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Emotionalisation of Media Discourse

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Перечень отраслей науки и групп специальностей научных работников в соответствии с номенклатурой ВАК РФ: Отрасль науки: 10.00.00 – филологические науки; Специальности научных работников: 10.02.01 – русский язык, 10.02.04 – германские языки, 10.02.05 – романские языки, 10.02.19 – теория языка, 10.02.20 – сравнительно-историческое, типологическое и сопоставительное языкознание.

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Emotionalisation of Media Discourse

CONTENTS

Introductory article

Emotionalisation of contemporary media discourse: A research agenda

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Abstract
This special issue continues the discussion of the role of emotion in discourse (see *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 2015 (1) and 2018, 22 (1))) which, as testified by the burgeoning body of literature in the field, has become more prominent in different spheres and contexts of public life. This time we focus on emotionalisation of media discourse. We highlight the intensification of emotions in media and, showcasing contributions from international authors, critically reflect on constructions, functions and pragmatic purposes of emotions in media discourse. Our aim is to investigate emotions in the media from semiotic, pragmatic and discursive perspectives against the contemporary socio-political background in which traditional notions concerning the role of media are being noticeably changed. In this introductory article, we also put forward an agenda for further research by briefly outlining three main areas of exploration: *the logics of media production and reception*, *the boundaries of media discourse, and the semiotic resources deployed to construct emotionality*. We then present the articles in this issue and highlight their contributions to the study of linguistic representations of emotions. We then summarise the main results and suggest a brief avenue for further research.
Keywords: *emotions, emotionalisation, media discourse, persuasion, media linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Analysis*

Эмоционализация современного медиадискурса: исследовательская повестка дня

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Аннотация

В этом специальном выпуске продолжается обсуждение роли эмоций в дискурсе (см. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 2015, № 1 и 2018, вып. 22, №1), которая, как свидетельствует растущий объем литературы в этой области, стала более заметной в разных сферах и контекстах общественной жизни. На этот раз мы обращаемся к эмоционализации медиадискурса. Авторы статей данного выпуска анализируют способы выражения эмоций, их функции и прагматические цели в медийном дискурсе и приводят многочисленные факты, свидетельствующие об усилении эмоционализации в средствах массовой информации. Наша цель – исследовать эмоции в СМИ с семиотической, прагматической и дискурсивной точек зрения на фоне современного социально-политического контекста, в котором традиционные представления о роли средств массовой информации претерпевают заметные изменения. Мы также намечаем направления дальнейших исследований, выделяя три основные области, касающиеся (1) логики производства и восприятия медиапродукта, (2) границ медиадискурса, (3) семиотических ресурсов, используемых для создания эмоциональности. Далее в статье мы кратко представляем исследования авторов этого выпуска и отмечаем их вклад в изучение лингвистических репрезентаций эмоций. В заключении подводим основные итоги и предлагаем пути дальнейших исследований.

Ключевые слова: *эмоции, эмоционализация, убеждение, медиадискурс, медиалингвистика, критический дискурс-анализ, мультимодальный анализ*

1. Introduction

Emotions are at the basis of human interaction and communication and, as testified by numerous studies in the field of psychology, sociology and linguistics, their role has been noticeably increasing in recent years (e.g. Alba-Juez & Larina 2018, Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021, Mackenzie & Alba-Juez, 2019, Scherer 2005, Shakhovsky 2008, 2018, Wetherell 2012, 2015, Wirth & Schramm 2015). This body of research has highlighted "the pervasive presence of emotionality in contemporary culture, where emotions become more important and formative than anything else" (Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021: 1), while it has shown how both explicit emotional expressions and implicit means of emotional appeal have broadened their functions in different social domains and discourses. The term *emotionalisation* has thus been used to refer to the legitimization and intensification

of emotional discourse in collective spheres of life (Ahmed 2014, Holmes 2010, Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021, Sieben & Wettergren 2010, Woodward 2009). As well as in everyday interpersonal interaction, emotionalisation of institutional, professional and civic domains has been identified (Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021). Emotions are highly relevant in academic discourse (e.g. Gretzky & Lerner 2021, Larina & Ponton 2020, forthcoming; Lerner, Zbenovich & Kaneh-Shalit 2021), in classroom settings (e.g. El-Dakhs et al. 2019), in digital communication (e.g. Maíz-Arévalo 2018, Jus 2018). Appeals to emotions have increasingly been featured in what are otherwise regarded as non-emotional genres of discourses, for example diplomatic, economic and financial discourses (e.g. Belyakov 2015, Mackenzie 2018, Zappettini & Unerman 2016). Several scholars have also pointed out that it is extremely challenging to disentangle affect from ideology, since the feelings and ideas that trigger the emotions are closely bound up together (Wetherell 2012, 2015). As Breeze (2020: 22) notes, emotions are therefore an inherent component of political discourse too, "precisely because of [their] emotional/affective impact on target audiences" (see also Breeze 2019). Emotionalisation has also been pervasive in the media (e.g. Alba-Juez & Mackenzie 2019, Altheide 2002, 2006, Antipova et al. 2021, de Marlangeon 2018, Bartlett & Gentile 2011, Döveling et al. 2011, Furedi 2018, Kopytowska & Chilton 2018, Schwab & Schwender 2011, Vishnyakova & Polyakova 2017) where emotions can be used as a fundamental means of persuasion, since they are essential in understanding how media messages are processed, and have considerable impact on individual behaviour and public social life (Döveling, von Scheve & Konijn 2011).

Our special issue focuses on the above-mentioned dynamics as they are constructed by and reflected in the media. Our aim is thus to investigate emotions in the media from semiotic, pragmatic and discursive perspectives, against the contemporary socio-political background in which traditional notions concerning the role of media, its ownership and professional practices, are being revolutionized by new technologies which allow, for example, for more interactive forms of communication performed through social media (Assimakopoulos 2018, Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2019, Breeze 2020). On the back of these changes, we see the emergence of new participatory opportunities (for example citizens' journalism), which has the potential to democratise the informative function that has typically distinguished traditional forms of media. New media platforms, meanwhile, pose new challenges to how information is produced, distributed and consumed, as distinctions between public and private mediated spaces have increasingly blurred. These issues have implications for discursive affordances in all realms of social life including political debate, and the infinite variety of social themes with which it is concerned.

2. Emotionalisation of media discourse: Areas of exploration

In a changed media landscape, we thus need to interrogate language and society along lines of enquiry that reflect the key themes outlined so far. Our special issue does this through the lens of emotionalisation, and from a critical perspective.

Our exploration of the ways in which language framing may intersect with the emotionalisation of media discourse is guided by what we see as key questions that need addressing in particular around the *whats, whys,* and *hows* of media discourse. We would therefore like to put forward a media and emotions research agenda in relation to three key areas of exploration in which the *whats, whys* and *hows* of media discourse interplay significantly with each other.

The first area of exploration is concerned with the *logics of media production and reception*. Information and entertainment goals, along with social, political and commercial agendas, have always driven media production. While emotions have often been mobilised by the media to achieve those goals (for example by sensationalizing a piece of news to make it newsworthy, or to support one particular editorial line), one key question is how the media is now performing these functions in an ever-shifting social landscape. For example, how is the press performing its persuasive function in relation to, for instance, new multimodal and digital forms of communication? Crucially, moreover, for whose benefit or what political gain is this being done? Researching the emotionalisation of media discourse should therefore help us understand not only *what discourses are produced by the media* but also *why they are circulated.*

The role of the media in creating and swaying public opinion can hardly be overstated. Constructing and appealing to emotions must therefore largely be seen as instrumental to media persuasive strategies. For example, the question of 'moral panic', as fuelled and amplified by the media has been widely debated since the Sixties (Cohen 2011) and has now re-emerged around new discursive foci such as the politicization of the 'immigration debate', which has centered around emotional responses of fear and resentment (Kopytowska & Chilton 2018, Wodak 2015, Zappettini 2019, 2021). In this sense, the newsworthiness of media coverage should primarily be seen as lying in specific communicative agendas that ultimately respond to basic social anxieties (Delanty 2008) and fears of having 'strangers at our door' (Bauman 2016). If "the prevalence of fear in public discourse can contribute to stances and reactive social policies that promote state control and surveillance" (Altheide & Michalowski 1999: 476), then we should also explain how the media mobilisation of fear-mongering, and other emotions, can also serve the legitimation of various political projects or commercial imperatives (see Cap 2017, Kopytowska & Chilton 2018, Sedláková & Kopytowska 2018, Doudaki & Boubouka 2019, Koschut 2020, Ozyumenko & Larina, this issue, Trajkova 2020).

Within this first area of exploration, we believe that the emotions play a crucial role, not only in how and why media discourses are produced but also in *how and why they are received and consumed* by their audiences. Although much research has shown how frequent exposure to certain media narratives can sediment into a 'cumulative effect' (Bell 1996) that would explain some readerships' attitudes, the direction of causality (who influences whom) between media and audience is not linear, and the 'media effect' (Wirth & Schramm 2005) is better to be assumed as mutually constitutive (that is, the media reinforces certain views already formed

among their audiences, who in turn select media aligned with their views). We would thus need to consider different potential discursive sites of production and consumption (van Dijk 1988) in which media emotionalisation is taking place.

The second area of exploration delves into the *boundaries of media discourse*. Here we would like to draw attention to at least two significantly interrelated trends. One trend is that, arguably, the tones of mediatized socio-political debates are shifting away from *logos* towards *pathos* or indeed towards the realm of *irrealis* statements. In other words, from reasoned debate about the issues of the day to a more direct appeal, based often on various forms of emotionality or constructs which are no longer connected with any truth-based logics, the so-called 'fake news' which is so pervasive in a post-truth society (D'Ancona 2017). However, even rejecting the claim for a diminished reliance on *logos*, Haidt's (2001) social intuition model tells us that moral reasoning is only subsequent to moral intuition (that is, a 'gut feeling' evaluation based on basic emotions), thus underlining the importance of *pathos*-oriented discourses. Emblematic of these processes are social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which have enabled interaction by "shift[ing] the boundaries between private and public domains; [by] combin[ing] reflections of individual interiority with the process of making sense of social relations and the constitution of collective identity" (Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021: 6). Social media such as Facebook and Twitter are to be seen not simply as platforms but rather as social and political actors/institutions in their own right, as they have the power to gatekeep and polarise debates and to control our interaction via algorithms which ultimately are based on our emotions. This raises questions around discursive opportunities and affordances, and more generally the institutionalization of social reality (Berger & Luckman 1966).

Arguably, the appeal of recent US presidents such as Barack Obama and, to an even greater extent, Donald Trump, depended in no small measure to the way in which their emotional appeal, transmitted via the affordances of emergent technology, resonated with receivers in the intimacy of their relations with the new media platforms. With Trump, in particular, a new phenomenon was witnessed, in which the emotional responses of a political leader were directly transmitted to subjects – in a literal sense, *followers* – allowing for the bypassing of all the previously known filters that have always characterised traditional media. This phenomenon, which also highlights pathos over logos, was not limited to Trump, but has become a feature of political discourse more generally. Other social media platforms such as Youtube or Facebook have effected similar alterations, enabling for more direct engagement between the parties involved in the political process, and at the same time permitting the expression and exchange of emotive talk, which readily slips towards the high intensity end of the spectrum. Insults, critiques, dismissals, *ad hominem* attacks, rants, diatribes and feuds are more frequently encountered than their opposites – hyperbolic admiration, emoji-fuelled expressions of adoration or love, exaggerated praise or abbreviations signalling degrees of amusement (*lol, lmao*, etc.) – though the latter also feature. As Bassols,

Cros & Torrent (2013) suggest, both positive and negative emotions have the effect of capturing and holding the interest.

A second trend, namely the heightened emotionalization of media language regulation, also needs consideration. Ideologies and interests have been able to harness the power of new media such as social networks, for better or for worse. Such media affordances have the potential to appropriate the internet as a propaganda tool and, in some cases to promote hate speech, seemingly shifting the threshold of what is now sayable and accepted in the public sphere (Wodak 2019). In response, we are seeing increasing debates around issues of political correctness in language produced or allowed by the media (Assimakopoulos et al. 2018). The extent to which 'verbal hygiene' (Cameron 2012) should be applied (if at all) is not something that we can cover in the space of this article, however, as it involves the larger question of prescriptivism, but would be worth further investigation.

The third area of exploration covers the *semiotic resources which have been deployed by the media, and their associated pragmatic implications*. As linguists, semioticians and social scientists we need to adapt our investigation of "affective-discursive practices" (Wetherell et al. 2015: 57) and strategies to the changing media landscape by focusing both on verbal means of construing emotionality through lexico-grammatical resources such as metaphor, simile and other rhetorical devices (Emanatian 1995, Handa 2013) and non-verbal means (font size, large text in headings, use of colour, pictures, etc.) recognizing thus the importance of multimodality in realising discourses (e.g. Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2017, Ponton 2016). Arguably, the multimodal construction of meaning in the 'image-texts' (Mitchell 1986) encountered in memes (Denisova 2019, Mina 2019, Jus 2019), above all privileges the emotional dimension of communication. Indeed, through the symbolic language of emoticons it is possible for skilled users to communicate a range of emotional responses to posted content, and thus an interactive dimension is constructed that both permits and encourages the underlining of the emotional component. Though in its early stages, Multimodal theory (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2010, Bateman et al. 2017, etc.) represents an invaluable contribution to the theoretical and practical approaches favoured in Discourse Analysis generally (Alba-Juez 2009, Ponton & Larina 2016, 2017), since it aims at explicating meanings in the prevalent semiotic practices of the computer age. These frequently depend on the emergent codes, widely shared among the proficient, mainly young users of the new generations, inherent in colour, number and other forms of contemporary symbolism (Faliang et al. 2017). Finally, it is important to remember that any 'sign' (whether it be text or image), makes sense within a communicative context that must be shared by the producer and receiver of any message. As some of the contributions in this issue implicitly demonstrate (e.g. Musolff, Solopova & Kushneruk, Zappettini) the semiotic resources tapped into by the media analysed in their studies are predicated on specific cultural repertoires that the analyst must interpret from an emic perspective.

3. Outline of contributions to the issue

The contributions to this issue address some of the key issues outlined above and they do so from a variety of methodological approaches and with different analytical foci.

Bull and Waddle's contribution focuses on emotionality in audience responses to (televised) political speeches. Building on and extending Atkinson's work on interactive behaviour between speaker/audience, Bull and Waddle explore in detail dynamics of invited and uninvited audience responses (e.g. applause and booing) in a variety of national contexts. This study illuminates the subtle interplay between rhetorical techniques used by politicians to invite responses which, as claimed by the authors, may be seen to reflect differing degrees of audience emotionality. The significance of Bull and Waddle's paper is not simply based on propositional content but also largely depends on affective and emotional elements. The authors' analysis can thus be extended further to corroborate our understanding of political communication.

Our issue also features three papers that deal with emotionalization of media discourse in the debates and unfolding of events relating to Brexit. Musolff analyses a corpus of politicians' speeches and interviews and press texts in relation to the proverb 'You cannot have your cake and eat it' to argue that the hyperbolic use of such proverb was instrumental in driving highly emotional discourses associated with metaphorical scenarios of liberation (in the specific instantiation, the UK liberating itself from the EU's yoke). Musolff goes further, suggesting that the escalation of the cake metaphor – upon which many Leave and Remain arguments rested – "led to a polarisation and radicalisation of political discourse in Britain".

Similar views are put forward by Zappettini who, focusing on the language of the British tabloid press, shows how emotionally laden representations of Britain and the EU as victim and bully respectively drove many public discourses during the negotiation stages of Brexit. Zappettini also critically points to how the emotional language of the tabloid press has been instrumental in shaping public opinion on the UK/EU relationships not only in the context of Brexit but also in the larger historical coverage of Euro-news as it effectively managed to drive the Brexit agenda along 'pathos over logos' lines. Crucially, such emotional framing of Brexit also became the dominant discourse of the Leave campaign and gained traction vis-a-vis the Remain arguments which were primarily perceived as based on 'cold facts' (Zappettini 2019).

Dancygier's contribution also focuses on discourses of Brexit during the negotiation stage, looking in particular at emotional responses to narrativized similes ('Brexit is/feels like…'). However, rather than focusing on how emotions are construed in/by the media, Dancygier's analysis is concerned with how different similes, or 'patterns of figuration' can signal different stances. Dancygier gives us a detailed account of how similes were used by speakers/writers to communicate their different emotional stances on specific aspects of Brexit with a focus on how ordinary citizens conceptualized Brexit and how they responded to its delivery.

Like Zappettini and Musolff, Dancygier demonstrates the relationships between linguistic forms and the emotional responses they are meant to convey, reasserting a view of media discourses as crucial in connecting citizens' attitudes and socio-political changes.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Pęzik explore the emotional impact of Polish media texts within an interpretative framework that views them as exemplifying the presence of an inherently persuasive, political function, which often manifests in covert rather than explicit ways. The paper outlines a theoretical innovation in the shape of the notion of 'emergent impoliteness', which is deployed to categorise examples from the representation of Polish political discourse. This method allows us to appreciate subtle shading in the instrumental use of the emotions in politics, where instances of overt rudeness or insulting language may be supplemented by nuanced innuendo which allows the politician to achieve emotional impact while maintaining an apparently polite public façade.

Three contributions focus on Russia, with two articles (Dobrosklonskaya, Solopova & Kushneruk) dealing with the specific topic of Russian political communication and one (Ozyumenko & Larina) with that of media discourse about Russia. Dobrosklonskaya's paper analyses press coverage of the 75th anniversary of victory in WWII, from a Media Linguistics, multimodal perspective, using a theorization of press functioning that dates back to the influential model proposed, in 1965, by Galtung and Ruge. Drawing on a previous paper of her own (Dobrosklonskaya 2020), Dobrosklonskaya argues that the stage at which the press 'interpret' the events for their readers is the most relevant for focusing on emotional effects. The analysis enables us to appreciate the role of emotional discourse in fostering a sense of national unity; more precisely, that emotions are central in mediated political interpretations of significant public events.

While Dobrosklonskaya's study regards media discourse within Russia, Solopova and Kushneruk present a diachronic study that explores the role of emotional press discourse that centres on the image of Russia itself in western eyes, and how variance in these patterns across time reflects alterations in the geo-political landscape. The study, like Dobrosklonskaya's, focuses on the Second World War, when Russia's status as a key ally in the fight against Nazi Germany encouraged the use of positive discursive frames regarding Russia, in press discourse emphasizing her heroic qualities, her military might, her friendship with Britain. The warmth of these representations may surprise readers more accustomed to see Russia framed as a bear with the "surly, uncouth, burly, shambling, enraged, violent" features of a wild animal, as she is apt to appear in contemporary press discourse. The study accounts for these changes and their corresponding emotional valences in terms of a theory that views press frames as subservient to wider political goals of the specific national groups in question.

