish song "Down by the Salley Gardens" is William Butler Yeats. It often happens that either music or words have an author but, in any case, they are included into the album of the folk songs. The explanation is given by William Cole in the album of folk songs: the songs "were picked up by the folk and have been sung by them ever since" (Folk songs of England… 1969: ix). Another explanation is given by Pete Seeger, an American singer-songwriter and musician: "they're called folk songs because folks sing 'em" (ibid., ix). Though it is again an example of a love song, in the last couplet the young man speaks about his disillusionment resulting from unhappy love: "*She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs; / But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears*".

An Irish song "Shule Aroon" ("Come o love") is named a song of lamentation due to the separation of lovers: "*I would I were on yonder hill, / Tis there I'd sit and cry my fill, / And every tear would turn a mill, Iss guh day thoo avomeen slawn*". The last lines and the refrain are given in Gaelic.

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3.3 How emotions and feelings are expressed in folk songs

Some examples are found in the Scottish song "Corn rigs are bonnie", the author of which is Robert Burns: "*I lock't her in my fond embrace*; / *Her heart was beating rarely*". In the song of the Hebrides "An eriskay love lilt" happy love is characterized like this: "*Thou'rt the music of my heart, / Harp of joy, o cruit mo chridh.*"

In the Welsh song "Megan's fair daughter" we come across a detailed description of a young man who is in love: "*I see her in dreams, she trips to me lightly*, / *With joy on her lips she whispers my name*. / *Her eyes look in mine, so fondly so brightly*…". The English lyrics are by John Oxenford; I deliberately omit the original text in Welsh because the number of people who will interpret it properly is limited, likewise for the examples from Slavic folk songs and from Georgian.

The majority of the examples presented above were connected with positive emotions and feelings, but the palette of them is different. In the Welsh song "The ash grove" we find lines characterizing a man's deep grief and sorrow: "*My lips smile no more, my heart loses its lightness*, / *No dream of the future my spirit can cheer*; / *I only can brood on the past and its brightness*, / *The dead I have mourned are again living here*".

Grief, sadness and despair are seen in the Russian folk song "То не ветер ветку клонит" ("That's not the wind bowing a branch") (see Table 1):

Table 1. Translation of an extract from a Russian folk song "То не ветер ветку клонит"

Russian	English
То не ветер ветку клонит, *Не дубравушка шумит.* *То мое сердечко стонет,* *Как осенний лист дрожит.*	That's not the wind bowing a branch, Not an oak grove rustling – That's mine, my poor heart groaning, Trembling like an autumn leaf.

Here we come across some SD, namely stylistic morphology: diminutive suffixes (dim. suff.) in *дубрав**ушк**а* (oak grove + dim. suff.) and *серд**ечк**о* (heart + dim. suff.), stylistic semasiology: simile – *That's mine, my poor heart groaning,* ***Trembling like an autumn leaf*** and at the end of the text – hyperbole combined with metaphor: *Знать, судьба теперь* ***с могилой / Обвенчаться молодцу*** (It seems now the fate of me, young man, / is **to be wed to the grave**).

The question arises how a person expresses one's feelings and whether there are differences in different cultures in the adequate perception and interpretation of emotions. There is an opinion that people belonging to different cultures are able to accurately perceive and evaluate the expressions of

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the human face, to determine from it such emotional states as joy, anger, sadness, fear, disgust, and surprise. This also can be applied to those peoples who have never been in contact with each other at all (Как человек выражает свои чувства и эмоции, *s.a.*).

Psychologists usually take into account different features accompanying emotions, such as features describing the person's evaluation or appraisal of the event, features describing the bodily symptoms and movements that tend to occur during the emotional state – feel shivers (in the neck, or chest, become pale, feel his/her heartbeat slowing down, etc.); features describing facial and vocal expressions, that accompany the emotion – blushed, smiled, closed his/her eyes, had tears in his/her eyes; changes in the loudness of voice, etc.) (Панасенко 2009: 89). All these symptoms were included into GRID study on the semantics of emotion terms across languages and cultures, which was supported by the Swiss National Center of Competence in Research on Affective Sciences, the results of which were published in 2013 (see Components of Emotional Meaning). Some of these features are presented in the examples above, some will be given below.

4. Song discourse and the place of a folk song in it

Scholars have analyzed discourse and its various types in detail. In so far as we can treat the song from different points of view, song discourse is worth discussing. In my opinion, song discourse contains such modules or blocks as CULTURE and SOCIETY, TIME, SPACE, which influence the following modules: AUTHORS, who create words and music; POETIC TEXT, which includes such elements as text semiotic and semantic space, SD and EM, and characters; SONG, which belongs to a specific genre and has music, arrangement and performance and ADDRESSEE (listener/reader). This model differs from other text discourse models because of such specific elements, as song genres, song performance and arrangement, musical means of creating images in the text (Панасенко 2014b) (see Fig. 1).

 ISSN 2453-8035

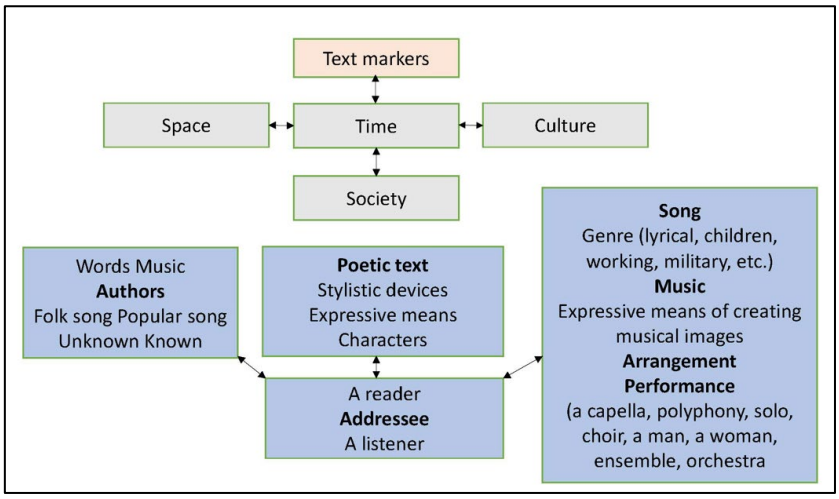

Figure 1. Model of song discourse. Source: Revised after Панасенко 2014

The background of the model of song discourse forms the text-discursive model proposed by Selivanova, which vividly reflects the relationship between text and discourse. It includes five modules: modules of the addresser (author), addressee (reader), text (utterance), being interiorized in time and space, and the semiotic universe (Селиванова 2002: 144). This model can be used to analyze any discourse. Taking the model of Selivanova as a basis, I created a model of song discourse, which includes both general components (author, text and addressee) and specific ones (music, performance, arrangement, genre). Discourse analysis of song folklore gives the possibility to reconstruct the cultural-historic changes in the society.

The modules of song discourse form several blocks. The first four include space and time, culture and society. The remaining four blocks are associated with the author, poetic text, addressee and musical component. Important markers in the song text are culture and society. The theme of folk songs is usually associated with various genres and reflect customs and traditions of peoples, e.g. in Ukrainian song folklore, you can distinguish the songs of the calendar-ritual cycle like vesnyanka, i.e. a spring song (веснянка), wedding songs, carols and bounties, obzhynky (обжинки) performed during a Slavic harvest festival. The hard lives of the Negro population (Negro Spirituals), racial discrimination ("Old Black Joe"), the war between North and South ("Just before the battle, mother"), election campaigns ("Lincoln and liberty") and other aspects of American society and history have also found their way into song folklore.

Though my examples of songs are borrowed from the collections of folk songs, as I mentioned above, some songs have authors. Due to their great popularity such songs are considered to be folk songs. A poetic text, which is an inseparable part of a song, not only functions as a carrier and source of information about the world, presented through the prism of national culture, but also as a source of

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linguistic information. We may come across various EM and SD which are used with the purpose of creating female and male images, and describing and expressing emotions and feelings. On the morphological level we may find many examples with diminutive suffixes, especially in Slavic songs, e.g., Slovak *Čierne oči smejú, biela* ***rúčka*** *kýva; v tom dvore akiste môj najmilší býva* (Black eyes are laughing, a white hand (+ dim. suff.) is waving, in that yard my dearest man lives) ("Večer je, večer je" – "It is evening, it is evening") (A teraz túto… 2004). Here we have a description of a loved one with tenderness and the functions of diminutives are sympathy, affection, cordiality, and admiration.

"Ах вы сени, мои сени" ("Oh you, my porch, you, my nice porch") is a traditional Russian folk song. It tells a simple story about a girl who is in love with the young brewer, Vanya, but her strict father forbids them to see each other. The poetic text abounds in diminutives which as in the examples above, have also positive meaning (see Table 2):

Table 2. Translation of an extract from a Russian folk song "Ах вы сени, мои сени"

Russian	English
Выпускала сокола из правого рукава,	She released the falcon from Her right wide and fancy sleeve.
На ***полётике соколику*** *наказывала...*	When **the falcon** (+ dim. suff.) **flew away** (a noun + dim. suff.) she said…
...Что один сын у отца –	She put her spell on… For his father has him one, The son's born as a nice guy!
зовут ***Ванюшкою****,* *Зовут* ***Ванюшкою-пивоварушкою***	And his name is **Ivan** (+ dim. suff.), And a **brewer** (+ dim. suff.) he is.

Source of the translation: https://accordeonworld.weebly.com/seni.html

On the lexical level we come across poeticisms and historicisms, colloquialisms, slang and dialectal words. Most interesting are semasiological and syntactic SD which are often combined with diminutives, as in the Ukrainian folk song "Гандзя" ("Gandzia") (see Table 3).

Table 3. Translation of an extract from a Ukranian folk song "Гандзя"

Ukrainian	English
Гандзя **душка**, Гандзя любка,	Handzya my dear, Handzya my love,
Гандзя мила, як голубка.	Handzya my sweet, how you are my dove.
Гандзя **рибка**, Гандзя **птичка**,	Handzya my fish (+ dim. suff.), Handzya my bird (+ dim. suff.),
Гандзя **цяця-молодичка**.	Handzya my knob-demoiselle (+ dim. suff.).

In this poetic text we have many emotively charged words which express love, tenderness, and admiration; these positive meanings are enhanced by diminutives and anaphoras. The description of this song in Russian as well as its performance by Nataliya Shelepnytska can be found on this web

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site: https://poembook.ru/diary/30000-gandzya-malorossijskaya-pesnya. Her singing is accompanied by fragments from the popular Ukrainian films "Christmas Eve", which is literally translated as "The night before Christmas" based on the novel of Nikolay Gogol' (produced in 1997) and "Chasing two hares" (1961). In these fragments we can see authentic female and male Ukrainian costumes and scenes from the everyday life of Ukrainians in the first half of the 19th century.

4.1 Music and its EM

All musical EM can be divided into three groups: **tonal characteristics**: type of melody, key, i.e. the main tonality of a composition, major or minor, intervals, tone colour or timber, harmony; **dynamic characteristics**: loudness of music, dynamic nuances, accent, and **temporal characteristics:** pauses, tempo, musical rhythm, and value of a note or a pause (Panasenko et al. 2023: 1542).

Let us discuss these three groups of EM and illustrate them with some examples.

Tonal characteristics. There are different types of melody development, such as repetition, modification, sequence, and leading notes (leading tone) (Васина-Гроссман 1978: 104). Sposobin (Способин 1958: 168-169) indicates five basic types: **repetition** of identical sound several times; **leading note** (preparing for the appearance of this or that scale tone with the help of nearby (introductory) notes; **ascending movement**, i.e., transition to higher sounds, which is often connected with the tension growth; **descending movement**, i.e. transition to lower sounds, which is often connected with the decline in tension; **wave-like movement**, i.e. sequence of ascending and descending transitions, which consists of leaps (i.e., wider intervals) and smooth movement (i.e., narrower intervals) (Panasenko 2014a: 31). Repetition of melodic elements evokes the feeling of insistence, and falling melodic contour with sequence (a melodic pattern repeated three or more times at different pitches with or without modulation) expresses regret and sympathy (Panasenko et al. 2023: 1544).

As an example of gradually descending and ascending melodic movement I would like to provide a fragment from a Russian folk song "Во поле берёза стояла" ("The birch tree"). *Lyuli, lyuli* is a saying *la, la, la* in English and is quite common in folk songs (see a fragment of sheet music in the original in Fig. 2).

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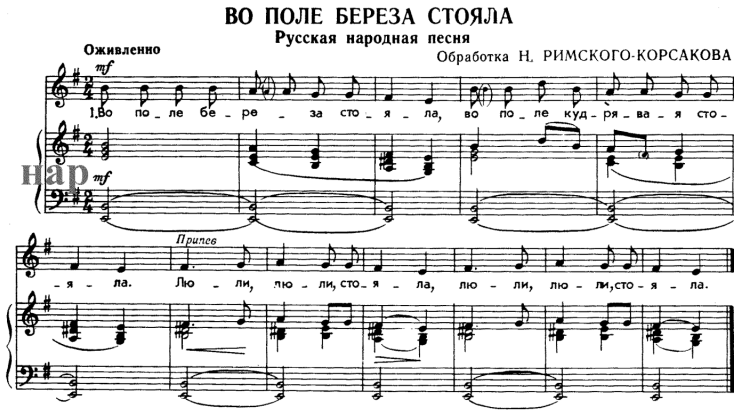

Figure 2. Sheet music (an extract) of the Russian folk song "Во поле берёза стояла".
Source: https://notarhiv.ru/ruspesni/noti/1%20(93).pdf

As it comes from the song fragment presented above, the melodic movement is gradually descending and ascending (see Table 4).

Table 4. Type of melodic movement in the Russian folk song "Во поле берёза стояла". Source: Own processing

Example	Type of melodic movement
In the field, a birch tree stood	descending
In the field, a curly birch stood	ascending, descending
Lyuli, lyuli it stood	ascending, descending

A birch tree is a symbol of Russia. You may listen to this song performed by Ksenia Koneva and Lada Mosharova under the accompaniment of a folk instrument orchestra with a balalaika, which is also one of the symbols of Russia (https://rutube.ru/video/ec00a3f6d3fcbe1f6521b517b2816171/).

Melodic intervals can be major, minor, wide, and narrow. Major intervals (major second, major third, major sixth, and major seventh) are related to major keys; they are characterized by open space and movement to light; minor intervals, on the contrary, have the meaning of melancholy. "Wide" intervals (fifths, sixths, sevenths, octaves) render openness of a statement and sincere revelations, whereas "narrow" ones reveal inner worlds of feelings and emotional restraint. A third and a quint in a question serve to express surprise and impatience, in a stressed position – surprise and delight with a shade of doubt and meditation. A pure fourth corresponds to decisiveness and assurance. An octave in an interrogative sentence shows the greatest degree of surprise, in a stressed position – surprise, delight, and puzzlement (after Волконский 1913).

While speaking about tonal characteristics, we must mention the role of keys and tonalities in expressing emotions and feelings. Major and minor modes are traditionally associated with positive

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and negative emotions. Different tonalities serve to express nuances of feelings, human spirit, and aspiration (Panasenko et al. 2023: 1545).

The combination of minor and major keys is often used by the creators deliberately to show the inner struggle of the hero and the stages of one's excitement, the struggle between good and evil, as in the Ukrainian song "Ой на горі сніг біленький" ("Oh, white snow is on the mountain"), in which there is a wonderful combination of various keys and intervals that serve to express sadness, deep grief, suffering and reproach (see Table 5):

Table 5. Translation of an extract from the Ukrainian folk song "Ой на горі сніг біленький" in combination with the variety of changing keys in it. Source: Own processing

Ukrainian	English	Musical means
F-dur Ой на горі C-dur сніг біленький, F-dur Десь поїхав C-dur мій миленький, d-moll Десь поїхав A-dur та й немає, g-moll Серце з жалю d-moll завмирає.	Oh, white (+ dim. suff.) snow is on the mountain, Somewhere went my sweetheart (+dim. suff.), Somewhere left and disappeared, My heart stops with regret.	Description, major keys statement of fact, major keys diminished seventh (sadness), minor key major key minor keys descending minor second (intonation of beating and sorrow

Since the girl has no hope of seeing her sweet, the song ends in the minor key of d-moll.

In the Ukrainian song "Дощик, дощик" ("Rain, rain") a major key is replaced by a minor one. The key of the song is g-moll, but it begins with a cheerful B-dur. Waiting for a meeting with a loved one gives way to disappointment. All these nuances are displayed due to the changes of the keys (see Table 6).

Table 6. Translation of an extract from the Ukrainian folk song "Дощик, дощик" in combination with the variety of changing keys in it. Source: Own processing

Ukrainian	English
B-dur Дощик, дощик Крапає дрібненько... c-moll Я ж думала, я ж думала – g-moll Запорожець, ненько!	Rain, rain (+ dim. suff.) Drips a little... (an adverb + dim. suff.) I thought, I thought – Zaporozhets, mommy! (a diminutive form of mother)

In this song Zaporozhets, a Cossack of Zaporizhzhya Sich (from the location – "beyond the rapids") is mentioned. Zaporozhian Cossacks played an important role in the history of Ukraine and the ethnogenesis of Ukrainians.

Dynamic characteristics (loudness and dynamic nuances). They are connected mainly with the performance of a piece of music. In sheet music loudness is marked by corresponding symbols: p –

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for piano (quiet), m f for mezzo forte (moderately loud), etc. Changes in the loudness are marked by the forks. Italian terms are used: *crescendo* (abbreviated cresc.), i.e. "increasing" (literally "growing"), *decrescendo* (abbreviated to decresc.) translates as "decreasing" and *diminuendo* (abbreviated dim.), i.e. as "diminishing".

As an example of dynamic characteristics, I would like to give an extract from the English song "Drink to me only with thine eyes", the words to it were written by Ben Jonson and music is traditional (see Fig. 3).

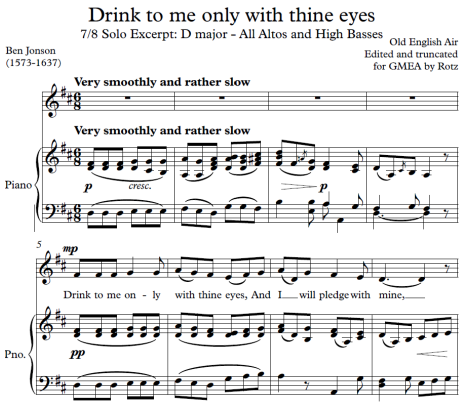

Figure 3. Dynamic characteristics in a fragment of the English song "Drink to me only with thine eyes". Source: Stone: 1991: 28 and https://mccleskeyms.typepad.com/files/drink-to-me-only-with-thine-eyes---d-maj---all-altos-and-high-basses.pdf

We see that the song starts with piano (time 1), then *crescendo* (time 1 and 2) and *diminuendo* (time 4) bring the melody back to piano. Then we see the difference between the singing and accompaniment: for a singer the loudness is marked as m p – mezzo piano (moderately quiet), for the accompaniment it is p p – *pianissimo* (very soft).

Temporal characteristics (pauses or rests, tempo, musical rhythm, and value of a note or a pause). Pauses have their names and duration, see Fig. 4.

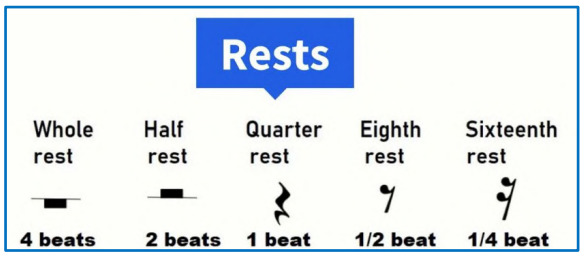

Figure 4. Rest values. Source: www.piano-keyboard-guide.com

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Various pauses can be seen in the examples in Fig. 4 above. Pauses or rests correspond to the value of notes. Tempo has specific gradation, like presto, largo, andante, etc., but they are traditionally used in classical music. In the sheet music of folk songs, they are substituted by terms more familiar to the performers, e.g. the popular Scottish song "Barbara Allen" should be performed moderately, the American song "The wayfaring stranger" – rather slowly, the Welsh song "All through the night" – a little slowly, the American song "Blow the man down" – moderately fast (Raph 1964).

A very important, if not the most important temporal component is rhythm. As Igl (2023: 1522) claims,

> "*Rhythm as mind-body interface and the stylistics of 'attunement'. The phenomenon of rhythm constitutes a promising subject to link the different phenomenal domains of textual features, the conditions of embodied cognition, and reading as a process and multi-sensory experience that enable the realization of a text as a phonotext*".

In this paragraph we discuss musical rhythm, but as far as a song unites a poetic text and music, I find it necessary to consider both. In fact, poetic and musical rhythms share similarities but function in a different way. Poetic rhythm is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry, is linguistic and depends on metre; it influences pacing and pauses. Musical rhythm is the timing of sounds and silences in music and depends on tempo as discussed above, time (duple time – a meter that has two beats per measure: 2/4 (example a Russian song "The birch tree"), 4/4, a musical metre characterized in modern practice by a primary division of 4 beats to the bar (a Welsh song "The kind old man" – "Yr hen wr mwyn") or triple time (3/4) characterized by a primary division of 3 beats to the bar. It is common in formal dance styles, for example, the minuet, the mazurka, the waltz and others (the English songs "Hares on the mountains" and "The green bushes"). Poetic rhythm is based on spoken/written words; musical rhythm exists in instrumental or vocal music. Poetry uses syllables and stresses, while music uses beats and note values.

We have carried out a special research on the comparative analysis of speech and musical rhythm (Panasenko et al. 2023: 1533), therefore I will now limit myself to giving some examples, which illustrate the role of this temporal component of musical intonation in expressing emotions and feelings. Melody is more organized than speech, especially rhythmically, as it uses fixed and differentiated proportions of sound durations (Мазель & Цукерман 1967: 48). Therefore, an equally interesting factor in the dynamics of the development of musical intonation is the change in the musical metre. My analysis shows that in Ukrainian folk songs a multiple change in metre indicates the depth of the experiences of the lyrical hero, the clash of characters, the struggle of interests, or the unfolding of conflicts, as in the songs "Ой, на гору козак воду носить" ("Oh, to the mountain a

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Cossack carries water"): 3/4, 4/4, 3/4; "Ой, зайди, зайди..." (Oh, come in, come in"): 4/4, 5/4, 4/4, 5/4). Changes of metre in the Ukrainian folk song "Козак від'їжджає" are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Translation of an extract from a Ukrainian folk song "Козак від'їжджає" in combination with the variety of changes in the musical metre. Source: Own processing

Ukrainian	English
3/4 Козак від'їжджає, Дівчинонька плаче: "Куди їдеш, козаче? 3/8 Козаче 2/4 соколю, Візьми мене із собою 3/4 На Вкраїну далеку".	A Cossack's riding out A young girl (+ dim. suff.) is crying: "Where do you go, oh a Cossack? Oh Cossack, my dear falcon, Take me there, along with you To the distant far-off Ukraine."

The girl's anxiety about her future fate, the evasive answers of a Cossack, aggravating the conflict tension of the dialogue, are reflected in the rhythmic pattern, which can be classified as free, even/odd, accented by the proportion of durations and means of the melodic line.

5. Discussion

I inserted a set of research questions in my research. What are the key factors in the emotional contact between the song and the listener? A poetic text abounding in SD and EM? Musical EM? Performance? Which of the modules of song discourse is most important?

Without any doubt a poetic text is the basis of any song, especially when it abounds in SD and EM, but proper decoding of the author's messages on the language level demands not only a good command of the language the song is written in; it demands an experienced reader. In some examples above I gave only their translation into English taking into account the limited number of the specialists in Welsh, or Gaelic, or Scots. In my opinion, musical EM, the performance and arrangement of a song are the key elements of expressing emotions and feelings and in making a strong emotional contact between the performer and addressee (listener). Let me illustrate it with several examples.

I want to start with the lyrical Ukrainian song "Ніч яка місячна" ("The night is so moonlit"); the author of words is Mikhailo Starytsky (Михайло Старицький), the music is folk (see Table 8).

Table 8. Translation of an extract from the Ukrainian folk song "Ніч яка місячна". Source: https://lyricstranslate.com/en/%D0%BDi%D1%87%D1%8C-%D1%8F%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BCi%D1%81%D1%8F%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B0-night-so-moonlit.html

Ukrainian	English
Ніч яка місячна, зоряна, ясная, *Видно, хоч голки збирай;* *Вийди, коханая, працею зморена,* *Хоч на хвилиночку в гай!*	The night is so moonlit, so starry, so bright There's so much light you could gather needles. Come, my love, weary with toil If just for one minute to the grove.

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A young man describes a beautiful night, invites his sweetheart and insists on their meeting. The emotions expressed in this song are all positive: love, sympathy, affection, but what prevails is tenderness. Now the Internet gives many possibilities and I want to give the links to two different performances. The first one is by two young men accompanied by a symphonic orchestra and a choir (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaOChwNPg5o&ab_channel=zevnikov). The song is performed in Ukrainian and is accompanied by an English translation. At the second minute and the fourth second of the performance a recitative starts. At the third minute and 15 seconds there is a large pause. The soloists, Rok Zupanc and Lovro Krišelj, are not Ukrainians and one may feel the slight accent which does not spoil their performance. On the contrary, it brings some charm to it and shows that art has no borders.

The second soloist, Anna Reker, is a Ukrainian soprano in André Rieu's symphonic orchestra (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vy8HjhiegNE). First, it is a male song: *Вийди, коха**ная*** (female) – Come, my love (in translation the sex is not identified). Thus, she has to edit the text: *Вийди, коха**ний мій*** (male). In fact, a female beloved in Ukrainian will be *кохана*. An extra letter is added for the sake of rhythm. At the second minute and 19 seconds, the second minute and 49 seconds and the third minute and 14 seconds we hear a considerable prolongation of the last sound in a musical phrase, i.e. the cases of fermata, which slows down the melodic motion, as if the singer needed time to come to their senses. At the third minute and 7 seconds the loudness goes down (diminuendo) and at the third minute and 26 seconds the singer adds specific colouring to her voice, i.e. timber.

In so far as I am limited in space, I will present the analysis of only one more song. It is the Georgian folk song "Suliko". Suliko is a Georgian female and male name meaning "soul". It is based on a love poem written in 1895 by Akaki Tsereteli. At his request the composer and public figure Barbare/Varinka Machavariani-Tsereteli, his relative, wrote the music to it. For a long time, her authorship was hidden, and in the sheet music "Suliko" was mentioned as a folk song (Gaprindashvili 2014). It was translated to and performed in multiple languages including Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Romanian, English, German, Basque, Chinese, and Hebrew. The content of the song is as follows. A young man is looking for the grave of his beloved, Suliko. He found a rose in the forest and asked if it was his Suliko. Then he put the same question to a nightingale, which answered positively. The first and the second couplets are identical, forming a frame or ring repetition. It means that the story has ended. It is not a happy end but life goes on: Suliko has turned into a nightingale and will sing bringing pleasure and admiration to its listeners. Here is the original verse (the first couplet) and its translations into English and Russian (see Table 9).

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Table 9. Translations of an extract from the Georgian folk song "Suliko". Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suliko

Georgian	**English**	**Russian** **Русский перевод Т. Сикорской**
სულიკო საყვარლის საფლავს ვეძებდი, ვერ ვნახე!.. დაკარგულიყო!.. გულამოსკვნილი ვჩიოდი: „სადა ხარ, ჩემო სულიკო?!“	Suliko (soul) I was looking for sweetheart's grave, But I couldn't find it, it was lost. I cried my heart out: "Where are you, my Suliko?!"	Сулико (душечка) Я могилу милой искал, Сердце мне томила тоска, Сердцу без любви нелегко, Где ты? Отзовись, Сулико!

Though it is a song about death, it expresses not deep grief but mild sorrow. The feelings which prevail in this poetic text are love, sympathy, fidelity, and tenderness. Tenderness can be expressed on the phonetic level by such a component of speech intonation as timbre. In music timbre belongs to tonal EM.

As it is a male song, it is often performed by a male ensemble or a choir under the accompaniment of the guitar. A good example of it is the male choir Basiani, the members of which are dressed in national Georgian costumes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPjf8E6tk78&ab_channel=BasianiEnsemble. Their singing is accompanied by picturesque Georgian landscapes. The performance of Trio Tbilisi is also delicate and tender: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5snsEzwsO8U&list=PL5vmX5jYbFNPhwLfa2kL-4eQRBcCVKdau&index=4). At the second minute and 20 seconds there is diminuendo, i.e. lowering the loudness of voice in a combination with slower tempo. The singing of Franko Tenelli is accompanied by the subtitles of the English translation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QR8hAJCJsfQ&ab_channel=AllThatJaaazzz. He not only leads two voices but accompanies himself playing the guitar.

There are considerably more versions of this song performance by women, in both classical and jazz styles, by a quartet of four young men representing the Kaunas Boys' Singing School "Varpelis" (Lithuania) among others.

We have already discussed most of the modules of the song discourse. Now I would like to specify one more – arrangement. Several examples below present fragments from sheet music, which show that the song was arranged in a specific way and performed in different keys (see Fig. 5 and Fig. 6).

