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

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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

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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.

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 *сатаніти 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

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.

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.
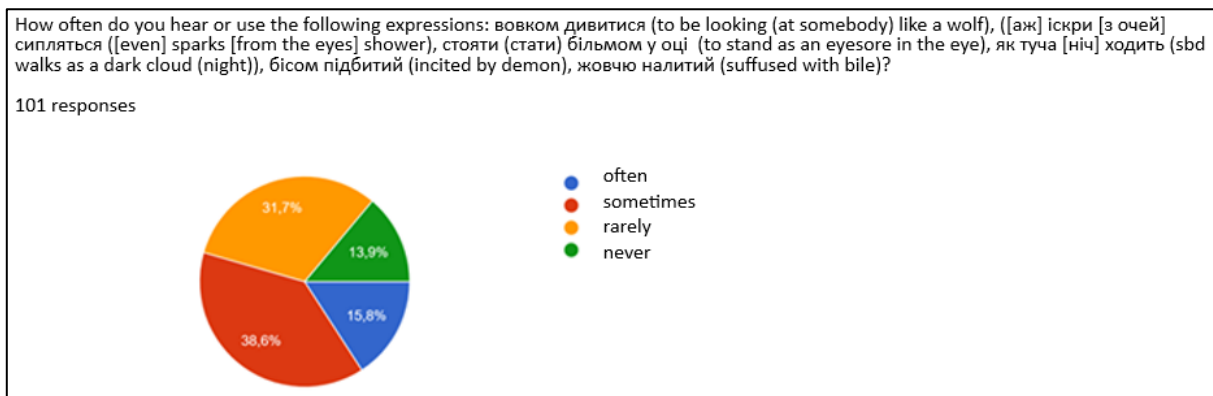
Figure 1. Frequency of exposure to anger expressions

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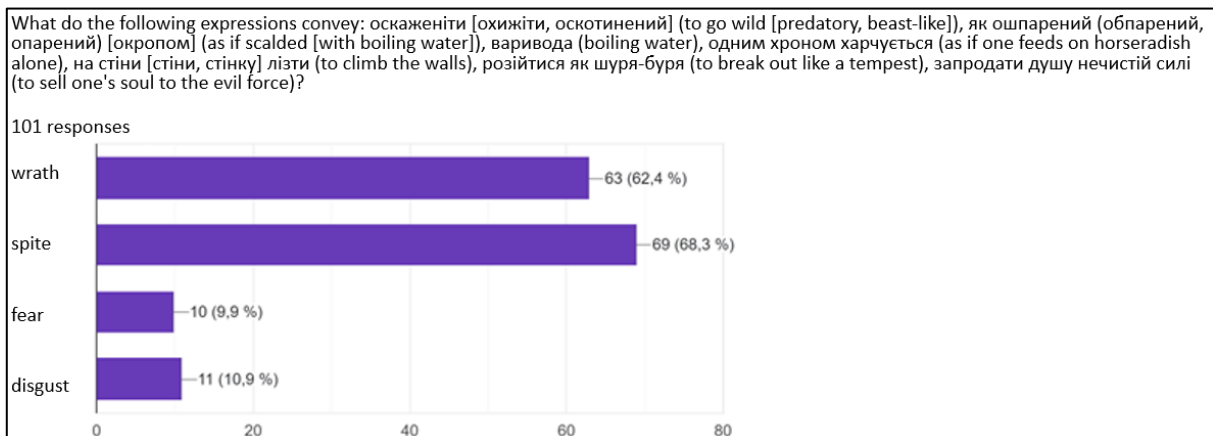
Figure 2. Interpretation of emotions expressed by the anger-related phrases