Following on from this paper, that of Ozyumenko and Larina enlarges on its discussion of the innate social forces that drive such strategies of framing, arguing that we are witnessing an authentic strategy of emotional manipulation on the part

of western media, in the service of creating fear of a so-called 'Russian threat', with the aim of justifying hard-line policies of containment and aggression. With ample reference to existing literature on the role of emotional discourse in political life, the paper uses data from British and American press sources to support its far-reaching thesis. As in the paper by Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Pęzik, the authors distinguish between implicit and explicit emotional effects, and also identify nuances, or degrees, of feeling in representations of political discourse regarding Russia. In terms of explicit effects, they discuss the press' use of idioms, hyperboles, metaphors, word play, cultural images and animalistic symbols. What emerges is a view of western media that, in recent times, has increased its reliance on emotional discourse, in collusion with a political class that has its own reasons for wishing to create a state of 'panic' about Russia amongst the general public.

Finally, the contributions of Ponton and Way point to how multimodality has been deployed in social media as a form of satire, parody, and critique. Their papers focus on memes as a new form of persuasive media discourse that has leveraged the emotions considerably. Way looks at public reactions to former US President Donald Trump as they were posted on an Alt-Right website, and finds that these memes lean on emotional discourses about nationalism, racism and authoritarianism. Significantly, Way reminds us that all memes are now part of a new politics which does "not communicate to us in logical arguments, but emotionally and affectively through short quips and images that entertain". This, of course, has often been the case with satire in the media but new ways of producing, distributing and consuming such messages, as well as the capability of multimodally combining different discursive forms should make us reflect on the extent to which both satire and extremist discourses are entangled with emotions and media. Ponton's work explores the pragmatic potentialities of this new communicative genre the meme, seeing them largely in terms of the traditional canons for political satire, i.e. 'speaking the truth to power'. Naturally, the emotional mainspring of these multimodal productions tends to be laughter, though nestling within this initial response are other emotions such as disgust, anger, frustration, fear, etc. Ponton's perspective on satirical political memes sees them as aligned with other persuasive political artefacts, subverting the viewers' opinions, and in ideal cases producing alignment. Like the viruses to which they are frequently compared, they may enter cognitive systems and produce their unpredictable effects largely without reference to the viewers' wishes or will.

4. Concluding remarks

As with many other types of scientific enquiry, our exploration of the *emotionalisation of media discourse* has only been able to provide a snapshot, rather than a full picture of the complex interplay between media, emotions and discourse. Nevertheless, we believe we have provided some solid evidence for how the mediatization of emotions is a feature of every-day social life and for how language (in its wider interpretation as a system of signs) and discourse (in its larger social ramifications) are inextricably part of it.

By way of summarising the contribution of this Special Issue to the advancement of the literature in the field, we would like to highlight some of our key findings. We have suggested that emotionalisation has increasingly become one of the pivotal features of media discourse, and that this has primarily been achieved through a discursive shift from logos to pathos whereby rational arguments give way to the tendency to leverage on feelings. We have critically suggested that a crucial driver of this shift, and in general of the use of emotions by media actors, has been the aim of achieving effective persuasive strategies. Methodologically, we have demonstrated that adopting a critical approach (such as Critical Discourse Analysis) can help us understand the potential impact of such persuasive strategies and their pragmatic and perlocutionary effects on audiences and, more generally, on the implementation of specific political and ideological goals. These processes can only be fully explicated by taking the context and its socio-political, historical and cultural dimensions into account. To put it simply, an interdisciplinary approach to linguistic enquiry has numerous practical advantages. We have also highlighted the merit of exploring the analysis of emotional discourses via a multimodal approach that looks at language in its different semiotic realisations. As our studies show, such a diversity of methods and approaches should be helpful in triangulating and thus corroborating the interpretation of our results.

It is our hope that this Special Issue will not represent a terminus but rather a point of departure for future investigations of the emotionalisation of public discourse on the back of the research agenda that we have just outlined, and in the light of any topical issues that our societies will be faced with. We would particularly encourage any further research on the emotionalisation of media discourse that focuses on the production of emotions in different media (such as the press, TV, social media), and genres (news items, commentaries, interviews, political speeches, political debates, etc.), and their reception among different audiences.

The editors would like to take this opportunity to thank our contributors and compliment them on the quality of their contributions to this Special Issue. Thanks to them, a lively, interconnected debate has been presented on this topical issue, that will add to the growing body of linguistic research on these important themes. We are open to suggestions of the form these might take; seminars, conferences, individual or group initiatives, and so on. Most of all it is our hope that readers will be inspired by these papers to contribute their own research in these areas, and that they will find practical tools that will assist them with their analytical projects.

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1. Введение

Эмоции лежат в основе человеческого взаимодействия и общения, и, как свидетельствуют многочисленные исследования в области психологии, социологии и лингвистики, их роль в последние годы заметно возросла

(см. например, Alba-Juez & Larina 2018, Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021, Mackenzie & Alba-Juez 2019, Scherer 2005, Wetherell 2012, 2015, Волкова & Панченко 2018, Шаховский 2008, 2018 и многие др.). Исследователи отмечают повсеместное присутствие эмоциональности в современной культуре, где «эмоции становятся более важными, чем что-либо еще» (Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021: 1). Они показали, что как эксплицитные, так и имплицитные средства эмоциональности расширили свои функции в различных социальных сферах и дискурсах. Таким образом, термин *эмоционализация* используется для обозначения интенсификации и легитимации эмоций и эмоционального дискурса в общественных сферах жизни (Ahmed 2014, Holmes 2010, Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021, Sieben & Wettergren 2010, Woodward 2009). Как и в повседневном межличностном взаимодействии, эмоционализация наблюдается в институциональной, профессиональной и административной сферах (см. Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021). По наблюдениям исследователей, не являются исключением дипломатический, экономический и финансовый дискурсы, для которых обращение к эмоциям считается нехарактерным (например, Беляков 2015, Mackenzie 2018, Zappettini & Unerman 2016). Эмоции играют существенную роль в академическом дискурсе (Gretzky & Lerner 2021, El-Dakhsetal 2019, Larina & Ponton 2020, Lerner, Zbenovich & Kaneh-Shalit 2021). Некоторые ученые отмечают, что чрезвычайно сложно отделить эмоции от идеологии, поскольку чувства и идеи, которые их вызывают, тесно связаны друг с другом (Wetherell et al. 2015: 57). Как подчеркивает Р. Бриз (2020: 22), эмоции являются неотъемлемым компонентом политического дискурса именно из-за их эмоционального / аффективного воздействия на целевую аудиторию (см. также Breeze 2019). Эмоционализация широко распространена в средствах массовой информации (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie 2019, Altheide 2002, 2006, Antipova et al. 2021, de Marlangeon 2018, Dövelingetal 2011, Furedi 2018, Schwab & Schwender 2011, Vishnyakova & Polyakova 2017 и др.), где эмоции используются как одно из важнейших средств убеждения. Их исследование необходимо для понимания того, как создаются сообщения, а также как они влияют на индивидуальное и социальное поведение и социальную жизнь общества в целом (Döveling et al. 2011).

Наш специальный выпуск посвящен отмеченным выше тенденциям и их проявлению в СМИ. Таким образом, наша цель состоит в том, чтобы исследовать эмоции в СМИ с семиотической, прагматической и дискурсивной точек зрения на фоне современного социально-политического контекста, где традиционные представления о роли СМИ, их профессиональных практиках претерпевают существенные изменения в результате применения новых технологий, которые создают возможности для более интерактивных форм общения, осуществляемых через социальные сети (Assimakopoulos et al. 2018, Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2019, Breeze 2020 и др.).

На фоне этих изменений мы видим появление новых возможностей (например, гражданская журналистика), которые демократизируют информационную функцию, обычно реализуемую в традиционных формах. Между

тем современные медиаплатформы ставят новые задачи в отношении производства, распространения и потребления информации, поскольку различия между публичной и частной сферой становятся все более размытыми. Эти вопросы находят отражение в дискурсивных возможностях во всех контекстах общественной жизни, включая политические дебаты и дискуссии по разнообразным социальным темам.

2. Эмоционализация медийного дискурса: области исследования

В изменяющемся медиаландшафте взаимодействие языка и общества необходимо исследовать по намеченным основным направлениям. В нашем специальном выпуске это делается через призму эмоционализации. Исследование того, как языковой фрейм может пересекаться с эмоционализацией медийного дискурса, строится вокруг трех, на наш взгляд, ключевых вопросов, требующих ответа, а именно ЧТО, ПОЧЕМУ и КАК. Поэтому мы хотели бы предложить в качестве основных векторов исследований СМИ и эмоций три ключевые области, в которых «что», «почему» и «как» в значительной степени пересекаются.

Первая область исследования связана с *логикой производства и восприятия медиапродукта.* Информационные и развлекательные цели, наряду с социальной, политической и коммерческой повесткой дня, всегда лежали в основе медиапроизводства. Для достижения этих целей СМИ часто задействуют эмоции (например, путем создания сенсации в новостном сообщении). Однако возникает вопрос, как средства массовой информации выполняют эти функции в условиях постоянно меняющегося социального и политического ландшафта. Например, как пресса выполняет функцию убеждения с учетом новых мультимодальных и цифровых форм коммуникации? И главное, в чьих интересах и с какой политической целью? Таким образом, исследование эмоционализации медийного дискурса должно помочь нам понять не только то, какие дискурсы производятся средствами массовой информации, но и почему они производятся и распространяются.

Роль СМИ в формировании общественного мнения и влиянии на него трудно переоценить. В связи с этим формирование эмоций и обращение к ним должно в значительной степени рассматриваться как средство реализации стратегии убеждения. Например, «моральная паника» ('moral panic') (т.е. наведение паники по вопросу моральных норм поведения), подпитываемая и усиливаемая средствами массовой информации, широко обсуждается с шестидесятых годов (Cohen 2011). Теперь она фокусируется на новых темах, например, иммиграция и эмоциональный ответ на нее в виде страха и неприятия (Kopytowska & Chilton 2018, Wodak 2015, Zappettini 2021). В этом смысле информационная ценность того или иного медийного освещения должна определяться в первую очередь тем, насколько она отвечает конкретной коммуникативной повестке дня, которая в конечном итоге реагирует на основные «социальные тревоги» (Delanty 2008) и страх перед «чужими» (Bauman 2016).

Как известно, преобладание страха в публичном дискурсе может способствовать формированию определенного отношения и приводить к ответной социальной политике, что в итоге способствует усилению государственного контроля и надзора (Altheide & Michalowski 1999: 476). Соответственно, мы также должны объяснить, как осуществляемое через СМИ нагнетание страха и обращение к другим эмоциям может служить легитимации различных политических и/или коммерческих проектов (см. Cap 2017, Doudaki & Boubouka 2019, Kopytowska & Chilton 2018, Koschut 2020, Ozyumenko & Larina в этом выпуске, Sedláková & Kopytowska 2018, Trajkova 2020).

В рамках **первой проблемной области исследования** одним из важнейших следует считать вопрос о решающей роли эмоций в том, как и почему создаются те или иные медиадискурсы. Однако не менее важным является и вопрос о том, как и почему они воспринимаются и потребляются аудиторией. Хотя многие исследования показали, как частое повторение определенных медийных нарративов может привести к «кумулятивному эффекту» (Bell 1996), который в итоге вызывает определенные отношения читателей, направление причинно-следственной связи (кто на кого влияет) между СМИ и аудиторией не является линейным и его лучше рассматривать как взаимно конституирующее. То есть СМИ укрепляют определенные взгляды, уже сформированные среди их аудитории, а аудитория затем предпочитает те СМИ, которые совпадают с ее взглядами. Таким образом, нам необходимо рассматривать различные потенциальные дискурсивные стороны производства и потребления (van Dijk 1988), в которых имеет место эмоционализация СМИ.

Вторая исследовательская область касается границ медиадискурса. Здесь мы хотели бы обратить внимание как минимум на две взаимосвязанные тенденции. Одна заключается в том, что тональность социально-политических медиадебатов смещается от логоса к пафосу или даже ирреалису, т.е. от аргументированных дебатов по актуальным проблемам – к более прямым заявлениям, часто основанным на различных формах эмоциональности или конструктах, которые не соответствуют действительности и не связаны с какой-либо логикой. Это так называемые фейковые новости, которые довольно широко распространены в «обществе постправды» (D'Ancona 2017). Однако, даже отвергая аргумент ради уменьшения зависимости от логоса, модель социальной интуиции Дж. Хайдта (Haidt 2001) говорит нам, что моральный аргумент является следствием моральной интуиции (то есть оценки, основанной на «внутреннем чувстве», которое в свою очередь базируется на эмоциях), тем самым подчеркивается важность ориентированных на пафос дискурсов.

Отражением этих процессов являются платформы социальных сетей, такие как Facebook и Twitter, сделавшие возможным взаимодействие, в котором сдвинуты границы между частным и общедоступным, где размышления о внутренней сущности сочетаются с осмыслением социальных отношений и созданием коллективной идентичности (Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021: 6). Социальные сети следует рассматривать не просто как платформы, а как

самостоятельные социальные и политические акторы / институты, поскольку они обладают способностью сдерживать и поляризировать дебаты и контролировать наше взаимодействие с помощью алгоритмов, которые в конечном итоге основаны на наших эмоциях. Это ставит вопросы о дискурсивных возможностях и в более общем плане – об институционализации социальной реальности (Berger & Luckman 1966).

Можно утверждать, что степень симпатии к недавним президентам США – Бараку Обаме и, в еще большей степени, Дональду Трампу, в немалой степени зависела от того, каким образом их эмоциональная привлекательность, передаваемая через доступные новые технологии, находила отклик у аудитории, и от использования ими новых медиаплатформ. В частности, в случае с Трампом был зафиксирован новый феномен, когда эмоциональные реакции политического лидера напрямую передавались субъектам, в буквальном смысле – последователям, минуя все известные ранее фильтры, характерные для традиционных СМИ. Это не единичный пример, который также свидетельствует о доминировании пафоса над логосом. Данное явление в целом стало характерной чертой политического дискурса.

Другие социальные платформы, такие как Youtube и Facebook, тоже претерпели аналогичные изменения, допуская более прямое взаимодействие между сторонами, участвующими в политическом процессе, и позволяя обмениваться эмоциональными репликами, которые легко скатываются к крайней степени интенсивности. Оскорбления, резкая критика, нападки, личные выпады, тирады встречаются чаще, чем гиперболическое восхищение, преувеличенная похвала, выражения симпатии и любви, хотя последнее тоже имеет место. Исследователи отмечают, что, как положительные, так и отрицательные эмоции притягивают и удерживают интерес аудитории (Bassols, Cros & Torrent 2013).

Таким образом, вторая из выделенных нами тенденций – это повышенная эмоционализация языка СМИ, регулирование которого также требует изучения. Новые медиа используются в качестве инструмента пропаганды для формирования различных идеологических установок. В некоторых случаях, например, для пропаганды языка вражды, считается возможным снижение порога допустимости того, что можно говорить в общественной сфере (Wodak 2019). В ответ мы наблюдаем усиление дебатов по проблеме политкорректности в языке СМИ (Assimakopoulos et al. 2018). Вопрос о том, до какой степени должна применяться «словесная гигиена» (Cameron 2012) (и должна ли она применяться), выходит за рамки данной статьи, так как он включает более широкую проблему прескриптивизма, которая заслуживает отдельного изучения.

Третья область исследования охватывает семиотические ресурсы, используемые СМИ, и связанные с ними прагматические импликации. Нам, лингвистам, семиотикам и социологам, необходимо адаптировать исследование «аффективно-дискурсивных практик» (Wetherelletal. 2015: 57) и стратегий к

изменяющемуся медиаландшафту, сосредоточив внимание на вербальных средствах конструирования эмоциональности с помощью лексико-грамматических ресурсов, таких как метафора, сравнение и другие риторические приемы (Emanatian 1995, Handa 2013, Richardson 2007), и невербальных средствах (размер шрифта, размер заголовка, использование цвета, изображений и т.д.), тем самым признавая важность мультимодальности в реализации дискурсов (см. Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2017, Ponton 2016). Мультимодальное построение смысла в «текстах-изображениях» (Mitchell 1986), встречающееся в мемах (Denisova 2019, Mina 2019), в первую очередь отдает предпочтение эмоциональному параметру коммуникации. Действительно, с помощью символического языка эмотиконов опытные пользователи могут передавать ряд эмоциональных реакций на размещенный контент, и таким образом создается интерактивное измерение, которое позволяет и поощряет наличие эмоционального компонента. Хотя Мультимодальная теория (Kress & van Leeuwen 2010, Bateman et al. 2017 и др.) находится еще только на начальной стадии развития, она представляет собой неоценимый вклад, как теоретический, так и практический, в дискурс-анализ в целом (Alba-Juez 2009, Ponton & Larina 2016, 2017), поскольку она направлена на объяснение значений в преобладающих семиотических практиках компьютерного века. Эти практики часто связаны с новыми кодами, заложенными в цвете, числах и других знаках современного символизма (Faliang et al. 2017) и широко распространены среди опытных, в основном молодых, пользователей нового поколения. Наконец, важно помнить, что любой знак (будь то текст или изображение) имеет смысл в определенном коммуникативном контексте, который должен быть общим у создателя и получателя сообщения. Как косвенно демонстрируют некоторые статьи этого выпуска (например, Музолф, Солопова и Кушнерук, Заппеттини), используемые в СМИ семиотические ресурсы основаны на культурно-специфичных системах, которые аналитик должен интерпретировать с эмической позиции, т.е. с позиции носителя конкретной культуры.

3. Статьи этого выпуска

Представленные в данном выпуске исследования, основанные на различных методологических подходах и имеющие разные аналитические фокусы, рассматривают ряд сформулированных выше ключевых вопросов.

Исследование Питера Булла и Мориса Уоддла посвящено эмоциональным реакциям телевизионной аудитории на речи политиков. Опираясь на работы М. Аткинсона по интерактивному поведению выступающего и аудитории и расширяя его подход, Булл и Уоддл детально исследуют динамику реакций аудитории (например, аплодисменты или освистывание) в различных национальных контекстах. Это исследование проливает свет на тонкое взаимодействие между риторическими приемами, используемыми политиками для получения реакции аудитории, которая, по мнению авторов, может рассматриваться как проявление разной степени ее эмоциональности.

Значимость данного исследования в том, что в его фокусе не только пропозиции высказываний, но и в значительной степени аффективные и эмоциональные элементы, оно способствует пониманию политической коммуникации.