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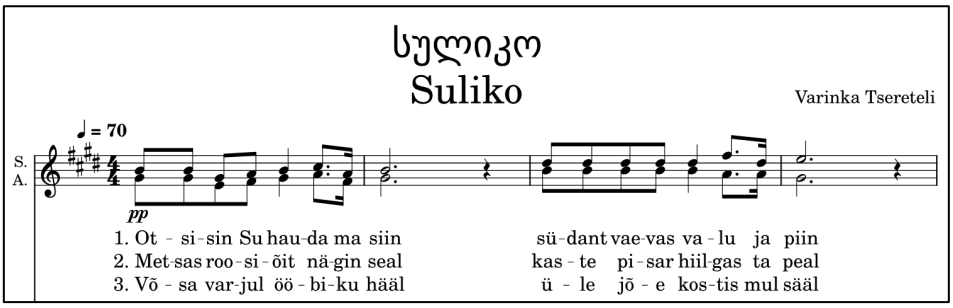

Figure 5. The arrangement of the Georgian folk song "Suliko" performed in E-dur.
Source: https://musescore.com/michelek/suliko

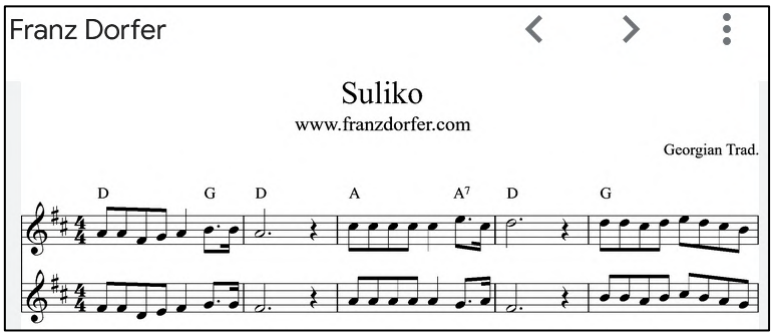

Figure 6. The arrangement of the Georgian folk song "Suliko" performed in D-dur.
Source: https://musescore.com/michelek/suliko

Musicologists and composers (Вашкевич 2006; How chords and key… 2023) attribute to the key E-dur different, if not opposite, meanings: the key of early spring; dissatisfaction and a ready-to-fight feeling but also joy and delight. It is the key in the example in Fig. 5. In the second example (Fig. 6) the arrangement is by Franz Dorfer. There is an opinion that D-dur is bright and emotional, as well as depressive masked by an air of happiness; it evokes feelings of grief and despair.

And the third arrangement which I would like to comment on is by Brent Wells, the Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of music at the college of Idaho, US (see Fig. 7).

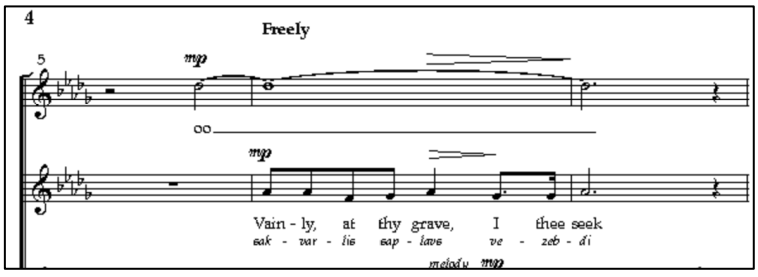

Figure 7. A fragment of the arrangement of the Georgian folk song "Suliko" performed in Des-dur.
Source: https://www.stantons.com/scores/W/W/1/7/8/3/gia-ww1783.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOora4M3ulllgbqZMi6J_DiT2ZZ_U2EN4KH8D9sz22lJoBV6i_p66

In the introduction to his arrangement, Brent Wells rendering the content of the song, directly mentions his understanding of the poetic text and names the emotions the protagonist feels:

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"*In the poem, Suliko has died and her love is heartbroken. He tries to "find" her in the beauty of nature around him. Eventually after much searching, he hears a whispered voice telling him that while she may be gone, her soul lives on in the perfection of the rose's bloom, the nightingale's song, the star's shining light, and the sighing breeze. With this understanding he is overwhelmed with a sense of joy and ultimately finds peace*" (ibid.).

The key Des-dur chosen by Brent Wells is considered to be light, a key of love. Originally the song was composed in C-dur which is said to be virtuosic, confident, firm, and resolute expressing innocence and happiness with a spiritual feeling.

6. Concluding remarks

Folk songs, often passed down through generations, strengthen group identity and create shared emotional experiences. Any song is really a knot of poetic text, culture, history, rituals, traditions coloured by emotions and feelings. People's world outlook, moral, spiritual, social, esthetic and other ideals are clearly displayed in these songs. In many countries they are performed in national costumes and sometimes are accompanied by dancing showing the strong connection between the ancestors and modern generations.

A song discourse model vividly shows the relations between the addresser (author – a poet or composer) and the addressee (a reader of the poetic text or a listener). Specific vocabulary and set of SD serve in naming, describing, and expressing emotions and feelings. Musical EM (melodic, dynamic, and temporal) are in harmony with the text and enhance its impact on the listener. Some emotions and feelings are expressed only due to specific musical characteristics: tempo, rhythms, keys, intervals, tone colour among others. I would also like to mention the great role of the arrangement and performance, which also contribute to the musical shaping of emotions.

Civilizations appear and disappear in the mists of time, royal dynasties replace one another, deserts appear in places once rich in water but a folk song is alive, neglecting the borders of states and time limits, bringing emotional catharsis and pleasure to its listeners.

Notes

1. Most of the examples used as an illustration of folk song performance are borrowed from YouTube. According to their strict rules, the videos cannot be saved and shifted to other place of storage. Thus, you may see ads on YouTube as well as comments. I apologize for this inconvenience.
2. The examples from Slovak, Russian, and Ukrainian are translated by the author. In some cases, the source of the translation is given.

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Abbreviations

dim. suff. – diminutive suffix

EM – expressive means

SD – stylistic devices

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LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

NORMATIVE (IN)SIGNIFICANCE OF ANGER METAPHORS IN UKRAINIAN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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Received: 18.02.2025 **Reviewed:** 25.02.2025 and 14.03.2025

Similarity Index: 1%

Bibliographic description: Pinich, I. (2025). Normative (in)significance of anger metaphors in Ukrainian figurative language. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 122-144. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.08

Abstract: The article examines the shifting normative role of the conceptual metaphor of anger in Ukrainian. An online survey supports the hypothesis that conventional figurative expressions of anger are declining in their regulatory function, while they are increasingly perceived as offensive and impolite, particularly in urban contexts and among younger speakers. This shift is driven by a change in the figurative interpretation of anger-related idioms, which are increasingly understood more literally, especially in power-dynamic contexts.

Key words: metaphor of ANGER, normative significance, impoliteness, offensiveness, rudeness.

1. Introduction

The idea of possible correlation patterns between emotion, language, and cognition is skillfully outlined by Foolen in his seminal work on the relevance of emotion for language and linguistics (2012). He suggests that linguistic expressions of emotions can: (1) always be mediated by cognition, (2) bypass cognition, (3) successfully combine both modes regardless of the emotion type, or (4) do so depending on the type of emotional reaction.

When identifying the specific ways in which anger is expressed, it becomes evident that, beyond its non-verbal manifestations, anger is largely conceptualized through language (Kövecses 1995). Notably, anger is represented within a system of conventionalized linguistic means, which serve as an inventory for expressing immediate reactions to the cause of the emotion, often in the form of

expletives and interjections, flagging the affect (Bednarek 2010), or swearing (Stapleton et al. 2022). Alternatively, a descriptive approach to conveying a cognized experience of anger includes both literal expressions (explicitly naming the emotion) and figurative expressions. The latter offers valuable insight into how speakers conceptualize and structure their understanding of anger through language.

Truly, extensive research on anger conceptualization, particularly its figurative aspects (see Metaphors of ANGER across languages…2024), underscores the central role of cognition in structuring and culturally shaping emotion knowledge. The concept of ANGER encompasses elements such as its possible triggers, potential targets, bodily experiences, and social mechanisms for regulating emotion manifestation, all of which contribute to the emotion schema as it unfolds over time (Kövecses 2015: 84-87). Pinich and Morozova (2024) highlight the importance of prospective actional patterns of anger manifestation in Ukrainian, often reflected in metonymic expressions, as integral to this framework. Therefore, the Ukrainian folk model of anger, with its incorporation of retributive practices, further emphasizes the normative significance of anger metaphors, which, through emotional regulation, reinforces societal and cultural norms and values, shaping perceptions of appropriate behavior.

This aspect of emotional knowledge regarding anger in Ukrainian tentatively involves reciprocal emotional responses, potentially implying offense, elicited by the targeted use of figurative language associated with anger. It is heavily influenced by the broader social nature of linguistic norms and habits of emotional expression among native speakers (Foolen 2023b), as well as their attitudinal perspectives on the function of Ukrainian anger idioms. These idioms balance between ironic, humorous, rude, disrespectful, and impolite tones and may evolve over time, gradually losing their normative significance.

Indeed, social and contextual judgments about the appropriateness of linguistic emotion expressions are rooted in intuitive appraisals of their potential offensive power, (un)intentionality of the offence, and its perceived intensity (Culpeper 2011). Such judgments arguably form part of the basic cognitive operations within the 'causal component' of emotion schema, contributing to a socio-cognitive approach to the model of anger (for Cognitive Sociolinguistics' methods see Foolen 2021). In this model, knowledge of anger antecedents, including the potential offense caused by figurative expressions of anger, is connected to challenging social expectations, violating social and cultural norms and values, or undermining the social significance of the target.

Similar to Foolen's (2012) patterns of correlation between language, emotion, and cognition, (im)politeness theorists conceptualize rudeness and impoliteness as being realized through linguistic expressions that are: 1) entirely context-dependent, requiring cognitive appraisal of the communicative situation, 2) inherently offensive and therefore affect-laden, or 3) a combination of both (see Van Olmen et al. 2023).

Thus, the subject of this survey is the potentially offensive figurative expressions of anger as attested in Ukrainian phraseological dictionaries. The object of the study is the normative (in)significance of anger metaphors in Ukrainian, while the research questions include:

1) Do anger metaphors in Ukrainian imply rudeness and/or impoliteness, as related to cultural and social expectations?
2) What is the correlation between the (un)intentionality of anger metaphor use, the level of offence caused, and social expectations?
3) What are the dynamics of the normative (in)significance of anger metaphors in Ukrainian across different demographics?

This study, grounded in a theoretical framework that integrates Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Impoliteness Theory as an instance of theory transfer (Foolen 2023a: 22) (outlined in Section 2), explores the discursive power of Ukrainian anger metaphors in regulating behavior and reinforcing or challenging societal norms. Section 3 outlines the data collection procedures and methodology, while Section 4 presents the survey findings. These findings are then analyzed in Section 5, with conclusions drawn in Section 6.

2. Theoretical framework

General language affordances in conveying emotions encompass expressive, cognitive, and epistemic meanings (Foolen 1997). Conventionalized anger metaphors, which fall under the descriptive mode of emotion language (Kövecses 2000: 6), are grounded in cognitive principles of emotion conceptualization. They also play a key role in facilitating epistemic reflection and/or constructing shared knowledge about anger by metaphorically or metonymically highlighting specific aspects of these experiences.

The causes, effects, typical behavioral patterns, and degree of externalization of anger are effectively conceptualized in language and conveyed through figurative expressions. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), the mechanisms for associative conceptualization

suggests that abstract concepts, including emotions like ANGER (Kövecses 2000), are systematically mapped onto more concrete, physically perceptible domains. These source domains create entrenched associations between bodily experiences of anger and tangible elements from nature, society, or history.

As a result, ANGER is often conceptualized as a DANGEROUS ANIMAL, for instance, through the metaphorical submapping *to behave (look) like a dangerous animal → to be angry (оскаженіти (oskazhenity), 'to go beast')*; as a CONTAINER, as instantiated by the submapping *excessive substance in a container → intensity of anger rising (повна торба злості (povna torba zlosti), 'a bagful of spite')*; or as BITTERNESS/SOURNESS, through the specific conceptual correspondence *unpleasant sourness → undesirability of anger (розсипати кислиці (rozsypaty kyslytsi), 'scatter around sour wild apples')*.

These metaphorical expressions conveying knowledge about undesirability and danger of anger can be potentially offensive, especially in personalized negative assertions structured as you (are) + metaphor of anger. However, the greatest sanctioning potential – and, consequently, the most significant normative role – of figurative expressions for anger in Ukrainian is particularly evident in metaphtonymic expressions with a dominant conceptual metonymic vehicle SOURCE DOMAIN FOR TARGET DOMAIN. Thus, AN ACT OF VIOLENCE FOR ANGER, which reflects the retributive aspect of anger, as seen in *гнати в три шиї (hnaty v try shyi, 'to kick someone out by hitting them in the neck'), давати (дати) духопелів (davaty dukhopeliv, 'to give a good kick')*, and *зняти голову (zniaty holovu, 'to have someone's head')*, is just as vivid and potentially insulting as STRONG CRITICISM FOR ANGER, such as *їсти живцем (yisty zhyvtsem, 'to eat someone alive')* or *накрутити хвоста (nakrutyty khvosta 'to wind a tail')*.

The conceptual correlation between symbolic retributive acts and anger is deeply embedded in the social context of their use, shaping perceptions of their (in)acceptability and (in)appropriateness, which are framed by factors such as personal relationships and power dynamics in specific communicative situations. Consequently, while the expressive manifestation of anger in Ukrainian – through swearing: expletives, oaths, and profanities – clearly constitutes verbal aggression, characterized by 'purposeful, motivated, conflict-generating speech behaviour aimed at creating a negative psychological and emotional impact on the recipient or eliciting an aggressive reaction' (Vusyk 2022: 23), figurative verbal expressions of anger may carry a comparable level of perceived emotional intensity but serve a distinct function of social sanctioning, shaped by cultural norms.

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In effect, both expressive and descriptive figurative modes of anger externalization may carry offensive potential and be perceived as rude, while face-aggravating behavior, though context-sensitive, is generally regarded as impolite (Locher & Bousfield 2008). Terminologically, the notions of 'rudeness', 'impoliteness' 'verbal aggression', and 'verbal abuse' constitute the metalanguage of Impoliteness Theory (Culpeper & Hardaker 2017), but there is still lack of consensus on the status of rudeness within this framework. Essentially, for Culpeper (2011: 111) the terms rude and impolite are not synonymous, though they exhibit significant semantic overlaps in most subsets of meanings as they "occupy very similar conceptual space" (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 4).

Impoliteness is regarded as a gradable notion that involves assessing the degree to which cultural norms of behavior are infringed upon (Culpeper 2011: 111). This judgment, based on social expectations, is essential for distinguishing between polite and rude or impolite behavior. However, it also causes the overlap of the concepts rude and impolite, particularly in cases where norm violations manifest through insults, criticism, complaints, challenges, condescension, dismissals, silencers, threats, and curses (Culpeper & Hardaker 2017). Notably, the gradation present in impoliteness is absent in the binary nature of rudeness.

Rudeness, understood as an evaluation of one's 'low-style' personal or social behavior (Culpeper 2011: 111), may stem from a primary assessment system that was conspicuously devoid of the courtesies found in complex hierarchical social relations. In Impoliteness Theory, rudeness is categorized into subtypes based on the intentionality behind it. Unmotivated rudeness stems from the speaker's lack of awareness of polite behavior and its linguistic expression, whereas motivated rudeness is a deliberate choice to be offensive. This contrasts with mock rudeness, which, despite its surface-level harshness, serves to reduce offense (Nuessel 2022: 264).

On the one hand, a deliberate lack of self-restraint is often perceived as threatening or abusive, as in the figurative description of an angry person, and tends to provoke a symmetrical response. For example, the Ukrainian expression *саманітu від злості (satanity vid zlosti 'to become like Satan with spite')* conveys an intense and uncontrolled display of anger, while such direct characterizations of an angry person may be considered offensive. On the other hand, unmotivated rudeness may arise from the unconditional use of conventional expressions of anger without accounting for shifts in how their offensiveness is interpreted in a different context or over time. As a result, idiomatic expressions that were not originally marked as dismissive or vulgar in dictionaries may acquire such connotations in individual conversations or through gradual linguistic change.

Contrariwise, ironic rudeness relies on a deliberate contrast between the form of rude verbal behavior and the true meaning of the message, generally reducing its offensiveness. For example, humourous associations in expressions like *нагодувати цибулькою (nahoduvaty tsybulkoiu, 'to feed on onions')* and *давати (всипати) березової каші (davaty (vsypaty) berezovoi kashi, 'to treat to birch porridge')* highlight the widely recognized retributive aspect of anger, evoking imagery of corporal punishment as a response to a child's mischievous behavior or as a means of discouraging it.

A continuous analysis of the evolving interpretation of figurative expressions of anger in Ukrainian helps identify patterns in their normative (in)significance and the intensity of their potential offensiveness. The data collection procedures and the methodology for analysis are discussed in detail in Section 3.

3. Data and methodology

3.1 Data collection

The survey, conducted online via Google Forms, assessed the attitudes of native Ukrainian speakers toward the normative value, (in)appropriateness, impoliteness, and potential offensiveness of figurative idiomatic expressions of anger. While it was suggested for participants aged 18 and older, there were no restrictions preventing younger individuals from responding. The form remained available from December 15, 2024, to January 21, 2025, when the number of respondents reached 101. The survey link was distributed through messaging applications, allowing native Ukrainian speakers from different regions of Ukraine to participate.

The structure of the survey included an introductory section acknowledging voluntary participation, followed by the core survey questions (eight in total), which aimed to assess familiarity with the expressions, understanding of their context of use and social meaning, perceived (in)appropriateness, hypothetical (un)intentionality, and offensive potential. The core questions were followed by a demographic section to gather background information about participants, including age, gender, region of residence, urban or rural background, and level of education.

To minimize bias, the survey's description mentioned only a general goal of testing knowledge of idiomatic expressions in Ukrainian, without specifying a focus on either anger or the categories of rudeness and impoliteness. The choice of metaphorical and metonymic expressions aligned with the nine most salient metaphors and metonymies in the structure of the conceptual metaphor anger in Ukrainian, as identified in the dictionary-based part of research by Pinich and Morozova (2024). The

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dataset of descriptive linguistic expressions documented in phraseological dictionaries (Словник фразеологізмів української мови 1998; Vynnyk 2003) was evenly distributed across the questions, with approximately eight to ten expressions per question.

To further ensure impartiality, the selected expressions included colloquial idiomatic phrases, as well as those marked as dismissive, vulgar, or humorous. Meanwhile, the majority of figurative expressions remained unmarked in dictionaries. Linguistic expressions conveying embodied experiences represented ANGER through the metaphorical source domains of DANGEROUS ANIMAL, FIRE, HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER, BITTERNESS/SOURNESS, INSANITY, NATURAL FORCE, AN EVIL SPIRIT IN A HUMAN BODY AS A CONTAINER, and the metaphor THE CAUSE OF HNIV/ZLIST IS A PHYSICAL ANNOYANCE.

Expressions reflecting the disciplining social aspect of anger followed metonymical patterns, including AN ACT OF VIOLENCE FOR ANGER, STRONG CRITICISM FOR ANGER, AGGRESSIVE SYMBOLIC BEHAVIOR FOR ANGER, AGGRESSIVE VOCAL/VERBAL BEHAVIOR FOR ANGER, AGGRESSIVE VISUAL BEHAVIOR FOR ANGER, AGGRESSIVE FACIAL EXPRESSION FOR ANGER, INABILITY TO SEE PROPERLY FOR ANGER, AND STRONG UNPLEASANT TASTE FOR ANGER.

Except for the question on frequency of use, all core survey questions allowed multiple answers, ensuring recognition of the expressions' multifunctionality and context sensitivity. This approach supports the functional and pragmatic analysis of anger expressions in Ukrainian, including their (un)intentionality, offensive potential, and (in)appropriateness.

3.2 Key changes: Data processing

Although the preferred age for respondents was indicated in the survey introduction, three participants aged 13, 15, and 16 volunteered to take part and were statistically included in the 18–24 age group. Overall, the distribution of respondents by age group is as follows: 15 participants in the 18–24 group (including the three younger volunteers), 11 in the 25–34 group, 21 in the 35–44 group, 29 in the 45–54 group, 4 in the 55–64 group, and 21 aged 65 and older. The youngest participant was 13, while the oldest was 82. Given the small number of respondents in the 55–64 age group, their responses were combined with those in the 65+ category for analysis, and the group was renamed 55+ with a total of 25 respondents. The gender distribution of the sample is 71.3% female and 28.7% male, which corresponds to an approximate ratio of 2.48:1.

 ISSN 2453-8035

The survey covered a wide range of administrative regions, including (in alphabetical order) Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Kirovohrad, Luhansk, Lviv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Ternopil, Vinnytsia, Zakarpattia, and Zhytomyr oblasts. Meanwhile, respondents from Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast comprised 66% of the total sample, allowing for a comparison between the Kyiv region and other regions, with an approximate ratio of 2.61:1.

In terms of settlement type, 13.9% (14 respondents) were from rural areas, 72.2% (73 respondents) were from urban areas, and 13.9% (14 respondents) had moved from rural to urban areas or vice versa. Notably, among rural residents, eleven belonged to the 55+ age group (five males and six females), while seven were in the 45–54 age group. The younger age groups included fewer rural respondents, with two in the 18–24 group, four in the 25–34 group, and three in the 35–44 group. The ratio of respondents from urban and rural areas (2.74:1), and almost 64.5 % of respondents majored in the humanities, while 35.5% studied sciences or received professional education.

Although the sample does not exhibit perfect demographic balance, the following section will analyze all survey questions, offering quantitative insights into the responses and a comparative assessment across different demographic groups in proportion to the overall sample ratios.

4 Results

4.1 Frequency of use

The metaphorical expressions included in the frequency-of-use question consistently conveyed the danger, undesirability, and self-detrimental nature of anger. All expressions were unmarked in dictionaries regarding their colloquial, offensive, or humorous meanings.

Responses varied, with 13.9% of participants having never heard these expressions, 31.7% hearing them rarely, 38.6% hearing them occasionally, and 15.8% frequently encountering their use (Fig. 1). Importantly, the number of respondents unfamiliar with these expressions decreased across age groups: five out of 11 in the 18–24 group, one in the 25–34 group, four in the 35–44 group, and two in the 55+ group.

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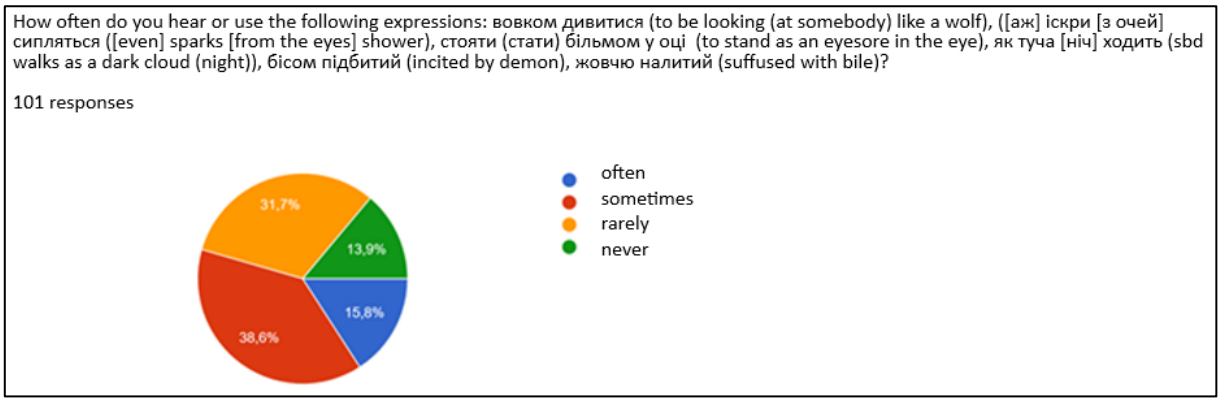

Figure 1. Frequency of exposure to anger expressions

4.2 Emotion correspondence

When testing the correlation between anger expressions and basic negative emotions (anger, fear, and disgust), the Ukrainian emotion terms гнів (hniv, 'wrath') and злість (zlist, 'spite') – which form a gestalt pair for ANGER in Ukrainian (Pinich & Morozova 2024), similar to Finnish (Tissari et al. 2019) – along with страх (strah, 'fear') and відраза (vidraza, 'disgust'), received respective scores of 62.4%, 68.4%, 9.9%, and 10.9% (Fig. 2).

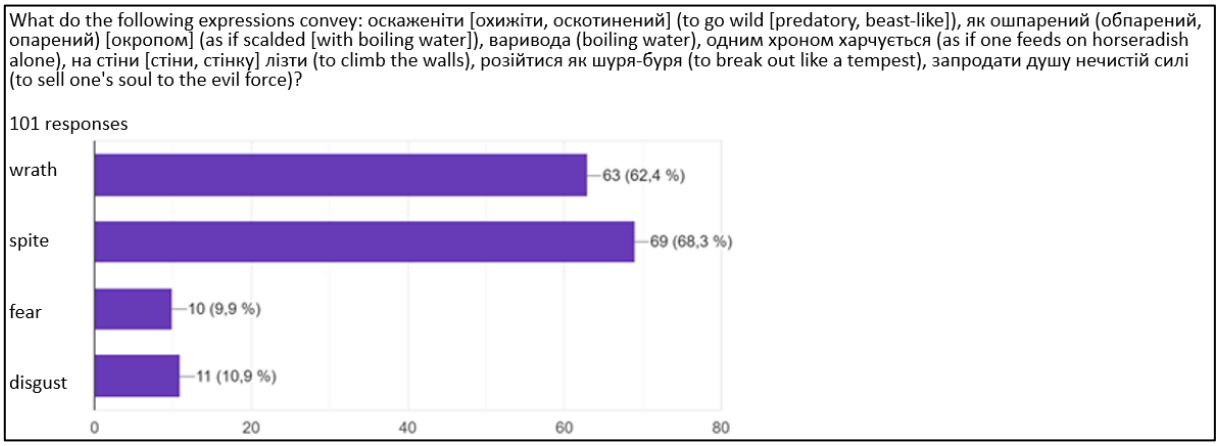

Figure 2. Interpretation of emotions expressed by the anger-related phrases

4.3 Pragmatic functions

The potential pragmatic functions of anger expressions – ranging from cathartic release and social policing to ironic sanctioning and dominance reinforcement – were examined using a selected list of figurative expressions that purportedly serve these purposes.

Importantly, the sanctioning function was identified in 66.3% of responses, often overlapping with the cathartic intent of the expressions (Fig. 3). The demographic trends in this group largely mirrored the overall sample ratios. However, a notable upward trend with age emerged. Younger and early-

ISSN 2453-8035

career adults (18–24 and 25–34) each accounted for approximately one-third of their respective groups. In the 35–44 age group, one-third of respondents recognized the sanctioning function, while in the 45–54 and 55+ groups, the proportion increased to half and two-thirds, respectively.

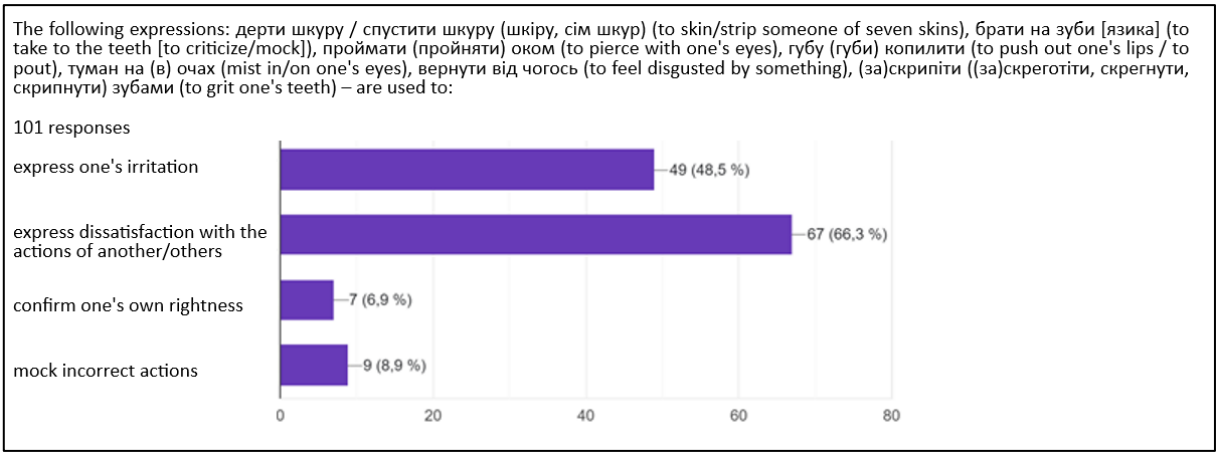

Figure 3. Pragmatic functions of anger-related expressions

4.4 Speaker-target dynamics

The results of the section testing the typical directionality of anger expressions indicated a lack of open directionality, as 72.3% of respondents identified metaphors of anger as occurring in contexts where a hypothetical target was absent from the communicative scene (Fig. 4). The preference for indirect expressions of anger was consistently observed across all age groups in the sample, mirroring a similar nationally specific feature of gloating (Mizin & Ovsiienko 2020).

