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

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**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 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=aliILTTOhbY>. 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](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 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>)<sup>1</sup>. 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 Panasenکو 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.

### 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
<i>То не ветер ветку клонит, Не дубравушка шумит. То мое сердечко стонет, Как осенний лист дрожит.</i>	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 *дубравушка* (oak grove + dim. suff.) and *сердечко* (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 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).

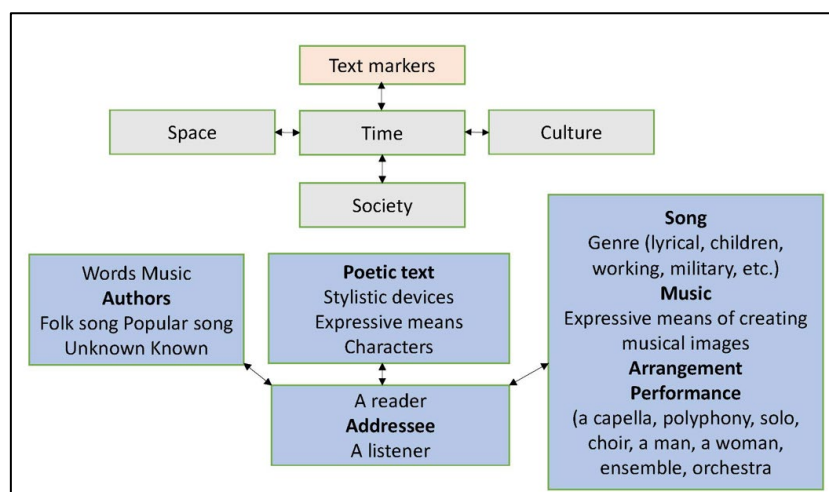


Figure 1. Model of song discourse. Source: Revised after Панасенко 2014

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



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 смеjú, 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
<i>Выпускала сокола из правого рукава, На полётике соколику наказывала...</i>	She released the falcon from Her right wide and fancy sleeve. When <b>the falcon</b> (+ dim. suff.) <b>flew away</b> (a noun + dim. suff.) she said...
<i>...Что один сын у отца – зовут Ванюшкой, Зовут Ванюшкой-пивоварушкой</i>	She put her spell on... For his father has him one, The son's born as a nice guy! And his name is <b>Ivan</b> (+ dim. suff.), And a <b>brewer</b> (+ 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 Ukrainian folk song "Гандзя"

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

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 (Panassenko 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) (Panassenko 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 (Panassenko 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).

**ВО ПОЛЕ БЕРЕЗА СТОЯЛА**  
 Русская народная песня  
 Обработка Н. РИМСКОГО-КОРСАКОВА

Оживленно

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](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
<i>In the field, a birch tree stood</i>	descending
<i>In the field, a curly birch stood</i>	ascending, descending
<i>Lyuli, lyuli it stood</i>	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

and negative emotions. Different tonalities serve to express nuances of feelings, human spirit, and aspiration (Panassenko 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 Деся поїхав C-dur мій миленький, d-moll Деся 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 Крапас 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** –

for piano (quiet), **mf** 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).

Drink to me only with thine eyes  
7/8 Solo Excerpt: D major - All Altos and High Basses Old English Air  
Ben Jonson (1573-1637) Edited and truncated for GMEA by Rotz

Very smoothly and rather slow

The image shows a musical score for the song "Drink to me only with thine eyes". It includes a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking, and then a *p* marking. The vocal line starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Drink to me on - ly with thine eyes, And I will pledge with mine,". The score is in 7/8 time and D major.

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 **mp** – mezzo piano (moderately quiet), for the accompaniment it is **pp** – *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.

Rests				
Whole rest	Half rest	Quarter rest	Eighth rest	Sixteenth rest
<b>4 beats</b>	<b>2 beats</b>	<b>1 beat</b>	<b>1/2 beat</b>	<b>1/4 beat</b>

Figure 4. Rest values. Source: [www.piano-keyboard-guide.com](http://www.piano-keyboard-guide.com)

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 (Panassenko 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

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

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

Ukrainian	English
3/4 Козак відїжджає, Дівчинонька плаче: "Куди їдеш, козаче?"	A Cossack's riding out A young girl (+ dim. suff.) is crying: "Where do you go, oh a Cossack?"
3/8 Козаче 2/4 соколю, Візьми мене із собою	Oh Cossack, my dear falcon, Take me there, along with you
3/4 На Україну далеку".	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%BD%D1%87%D1%8C-%D1%8F%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D1%81%D1%8F%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B0-night-so-moonlit.html>

Ukrainian	English
<i>Ніч яка місячна, зоряна, ясна, Видно, хоч голки збирай; Вийди, кохана, працею зморена, Хоч на хвилиночку в гай!</i>	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.

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](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, кохана* (female) – Come, my love (in translation the sex is not identified). Thus, she has to edit the text: *Вийди, кохануї 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).



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 ვზიოდი: „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](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=QR8hAJCJsQ&ab\\_channel=AllThatJaaazzz](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QR8hAJCJsQ&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).

**სულიკო**  
**Suliko**

Varinka Tsereteli

♩ = 70

*pp*

1. Ot - si - sin Su hau - da ma siin                      sü - dant vae - vas va - lu ja piin  
 2. Met - sas roo - si - öit nä - gin seal                      kas - te pi - sar hiil - gas ta peal  
 3. Vö - sa var - jul öö - bi - ku hääl                      ü - le jö - e kos - tis mul säääl

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

Franz Dorfer

**Suliko**  
www.franzdorfer.com

Georgian Trad.

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).

4

**Freely**

*mp*

*mp*

Vain - ly, at thy grave, I thee seek  
 eak - var - lie eap - lavs ve - zeb - di

*melody mp*

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\\_U2EN4KH8D9sz221JoBV6i\\_p66](https://www.stantons.com/scores/W/W/1/7/8/3/gia-ww1783.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOora4M3ulllgbqZMi6J_DiT2ZZ_U2EN4KH8D9sz221JoBV6i_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:

*"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.

## Abbreviations

dim. suff. – diminutive suffix

EM – expressive means


SD – stylistic devices

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