Три статьи выпуска посвящены эмоциональной окраске медийного дискурса, касающегося дебатов и событий, связанных с Брекситом. Известный исследователь политической метафоры Андреас Музолф (Musolff 2004, 2016, 2019) анализирует использование пословицы *You cannot have your cake and eat it*[1] в газетных текстах, выступлениях и интервью политиков, чтобы доказать, что гиперболическое использование пословицы способствовало развитию высокоэмоциональных дискурсов, связанных с метафорическими сценариями освобождения (в конкретном случае – освобождения Великобритании от «гнета» Евросоюза). Музолф идет еще дальше и высказывает предположение о том, что распространение данной метафоры, на которой основывались многие аргументы в пользу того, чтобы выходить из Евросоюза или оставаться в нем, привело к поляризации и радикализации политического дискурса Великобритании.

Аналогичные идеи выдвигает и Франко Заппеттини, который, анализируя язык британской бульварной прессы, показывает, что эмоционально нагруженные представления о Великобритании как жертве и Евросоюзе как притеснителе, вызвали множество публичных дискуссий на этапах переговоров по Брекситу. Заппеттини указывает на важную роль эмоционального языка бульварной прессы в формировании общественного мнения об отношениях Великобритании и ЕС не только в контексте Брексита, но и в более широком историческом освещении евроновостей, поскольку он эффективно помогал повестке дня Брексита по принципу «пафос выше логоса». Важно отметить, что такое эмоциональное оформление Брексита стало доминирующим дискурсом кампании по выходу из Евросоюза в отличие от дискурса кампании против выхода, который был основан на «холодных фактах» (Zappettini 2019).

Барбара Данцигер также рассматривает дискурс Брексита на этапе переговоров. В фокусе ее внимания – эмоциональные реакции на нарративные сравнения 'Brexit is / feels like…'[2] . Она показывает, как сравнения могут сигнализировать о разном отношении к Брекситу. В статье подробно исследуется, как использовались подобные сравнения для выражения эмоциональной позиции по конкретным аспектам Брексита, делается акцент на том, как обычные граждане концептуализировали Брексит и как они отреагировали на его реализацию. Как Заппеттини и Музолф, Данцигер демонстрирует взаимосвязь между языковыми формами и предполагаемыми эмоциональными реакциями на них, подтверждая мнение об основополагающей роли СМИ

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[1] Букв.: Ты не можешь одновременно иметь свой пирог и съесть его. Приблизительные русские аналоги этой пословицы – совместить несовместимое; пытаться усидеть на двух стульях.

[2] Букв.: «Брексит – это / Брексит ощущается как …»).

в обеспечении связи между отношениями граждан и социально-политическими изменениями.

Барбара Левандовска-Томашчик и Петр Пензик исследуют эмоциональное воздействие польских медиатекстов, показывая, что они выполняют присущую им политическую функцию убеждения скорее при помощи скрытых, чем явных средств и способов. В статье рассматривается новое в теоретическом плане понятие «возникающая невежливость» ("emergent impoliteness"), которое используется для категоризации примеров, взятых из польского политического дискурса. Предложенный в исследовании метод позволил увидеть тонкие оттенки в использовании эмоций в политическом дискурсе, где случаи явной грубости или оскорбительной лексики могут быть дополнены намеками, двусмысленными выражениями, которые позволяют политику добиться желаемого эмоционального воздействия, сохраняя при этом явно вежливую публичную тональность.

Следующие три статьи посвящены российскому политическому дискурсу, а также дискурсу западных СМИ о России. В статье Т.Г. Добросклонской с позиций медиалингвистики и мультимодальности анализируется освещение 75-й годовщины победы в Великой отечественной войне. Автор использует теорию функционирования прессы (Galtung & Ruge 1965) и, развивая идеи своей предыдущей статьи (Добросклонская 2020), утверждает, что этап, на котором пресса «интерпретирует» события для своих читателей, наиболее важен для эмоционального воздействия. Её анализ позволяет оценить роль эмоционального дискурса в воспитании чувства национального единства и показывает, что эмоции занимают центральное место в политической интерпретации значимых общественных событий в СМИ.

Если исследование Т.Г. Добросклонской касается медийного дискурса внутри России, то О.А. Солопова и С.Л. Кушнерук представляют диахроническое исследование, в котором рассматривается роль эмоционального пресс-дискурса, представляющего образ России в глазах Запада. В статье показано, как изменение этого образа во времени соотносится с изменениями в геополитическом ландшафте. Исследование, так же сосредоточено на Второй мировой войне, когда статус России как ключевого союзника в борьбе с нацистской Германией способствовал использованию позитивных дискурсивных фреймов в отношении России, в дискурсе прессы подчеркивались ее героические качества, военная мощь и дружба с Великобританией. Теплота этих представлений может удивить читателей, более привыкших видеть Россию в дискурсе современной прессы в образе медведя и с чертами угрюмого, неуклюжего, разъяренного и жестокого дикого животного. Авторы объясняют эти изменения и соответствующие им эмоциональные валентности с точки зрения теории, которая определяет рамки прессы как подчиненные более широким политическим целям конкретных национальных групп.

В следующей статье В.И. Озюменко и Т.В. Ларина продолжают анализ процессов, которые управляют стратегиями фрейминга, утверждая, что мы

являемся свидетелями реального эмоционального манипулирования со стороны западных СМИ, служащих нагнетанию страха перед так называемой «российской угрозой» с целью оправдания жесткой и агрессивной политики сдерживания. Для подтверждения своего смелого тезиса авторы ссылаются на современную литературу о роли эмоционального дискурса в сфере политики и приводят многочисленные иллюстративные примеры из британской и американской прессы. Как и в статье Б. Левандовской-Томашчик и П. Пензика, авторы различают эксплицитные и имплицитные способы эмоционального воздействия, а также определяют нюансы и оттенки чувств в репрезентации политического дискурса о России. Среди эксплицитных средств воздействия обсуждается использование прессой идиом, гипербол, метафор, игра слов, культурные образы и анималистические символы, среди имлицитных рассматриваются пресуппозиция, вопросительные заголовки, проксимизация и др. Развивается тезис о том, что западные СМИ в последнее время все больше прибегают к эмоциональному дискурсу, обслуживая определенный политический класс, у которого есть свои причины поддерживать среди широкой публики состояние «паники» и страха в отношении России.

И, наконец, Дуглас Марк Понтон и Линдон Уэй показывают, как мультимодальность используется в социальных сетях в таких жанрах, как сатира, пародия и критика. В их статьях рассматриваются мемы как новая влиятельная форма медиадискурса, в значительной степени использующая эмоции. Понтон исследует прагматические возможности мемов, рассматривая их в основном с точки зрения традиционных канонов политической сатиры. Эмоциональной движущей силой этих мультимодальных сюжетов является смех, хотя за этой первоначальной реакцией скрываются и другие эмоции, такие как отвращение, гнев, страх и т.д. С точки зрения Понтона, сатирические политические мемы связаны с другими средствами воздействия. Они влияют на мнения зрителей и в идеальных случаях достигают своей цели. Подобно вирусам, с которыми их часто сравнивают, они проникают в сознание и в значительной степени добиваются своих непредсказуемых результатов независимо от желания или воли зрителей. Линдон Уэй рассматривает реакцию общества на бывшего президента США Дональда Трампа на сайте Alt-Right и показывает, что посвященные ему мемы основаны на эмоциональных дискурсах о национализме, расизме и авторитаризме. Примечательно, что Уэй напоминает нам, что мемы теперь являются частью новой политики, которая «общается с нами не логическими аргументами, а эмоционально – через короткие шутки и забавные образы». Сатира, конечно, часто встречается в СМИ, но новые способы создания, распространения и потребления таких сообщений, а также возможность мультимодального комбинирования различных дискурсивных форм должны заставить нас задуматься не только о том, как сатира, но и как экстремистские дискурсы переплетаются с эмоциями и СМИ.

4. Заключение

Мы не претендуем на то, что наш специальный выпуск, посвященный эмоционализации медиадискурса, дает полную картину сложного взаимодействия между медиа, эмоциями и дискурсом. Мы лишь очертили основные области исследований и попытались ответить на ряд актуальных вопросов. Тем не менее, мы полагаем, что представили убедительные доказательства того, что медиатизация эмоций стала особенностью повседневной социальной жизни, и показали, как эмоционализация СМИ реализуются через язык (в его более широкой интерпретации как системы знаков) и дискурс (в его широких социальных ответвлениях).

Подводя итоги обсуждения данной темы, мы хотели бы выделить некоторые из основных результатов. Предложенные исследования свидетельствуют о том, что эмоционализация становится одной из основных черт медиадискурса, и это в первую очередь достигается за счет дискурсивного перехода от логоса к пафосу, когда рациональные аргументы уступают место тенденции воздействовать на чувства аудитории. Мы полагаем, что решающим фактором этого сдвига и в целом использования эмоций акторами медиа является поиск эффективных стратегий убеждения. Что касается методологии, мы продемонстрировали, что критический дискурс-анализ может помочь понять потенциальное влияние стратегий убеждения и их прагматическое и перлокутивное воздействие на аудиторию и, в более общем плане, на реализацию конкретных политических и идеологических целей. Эти процессы могут быть полностью объяснены только с учетом контекста и его социально-политических, исторических и культурных аспектов, что говорит о том, что междисциплинарный подход к лингвистическому исследованию имеет множество практических преимуществ. Мы также подчеркнули необходимость анализа эмоциональных дискурсов с помощью мультимодального подхода, который рассматривает язык в его различных семиотических реализациях. Как показывают наши исследования, такое разнообразие методов и подходов может дать надежные результаты.

Мы надеемся, что этот специальный выпуск станет стимулом для будущих исследований эмоционализации публичного дискурса в намеченных нами направлениях и в свете актуальных социальных и политических проблем современного общества. Представляются перспективными дальнейшие исследования эмоций в различных видах СМИ (пресса, телевидение, радио, социальные сети и др.) и жанрах (новости, комментарии, интервью, политические выступления, политические дебаты и др.) и анализ их восприятия различными аудиториями.

Мы хотели бы воспользоваться этой возможностью, чтобы поблагодарить всех авторов за поддержку нашего проекта и высокое качество присланных статей. Благодаря вашему участию нам удалось провести живую дискуссию, которая пополнит междисциплинарные лингвистические исследования по этой важной теме. Мы надеемся на продолжение сотрудничества

и открыты для предложений о том, какую форму оно может принять: семинары, конференции, индивидуальные или групповые инициативы и так далее. Больше всего мы надеемся, что наш специальный выпуск вдохновит читателей на проведение исследований в этих областях и что они найдут в нем практические инструменты, которые помогут в реализации аналитических проектов.

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Research article

"Stirring it up!"
Emotionality in audience responses to political speeches

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Abstract
Speaker-audience interaction in political speeches has been conceptualised as a form of dialogue between speaker and audience. Of particular importance is research pioneered by Atkinson (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b) on the analysis of rhetorical devices utilised by politicians to invite audience applause. Atkinson was not concerned with emotionalisation in political speech-making, rather with how applause was invited in relation to group identities through ingroup praise and/or outgroup derogation. However, his theory has provided important insights into how speakers invite audience responses, and a powerful stimulus for associated research. The purpose of this article is to address the shortfall of emotionalisation research within the realm of political speeches. We begin with an account of Atkinson's influential theory of rhetoric, followed by a relevant critique. The focus then turns to our main aim, namely, how key findings from previous speech research can be interpreted in terms of emotionalisation. Specifically, the focus is on audience responses to the words of political speakers, and how different forms of response may reflect audience emotionality. It is proposed that both duration and frequency of invited affiliative audience responses may indicate more positive emotional audience responses, while uninvited interruptive audience applause and booing may provide notable clues to issues on which audiences have strong feelings. It is concluded that there is strong evidence that both invited and uninvited audience responses may provide important clues to emotionalisation – both positive and negative – in political speeches.
Keywords: *oratory, political speeches, rhetorical devices, applause, laughter, cheering, chanting, booing*

Научная статья

Эмоциональность в реакциях аудитории на выступления политиков

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Аннотация

Взаимодействие спикера и аудитории в политических выступлениях концептуализируется как форма диалога между ними. Особое значение в этой связи имеют исследования Аткинсона (Atkinson 1983, 1984a, 1984b), который первым обратился к риторическим приемам, используемым политиками с целью получения аплодисментов аудитории. Аткинсона интересовала не столько эмоциональность в политических выступлениях, сколько способ получения аплодисментов в привязке к групповой идентичности, а именно через внутригрупповую похвалу и / или внегрупповое уничижение. Его теория позволила понять, как выступающие вызывают отклик аудитории, и она послужила стимулом для дальнейших исследований в данной области. Цель статьи – восполнить недостаток исследований эмоционализации в политическом дискурсе. Мы остановимся на анализе теории риторики Аткинсона и отметим ряд ее недостатков. Затем перейдем к нашему главному вопросу, а именно – как результаты предыдущих исследований в области риторики могут быть интерпретированы с точки зрения эмоционализации. Основное внимание будет уделено реакции аудитории на слова политиков и тому, как различные формы ответа аудитории отражают ее эмоциональное состояние. Высказывается мнение, что как продолжительность, так и частота ожидаемых реакций аудитории могут указывать на более положительные эмоциональные отклики, в то время как случайные прерывистые аплодисменты и освистывание могут указывать на то, какие вопросы вызывают у аудитории неприятие и возмущение. Делается вывод, что как ожидаемые, так и неожиданные реакции аудитории, положительные и отрицательные, могут быть свидетельством эмоционализации политических выступлений, и они дают ключ к пониманию этого процесса.

Ключевые слова*: ораторское искусство, политические выступления, риторические приемы, эмоционализация*

1. Introduction

Oratory has always been an important form of political communication, its study dating back to the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. In the modern era, significant insights have been gained into how politicians interact with live audiences through the finely detailed microanalysis of audio, visual, and text-based materials across a broad range of research approaches. Whilst oratory was traditionally regarded as monologic, a central finding from this substantial body of research concerns the role of audiences in a two-way interchange. Indeed, research

on speaker-audience interaction has shown how political speeches can be conceptualised as a form of dialogue between speaker and audience. The key purpose of this article is to consider how emotional responses feature in those interactions.

To set the scene, we will first describe and review some highly influential and relevant studies. Of particular importance is research focused on rhetorical techniques utilised by politicians to invite audience applause, pioneered by Atkinson (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b). His theory of rhetoric is reported in the next section, which includes a critique based on subsequent related research. In section 3, the focus is on audience responses in political speeches in relation to speaker rhetoric and speech content, and how different forms of response may reflect different degrees of audience emotionality.

2. Atkinson's theory of rhetoric and its critique

Atkinson's key insight was to compare political speech-making with how people take turns in conversation. Thus, just as a listening participant in a conversation may take a turn by anticipating when the speaker will reach the end of an utterance (e.g., Duncan & Fiske 1985, Walker 1982), so audience members are able to anticipate when the speaker will reach what is termed a *completion point* (Jefferson 1990). This occurs via the rhetorical structure of the speech, which can facilitate applause at appropriate moments, and which is typically reflected in close speech-applause synchrony. So, just as conversation participants take it in turn to talk, speaker and audience may also take turns – although the "turns" of an audience are essentially limited to traditional displays of approval or disapproval (such as applause, cheering or booing). From his close analysis of speeches, Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b) revealed how *rhetorical devices* (RDs) embedded in the structure bring about the typically seamless transition between speech and applause.

Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b) identified four such RDs – *list, contrast, naming*, and expressing *gratitude* – which, when used appropriately by speakers, facilitate timely applause. For example, in conversation, the end of a list can signal the end of an utterance. Such lists typically consist of three items, and once the listener recognises that a list is under way, it is possible to anticipate when the speaker is about to complete the utterance. Similarly, in the context of political speeches, the *three-part list* may signal to the audience when to begin their applause.

The second RD identified by Atkinson (e.g., 1984a) is the contrast*,* which juxtaposes a word, phrase, or sentence with its opposite. To enhance effectiveness, the two parts of the contrast should be a close match in terms of construction and duration, thereby allowing the audience to more easily anticipate the point of completion. If the structure of the contrast is too brief, people may have insufficient time to recognise that a completion point is approaching, let alone to produce an appropriate response. According to Atkinson (1984a), the contrast is by far the most common RD used to invite applause.

A key feature of both the three-part list and the contrast is that they are not used *explicitly* to invite applause, for example, "Please put your hands together to give a round of applause" or "I ask for your support". However, these RDs are *implicit* invitations, embedded in the structure of the speech, thereby discretely indicating to the audience when applause is appropriate.

The two remaining devices identifiable from the work of Atkinson (1984a), naming and expressing gratitude, are often used jointly. In inviting the audience to show their appreciation for a particular individual, the speaker may start by giving some clues to the person's identity, then continue with their eulogising, before finally revealing the person's name. The audience is thus given ample time to realise that applause is expected and to anticipate to whom the speaker is referring, so that they are fully prepared when the name is finally announced (Atkinson 1984a). Such instances of naming are often combined with expressions of gratitude, where the speaker thanks the named person, who, in the context of political speeches, is often someone in attendance.

Expanding on the foregoing research, Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) identified five further RDs used to invite applause implicitly: namely, *puzzle-solution, headline-punchline, position taking, combination,* and *pursuit*. In a puzzle-solution device, the speaker first establishes a kind of puzzle (or refers to a problematic issue), to which they then offer or propose the solution – which is the significant and thereby applaudable part of their message. Similar in structure to the puzzle-solution, although somewhat simpler, is the headline-punchline device. Here, the speaker proposes to make an announcement, pledge, or declaration, then proceeds to make it. The approaching applaudable part of the message is made salient by the speaker giving advance notice of what they are about to say. The device of position taking, is recognisable by the speaker first describing a state of affairs for which they may be expected to take a strongly evaluative stance. Immediately following their description, the speaker clarifies their position by overtly and unambiguously either supporting or condemning the stated issue. Any of these devices may be used in combination with one or more of the others to further emphasise the approaching completion point and the applaudable part of the message. Finally, in cases where an audience fails to provide the desired timely response, speakers may employ a pursuit – often in the form of a re-emphasised or re-phrased point – to actively pursue the applause.

Heritage and Greatbatch's (1986) analysis was based on all 476 speeches from the conferences of the three main political parties (Conservative, Labour, and Liberal) broadcast on British television in 1981. They found contrasts to be associated with one third of the incidents of collective applause during speeches, and lists with 12.6%; hence, almost half of the applause was associated with the two main RDs identified originally by Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b). With the inclusion of their five newly-identified devices, 68% of collective applause was associated with these seven RDs.