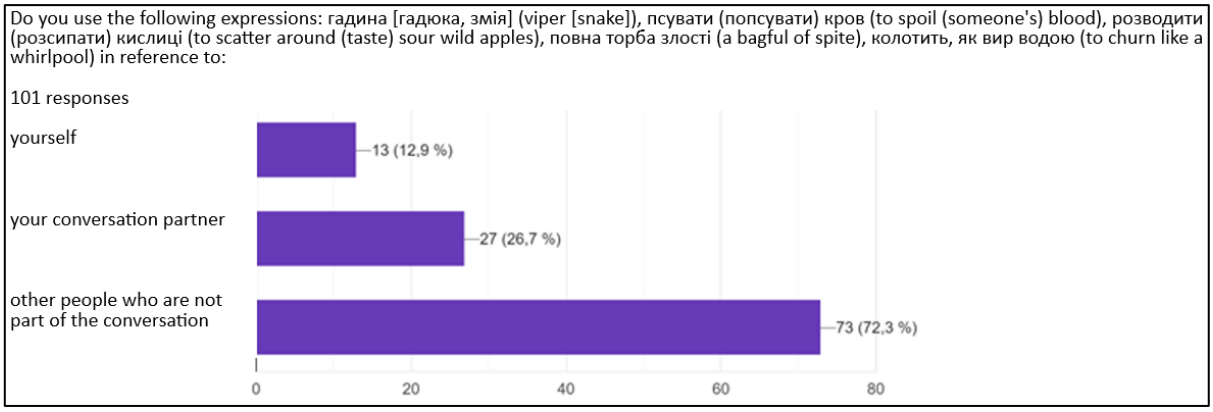

Figure 4. Directionality of anger metaphors

The appropriateness of using anger expressions as a direct reference to the communicant in personal interactions was acknowledged by 26.7% of respondents. Overall, one-third of the 29 male

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respondents considered the use of anger-related expressions, including potentially offensive ones, appropriate in face-to-face communication.

Additionally, another section examining the potential offensiveness of anger expressions in third-person references revealed the following trends. Nineteen respondents in this section found the use of these expressions inappropriate due to the absence of the target of anger (Fig. 5).

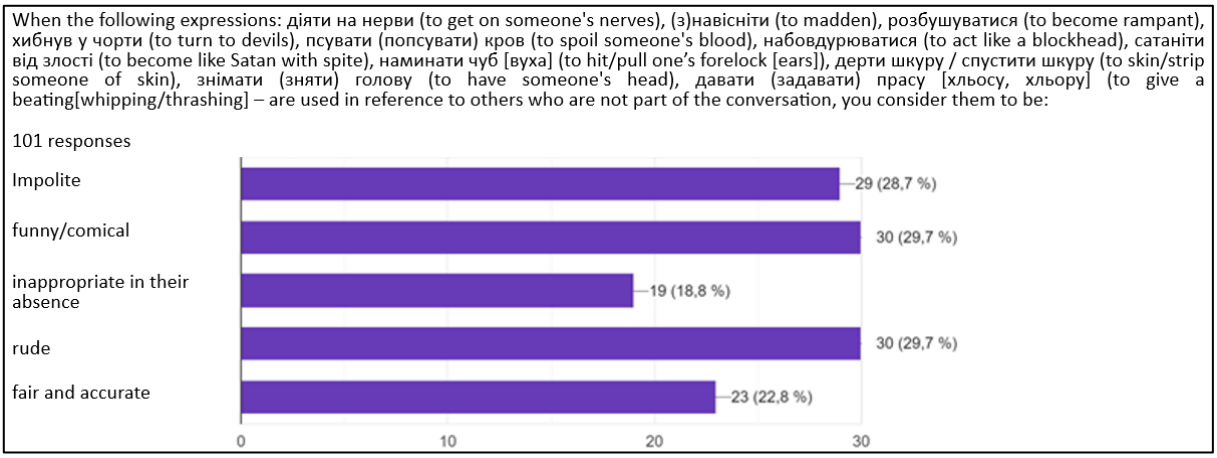

Figure 5. Appropriateness of third-person related anger metaphors

Of the 30 respondents who acknowledged rudeness in the given context, 15 classified the phrases as exclusively rude, with the majority being female and only one male. Additionally, 12 respondents in this group had a background in the humanities. Other combinations of responses included impolite and rude, ironic and rude, rude and fair, rude and inappropriate in the absence of the target, and ironic, rude, and fair.

The humour of the situation was acknowledged by an equal number of respondents (30), with 12 identifying it as the sole interpretation of the expressions. The ratio of male respondents in this group showed an upward trend, with a female-to-male ratio of 1.63:1, compared to 2.48:1 in the overall sample. The number of rural respondents was noticeably lower, as reflected in the urban-to-rural ratio of 3.83:1. The proportion of respondents from regions outside Kyiv increased, with an approximate ratio of 2:1 between Kyivites and non-Kyivites. Additionally, the group had a lower number of participants with humanities background and a slightly higher number of respondents with technical or professional education, with a ratio of 2.2:1.

The fairness of using anger metaphors in reference to a third person was endorsed by 13 respondents who selected this option exclusively, 8 of whom were male. When including respondents who also

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recognized the potential humorous effect of these expressions, the overall female-to-male ratio shifts to 1:1.

Nineteen respondents exclusively assessed the situation as impolite, while seven associated it with both rudeness and impoliteness, and two also linked it to humour. The female-to-male ratio in this group was 2.2:1, while the urban-to-rural ratio stood at 3.1:1. Notably, the age demographics revealed a significant absence of young adults aged 18 to 24 from this group.

Overall, at least half of the respondents in each age group from 25 and above associated anger-related expressions, when directed at a third person, with rudeness, impoliteness, and inappropriateness – either separately or in combination – while younger adults were more likely to perceive them as humorous and/or fair.

4.5 Power dynamics

When testing the potential offensiveness of anger expressions in the context of parenting or elder–younger dynamics, eleven respondents classified their use as impolite (Fig. 6), while 34 respondents interpreted them as a symbolic threat for misbehavior, aligning with the retributive aspect of the listed idioms.

Additionally, 24 participants associated these expressions with a sanctioned verbal outlet for anger, used by elders to enforce discipline, while 46 respondents perceived them as a humorous method of discipline. Among them, 12 individuals held a multifunctional perspective and were automatically included in this category by the tool.

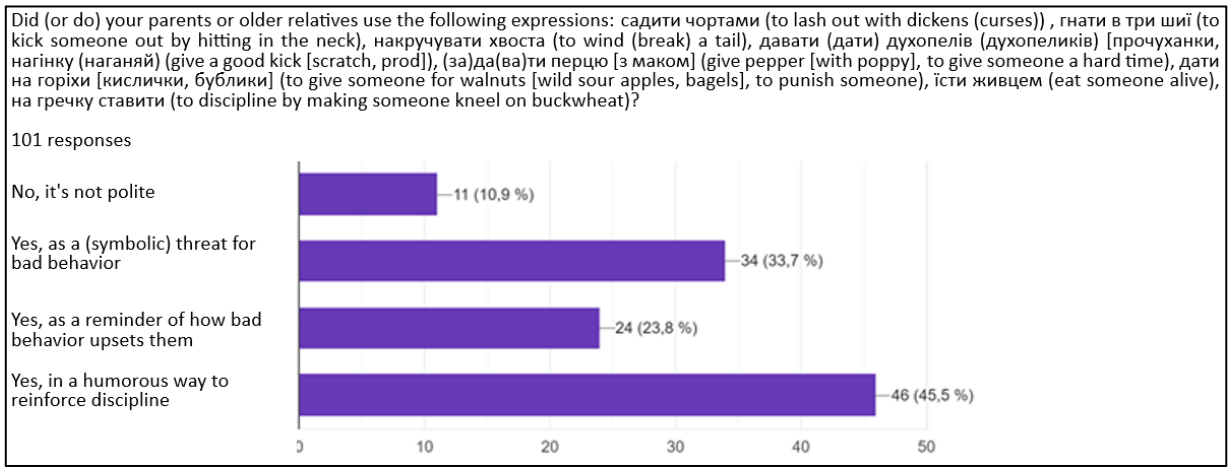

Figure 6. Acceptability of anger-related expressions in the family context

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The demographics of respondents who identified impolite anger metaphors as inappropriate (10.9%) were predominantly female, including four participants aged 18–24, four aged 55+, one from the 25–34 age group, and two from the 45–54 age group. A similar predominance of female respondents (26 individuals versus 8 males) was observed among those who exclusively endorsed the humorous function of retributive anger expressions within the total of 46 responses, yielding a general ratio of 4.18:1. The age distribution in this group was as follows: five young adults (18–24), nearly equal representation among early-career adults (25–34, six respondents), while an observable drop was indicated for mid-career adults (35–44, with only six respondents out of 21). The similar tendency was spotted of the number of older respondents, with ten participants out of 29 in the 45–54 age group and seven out of 25 in the 55+ group.

The group of respondents who consistently identified the retributive role of these expressions comprised 34 individuals, including 12 males. The age distribution followed a clear pattern, with approximately one-third of each age group recognizing this function. Specifically, there were four respondents in both the 18–24 and 25–34 groups, six in the 35–44 group, and ten each in the 45–54 and 55+ groups, where the proportion reached two-thirds of the entire group. The female-to-male ratio remained stable among younger and early-career adults, with a slight shift in the 45–54 group (3:1) compared to the one in the overall subsample (2.2:1). The general ratio is also observed in one-third of rural respondents in this group, while approximately one-third coming from regions outside Kyiv.

4.6 Perceived offensiveness of anger expressions

To further examine the potential offensiveness of these expressions, the survey form included two key contexts. The first context considers expressions directed at the respondent by individuals within their kinship group. The second context examines expressions used by individuals of higher social status who are outside the respondent's kinship group.

Though none of the expressions were marked in the dictionary as humorous, rude, or disregarding, 19.8% of respondents identified their use in a family setting as unacceptable, expressing indignation at the perceived injustice as their emotional reaction (Fig. 7). The group consisted predominantly of female respondents, with a gender ratio of 5:1. Most had a background in the humanities and were from urban areas. The age demographics showed a trend toward a higher proportion of young adults.

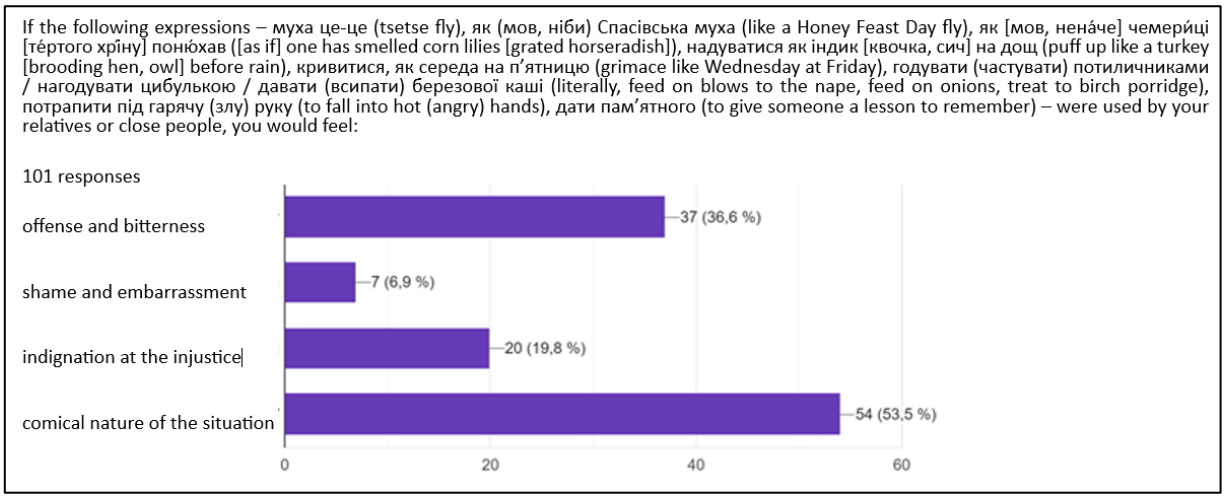

Figure 7. The level of perceived offensiveness of anger metaphors in the family context

Additionally, 36.6% of responses indicated that the expressions were offensive, with respondents reporting feelings of offense and bitterness as their hypothetical reaction. This reaction was primarily noted among respondents aged 25 and older. Among younger adults, only one respondent recognized offense, while another perceived both offense and humour. The urban-to-rural respondent ratio showed an upward trend of approximately 4:1, mirroring a slight increase in the female-to-male ratio (3:1). Respondents with technical or professional education and those with a humanities background were nearly equal in number, with a ratio of 1:1.2. The overall perception of potential offensiveness across age groups presents the following pattern: nearly half of respondents in the 35–44 and 55+ age groups found the expressions offensive, followed by one-third of those in the 25–34 and 45–54 age groups. In contrast, only about one-seventh of respondents in the 18–24 age group perceived them as offensive.

Humour in the use of anger expressions was acknowledged in 53.5% of responses. While humour was often mentioned alongside other reactions, 45 responses across the overall sample were exclusively positive, while 9 combined the comic effect with other reactions. A notable increase in the number of rural respondents was observed in this group, with the urban-to-rural ratio shifting to 1.65:1 compared to the overall ratio of 2.74:1. Additionally, a slight increase in male respondents was noted, resulting in a female-to-male ratio of 2.3:1. Age dynamics revealed the following trends across subgroups: humour was most frequently recognized in younger respondents, with approximately two-thirds of those in the 18–24 group acknowledging it. In the 25–34, 35–44, and 45–54 age groups, about half of respondents found the expressions humorous, while in the 55+ group, around one-third did.

In the second social situation involving anger-related expressions, one was disregardful, and two were colloquial. When used by individuals of higher social rank, these expressions were more likely to provoke indignation, as they were perceived as unacceptable and unjust. A total of 44.6% of respondents confirmed the expectation that these expressions would be considered rude (Fig. 8). The female-to-male ratio showed a slight increase to 3:1, mirroring a similar sentiment among rural dwellers, with the urban-to-rural ratio shifting to 2.2:1. There was also a significant change in the ratio between respondents with different educational backgrounds, recorded at 1.6:1.

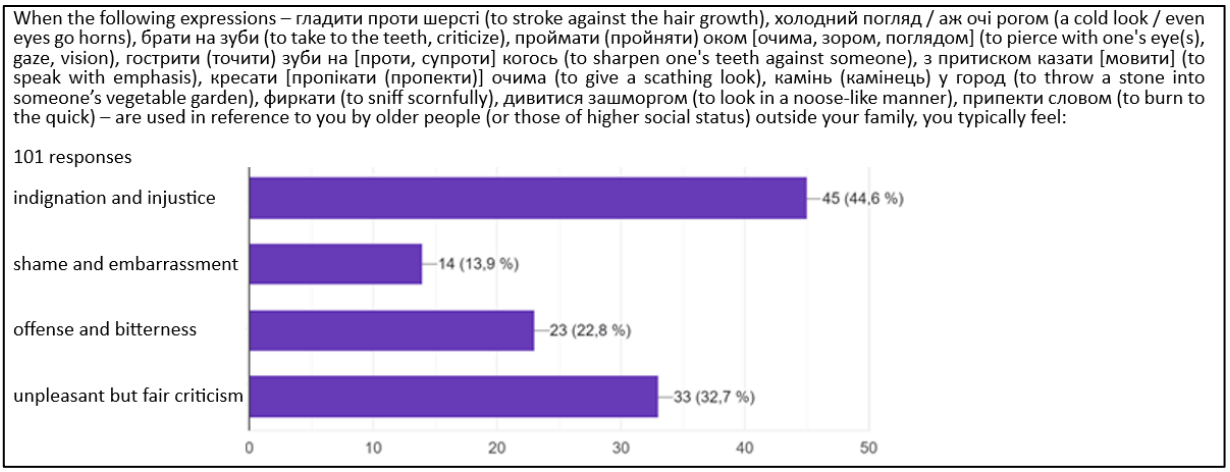

Figure 8. The level of perceived offensiveness of anger metaphors in the power dynamic context

The perceived unacceptability of anger expressions that convey retributive and regulatory intent was observed across different age groups, following an upward trend. The highest rate of disapproval was recorded among early-career adults, where two-thirds of respondents viewed these expressions as inappropriate.

The offensiveness of the expressions in the given social context was indicated by 22.8% of responses, which cited bitterness and offense as potential reactions in such situations. The demographic analysis revealed a significant shift toward urban respondents, with a ratio of 8.5:1. Additionally, there was a noticeable prevalence of respondents with a humanities background (4:1) and a slight increase in the female-to-male ratio (3:1). A minor growth was also observed in the number of respondents from regions outside Kyiv, with a ratio of 2.3:1. Notably, no early-career adults endorsed the offensiveness of these phrases under the given conditions, reflecting their more categorical stance on unacceptability and rudeness.

Conversely, 32.7% of respondents recognized the acceptability of these expressions, acknowledging their unpleasantness but fairness when used by higher-ups. A notable upward trend was observed in the increase of male respondents within this group, resulting in a female-to-male ratio of 1.5:1.

The proportion of rural respondents also increased slightly, shifting the urban-to-rural ratio to 2:1. Similarly, respondents from regions outside Kyiv were more likely to accept the idioms as appropriate, with a Kyiv-to-non-Kyiv ratio of 1.75:1. The most striking shift was the increase in respondents with a technical background, which equaled the number of those with a humanities background, bringing the ratio to 1:1.

While the overall proportion of respondents in the 45–54 and 55+ age groups remained at one-third, a noticeable decline in the recognition of appropriateness was observed among younger respondents: one-third of participants aged 18–24, one-fourth of those aged 35–44, and half of those in the 25–34 age group.

Shame and embarrassment were acknowledged as a stereotypical reaction in the situation by 14 respondents, the majority of whom were female, with only one male participant. This group included four young adults and two early-career professionals, five respondents aged 45–54, and only one or two responses from the remaining age groups.

5. Discussion

The nature of the sample obtained through the online survey necessitated the analysis of relative rather than absolute demographic indicators. This methodology proved effective in gaining insight into major trends in the discursive regularities of contemporary dictionary-attested anger metaphors, their pragmatic functions, and their normative value and potential offensiveness.

The earlier inclusion of the social sanctioning role of anger in the conceptual frame of the emotion (Pinich 2019) was supported by 66.3% of responses, which recognized the retributive potential of anger expressions in Ukrainian. Moreover, the normative significance of these expressions appears to be largely restricted to third-person references (72.3%), rather than direct interactions (26.7%) (See Appendix A).

Accordingly, in face-to-face interactions, anger metaphors are expected to function as regulative tools, reinforcing cultural norms and established behavioral patterns. Their use is directly

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accompanied by strong emotional feedback from the target, who may become gradually desensitized through repetitive exposure and the retention of this knowledge in the long-term memory of native speakers.

The survey results indicate that non-dismissive anger expressions, as recorded in dictionaries, are often interpreted in parent-child and elder-younger dynamics as a symbolic threat (33.7%). However, they are more frequently perceived as a form of ironic rudeness, linked to humorous retributive practices (45.5%).

Nonetheless, the inclusion of dismissive anger expressions and colloquial idioms in face-to-face communication influences the perception of their potential offensiveness, with its intensity varying based on the social context. In family interactions, 36.6% of respondents reported feelings of offense and bitterness, compared to 19.8%, who expressed an even stronger reaction of indignation. This ratio shifts significantly in power-dynamic relationships outside the family, where indignation rises to 44.6%, while general feelings of offense and bitterness decrease to 22.8%.

The significant role of ironic sanctioning in family contexts is reflected in 53.3% of responses, whereas in power-dynamic contexts, anger metaphors and metonymies – despite their retributive character – can be perceived as fair yet unpleasant critique (32.7%). This supports the conjecture that the conceptual metaphor of anger in Ukrainian holds normative significance.

By contrast, the detected shifts in the perception of appropriateness suggest an emerging stability in how the sanctioning potential of anger metaphors is interpreted across different demographics. The trends show a consistent upward trajectory among urban respondents, who generally exhibit greater sensitivity to the intentionality, potential offensiveness, and perceived intensity of offense encoded in anger expressions.

Similarly, the ratio of female respondents demonstrates a growing tendency toward recognizing both the potential and perceived offensiveness of idiomatic expressions for anger across various contexts. Meanwhile, male respondents more frequently associate these expressions with humor and fairness of criticism, particularly in third-person references and power-dynamic contexts, resulting in a more balanced female-to-male ratio in these interpretations.

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The steady dominance of respondents with a humanities background aligns with expectations, as they tend to identify offense more readily in anger metaphors while also exhibiting a more nuanced understanding of their humorous sanctioning function.

The ratio of Kyiv-region residents to non-Kyiv-region respondents consistently reflects a higher sensitivity among the former in identifying potential offensiveness, particularly in power-dynamic contexts. In contrast, respondents from other regions are more inclined to recognize the regulative sanctioning and ironic policing functions of these expressions.

Likewise, the general sociolinguistic trend across age groups indicates a shift in the perception of normative value among young adults (18–24 years) and early-career adults (25–34 years). These groups consistently interpret the discursive function of anger expressions as humorous, particularly in third-person references, parent-child interactions, and older-younger dynamics. However, they reject the acceptability of these expressions in workplace settings, doubting their regulative potential in delivering fair criticism.

The persistent perception of anger expressions as rude or impolite, along with their strong cathartic function and humorous rather than symbolic connotation, diminishes their normative significance. As a result, these metaphors are increasingly categorized as inappropriate and impolite expressions, rather than as legitimate tools for sanctioning misconduct or delivering fair yet unpleasant criticism.

6. Conclusion

Conventional expressions of anger, including figurative ones, convey knowledge of both physical experiences and social sanctions associated with the emotion. In Ukrainian, the concept of anger encompasses a retributive aspect, serving as a precaution against infringements, while also recognizing its cathartic role and use in ironic sanctioning as conveyed in conventional idiomatic expressions. Once perceived as a means of reinforcing behavioral expectations and regulating interpersonal interaction, the contextual use of these metaphors may appear offensive nowadays and therefore can be assessed as inappropriate and impolite particularly in the urban environment.

The situational and social contexts that gave rise to anger metaphors (Kövecses 2019) are deeply rooted in the life of traditional Ukrainian rural communities, which is manifested in the most salient conceptual metaphors and metonymies with association to the physically perceptible phenomena and practices of the rural life. These communities, marked by high stability, unity, close-knit neighborly

relations, and minimal hierarchical organization (Hubeladze 2015: 29), tend to uphold conservative values and enforce standardized behavioral patterns through the figurative expressions of anger relative to the rural context.

However, as urbanization and societal shifts have distanced modern young speakers from rural traditions, the conceptual basis of these metaphors has become increasingly irrelevant. Today, these expressions are largely confined to colloquial speech, particularly among older individuals, especially those from rural backgrounds. As a result, they are gradually falling out of use and are often perceived as inappropriate, humorous, or rude, particularly in formal settings and urban environments.

This shift in perception also aligns with broader linguistic patterns in Ukrainian, where the concept of rudeness is closely linked to both physical and social attributes. Notably, the term *грубий (hrubyj 'rude')* in its semantic structure has the meanings of fat, hard, crude, simplistic, without refinement, as well as indelicate, impolite, and uncultured (https://sum.in.ua/s/ghrubyj). This semantic correlation prompts conceptual linkage between perceptually basic things and the abstract idea of rudeness. Additionally, terminological paradigm for impoliteness in Ukrainian includes *нечемний (nechemnyj 'discourteous, impolite, uncultured'),* and *невві́чливий (nevvichlyvyj 'impolite, tactless, inattentive')* which stand in opposition to the key principles of politeness attested in the dictionary as propriety, courtesy and attentiveness (to the other) https://sum.in.ua/s/vvichlyvistj.

The emerging shift in how younger demographics evaluate the (in)appropriateness of anger metaphors has led to a reconfiguration of their normative significance, as they are increasingly interpreted as unacceptable. The perception of offensiveness stems from a conceptual shift, in which the figurative meaning of these expressions – once understood as socially accepted forms of regulation – gradually fades. Younger speakers tend to interpret them more literally, associating them with direct verbal aggression rather than symbolic sanctioning. As associative links to retributive practices and their sanctioning value weaken, anger-related figurative expressions evoke stronger imagery of criticism and physical punishment. While their use in family settings is often perceived as either unacceptable or ironic, in social power dynamics, these expressions are more likely to provoke indignation, as they are seen as deliberate acts of verbal aggression with the diminishing regulative effect.

 ISSN 2453-8035

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DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN INTERPRETING THE (IM)POLITENESS OF ANGER METAPHORS

Demographics	(Un)Intentionality of Offense Directedness of Anger Metaphors		Potential for Offensiveness							Perceived Offensiveness					
			Impoliteness in Third-Person References				Impoliteness in Parent-Child and Older-younger dynamics			Offense among kin			Offense in power dynamic relationships		
	Indirectness 72,3%	Directness 26,7%	Impoliteness 28.7%	Rudeness 29.7%	Humourous effect 29.7%	Fairness 22.8%	Impoliteness 10.9%	Symbolic threat 33.7%	Cathartic retribution 23.8%	Humorous retribution 45.5%	Offense and bitterness 36.6%	Indignation 19.8%	Humour 53.5%	Offense and bitterness 22.8%	Indignation 44.6%	Unpleasant but fair critique 32.7%
Urban::Rural (2.74:1)	3:1 ↑	3.8:1↑	3.1:1 ↑	4:1↑	3.83:1↑	3:1 ↑	11:0↑	2.1:1↓	3.6:1↑	2.5:1↓	4:1↑↑	5.6:1↑	1.65:1↓	8.5:1↑↑	2.2:1↓	2:1↓
Female::Male (2.48:1)	2.8:1↑	3:1 ↑	2.2:1↓	15:1 ↑↑↑	1.63:1↓	1:1↓↓	4.5:1↑↑	1.83:1↓	2.3:1	4.18:1↑↑	3:1↑	4:1↑	2.3:1	3:1↑	3:1↑	1.5:1↓
Age Group Ratios Relative to the Full Sample	18-24 – 2/3 25-34 – 3/4 35-44 – 3/4 45-54 – 4/5 55+ –3/5	18–24 – 1/3 25–34 – 1/11 35–44 – 1/3 45–54 – 1/6 55+ – 1/5	18–24 - 25–34 (1/2) 35–44 – 1/5 45–54 1/3 55+– 1/3	18–24 – 1/3 25–34 – 1/3 35–44 – 1/4 45–54 – 1/4 55+ – 1/5	18–24 – 4/7 25–34 – 1/5 35–44 – 1/5 45–54 – 2/5 55+ – 1/12	18–24 –1/2 25–34 - 35–44 – 1/4 45–54 – 1/4 55+ – 1/5	18–24 – 1/3 25–34 – 1/11 35–44 - 45–54 – 1/12 55+ – 1/5	18–24 – 1/4 25–34 – 1/3 35–44 – 1/4 45–54 – 2/3 55+ – 2/5	18–24 – 1/3 25–34 – 1/2 35–44 – 1/7 45–54 – 1/6 55+ – 1/5	18–24 – 1/2 25–34 – 1/2 35–44 – 1/2 45–54 – 1/2 55+ – 1/3	18–24 – 1/7 25–34 – 1/3 35–44 – 1/2 45–54 – 1/3 55+ – 1/2	18–24 – 1/3 25–34 – 1/6 35–44 – 1/5 45–54 – 1/5 55+ – 1/7	18–24 -1/2 25–34 -1/2 35–44- 1/2 45–54 - 1/2 55+ - 1/3	18–24 -1/2 25–34 - 35–44- 1/2 45–54 - 1/3 55+ - 1/3	18–24 -1/2 25–34 -2/3 35–44- 1/2 45–54 - 1/3 55+ - 1/3	18–24 -1/3 25–34 -1/2 35–44- 1/5 45–54 - 1/2 55+ - 1/4
Humanities:: Sciences (1.8:1)	1.92:1↑	3.3:1↑	2.1:1↑	2.6:1↑	2.9:1↑	1.9:1	4.5:1↑↑	2.1:1↑	1.5:1↓	2.83:1↑	1.2:1↓	5.6:1↑	1.8:1	4:1↑	1.6:1↓	1:1↓↓
Kyiv region:: Other regions (2.61:1)	2.5:1	2.2:1↓	3.6:1↑	4.1:1↑↑	2:1↓	3.2:1↑	1.75:1↓	1.83:1↓	1.87:1↓	1.7:1↓	2.63:1	3:1↑	1.65:1↓	2.3:1↓	2.2:1↓	1.75:1↓↓

ISSN 2453-8035

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ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

LANGUAGE IN THE LIGHT OF ECOLINGUISTICS

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Received: 31.12.2024 **Reviewed:** 5.01.2025 and 15.02.2025

Similarity Index: 2%

Bibliographic description: Prihodko, G. (2025). Language in the light of ecolinguistics. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 145-157. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.09

Abstract: In spite of the importance of the notion "Ecology", and its significant social role, it is not quite a study in linguistics. Linguistic ecology dynamically reflects natural changes of linguistic conceptualization of the world, the relationships between social, cultural and linguistic processes. One of the new scientific directions that tries to connect the ideas of the harmonious existence of nature and language is ecolinguistics. An essential motive for the formation of the ecolinguistic direction was the growing ecological crisis of a methodological nature.

Key words: language, ecology, ecocentrism, ecosystem, biological, cognitive.

1. Introduction

A characteristic feature of the development of contemporary science is that today there are many disciplines that simultaneously comprise a number of different directions and arise at the junction of already existing scientific paradigms. This can be explained by the fact that human society continues to develop and become more complex, and in order to make new discoveries, it is necessary to conduct investigations in related fields. One of the new scientific directions that tries to connect the ideas of the harmonious existence of nature and language is ecolinguistics.