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-

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.
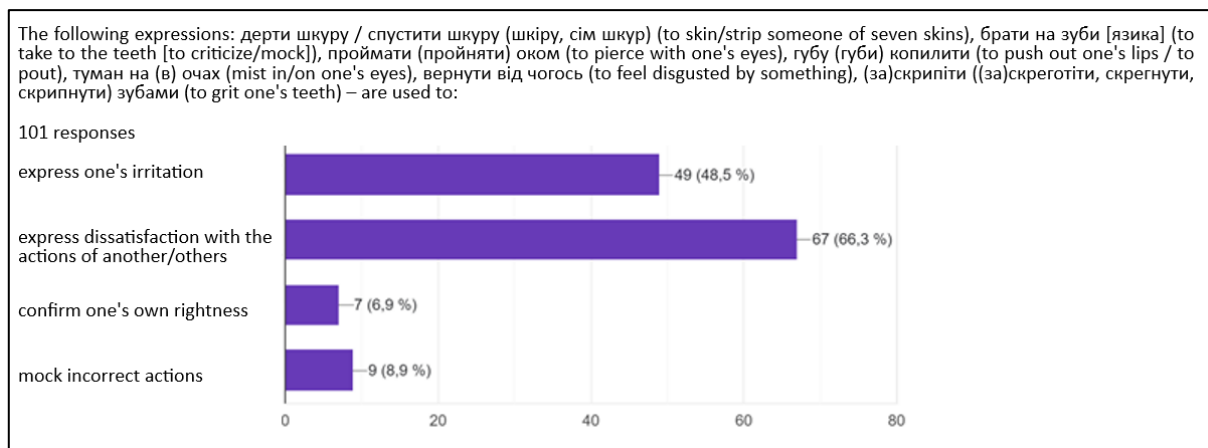
Figure 3. Pragmatic functions of anger-related expressions

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

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. Nin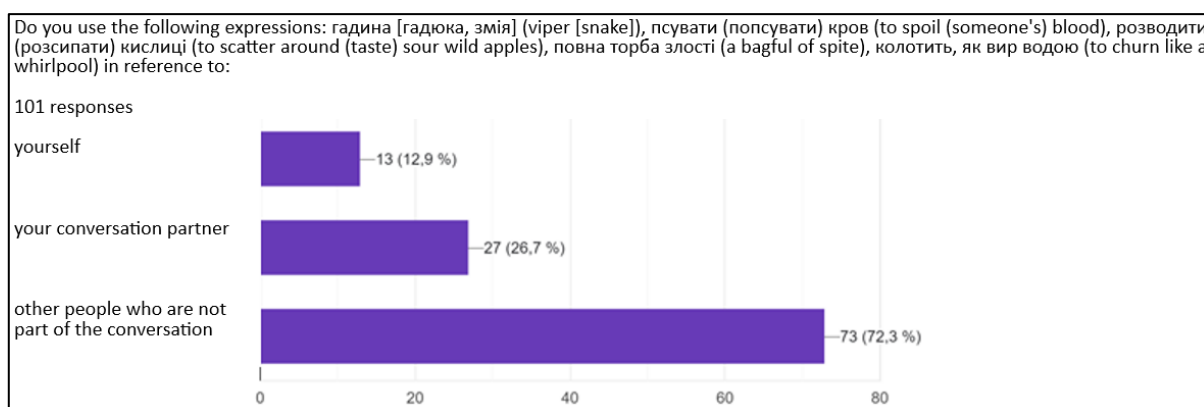eteen respondents in this section found the use of these expressions inappropriate due to the absence of the target of anger (Fig. 5).

When the following expressions: діяти на нерви (to get on someone's nerves), (з)навісніти (to madden), розбушуватися (to become rampant), хибнув у чорти (to turn to devils), псувати (попсувати) кров (to spoil someone's blood), набовдурюватися (to act like a blockhead), сатаніти від злості (to become like Satan with spite), наминати чуб [вуха] (to hit/pull one's forelock [ears]), дерти шкуру / спустити шкуру (to skin/strip someone of skin), знімати (зняти) голову (to have someone's head), давати (задавати) прасу [хльосу, хльору] (to give a beating[whipping/thrashing] – are used in reference to others who are not part of the conversation, you consider them to be:

101 responses

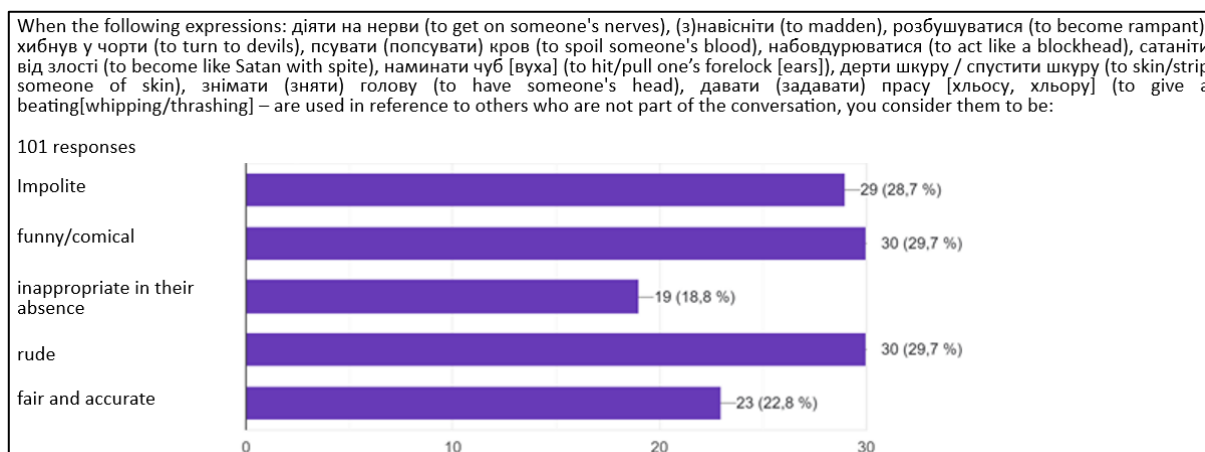| Category	Value
Impolite	29 (28,7 %)
funny/comical	30 (29,7 %)
inappropriate in their absence	19 (18,8 %)
rude	30 (29,7 %)
fair and accurate	23 (22,8 %)

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

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.
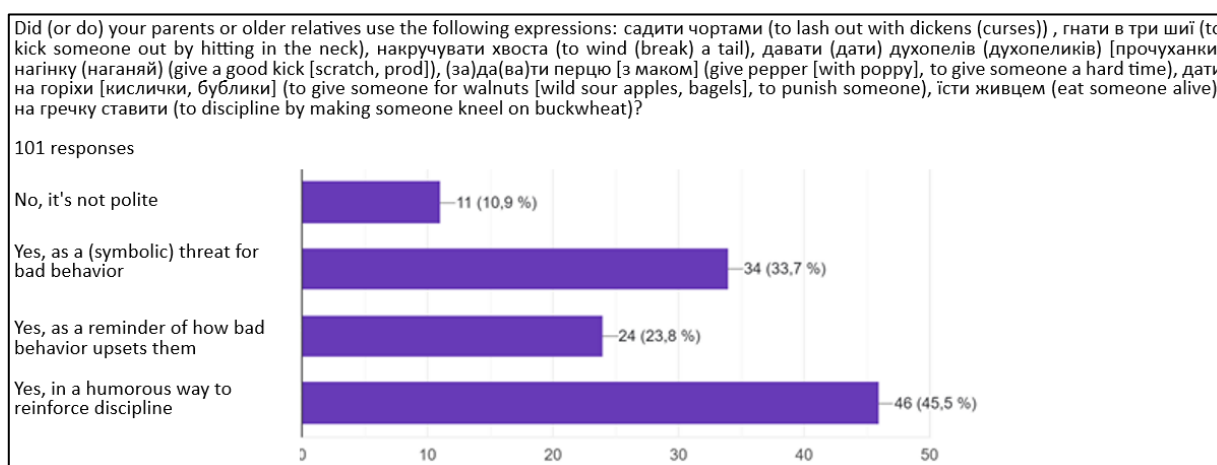