A further two RDs were identified by Bull and Wells (2002). They argued for the inclusion of *jokes* – as jokes often lead to applause as well as laughter – and

what they termed *negative naming*. Distinct from naming, where the audience are invited to show their appreciation for a particular individual (Atkinson 1984a), negative naming is typified by applause brought about by the condemnation or ridicule of a named person. The negatively named person tends to be an opposition politician, but the device can be used more widely to castigate an opposing political party or some other group that the speaker wishes to criticise. Negative namings may even prompt a more raucous form of audience response, namely, booing, especially in speeches at political rallies in the United States (Bull & Miskinis 2015), but this tends not to be a common feature in the UK.

A clear demonstration of the audience impact of RDs comes from a recent study by O'Gorman and Bull (2021), in which they compared 14 speeches from two recent British political leaders: Theresa May (former Conservative Prime Minister, 2016–2019) and Jeremy Corbyn (former Labour Leader of the Opposition, 2015–2020). The speeches were delivered at party conferences in 2016 and during the general election campaign of 2017, and were closely matched in terms of when and where they took place, speech duration, and comparable stages for each politician during the campaign. This close matching was an important and novel feature of the methodological design, since thereby any observed differences in the speech-making of the two politicians might reasonably be attributed to their oratorical skills, not to the situational context. RDs occurring prior to each incident of collective applause were coded in terms of the eleven categories as listed above (lists, contrasts, naming, gratitude, puzzle-solution, headline-punchline, position taking, combination, pursuits, negative naming, and jokes). Almost all the incidents of collective audience applause (98%) occurred in response to these eleven RDs, thereby showing an almost perfect match between applause invitations and applause incidents.

The results of that study also showed that Jeremy Corbyn was significantly higher in terms both of the frequency of his RDs, and in the frequency with which he received collective applause. Notably, the two politicians differed markedly in their reputations as public speakers. Whereas Theresa May's podium performances were widely criticised, Corbyn was typically regarded more highly (O'Gorman & Bull 2021), and the analysis pinpoints aspects of his oratory which led to greater audience impact.

2.1. Critique of Atkinson's theory

An obvious objection to Atkinson's theorising is that audiences do not simply applaud RDs, they also respond to the *content* of a political speech. While Atkinson (1983, 1984a, 1984b) acknowledged that applause occurs in response to relatively narrow types of speech content (e.g., supporting the speaker's own party or attacking the opposition), he also argued that audiences are much *more* likely to applaud if such speech content is expressed in an appropriate RD. Similarly, Atkinson was also well aware that applause is affected by the speaker's *delivery*: nonverbal features associated with speech, both vocal (change in pitch, speed or

intonation) and non-vocal (stance, gaze or gesture). But again, Atkinson argued that audiences are much *more* likely to applaud if a RD is accompanied by appropriate delivery (Atkinson 1984a: 84).

Atkinson's (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b) original observations have made an enormous contribution to our understanding of political rhetoric. In summary, his key theoretical insight was the analogy between audience applause and conversational turn-taking. Just as people take turns in conversation by anticipating when the speaker will reach the end of an utterance, so audience members are able to anticipate when the speaker will reach a completion point through RDs embedded in the structure of talk. This enables them to applaud at appropriate moments, and is reflected in the close synchronisation between speech and applause.

However, while not detracting in any way from Atkinson's (1983, 1984a, 1984b) important theoretical insights, several major theoretical modifications to his conceptual framework have been proposed (Bull 2000, 2006, Bull & Wells 2002). Firstly, one important modification relates to the role of cross-cultural differences. Thus, based on Atkinson's theoretical framework, two studies of Japanese political speeches were conducted: the first on 36 speeches delivered in the 2005 Japanese general election (Bull & Feldman 2011), the second on 38 speeches from the 2009 Japanese general election (Feldman & Bull 2012).

One notable feature of the study by Bull and Feldman (2011) was that applause occurred most frequently in response to *requests for support* (29% of incidents of applause). This made an interesting comparison with the data for British political speeches. Whereas Atkinson's analyses (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b) were based on the proposal that applause invitations from British politicians are implicit (i.e., built into the construction of talk to indicate to the audience when applause is appropriate), in contrast, in these Japanese speeches, the politicians explicitly asked for support, which they received in the form of applause. Hence, it was decided to make a comparison of what were termed *explicit* and *implicit* RDs. Notably, the majority of applause incidents occurred in response to explicit invitations from the speaker: 68% in the study of the 2005 election (Bull & Feldman 2011), 70% in the study of the 2009 election (Feldman & Bull 2012).

Secondly, delivery is arguably as integral to applause invitation as is the use of RDs. Whereas Atkinson argued that appropriate delivery only increases the chance of a RD being applauded (Atkinson 1984a: 84), Bull and Wells (2002) proposed that delivery is important in indicating whether *or not* the message constitutes an invitation to applaud. For example, a speaker might use a three-part list, but their associated delivery suggests that they intend to continue with the speech. Hence, a RD in itself is not sufficient to constitute an applause invitation – it also has to be accompanied by appropriate delivery.

Thirdly, not all applause is "typically" synchronised with speech in the way in which Atkinson describes. In this context, he observed that "...displays of approval are seldom delayed for more than a split second after a completion point, and

frequently just before one is reached" (1984a: 33). This contrasts with the results of a more formal analysis by Bull and Noordhuizen (2000) of speaker-audience synchrony, based on six speeches delivered by the three leaders of the principal British political parties to their respective party conferences in 1996 and 1997. The study was intended to assess both the frequency of speaker-audience synchrony, and also to analyse instances where this failed to occur. The results showed that only 61% of audience applause was fully synchronised with speech in the way in which Atkinson described. A further discussion of the results of this study concerning synchrony, or a lack thereof, is presented below in section 3.1.

Fourthly, a significant distinction can be made between invited and uninvited applause (Bull 2000). Atkinson's analysis was concerned with applause invited through RDs, but uninvited applause can also occur through a misreading of RDs (Bull & Wells 2002) or, in the absence of RDs, as a direct response to the content of speech if that content is of particular importance to the audience (Bull 2000).

A good example of uninvited applause through misreading a RD comes from a speech by William Hague (7 October, 1999). At that time he was Leader of the Conservative Opposition, and subsequently became Foreign Secretary (2010-2014) in the coalition government led by David Cameron. Hague received collective applause when he said "What annoys me most about today's Labour politicians is not their beliefs – they're entitled to those – but their sheer, unadulterated hypocrisy. They say one thing and they do another". In this extract, Hague used the RD of a contrast twice in quick succession ("beliefs" are contrasted with "hypocrisy," "saying one thing" is contrasted with "doing another"). However, Hague also showed a very clear and visible intake of breath following the phrase "they do another," which suggested that his intention had been to continue. Hence, the applause which occurred immediately after "…they do another" was judged to have been uninvited and interruptive. From this perspective, uninvited applause may occur not only as a direct response to the content of the speech, but also through misreading of RDs as applause invitations, when the associated delivery suggests that the politician intends to continue with his speech.

Some good examples of uninvited applause as a direct response to speech content can be found in the analysis of speeches by Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn referred to above (O'Gorman & Bull 2021). In that study, it was noted that almost all incidents of collective applause occurred in response to invitations through RDs. However, in the speeches by Corbyn, there were a few exceptions of uninvited applause which could be seen as direct responses to speech content. So, for example, in the following extract (1a), the interruptive applause and cheering seems to be a direct response to the mention of the National Health Service:

(1a) *It was that great Labour government before I was born that gave us the National Health Service after the Second World War...* (CHEERING & APPLAUSE) *because they believed in the principles of an inclusive sustainable society* (campaign speech in Scarborough, Yorkshire, 2017).

Again, in the following example (1b), the interruptive applause seems to be a direct response to the mention of "children who are not properly fed":

(1b) *It's the election of 2017, the election of 2017 that says we want to develop our country fit for the 21ˢᵗ century. We don't pass by on the other side in life. We look out for, and support each other. So why should we have a government that passes by on the other side to the homeless, to the children who are not properly fed,* (APPLAUSE) *to the small businesses struggling to survive, to those who want to change and improve their lives, and build a strength to our communities* (campaign speech in Scarborough, Yorkshire, 2017).

The National Health Service (NHS) and child poverty are major issues for the Labour Party, and their mere mention in these speeches was enough to evoke applause without invitation through RDs. From this perspective, uninvited applause is of particular relevance to the analysis of emotionalisation in political discourse, since it may indicate highly emotive audience responses.

3. Emotionalisation in audience responses

3.1. Mismatches (lack of synchrony)

In the study of speaker-audience synchrony referred to above (Bull & Noordhuizen 2000), four ways were distinguished whereby lack of synchronisation may occur between speech and audience applause (referred to as *mismatches*). One form of mismatch – *interruptions of applause by the speaker* (speaking before the applause has subsided) – notably differs in certain important respects from the other three types of mismatch. In particular, whereas the other three relate to audience behaviour, this is the only category that deals with the behaviour of the speaker. Furthermore, as Atkinson (1985) pointed out, a charismatic orator – by speaking into the applause – may create an impression of overwhelming popularity, struggling to be heard while at the same time inhibiting and frustrating the audience. When the speaker does finally allow the audience an opportunity to respond, their desire to applaud may have intensified, thereby the speaker is seen as receiving a rapturous reception. As such, interruptions of applause by the speaker may be strategic, stirring up the audience into a high degree of expressed emotion. However, there is no reason to believe that every incident of the speaker interrupting applause is necessarily strategic in the way Atkinson (1985) describes. Audience applause can simply go on for so long that the speaker has to interrupt in order to continue with the speech. Thus, speaker interruption of audience applause is regarded as a mismatch, but one of a special kind.

One form of audience mismatch is *isolated applause* (claps from one or two people), which Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) distinguish from collective applause. Given that isolated applause does not involve a co-ordinated response from all or a large proportion of the audience, it may be regarded as a mismatch. Secondly, another form of audience mismatch (referred to as *delayed applause*) may occur if there is an extended silence between the speaker's utterance and the

applause. Silence suggests that the speaker was expecting applause, but for some reason the audience failed to respond appropriately, hence a failure of synchronisation between speaker and audience, just as an extended silence in conversation may also be considered awkward.

Thirdly, just as interruptions in conversation may be regarded as potentially disruptive to turn-taking, so too interruptive applause may be regarded as a form of mismatch. Such incidents may be initiated either by the speaker, as indicated above, or indeed by the audience. The audience may interrupt the flow of the speaker by applauding well in advance of a completion point; this can be regarded as a mismatch, whether or not the speaker goes on to complete what they were saying. However, brief *overlaps* where the audience starts to applaud just before the speaker completes an utterance (similarly, cases where the speaker resumes speaking as applause begins to subside) would not be regarded as mismatches, because they suggest the anticipation of a completion point. Such events are comparable to brief overlaps in conversation between one speaker and another, which also would not be regarded as interruptive.

Across all six speeches, audience mismatches accounted for a mean 29.2% of applause events, and speaker mismatches for 12.9% (Bull & Noordhuizen 2000). By far the most frequently occurring type of mismatch was applause where the audience interrupts the speaker (mean: 17.8% of applause events), followed by incidents where the speaker interrupts the applause (mean: 12.9%). Delayed applause accounted for a mean 7.5% of applause events; isolated applause was the least frequently occurring type of mismatch (mean: 4.7%).

Mismatches can occur for a whole variety of reasons (Bull & Noordhuizen 2000), but in the context of this paper they are of notable interest as potential indicators of audience emotional responses. Whilst both delayed and isolated applause may reflect a lack of audience enthusiasm, instances where audiences are interruptive of speakers may be important indicators of emotionality. For example, although interruptive applause may be seen as a failure of synchronisation (the audience fails to applaud at a completion point), it may also be seen to reflect audience enthusiasm – in their eagerness to endorse aspects of the speech, they do not wait for the completion point to be reached. This can be seen in the above extracts from Jeremy Corbyn's 2017 speech. In extract 1a, their cheering and applause following the mere mention of the NHS appears indicative of their attachment, and perhaps pride, in the UK's publicly funded healthcare system. In extract 1b, the timing of the interruptive applause is symptomatic of a negative emotional response – displeasure or even anger – related to the speaker calling attention to child poverty.

3.2. Other audience responses: laughter, cheering, chanting, and booing

Of course, not all audience responses take the form of applause. In the two studies of the Japanese general elections of 2005 (Bull & Feldman 2011) and 2009 (Feldman & Bull 2012), it was found that audience responses could be divided into

laughter and cheering, as well as applause. Although collective applause was the predominant form of audience response in the 2005 election (59% of responses), there was also a substantial proportion of laughter (25%) and cheering (16%). In the 2009 election, there was almost as much laughter (39%) as applause (40%); cheering was 9%.

In a study of speeches from the 2012 American presidential election (Bull & Miskinis 2015), chanting and booing were found in addition to laughter, cheering and applause. Most of these forms of response (applause, laughter, cheering and chanting) can be regarded as typically conveying a positive emotional message, which has been subsumed within the concept of affiliative responses (discussed in section 3.2.1). The only exception is booing, which may or may not be an affiliative response; because of its distinctive character, it is analysed separately (and discussed in section 3.2.2).

3.2.1. Affiliative responses

One way of assessing the impact of affiliative responses is to compare them with electoral performance, and this form of analysis has been conducted in three separate studies (Bull & Miskinis 2015, Feldman & Bull 2012, Goode & Bull 2020).

The study by Feldman and Bull (2012) was based on 38 speeches delivered during the 2009 Japanese general election by 18 candidates for the House of Representatives (the lower house of the National Diet of Japan). The results showed no significant correlations between electoral success (measured in terms of whether or not the candidate was elected, and the proportion of votes cast) and what was termed *affiliative response rate* (incidents of applause, laughter, or cheering per minute of speech). However, it is important to stress that the speeches analysed in this study were delivered at indoor meetings (at places such as school classrooms or gymnasia), attended principally by individuals who were already supporters of the candidates and their political group, and were most likely to vote for them. Those who gather at these meetings do so more to encourage the candidates and show loyalty to them and their political party, rather than to appraise the political views and policies of speech-making candidates before deciding for whom to cast their vote. At these "rallies of the faithful" (Feldman & Bull 2012: 393), affiliative responses were only to be expected. Hence, it is perhaps unsurprising that affiliative response rate was not predictive of electoral success.

In contrast, two other studies were conducted in the context of the American presidential elections of 2012 (Bull & Miskinis 2015) and 2016 (Goode & Bull 2020), based on speeches delivered in informal public meetings without a pre-selected audience, in a sample of so-called swing states. Swing states are those in which no single candidate or party has overwhelming support. In the American political system, it is the electoral college that votes in the president, not the popular vote; furthermore, whoever wins a state takes all the electoral college votes for that state. Thus, winning swing states is critical, and is the best opportunity for the main

political parties to make significant gains in the electoral college. In these open public meetings, it was hypothesised that affiliative responses might be a more significant indicator of speaker popularity, hence, affiliative response rates in this study would be predictive of electoral success.

In the study based on the 2012 election (Bull & Miskinis 2015), ten speeches were analysed, delivered in informal outdoor locations (stadiums, parks, and fields) by the two candidates (Barack Obama, the incumbent Democrat president, and Mitt Romney, the Republican challenger) in the following swing states: Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio, and Iowa. The rate of affiliative responses (per minute) was correlated for both candidates with their election results (percentage of votes) for the ten swing state speeches. The results showed a significant positive correlation between affiliative response rates and electoral success (r = .67, p = .017, Pearson's one-tailed). Notably, Obama had a higher affiliative response rate and a higher percentage of the vote in Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, and Iowa; Romney had a higher affiliative response rate and higher percentage of the vote in North Carolina.

In the study based on the 2016 election (Goode & Bull 2020), the candidates were Hilary Clinton (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican). In the following swing states, the candidates delivered the speeches in both indoor and outdoor locations (auditoriums, gymnasiums, halls, and parks): Michigan, Pennsylvania, Florida, New Hampshire, and Colorado. Audiences attended meetings which required prior bookings, but did not require a declaration of party affiliation. In this regard, they can be interpreted as unselected, but more restrictive to the general public than the 2012 presidential election campaign speeches that took place in venues allowing free attendance (Bull & Miskinis 2015).

In this study (Goode & Bull 2020), both the affiliative response rate (number of responses per minute) and total audience response times were correlated with the election results (percentage of votes received by each speaker) for the ten swing-state speeches. (As speeches varied in length, the total audience response time was then calculated as a proportion of overall speech time). Results showed a non-significant correlation between affiliative response rate (.20), but a significant correlation between duration of audience responses and electoral success (.73, $p < .01$).

Notably, the popularity of a speaker may be reflected in both the duration and frequency of affiliative responses. If audiences respond more frequently with affiliative responses or if those responses go on for a longer period of time, this suggests a more positive emotional response to the speaker (i.e., audiences are motivated towards expressions of approval and appreciation of the speaker or the speaker's message). This is supported by the significant correlations with electoral performance, which show that affiliative response rate (Bull & Miskinis 2015) and response duration (Goode & Bull 2020) are predictive of electoral success.

3.2.2. Booing

Booing is a highly emotive audience response, whereby audiences typically express their disapproval of the speaker. According to Clayman (1993), the way in which booing occurs is quite different from that of applause. Booing tends to be preceded by a sizeable delay, by another form of audience behaviour (e.g., clapping, heckling, jeering, or shouting), or by a combination of these. Clayman further proposed that there are two principal ways in which an audience can coordinate its behaviour, which he refers to as *independent decision-making* and *mutual monitoring*. In independent decision-making, individual audience members may act independently of one another yet still manage to coordinate their actions, for example, through applause in response to RDs. In what Clayman calls mutual monitoring, individual response decisions may be guided, at least in part, by reference to the behaviour of others. Responses organised primarily by independent decision-making typically begin with a "burst" that quickly builds to maximum intensity, as many audience members begin to respond together; whereas, in contrast, mutual monitoring tends to bring about a *staggered onset*, as the initial reactions of a few audience members prompt others to respond. Clayman writes that "...clappers usually act promptly and independently, while booers tend to wait until other audience behaviours are underway" (1993: 124).

Interestingly, data from the study by Bull and Miskins (2015) showed evidence for two distinctive types of booing: disaffiliative (the audience boo the speaker), and affiliative (the audience align with the speaker to boo political opponents). The following example of disaffiliative booing comes from a speech delivered by the Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney to a predominantly hostile audience at a conference in Houston, Texas during the 2012 presidential election (11 July, 2012). "If our goal is jobs, we have to stop spending a trillion dollars more than we take in every year. And so, I am gonna eliminate every non-essential programme I can find. That includes Obamacare. [1] And I'm gonna work to reform…". Not only was Romney booed for this statement, there were shouts of "No", "Shame" and "Get off the stage", which appear indicative of the audience expressing their disapproval and aversion at his proposed removal of Obamacare.