In many branches of modern scientific knowledge, the process of ecologization can be observed today. Ecologization is a theory that reveals the process of penetration of an ecological approach and ecological principles into various types and spheres of human life (Морозова 2015: 266; Pinich 2017: 262-298). In linguistics, the process of ecologization is greatly facilitated by the anthropocentric

paradigm that has dominated for many years, which puts the category of human dimensions in the centre of scientific research in relation to various objects of study.

An essential motive for the formation of the ecolinguistic direction was the growing ecological crisis of a methodological nature. The point is that the anthropocentric worldview, based on the idea of human exclusivity, turns out to be much narrower than the principles of ecological consciousness, formed by a kind of "ecological imperatives" (Bang & Trampe 2014: 81-92), which regulate many types of human activity from new positions. We can say that a somewhat different type of relationship is emerging – ecocentrism, where the highest value is harmonious development and mutually beneficial unity of nature and man. This type of relationship is most evident in the strategies for changing the existing socio-ecological consciousness.

In the 20th century, the emergence of the science of ecology brought about very interesting changes in the focus of attention, and now the ideas expressed in biology are beginning to be applied to the consideration of language. Linguistics in the twentieth century develops ideas related to the systemic organization of language, making attempts to distinguish between internal and external linguistics. As in ecology, the key notion is the concept of a system where the doctrine of ecosystems has been developed. These provisions once again confirm that today many sciences, due to complex and multifaceted objects of research, are developing on the basis of several scientific directions.

The **aim** of this paper is to demonstrate what language ecology means and what it implies for linguistics. Achieving this goal demands the resolution of the following **tasks**: the examination of the interconnection between ecology and other humanitarian sciences; the analysis of the ecology's central role in the study of language; investigation of the cognitive nature of ecolinguistics. **Methods and techniques** are determined by the objective, theoretical direction of the proposed article and are complex in nature. They integrate the fundamental statements of Ecological theory and Cognitive theory. Theses and techniques of ecocognitive and biocognitive theories are used while studying the essential characteristics of the ecolinguistic concept.

2. Theoretical basis of ecolinguistics

Ecolinguistics is a relatively new scientific direction that appeared in the second half of the 20th century and has grown rapidly in recent years. The main feature of ecolinguistics is that it studies the systemic organization of the language, including its consideration in various natural and social (eco)systems. Therefore, the founder of ecolinguistics, Haugen, defined this area of science as "the

study of interactions between any given language and its environment, where the environment is understood as a society that uses the language as one of its codes" (Haugen 1972).

In ecolinguistics, as presented in modern studies, two areas of research can be distinguished: 1) ecological linguistics, which metaphorically transfers ecological terms, principles and methods of investigation into language and linguistics, and 2) linguistic ecology, which considers the expression of environmental topics in language, taking into account linguistic methods (Alexander & Stibbe 2014: 104-110).

It is common knowledge that languages cannot exist in a vacuum. They are the product of long accommodation with the people who speak them and the environment in which they are used. The ecological approach can be described nowadays more as juxtaposed and less as opposing. The continuing dynamics reveal that language can be both an instrument in the analysis of eco-related questions and the object of ecological research. On the one hand, language conceptualizes as a "living organism" that impacts the way we perceive the world and cooperate with it. On the other hand, language is shaped by the environment in which it is functioning.

The aim of this paper is to show the influence of ecology on the functioning of language in society. Ecolinguistics as a scientific area combines ecology and linguistics studies, the interaction between language, the human being as a language personality and his environment, which is the influence of the environment through the person and society on language, and also influence of language on the moral and spiritual level of society.

Language is viewed as an integral constituent of the relationship between man, society and nature. Functioning and development of the language appears as an ecosystem, and the world – as a linguistic concept.

In ecological research of language four main directions can be named: 1) studies in which the language itself is considered as a symbolic ecosystem; 2) the language is included in the context of natural ecosystems; 3) language is studied as part of sociocultural systems; 4) language is considered as a component of the cognitive "environment" (Couto 2014: 122-128; Steffensen & Fill 2014: 6-25).

These directions of language research are different in terms of problems and general theoretical and methodological grounds. For ecology it is very important to find an adequate answer to the question

"what is the ecology of language?" (Steffensen & Fill 2014: 16). The response to it determined and determines what and how to study in the language. In this regard, most ecolinguists reconsider the understanding of language as an abstract, idealized and autonomous system as existing in previous linguistics (Garner 2004; Hodges 2014: 93-103).

Many scholars are convinced that linguistics should investigate language as such and get rid of the study of its physical, physiological, psychological, logical (and opposite) tasks and consider language as a conceptual metaphor (Bang & Trampe 2014: 81-92; Garner 2004). Therefore, ecolinguistic studies of the nature of language are characterized by an extreme pragmatic turn, a systematic approach and interdisciplinarity. Let us dwell on this aspect of modern linguistic research in detail.

3. Ecology as an obligatory constituent of language

Ecolinguistics is still in the dynamic stage of search and formation of its main paradigm (Bang & Trampe 2014: 81-92). In spite of the difference in theoretical and methodological principles, studies in the field of ecolinguistics that consider the nature of language are characterized by openness to new ideas, approaches and methods, and attention to the pragmatic aspects of the functioning of the language. In the variety of studies, at least five major features of the ecological approach in understanding of language can be distinguished, which are shared by many scientists representing this sphere.

1. Representatives of ecolinguistics criticize theories which view language as a closed, idealized system of conventional symbols. Language is an open and distributed dynamic ecosystem, which should be studied not only by means of linguistics itself, but also by means of at least three theoretical areas: the theory of language distribution, environmental psychology and the theory of dynamic systems (Hodges & Fowler 2010: 239-254.).

Furthermore, language is studied not only in the system "language – culture", "language – subject", but also in the system "language – nature", "language –ecosystems", as the natural environment, the situational context of speech affect the structure, the content and development of language no less than culture and personality, which themselves are part of these natural and social ecosystems (Cowley 2014: 60-70; van Lier 2004: 155-177).

2. The ecological approach emphasizes that the language is not localized in the subject of speech as innate or acquired abilities, but is continuously born in the multilevel and distributed dynamics of social communication, in which there are no metaphysical components (Hodges & Fowler 2010: 239-

254). At the same time, scholars distinguish between two levels of language – the "language of the first level", which depends on the individual, the context, and the "language of the second level", which is culturally determined and is characterized by a certain stability and standard, but only for a definite period of time for a certain social group (Garner 2014: 111-121).

3. The ecological proposal criticizes the opinion that language is based on a system of predominantly linguistic rules, and behind the diversity of the language there are stable universal structures that guide the generation of the language and ensure mutual understanding. It was thoroughly studied by structuralists and followers of universal grammar (Hodges 2014: 93-103; Millikan 2008: 87-100). In their opinion, in the formation of relatively stable structures in the living dynamics of the language, pragmatic factors rather than linguistic ones are involved (Foolen 2019: 39-46). This is chiefly true for everyday language, which is characterized by dynamism and non-formalizable variability, and the process of formulating and clarifying the rules for it can be endless (Garner 2014: 113-114). So, researchers describe language as a system process rather than a set of formal structures.

4. Ecological points of view about language are characterized by the study of the situational nature of the language. Language meanings are based not only in the language itself (traditions of its use) or in the thinking of an individual, but also in the surrounding reality. Language emerges from the actual situations in which speech takes place (Garner 2004: 42-43; van Lier 2004). Language is a part of reality and actions; it is they that create objective grounds for mutual understanding and coordination of joint actions, and not innate knowledge of the language (Reed 1996: 154-155; van Lier 2004).

5. The ecological vision of language avoids reducing its nature to one of the aspects of systemic processes that determine the existence of a language. Language is universal; it cannot be localized (Cowley 2014: 67). Thus, unlike sociocultural approaches that emphasize the importance of external cultural factors in the formation of language abilities, thinking and worldview (Nelson & Fivush 2000: 283-295; Teubert 2010), ecolinguistics also takes into account external natural factors and internal individual characteristics of communication participants, i.e. it considers the most systemic aspect of the existence of communication. The ecological understanding of language stresses that it cannot be applied only to grammar or meaning, it cannot be separated from the fullness of methods of communication that we use and which give sense to reality. Gestures, expressions and movements cannot be detached from the verbal message, and giving meaning cannot be reduced to syntactic or lexical constructions (Hodges 2014: 98; van Lier 2004: 140-165).

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It must be noted that the basis of ecological thinking and ecolinguistics constitutes understanding of the systemic relationships of heterogeneous phenomena and the inclusion of the notion of the environment in research methods.

The ecology of language takes into account the modern realities of the linguistic sphere and therefore proceeds from the recognition of its multifaceted nature – the relationship between linguistic, social, historical and cultural factors in the process of interaction of languages. Therefore, ecolinguistics is a multi-paradigmatic science that combines sociolinguistic, linguocultural, psycholinguistic, and pragmalinguistic approaches (Prihodko 2020: 31-40). The latter must be emphasized, since it is ecolinguistics that emphasizes the connection of language with human communicative activity.

Since ecolinguistics as a field of humanitarian knowledge is currently at an early stage of development, we will present information about the terms and methods of this direction. First, ecolinguistic analysis correlates linguistic data with the communicative situation and the sociocultural and linguocultural characteristics of a language society. Secondly, since the systematic approach involves a view of the world in which everything is part of an indivisible whole, ecolinguistics does not reduce complex phenomena and systems to dualism, but describes all phenomena as:

1) interconnected (each unit of the whole is connected with all other units and with the whole); 2) interdependent (the nature of the existence of a linguistic phenomenon changes if another phenomenon ceases to exist); 3) interacting (no unit affects other units if it is not itself influenced by them; there is no unidirectional interaction; only bilateral, which, however, does not mean symmetry, because one part can govern the others) (Garner 2014: 111-121).

The systematic approach leads scientists involved in ecolinguistics to the theory of general systems, ideas of self-developing and open systems, dynamics, emergence and fluctuations. In such theoretical constructions, language is defined as a mediator between cultural and natural ecosystems, in the aspect of interaction.

Fill (Steffensen & Fill 2014: 9-15) was one of the first to formulate the terms of ecolinguistics. Ecolinguistics is a general term for all fields of study that combine ecology and linguistics. Linguistic ecology deals with the study of the relationship between language and environmental or biological issues (for example, biodiversity and environmental problems).

The ecology of language explores issues of interaction between languages (for example, the preservation of linguistic diversity). This direction is characterized by a prescriptive paradigm that sets the norm of use and contributes to the preservation of the language state. Ecological linguistics adopts borrowed concepts and principles from ecology in relation to language (for example, the notion of an ecosystem). These are the terms that are now in scientific use.

The growing interest in this topic leads to the emergence of new terms, for example, "ecology of speech", which should be attributed to the field of language ecology. There also exist the terms "ecological stylistics", "ecocritical analysis of discourse", "ecology of translation", which, as follows from the publication, belong to the general field of ecolinguistics.

4. New tendencies in ecolinguistics.

Today, a new vision of linguistic ecology is emerging, where the concept of ecology is perceived in its biological sense, and linguistics is called upon to participate in solving environmental problems.

Here the description of the current trends in ecolinguistics.

1. Symbolic ecology of language. A distinctive feature of research in this field is the desire to learn the language in some environment. The concept of "environment" includes the surrounding, consisting of other languages, as well as the society using the language. This direction claims to be a scientific explanation of the interactions that occur between symbolic entities: the interaction of language with other languages, the interaction of language with society, which uses language as one of its codes. It is believed that the ecology of a language is determined by the people who learn it, use it, and deliver it to each other. These are the social and psychological aspects of linguistic ecology: in the minds of individuals some processes that, through language, can influence society and its culture take place (Steffensen & Fill 2014: 8).

Within the framework of symbolic ecology, there is a clear tendency to deal with the preservation of languages and linguistic diversity. Illustrative is the metaphorical use of certain notions in relation to the language: different stages of the development of languages from origin to death, the survival of the language, and its adaptation to changing environmental conditions, language mutations are considered (Garner 2014: 111-121; Poppi & Urios-Aparisi: 158-189).

It should be noted that two aspects are distinguished in the symbolic ecology of language – interlingual and intralingual. Within the framework of the first aspect, such topics as the habitat of a separate ethnic language, the threat of extinction of languages and the decrease in the linguistic

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diversity of the languages from around the world, pidginization and creolization of languages are discussed. Such studies examine the features of functionally weak languages that demonstrate a certain degree of disadvantage: the narrowness of the spheres of use, the low number of native speakers, the influence of another, functionally more powerful language (Millikan 2008: 87-100).

The roots of the intralingual aspect of language ecology lie in the field of research of various factors leading to the impoverishment and regression of the language. In this aspect, the subject of ecology is protective measures in relation to the language or national languages. The relationship of the language with the environment is analysed. The environment consists of social, cultural, natural conditions necessary to preserve the identity of the ethnic community and its language, for example, the preservation of the national culture and traditional areas of activity of native speakers, the integrity of the territory, or the level of national self-consciousness (Haugen 2001: 57-66).

There are reasons to talk about the translingual aspect. It is concerned with the study of how units of one language (or culture) are used in the context and through another language. This aspect is presented in the study of fiction, folklore, and is comprehended in translation practice. For example, Hu, pointing out that mankind has entered the era of "eco-civilization", develops the idea of "eco-translation studies" (Hu 2016: 19).

2. Natural ecology of language. This approach is based on the fact that, regardless of the difference in views on the nature and essence of the language, no one will deny that the language exists in the material world. The attention of researchers is focused on how the language is inscribed in the context of natural ecosystems, including climate, topography, fauna, and flora (Panasenko 2023).

Two points of view on this issue are relevant, which consist of exploring how natural phenomena are integrated into language and culture, and how language affects natural environmental phenomena. Within the framework of this approach, extensive research is being carried out on discursive analysis, the ecology of grammar, markers of the ecological crisis in various texts and discourses, and the anthropocentrism of dictionaries (Alexander 2008: 127-142; Heuberger 2003: 93-105).

The interpretations of the content of ecolinguistics testify to the significant role of various speech practices and speech works, the information contained in them in general, everything that is created by means of language and is used in the informational, intellectual, communicative spheres of human activity, in the formation of its micro- and macroenvironment.

3. Sociocultural ecology of the language. This research program implies that language is linked to the social and cultural resources that shape the conditions for the speaker and for language communities in general. Many ideas concerning this approach can be found in the works of scientists of the 19th and 20th centuries, discussing the nature of the influence of the physical environment on the cultural and social surrounding and the impact on the language of a particular people.

Sapir's statement that "... in a real society, even the most elementary phenomenon of the environment is either supported or transformed by social factors" (Sapir 1993: 270) determined many ideas of linguistic science both in practical and theoretical terms. This statement is especially important for studying sociocultural aspects of language and speech. The topicality of the social aspects' research of language functioning is beyond doubt. Of particular importance is the study of the socio-cultural aspects of discourse, models of speech behaviour in various types of communication, the conceptualization and categorization of the world, and their representation in the language system.

Lotman repeatedly mentioned the relationship between culture and language, and their semiosis:

"*The outer world, into which a person is immersed, in order to become a factor of culture, is subjected to factors of semiotization – it is divided into the area of objects that mean something, symbolize, indicate, i.e. meaningful, and objects that represent only themselves*" (Lotman 1999: 178).

In this regard, scientists have adopted the concept of a cultural code.

The cultural code is understood as a system of signs of the material and spiritual world, which have become carriers of cultural meanings, accessible to "reading" by the carriers of this culture and language.

The study of linguistic interaction in an ecological way combines applied linguistic research, such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, conversational analysis, and discursive analysis. The question arises as to what makes research ecological in this perspective.

In this regard, scientists propose two strategies for following an ecological approach to language. The first is to return to Haugen's original approach and focus on "multilingual settings of human interaction and, especially, on the educational context" (Steffensen & Fill 2014: 12). Scholars recommend focus on providing ideological issues and language policies that would ensure the existence of a multinational community. Examples in this direction are presented by the ideas of researchers who advocate the preservation of the language and the practice of improving speech.

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Another strategy is the support and development of such "methods and language practices that are already environmentally friendly" (Steffensen & Fill 2014: 12-13).

4. Cognitive ecology of language. In modern ecolinguistics, there is a clear tendency towards the convergence of cognitive and pragmatic approaches.

According to Wen (Wen 2022) the inclusion of the pragmatic aspect in the system of cognitive processing and information processing led to the emergence of mental pragmatics, the further development of cognitive algebra within the framework of functionalism, as well as a fundamentally new approach to language - cognitive pragmatics, which studies the mental and speech foundations of communication. This statement is corroborated by Foolen, who claims that cognitive pragmatics is a helpful tool for understanding what takes place in conversational interpretation processes, i.e., in reality (Foolen 2023: 22).

Pragmatics integrates cognitive processes and principles of interpretation of statements and speech behaviour. At the same time, pragmatic factors, which stem from the conditions of the speech situation, communicative goals, strategies and tactics and determine the impact potential of the utterance, are an integral part of the cognitive processes occurring in the human mind as part of the ecosystem.

This approach analyses how language contributes to the dynamics between biological organisms and their environment, and studies the cognitive abilities that provide adaptive and flexible behaviour of organisms. Language is considered as a component of the cognitive environment.

The area of interest of this approach largely includes research within the theory of living (social) systems and related biology of knowledge (Maturana 1975: 313-332). These directions correspond to biologically oriented cognitive science or cognitive science of the third generation. In this scientific direction, language is interpreted as a biologically rooted, socially conditioned, cognitively motivated, circularly organized activity of an orienting (semiotic) nature in the consensual area of interactions (Hutchins 2010: 705-715).

With such an interpretation of language, the most important environmental factor influencing the evolutionary development of a person is language interaction, that determines and maintains the cognitive niche of human society as a living system.

This direction shows a connection with the interdisciplinary field of knowledge about the psychological aspects of the relationship between man and the environment. This research goes back to the ideas of Gibson (Gibson 2014), who initiated the study of the processes of cognition and practical actions in their relationship with the environment. This area of knowledge, called ecological psychology, explores how the social, cultural, and geographical environment is included in a person's life and regulates their behaviour and interactions in society.

This approach is closely related to a number of areas, resonating with third generation cognitive science: distributed approach to the language; dialogism; theory of living systems; biology of knowledge; radical constructivism (Hodges 2014; Hodges & Fowler 2010).

5. Conclusions

Therefore, the presented scientific context includes a large number of studies, approaches and perspectives related to different aspects of the science of language. This is a prerequisite for the formation of an ecocentric paradigm in linguistics and ecological thinking in the science of language. Ecolinguistics opposes itself to the previous tradition, in which linguistics is seen as an independent science with a unique subject and language of study.

Cognitive and pragmatic "turns" that occurred in the twentieth century in different fields of knowledge made the transition from the study of language as an autonomous system to language as a subsystem derived from various natural, social and cognitive (eco)systems. Ecolinguistics is a vivid example of this extreme "pragmatic turn", in which scientific, theoretical, methodological and terminological unification of different directions, linguistics ceases to be only linguistics.

This flourishing variety of pragmatic studies of language is the advantage of modern ecolinguistics. At the same time, these investigations emphasize that its further development also requires the integration and cooperation of various scientists working in different fields, so that ecolinguistics has the opportunity to form a common paradigm that unifies existing directions of research.

Ecological philosophy no longer sees ecology merely as a feature of the natural environment that can serve as a metaphor for other phenomena, but as a distinct way of thinking, with far-reaching implications for many disciplines, including language sciences.

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LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO HYPERBOLIC BLENDS[1]

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Received: 10.03.2025 **Reviewed:** 20.03.2025 and 24.03.2025

Similarity Index: 0%

Bibliographic description: Ruiz de Mendoza-Ibáñez, F.J. & Peña-Cervel, M.S. (2025). A cognitive linguistic approach to hyperbolic blends. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 158-179. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.13

Abstract: This study explores hyperbolic blends, a creative word-formation technique, through cognitive modeling. It categorizes these blends into intensifying and non-intensifying sets with unique features and functions. The analysis demonstrates systematicity in blend creation and interpretation, confirming hyperbole's prevalence in language and reasoning. The research also refines lexical blending definitions, recognizing nonce formations as potential blend components.

Keywords: cognitive modeling, hyperbole, lexical blending, metaphor, metonymy, splinter.

1. Introduction

Lexical blending, an additive and subtractive word formation category at the intersection of morphology and phonology, exhibits great structural and conceptual diversity, leading to different and even divergent definitions of the phenomenon. Our definition is all-encompassing, as it includes phenomena such as shortened or abbreviated combinations (e.g., *breathalyzer* < *breath* + *analyzer*; Plag 2003: 122), overlapping blends (e.g., *sinema* < *sin* + *cinema*), or intercalative blends (e.g., *slithy* < *lithe* + *slimy*). Lexical blending is a creative, innovative, and productive mechanism (cf. Peña, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c) through which a lexical item is created by combining two (or more) base words, with at least one being shortened (Peña 2022c: 276). The segmentation of the constituents of blended

[1] This paper is part of the project PID2023-146582NB-I00, funded by MCIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/FEDER, UE

words does not follow regular morphological standards. It should be also noted that one of the constituents of blends might be a nonce formation rather than a well-defined lexical item (e.g., *kerjillion* < *kerj* + *b/million*), which further attests to the great heterogeneity displayed by this word-formation technique.

A matter of concern for scholars is whether lexical blending is regular and predictable or creative and unpredictable. However, as argued by Beliaeva (2019), creativity does not necessarily lead to lack of regularity. Researchers like Bauer, Beliaeva, and Tarasova (2019), Wulff and Gries (2019), and Peña (2022b; 2022c) provide extensive evidence of predictable constraints on the morphological, phonological, and semantic features of blends. In this context, to contribute to the existing literature on the semantic regularity of lexical blending, a detailed analysis of a specific group of blends, hyperbolic blends, is conducted in this proposal from the perspective of cognitive modeling (Peña & Ruiz de Mendoza 2022; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera 2014). The following objectives are addressed: (i) to lend further support to the widely-acknowledged belief in the growing potentiality and popularity of lexical blending as a word-formation technique; (ii) to account for and motivate the regular nature of a group of blends from a semantico-pragmatic perspective; to this end, a two-fold classification of hyperbolic blends is proposed, and the functions these sets of blends fulfill are spelled out; and (iii) to further substantiate the claim for the central role played by figurative language in everyday language and thought. Hyperbolic blends have not been addressed systematically to date. This study fills this gap.

To provide a detailed qualitative analysis of the topic at hand, a corpus of 500 hyperbolic blends has been collected from the webpage of neologisms of the University of Rice, the new words section of the *Cambridge Dictionary* online, and the NOW Corpus. The examples illustrating the use of blends in context have been retrieved from the NOW Corpus, the *Cambridge Dictionary* online, and the *Urban Dictionary*.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: section 2 provides a summary of some of the main approaches to the study of blends from a semantic perspective. Section 3 focuses on the study of hyperbole from the perspective of cognitive modeling. Section 4 is dedicated to the analysis of the data. Finally, section 5 summarizes our main findings and suggests future research avenues.

2. A semantico-pragmatic approach to lexical blending

There are various ways in which the components of blended words can be semantically related, as discussed in Adams (1973), Algeo (1977), Barrena Jurado (2019), and Gries (2012).

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Adams (1973) organizes blends into syntactic classes, such as nominal, adjectival, and verbal blends, and further classifies them semantically. For example, nominal blends can be instrumental (e.g., *automania* < *automobile* + *mania*), compositional (e.g., *plastinaut* < *plastic* + *astronaut*), locative (e.g., *daymare* < *day* + *nightmare*), or resemblance-based (e.g., *bombphlet* < *bomb* + *pamphlet*).

Algeo (1977) distinguishes between syntagmatic blends, which fuse co-occurring lexical items (e.g., *Amerind* < *American* + *Indian*), and associative or paradigmatic blends, which arise from mental associations between lexical units. Most associative blends combine semantically-linked units, such as synonyms (e.g., *swellegant* < *swell* + *elegant*) or co-hyponyms (e.g., *smog* < *smoke* and *fog*).

Gries (2012) identifies five main categories of semantic connections between blend constituents: synonymy, co-hyponymy, contractive (e.g., *scifi* < *science* + *fiction*), frame relation (e.g., *riverscape* < *river* + *landscape*), and others (antonymy, derivation, etc.).

Barrena Jurado (2019) focuses on blends with the *splinter -gasm.* A splinter is a fragment of a word that is used to form a blend. This author classifies the blends containing this splinter into cause-and-effect blends (e.g., *yogasm* < *yoga* + *orgasm*), experiencer blends (e.g., *fangasm* < *fan* + *orgasm*), coordination blends combining two sensations (e.g., *dreamgasm* < *dream* + *orgasm*), and adjectival blends (e.g., *fakegasm* < *fake* + *orgasm*).

Peña (2022c) offers a detailed study of English lexical blends in terms of cognitive modeling in order to account for the semantic relationship between the constituents of a set of blended words. Her corpus of analysis spans five years, from 2016 to 2020. This contribution, however, does not specifically focus on hyperbolic blends. In this proposal, we address this particular kind of blend, and the corpus of analysis has not only grown in size but has also been updated.

3. Hyperbole: a brief overview

In this section, we offer a brief outline of hyperbole, paying special attention to the analysis of this figurative use of language from the point of view of the notion of cognitive modeling as treated in Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera (2014) and Ruiz de Mendoza (2021).

Hyperbole has been extensively studied in pragmatics, where it is regarded as an interpretive or non-descriptive figurative use of language involving an exaggerated clash with reality. In connection to the Gricean view of figurative language as involving a flouting of the conversational maxim of

truthfulness, scholars like Bhaya (1985), Clark (1996), and Haverkate (1990) distinguish between lying and hyperbolic language, with only the latter being socially acceptable. For example, Haverkate (1990: 103) notes that hyperbole is but "a description of the world in terms of disproportionate dimensions". As for the exaggeration ingredient, scholars like Pomerantz (1986) and Norrick (2004) differentiate between non-extreme hyperbole and *extreme case formulations* or ECFs, with hyperbole involving a scale ranging from ECFs (which consist in absolute expressions like *You are always complaining*) to mild cases. With respect to its relationship with other figures of speech, Dynel (2017) argues that hyperbole converges with metaphor, irony, and meiosis in that they all flout the maxim of truthfulness (i.e., they are overtly false). Relevance Theory emphasizes the interplay between hyperbole and other figures such as irony (Gibbs 2000; Kreuz & Roberts 1995), metaphor, and simile (Carston and Wearing 2011; Rubio-Fernández et al. 2015), challenging the assumption that metaphor can be neatly distinguished from hyperbole and meiosis. Thus, many ontological metaphors focus on a target-domain property that the source contains in a higher and more conspicuous proportion (e.g., *Her gaze gleamed with the brilliance of gold*). As for hyperbole and irony, think of the sentence *Right, exactly what I needed*, said in response to an undesirable or negative situation. The adverb *exactly* is hyperbolic in situations where absolutely accuracy is impossible to determine. Because of its hyperbolic quality, it can combine easily with irony to emphasize in an impacting way that the situation in question is not what could be expected but rather the opposite.

The cognitive perspective on hyperbole, which is consistent with most aspects of the various pragmatic accounts, discusses this figure as involving strengthening and mitigation operations on scalar concepts (Peña & Ruiz de Mendoza 2017; 2022; Ruiz de Mendoza 2020; 2021; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera 2014; Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña 2005; Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez 2003). The speaker employs strengthening to produce the exaggerated meaning impact, whereas the hearer utilizes mitigation when noticing the discrepancy between the speaker's utterance and the actual context. This perspective relates the cognitive mechanisms involved in hyperbole with their meaning effects. But hyperbole involves more than these two converse cognitive operations. Like metaphor, hyperbole consists of a cross-domain mapping where an upscaled conceptual representation sets up an imaginary source domain that helps reason about the target domain, a real-world state of affairs (Ruiz de Mendoza 2014). For example, in *Mary's depression is killing her* the source domain depicts the nearly impossible situation where Mary is dying of depression. The target is the real situation where Mary is having a hard time. Thinking of the real-world situation as if it was the imaginary one is a source of attitudinal inferences that allow the hearer to measure the emotional impact of an overly troubling situation. Overestimation of the severity of the situation is intended to maximize the hearer's concern over it and to encourage the hearer to sympathize or even to take action to the extent that it

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is possible on account of the social convention whereby we are expected to provide comfort to those in trouble.

Hyperbolic expressions can describe situations that are either inconceivable or conceivable but unlikely. Absurd hyperbole belongs to the category of impossible or unimaginable scenarios and is similar to other figures of speech like metaphor and irony (Barnden 2020; Musolff 2017). In this regard, Barnden (2020) suggests that three scales are essential for a cognitively plausible understanding of hyperbole: the scale in question, the speaker's emotional state, and the protagonist's emotional state. This proposal suggests that to comprehensively and accurately analyze hyperbole, one must consider its interactive aspects.