Figure 6. Acceptability of anger-related expressions in the family context

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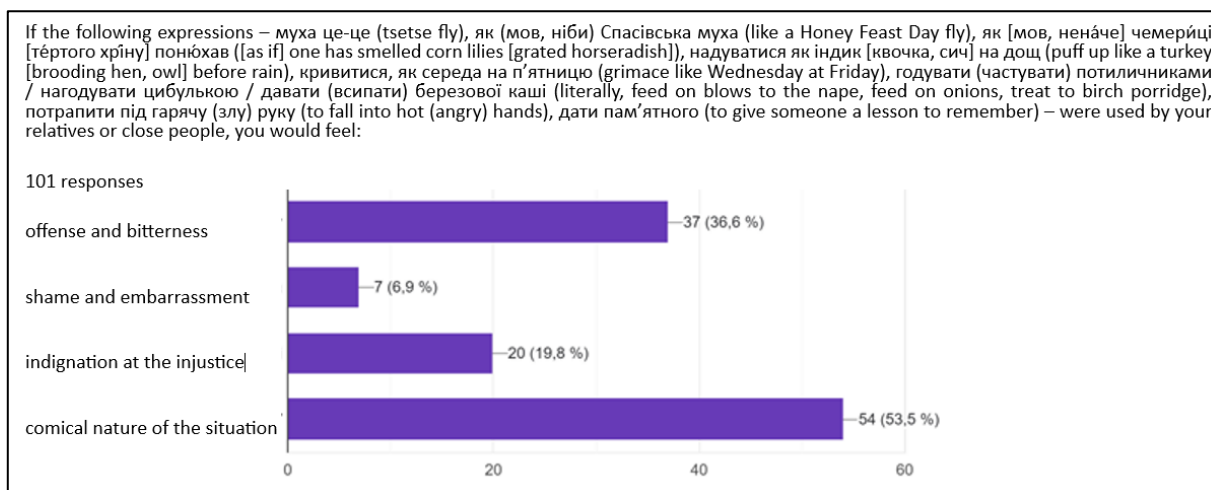
Figure 7. The level of perceived offensiveness of anger metaphors in the family context

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.

When the following expressions – гладити проти шерсті (to stroke against the hair growth), холодний погляд / аж очі рогом (a cold look / even eyes go horns), брати на зуби (to take to the teeth, criticize), проймати (пройняти) оком [очима, зором, поглядом] (to pierce with one's eye(s), gaze, vision), гострити (точити) зуби на [проти, супроти] когось (to sharpen one's teeth against someone), з притиском казати [мовити] (to speak with emphasis), кресати [пропікати (пропекти)] очима (to give a scathing look), камінь (камінець) у город (to throw a stone into someone's vegetable garden), фиркати (to sniff scornfully), дивитися зашморгом (to look in a noose-like manner), припекти словом (to burn to the quick) – are used in reference to you by older people (or those of higher social status) outside your family, you typically feel:

101 responses

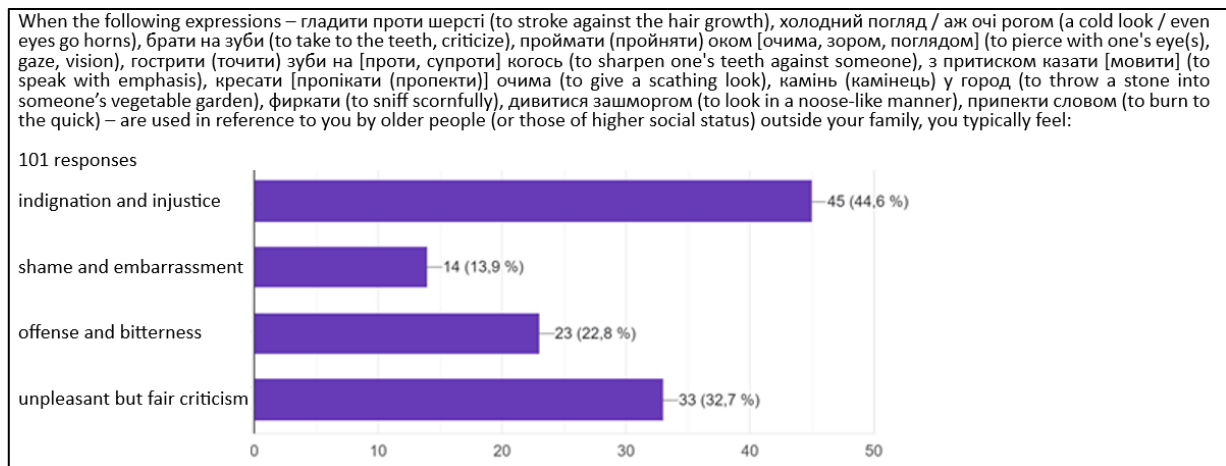|	
indignation and injustice	45 (44,6 %)
shame and embarrassment	14 (13,9 %)
offense and bitterness	23 (22,8 %)
unpleasant but fair criticism	33 (32,7 %)

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

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.

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 *неввічливий (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.

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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 55+ – 1/5	18-24 – 4/7 25-34 – 1/5 35-44 – 1/5 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 – 1/3 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 – 1/3 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↓↓

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