A contrasting example of affiliative booing can be seen in the following statement from a speech by Barack Obama (the incumbent Democratic president) at Colorado State University (28 August, 2012): "Last week my opponent's [i.e., Romney's] campaign went so far as to write you off as a lost generation. That's you according to them". When the audience booed this statement, they could be seen not as attacking Obama, but as aligning themselves with Obama by expressing their disapproval of his opponent Romney. Affiliative booing is typically preceded by RDs, hence may be seen as an invited response, unlike disaffiliative booing, which is typically not preceded by RDs, given that it is an unwelcome response for the

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[1] In 2010, President Obama introduced the Affordable Care Act – known as *Obamacare* – which represented major changes to the provision of health care in the USA.

speaker. In the eleven speeches by Obama and Romney, 7% of audience responses took the form of affiliative booing, most frequently associated with the RD of negative naming (accounting for 55% of devices associated with affiliative booing).

Negative naming does also occur in British political speeches, but typically as a form of applause invitation (Bull & Wells 2002), for example, a speaker derides or ridicules a named opponent, which tends to prompt expressions of audience approval in the form of clapping. However, no instances of affiliative booing were identified in any of the aforementioned analyses of British political speeches (e.g., Atkinson 1984a, Bull 2006, Heritage & Greatbatch 1986); affiliative booing seems to be characteristic primarily to American political culture. Notably, neither negative naming nor booing (affiliative or disaffiliative) were observed in either of the foregoing studies of Japanese speeches (Bull & Feldman 2011, Feldman & Bull 2012), and very rarely in a study of Norwegian speeches (Iversen & Bull 2016). However, some instances of booing were observed in an analysis of French presidential speeches (Ledoux & Bull 2017), although in every instance the booing was exclusively affiliative, invited by the speaker to attack the rival candidate, typically through use of negative naming. These findings are strong indicators of cross-cultural differences in terms of audience emotionalisation in political speeches.

Most of the audience responses discussed above (applause, laughter, cheering, and chanting) were affiliative, that is to say, the audience are invited to align with the speaker. However, even booing can be affiliative, as shown in the analyses of both American and French speeches (Bull & Miskinis 2015, Ledoux & Bull 2017). Of course, booing can also be disaffiliative, for example, when Romney was booed in his speech in Texas (Bull & Miskinis 2015); but on occasions so too can applause, cheering, laughter, and chanting (e.g., audiences may slow hand clap, cheer, or laugh at a pratfall by the speaker). From this perspective, it is not the responses themselves that are intrinsically affiliative or disaffiliative, but how they are used and in what context. The range of nuanced speaker-audience interaction revealed by such studies clearly highlights the potential for future emotionalisation research.

4. Conclusions

Overall, in this paper it has been proposed that both invited and uninvited audience responses provide important clues to emotionalisation in political speeches. So, for example, the popularity of a speaker may be reflected in both the duration and frequency of affiliative responses. If audiences respond more frequently with affiliative responses or if those responses go on for a longer period of time, both suggest a more positive emotional response to the speaker. This view is supported by the significant correlations with electoral performance, which show that both the rate and the duration of affiliative responses (Bull & Miskinis 2015, Goode & Bull 2020) are predictive of electoral success.

Furthermore, both uninvited and interruptive applause can provide notable clues to issues on which the audience has strong feelings. Whereas interruptive

applause may reflect audience enthusiasm, an orator who interrupts applause may be both inhibiting and frustrating, such that when finally allowed an opportunity to respond, the audience applause may be noticeably more enthusiastic and rapturous. Thereby, the speaker may stir up the audience into a high degree of expressed emotion (Atkinson 1985).

Booing is in a separate category of its own. It is a highly emotional audience response, whereby audiences may express their disapproval of the speaker. Data from Bull and Miskinis (2015) showed evidence for two distinctive types of booing: disaffiliative (the audience boo the speaker), and affiliative (the audience align with the speaker to boo political opponents). In cases of affiliative booing, speakers appear to motivate audiences towards an expression of negative emotionality, typically directed not at anyone in attendance, but at disfavoured opponents (individuals or groups).

Applause alone was the focus of Atkinson's original theory of speaker-audience interaction (e.g., 1983, 1984a, 1984b), but subsequent research has both refined his analysis of applause (through the detailed examination of mismatches), and extended it to other forms of audience response (cheering, laughter, chanting, and booing). Also, Atkinson's original theory was not concerned with emotionalisation in political speech-making, but rather with how applause was invited in relation to group identities through ingroup praise and/or outgroup derogation. However, his analyses have provided important insights into speaker-audience interaction, and a powerful stimulus for associated research. Thereby, useful clues have been provided for the analysis of emotionalisation in political speeches, through the development of a theoretical framework whereby the dialogic interaction between speakers and their audiences can be conceptualised and more clearly understood.

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Research article

Hyperbole and emotionalisation:
Escalation of pragmatic effects of proverb and metaphor in the "Brexit" debate

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Abstract

(How) Can the use of hyperbole in metaphorical idioms and scenarios contribute to an increase in emotionalisation of public debates? Using a research corpus of quotations from British politicians' speeches and interviews and of press texts 2016–2020, this paper investigates hyperbolic formulations in Brexit-related applications of the proverb 'You cannot have your cake and eat it' and related scenarios of national liberation, which appear to have strongly boosted emotionalised public debates. For instance, Brexit proponents' reversal of the *cake* proverb into the assertion, 'We can have our cake and eat it', and their figurative interpretation of Brexit as a war of liberation (against the EU) triggered highly emotional reactions: triumphant affirmation among followers, fear and resentment among opponents. The paper argues that the combination of figurative speech (proverb, metaphor) with hyperbole heightened the emotional and polemical impact of the pro-Brexit argument. Whilst this effect may be deemed to have been rhetorically successful in the short term (e.g. in referendum and election campaigns), its long-term effect on political discourse is more ambivalent, for it leads to a polarisation and radicalisation of political discourse in Britain (as evidenced, for instance, in the massive use of hyperbole in COVID-19 debates). The study of hyperbole as a means of emotionalisation thus seems most promising as part of a discourse-historical investigation of socio-pragmatic effects of figurative (mainly, metaphorical) language use, rather than as an isolated, one-off rhetorical phenomenon.

Keywords: *emotionalisation, hyperbole, metaphor, proverb, scenario*

Научная статья

Гипербола и эмоционализация:
усиление прагматических эффектов пословиц и метафор в дебатах о Брексите

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Аннотация

В данной статье ставится вопрос – может ли использование гиперболы в метафорических идиомах и сценариях способствовать эмоционализации публичных дебатов, а если да, то как. В контексте Брексита исследуются гиперболические высказывания с использованием

поговорки *You cannot have your cake and eat it* и связанные с ней сценарии национального освобождения, которые вызвали эмоциональные публичные дебаты. Например, сторонники Брексита превратили данную поговорку в утверждение *We can have our cake and eat it*, а их образная интерпретация Брексита как освободительной войны (против ЕС) вызвала сильную эмоциональную реакцию: у последователей Брексита – эмоциональную поддержку, у их оппонентов – страх и негодование. Материал для исследования извлекался из корпуса цитат, использованных в выступлениях британскими политиками, а также из интервью и газетных текстов (2016–2020 гг.). В статье показано, что сочетание фигур речи (пословиц, метафор) с гиперболой усиливает эмоциональное и полемическое воздействие на аудиторию. Хотя этот эффект можно считать риторически успешным в краткосрочной перспективе (например, в ходе референдума и избирательных кампаний), его долгосрочное влияние на политический дискурс более амбивалентно, поскольку оно ведет к поляризации и радикализации политического дискурса в Великобритании (о чем свидетельствует, например, широкое использование гипербол в дебатах о COVID-19). Таким образом, наиболее перспективным представляется изучение гиперболы как средства эмоционализации в парадигме дискурсивно-исторического исследования социально-прагматических эффектов образного (в основном, метафорического) использования языка, а не как изолированного, единичного риторического средства.

Ключевые слова: *эмоциональность, гипербола, метафора, пословица, сценарий*

1. Introduction

The concept of emotionalisation implies a heightening of emotional intensity, as defined in psychology and also in an approach to linguistics that is interested in the "emotive" and "interpersonal" aspects of language (Alba-Juez & Larina 2018, Jakobson 1960, Halliday 1978, Mackenzie & Alba-Juez 2019). It presupposes a basic 'given-ness' of emotions in discourse and focuses on their escalation to a higher degree of outspoken-ness and/or crassness, perhaps even reaching the realm of taboo (Allan & Burridge 2009, Bednarek 2019). Political discourse provides many examples of such emotionalisation, because its contents are usually controversial and because its participants, e.g. politicians and media, compete for attention and approval from, the public and have an interest in surpassing each other in expressing emotionally charged attitudes towards and judgements about the respective topics. A high degree of emotional intensity is thus a characteristic of public polemic but it can always be ratcheted up even further. Its analysis thus entails an explanation of how a given emotional aspect of language use is further escalated.

In this article I will investigate the role of hyperbole in emotionalising communication in politics. Since Antiquity hyperbole has been well-known and studied as a rhetorical trope (Lanham 1991: 86, Lausberg 1984: 74, 138) – even Aristotle (2000: 3.11.16) connected hyperbole with the passions and passionate speech. More recently, hyperbole has become the object of research in several branches of linguistics, specifically Pragmatics including Relevance Theory (Carston & Wearing 2011, 2015, Norrick 2004), Cognitive Studies, especially regarding the interplay with metaphor and irony (Barnden 2017, 2018, 2020,

Burgers, Brugman, Renardel de Lavalette & Steen 2016, Burgers, Renardel de Lavalette & Steen 2018, Colston & Keller 1998, Peña & Ruiz de Mendoza 2017) and political discourse studies (Kalkhoven & De Landtsheer 2016). They have emphasised the scalar and evaluative character of hyperbole and have noted its frequent usage in polemic and emotive discourse. Here we take a corpus-based view at the relationship of hyperbole and metaphor, specifically their combination in political discourse, both in the short term but also in a medium-term discourse-historical perspective (Reisigl & Wodak 2009).

Based on a research corpus drawn from politicians' speeches and interviews and press texts dealing with Britain's withdrawal from the European Union ("Brexit") from 2016 to 2020, the paper investigates the role of hyperbolic metaphors. Our central example are hyperbolic applications of the proverb 'You cannot eat your cake and have it (too)', which together with further hyperbolic metaphors helped to heighten the emotional and polemical impact of the pro-Brexit argument. Whilst this effect may be deemed rhetorically successful in the short term (insofar as pro-Brexit-hyperbole facilitated victory in 2016 referendum and Johnson's electoral victory in 2019), its long-term effect on political discourse in Britain is ambivalent. Its boost for the emotionalisation of public discourse precipitated a general polarisation and radicalisation of the political public, which can also be witnessed in the debate about the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Brexit, emotions and metaphor

Over the past five years, the public debates in the United Kingdom (UK) about Britain's withdrawal from the (EU), which was officially completed in January 2020 have been a prominent site for emotionalised political debates Britain (Buckledee 2018, Koller, Kopf & Miglbauer 2019, Charteris-Black 2019, Oliver 2018). An early climax of that debate was reached in June 2016 when, after about four months of intensive (and several years of preparatory) campaigning for Brexit by "Eurosceptics", a 51.9% majority of the UK electorate voted in favour of withdrawal. The most prominent emotions connected with the Eurosceptic motivation for Brexit were ANGER, e.g. about a perceived unfair financial and administrative burden on Britain imposed by the EU, FEAR, e.g. of growing mass immigration from other EU countries, and PRIDE, e.g. in Britain's national sovereignty and its history as an independent nation state (Rowinski 2017, Spiering 2015). During the referendum campaign, Brexit opponents expressed and propagated their emotions, too, e.g. FEAR of their nation losing allies in the EU and, with them, economic and political clout internationally, but they were beaten back by pro-Brexit voices who denounced such emotions as .being deliberately invented, e.g. through the dysphemistic label "Project Fear" (Payne 2016, Pesendorfer 2020).

Metaphors have played a key role in expressing both the afore-mentioned basic emotions triggered by Brexit, as well as the more complex, mediated reactions during the different phases of the public debate as it unfolded between 2016 and

2020 (Charteris-Black 2019, Dallison 2017a, b, Đurović & Silaški 2018, Musolff 2017, 2019). This is no surprise as figurative language is a fundamental characteristic of political communication (Lakoff 1996, Lakoff & Johnson 1980/2003, Musolff 2016). But the frequency, intensity and complexity of Brexit-metaphorisations was so pervasive that it led to the emergence of a special "Metaphor Brexicon" (Charteris-Black 2019: 323) as part of the Brexit-jargon, many of whose terms and allusions are comprehensible only to insiders of the British media "community of practice" (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999). Consider the following headlines:

(1) Why shouldn't we try to have our Brexit cake and eat it too? (*The Daily Telegraph,* 29/11/2016)
(2) Brexit weekly briefing: cake off the menu as hard choices loom. (*The Guardian,* 04/07/2017)
(3) The delusions of cakeism (*The New European*, 15/09/2017)
(4) Rosbif [*sic*] with cake. What Europe thinks of Boris Johnson (*The Economist*, 22/06/2019)

Without further contextualisation, these headlines are enigmatic: at best, readers can make out that Brexit is viewed, strangely enough, as a "cake", that there is an ideology based on it ("cakeism", comparable to other "isms") and that a weird combination of "rosbif" (a supposed mock-European loan of English *roast beef*) with cake is associated with Boris Johnson, the British Prime Minister at the time of writing and the leading pro-Brexit-campaigner from February 2016 onwards.[1] If they have a good knowledge of English idioms they may recognise the allusion to the proverb, *You cannot have your cake and eat it (too)* in (1),[2] but its usage in that example is problematic because it asks a seemingly senseless question: if common sense – as embodied in the proverb – states that 'eating a cake' and also 'having it' (in the archaic sense of *keeping* it) is impossible and/ or unjustifiable,[3] why suggest that it is worth trying?

In the following section we focus on applications of this proverb as an example of how a combination of metaphor and hyperbole can trigger the intensification of emotional reactions and lead to a polarisation and radicalisation of public debate. The sample of applications of the *have/eat cake* proverb includes 208 instances of the phrase and amounts to 139,396 word tokens; it is drawn from print and online versions of *Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Financial Times, Marxism*

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[1] See e.g. *The Daily Telegraph,* 21 February 2016: "Boris Johnson backs Brexit as he hails 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' to vote to leave EU".

[2] For present-day usage of the proverb and its history dating back to the mid-16th century see Ayto 2010: 53; *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable* 2001: 189, *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* 1993, vol. 1: 317; Speake 2015: 147-148; Wilkinson 2008: 47.

[3] *The Daily Telegraph*, for instance, usually applies the proverb in its standard version, e.g. in a headline from 2014, "The whining rich can't have their cake and eat it", which denounced as hypocritical the attitude of those who "monopolise wealth in the 21st Century [and still] moan about taxes" (*The Daily Telegraph,* 11/08/2014).

Today, New Statesman, The Daily Telegraph, The Economist, The Guardian/Observer, The Independent, The National, The New European, The Scotsman, The Spectator, The Street, The Sun, The Times/Sunday Times, The Yorkshire Post.[4] we first give an overview of the "discourse career" of the *cake-Brexit* metaphor and subsequently analyse its emotionalisation effect before contextualising it later on in the wider perspective of Brexit-hyperbole.

3. Proverb and hyperbole

The application of a special version of the proverb, *You cannot have your cake and eat it,* to Brexit by Boris Johnson was originally a self-quotation. Back in 2009, i.e. long before Brexit but when he was already the Mayor of London, Johnson characterised his political ambitions by way of a metaphor that alluded to the well-known proverb in an interview:

> (5) "Let's not beat about the bush here. My policy on cake is still pro having it and pro eating it." (*The Daily Telegraph,* 10/04/2009)

Johnson's interview answer can be interpreted as a (mildly) self-ironical confirmation that his political ambitions were extremely high but their achievability was uncertain.[5] In order to avoid being seen as over-ambitious, he played with the standard 'impossibility/ absurdity' sense of the proverb but also indicated a determination to 'try the impossible'. It had a hyperbolic element that added a humorous aspect and ambiguity:[6] strictly speaking, *having/keeping a cake* and *eating the same cake* is impossible. Thus, Johnson presented a goal that he intended to as an 'impossibility' – while it was *not absolutely* impossible after all to achieve (as we know with hindsight, given his rise to power as the UK's Prime Minister within a decade). This internal contradiction makes his statement quasi-paradoxical: Johnson used the extreme end of the scale of ambition as a benchmark instead of the more plausible but less exciting notion of achieving a specific, limited goal (which would have equalled *eating the cake but not keeping it*). His formulation fulfilled the basic condition of hyperbolic language use as "an expression that is more extreme than justified given its ontological referent" (Burgers, Brugman, Renardel de Lavalette & Steen 2016: 166). Its "extreme" aspect

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[4] This database is part of a larger research corpus ("EUROMETA") of figurative language use in British and German debates about European Union politics (Musolff 2016: 14–15).

[5] Within the largely sympathetic article in the *Daily Telegraph*, the proverb-application was embedded in a passage where Johnson was described as "is a Merry England Tory, who stands for a generous conservatism in which cakes and ale are never willingly sacrificed on the altar of some desiccated doctrine" (*The Daily Telegraph,* 10/04/2009). Johnson himself has written regularly for the *Daily Telegraph* since the mid-1990s (Gimson 2006, 90–102; Purnell 2011: 106–126),

[6] Ambiguity, hyperbole as well as exaggerated understatement are among Johnson's favourite rhetorical techniques. In the same year as that of the *Daily Telegraph* interview he described himself as a "mere Mayor of London, as a mere toenail in the body politic" (*BBC Newsnight*, 05/10/2009), thus achieving at the same time an ostentatious self-denigration (as a lowly 'toenail') and its self-referential disclaimer (by pointing to his position as Mayor of the nation's capital).

lay in the degree of *qualitative exaggeration*, which is one of the main types of hyperbole: something that is in fact *not* viewed by the speaker as being completely unachievable is presented as if it were (Colston & O'Brien 2000, Norrick 2004).