4. Hyperbolic blends: classification and functions

4.1 Intensifying hyperbolic blends

Lexical blending does not always create new meanings. The analysis of the data in our corpus reveals that some hyperbolic blends do not name new realities, emotions, or reflect societal changes or new trends. Blends of this kind will be referred to as *intensifying hyperbolic blends*. Take the following examples:

(1)

a. *Yummilicious* (< *yummy* + *delicious*) ('extremely delicious'). "*You can choose from their three yummilicious homemade sauces*" (NOW Corpus).

b. *Gianormous*, *ginormous* (< *giant* + *enormous*) ('extremely large'). "*Apple is already busy building its ginormous cloud data center in Maiden, North Carolina*" (NOW Corpus); *gimongous* (*gigantic* + *humongous*) (used to refer to something that is particularly huge) ('extremely large, enormous'): "*How wrong they are and Jodiphur had just made one huge, gimongous mistake"* (https://www.wordsense.eu/gimongous/).

c. *Fantabulous* (< *fantastic* + *fabulous*), *niftabulous* (< *nifty* + *fabulous*), *superbulous* (< *super* + *fabulous*), *glamfabulous* (< *glamorous* + *fabulous*) ('absolutely amazing, fabulous'): "The Incredible *(the movie) was niftabulous! I enjoyed every second of it*" (https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/45716).

d. *Splendorific* (< *splendorous* + *terrific*), *magriffic* (< *magnificent* + *terrific*) ('amazing, awsome'). "*The Christmas decorations at the Galleria during this season are magriffic!*" (https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/45213).

e. *Grool* (< *great* + *cool*) ('special, extraordinary'). "*…personalised Lohan videos include: wishing your pal a "grool" birthday"* (NOW Corpus).

f. *Maddenating* (< *maddening* + *infuriating*) ('causing extreme anger'). "*It is so maddenating that my History final isn't until the 18th*" (https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/45208).

The constituents of the lexical blends in (1) are semantically related through (near-)synonymy. Additionally, these blends are primarily based on extreme case formulations or ECFs, a notion already mentioned above. ECFs often stretch reality beyond what is reasonable, which is why they are likely to trigger hyperbolic uses, as seen in the examples in (1). By combining two segments of synonymous source adjectives, at least one of which is an ECF, these amplify the hyperbolic potential of a single ECF. The primary purpose of these blends is to exaggerate size, a specific quality, or an emotional reaction. *Yummilicious* stresses the extremely tasty quality of food. This blended adjective has been used to name a self-serve franchise that offers unique sweet and tart frozen yogurts. *Gianormous*, *ginormous*, and *gimongous* emphasize huge size. The second element of the blends in (1c) is the splinter *-bulous* or the full form *fabulous*, which can prompt hyperbolic meaning. This effect is magnified by the first constituent of *fantabulous*,[1] *niftabulous*, *superbulous*, and *glamfabulous*. These adjectives highlight the extremely amazing, good, or incredible nature of something. *Splendorific* and *magriffic* incorporate the final splinter *-ific*, which has undergone a process of amelioration and weakening of meaning throughout history. *Grool* also emphasizes excellence and greatness, while *maddenating* emphasizes derangement.

As noted above, these blends combine two (near-)synonyms without contributing new semantic meanings to the lexicon. Their pragmatic function is to enhance the potentially hyperbolic nature of a single ECF, aiming to draw the hearer's attention to an impossible scenario that is clarified in context. As the likelihood of the imaginary scenario decreases by accumulating hyperbolic-prone lexical items, the emotional impact of the expression on the hearer increases. In terms of relevance, which is central to cognition, processing effort should be offset by extra contextual effects (Wilson & Sperber 1994: 94-95). When applied to the interpretation of the examples in (1), processing two bases encoding the same meaning is more costly than processing one. This additional effort on the part of the addressee results in greater contextual effects.

Besides these adjective + adjective combinations, adverbs can also merge in blends such as *pre-zactly*:

(2) *Pre-zactly* (< *precisely* + *exactly*) (used to enhance someone's point).

"An ex-RAAF Uncle who serviced P-51s informed me that during the Korean War and after that, Aussie CAC-built Mustangs and their Packard Engines were sought by others (Yanks in particular)

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... reason, they were the most powerful and reliable...my Uncle passed away so would need another RAAF type to confirm the story.

As opposed to the US built Mustangs with imported UK built Merlins?

Yes! Prezactly!" (NOW Corpus)

Another interesting set of blended words that do not create new meanings in the lexicon consists of noun + adjective patterns. The constituents are linked in terms of resemblance (a cognitive operation that captures similarities across concepts; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera 2014: 93). Consider the following examples:

(3)

a. John: We're going to the beach on Saturday!
Matt: Sexcellent! (*Urban Dictionary*)

b. "Mmmm... this pie is sexxxcellent"
(https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/47039)

Sexcellent and its variant *sexxxcellent* are used to describe something that is exceptional, surpassing all limits. The implicit comparison underlying *sexcellent* is 'something as excellent as sex' and the multiple "xs" in *sexxxcellent* add an extra layer of intensification. This catchy lexical blend serves as the title of a song by the band Uncle Scam, which deals with singer Ischa's sexual encounter with an unknown partner. However, the connotations of these blended adjectives are not solely sexual. They apply to any situation, event, or thing whose most prominent characteristic is excellence, as seen in the examples in (3).

A prime example is the blend *heinosity*, which combines the adjective *heinous* and the noun *monstrosity* in (4) below. Monstrosities are characterized by being extremely ugly, evil, and usually large. Thus, describing a monstrosity as heinous may seem redundant, as monstrosities are inherently abominable. The adjective strengthens this trait, making the blend more expressive and appealing but does not contribute to creating a new lexical item with a distinct new meaning.

(4)

"DS: *Heinosity is a word that I invented. It is a combination of the words "heinous" and "monstrosity". I'm the first artist to have used the word "heinosity" in a song title and record title and I am very proud of that".*

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This example is part of an interview between Jon Neudorf and Derek Sherinian (DS), a singer. This singer coined the eye-catching word *heinosity* as a marketing strategy to name an album he released in North America in 2009. The hyperbolic load of the noun *monstrosity* is evident not only due to the extreme wicked nature of monsters and monstrosities but also because monsters are imaginary creatures. The characteristics emphasized in the metaphorical substratum underlying the title of this album are related to heavy music. The etymological meaning of the adjective *monstrous*, "of unnatural formation, deviating from the natural order, hideous," and "enormous, huge"[2] dates back to the middle of the 15th century and to 1500 respectively. These meanings persist to this day, with a further metaphorical twist in some contexts: BIG IS IMPORTANT. Furthermore, what deviates from the natural order (as is the case with heavy music) is considered extraordinary. Thus, the negative etymological connotations of *monster* and its derivatives (*monstrous*, *monstrosity*) undergo a process of enhancement through metaphorical reinterpretation. Moreover, as argued, the adjective *heinous* reinforces the 'wicked' feature of the noun *monstrosity* and adds an extra level of hyperbolic meaning to the blend *heinosity*.

Excess is also codified by blended nouns denoting high numbers. Take the examples in (5):

(5)

a. *Jillion, bajillion, squillion, zillion, gazillion, kazillion, bazillion.*

b. *Skajillion, kerjillion*: "*May she burn in hell for a million billion kerjillion lifetimes*" (NOW Corpus)

The nouns in (5) mean 'an extremely large, but not an exact, number', as in *I've told you a zillion times/zillions of times not to do that*. While the examples in (5a) are well-established blends included in dictionaries like *Cambridge* or *Merriam-Webster*, those in (5b) have not yet been incorporated into standard lexicographical products. *Skajillion* and *kerjillion* have been modeled based on the noun blends in (5a). These blends are, in fact, *hapax legomena* in the NOW Corpus, but they demonstrate the great potential of the splinter *-illion* (< *m/billion*) to fuse with other segments, yielding new blends that are highly creative and catchy. This splinter does not retain its exact original meaning in the novel blend formations it is attached to, but rather becomes more general, as it refers to an extremely large number. The additional elements of 'indeterminacy' and even 'bizarreness' are contributed by both the splinter and the first component of the formation.

In summary, the blends in (5) demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of blending as a word-formation process. The first component of these blends is a nonsensical segment that cannot be attributed to any grammatical category and does not have an identifiable semantic meaning. This contrasts with

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previous definitions of lexical blending, which claim that segments of blends originate from well-defined lexical items (including abbreviations and letters) rather than nonce formations.

Other potentially hyperbolic blends are those based on the splinter *-illionaire*, which is clearly related to the splinter *-illion* and is used to designate a person who has amassed an exorbitant fortune. The blends incorporating this splinter in (6) share the meaning of an indeterminate, bizarre amount of money with the nouns denoting disproportionate wealth in (5).

(6)

a. *Kajillionaire, gazillionaire, zillionaire, jillionaire, squillionaire, bazillionaire, bajillionaire.* "*Why did he take the job? He's already a bazillionaire"* (*Cambridge Dictionary*)
b. *Bullionaire* (< *bullion + billionaire*). "*Vladimir Putin, whose wealth is unknown but has been speculated to exceed $200 billion, is another, different kind of billionaire – one with graver whimsies"* (NOW Corpus)
c. *Ballionaire* (< *ball + billionaire*). "*Ballionaire is a pachinko roguelike about building the wackiest Rube Goldberg machine you can in order to make as much money as possible and meet increasing cash thresholds"* (NOW Corpus)

There is an asymmetry in the coinage of the intercalative intentional *bullionaire* in (6b) when compared to the examples in (6a). The possibility of creating the associated term *bullion* to mean a large amount of money is ruled out. First, *bullion* already exists to refer to gold or silver in the form of bars. It would be feasible to include this sense in the lexical entry of this lexeme in lexicographical products, but it could be a potential source of confusion. Second, *bullionaire* refers to a person who has become extremely rich through activities related to trading in precious metals. Thus, the semantic import of this blend differs from the ones in (6a), all of which refer to an extraordinarily wealthy person without any indication of the source of the riches. A similar explanation applies to *ballionaire* in (6c), another intercalative intentional blend that goes beyond alluding to an extremely rich person. Headedness in this example differs from the type found in (6a) and (6b). The examples in (6a) and (6b) are endocentric blends where one of the original parts (the "head") determines the overall meaning of the new word. *Ballionaire* is an exocentric blend, where the meaning of the whole is not directly derived from the meaning of its parts, as it refers to a "pachinko roguelike" that can make gamers amass a great fortune by placing triggers after each of five ball drops to pay tribute to some "Elder" beings. The game is named after two salient facts: (i) it involves playing with balls and, (ii) if successful, you can become a m/billionaire. Thus, another interesting shared characteristic of the blends in (6b) and (6c) is that emphasis is directed towards aspects of meaning that are not

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indeterminate quantity and bizarreness, which are bleached or non-existent in *bullionaire* and *ballionaire*.

A conspicuous difference between the blends in (6a), on the one hand, and (6b) and (6c), on the other, is that while the former do not give rise to new lexemes in the lexicon, as was the case with all previous examples in this section, the former do create new meanings.

The hyperbolic blends discussed so far, intensifying hyperbolic blends, are characterized by the following features:

- They are used for emphasis, as they intensify the meaning of the second element of the blend.
- Exaggeration is central to the formation of these blends, making them suitable for hyperbolic interpretation. They can exaggerate size, degree, quality, or quantity.
- The main semantic relationship between the elements forming these blends is near-synonymy.
- They do not contribute to the substantial body of lexemes that represent distinct meanings in the lexicon.
- They mainly conform to the adjective + adjective morphological pattern, even though other structures are feasible to a more limited extent: adverb + adverb, adjective + noun, noun + adjective, or unknown word class + noun.
- They tend to be conceptually simple. Apart from the near-synonymy relationship held by most of these blends, the cognitive foundation underlying their production and interpretation in terms of cognitive operations is not very complex. Their comprehension does not pose many challenges. Their interpretation is straightforward compared to some of the hyperbolic blends in the following section.
- Their main pragmatic functions are humor, playfulness, and attractiveness. These blends capture the addressee's attention and arouse their interest or curiosity.

4.2 Non-intensifying hyperbolic blends

Some hyperbolic blends, rather than intensifying them, instead generate novel meanings. While still exaggerating emotions, perspectives, and circumstances, these particular blends do not serve an amplifying function.

Some nonce formations like *relationshit* and *vegevangelical* in (7) and (8) respectively can be interpreted hyperbolically:

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(7) *Relationshit* (< *relation* + *shit*) ('a very complicated and extremely disappointing relationship'). "*If there is abuse there is no love, i'm sorry that you got caught in this relationshit... honestly, i think you should just move on alone and stay single for good until you meet the right one"* (NOW Corpus)

(8) *Vegevangelical* (< *vegetarian* + *evangelical*) (used to characterize a person who is a convinced vegetarian and tries to persuade other people to join this way of life). "*I feel like a vegevangelical when I try to tell you that meat is harmful to your health, since my words never seem to get anywhere"* (https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/48495)

In (7), resemblance accounts for the underlying semantic connection between the constituents of *relationshit*. Interpreting the meaning of this nonce formation requires a metaphorical reinterpretation of *shit*. The alleged similarity between the referents of the bases of *relationshit* is related to one of the main effects that "shit" can produce: repulsion, which is carried over to the domain of a love relationship.

The interpretation of *vegevangelical* should be understood in a very specific context. The term was coined by parents telling their children not to eat meat due to its unhealthy effects, while coincidentally, there was a pastor on television. Evangelicals consider it essential to spread their religious beliefs to others. Vegetarians attempting to persuade others to follow their eating habits might be compared to evangelicals. As with *relationshit*, resemblance between the two bases of *vegevangelical* underlies its interpretation.

Both *relationshit* and *vegevangelical* are hyperbolic in the examples in (7) and (8) above. The speakers exaggerate a state of affairs (by claiming that a relationship is "shit" in (7) and that a convinced vegetarian is an evangelical in (8)), which the hearers must downplay to understand the real-world situation: a love relationship is unsatisfactory and harmful in (7), and parents, characterized as convinced vegetarians, persistently attempt to persuade their children to adopt their lifestyle and stop eating meat in (8).

Other blends result from the systematic attachment of a splinter to various (parts of) source words. Our data analysis has revealed that several splinters with a metaphorical basis trigger hyperbolic readings of the resulting blends they are part of. Consider the following examples:

The final splinters *–(t)astrophe* (< *catastrophe*), *-pocalypse* (< *apocalypse*), and *-locaust* (< *holocaust*) are intrinsically negative suffix-like segments denoting impending disaster. A catastrophe

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is an event that causes great and very often sudden damage, trouble, or destruction. An apocalypse can be defined similarly. Its biblical interpretation as the total destruction and end of the world is well known. A holocaust refers to a large amount of destruction, mainly caused by fire or heat, or to the killing of many people. The killing of millions of Jews by the Nazis before and during the Second World War was accordingly called the Holocaust. These lexemes and their corresponding final splinters can be used hyperbolically whenever the disaster is exaggerated for effect. They do not imply a real "end-of-the-world" situation. In fact, the hyperbolic component of these final splinters is based on a metaphorical interpretation in which any mishap or accident that is not particularly devastating or harmful is seen as a catastrophe. Furthermore, the splinters *-(t)astrophe*, *-pocalypse*, and *-ocaust* retain the intended communicative force of their corresponding bases. Let us address these three final hyperbolic splinters one by one.

Further down, in examples (9a), (9b), (9c), and (9d), the splinter *-(t)astrophe* combines with a source lexeme that expresses the cause of the catastrophe. This means that the semantic relationship between the constituents of the blends in (9) is basically cause-effect. The frame of the lexeme *catastrophe* involves "an Undesirable_event which affects the Patient negatively. No agent need be involved."[3] Interestingly enough, the first segments of (9a), (9b), (9c), and (9d) denote a non-core element of the frame 'catastrophe', the cause. On the other hand, the first portion of (9e) designates a core frame element, the patient. Santa Claus occupies the slot of the Patient inasmuch as he suffers the consequences of crowded hotels at Christmas, which makes it impossible to deliver gifts. The degree of conceptual complexity of these blends is high. In (9a), the first element, the bus, provides conceptual access to a situation in which a shortage of bus drivers caused massive cancellations and delays of buses. In (9b), the first source word of *wish-tastrophe* also activates a whole situation in which the main character of a novel, Lydia Marmalade, causes chaos after making a wish at Christmas. *Sarcasm* in (9c) also opens up a scenario in which failing to understand someone's use of sarcasm triggers an uncomfortable situation. *Boy* in (9d) is also an anchor to a whole scenario in which a failed relationship with a boy leads to disaster. In (9e), *Santa* invokes a situation where Santa's primary role as responsible for delivering gifts at Christmas is doomed to failure due to the presence of many people in hotels.

(9) *-(t)astrophe* (< *catastrophe*)

a. *Bustastrophe* ('the chaotic situation that arose as a consequence of the departure of old bus drivers and the unsuccessful attempt of the industry to recruit new bus drivers'). "*Everyone*

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will remember the bustastrophe when the trolleybuses were decommissioned and replaced with +30 years old diesels from Auckland" (NOW Corpus)

b. *Wish-tastrophe* (title of a novel by Cariad Lloyd; it makes reference to the chaotic situation caused by Lydia Marmalade after she makes a wish at Christmas). "*When Lydia Marmalade makes a wish on the most magical night of the year, little does she know the chaos she's about to unleash. Could one simple wish start a . . . wish-tastrophe?"* (NOW Corpus)

c. *Sarcastrophe* ('embarrassing situation that can arise when someone tries and fails to use sarcasm'). "*Todd's failed attempt at humorous sarcasm resulted in a sarcastrophe at dinner"* (https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/46850)

d. *Boytastrophe* (a bad experience in a relationship, usually a romantic one, with a boy). "*What a boytastrophe! We went on a date, but we disagreed on everything so much that it ended only 30 minutes in!"* (https://neologisms.rice.edu/word/41769)

e. *Santastrophe* ('a chaotic situation faced by Santa Claus when trying to deliver gifts in hotels at Christmas'). "*Airbnb: Santastrophe. Santa Claus faces comedic chaos delivering gifts in hotels in Airbnb's festive animated short"* (NOW Corpus)

In the examples in (10) below, the final splinter *-pocalypse* (< *apocalypse*) is used recurrently in the formation of hyperbolic blends. As was the case with *(t)astrophe* (< *catastrophe*), the cause is a non-core element of the frame for apocalypse. However, the first component of the blends in (10) denotes this peripheral element. The degree of conceptual complexity of these blends, especially of the first segment, varies. While the interpretation of (10a) and (10b) is reasonably straightforward, (10c) is more complex, (10d), (10e), and (10f) representing higher levels of complexity. In *robopocalypse* (10a), the first element denotes the direct cause of a potentially catastrophic situation in which robots replace humanity. In (10b), the first segment of the blend, *snow*(storm), designates a weather event that causes devastating effects. The understanding of (10c) requires more processing effort. *Cookie* provides conceptual access to a whole scenario in which third-party cookies disappear. *Cookiepocalypse* refers to the negative consequences this might bring about, especially in the way advertisers target Internet users. As regards (10d), *air* provides access to a whole scenario in which people living in Beijing in 2013 were exposed to toxic air. Smog particles in the air far exceeded the limit recommended by the World Health Organization. This was perceived as a dramatic "end-of-the world" scenario. In (10a), (10b), (10c), and (10d) causes are objects or events. In contrast, in (10e) and (10f), certain animate beings and a specific human being are respectively seen as causing an apocalyptic situation. However, these entities grant conceptual access to whole scenarios. In (10e), *Trump* conjures up a wider scenario that involves Trump's (re)election, no matter what he does, and his way of ruling the United States of America. *Trumpocalyse* conveys negative feelings towards

Trump as a political leader, which might lead to the end of America as people knew it before Trump burst into politics. *Trumpocalypse (Restoring American Democracy)* is also the title of a book by David Frum in which the author wonders why a third of the electorate keeps trusting Donald Trump. As a title, *Trumpocalypse* is evocative. Finally, *hens* in *henspocalypse* (10f) first needs a interpretation based on the metaphor WOMEN ARE ANIMALS (HENS). This sense of the word *hen*, used to refer to women, can be traced back to Middle English. The expression *hen party*, meaning a 'gathering of women', was first recorded in 1887. The underlying reason for metaphorically speaking about women in terms of hens lies on a derogatory conception of women, who are seen as "standing out for their dopey behavior" (López-Rodríguez 2007: 27). The way hens are kept in small spaces is another feature that is carried over from the domain of hens to the domain of women. Crowded together in a tiny space, which impedes motion, makes them indistinguishable and deprives them of individuality. In the context of the film *Henpocalypse*, it is also worth noting that the five women who star in it are compared to hens in terms of the way they move around in barns. Their movement closely resembles that of women who dance and sway happily when enjoying an event like a party. In fact, the title of the film evokes a happy and playful situation in which five women gather to celebrate a wedding. This metaphorical interpretation of 'hens' as 'women' is an anchor for a situation in which these women happily enjoy a party.

(10) *-pocalypse* (< *apocalypse*)

a. *Robopocalypse* ('a future end of the world caused by robots'). "*With the advances in technology that we're seeing, many people are worried about a coming robopocalypse"* (NOW Corpus)
b. *Snowpocalypse* ('a severe winter storm'). "*The event takes place regardless of the weather, although it has been cancelled once due to a crippling winter storm dubbed "Snowpocalypse""*" (NOW Corpus)
c. *Cookiepocalypse* ('the possible and gradual disappearance of third-party cookies seen as a dramatic event'). "*Google is trying to avert the cookiepocalypse for the ad tech industry, no repentance necessary*" (NOW Corpus)
d. *Airpocalypse* ('presence of dense and toxic airborne smog in many parts of Asia and South Africa'). "*While a handful of city authorities had raised the pollution warning to the highest level, Tuesday China's national observatory did so, signalling a first-ever red alert for a phenomenon that has come to be known as the "airpocalypse""*" (NOW Corpus)

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e. *Trumpocalypse* ('the election and presidency of Trump seen as a catastrophe, more precisely as the end of America, by some Democrats'). "*A number of wealthy tycoons have made preparations for 'Trumpocalypse' by buying property in New Zealand*" (NOW Corpus)

f. *Henpocalypse* (title of a film in which five women enjoying a hen-do face an apocalyptic situation when they discover that a sudden outbreak of crab measles threatens to wipe out humankind). "*This led him straight to the set of Henpocalypse! which saw five women headed out on a hen-do, only for the celebrations to be interrupted by the end of the world…"* (NOW Corpus)

The final splinter *-ocaust* (< *holocaust*) in (11) also denotes a sense of destruction derived from its original source word, *holocaust*, whose meaning is "a very large amount of destruction, especially by fire or heat, or the killing of very large numbers of people".[4] The splinter metaphorically reconstrues the original sense of the base word and is part of nonce formations whose first element expresses cause (11a), affected entity (11b), or even a positive event or situation (11c and 11d). The degree of conceptual complexity of these blends is high. In (11a), *alcohol* provides access to a party in which excessive alcohol consumption leads to a chaotic situation. (11b) is particularly interesting since the 'holocaustic' component is parameterized into a specific kind of catastrophic situation caused by an infectious disease like Coronavirus, which dramatically affects birds by expediting their death. In (11c) and (11d), *lolocaust* and *yolocaust*, contrast operates at two levels: (i) lexical contrast, as the two segments making up these blends involve seemingly contradictory terms when considered from a denotational point of view; and (ii) high-level contrast: these blends are to be interpreted in terms of a clash between an imaginary scenario and a real-world scenario that produces a great emotional impact on the hearer (Peña 2022b). *Lolocaust* (11c) emerges from the combination of the acronym *lol* ('laughing out loud') and the splinter *-ocaust*. The meaning of this blend is not only hyperbolic but also paradoxical and ironic. First, there is a clash between an imaginary scenario in which something completely terrible but at the same time amusing takes place and a real-world situation that depicts something that is both terrible (but not completely horrible) and fun. Second, the paradox is reinterpreted in the right context as something that causes pretended rather than authentic laughter. This is related to the ironic component. The irony stems from a fictitious scenario in which the speaker likes terrible situations and an observed scenario in which the speaker hates the situation (in the context of the example the speaker expresses his/her irritation at the long wait on the road to avoid a hurricane that never struck). The interpretation of *yolocaust* in (11d) runs along the same lines. *Yolo* is an acronym for "you only live once". It is used particularly in social media to mean that you should do exciting or enjoyable things, even if they seem stupid or a little dangerous. Here, the splinter

-ocaust refers to a situation in which people taking selfies in the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin express their joy. Again, we find two levels of contrast, lexical and high-level contrast. In this example, the marked scenario in which people enjoy something so harsh and mournful as the Holocaust Memorial is to be construed in the context of new trends that lead people to take selfies wherever they are, no matter how inappropriate that might be. The hyperbolic element stems from the clash between an imaginary scenario in which people enjoy the scenery where they take the selfies, the Holocaust Memorial, as if it was a funny place, and the real-world situation in which people show a blatant disregard for such a sad place as a way of amusement.

(11) *-ocaust* (< *holocaust*)

a) *Alcoholocaust* ('the panorama after a drinking party, usually resulting in a messy and filthy space full of empty bottles and trash'). "*You guys better stay around to help clean up the alcoholocaust you started last night"* (https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=alcoholocaust)
b) *Aviocaust* ('a great disaster caused by Coronavirus or other infectious diseases that causes the massive death of many birds'). "*Christmas is coming but neither the geese, nor for that matter the turkeys, are getting fat. They are dying of Covid – sorry, bird-flu – and millions have had to be culled because of the danger of infecting humans. The price of the birdy-Christmas-dinner rises with the aviocaust*" (NOW Corpus)
c) *Lolocaust* ('a situation or event described as terrible but in an amusing way'). "*We spent twenty-two hours on the road avoiding a hurricane that never even came. What a lolocaust*" (NOW Corpus)
d) *Yolocaust* ('the joy expressed by people taking selfies in the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin'). "*He rebuked a project called "Yolocaust" meant to mock visitors for taking jubilant selfies at such reflective sites*" (NOW Corpus)

Besides these final splinters that denote catastrophe or impending disaster, there are others, based on metaphor, which express other meanings. Some examples are (12) *-zilla* (< *Godzilla*) or (13) the initial splinter *franken-* (< *Frankenstein*). The referent of the initial segment of any blended word ending in *-zilla* will be metaphorically regarded as a monster, which is obviously hyperbolic. The splinter *-zilla* is often taken by agent-like segments to denote a person who is excessively imposing, overbearing, and/or huge (Mattiello 2023: 169). Thus, the splinter *-zilla* is metonymically reinterpreted to focus on one or more of the characteristics attributed to Godzilla, a dinosaur-like

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monster. In (12a), (12b), (12c), and (12d) the relevant feature is the threatening nature of the monster, while in (12e) and (12f) it is its extraordinary size.

(12) *-zilla* (< *Godzilla*)

a. *Bridezilla* ('a bride or bride-to-be who is excessively worried about the details of her wedding and is obsessive and very demanding'). "*Not every bride is a bridezilla, but if you've watched Whose Wedding Is It Anway, then you can admit there are a few psycho ones*" (NOW Corpus)
b. *Groomzilla* ('a man who is extremely demanding as regards the details of his wedding and is difficult to deal with'). "*Sally branded him a "groomzilla" as she pointed out that little things about the colour of the napkins don't matter in the grand scheme of things*" (NOW Corpus)
c. *Weddingzilla* ('a person extremely involved in planning his/her wedding, which results in unbearable behaviour'). "*Apparently, Des was a bit of a weddingzilla during the planning stages as he was all for taking to the dance floor*" (NOW Corpus)
d. *Momzilla* ('an over-involved or controlling mother'). "*Eventually, she mutates into a humungous mumzilla with pendulous breasts, who sucks her zombie-killing son Lionel back into her womb with the words, "No one will ever love you like your mother!""*"(NOW Corpus)
e. *Hogzilla* ("a giant male wild hog hybrid that was killed in 2004 in Georgia, in the United States"). "*In 2004, one of the largest hogs was found in Alapaha, Georgia. It was estimated to weigh about 800 pounds and was around eight feet long. The locals call it "Hogzilla""*" (NOW Corpus)
f. *Toadzilla* ('an extremely giant cane toad'). "*A cane toad so giant wildlife officers thought it was fake has been found in a north Australian rainforest. The "monster" specimen is six times bigger than the average toad, weighs 2.7kg, and could break a world record. Dubbed "Toadzilla", the animal was quickly placed in a container and removed from the wild"* (NOW Corpus)

(13) *franken-* (< *Frankenstein*)

The meaning of the initial splinter *franken-* also results from a metonymic reinterpretation whereby one or more characteristics of the monster Frankenstein are singled out:[5]

- Genetically modified (artificial) (as in 13a).
- Something that consists of several assembled parts, which can result in a weird object/event (as in 13b).
- Ugliness and/or weirdness (as in 13c).

- More than one of these senses, even though one of them usually stands out from the rest (as in 13d).

a. *Frankentomato* ('tomato that has been genetically modified').
b. *Frankenbite* (or *franken-edit*) ('a video extract edited together from several sources').
c. *Frankencut* ('a weird and ugly haircut').
d. *Frankencar* ('a car that is assembled from defective parts of other cars, and is thus weird and ugly').

In (12) and (13), an imaginary and (virtually) impossible scenario is set up that involves some exaggeration (in terms of size or some other characteristic) that the addressee has to scale down to understand the real-world situation. Moreover, while the blends in (12) and (13) have a naming function, in the sense that they create new members within existing categories, they also fulfill a humorous function.

The hyperbolic blends analyzed in this section are characterized as follows:

- They create new meanings (new members within already existing categories) instead of merely having an intensifying role.
- As with intensifying blends, exaggeration plays a decisive role in their formation and are thus hyperbolic.
- The main semantic relationships between the elements forming the blends are hyponymy and contrast.
- The blends mainly conform to the noun + noun morphological pattern.
- They tend to be conceptually complex. First, they are usually based on metaphor and many of them call for some metonymic elaboration.
- As in the case of intensifying hyperbolic blends, their main pragmatic functions are humor, playfulness, and attractiveness. These blends catch the hearer's attention arousing interest and/or curiosity.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper fills a gap in the study of lexical blending by providing a qualitative analysis of a previously underexplored group of blends: hyperbolic blends. Drawing on the main postulates of cognitive modeling, the study offers a semantico-pragmatic perspective of this set of blends. It has been found that hyperbolic blends are highly innovative and creative lexical items that can be divided into two main sets: intensifying hyperbolic blends and non-intensifying blends. The former are primarily adjective + adjective combinations used to intensify the meaning of the second element of the blend. The semantic relationship between the segments in these lexical items should be understood

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in terms of near-synonymy. Thus, they do not create new meanings. Their interpretation is often straightforward, as they do not involve a high degree of conceptual complexity. They serve humorous purposes and are catchy. In contrast to intensifying hyperbolic blends, the second group consists of novel formations that create new members within existing categories. They mainly conform to the noun + noun pattern and the relationship between their constituents is one of hyponymy or contrast. They are conceptually complex compared to intensifying hyperbolic blends. They are usually metaphorically grounded, and many of them have to be metonymically developed. Regarding their functions, while they convey playful humor, they also serve a naming purpose.

As hyperbolic expressions, the blends in both sets involve some form of exaggeration, which is a key concept for the production and interpretation of hyperbole. These concise and creative lexical items are interpreted in terms of a clash between two scenarios: an imaginary and (virtually) impossible scenario (the source) and the real-world situation (the target). The addressee must scale down the exaggeration to understand the meaning of the blend. This clash has a significant emotional impact on the addressee.

Examining hyperbolic blends from the perspective of cognitive modeling has enabled us to further substantiate the claim that there is some semantic and pragmatic systematicity and regularity in the creation and interpretation of blends. This analysis has also contributed to supporting the claim that hyperbole, much like metaphor, is widely used in language since it is one of the ways in which we reason about the world. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the detailed study of our data has paved the way for a refinement of previous definitions of lexical blending. We have discovered that the components of blends are not necessarily well-defined lexical items included in lexicographical products; they can also be nonce formations that are playful, attractive, and creative.

This study opens up further research avenues. Quantitative and cross-linguistic studies could shed additional light on both the idiosyncratic and regular nature of hyperbolic blends. Additionally, a bigger corpus would allow for the search of more splinters that display a hyperbolic component.

Notes

[1] This blend has been studied as an intentional blend. Similarity has been found to play a relevant role in the formation of some blends. In the case of intentional blends, similarity is to be understood in terms of the extent to which the base words that are combined in a lexical blend are similar to each other in terms of characters, phonemes, and stress patterns (Gries 2004; Kemmer 2003). Here we focus on semantic similarity, the paradigmatic relationship of (near) synonymy exhibited between the constituents of lexical blends. However, phonological similarity is also displayed by some hyperbolic blends like *fantabulous* or *cashtration*, which enhances the expressive effect of these lexemes.

[2] https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=monstrous

[3] https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Catastrophe

[4] Definition taken from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/holocaust

[5] For a detailed study of this splinter, see Peña (2022a: 129-130)

Abbreviation

ECF(s) – extreme case formulation(s)

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ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

ON THE COGNITIVE FRAME OF FREEDOM

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Received: 30.01.2025 **Reviewed:** 25.02.2025 and 14.03.2025

Similarity Index: 0%

Bibliographic description: Uberman, A. (2025). On the cognitive frame of FREEDOM. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 180-197. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.10

Abstract: Freedom is considered one of the basic human rights. It is a complex concept encompassing many types. Freedom is also among the most rudimentary values observed by human societies and a crucial cultural keyword. An attempt will be made in the discussion to sketch out the cognitive frame of FREEDOM and to show selected fundamental elements, exemplified by media coverages and news reports. The linguistic analysis of some of its most salient elements is provided on the basis of Oxford English dictionary.

Keywords: value, cultural keyword, cognitive frame, freedom, the frame of FREEDOM.

1. Introduction

In turbulent times that we are currently living, the basic human safety tends to be under need of threat in various places across the world. Armed conflicts and unstable political situation in different countries make freedom not only an inescapable need and a sought-after value, but a necessity the protection of which is the responsibility of diverse communities, societies and nations. Regrettably, it is not only in war-ravaged areas that diverse human freedoms are denied or violated. These features of the phenomenon make it an interesting topic worthy of research.

Freedom is a complex concept that defies brief description. It is a multifaceted notion which can be addressed from a number of perspectives, such as philosophical, theological and social, to mention but a few. Section 2 of the present discussion (Defining freedom: methods and materials) focuses on the definitions of the concept from different perspectives. The symbolic representations of freedom

are introduced (Pinker 1997; Biedermann 1996) and briefly addressed, followed by the general definitions of freedom presented on the basis of the Oxford English dictionary (OED, *s.a.*). A philosophical perspective of freedom is outlined by Feinberg (2005), Waldron (2008) and Bochenek (2017). The linguistic perspective is grounded in observations by Wierzbicka (1997), who presents an explication of the concept by referring to its culture-specific and language-specific characteristics. She proposes a definition in terms of semantic metalanguage, thus avoiding the bias that individual languages and cultures might and do bring into their understanding of the notion.

Freedom is also a significant value discussed extensively in the expert literature (Abramowicz 1993; Antosiak 2003; Bartmiński 2003; 2008; 2009; 2014; 2015; Koczur-Lejk & Rodziewicz 2021; Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska 2015; Pinker 1994; Puzynina 1992; Wierzbicka 1992; 1997; 1999). This important aspect is the primary focus of Section 3 titled Freedom as value. Additionally, the American perspective on values is briefly presented (Borstelmann 2020; Caldwell 2007; Gries 2016; Gooding 2018; Obama 2020; Plummer 2003; Sharpes 2019; Uberman 2022). It is also important to note that freedom is considered a cultural keyword (Bartmiński 2015; Levisen & Waters 2017; Wierzbicka 1992; 1997; 1999; 2006; 2007; 2014).

In Section 4 (A cognitive frame of FREEDOM: outline and discussion) the frame of FREEDOM is analysed. The cognitive model is presented from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics and outlined on the basis of specialist literature (Figar 2020; Fillmore 1975; Foolen 2012; Hoang 2022; Ioannou 2019; Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Petruck 2013; Sullivan 2013; Uberman 2018). The frame is understood as "a cognitive structure that organizes human experience and can be activated by various linguistic signals" (Ushchyna 2020: 462).

The research study is conducted on the basis of two online lexicographic sources, the Oxford English dictionary, *s.a.* and the Merriam-Webster dictionary, *s.a.* Additional sources are composed of selected online BBC News reports and a Polish news report together with a YouTube interview, all of which concentrate on the many faces of the issue of freedom. The analysis of the sources enables the creation of a rudimentary cognitive frame of FREEDOM, as the presentation of a complete structure is well beyond the scope of such a limited research study. The most crucial frame elements are instantiated, and they are exemplified by world news items for clarification and illustration. It must be stressed that only the aspects of freedom relating to social life will be addressed; the science-related senses of freedom will be excluded from considerations. Concluding remarks is the final section which briefly summarises the analysis of the research study material and its findings.

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2. Defining freedom: methods and materials

Even though it is ubiquitous, freedom is an abstract concept that can be interpreted and epitomized in a number of ways. The concept of freedom is symbolically rendered by a number of images. A concrete image that is universally understood as representing freedom is the Statue of Liberty (Pinker 1997: 297). Searching online sources for data has revealed recurrent images, such as an eagle – a bird considered 'king' among the feathered beasts, a dove, a raven – owing to its connotation with freedom and independence. Other images signifying freedom are broken chains, open palms, wings, torches, stars or olive branches (Symbols of freedom, *s.a.*). Biedermann (1996: 60) also notes that cats are considered a symbol of freedom. They signify liberty owing to the difficulty in catching or confining them. Freedom can be also figuratively ascribed to deer, which as "creatures of the wild […] roam through nature, seeking distant regions and shunning fixed abodes" (ibid., 93).

2.1 Freedom: Definitions

Freedom is generally defined as "the state of being able to act without hindrance or restraint; liberty of action" (Freedom (a), *s.a.*). In its more specific understanding, it is also referred to as "exemption or release from slavery or imprisonment", "exemption or release from the obligations of a contractual agreement; spec. release from a marriage, divorce". In the current situation of many nations across the globe involved in some kind of (not only armed) conflict, there is a strong prevalence of search for freedom understood as "the state or fact of not being subject to despotic or autocratic control, or to a foreign power; civil liberty; independence". In figurative terms, freedom is considered to be "liberation from the bondage or dominating influence of sin, spiritual servitude, worldly ties, etc." (Freedom (b), *s.a.*).

From a philosophical perspective freedom is considered to be the self-determination of personal, mindful activity (Freedom (c), *s.a.*). It is rendered in various walks of life as, for instance a socio-political freedom, freedom of choice and practising religion, freedom in searching for truth and arranging academic research, freedom in moral conduct, freedom of artistic activity, etc. All of the abovementioned types assume some form of understanding of human freedom.

As further clarified by Feinberg (2005: 294):

"*There are at least two basic ideas in the conceptual complex we call 'freedom'; namely, rightful self-government (autonomy), and the overall ability to do, choose or achieve things, which can be called 'optionality' and defined as the possession of open options. To be autonomous is to be free in the sense of 'self-governing' and 'independent', in a manner analogous to that in which sovereign nation states are free. Optionality is when a person has an open option in respect to some possible action, x, when nothing in the objective circumstances prevents them from doing x should they choose to do so, and nothing requires them to do x should they choose not to. One has freedom of action when one can do what one wills, but in order to have the full benefit of optionality, it must be supplemented by freedom of choice (free will), which*

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consists in being able to will what one wants to will, free of internal psychological impediments. Autonomy and optionality can vary independently of one another. A great deal of one can coexist with very little of the other".

Waldron (2008: 279) claims that "Humans are potentially free agents and the realisation of their freedom is a matter of the greatest moral importance". However, in connection with the language of rights, the author notes that people do not a have "a right to perform just any action they choose. Maybe we have a right to perform at least those actions that do not interfere with the liberty of others" (ibid.). As pointed out by Bochenek (2017: 35-36), from the personalism perspective an individual as a dynamic reality is constituted by will whose basis of realisation is self-determination – i.e. possessing oneself. Freedom is the primary measure of one's dignity and greatness, the fundament of other features, the privilege without which a given individual's actions are devoid of any axiological connotation.

While discussing the concept of 'freedom' Wierzbicka (1997) states that it is a culture-specific and a language-specific concept. She notes that 'freedom' is mostly discussed by researchers in philosophy and not so much attention is devoted to the linguistic analysis of the notion. Moreover, she believes that a cross-linguistic analysis would unveil similarities as well as existing diversities between the 'freedom' lexicon in different culture and language communities, despite the fact that the concept might be commonly considered to be universal. She goes on to state that "An awareness is also lacking of the fact that words encode certain conceptualizations rather than any objective "pictures" of reality, or that the same situation or state of affairs can be differently construed […] for the purposes of linguistic encoding" (ibid., 126). Therefore, a culture-independent explanation employing semantic metalanguage is likely to provide an unbiased image. The modern English concept of 'freedom' is covered in the following explication (ibid., 130):

"*freedom*
(a) someone (X) can think something like this:
(b) if I want to do something I can do it
(c) no one else can say to me: "you can't do it because I don't want this"
(d) if I don't want to do something I don't have to do it
(e) no one else can say to me: "you have to do it because I want this"
(f) this is good for X
(g) it is bad if someone cannot think this"

As further noted, the explication above justifies the possibility in English to talk about "freedom OF / TO" as well as "freedom FROM" (ibid., 131). An important observation is made by Wierzbicka (ibid., 132), referring to the latter, in the following words:

"*This "negative" semantics of freedom[1] corresponds, then, to the ideal of "non-imposition," which is one of the major cultural themes in the Anglo world. It is not the ability to do whatever one wants that is a key Anglo ideal, because the*

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supreme goal of individual rights is linked in this culture with a general recognition of other people's individual rights. It is "non-imposition" which is the key idea: "Maybe I can't do some things that I'd like to do, but at least no one else is going to prevent me from doing what I want and what I have the right to do." It is crucial to this conception that what applies to me applies also to everyone else: freedom[2] is not just a privilege that some people may enjoy ('it is good for this person') but a universal right ('it is bad if someone can't think this'). The emergence of the concept of 'freedom' in the English language reflects the rise of this modern ideal".

Selected different types of freedom will be the focus of discussion in the sections to follow in order to sketch out the core of the cognitive frame in which they are included.

2.2 Methods and materials

Freedom is a concept that can be interpreted from a number of perspectives, as proven by the definitions that have thus far been provided. It is not only a condition in human life but also a significant value for most individuals. This is reflected in the way freedom is perceived in language-specific and culture-specific contexts. The main emphasis of the discussion is the cognitive model, i.e. the frame of FREEDOM with its diverse elements formed by freedom types and associated notions, such as the people and certain activities involved. The construct to be outlined is so complex that only its most salient elements will be addressed. It is an extremely multifaceted knowledge structure and the main types of freedom will be referenced in the present research study.

The corpus subjected to analysis and presented as the cognitive frame of FREEDOM has been gathered from two online dictionaries, the Oxford English dictionary, *s.a.* (henceforth OED, *s.a.*) and the Merriam-Webster dictionary, *s.a.* (referred to as MW, *s.a.*). Individual entries pertaining to types of freedom and freedom-related concepts are quoted after the above sources. Moreover, online BBC News reports are referenced as well. The selection that is referred to are the articles reporting on issues affecting diverse types of freedom (i.e. freedom of education, reproductive freedom, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of expression). One online article comes from a Polish online news platform and, together with a YouTube link to the interview on which the article is based, they address the freedom of expression of a Chinese-born poet in exile. The focus of attention are the freedom types in the Western world, however, instances from other regions are also quoted to identify limitations on particular types of freedom placed on citizens in different parts of the globe.

3. Freedom as value

It has to be stressed that freedom is one of the human values that are most dearly held by communities, ethnic groups, societies as well as whole nations (Abramowicz 1993; Antosiak 2003; Bartmiński 2003; 2008; 2009; 2014; 2015; Koczur-Lejk & Rodziewicz 2021; Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska 2015; Pinker 1994; Puzynina 1992; Wierzbicka 1992; 1997; 1999). Preserving and maintaining freedom are

undoubtedly activities that are influenced by affectivism, as freedom is the concept and condition requiring utmost attention and deserving priority. As rightly stressed by Bartmiński (2009: 12) "freedom and sovereignty, peace and well-being, democracy and solidarity" are the entrusted values for many European nations, Poland included. Among the most significant values for Polish people 'freedom' − [Pol. *'wolność'*] ranked sixth, after 'family', 'work', 'love', 'faith' and 'friendship' (Bartmiński 2014: 19). In a conducted research study (Lappo 2006) 'freedom' was associated mainly with the following features:

a) independence, the lack of external limitations;
b) freedom of speech;
c) ability to decide about oneself;
d) the freedom of choice;
e) self-limitation for common good;
f) a guarantee of a democratic state;
g) it is a human feature / an individual's inner feeling;
h) it gives the feeling of happiness / safety / lightness;
i) freedom of religion, denomination;
j) ability to act in unrestricted manner;
k) ability to travel / move about;
l) acting according to one's conscience;
m) national sovereignty;
n) it is related to the responsibility for one's choices;
o) it requires self-control;
p) no obligation to work;
q) it is the rule of law.

Freedom is one of the most crucial aspects of American culture (Borstelmann 2020; Caldwell 2007; Gries 2016; Gooding 2018; Obama 2020; Plummer 2003; Sharpes 2019; Uberman 2022). Sharpes states that "the essence of American values [is] **human freedom** and the indispensable condemnation of those who violate it" (2019: 98). It is featured extensively in various walks of life. For Americans, freedom is a deeply-rooted notion significant in terms of both the authorities, individuals, and the media. The freedom of all forms of expression, including the freedom of speech, are universally declared and executed in the daily lives of citizens in the USA. "This very aspect of American life is of fundamental significance, and it can be easily identified as the American cultural script and also as a notion featuring in the national anthem" (Uberman 2022: 145). The national coat of arms of the

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United States is referred to as the **Bird of Freedom**, "the bald eagle considered as an emblem of the United States of America" (Bird of freedom, *s.a.*).

Freedom is also considered one of the cultural keywords in numerous languages and cultures (see among others Bartmiński 2015; Levisen & Waters 2017; Wierzbicka 1992; 1997; 1999; 2006; 2007, 2014). Wierzbicka (1997: 15-16) interprets keywords to be "words which are particularly important and revealing in a given culture", but states that their number is not set and no objective discovery process can be named to recognize them. As noted by experts in the field, cultural keywords may vary from language to language in subtle details, as it is those details and individual elements of the linguistic worldview that make culture and language communities unique (Bartmiński 2009; Underhill 2012).

4. A cognitive frame of FREEDOM: Outline and discussion

It is a long-held claim and a rudimentary supposition in Cognitive Linguistics that language and cognition are interrelated. Foolen (2012: 349) states that the manner in which "human cognition works has an influence on the structure of human language, and language influences human cognition".

As pointed out by Dukes et al. (2021), it is not only facts that enable individuals to make sense of the world in which they live: in line with the claims of the affective sciences, it is emotions, feelings and motivations that are of grand relevance for human cognitive processes. They (ibid., 816) note that

> "*the affective sciences have already led to a better understanding of how we acquire knowledge of the objects, concepts, and people around us, as well as how we determine the value of those things. Importantly, emotions do not just shape how we interpret the world, but also shape which aspects of the world need our attention and which can safely be ignored: emotions are not just about what is, but also about what matters*".

Petruck highlights the fact that a concept of a semantic frame was introduced by Fillmore in 1975 "as an alternative to 'checklist' theories of meaning", thus, "instead of representing the meaning of a linguistic form in terms of a checklist of conditions that must be satisfied for the form to be appropriately or truthfully used, word meaning is characterized in terms of experience-based schematizations of the speaker's world − *frames*" (2013: 1). A semantic frame is the basis for understanding concepts. The combination of background data enables the language user to comprehend and apply a linguistic concept. "Patterns of language reflect cognitive models and frames, which form the cognitive spaces with layers and lots of mental elements, namely, language

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perceiver capabilities of mapping, analysing, synthesizing, building image schema, partitioning concept, etc." (Hoang 2022: 845).

As noted by Sullivan (2013: 17), "To date, semantic frames have appeared mostly in analyses of non-metaphoric language. Conceptual metaphor theorists have suggested that frame structure is preserved in metaphoric mappings, but this is rarely formalized". A semantic frame is described as "a script-like conceptual structure that describes a particular type of situation, object, or event and the participants and props involved in it" (ibid., 18).

A frame is a cognitive construct, a composite data structure, originally discussed by Fillmore (1975), who proposed to substitute the "traditional notion of a static, rigid, structuralist construct of a semantic field" with "a more flexible construct of a frame" (Figar 2020: 160). Frames "are complex knowledge structures, which encompass not only culturally-conditioned information, but also descriptions of activities and tools employed in the related processes, their linguistic exponents and elements that are interrelated and mutually-conditioned" (Uberman 2018: 428). Cognitive frames, as noted by Ioannou, are "the conceptual categories evoked by the presence of elements that belong to the frame, independently of the discursive, pragmatic or other context" (2019: 14). Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 116) stress the fact that semantic frames offer an inclusive conceptual framework "defining the semantic relationships between entire "fields" of related concepts and the words that express them", adding that the conceptual frames present in human cognition "*contribute semantically*[3] to the meanings of words and sentences". Fillmore and Atkins (1992: 75) state that "individual word senses, relationships among the senses of polysemous words, and relationships between (senses of) semantically related words are linked with the cognitive structures (or "frames"), knowledge of which is presupposed for the concepts encoded by the words".

Frames function in human cognitive processes as complex networks of interrelated elements. They contain names of objects, ideas, actions, sequences of events (scripts) and upon evoking one such element, access to the entire structure is enabled, and information is made available for retrieval. In the following, we will address the core elements of the cognitive construct under consideration, i.e. the frame of FREEDOM.

Freedom, as defined by OED, *s.a.*, is a composite concept with a number of meanings and possible interpretations. The most prototypical reading of the term is related to independence of various kinds. In the discussion to follow an attempt will be made at outlining the most characteristic elements of the frame of FREEDOM, as presenting a complete set of concepts is impossible owing to its

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incredible diversity and complexity. The following discussion will identify the core elements of the cognitive model under consideration. Those uses related to different areas of science (physics, chemistry, etc.) shall not be considered, as only those pertaining to the general lives of individuals will be addressed. Diverse types of freedom are guaranteed for citizens in most countries, such as the freedom of speech, or the freedom of education, and a selection of them will be presented and characterised below.

At present many places on the globe are war zones. Universal individual freedoms are violated when nations or ethnic groups are at war (Uberman 2024). **Personal freedom** is in opposition to slavery. OED, *s.a.* lists two other items, i.e. servility and servitude. **Servility** is defined as "the state or fact of being a slave, serf, bonded labourer, etc.; servitude, bondage; lack of personal freedom" (Servility (a), *s.a.*) or the state of "lacking spirit or independence" (Servility (b), *s.a.*) while **servitude** designates "the condition of being a slave or a serf, or of being the property of another person; absence of personal freedom; (now *esp.*) a state of subjection entailing enforced rigorous or excessive labour" (Servitude, *s.a.*). **Slavery** is historical in meaning and stands for "the state or condition of having the (legal) status of being the property of another person, of having no personal freedom or rights, and of being used as forced labour or an unpaid servant; the fact of being enslaved; involuntary servitude" (Slavery, *s.a.*). A person who was kept in bondage was a **slave**, however, upon getting set free they were given **freedom papers** i.e. "documents proclaiming the holder to be a free person (as opposed to a slave)" (Freedom papers, *s.a.*).

Any person involved in protecting or attempting to secure or to restore freedom can be named a **freedom fighter**, i.e. "a person who fights for freedom or liberation; a person who takes part in a resistance movement against the established political system of a country; also in extended use" (Freedom fighter, *s.a.*). Thus, **freedom fighting** is "a. *adj.* That fights for freedom or liberation; b. *n.* the action of fighting for freedom or liberation; (armed) resistance against the established political system of a country" (Freedom fighting, *s.a.*) (cf. Uberman 2024).

Gasaway Hill (2018: 21) points out that the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* in Article 19 necessitates basic liberties of expression and holding own views and states as follows: "Everyone has the right to **freedom of opinion** and **expression**; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

Freedom of thought is the type of freedom referred to as **free will**, "freedom to think or reason without restriction or interference" (Freedom of thought, *s.a.*). **Freedom of will**, also **freedom of the will** is chiefly used in philosophy and theology, and it is regarded as "Free will; the ability to choose freely" (Freedom of will, *s.a.*).

Freedom of expression is understood as "(a) Frankness or openness in the expression of one's thoughts, feelings, etc.; (b) the right to express oneself without interference or censorship" (Freedom of expression, *s.a.*). **Freedom of the press** (Sharpes 2019) is included in the freedom of expression. OED, *s.a.* defines it as "freedom to print and publish anything without interference or censorship, esp. when regarded as a right" (Freedom of the press, *s.a.*).

Freedom of speech is defined as "Freedom to express one's opinions without censorship, legal penalty, or any other restraint, esp. when regarded as a right" (Freedom of speech, *s.a.*).

The imperative essence of **personal freedom** as well as **freedom of speech** or **freedom of expression and opinion** can lead some individuals to exile, as exemplified by the Chinese poet Yang Lian. He is considered a freedom of speech fighter and in 2024 he was awarded The Zbigniew Herbert International Literary Award for his lifelong artistic input in poetry. In an interview with a Polish journalist (Uberman-Kamińska 2024a; 2024b) he noted that fighting for the freedom of speech is his personal way of saving his poetry. He claims that the kind of control over the freedom of thought and speech in various aspects of human life is ever present. He calls himself the 'poet in exile' and points out that poetry does not exist without **the freedom of thought and expression**.

Limitations on the **freedom of expression** in some Islamic countries has gone as far as ordering young females not to sing or speak aloud publicly. In 2021 an oppressive action was taken by the director if education in Kabul banning girls aged 12 and above from singing in public (Afghanistan investigates … 2021). In 2024 an even more tyrannical law was introduced. "The Taliban have banned teenage girls from education, banned women from travelling long distances without a male chaperone, and now ordered them to keep their voices down in public – effectively silencing half the population" (Drury 2024).

Individuals in numerous parts of the world, though sadly not everywhere, are entitled to **freedom of conscience** and **freedom of religion**. The former is "freedom to follow one's own beliefs in matters of religion and morality, esp. when regarded as a right" (Freedom of conscience, *s.a.*), while the

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freedom of religion is defined as "freedom to practise the religion of one's choice, esp. when regarded as a right" (Freedom of religion, *s.a.*).

Freedom of association is granted as "freedom to socialize or form an association with whom one pleases, esp. when regarded as a right" (Freedom of association, *s.a.*) and many nations guarantee a constitutional **freedom of assembly** (Sharpes 2019: 97) / **right of assembly** "the principle of popular government often constitutionally guaranteed that it is the right of the people peaceably to assemble for any purpose not expressly prohibited by law" (Right of assembly, *s.a.*). This right is exercised by citizens when they are opposing some government actions or legislature.

Emotions, as noted by Dukes et al. (2021), are running high when considering various protests against limiting individual freedoms. **Freedom marches** – "a march in celebration of or in support of freedom" (Freedom march, *s.a.*), or **freedom walks** – "a walk or march organized as a form of political demonstration, esp. (now *historical*) as a protest against racial segregation" (Freedom Walk, *s.a.*) are organised by dissatisfied or irritated citizens to show their disapproval of certain government actions, including legislative activity.

Such is the case of for instance relatively recent exemplars of social rage expressed against violating reproductive rights. In many countries all over the world governments have created stringent laws against abortion – punishing both patients and doctors (e.g. Poland / USA), causing miscarriage (e.g. in India: Offences causing…2024), jailing women for suffering involuntary / incidental miscarriage or a stillbirth – as exemplified by cases reported from El Salvador (Perasso & Duarte 2022), and the like. Such government policies have resulted in massive protests in order to promote and secure **reproductive freedom**, which is strictly connected with the right of abortion, availability of family-planning programmes, in-vitro fertilisation, etc. In Poland, the Constitutional Court in October 2020 claimed the long-held abortion compromise, (allowing the termination of pregnancy when the health of a mother and/or foetus was in danger or when the foetus was lethally deformed or terminally ill), was unconstitutional. When those women's rights of reproductive freedom were violated by the government, the language employed to express the protesters' dissatisfaction with the decision was highly emotional and, in numerous instances, very strong.

The 2024 US presidential election candidate Kamala Harris chose Beyonce's song "Freedom" as her campaign anthem. In her programme she frequently resorted to the need of preventing the limitations of women's **reproductive freedom**, and made abortion rights a key point in her campaign (A quick guide…2024). She was a strong advocate of securing women's rights and promoting reproductive

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freedom (cf. Coen-Sanchez et al. 2022; Deckman 2021; Deckman et al. 2023), however, there remain fears of the prospective reversal of laws that were introduced by the Biden administration.

The protests that took place in Poland and USA (during the recent 2024 presidential campaign) as a response to law makers' attempts to limit or curb reproductive freedoms were acts of civil disobedience[4] and exemplars of exercising the human right to the **freedom to protest** (Gasaway Hill 2018: 18).

All of the above evoked examples, including those involving some form of protest, rely on the interplay between language and emotions. Foolen (2015: 243) notes that emotions are "conditional for language" and states further that "It is unavoidable that emotions also colour language, as language is part of our everyday life. And apparently, language can live with this colouring, the emotional "infection" does not undermine its conceptualizing role. The emotional colouring is most clearly observable in the emotive meaning of words" (ibid., 244).

Considering the frame of FREEDOM, **academic freedom** can also be distinguished within its variations. It is defined as "a. (also **academic freedom of thought**) the freedom of a teacher to state personal opinions openly without censorship, or without the fear of professional disadvantage; b. the freedom of students to choose their courses or influence the content of courses; c. the freedom of an academic institution to control its own affairs" (Academic freedom, *s.a.*). Even though this type of freedom, including **freedom of education**, is universal in the Western world, it is unfortunately not granted to women in Islamic countries (Drury 2024; Drury & Gharanai 2024; Moshiri & Preskey 2025; Sandhu & Hafeji 2024). Obviously, the freedom of education is nearly non-existent and this affects all citizens in those regions of the world where armed conflicts are in progress and wars are fought, as well as in the areas that are poverty-stricken.

Referring to **worker freedom**, Sharpes states, "corporations function as mini-states regulating worker lives. They issue orders on how to behave, how to dress, when to work, how to work, they monitor worker communications and activities. Ironically, the free market is free only in its hierarchy, and is not as an advocate for worker freedom or liberty" (2019: 154). It is crucial to stress that among essential elements of the discussed frame is also **economic freedom**, as well as the universal **freedom of choice** (Sharpes 2019). However, it is rightly pointed out that "although individuals have the **freedom to choose**, they cannot choose to ignore laws established to protect the rights of others"

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(Sharpes 2019: 66). Thus, seen from this very perspective it might be fair to say that freedoms should have certain limitations, so that they are not exercised improperly.

Nevertheless, the **freedom of** personal **choice** has been radically limited by the newly sworn American president Donald Trump, who signed an executive order stating that the US will not recognize transgender individuals. In another one he made a decision to discontinue diversity, equity and inclusion programmes within the federal government. He also revoked Biden's administration orders "preventing discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation" (Wendling & Epstein 2025) thus limiting American citizens' personal freedoms.