Seven years later Johnson applied this proverb version to announce his Brexit-ambitions in as positive a light as possible to the right-wing tabloid *The Sun*. By this time, he had become Foreign Secretary in the Conservative government under Prime Minister Theresa May, which had emerged after the 2016 Brexit-referendum:

> (6)   'We'll have our cake and eat it'. BORIS Johnson has declared his support for a hard Brexit […]. He also insisted we will get immigration controls back as well as continuing open trade with the EU. Mr Johnson told The Sun: "Our policy is having our cake and eating it. We are Pro-secco but by no means anti-pasto". (*The Sun,* 30/09/2016)

The pun on Italian culinary products in the last sentence showed that Johnson still tried to appear witty and jovial, but his proverb-application was no longer meant as an ironic "echo" (Wilson & Sperber 2012) of the standard (negated) proverb, but rather as an emphatic (non-standard) assertion applied to UK policy towards the EU. Johnson's policy promise of *having the cake and eating it* openly announced that the UK government tried to achieve two objectives that were often seen as excluding each other, i.e. maintaining on the one hand full "immigration controls" and on the other hand "open trade". The EU's "internal market" system, however, implied that the free movement of people (i.e. migration from one EU country to another) and free trade were interdependent; Johnson's aim of keeping freedom of trade for the UK whilst ditching freedom of movement was therefore an implicit challenge to the EU's regulations. Unlike his 2009 usage, Johnson's announcement of combining both goals was intended to be received as a reassuring promise that the British government would try to achieve maximum benefits from Brexit. Emotionally, it could be linked to FEAR (or at least UNEASE) that the final Brexit outcome might turn out to be disadvantageous but also to national PRIDE in Britain being strong enough to negotiate a favourable deal. The promise aimed, unsurprisingly, at reinforcing the Brexit-supporters' feelings of optimism.

This interpretation seems to me more likely than the reading of it as a defensive argument in a "moral dilemma" (Charteris-Black 2019: 3). Brexit – with its one-sided ambitions for a maximum, 'win-win' outcome for the British side may have been a moral dilemma for its opponents but these were not at all Johnson's (or the *Sun's*) chief addressees. Johnson's statement in example (6) is a proud, triumphant announcement of following up the promises made before the referendum until a full victory can be declared. Its hyperbole is not tinged by irony; instead, it pronounces the achievability of the impossible as a viable policy and tops it up with jokey wordplay. Of course Johnson was aware of the Brexit-opponents and other critics' derision for his optimism about Britain *having its cake and eating it*. Such critics could be found across the whole range of media. Thus, the left-wing *Guardian* and the liberal *Economist,* but also the pro-conservative *Spectator* and even the fervently pro-Brexit *Daily Express* admonished him:

(7)   No Boris, you can't have your Brexit cake and eat it too. (*The Guardian*, 22/02/2016)

(8)   […] the free having and eating of cake is not an option. (*The Economist*, 25/06/2016)

(9)   Perhaps all will be for the best in this the best of all possible worlds […] but it is infantile to suppose these [British Brexit goals] will not be countered, or even matched [by the EU]. Other people want cake too. (*The Spectator*, 02/10/2016)

(10) 'Britain can't have its cake and eat it' – Brussels will gang up on UK over Brexit talks. (*Daily Express*, 05/10/2016)

Examples (7) and (8) invoke the standard proverb version as the common-sense position (from their standpoint) against Johnson's folly. (9) suggests that if the UK takes an egotistic stance, so will probably "others", i.e. the EU as a whole and/or its various member states. (10) on the other hand insinuates that the others will "gang up" on Britain to not allow its *having and eating* the Brexit-*cake*. In (10) Johnson's policy is implicitly endorsed in principle but still viewed as doomed because of the intransigence of the EU as the opposing party. Notwithstanding the varying stances taken in these reactions, all of them demonstrate that by the summer/autumn of 2016 Johnson's *can have and eat cake* proverb version had already acquired catchphrase status, allowing journalists to use it as an allusion (e.g. "Other people want cake too") on the assumption that their readers were sufficiently familiar with it to recognise its "echo" in ironical references and contradictions. Its popularity even spread to the EU where the then president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, engaged in an elaborate dismissal of what he dubbed Johnson's "cake philosophy":

(11) "The brutal truth is that Brexit will be a loss for all of us, […] There will be no cakes on the table for anyone. There will be only salt and vinegar." (quoted in *The Independent*, 13/10/2016)

But whilst Johnson's critics from various quarters took pot shots at his proverb use, his allies in the now Brexit-pursuing government copied his recipe for hyperbolic metaphor. The strongly Brexit-enthusiastic International Trade Secretary Liam Fox was quoted with the prediction that Britain would become

(12) "[…] the world's brightest beacon and champion of open trade" (quoted in *Daily Express*, 26 September 2016).

Another ally, the new secretary of state appointed for leading the negotiations with the EU, David Davis, bragged that the

(13) "negotiating cards with the EU [were] incredibly stacked in our way." (quoted in *The Guardian*, 12/10/2016)

In November 2016, Johnson's proverb version was even given an accidental but quasi-official endorsement by May's Cabinet when a Conservative party aide, Julia Dockerill, was photographed carrying notes into the Prime Minister's Office

which indicated that the government's Brexit preparations were based on Johnson's slogan. It read: "'What's the model? Have cake and eat it'" (*Daily Mirror,* 29/11/2016). Ignoring several dementis by government spokespersons, the British press almost unanimously interpreted the notes as representing the gist of the government's strategy (Musolff 2019: 211-212). The phrase was now also associated with the Prime Minister Theresa May, who was, for instance, reported as "still telling Britons they [could] have their cake and eat it" by "promising barrier-free access to the single market while stopping EU migrants" (*The Economist,* 01/04/2017).

However, after a national election in June 2017 that deprived the Conservatives of an outright majority in parliament, and with increasing experience of harder-than-expected negotiations with the EU, the government's ostentatious optimism as expressed in Johnson's *eat and have cake* promise began to weaken. Several newspapers reported that May was recognizing the unfeasibility of retaining all benefits of EU membership without incurring any losses. This change motivated headlines such as,

> (14) Britain drops 'have cake and eat it' strategy (*The Independent,* 02/072017) or
> (15) Cake off the menu as hard choices loom (*The Guardian,* 04/07/2017).

The asserted version of the proverb was now increasingly linked to the goal of a so-called "hard" Brexit that would sever most economic and administrative ties with the EU and incur substantial economic risks. Finance experts in particular, e.g. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philipp Hammond, and the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, urged caution about such a prospect by "discourag[ing] talk of cake" (Hammond, quoted in *Daily Mail,* 27/06/2017) and denouncing as an illusion the thought that Brexit would be "a gentle stroll or smooth path to a land of cake and consumption" (Carney, quoted in *Daily Mail,* 20/062017).

However, if Carney and Hammond had intended to bury Johnson's slogan by mocking it, they had not reckoned with the Labour-party under Jeremy Corbyn adopting it in a belated attempt to join in and gain from maximalist Brexit rhetoric. Rebecca Long-Bailey, Labour's shadow business secretary, claimed it for her party:

> (16) "We want to have our cake and eat it, as do most parties in Westminster"
> (quoted in *The Guardian,* 16/07/2017).

Her statement was, predictably, seized upon as revealing a hypocritical stance of officially opposing the Conservative-led Brexit whilst surreptitiously supporting it for Labour-specific purposes. The Liberal Democrats' spokesman, Tom Brake, commented that Labour's Brexit position was "so indistinguishable from the Conservatives that they have started parroting Boris Johnson" (*The Independent,* 16 July 2017), and the magazine *The Spectator* portrayed Long-Bailey ironically as "channel[ing] her inner Boris Johnson" (*The Spectator,* 16 July 2017). Following the interview, the *cake*-phrase became a focus for Labour-internal disputes. When their Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, suggested that after a change in government Labour would abide by the referendum result but ensure tariff-free

access to the single market and the customs union, he was accused by the former Labour Prime Minister and Brexit-opponent Tony Blair of caving in to the Conservatives' "having cake and eating it" strategy (*The Guardian,* 27/11/2017, *The New European,* 11/12/2017, *The Daily Telegraph,* 04/01/2018).

With both the largest government and opposition parties each claiming the 'eat-and-have cake' stance for themselves but also disputing it among themselves, the slogan became an easy target for allusive parody by politicians and media commentators who competed to coin new rhetorical niches for themselves to gain the public's attention. Some of the more colourful examples included a warning by Sir Martin Donnelly, a Brexit-critical former civil servant, that leaving the European customs union would be

> (17) "like giving up a three-course meal in favour of a packet of crisps" (*The Guardian,* 27/02/2018);

a description of Brexit plans as a "chimpanzee's tea party Brexit" where there was

> (18) cake everywhere. It's been had, it's been eaten, it's been smeared up walls. It's had pots of hot tea smashed over the top of it. It's been scooped on to the end of long hairy fingers and violently jammed into ears. (*The Independent*, 08/03/2018)

and an expletive-laden complaint by the Labour MP Alison McGovern describing Brexit as

> (19) "the s*** cherry on the s*** icing on the s*** cake that the Tories baked us all in the 1980s." (quoted in *Daily Express,* 03/03/2018).

The polemical, sarcastic and satirizing drift of these uses, including use of taboo words, bears the hallmarks of hyperbole. Analytically, we can distinguish between two levels of a) proverb-application (in the sense of a propositionally elaborated or allusive use of the *can(not) have and eat cake* situation and b) its further pragmatic exploitation – through hyperbole – to achieve additional polemical and argumentative, also humorous effects. The new proverb version became a clichéd "scenario" (Musolff 2006) with stereotypical participants (CAKE, EATER), event structure (EATING AND KEEPING) and default evaluative bias ((IM)POSSIBILITY) that served as a 'ground' for rhetorical-pragmatic 'figure'/Gestalt-effects. It is 'mentioned' or echoed rather than 'used' (Sperber & Wilson 1981), both in the satirical sketches quoted above (see examples 17–19) as well as in the laconic allusions cited earlier in section 2 (see examples 1–4).

4. Proverb-free hyperbole

In our sample of overall 208 articles over five years, applications of the Brexit-related *cake*-phrase rise from 31 instances in 2016 to 85 instances in 2018 and then fall to under 20 instances in 2020. The decline may be due to a combination of factors, i.e. the media reaching a 'saturation point' in satirizing the slogan, a realization even on the part of Brexiters that the maximalist negotiation stance

become obsolete in view of a hardening EU negotiation tactic. Johnson, as Brexit's (and the *cake* slogan's) chief propagator in public discourse, withdrew from Theresa May's cabinet in June 2018 on account of their disagreement on Brexit strategy, which triggered a Conservative inner-party conflict that led in the end to May's resignation and replacement by Johnson (in July 2019). But whilst the allusions to the *eat and have cake* proverb became fewer and fewer in public discourse, the hyperbole did not, and certainly not in Johnson's rhetoric. Free to write his column in the *Daily Telegraph* without having to obey Cabinet discipline, he denounced May's strategy and deal in the starkest terms, no longer invoking a funny proverb version but instead relying on a sinister WAR scenario of 'complete victory or total defeat/ surrender with ensuing enslavement' as the conceptual frame for Brexit:

> (20) Victory for Brussels is inevitable. In adopting Chequers, we have gone into battle waving the white flag. (*The Daily Telegraph,* 03/09/2018)
> (21) The EU are treating us with naked contempt – we must abandon this surrender of our country (*The Daily Telegraph,* 15/10/2018)
> (22) The EU will turn us into captives if we sign up to this appalling sell-out of a deal. […] this 585-page fig-leaf [= May's EU Treaty] does nothing to cover the embarrassment of our total defeat. (*The Daily Telegraph,* 18/10/2018)
> (23) The British people won't be scared into backing a woeful Brexit deal nobody voted for […]; we now have a cumulative forecast that is downright apocalyptic. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 06/01/2019)
> (24) The people's day of jubilation has been hijacked by spineless pirates. […] This was meant to be the week of Brexit. And what has happened instead? In one of the most protoplasmic displays of invertebracy since the Precambrian epoch, this Government has decided not to fulfil the mandate of the people. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 26/03/2019)
> (25) Theresa May's plan to enslave us in the customs union with Corbyn's help will never work (*The Daily Telegraph,* 07/04/2019)

In these examples, a stark opposition is drawn between the 'good' side of (pro-) Brexit Britain and 'evil' forces including both the EU and May's government trying to *vanquish*, *take captive* and *enslave* their victim.[7] The basic Brexit-related emotions had remained the same since the time of the pro-Brexit campaign: FEAR, ANGER, and (hurt) national PRIDE. However, by spring 2019 they had been rhetorically 'escalated' to an extreme degree and could hardly be topped. In order to keep up his Brexit promise, Johnson had to switch to further extreme rhetorical moves. One of these was to promise a kind of epiphany of a 'maximum gain' Brexit appearing miraculously over the horizon:

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[7] Other politicians' and media's Brexit rhetoric during 2019/20 was no less hyperbolic than Johnson's. Both the hard Brexit proponents on the right, i.e. among the Conservatives and the even more radical "UK Independence Party" (later "Brexit Party"), as well as the Labour leadership intent on blockading May's government at any cost (see Charteris-Black 2019: 65-134; Demata 2019; Hansson 2019; Zappettini 2019).

(26) So don't despair. Don't give up. [Brexit] is going to happen, and at that wonderful moment it will be as though the lights have come on at some raucous party; or as if a turbulent sea has withdrawn to expose the creatures of the shore.... (*The Daily Telegraph*, 15/04/2019)

In a complementary move he threatened the EU with a violent angry reaction by a Britain likened to the Comic strip figure "Incredible Hulk":

(27) "We'll break free of the EU like the Incredible Hulk. […] The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets" (*Daily Mail,* 15 September 2019).

Both the renewed 'Brexit-as-paradise' promise and the threat of acting like the "Hulk" were still in line with the hyperbolic scenarios used during the whole Brexit referendum campaign: the *win-win* vision of a maximum gain through Brexit and its depiction as the only alternative to complete *surrender* and *defeat*. However, when "Brexit day" actually came on 31 January 2020 (after several delays), its economic and political impact was nearly zero. Apart from small festivities of Conservative Brexiters in or near their party headquarters there were few emotional reactions and even the *Daily Telegraph* mainly highlighted the achievement of having passed "three years of bust-ups, backstabbing, tears and turmoil" that had made "the mere act [*sic*!] of departure" so difficult (*The Daily Telegraph* 31/01/2020). If the day of Britain officially leaving the EU was a "mere act of departure" even in the eyes of Johnson's most sympathetic media outlet, it certainly was nowhere near a "total victory" or the "wonderful moment" when "lights coming on at a raucous party". On the other hand, it was not a complete *defeat* or *catastrophe* for the UK either. So, was Johnson's hyberbolic rhetoric just "much ado about nothing", a mere accompaniment to the political process that had no effect on its outcome?

5. Preliminary conclusions

Obviously, the long-term effects of Brexit, their evaluation as success or failure, and their emotional effect are not known yet. There have been voices, mainly on the part of Brexit-opponents, which maintain that the emotionalised rhetoric of the Brexit disputes has led to a deterioration of debating culture and a radicalisation of the public sphere in the United Kingdom (*The Guardian,* 12/10/2019: "Brexiters' adoption of war language will stop Britain from finding peace", *The Observer,* 29/09/2019: "Boris Johnson seeks to divide and conquer with his incendiary rhetoric"). Johnson's use of figurative speech is highly deliberate and crafted (Margulies 2019), not a chance product of a specific situation. The coinage of a non-standard version of a proverb, whose canonical form has been entrenched in everyday discourse for four centuries, and the colourful ornamentation of the UK-EU conflict as a *battle* of a single nation against the threat of *enslavement* by a *contemptuous enemy,* evidenced in the examples cited above show that Johnson purposefully presented Brexit as a contest between *good* and *bad,* at the end of which could only stand *victory* or *total defeat*. The

psycho-political intention behind this strategy is easy to discern: by portraying Brexit in the most extreme contrasting evaluations, Johnson and his allies tried to raise and mobilise the emotions of their followers to a maximum. The outcomes of the 2016 Brexit referendum with its majority in favour of Brexit, and of the national election in December 2019, which gave Johnson a huge parliamentary majority (365 out of 650 seats and a 43.6% of the vote) seem to vindicate this strategy at least in terms of electoral success. In terms of political strategy, the use of hyperbolic figurative language apparently boosts and 'escalates' the emotional appeal and impact of specific policies, i.e. their connection with positive emotions such as PRIDE and a need to avoid or overcome negative ones (FEAR, ANGER). Acceptance of that connection by recipients in turn boosts voter support for and readiness to actively endorse those policies.

Thus, whilst evidently fit for the purpose of emotionalisation in the short-term, the *cake-* and *liberation war* scenarios suffer from an inherent problem that originates in what one might call 'hyperbolic overload'. It is not so much an issue that they are unrealistic and resemble fairy tale and/or comic-story plots but rather that the hyperbolic suggestion of an extremely positive outcome loses its pragmatic value over time and demands an ever more hyperbolic escalation. Like other openly evaluative semantic and pragmatic effects, e.g. euphemism, it is susceptible to a 'treadmill' effect over time (Allen & Burridge 1991, Pinker 1994, Crespo-Fernández 2006). The more often and the more emphatically they are used, the less convincing they become. This deterioration seems to be reinforced by an inbuilt comparison of the 'super-positive' intended meaning with perceived 'reality'. The supposed 'positive' politeness of euphemisms such as *African American* instead of *Black American* or of *passing away* instead of *dying* loses its appeal if experiences of continuing racial discrimination as a social evil or of death as a fearful event expose it as phoney. In the case of hyperbole, which has no intrinsic polarity, it is the exaggeration 'value' itself that diminishes in view of the experiential contrast. If the *maximum gain* or *total victory* promised in the pro-Brexit scenarios remains elusive, the suggested extreme result will not come true. The hyperbolic promise becomes a 'hostage to fortune', which is extremely risky in politics, given its unpredictability.

However, it is unlikely Johnson himself will refrain from hyperbolic metaphor use – it seems embedded in his rhetoric. When Britain, like the rest of the world, was facing a new challenge shortly after the low-key event of official Brexit day (31 January 2020), i.e. the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, his pragmatic-rhetorical choice was again in favour of optimistic hyperbole in the guise of metaphorical idioms:

> (28) "We already have a fantastic NHS, fantastic testing systems and fantastic surveillance of the spread of the disease … I want to stress that for the vast majority of the people of this country, we should be going about our business as usual." (quoted in *The Guardian*, 23/03/2020)

(29) "[...] looking at it all, that we can turn the tide within the next 12 weeks, and I'm absolutely confident that we can send coronavirus packing in this country." (quoted in *The Guardian*, 23/03/2020)

(30) "We have growing confidence that we will have a test, track and trace operation that will be world-beating and yes, it will be in place by June 1." (quoted in *The Guardian*, 20/05/2020).

Whilst "fantastic" in (28) may pass as fair, if strong praise, its three-time repetition points in the direction of hyperbole. *Turn the tide* and *send packing* in (29) are idiomatic phrases (Ayto 2010: 254, *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* 1993, vol. 2: 2066, 3427) that set up a *confrontation* scenario (UK vs. Coronavirus) with implies *superiority* (and hence, likely *victory*) for one side over the other. In (30), the claim to have a world-*beating* "track and trace" system for people who were infected by the COVID-19 virus in 12 days' time (20 May – 1 June) as part of an inherently competitive scenario of the UK *beating* the whole world in the field of technology-driven pandemic management was as over-ambitious as Johnson's Brexit promises. Predictably, its trustworthiness was challenged, not just by the political opposition but even by conservative-leaning media, as the experience of its at best limited success made it an easy target for criticism.[8] Johnson tried to deflect such criticism by accusing his opponents of casting aspersions on the National Health Service and reiterated his *world-beating* boast (*Daily Mail,* 03/06/2020, 06/08/2020), perhaps operating on the assumption that the advantage of employing hyperbolic figurative language as a means to present optimistic messages outweighs the cost of incurring accusations of insincerity. The general appeal of hyperbole for politicians and journalists may lie in its multifunctionality, i.e. the fact that it triggers, answers and escalates multiple basic emotions, e.g. by expressing PRIDE, reassuring FEAR and even seemingly justifying ANGER. As such it seems the trope of choice for achieving political emotionalisation.

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[8] See e.g. *The Independent*, 05/06/2020: "'Not even virus beating': Government scientific adviser dismisses Boris Johnson's claim test and trace system is world leading"; *The Guardian,* 17/06/2020: *"While other countries are recovering from Covid-19, Britain is still in intensive care"*; *Daily Mail,* 06/08/2020: "Test and Trace is getting WORSE: […] – but Boris Johnson still insists it's 'world-beating'."

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Research article

The UK as victim and hero in the Sun's coverage of the Brexit 'humiliation'

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Abstract

This paper discusses how emotions were mobilised by the British tabloid press as discursive strategies of persuasion during the public debate on the implementation of Brexit. Using the case study of the Sun's coverage of the alleged UK's 'humiliation' at the Salzburg meeting (2018) during the Brexit negotiations, the analysis addresses the questions of how and through which linguistic means actors and events were framed discursively in such an article. The findings suggest that The Sun elicited emotions of fear, frustration, pride, and freedom to frame Brexit along a long-established narrative of domination and national heroism. The discourse was also sustained by a discursive prosody in keeping with a satirical genre and a populist register that have often characterised the British tabloid press. In particular the linguistic analysis has shown how antagonistic representations of the UK and the EU were driven by an allegory of 'incompetent' gangsterism and morally justified resistance. Emotionalisation in the article was thus aimed both at ridiculing the EU and at representing it as a criminal organisation. Such framing was instrumental in pushing the newspaper agenda as much as in legitimising and institutionalising 'harder' forms of Brexit with the tabloid's readership. Approaching journalist discourse at the intersection of affective, stylistic, and political dimensions of communication, this paper extends the body of literature on the instrumental use of emotive arguments and populist narratives and on the wider historical role of tabloid journalism in representing political relations. between the UK and the EU.

Keywords: *Brexit, political communication, media linguistics, tabloid journalism, Critical Discourse Analysis*

Научная статья

Великобритания как жертва и герой в освещении Брексита газетой "Sun"

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена роли эмоций в дискурсивных стратегиях убеждения. В ней рассматривается, как во время публичных дебатов по вопросу Брексита британская таблоидная пресса использовала эмоции для продвижения данной идеи. На примере освещения газетой "Sun"

«унижения» Великобритании на переговорах по Брекситу в Зальцбурге (2018) исследуется, как и с помощью каких языковых средств были дискурсивно оформлены акторы и описываемые события. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что газета "Sun" вызывала у читателей эмоции страха и разочарования наряду с чувством гордости и свободы, чтобы связать Брексит с давно устоявшимся нарративом доминирования и национального героизма. Дискурс также подкреплялся дискурсивной просодией в сочетании с сатирическим жанром и популистским регистром, которые часто характеризуют британскую бульварную прессу. В частности, лингвистический анализ показал, как антагонистические образы Великобритании и ЕС подкреплялись аллегорией «некомпетентного» гангстеризма и морально оправданным сопротивлением. Таким образом, эмоционализация была нацелена как на высмеивание ЕС, так и на изображение ЕС как преступной организации, что сыграло важную роль в продвижении идеи Брексита среди читателей таблоида, а также легитимации и институционализации его более жестких форм. Рассматривая журналистский дискурс с учетом эмоционального, стилистического и политического аспектов коммуникации, данное исследование расширяет представление об использовании эмоциональных аргументов и популистских нарративов, а также подчеркивает роль бульварной журналистики в представлении политических отношений между Великобританией и ЕС.

Ключевые слова: *Брексит, политическая коммуникация, медиалингвистика, бульварная журналистика, эмоциолнализация, критический дискурс-анализ*

1. Introduction: Language and emotions in the news

A large body of literature has shown the complex interplay between affective, cognitive, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions of communication, and how emotional language is part and parcel of every-day mediated representations (Mackenzie & Alba-Juez 2019, Foolen 2012, Niemeier & Driven 1997, Martin & White 2005, Wierzbicka 1999, van Dijk 2013). Different linguistic/semiotic features of discourse can encode specific emotional stances; they can be used to convey different aspects of reality and influence how we make sense of events and the world. This, in turn, can have significant social and political implications as public discourse can be used persuasively to shape attitudes and lead to actions (Ponton 2020, Larina, Ponton & Ozyumenko 2020) and since citizens tend to participate in political life primarily driven by feelings rather than rationality (Wahl-Jorgensen 2019) especially in populist discourses. Although the question of representations and the so called 'media effect' (i.e., the role of media in instigating, influencing, and reinforcing certain worldviews) have been long debated in academia (including issues of interpretation and audience reception) the way in which actors are represented and in which events are framed by the media – and how this is evoked through emotions – has received close examination by linguists and social scientists alike. For example, the language of the news has increasingly been scrutinised (White 2020, Hameleers et al. 2016, Bell 1996, Bednarek & Caple 2014, van Dijk 2013) as it often goes beyond reporting facts, with editorial and opinion pieces in which journalists' narratives – underpinned by specific values and

schemas shared within a discursive community – co-construct emotions with like-minded addressees and target audiences so that mediated language can ultimately contribute to legitimise collective feelings.

The analysis of media language in relation to Brexit has produced an abundant output in different fields at the intersection of linguistics and political communication (e.g., Koller, Kopf & Miglbauer 2019, Buckledee 2019, Maccaferri 2019, Zappettini & Krzyzanowski 2019, Zappettini 2020, 2021, Bennett 2019, Brusenbauch Meislova 2019, Charteris-Black 2019, Musolff 2017, 2019, Dancygier 2021, this issue). This paper corroborates and takes forward the existing literature by focusing on one case study of how emotions around the alleged 'humiliation' of Britain at the Salzburg meeting (see below) were mobilised in the Sun, one of best-selling British tabloids. Although this paper is only able to discuss one article given the necessary trade-off between breadth and depth of analysis, my point is to show that The Sun's article is representative of the overall *emotional coverage of Brexit* in a large section of the tabloid press (for a larger discussion see Zappettini, forthcoming). More significantly, the use of emotions in the press coverage can be interpreted as part of the *pre-legitmation* and the subsequent *'chain of legitimacy'* (Zappettini, forthcoming) that has sustained the *critical juncture*[1] of Brexit (Zappettini & Krzyzanowski 2019) and normalised 'harder' forms of Brexit after the referendum. In other words, the alleged 'humiliation' of Britain can be seen as concatenated into the larger populist narrative that has portrayed the UK as vexed/ostracised by the EU resulting in Brexit being framed by the majority of tabloids as a heroic act of national pride and independence – or as 'Britain freeing itself from the EU's shackles' (see Zappettini 2019). Such framing of Britain's 'humiliation', I argue, boosted already existing attitudes to Brexit that The Sun had been priming onto its readership through years of negative coverage of the EU/UK relationship and through narratives of victimisation of the UK by the Brussels and Westminster 'elites' (see Zappettini & Krzyzanowski 2019, Zappettini 2021).

By providing a window on the language of Brexit in tabloids, the rationale for my analysis is to show that the media have been key actors in the UK's departure from the EU for they have not simply acted as platforms reverberating and amplifying different political messages, but crucially because they have in fact pushed their own ideological agenda to legitimise and institutionalise specific populist imaginaries of Brexit leveraging on certain dominant logics and emotions (e.g. freedom, rupture, emancipation). The intended contribution of my analysis is therefore an understanding of the pragmatics of emotions at the intersection of consumption and production of media and political discourses (Wahl-Jorgensen 2019). Here, therefore I take Brexit as a case study of *emotive* rather than *emotional* communication (Alba-Juez & Larina 2018) to highlight the conscious mobilisation of emotions for communicative purposes in which the newsworthiness of a piece is often driven by the newspaper's very own political and commercial agenda.

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[1] Critical juncture refers to the process of institutionalization of specific social, political and cultural visions of reality sustained by the acceleration of a discursive path/trajectory (see Zappettini and Krzyzanowski, 2019).

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. Features of tabloid journalism and its role in Brexit are discussed in section 2 which also provides some background on the events covered in the news article analysed (reproduced in Appendix 1). The analytical approach is discussed in section 3 followed by a discussion of the findings in section 4 and conclusions in section 5.

2. The discourse of tabloids and the critical juncture of Brexit

Arguably, no country is characterized by its popular national press culture more than Britain is by its tabloids. In a country where people read more newspapers per head than any other nation and where five national tabloid titles reach around 85% of the entire readership (Bingham & Conboy, 2015) the role of the tabloid press can hardly be overestimated. The popular press has played a key role in how millions of British people have been informed about and made sense of the world around them, its social and political life. Significantly, over time, different titles have pushed different political agendas and heavily influenced and divided public opinion. This has increasingly been the case as newspapers have become industrial and commercial ventures and different tabloid titles were born to support and reflect different social attitudes and ideologies (Bingham and Conboy 2015). Since Alfred Harmsworth initially launched *The Daily Mail* in 1896 on the model of right-wing populist Sunday newspapers and the American press Tabloid format (12'×16') other titles followed his successful formula, for example *The Daily Express* which was established in 1900. This was followed by a second wave emerging in the 1930s with Labour-supporting titles such as *The Daily Herald* and *Daily Mirror*. Finally, the 1970s saw the arrival of Murdoch's *The Sun* which over the years has repeatedly swayed its political support between the Tories and Labour.

Tabloid journalism constitutes a genre of its own vis-à-vis the so-called 'quality press' being characterised by certain distinctive features. In ideological terms, tabloid journalism understands its own social role in opposition to the "excesses of political correctness and [..] liberal intellectualism" (Krämer 2018: 15) rather than the duty to promote an informed democratic dialogue among citizens. Tabloids typically use a discursive style aimed at creating newsworthiness around a mix of 'soft' content (e.g., celebrities and gossip), hard facts and opinions which often compress complex arguments into simplistic evaluations and catchy lines (Conboy 2004). Tabloids are prominently known for their *demotic* (or vernacular) discursive register characterised by highly emotive, sensational, and everyday language. This language is often found in headlines relying on puns, wordplay, rhyming and alliteration designed as forms of entertainment, humour and satire attuning to the folk culture of the intended readership. Different studies have highlighted the simplistic conceptual categories and colloquial, emotional, evaluative vocabulary (such as *punks, nuts, perverts, bonkers, thugs*) used by tabloids (Conboy 2004). Similarly, sensational language to maximise the story's newsworthiness (e.g. *scandal, fury, outrage, secret, revealed, shocking, exclusive*) has been prevalent in the tabloid press (Schaffer 1995). Tabloids' evaluative

language is also less nuanced compared to that of broadsheet – for example disagreements or debates will tend to be referred to as *rows, fury, feuds* while to criticise someone will be reported as *to slam, lash, rap, lambast*, etc. Two-word noun phrases are also used to represent/evaluate social actors (e.g., *miracle baby survives plane crash; innocent bystanders witnessed the attack*) while unconventional spelling is frequent for politicians' names such as *Jez* for Jeremy Corbyn, *Maggie* for Margaret Thatcher and so on. Another conspicuous feature of the tabloid press has been the explicit 'male gaze' taken by these publications (for example The Sun is well known for publishing topless models on its page three) and, in general, the trivialisation and sexualisation of political issues (which dovetails with the ideological 'politically incorrect' approach of tabloid journalism). For example, a Daily Mail article (2014) on the newly formed Cameron cabinet focused on female MPs' attire and the way they 'cat walked' into their first new cabinet meeting. Similarly, a Brexit meeting between English and Scottish Prime Ministers was headlined as a 'Legxit' or a legs beauty contest (Daily Mail 2017).

The tabloid press has also historically fuelled acrimonious debates about nation and race typically promoting a nationalist agenda with, in some cases jingoistic and overtly xenophobic tones (Bingham & Conboy 2015). The legitimacy of nations has often been predicated on the discursive reproduction of the affective dimension of being part of an 'imagined' community (Anderson 2006) even if in 'banal' forms (Billig 1995). The tabloids' direct interpellation of audiences as part of a national 'textual community' promotes their identification as a group member but it also encourages readers to feel part of an *us-group* versus an antagonistic *other-group* if feelings are mobilised in such a way. For example, while Edwardian era tabloids reproduced narratives of 'Britannia rules the waves', hostility towards strangers subsequently shifted towards different 'foreigners', namely Irish and Jewish immigrants ('Aliens' in *The Daily Express, 1901)* and then the German 'foes' in World War 1and 2 *('The Huns', Daily Mail).* The '50s and 60's saw the tabloid press amplifying overtly discriminatory discourses against black people (*Daily Express* headlines in this period included *'Would You Let Your Daughter Marry a Black Man?'; '800,000 People Who Shouldn't Be Here'* and *'Visitors Who Never Go Home').* The 1980s and 1990s saw tabloids engaging with different mainstream representations of Britain and its 'enemies'. For example, the *us versus them* military propaganda was recurrent in The Sun's coverage of the Falklands war ('our lads' for the British army) and the Afghanistan war ('Prince Harry…one of our boys') (see Richardson 2009). The last twenty years have seen the tabloids press engaged in a backlash against multiculturalism with distinct Islamophobic and Europhobic tones. In this context most tabloid titles have peddled negative frames of news on immigration, for example, through frequent metaphorical domains that have associated immigrants with natural disaster and animals (*floods* and *swarms of people*) and states with containers ('Open door policy must be changed, Britain is full').

Historically, a large section of the British tabloid press has also strongly opposed the EU's political project and has portrayed UK/EU relationships negatively (Hardt-Mautner 1995). Titles such as *The Sun* have often represented the UK and the EU as opponents relying on metaphors of war (Daddow 2012). In the 1980s The Sun encouraged readers to submit 'anti-French jokes' and in 1990 it published the infamous headline 'Up yours Delors' vilifying the then President of the European Commission for his French-centric vision of Europe. Other titles such as The Daily Mail and The Daily Express have often initiated various anti-EU 'crusades' based on bogus 'Euro-myths' (e.g. 'the EU wants to ban our kettles') some of which the EU Commission has debunked through a dedicated website[2]. The mainstream discourse to which a large part of the tabloids' readership has been relentlessly exposed for years has portrayed the UK as a victim of a Franco-German alliance or a Brussels 'conspiracy plot' (see also Levy et. al. 2016).

There have been different explanations for why the tabloid press, and The Sun in particular, have taken their specific Eurosceptic (or indeed Europhobic) stance. It is reported that when The Evening Standard journalist Anthony Hilton asked Rupert Murdoch the reason why he so opposed to the European Union he replied: "That's easy. When I go into Downing Street they do what I say; when I go to Brussels they take no notice" (Hilton 2016). There are however further plausible motives for how nationalist sentiment has been mobilised against the EU and why the EU's 'ever closer Union' project has been represented as incompatible with British interests escalating into calls for Brexit. Brexit can be read as a populist response driven by political opportunism leveraging both logics of acceleration/deceleration of globalisation patterns (Zappettini & Krzyżanowski 2019). From a leftist ideological perspective, the argument of global deceleration rejected neoliberalism and austerity (with the EU seen as a key actor of global governance penalising power within national remits) while the right-wing side advocated a logic of global acceleration, that is further liberalisation and international free trade, portraying the EU as frustrating British 'global' mercantile aspirations (cf. Zappettini 2019a, 2019b). The tabloid press capitalised on both views advocating Brexit from the stance of trade frustrated by the EU's red tape as well as from the stance of 'working people' left behind by the EU transnational neoliberal model (see Zappettini 2020). In relation to domestic politics, Brexit was also a discursive opportunity for England to re-imagine itself as a new powerful democracy in the wake of Scottish and Welsh devolution (Barnett 2018) and vis-a-vis its imperial past. In this vein, O' Toole (2018) argues that through the Brexit vote, the English directed their anger to the EU in order to reaffirm their glorious past and recreate a sense of groupness through 'consensual' humiliation that tapped into the national psyche of British exceptionalism (see also Cohen 2019). As evoking emotions of shame and humiliation helps one feel morally superior, by representing the struggle of 'freeing' itself from the EU's yoke, Britain was trying to redeem itself from its imperial legacy in a reversal of the victim-perpetrator roles

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[2] https://blogs.ec.europa.eu/ECintheUK/curved-bananas/ (Accessed: 28.09.2018).

(O' Toole 2018). O' Toole also points to a generalised interpretation of Brexit as an act of 'heroism' in relation to the narrative that Brexit would help Britain escape the EU's doomed project (and equally save the EU from itself). Such a cautionary tale was often narrated by Leavers who metaphorically urged voters to embrace Brexit as the only way to abandon the EU's 'sinking ship'. The Titanic allegory became a powerful symbolic narrative of Britain saving itself from the catastrophic collision to which the direction of EU politics would lead and crucially to juxtapose Britain's 'heroic lifeboat' vis-a-vis the EU's hubris (Charteris Black 2019). This nationalist framing of Brexit news was particularly prevalent in the Sun's titles for example in the front-page headline *'Beleave in Britain'* (13/6/2016) urging to vote out and in the front-page headline hailing the referendum outcome as *'Independence Day'* (23/6/2016). Mobilising emotions around Brexit and portraying exiting the EU as the only way for the UK to 'regain' its sovereignty and dignity was certainly at the heart of the tabloids discourse during the Brexit referendum campaign. For example, an analysis of how the tabloid press covered the campaign (Zappettini 2021) found that "the vast majority of tabloids relied on discursive strategies that primarily appealed to emotions of fear, resentment and empowerment in an antagonistic framing of the British versus 'other' people. […] The framing of Brexit as an enactment of British pride was prominent and often adopted by a number of articles in relation to strategies that typically appealed to emotions of national resistance and standing up to the *people*'s opponents/bullies". It is against this background that the analysis has focused on an article published by The Sun on 21 September 2018 titled 'EU dirty rats' (see Appendix 1) to show how such pre-legitimising narratives were taken up by tabloids during the period in which Brexit was institutionalised. The article is an opinion piece referring to events that occurred a few days beforehand in Salzburg of which the next section will provide some background.