5. Concluding remarks

The cognitive frame of FREEDOM as outlined above has shown only the most crucial of its elements, as the great diversity and extensive scope of the phenomenon cannot be all addressed in a text of such a limited size. However, it has been shown that once a frame element is evoked, the entire structure is brought to the fore, as associations between elements are awoken and allow individuals to see the broader picture created by interrelated concepts. By mentioning the term 'freedom', various interlaced types and related issues pertaining to the core of the concept are triggered and become activated.

Even though freedom appears to be a universal concept, there are certain limitations placed on individuals in different communities. The seemingly basic personal freedoms of choice, of expression or of speech are regrettably treated differently in specific societies, or by different groups and individuals within the same community or society. The limitations on the freedom of education or the freedom of speech affect mainly females in Islamic countries, as exemplified by recent legislature from Afghanistan. The reproductive freedoms are still not commonly protected worldwide.

Yet, despite all these shortcomings, freedom is a cultural keyword, it is a significant value for millions of people all over the world. It is protected and fought for in most communities where there are no authoritarian leaders. It is also symbolically featured in emblems and referred to in national anthems of many nations, for instance USA.

The fact that so many types of freedom are enumerated addressing its various aspects is strong evidence of the salience of this concept in countless human societies. The most recurrently addressed types of freedom are personal freedom, the freedom of expression, the freedom of speech, the freedom of thought, and the freedom of education. Some very specific individual freedoms are freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, as well as reproductive freedom. The people striving to retain or

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regain freedom are freedom fighters, in its mildest form exercising the freedom of assembly and the freedom to protest; in extreme cases fighting for independence with the use of weapons and getting involved in armed conflicts. All these diversities are reflected in language use and constitute a cognitive knowledge structure of the frame of FREEDOM. It is also important to stress that violating freedoms is opposed to by citizens, the language they adopt to express their dissatisfaction or rage is full of emotions, as it is hardly tolerable to accept the curbing of individual rights silently and emotionlessly.

Notes

1. The underline has been introduced to reflect the italics in the original text (Wierzbicka 1997: 132).
2. The underline has been introduced to reflect the italics in the original text (Wierzbicka 1997: 132).
3. The italics have been introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1999) in their original work.
4. Civil disobedience is "the refusal to comply publicly with a law as an act of nonviolent protest" (Gasaway Hill 2018: 18).

Abbreviations

MW – Merriam-Webster dictionary

OED – Oxford English dictionary

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 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

CHINESE BAMBOO METAPHORS: A CULTURAL COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Received: 21.01.2025 **Reviewed:** 21.02.2025 and 24.03.2025

Similarity Index: 0%

Bibliographic description: Wen, X. & Dong, Z. C. (2025). Chinese bamboo metaphors: A cultural cognitive perspective. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 198-213. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.11

Abstract: This study explores bamboo metaphors in Chinese culture from a cultural cognitive linguistic perspective, focusing on qualities like resilience, integrity, and humility. Employing the framework of conceptual metaphor theory, it examines how bamboo serves as a vehicle for expressing abstract qualities such as resilience, integrity, and humility. It analyzes the cognitive processes behind these metaphors, shedding light on the relationship between language, culture, and cognition and highlighting cultural specificity in metaphorical conceptualization.

Keywords: bamboo metaphor, conceptual metaphor theory, cultural cognition, cognitive linguistics, Chinese culture.

1. Introduction

Bamboo (竹, *zhú*) is one of the most iconic symbols in Chinese culture, embodying both a versatile natural resource and a profound cultural metaphor. With its elegant appearance and unique physical properties, bamboo has played a vital role in Chinese culture for thousands of years. Beyond its

practical applications, bamboo occupies a special place in the cultural imagination, serving as a rich source of metaphorical meaning in Chinese literature, art, and philosophy.

From early Confucian texts to modern literature, bamboo is frequently associated with virtues such as humility, resilience, and inner strength in Chinese culture (Wang 2014). Classical Chinese poets employed bamboo imagery to articulate personal ideals and address social concerns, while painters incorporated bamboo into their artworks to symbolize harmony between humanity and nature. These enduring symbolic meanings underscore bamboo's profound cultural significance and its inseparable connection to Chinese cultural identity, serving as a timeless representation of traditional Chinese values.

We use a cultural cognitive linguistic approach to investigate how bamboo metaphors are conceptualized and employed in Chinese language and thought. By systematically analyzing Chinese bamboo metaphors, the research seeks to uncover underlying cognitive processes and illuminate how these metaphors embody, reinforce, and reflect core Chinese cultural values, offering insights into the interplay between language, cognition, and culture.

2. The theoretical framework

This study adopts two primary theoretical frameworks: conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and the theory of cultural cognition. CMT provides a cognitive linguistic foundation for analyzing the structure and function of Chinese bamboo metaphors, while cultural cognition emphasizes the role of culture in shaping metaphorical meanings. Together, these approaches enable a comprehensive exploration of bamboo metaphors in Chinese language and thought.

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

CMT, first introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), posits that metaphors are not mere decorative aspects of language but are essential to human cognition. CMT shows abstract concepts are often understood and reasoned through concrete, sensory experiences. Metaphors act as cognitive mappings, linking the more abstract "target domain" to a more familiar and concrete "source domain" (Kövecses 2015). For example, complex or intangible ideas are made more comprehensible by

ISSN 2453-8035

relating them to everyday experiences, allowing individuals to navigate and communicate intricate thoughts. This process shapes individual cognition and social communication, highlighting how metaphors are deeply embedded in how people think, speak, and interpret the world around them.

Analyzing metaphors provides valuable insights into the cognitive processes underlying language and thought. CMT has profoundly impacted cultural cognitive linguistics, offering a robust framework for analyzing the cognitive mechanisms behind metaphorical expressions (Wen & Yang 2023). It reveals how metaphors reflect universal and culturally specific conceptual structures, emphasizing how metaphors shape and reflect different societies' values, beliefs, and worldviews. The theory highlights metaphors' significant role in forming individual cognition and collective cultural identities. Although metaphors may be shared across cultures, their elaboration often varies depending on particular historical, social, and environmental contexts, reflecting each culture's unique perspective on the world (Kövecses 2005).

By applying CMT to the study of Chinese cultural metaphors, such as those involving bamboo, this research provides a deeper understanding of how metaphorical expressions mirror universal cognitive patterns while also reflecting culture-specific systems. The combination of cultural cognition and CMT facilitates a more comprehensive exploration of how cognitive mechanisms and cultural influences interact, enriching our understanding of language and culture.

2.2 Cultural cognition and metaphor

Cultural cognition refers to how cultural factors shape our cognitive processes, such as perception, categorization, and reasoning (Palmer 1996). In the context of metaphors, cultural cognition plays a pivotal role in shaping the metaphors that emerge within a specific culture. These metaphors are deeply rooted in a community's shared history, environment, and social practices, reflecting individual experiences and collective values (Wen 2024). Different cultures, with their distinct historical and social contexts, may develop unique metaphorical systems that influence how abstract concepts are understood. Therefore, metaphors are a powerful tool for exploring the intricate relationship between language, thought, and culture.

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As Sharifian (2011) stated, cultural cognition is the foundation of metaphorical conceptualization, with metaphors reflecting a culture's values, beliefs, and worldview. For instance, in Chinese culture, the prominence of bamboo has led to metaphors symbolizing qualities such as resilience, integrity, and other esteemed values in Chinese philosophy and daily life. These culturally grounded metaphors convey abstract ideas and reinforce and perpetuate the values that shape collective cognition. Analyzing metaphors gives us crucial insights into the intricate relationship between culture, cognition, and language (Sharifian 2017). In cultural cognition theory, metaphors are vital as they are not just linguistic expressions but cognitive structures that reflect and shape how people perceive and understand their world. Metaphors encapsulate the underlying cognitive patterns deeply influenced by cultural contexts, offering a window into how abstract concepts are processed and conceptualized (Wen & Chen 2024).

This study is based on cultural cognition theory because it offers a valuable framework for examining how metaphors, such as those involving bamboo in Chinese culture, reflect and reinforce the cultural values, beliefs, and practices that shape collective cognition. Through this approach, we can better understand how metaphors function as cognitive mappings that bridge individual thought with broader cultural knowledge, shedding light on the profound interplay between culture, cognition, and language in shaping the Chinese worldview.

3. Bamboo metaphors in Chinese culture

This section examines a broad range of bamboo metaphors in Chinese texts, outlining their main textual manifestations. Data were collected from classical poems, modern prose, and dictionaries, ensuring inclusive representation. Four distinct types of bamboo metaphors are identified on this basis.

3.1 BAMBOO FOR RESILIENCE

In Chinese culture, bamboo is often used as a metaphor for resilience, symbolizing strength, flexibility, and the ability to endure adversity. Known for its unique physical property of bending without breaking, bamboo is a powerful representation of perseverance in facing challenges. This metaphorical connection is deeply ingrained in traditional Chinese thought, where resilience is viewed as the ability to endure hardship and the capacity to adapt and emerge stronger from difficulty.

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The prominent Chinese idiom, 势如破竹 (*shì rú pò zhú*, like bamboo breaking through an obstacle), uses the source domain of bamboo to illustrate the target domain of resilience. In this metaphor, bamboo's ability to break through an obstacle without resistance symbolizes the dynamic force of resilience. The metaphor suggests that resilience is not a passive state but an active and unstoppable momentum that overcomes any barriers in its path. Bamboos effortless penetration through an obstacle emphasizes that true resilience involves breaking through challenges with strength and determination rather than merely enduring them. This metaphor presents resilience as a force that actively dismantles adversity, moving forward with relentless ease and power.

In contrast, the idiom 破竹建瓴 (*pò zhú jiàn líng*, breaking bamboo to build a pitcher) expands the concept of resilience by connecting the source domain of bamboo to the target domain of transformation and creation. Bamboo, in this idiom, is a symbol of breaking through barriers and constructing something meaningful from that very act of overcoming. The image of using broken bamboo to create a pitcher illustrates that resilience is not just about surviving or resisting adversity; it involves the ability to transform challenges into new possibilities (Wang 2014). This metaphor reflects the idea that through resilience, one can harness the power of adversity to foster growth and renewal, turning obstacles into opportunities for creation. Thus, bamboo in this expression signifies the strength to break through and the creative potential that arises from overcoming difficulties.

These metaphors highlight bamboo's association with flexible and powerful resilience. This form of resilience is not about rigidity but about bending with nature's forces, adapting, and emerging stronger. It reflects the core values of perseverance and adaptability in Chinese philosophy, where gracefully enduring hardship is a highly esteemed virtue.

3.2 BAMBOO FOR INTEGRITY

Bamboo has long been revered in Chinese culture as a powerful symbol of integrity, a quality deeply embedded in Confucian philosophy and Chinese moral thought. The distinctive characteristics of bamboo, including its straight and resilient stalk and hollow interior, have inspired profound interpretations of moral uprightness and inner strength. In Chinese tradition, bamboo's unyielding

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exterior represents steadfastness, while its hollow core symbolizes humility, suggesting that true integrity comes from within, not from external appearances.

The famous Chinese poet Su Shi (苏轼), in his reflection on bamboo, wrote, 竹有节而无心 (*zhú yǒujié ér wúxīn*, the bamboo has no content, yet it stands tall and straight). In this metaphor, the source domain of bamboo's physical characteristics, its segmented structure is applied to the target domain of moral integrity. The 节 (*jié*, joints of bamboo) symbolize integrity in Chinese thought, representing the idea that true virtue does not require ostentation or external display. The metaphor suggests that integrity, like bamboo's unadorned form, is rooted in inner strength and moral steadfastness, not superficial show (Su 2000). The expression 无心(*wú xīn*, no content) emphasizes the absence of selfishness or personal desire, aligning with Confucian ideals where righteousness and virtue are inherent, unpretentious qualities (Confucius et al. 2015). Bamboo, as a source domain, thus serves as a model for personal conduct, urging individuals to embody moral strength and humility while remaining upright in the face of external pressures.

Another sentence in Su Shi's work, 宁可食无肉, 不可居无竹 (*nìngkě shí wú ròu, bùkě jū wú zhú*, It is better to go without meat than to live without bamboo), uses bamboo to highlight the target domain of moral resilience. In this expression, bamboo symbolizes practicality and is an unwavering integrity and endurance emblem. The metaphor reflects the idea that, even in times of hardship, one should maintain their principles and values, represented by the presence of bamboo over material comforts like meat. The proverb suggests that moral integrity, symbolized by bamboo, holds more significance than fleeting pleasures or necessities (He 2007). The bamboo here moves beyond its role as a physical object; it becomes a spiritual symbol, emphasizing qualities such as fortitude, resilience, and purity. By equating bamboo with moral strength, this saying reinforces its position in Chinese culture as a symbol of physical survival, enduring virtue, and moral rectitude.

In these cultural references, bamboo consistently functions as a symbol of integrity within Chinese philosophy. Its straight, resilient form epitomizes moral uprightness, reminding us of the importance of adhering to our principles in the face of external pressures. Bamboo thus conveys that true integrity

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is not contingent upon external circumstances or appearances but is rooted in an individual's internal commitment to ethical values and personal convictions.

3.3 BAMBOO FOR HUMILITY

Another important metaphorical dimension of bamboo is its association with humility. Bamboo grows tall but remains flexible and grounded, interpreted as a metaphor for modesty and self-restraint. In Chinese culture, humility is highly valued, and bamboo is often used to represent the ideal of an accomplished and humble person.

The phrase 空谷幽兰, 竹林深处 (*kōng gǔ yōu lán, zhú lín shēn chù*, a hidden orchid in a quiet valley, deep within the bamboo forest), draws on the source domain of bamboo and its environment to convey a specific conception of humility and contentment. In this metaphor, the bamboo forest serves as the backdrop, with the 幽兰 representing an individual who remains modest and unassuming (He 2007). The target domain here is the person's character, particularly their inclination towards simplicity and self-restraint. The quiet, secluded bamboo forest symbolizes a setting free from external distractions or societal pressures, highlighting the individual's choice to stay out of the limelight, content in their own presence and without the desire for recognition or fame. Thus, the metaphor conveys the peace of solitude and the virtue of humility, with bamboo's deep connection to nature underscoring the idea of living authentically, without seeking attention.

The expression that embodies bamboo's connection to humility is the Chinese idiom 高风亮节 (*gāo fēng liàng jié*, high character and noble integrity). This idiom is often used to describe individuals who uphold moral principles with steadfastness, unyielding to external pressures, and whose actions reflect exemplary conduct. The word 节 (*jié*) in this idiom can be directly associated with the segments or joints of bamboo, which are regarded as symbols of integrity and uprightness (He 2007). With its distinct segmented structure, bamboo is a metaphor for moral "segments" that remain firm and unbroken, signifying a person's unyielding adherence to virtuous principles.

In this context, the part of bamboo embodies the notion of self-restraint and moral clarity, essential aspects of humility. The bamboo's ability to grow tall while maintaining its rootedness in the ground

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mirrors the individual who, while accomplished or high-ranking, does not let pride or ego sway their character. Just as bamboo's segments are unbroken and steady, a person with 高风亮节 maintains their principles, unaffected by external recognition or fame, illustrating the deep connection between bamboo and humility.

3.4 BAMBOO FOR HARMONY

In Chinese tradition, bamboo is also a profound metaphor for social harmony and communal well-being. The image of a bamboo forest, dense and interwoven stalks, evokes a vision of unity and mutual dependence (Lin 2016). Each bamboo stalk relies on others for support, illustrating the importance of cooperation and solidarity in fostering a harmonious society. This metaphor has been deeply embedded in the Chinese cultural psyche, emphasizing collective prosperity and interdependence as foundational values.

One of the most significant expressions of bamboo's symbolic meaning is the idiom 竹报平安 (*zhú bào píng ān*, bamboo brings peace), which is commonly used as a New Year's greeting. Bamboo serves as the source domain in this expression, while peace and safety represent the target domain. The image of bamboo, a resilient and vibrant plant despite harsh conditions, conveys the idea of enduring peace and stability. This metaphor suggests that, just as bamboo thrives in difficult environments, the hope is that peace will prevail despite societal challenges. By invoking bamboo in this way, the idiom conveys a personal wish for individual well-being and expresses a broader aspiration for harmony and prosperity within the community. It highlights the role of stability and resilience in maintaining peace and safety at both the personal and societal levels.

Similarly, the idiom 竹苞松茂 (*zhú bāo sōng mào*, bamboo flourishing, pine thriving) connects the source domains of bamboo and pine to the target domain of societal flourishing. Bamboo represents individuals, while the pine tree symbolizes steadfastness and resilience. The flourishing bamboo signifies personal growth and prosperity, while the pine complements it by emphasizing enduring strength and stability. The synergy between bamboo and pine in this metaphor reflects a vision of a flourishing society where the success of individuals (bamboo) is supported by collective strength (pine) (Lun & Zhang 2022). This metaphor underscores the idea that a prosperous society is not only

built on individual achievements but also on mutual support and resilience, where the growth of each member contributes to the stability and success of the whole. Thus, bamboo and pine symbolize the balance between dynamic growth and steady endurance, which is essential for a thriving community. Through these metaphors, bamboo transcends its role as a natural element to become a symbol of harmony, mutual respect, and societal cohesion. In Chinese thought, its interwoven stalks and enduring growth remind us that social harmony is not achieved through isolation but through collective effort and mutual reliance (Wen 2024). This interconnectedness reflects core Chinese values, emphasizing social cohesion, the importance of family, and the collective good.

4. Implications for cultural cognitive linguistics

As Foolen (2023) noted, embedding linguistic theory in a more general social theory on norms and habits is helpful for understanding the phenomenon of linguistic feeling. This study illuminates the dynamic interplay between linguistic expressions, cultural values, and cognitive processes. This study contributes to the development of cultural cognitive linguistics by analyzing bamboo metaphors. This field bridges the gap between language, thought, and cultural context, emphasizing how metaphorical language reveals underlying cognitive structures shaped by culture (Sinha 2021).

4.1 Metaphor in Cultural Conceptualization

Metaphors are instrumental in shaping abstract cultural concepts and guiding human thought (Lakoff & Johnson 1980b). In Chinese culture, bamboo plays a significant role as a metaphor, helping to conceptualize core values such as foresight, simplicity, and futility. Through its unique physical attributes, the metaphors associated with bamboo offer a rich framework for understanding these abstract concepts and making them more accessible within cultural conceptualization.

(1) 胸有成竹 (*xiōng yǒu chéng zhú*, having a well-thought-out plan)

(2) 竹篱茅舍 (*zhú lí máo shè*, bamboo fence and thatched cottage)

(3) 竹篮打水一场空 (*zhúlán dǎshuǐ yīchǎng kōng*, drawing water with a bamboo basket)

In Example (1), the metaphor draws on bamboo's characteristic of growing straight and unwavering once it has matured. It reflects Chinese cultural values of foresight and preparation, suggesting that, like a painter envisioning a bamboo before painting, a person with a clear plan demonstrates certainty and clarity in their actions. Bamboo's mature, well-formed growth symbolizes how careful planning

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leads to success and stability. This metaphor conceptualizes foresight as a mental quality and an embodied characteristic that ensures effective execution. By linking bamboo's growth to a well-thought-out plan, the metaphor illustrates how foresight is integral to achieving tangible outcomes, encapsulating the cultural belief that clear vision and preparation are essential for overcoming challenges and achieving lasting success.

Example (2) uses the image of bamboo to symbolize simplicity and humility. The imagery of a humble bamboo fence and a thatched cottage represents a way of life that is unpretentious, modest, and harmonious with nature. This metaphor encapsulates a broader cultural ideal that values modest living and simplicity, suggesting that true contentment and peace can be found in living close to nature and avoiding the complexities of material wealth and urban life. In contrast, Example (3) serves as a metaphor for futility. This expression illustrates the inherent limitations of bamboo as a material, highlighting how its hollow nature makes it unsuitable for holding water. It is used to describe efforts that lead to no tangible result and draws attention to the gap between intention and outcome and the futility of actions that are inherently doomed to fail. While bamboo is strong and flexible, its practical limitations are emphasized here to underscore that even the most well-intentioned efforts can sometimes prove fruitless. This metaphor provides a vivid way to conceptualize failure. It emphasizes the cultural understanding that some tasks, no matter how well planned, may not always yield success due to intrinsic limitations.

The process of cultural conceptualization highlights how metaphorical language reflects and actively constructs cultural cognition, providing a framework through which these ideals are passed down and embodied in daily life (Baranyiné Kóczy 2023). These bamboo metaphors demonstrate bamboo's central role in shaping Chinese cultural values by transforming its physical characteristics into symbols for a wide range of abstract concepts. Through such metaphors, bamboo becomes a cognitive structure that helps individuals understand and internalize complex cultural ideas, such as resilience, humility, and foresight. Each metaphor draws upon bamboo as a source domain, shaping how Chinese society perceives and values these abstract concepts.

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4.2 Cultural context and metaphorical thinking

The analysis of bamboo metaphors underscores the crucial role that cultural context plays in shaping metaphorical thinking. In Chinese culture, bamboo is prominent, symbolizing virtues such as resilience, integrity, and humility. This cultural significance has led to a rich and diverse set of metaphors reflecting the unique Chinese worldview. Bamboo is an important cultural symbol and an essential vehicle for expressing complex social values, emotions, and philosophical ideas. These metaphors encapsulate the interconnectedness of nature, society, and individual character, providing insights into how the Chinese perceive the world and their place in it.

(4) 松竹繁茂 (*sōng zhú fán mào*, the pine and bamboo flourish together)

(5) 青梅竹马 (*qīng méi zhú mǎ*, childhood sweethearts)

(6) 千磨万击还坚劲，任尔东西南北风 (*qiānmó wànjī hái jiānjìng, rèn ěr dōng xī nán běi fēng*, It endures thousands of strikes, and remains strong against any wind from all directions)

One notable example is the idiom in Example (4), which often highlights the cultural value of harmony, balance, and complementarity in Chinese thought. The pine, known for its resilience and steadfastness in adverse conditions, pairs with bamboo, which symbolizes flexibility and vitality. Together, they represent an ideal of harmonious coexistence, where strength and adaptability are equally valued. In Chinese philosophy, this balance is crucial for both personal and societal well-being. Just as the pine and bamboo flourish in a symbiotic relationship, society is believed to prosper when individuals with different strengths work together in balance. This metaphor underscores the cultural belief that stability is achieved not through uniformity but through the respectful integration of diverse natural or societal forces, creating a harmonious whole.

In the idiom 青梅竹马 (*qīng méi zhú mǎ*, green plums and bamboo horses), bamboo serves as a metaphor for relationships, particularly childhood love and friendships. The phrase evokes the image of two children growing up together, sharing an innocent, pure bond. Bamboo, with its slender, flexible stalks, mirrors the adaptability and resilience of these early relationships. It suggests that, like bamboo, such bonds are malleable and can grow stronger over time, weathering life's challenges. This metaphor reflects a key aspect of Chinese culture: the importance of loyalty, fidelity, and relationships nurtured over time. Bamboo's role in this idiom underscores the idea that familial or romantic

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relationships are most valued when they are long-lasting, resilient, and rooted in mutual trust. These qualities are highly esteemed in Chinese society, where the cultivation of deep, enduring connections is seen as essential for personal and collective harmony.

Furthermore, the line of poetry in Example (6) is written by the Chinese Song Dynasty poet Wen Tianxiang, which draws on bamboo's physical property of bending without breaking, symbolizing the strength and perseverance of individuals or communities facing challenges. In Chinese culture, this metaphor aligns with the belief that true strength lies in the ability to endure hardship with dignity and resolve. The image of bamboo enduring fierce winds without breaking speaks to the ideal of resilience, not merely surviving but maintaining strength despite external pressures. This metaphor reflects the deep cultural value placed on perseverance, suggesting that those who can adapt to and overcome adversity emerge stronger and more determined.

These examples demonstrate how bamboo, as a metaphor, is deeply embedded in Chinese culture, reflecting values like balance, resilience, and enduring relationships. Bamboo's symbolic significance is shaped by the Chinese worldview, which emphasizes harmony between nature, society, and the individual. The cultural context is crucial in shaping metaphorical thinking, as metaphors are not universal but rooted in specific cultural experiences and values (Foolen 2021). Understanding the cultural background enhances our appreciation of the deeper meanings conveyed through such metaphors.

4.3 Bamboo metaphors and cognitive processes

The study of bamboo metaphors provides valuable insights into the cognitive processes that underlie metaphorical thought, particularly in embodied cognition, metonymy, and conceptual blending. These processes are fundamental to understanding how humans use metaphors to make sense of the world, and bamboo, as a rich cultural symbol in Chinese tradition, offers a powerful lens through which these processes can be examined.

(7) 竹报平安 (*zhú bào píng ān*, bamboo brings peace)

(8) 竹林七贤 (*zhú lín qī xián*, seven sages of the bamboo grove)

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(9) 竹苞松茂 (*zhú bāo sōng mào*, bamboo flourishing, pine thriving)

One of the key cognitive processes involved in metaphorical thought is embodied cognition, which suggests that human cognition is deeply rooted in bodily experiences and interactions with the environment (Gibbs 2008). Bamboo metaphors often draw on the physical properties of bamboo, such as its flexibility, resilience, and uprightness, to convey abstract ideas. For example, the idiom 竹报平安 in Example (7) uses bamboo's enduring strength and upright form to symbolize stability and peace. The metaphor here reflects a bodily understanding of peace and security, where the stability of the bamboo in the face of wind and storms embodies the resilience required to maintain social harmony. This conceptual link between the physical world of bamboo and the abstract concept of peace is a prime example of how embodied cognition shapes metaphorical thinking, making abstract concepts more tangible and accessible.

In addition to embodied cognition, conceptual metonymy plays a crucial role in bamboo metaphors, as it allows one thing to stand for another based on a relationship of contiguity. The idiom in Example (8) 竹林七贤 is a classic example of metonymy, where bamboo is used to represent a group of intellectuals. The term refers to seven scholars from the Wei-Jin period who withdrew from the world to live in a bamboo grove, emphasizing their rejection of social norms in favor of a life of intellectual and moral purity. Bamboo here does not just symbolize the physical environment in which the sages lived and the moral and intellectual refinement they represented. This metonymic association reflects bamboo's role as a symbol of scholarly integrity and self-cultivation, and it highlights how metonymy allows a single cultural symbol, bamboo, to convey a deeper set of meanings related to morality, intellect, and lifestyle.

Finally, conceptual blending is the cognitive process of combining two or more mental spaces to form new meanings that can also be seen in bamboo metaphors. This blending process allows us to integrate different concepts to form a unified, often more complex, idea (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). In Example (9), 竹苞松茂 blends the characteristics of bamboo and pine to create a metaphor for flourishing and prosperity. While bamboo is known for its rapid growth and flexibility, the pine is celebrated for its strength and longevity. By blending these two symbols, this expression conveys the

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ideal of balanced growth, where the qualities of both plants work together to symbolize a harmonious and prosperous existence. Blending the flexible bamboo with the enduring pine allows for the conceptualization of a society or individual that thrives through a combination of adaptability and resilience, which are qualities essential for success in both personal and communal life.

Studying bamboo metaphors provides valuable insights into the cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphorical thought, such as embodied cognition, metonymy, and conceptual blending. Bamboo is a rich cultural symbol encapsulating various cognitive processes, offering a clear example of how metaphorical language shapes our understanding of the world. Through bamboo metaphors, abstract concepts like peace, intellect, and prosperity are brought to life, demonstrating the power of metaphor to connect the tangible and the intangible in human cognition.

5. Conclusion

Bamboo metaphors are integral to Chinese culture, serving as a powerful linguistic tool for expressing core values and abstract concepts. This paper has examined bamboo metaphors' linguistic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions through the lens of cognitive linguistics, revealing how they encapsulate Chinese perspectives on resilience, integrity, humility, and social harmony. The study underscores the pivotal role of metaphor in shaping cultural cognition and offers deeper insights into the interconnections between language, culture, and thought. As China increasingly engages with the global community, exploring bamboo metaphors provides a valuable avenue for bridging cultural differences and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Notes

1. The linguistic expressions of the Chinese character "竹" are collected from the online Chinese dictionary http://www.hydcd.com/, the online classical Chinese poems https://www.gushiwen.cn/.
2. The translation from Chinese into English was done by the authors.

Abbreviations

CMT – Conceptual metaphor theory

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 ISSN 2453-8035

LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. X. No 1 2025

Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences

PHRASEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS IN SPOKEN DISCOURSE: CREATIVE BOUNDARIES AND PRAGMATIC EFFICIENCY

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Received: 31.01.2025 **Reviewed:** 15.02.2025 and 24.02.2025

Similarity Index: 0%

Bibliographic description: Zykova, I. (2025). Phraseological representation of emotions and feelings in spoken discourse: Creative boundaries and pragmatic efficiency. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* Special issue: Cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and affective sciences, X (1), p. 214-228. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.25.10.1.12

Abstract: The paper elaborates an integrated methodology of studying the ways in which a speaker's emotional state can be represented with the help of phraseological means. The analysis of eight feature films has established that in spoken discourse the choice of phraseological units for conveying one's emotions and feelings depends on several main factors: their type, the conceptual foundation of their images, their emotional modus, their use in (non)conventional forms, communicative strategies of their modifications, and illocutionary shifts determining their pragmatic efficiency in interpersonal interaction.

Keywords: phraseological unit, cognitive linguistics, spoken discourse, creativity, pragmatics, film.

1. Introduction

The issue of how human emotions and feelings can be represented by language means in the process of communication has been studied in numerous investigations. According to Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, words evoke certain emotions, the intensity of which ranges from highly negative to highly positive. Scholars introduced a special term for the emotional strength of words – "word valence" (Osgood et al. 1957). In Langacker's opinion, every instance of language use "has conceptual import involving four dimensions: descriptive, expressive/emotive, interactive, and discursive" (Langacker 2012: 100). As Foolen states, "emotion drives and determines language use to a considerable extent" (Foolen 2018). Ponsonnet discusses various reasons why emotional language is so relevant to explore, and one of them is as follows: " …since emotions are everywhere in our lives

and everywhere in our language, understanding how humans use emotional language is crucial to any "anthropological study", broadly understood as "the study of human life"" (Ponsonnet 2022).

Research into the "emotion-feeling lexicon" (EFL) faces many challenges. The main challenge stems from its heterogeneity, resulting from the extremely complex human perceptual system. EFL heterogeneity, in its turn, brings up terminological, theoretical, and methodological problems.

The terminological problem manifests itself in the fact that one and the same unit of the EFL may have different terminological names depending on the theoretical field within the framework of which it is studied. For example, the unit *Good morning(!)* (that expresses the speaker's certain positive feelings) may be termed as an interjection, or as: an exclamation phrase, a speech act, a conversational routine, a trite metaphor, a discourse marker/expression, a phraseological unit, or a situational set-phrase. This can be illustrated by dictionary definitions, cf., e.g.: *Good morning*: 1) 'it should be used as a greeting or salutation to wish someone a pleasant morning. It's a polite and friendly way to acknowledge someone's presence and show them that you care about their well-being' (https://thecontentauthority.com/blog/how-to-use-good-morning-in-a-sentence); 2) 'conventional expression of greeting or, less commonly, farewell used during the morning (i.e., before noon)' (FDI).

The key theoretical issue of the EFL, which remains rather challenging and still defies solution, is its classification and is also closely connected with the problem of terminological variability. Modern investigations take into account different properties of the EFL and, correspondingly, distinguish various classes and subclasses (types and subtypes) that in some cases have no clear-cut boundaries. For instance, Shahovskij claims that the emotional state or attitude can be represented in language by (i) direct naming (*fear, love, anger*), (ii) direct expression (*interjections, invective vocabular*y, etc.), and description (*postures, some voice characteristics, gaze,* etc.). Thus, the scholar makes a distinction between emotion denotation, emotion expression, and emotion description (Shakhovskij 2009). Gak identifies two main groups in the EFL: units that express emotions and feelings (e.g., *Ouch!*; *What horror!*) and units that describe them (e.g., *I don't like it*). Besides, he singles out three degrees of "zero expression" of emotions and feelings (in ascending order): inadequate utterance, glossolalia, and silence (Gak 2016). In his turn, Foolen (2012: 363-364), exploring the relevance of emotions for language and linguistics, has drawn the following deductions:

"Emotions are (a) conceptualized in languages by a variety of word forms, with "literal" and figurative meaning, (b) can be expressed in a more direct way by prosody, morphology, syntactic constructions and by the use of figurative speech, and (c) are foundational for processing language and its ontogenetic and phylogenetic genesis and development".

 ISSN 2453-8035

In present-day linguistic literature, much attention is paid to the study of phraseological units (PhUs) as a special class of the EFL. The significant interest in PhUs is explained by their inherent capacity to convey in both a figurative way and in an explicit or implicit manner the speaker's attitude to reality. As Teliya claims, one of the basic constituents in phraseological meaning structure is the emotive macrocomponent, which renders subjective modality, some "feeling-attitude" (чувство-отношение) in addition to what is denoted by a PhU. For instance, the use of the idiom *to lead a cat and dog life* entails the expression of the speaker's negative "feeling-attitude" to someone's family relations. In all PhUs, emotions and feelings are encoded and represented through the images (in most cases based on metaphor, but also on metonymy, hyperbole, etc.) that underlie their semantics. Teliya (1996: 213) also emphasizes that:

> *"To use an idiom in speech means to intentionally commit a speech act, because the figurative gestalt structure commands use due to analogy, and this analogy is in order to inform listeners about the speaker's intention and evoke in them this or that feeling-attitude to a certain fact in order to change their opinion or behavior".*

Finally, due to EFL heterogeneity, a whole range of methods is required to arrive at a satisfactory in-depth account of structural, grammatical, semantic, functional, and pragmatical peculiarities that units of EFL have as elements of both a language system and discourse. Nowadays, such units are explored by methods coming from such fields as cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, linguopragmatics, cultural linguistics, discourse analysis, computational corpus linguistics, neurolinguistics, amongst others [see, e.g., (Kövecses 2000; McEnery 2006; Niemeier 2022; Niemeier & Dirve 1997; Panasenko et al. 2018)]. However, it might be possible to gain deeper insights into the relation between language and emotion, as Foolen (2012) puts it, only by strengthening "the interdisciplinary contacts" in research.

In this paper, I set out to propose an integrated approach to studying the specificity of representing emotional information in spoken discourse with the help of emotional PhUs (E-PhUs). This approach brings together a number of theoretical assumptions developed in cognitive linguistics and phraseology, and also rests on some of the notions elaborated nowadays in linguistic pragmatics and linguistics of emotions. My research aims to establish the methods of and relevant factors in bringing out E-PhUs' creative potential and their pragmatic efficiency in the course of interpersonal communication.

2. Key theoretical assumptions, sources of material, and methodology

In the given work, I regard creativity and pragmatics as mutually influencing phenomena. My earlier findings showed that linguistic creativity might be graded, but irrespective of what the degree of its

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manifestation in discourse is, it always leads to this or that pragmatic impact (Zykova 2015; 2020; 2021). The phraseological representation of emotions and feelings is understood in my investigation as a communicant's deliberate choice of certain phraseological means for transmitting emotional information in the process of interpersonal communication. The choice of E-PhUs in discourse is pragmatically dependent. By using them, the speaker intends not just to denote, express, or describe what (s)he is feeling, but to evoke a particular reaction on the part of the addressee.

For the study, I have selected seven feature films, which were released in the period from the 1990s up to the present time. The films are popular comedies from Russian film directors:

- "Патриотическая комедия" ("A Patriotic Comedy", directed by Vladimir Khotinenko; released in 1992);
- "Мама не горюй" ("Mama Don't Grieve", directed by Maksim Pezhemsky; released in 1997);
- "Артистка" ("The Actress", directed by Stanislav Govorukhin; released in 2007);
- "Мужчина в моей голове" ("The Man in my Head", directed by Aleksey Pimanov; released in 2009);
- "Новогодний детектив" ("New Year Detective Story", directed by Aleksey Bobrov; released in 2010);
- "Холоп" ("A Serf", directed by Klim Shipenko; released in 2019);
- "Отель Белград" ("The Hotel Belgrade", directed by Konstantin Statsky; released in 2020).

Feature films have one characteristic that is of particular importance for my research: they are artistic (fictional) works and convey an artistic model of reality, which reflects the worldview of a certain author, his/her personal stance toward what is narrated in the film. This characteristic (which I would further call "fictional authenticity") implies two main inferences. On the one hand, the communication that takes place in feature films cannot be regarded as real-life communication. On the other hand, film personages' speech is drawn from real life, it is based on spoken-discourse patterns that are typical of various real-life communication situations, both informal (everyday) or formal (official, professional, etc.). For instance, if a film narrates a story of a bank manager's life the characters' speech will be the closest possible replica of what is natural for the people of this social stratum and professional sphere. Therefore, feature films reproduce basic communication regulations and, therefore, can be regarded as valid sources for investigating spoken discourse in all its variety.

Unlike other types of feature films, comedy films are deliberately designed to entertain and amuse. This can be achieved by the creative use of language means, E-PhUs in particular.

In the monograph (Zykova 2015), I elaborated the cognitive culture-oriented approach to the study of phraseological meaning and phraseological creativity on which I rest in the present paper. According to this approach, the phraseological meaning is a two-strata structure. It includes (1) the surface (or semantic) stratum and (2) the deep (or conceptual) stratum [see also (Beliaveskaya 2007)]. The surface stratum is constituted by semes forming what is known as the actual phraseological meaning registered in dictionaries. The deep stratum encloses two interdependent constituents: the phraseological image (the 1st level of the deep stratum) and its underlying conceptual foundation (the 2nd level of the deep stratum). The conceptual foundation proved to be a rather complex conceptual structure. Its formation starts with simple (archetypal) concepts (e.g., UP/DOWN, RIGHT/LEFT, FORWARD/BACKWARD, etc.) and then is further developed synthesizing more and more intricate non-metaphorical and metaphorical concepts into its general set up. As a result a macro-metaphorical conceptual model (MMCM) is formed.

In detail, the reconstruction of MMCMs is highlighted in (Zykova 2016). As an example, I will consider the results of reconstructing the MMCM that underlies the E-PhU *наводить тоску на кого-либо* used in the following context:
(1) *А сейчас иди, Босякин.* ***Тоску на меня наводишь***. ("The Actress") – [Eng.: *And now leave me, Bosyakin. You make me bored*].

The actual meaning (i.e. the surface stratum) of *наводить тоску на кого-либо* is 'to depress someone; to evoke despondency in someone; spread gloomy mood' (Lubensky 2013: 646). The meaning stems from the image (i.e. the 1st level of the deep stratum) that is based on the perception of boredom in terms of an object that can be moved from one place to another – Eng. lit. *'to direct the feeling of intense boredom towards someone'*. The image construction is provided by means of synthesizing into an integral whole a number of conceptual constituents, from the elementary (archetypal) constituents DIRECTION, FORWARD, LOCATION to form more complex concepts that render a number of correlated ideas: 1) of the feeling as: a material object; a moving object (vehicle); a dangerous object; a controlled object; an object that intends to reach a certain destination; 2) of the actors as: a "feeling (boredom)" sender and "feeling (boredom)" receiver; 3) of the change in the mood as: movement in a particular direction; a targeted movement; violation of space integrity/boundaries; departure from one place; arrival at a certain place. All these elementary and more complex (metaphorical) concepts are integral parts of such MMCM (i.e. the 2nd level of the deep stratum) as EMOTIONAL STATE (MOOD CHANGE) IS A TRAVEL.

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This particular macro-metaphorical conceptual model (like any other MMCM) underlies images of multiple PhUs in the Russian language, cf., e.g.: *пребывать в каком-либо настроении* [Eng: lit. *'stay in some (good/bad) mood'*], *пребывать/находиться в хорошем расположении духа* [Eng: lit. *'stay/be in a good frame of spirit/mind'*]. It is important to state that any MMCM regulates PhUs' usage in discourse (both traditional and occasional). Thus, due to its inner conceptual (metaphoric) complexity it is the MMCM that gives rise to the creativity of PhUs.

Proceeding from these findings, I elaborated two interrelated definitions of phraseological creativity. Firstly, the phraseological creativity is the ability of MMCMs to systemically create PhUs so that the phraseological subsystem of language is formed and further enlarged. Secondly, the phraseological creativity is the ability of MMCMs to adapt any PhU in communication to certain pragmatic tasks set in a particular discourse. Thus, phraseological creativity may be of two types: system creativity and discourse creativity.

As was established, five main strategies can be used to modify PhUs and, hence, to produce and/or intensify a needed pragmatic effect: the inbuilding strategy; the accretion strategy; the recomposition strategy; the decomposition strategy; the combination strategy. In example (1), the E-PhU *наводить тоску на кого-либо* is modified by means of the recomposition strategy, i.e. by the change of the arrangement of its components to form *тоску на меня наводишь*.

E-PhUs generated by different MMCMs can have different illocutionary charge. In my research, I proceed from Teliya's assumption that (1996: 118):

> *"An emotive assessment is rewarded with illocutionary charge: it encourages one to experience a certain feeling-attitude and provides the realization of a certain illocutionary intention, causing, in case of communicative success, a corresponding perlocutionary effect".*

According to Teliya, the illocutionary charge of PhUs can be of two kinds, forming the opposition 'approval – disapproval' with corresponding further subdivisions conveying more specific personal assessments, such as: 'approval' > delight, admiration, support, etc.; 'disapproval' > contempt, disdain, humiliation, censure, etc. For instance, using the E-PhU *наводить тоску на кого-либо* means to express one's disapproval of what another person has said or has done, which is perceived as an act of ending the conversation.

The creative use of E-PhUs, "sanctioned" by their underlying MMCM, can alter their illocutionary charge in the course of spoken communication and can produce particular pragmatic effects. For

instance, the modified use of PhU *наводить тоску на кого-либо* makes the word *тоска* more salient, which signals the speaker's intensifying irritation with regard to the addressee and serves as an indirect request to stop the conversation. So, the pragmatic efficiency of the modified E-PhU is determined by the illocutionary shift from expressing one's emotion (irritation) to requesting someone perform a definite action. This pragmatic efficiency can be detected through the addressee's (non)verbal reaction: in the film analyzed the addressee is leaving despite his intense desire not to do so.

The phraseological creativity and pragmatic efficiency of E-PhUs in discourse may depend on the type to which they belong. Taking into account Shakhovskij's classification of the EFL as well as structural-semantic and functional peculiarities of phraseological units, I will differentiate between two types of E-PhUs: the expressive type (e.g. *Боже мой!* [Eng.: *'My God!'*]*; Черт возьми!* [Eng.: *'Damn it!'*]) and the mixed – denotative-expressive – type (e.g. *наводить тоску на кого-либо* [Eng.: *~ 'make someone feel sad'*]*; как последняя дура* [Eng.: *~ 'like an absolute fool'*]).

Resting on the aforementioned theoretical aspects, my study addresses three main research questions (RQ 1, 2, 3) with corresponding three sub-questions (a, b, c).

- RQ1: What is the distribution and the frequency of occurrences of two types of E-PhUs in the comedy films under study?
- RQ2: What macro-metaphorical conceptual models underlie the E-PhUs used in the comedy films? (a) Is there any variation in their phraseological representation of emotions and feelings in the spoken discourse of films? (b) What is the proportion of the E-PhUs with positive, negative, or neutral emotional modus?
- RQ3: How do the macro-metaphorical conceptual models realize their discourse phraseological creativity in the comedy films under consideration? (c) What defines the pragmatic efficiency of modified E-PhUs?

These research questions entail a three-step procedure of analysis with the application of the following methods: the method of phraseological identification, the method of conceptual analysis based on the theory of metaphorical concepts by Lakoff–Johnson and the theory of phraseological creativity; the quantitative method, the semantic and discourse analysis aimed at establishing the emotional modus and illocutionary charge of E-PhUs in the comedy films.

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3. Results and discussion

3.1 Distribution of E-PhUs and frequency of occurrences of the two types singled out (RQ1).

The selected seven comedy films introduce patterns of imitated natural spoken discourse with an overall running time of 710 minutes (11h 50 min). The analysis has revealed different E-PhU distribution and different ratio of use frequency of their two types across the comedy films under consideration. The results of my observations are presented in table 1 (see table 1).

Table 1. The distribution specifics and ratio of two types of E-PhUs used in the comedy films
Source: Own processing

Title of a comedy film	Absolute frequency of occurrences	E-PhUs of the expressive type (per cent)	E-PhUs of the mixed type (per cent)
1. "A Patriotic Comedy"	30	57 %	43 %
2. "Mama Don't Grieve"	21	38 %	62 %
3. "The Actress"	52	52 %	48 %
4. "The Man in my Head"	50	34 %	66 %
5. "New Year Detective Story"	38	21 %	79 %
6. "A Serf"	41	22 %	78 %
7. "The Hotel Belgrade"	12	83 %	17 %
Overall quantity / percentage	244	39 %	61 %

In three comedy films (1, 3, and 7), the occurrence percent of E-PhUs that refer to the expressive type is higher than the percent of occurrences of E-PhUs that belong to the mixed type. E-PhUs of the expressive type involve such lexical-syntactic classes as phraseological interjections, phraseological parenthesis, phraseological adverbial or adjectival intensifiers, phraseological formulas, phraseological particles, e.g.: *боже мой!* [Eng.: *'Oh my God!'*]; *ради Бога (извините, простите)* [Eng.: *'for God's sake (excuse someone)'*]; *побойся бога* [Eng.: *'have you no fear of God?'*]; *к чертовой матери* [Eng.: *'to the devil's mother'*]; *да ладно* [Eng.: *'okey then'*]; *какого черта* [Eng.: *'what the devil'*]; *как назло* [Eng.: *'ill luck would have it'*]. In the other four comedy films (2, 4, 5, 6), E-PhUs of the mixed (denotative-expressive) type occur more frequently. These are lexical-syntactic varieties of E-PhUs such as verbal, substantive, adjectival, adverbial collocations and idioms, paremias, e.g.: *выкинуть кого-либо (что-либо) из головы* [Eng.: lit. *'get someone/something out of one's head'*], *все равно* [Eng.: *'one does not care'*]; *кого-либо как подменили* [Eng.: *'someone became a different person'*], *тихий омут* [Eng.: *'still waters'*]; *как последняя дура* [Eng.: *'like a complete fool'*]; *оставлять кого-либо в покое* [Eng.: *'leave someone alone'*]; *кусать (себе) локти* [Eng.: lit. *'bite one's elbows'*].

The overall percentage of distribution and frequency of use reveals the predominance of the mixed type of E-PhUs in the comedy films under analysis.

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3.2 Macro-metaphorical conceptual models: a variation in the phraseological representation of emotions and feelings and the ratio of E-PhUs according to their emotional modus (RQ2)

The conceptual analysis undertaken has resulted in establishing eight macro-metaphoric conceptual models that underlie all the E-PhUs used in the comedy films under study. These are the MMCMs of: TRAVEL, MEDICINE-RELATED ACTIVITY, COMMERCE, SOCIAL ACTIVITY, PLAY, CRAFT, GASTRONOMY, RELIGION-RELATED ACTIVITY. The reconstruction of these MMCMs can be observed in the following examples:

(2) ***Иди ты к бесу*** ("A Serf") – [Eng.: lit. *'**Go to the devil**'*]: ONE'S IRRITATION CAN SEND ANOTHER PERSON TRAVELLING OVER A VERY LONG DISTANCE > the MMCM of TRAVEL.

(3) *Все мужики **рты пооткрывали*** ("The Man in my Head") – [Eng.: lit. *'All men **are with their mouths opened**'*]; *А ты знаешь, **время лечит*** ("The Man in my Head") – [Eng.: lit. *'You know, **time heals**'*]: SURPRISE / FEELING OF GUILT IS SOMETHING THAT CAUSES A DISFUNCTION / ILLNESS / INJURY WHICH CAN BE HEALED > the MMCM of MEDICINE-RELATED ACTIVITY.

(4) ***Сил моих нет!*** ("The Man in my Head") – [Eng.: lit. *'I **can't endure this any longer!**'*]: PATIENCE IS A DWINDLING RESOURCE; *Ты возьми и **выкинь его из головы!*** ("The Man in my Head") – [Eng.: lit. *'Just get him out of your head! (showing resentment)'*]: RESENTMENT IS A USELESS OBJECT THAT ONE SHOULD GET RID OF > the MMCM of COMMERCE.

(5) ***Бабы есть бабы!*** ("Mama Don't Grieve") – [Eng.: lit. *'**Women are women!**'*]; *Мистицизм, **бабушкины сказки*** ("A Patriotic Comedy") – [Eng.: lit. *'Mysticism, **grandmother's tales**'*]: DISAPPOINTMENT / DISBELIEF IS SOMETHING ATTRIBUTED TO A DEFINITE SOCIAL GROUP > the MMCM of SOCIAL ACTIVITY.

(6) ***Зализывала раны*** *и давала клятву, что больше никаких мужчин* ("New Year Detective Story") – [Eng.: lit. *'I was **licking my wounds** and swearing that there would be no more men'*]: LOVE IS A WEAPON THAT HURTS (LOVE IS A WAR); *Так-то мне, конечно, все равно, но… чтобы я **не ходил, как дурак*** ("A Serf") – [Eng.: *'Well, I don't really care, of course, but… so that I wouldn't **look like a fool**'*): LOVE IS SOMETHING THAT ENTERTAINS (LOVE IS A THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE) > the MMCM OF PLAY.

(7) *Ну что, **все в порядке**?* ("The Man in my Head") – [Eng.: *'So, **are** you **alright**?'*]; *Ты, Коль, **с катушек не слетай*** ("Mama Don't Grieve") – [Eng.: lit. *'You, Kol', **don't go off the rails**'*]: EMOTIONAL STATE / ANGER IS AN OBJECT THAT CAN BE IN/OUT OF ORDER [AND MUST BE REPAIRED/FIXED] > the MMCM of CRAFT.

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(8) *Ну… **не в моем вкусе** мужчина* ("Mama Don't Grieve") – [Eng.: *'Well… **not my type** of man'*]; *Вы **черте что на постном масле!*** ("The Man in my Head") – [Eng.: lit. *'You are **devilry cooked in vegetable oil**'*]: DISLIKE / ANTYPATHY IS BADLY COOKED FOOD WITH AN UNPLEASANT TASTE > the MMCM of GASTRONOMY.
(9) *Простите **ради Бога*** ("The Actress") – [Eng.: lit. *'Forgive me **for God's sake**'*]; *Еще раз **спасибо большое** за гостеприимство!* ("The Actress") – [Eng.: lit. *'And again, **thanks a lot** for your hospitality!'*]: GUILT / GRATITUDE IS SOMETHING EVOKED / GRANTED / CONTROLLED BY GOD > the MMCM OF RELIGION-RELATED ACTIVITY.

The conceptual analysis has allowed me to discover that the phraseological representation of the interlocutors' emotions and feelings in the comedy films is carried out in the majority of cases by means of the E-PhUs based on the MMCMs of TRAVEL (25%), COMMERCE (22%), and RELIGION-RELATED ACTIVITY (13%) (overall per cent – 60%). The E-PhUs based on these models are chosen to express and/or denote emotions and feelings more frequently than the PhUs based on the other five MMCMs (overall per cent – 40%).

According to my research findings, the MMCMs give rise to phraseological images of emotions and feelings that are of negative, positive, as well as neutral modus. Their correlation in the comedy films is as follows: negative – 54%; positive – 37%; neutral – 8%.

Rather remarkably, any MMCM can underlie E-PhUs that represent emotional states of all the three modi: positive, negative, or neutral. For example, the PhUs *приходить в себя* [Eng.: lit. *'come into oneself'*], *сойти с ума* [Eng.: lit. *'leave one's mind'*], and *развелась и развелась* [Eng.: lit. *'divorced and divorced'*] render such emotions as: 'coming out of the state of intense nervousness, fright, worry', 'strong emotional tension, stress', and 'lack of interest, concern'. These positive, negative, and neutral emotions are perceived through the phraseological images in terms of such concepts as LOCATION CHANGE, LEAVING, RETURNING, GOING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS that are the constituents of one and the same MMCM of TRAVEL.

3.3 Macro-metaphorical conceptual models: discourse phraseological creativity and pragmatic efficiency of modified E-PhUs (RQ3)

As noted above, the discourse phraseological creativity is rooted in the capacity of MMCMs to adapt PhUs to the pragmatic tasks of discourse and can be determined through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the E-PhUs' (non)modified use in the comedy films under study.

According to my research findings, 51 E-PhUs (i.e. 21%) have modified forms, while 193 E-PhUs (i.e. 71%) are used in their usual (or conventional) forms. In the comedy films, the discourse creativity of MMCMs might take different forms. The proportion of the modified E-PhUs based on different MMCMs is as follows (in descending order): TRAVEL – 33%; MEDICINE-RELATED ACTIVITY – 21%; PLAY – 17%; COMMERCE – 15%; CRAFT – 10%; SOCIAL ACTIVITY – 2%; GASTRONOMY – 2%; RELIGION-RELATED ACTIVITY – 0%.

As was established, in oral communication the E-PhUs of the mixed (denotative-expressive) type are modified much more frequently than those of an expressive type, cf. their ratio: 47 cases (92%) vs. 4 cases (8%), correspondingly. This can be explained by the fact that the E-PhUs of the expressive type are characterized by a lower degree of figurativeness in comparison with the E-PhUs of the mixed type, where figurativeness is usually rather high. In the majority of cases, the images of denotative-expressive E-PhUs are based on original metaphors (or metonymies, etc.) that are a rich source of their creativity. Metaphoric figurativeness makes the E-PhUs more liable to changes in the process of communication in order to achieve certain pragmatic aims. As was pointed out above, to modify the E-PhUs of both types, five strategies are used in spoken discourse in the comedy films. The frequency of occurrence of each strategy varies, and the corresponding ratio is given in table 2 (see table 2).

Table 2. The ratio of strategies used to modify E-PhUs in spoken discourse
Source: Own processing

Modified E-PhUs		
Strategies	**Expressive type (4 cases)**	**Denotative-expressive type (47 cases)**
Inbuilding	1	22%
Accretion	---	14%
Recomposition	1	36%
Decomposition	2	20%
Combination	---	8%

As is shown in table 2, the recomposition strategy is used most frequently in the characters' speech, e.g.:

(10) *Между прочим*, ***большие виды на нее имеет***. ("The Actress") – [Eng.: *By the way, he has big hopes of marrying her*].

The E-PhU *иметь виды на кого-либо* [Eng.: lit. *'have designs on someone'*] is modified in the conversation with the help of the recomposition strategy, that consists in changing the arrangement

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of the components of the E-PhU. This strategy is accompanied by the inbuilding strategy that implies the insertion of new components into the base-form of the E-PhU. In the example given above the adjective *большие* [Eng.: *'big'*] is inserted to emphasize the intensity of one's hope and the strength of intention to openly speak of one's love (deep sympathy). The application of these strategies results in changing the illocutionary intention of the E-PhU's use, from informing about particular relationships between two people to warning about them. This illocutionary shift intensifies the pragmatic efficiency induced by the use of the phraseological modification under consideration.

As my research has shown, the pragmatic efficiency varies (decreases/increases) depending on illocutionary shifts caused by the application of this or that strategy of modifying E-PhUs in spoken discourse, e.g.:

(11) *Черт подери!* – 'used to express indignation, vexation, astonishment: ***Черт**, говорю, **вас подери**, а!* ("A Patriotic Comedy") – [Eng.: ***Damn**, I say, **you**, ah!*].

(12) *убрать улыбку с лица* – 'stop rejoicing': *Ты извинишься за халдея и **уберешь эту гадкую ухмылку со своего лица***. ("New Year Detective Story") – [Eng.: *You'll apologize for calling me hash-slinger and **get that nasty grin off your face***].

In example (11), the application of the decomposition strategy results in mitigating the character's indignation and in the illocutionary shift from expressing a strong negative emotion to requesting one to pay attention to it, that is to simply informing about the speaker's emotional state. In example (12), the E-PhU is modified by means of the inbuilding strategy that causes the illocutionary shift from a request to a threat or an intimidation. These examples demonstrate the decrease and the increase of pragmatic efficiency of the E-PhUs in question, correspondingly.

4. Conclusion

Through the analysis of eight feature films, I sought to explore the specifics of the phraseological representation of emotions and feelings in spoken discourse. My research was particularly focused on the distribution, frequency, and variation of E-PhUs in oral communication depending on (1) their reference to one of the two main types (expressive or denotative-expressive), (2) the macro-metaphorical conceptual models that generate their images, (3) their emotional modus, (4) their use in traditional or modified forms, (5) their pragmatic impact determined by both the strategy that is applied to modify them and by the illocutionary shifts resulting from these modifications.

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The methodology that has been elaborated in my research on the basis of a number of assumptions coming from cognitive linguistics, linguistic pragmatics, phraseology, and linguistics of emotions, has let me obtain valid empirical data and reach the following deductions.

In the spoken discourse of the comedy films under consideration the interlocutors prefer to use the E-PhUs of the mixed (denotative-expressive) type to convey their emotions and feelings. The choice of such units provides them with broader opportunities to both express their emotional state and describe it, and, thus, to get a certain response or a target reaction from the addressee. In the majority of cases, the interlocutors use E-PhUs to render their negative emotions. To achieve a higher degree of pragmatic efficiency, the speaker modifies E-PhUs. The possible range of discursive modifications is provided by the conceptual foundations (i.e. MMCMs) that underlie the E-PhUs' images and semantics, and by the kind of communicative strategy applied (inbuilding, recomposition, combination, decomposition, accretion). The MMCMs generate phraseological images that can be conceived by the speaker as most appropriate in representing his/her feelings. The discourse creativity of E-PhUs may be low, moderate, or high in degree. But irrespective of the degree of discourse creativity, the E-PhUs' modifications evoke certain illocutionary shifts resulting in the increase or the decrease of pragmatic efficiency of conveying interlocutors' emotions and feelings with the help of phraseological means.

Overall, the results obtained have made it evident that the use of E-PhUs, especially their modified use in film discourse, should necessarily be considered when studying pragmatic value of speech acts. The research conducted can contribute to the study of deep-lying links between cognitive and pragmatic aspects of interpersonal communication. The issues raised could be explored further in future research on other types of discourse and languages.

Note

Translation from Russian into English was done by the author.

Abbreviations

EFL – emotion-feeling lexicon

E-PhU(s) emotional phraseological unit(s)

MMCM – macro-metaphorical conceptual model

PhU(s) – phraseological unit(s)

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