2.1. A contextualisation of the Salzburg meeting

Following the 2016 referendum result to leave the EU and the trigger of Article 50, the UK and the EU began their negotiations on their future relationship status. In July 2018, the then Prime Minister Theresa May laid out the Government's plan for such a new UK/EU partnership in what became known as the Chequers proposal after the country estate where it was presented to the Cabinet. The Chequers proposal envisaged the UK sharing a common rulebook for maintaining 'frictionless' free trade of goods and services with the EU but made no concessions on freedom of movement and foresaw no role for the European Court of Justice over UK laws. The proposal met with negative responses among EU leaders when it was presented to them at an informal summit in Salzburg in September 2018. French president Macron said the plan was 'unacceptable' because the UK was 'cherry picking' the most favourable terms without accepting any obligations deriving from such a close association with the Union. He was also keen to signal EU unity in the face of the populist surge across Europe. The European Council

President Donald Tusk said May's plan would not work because it undermined the single market by giving British companies a competitive advantage. In short, the plan was dismissed as another 'global Britain' fantasy of 'having its cake and eating it too' (see Zappettini 2019, Musolff 2021, this issue) while PM May called for the EU to treat the UK with more respect in Brexit negotiations (BBC, 2018). 'Ambush' and 'humiliation' became prevalent terms of framing the above events in British public discourse, not only among politicians but also in news outlets including the quality press (Quinn 2020). The 'humiliation' of Britain in Brexit negotiation was frequently evoked by the media and such representations were widely reproduced in public opinion. In a 2019 poll, 90% of Britons thought that Brexit negotiations had brought shame to the nation (although more people believed the blame lay with the British government's handling of Brexit than the EU's) (Sky News, 2019). Crucially, the Salzburg meeting took place a few weeks before the Conservative party annual conference and the Chequers meeting was meant to represent the PM's attempt to quell hard Brexiteers within her party who would like to leave the EU with no deal while, at the same time, she was trying to compromise on softer Brexit positions including those which would favour a second referendum. The PM hoped that the Chequers plan would be a political opportunity to reconcile her divided party while strengthening her leadership. Part of the negative press coverage therefore had much to do with the PM's domestic credibility and her leadership and in the quality press 'humiliation' primarily referred to the PM's reputation within domestic rather than international politics (although the latter was also relevant for example to make the case for showing how Britain's clout on the world stage had waned [3]). The tabloid press, however, (as well as right-wing politicians [4]) predominantly tended to frame the meeting outcome in terms of Britain itself being humiliated and the Prime Minister being 'ambushed' i.e. invited to the talks in Salzburg and led to believe that her plan would be agreed on only to be shunned by the EU leaders.

3. Analytical approach

While the analytical approach has adopted a general Critical Discursive orientation (Wodak & Fairclough 1997) it has in particular drawn from Communication Studies the well known concept of *framing* (Entman 1993, see also Solopova & Kushneruk, in this issue). Framing relates to how the news narrative defines events and issues (e.g., as problems, crises, etcetera) and how it links them to actors, causes and any suggested solutions. As Entman (1993: 52) points out, framing involves the selection of specific "aspects of a perceived reality to make

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[3] See https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-theresa-may-deal-suez-britain-eu-a8730 746.html (Accessed: 23.09.2018).

[4] See, for example, Dominic Raab's comment "We've been humiliated as a country" https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/14/brexit-britain-national-humiliation-uk-eu (Accessed: 14.06.2019).

them more salient in a communicating text". Through framing, the speaker – in this case the journalist or editorial voice [5] – is not only able to provide a specific perspective on certain objects of social reality but also to define the conceptual tools for reasoning about those objects and, crucially, to influence the audience's interpretations and actions in relation to them. A frame can thus be understood in terms of language, images or their multimodal combination deployed to articulate a discourse as well as in terms of reasoning devices, that is the conceptual framework through which the issue is made sense of and evaluated. A frame can therefore provide the ethical 'toolbox' and drive moral reasoning on the issue, especially when frames consolidate into socially agreed perspectives that become the dominant interpretation or the conventional schema for the community that consumes and reproduces a particular discourse (Musolff 2016, Charteris Black 2019). In this sense, ideologies can be propagated by the media to their audiences through the 'cumulative effect' (Bell 1996) of repeatedly used frames which normalise reality within a larger epistemic community such as a newspaper's readership. Against this background, the in-depth analysis has zeroed in on linguistic devices through which framing was operated, in particular allegory (Charteris Black 2019), metaphors (Musolff 2016) as well as the discursive strategies (Wodak et al. 2009) through which moral reasoning around Brexit was articulated. Put succinctly, allegories are symbolic narrations aimed at conveying "some form of covert ethical comment that cautions the reader or listener indirectly on how to behave when faced with some form of moral question" (Charteris Black 2019: 18). Allegorical narratives can thus be rhetorically used to frame events and actors around distinct ethical precepts and, crucially, to induce moral reasoning along distinct metaphorical scenarios. Musolff (2016) defines a metaphorical scenario as: "a set of assumptions […] about the prototypical elements of a concept, […] 'dramatic' story lines and default outcomes, as well as ethical evaluation of these elements, which are connected to the social attitudes and emotional stances that are prevalent in the respective discourse community" (Musolff 2016: 30–31). Discursive strategies, on the other hand, are 'intentional plan[s] of practices… adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal' (Wodak et al. 2009: 94) and are predicated on implicit/explicit argumentative schemes. For example, Wodak et al. (2009) refer to the construction of national identity achieved, inter alia, through strategies of unification and differentiation predicated on arguments of comparison (see also Zappettini 2019c for a discussion of discursive strategies aimed at dismantling or delegitimising national identities).

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[5] See Goffman (1981) for a distinction between author, principal and animator and Dobrosklonskaya (2021, this issue) for a discussion of 'news voices'. In this case the article analysed is anonymous and featured under the 'The Sun says' column which is where the newspaper traditionally has published its collectively authored editorial pieces. The Sun says 'We can't wait to free ourselves' reproduces the newspaper's explicit pro-Brexit agenda.

4. Analysis and discussion

4.1. Mobilising emotions: us vs. them and the allegory of EU's gangstersism

The discourse in this article is conspicuously driven by the allegory of *gangsterism* and the metaphorical scenario of emancipation. The piece frames the Salzburg meeting as being played out by two opposed actors in a hyperbolic metaphorical scenario of *gangster culture* permeated by violence and abuse. As noted above, allegories have symbolic and rhetorical value and are produced to argue a particular moral stance. In this case, the key purpose of framing the UK/EU relation through the allegory of gangsterism is to characterise Britain as the story hero who after being unjustly 'bullied' it now resists and breaks free from its criminal antagonist via Brexit. The framing of actors relies on antithetical and antagonistic representations of *us* (the in-group) and *them* (the out-group) and of an unbalanced relationship between the two groups with distinct *oppressor/villain* and *oppressed/hero* roles for the EU and Britain, respectively. The out-group is framed as the *oppressor* through different semiotic characterisations. For example, the EU is metonymically caricatured as a 'mobster' pair made up of French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron and the EU's Council President Donald Tusk. In English, the lexeme mobster connotes someone who is involved in organized crime or belongs to a criminal gang and the term mob has also been used as a synonym for the mafia. Such linguistic characterisation is visually reinforced by the meme of the two politicians dressed as gangsters in pinstripe suites and holding guns and by the war metaphor 'fear [is the EU's] only weapon in their arsenal'. Consistent with the allegorical narration of *gangsterism*, the passage "Brussels has made us an offer it thinks we can't refuse" is a clear intertextual reference to the popular film The Godfather (1972) where the sentence 'an offer that can't be refused' is famously uttered by the protagonist, mafia boss Don Corleone played by Marlon Brando, to imply a mafia order. Brussels making Britain an offer it can't refuse is thus euphemistically used here to mean a threatening command that Britain must execute or else it will have to bear the consequences. The gangster culture scenario is reinforced in lines 25–26 where the EU is represented as an 'outfit' (a metonymy for gangsters) that 'looks more at home in Sicily than Strasbourg" the two geographical references conjuring up associations with the mafia and the EU Parliament, respectively. The crime allegory is further evoked by the headline 'EU dirty rats', a homophonic reference to gangster film, Taxi! (1932) in which actor James Cagney is believed to utter the iconic line "You dirty rat!" [6].

Further considerations can be made on the us/them juxtaposition. While in the article third-person plural pronouns and adjectives (*they/them/their*) are exclusively attributed to the EU or its leaders to portray them as Britain's arrogant bullies (*'they have refused to negotiate in good faith/ to compromise/ insulted the minister/ ignored their citizens'*), the first-person plural pronouns and adjectives (*we/us/our*)

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[6] The exact line is "you dirty yellow-bellied rat" however in popular culture this has often been misquoted as "You dirty rat".

are inferable as relating to the newspaper's own editorial voice and that of its readership (*'we join the Prime Minister in saying no', 'our Brexit message', 'The Sun says we can't wait to free ourselves'*) as well as to the British nation and its institutions (*'to punish us', 'Brussels has made us an offer', 'we need to [prepare] for a clean-break Brexit', 'they want us to vote'*). As noted in footnote 5 the article is anonymous and, as it is conventional with pieces under 'The Sun says' headline, can be attributed a collective authorship. In a symbiotic relationship between producer and consumer of text The Sun enacts the role of spokesperson for what can be seen as an 'imagined' textual/national community. The alignment between the newspaper and its readership is not only organised along ideological lines but also achieved through colloquial vocabulary resonating with a demotic style (e.g. 'Fat chance of that", 'cackhanded') and through satire (see below).

4.2. Delegitimising the EU through moral reasoning and satire

The main discursive strategies adopted in this article are the *delegitimation of the EU* – which is achieved leveraging on *emotions of fear* and via the allegory of gangsterism discussed above – and the logically consequential *legitimation of Brexit* as 'breaking free' from the oppressor in a heroic act of defiance and emancipation/empowerment. The delegitimation of the EU is operated not only through the argument that the Union is an undemocratic set up but also via the pervasive metaphor of 'THE EU IS A CRIMINAL ORGANISATION' which suggests precisely the 'illegality' of its actions and its intentions just as criminal gangs operate outside the law and are based on a culture of abuse and violence. Moreover, the crime metaphor is deployed to construct the scenario of 'moral fight back' via the argument that the EU have been 'bullying' the UK and thus to legitimise Brexit as Britain breaking free from such 'racket'. This argument ties in with historical discourses of the alleged vexation and victimisation of the UK by Brussels that have been produced and circulated by The Sun well before Brexit and that were amplified during the referendum campaign (see Zappettini 2021). Such logical discursive continuity is reiterated in the passage 'the European Union has shown time and time again why more than 17 million people voted to leave' (lines 18–19) which constitutes the causal link between the portrayal of the EU as Britain's oppressor and Brexit as a popular response to it. We also notice the representation of Brexit as externally validated by other European citizens 'where more and more voters are turning against [the EU]' (lines 24–25). The article also delegitimises Macron and Tusk personas who are associated with the EU as a 'two-bit' (i.e., worthless) mobster. Further negative representations of the two leaders are predicated on ascribing them immoral actions and arrogant characteristics (Donald Tusk 'trolling the PM on Instagram' and Macron's 'puffed up pomposity'. In a satirical vein (which is consistent with The Sun's 'tongue-in-cheek' discursive style) the couple is also delegitimised as 'inept gangsters' via the analogy with Bugsy Malone, a popular musical comedy film about would-be gangsters (itself a parody of real-life gangsters Bugs Moran and Al Capone) and the statement 'This

lot is more Bugsy Malone than Al Capone' (line). Satire – which relies on the use of irony and exaggeration to ridicule public personas, especially politicians – can represent a form of delegitimation and is well established in British/Western cultures (see Ponton 2021, this issue; and Way 2021, this issue). By likening the two leaders to clumsy criminals the article not only delegitimises them but significantly it legitimises Britain's fight back while downplaying emotions of fear and potential negative consequences from the act of liberation that Brexit would constitute. This reasoning is signalled by expressions such as: 'we've got nothing to be scared of' and 'to show the EU [Britain] won't roll over' which mark Britain's heroic role of standing up against the EU's alleged threatening behaviour and the imagery of a 'new future free of [the EU's] cold, dead hands' (line 33) which personifies the EU as a lifeless individual. Portraying the 'humiliation' of the Prime Minister as an undermining of collective pride and national dignity has further moral implications. Rather than an objective reality, the act of humiliating (that is to show someone's inferiority) is intrinsically correlated to one's own perception of one's own status. One country can therefore feel humiliated if its relationship with other countries is perceived as incompatible with its own imagined status on the world stage. In this case representations of humiliation rely on the implicit assumption that Britain carries more power than other EU countries and that that should be reflected in negotiations. Moreover, representations of Prime Minister being ambushed and mortified are predicated on the assumption of some intentional calculated attempts to treat her in such a malevolent way.

5. Conclusions

Approaching journalist discourse at the intersection of affective, stylistic, and political dimensions of communication, this paper has discussed how emotions were mobilised in the Brexit public debate via the example of The Sun's coverage of the alleged UK's 'humiliation' at the Salzburg meeting. It has been argued that the Sun made an instrumental use of emotive language and populist narratives by leveraging feelings of fear, pride, resistance, and freedom to portray Britain as a victim of the EU and to legitimise Brexit along the moral reasoning of 'heroic emancipation from bullying'. The analysis highlighted how the overarching framing of events and actors in this article was predicated on the *us vs them dichotomy* and was narrated via the allegory of *gangsterism* and the *metaphorical scenario of emancipation*. The UK was characterised as the story hero who is morally entitled to break free from its criminal bullying antagonist via Brexit. The framing of the EU and Britain as the *oppressor/ oppressed,* respectively, was semiotically realised through the pervasive multimodal metaphor THE EU IS A CRIMINAL ORGANISATION, that portrays the EU as an illegal racket and its leaders at the same time threatening and inept, and via specific intertextual references tapping into the popular culture of mafia and gangster films. This framing served to dramatize the imagery of Britain held captive by the EU and to represent Brexit as an opportunity to stand up to the enemy and upend the status

quo. In addition, moral reasoning made use of satirical and colloquial registers designed to resonate with the intended audience. The analysis showed how The Sun performed the role of spokesperson for its reading community by tapping into the psychology of *national emotions* (collective feelings of groupness, shared identities and interests). In this sense The Sun's framing of Brexit events and actors has been key in the discursive reproduction as an 'imagined' affective dimension of Britishness. Crucially, representations in this article concatenate into The Sun's long-established portrayal of frustration at the power asymmetry between the UK and the EU and the UK's victimisation by the Brussels and Westminster elites (Zappettini 2019). Eliciting such emotions was instrumental in pushing the newspaper anti-EU agenda and in delegitimising the EU as Britain's oppressor it must free itself/acquire independence. Mobilising emotions of fear and pride was equally instrumental in legitimising and institutionalising 'harder' forms of Brexit (see Zappettini, forthcoming for a discussion of how the narrative of Britain's enemies was framed in the tabloid press during the post-referendum debate).

Emotional language and specific narratives may become common currency in the way we speak about certain actors and in how we understand certain affairs or processes and should invite us to consider the question of tabloid journalism and its role in making the UK press as "the least trusted in Europe" (European Broadcasting Unit 2017). Finally, as with all interpretive studies, the limitation must be acknowledged of analysing emotions in language through the lens of inferences made by the analyser. While the socio-political contextualisation and the literature have provided the background to the interpretation, the question of audience reception remains open and any study addressing emotions in the readership could help corroborate these findings.

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Appendix

EU DIRTY RATS; OUR BREXIT MESSAGE TO… Euro mobsters ambush May
The Sun (England)
September 21, 2018 Friday, Edition 1, National Edition

Section: EDITORIAL; OPINION; LEADING ARTICLES; Pg. 1,10

EU DIRTY RATS
The Sun Says we can't wait to free ourselves of the two-bit mobsters who run the European Union

Body

WE can't wait to shake ourselves free of the two-bit mobsters who run the European Union.

EU leaders promised a fair hearing on our future relationship at yesterday's crunch Salzburg summit. Instead, Mrs May was ambushed with a cackhanded attempt to sign us up to Brussels' unacceptable terms there and then.

The PM refused to budge on the UK's red lines, and she's absolutely right to do so. This lot are more Bugsy Malone than Al Capone.

Yesterday the leaders of the undemocratic European Union showed their true colours.

This isn't some grand project, designed to bring the peoples of Europe together in one happy union. It's a protection racket.

But even before the Prime Minister had been the subject of calculated attempts to humiliate her, we saw just how detached from reality Europe's leaders have become.

Maltese and Czech leaders told Britain to hold a second referendum, employing the same tactic that the EU has used in Ireland and Denmark before.

This isn't based on the half-baked "democratic" argument clung to by never-were and past-it grandees at home, such as Andrew Adonis and Lord Heseltine.

They just want us to be given the chance to vote the "right" way.

Fat chance of that. Throughout this process, the European Union has shown time and time again why more than 17 million people voted to leave.

They have refused to negotiate in good faith. They have refused to compromise, even while Britain has worked day-in, day-out to find agreement.

They have insulted the Prime Minister, ignored their own citizens, and are willing to accept a massive economic hit for the sake of flexing their muscles.

Like all good gangsters, they're trying to rule by fear. That's the only weapon in their arsenal on the Continent, where more and more voters are turning against an outfit that increasingly looks more at home in Sicily than Strasbourg.

All they have is the chance to punish us, and prove to the rest of the continent that it isn't worth leaving.

The message they want to send? You won't get away with it.

Well, Mrs May is right to say that we've nothing to be scared of.

Yes, it is without doubt that we need to pick up the pace on preparations for a clean-break Brexit. It is vital we show the European Union, who still seem to think we'll roll over when it really matters, that we are ready for a new future free of their cold, dead hands.

And despite no-marks such as Donald Tusk trolling the PM on Instagram, and the puffed-up pomposity of France's Emmanuel Macron and Ireland's Leo Varadkar, we haven't entirely given up hope that sensible forces within the EU might find their voice in the crucial months to come – and work with the UK, not against it.

The Government should be all ears if Brussels makes us an offer that works for both sides.

But after yesterday's performance, we don't hold out much hope.

Brussels has made us an offer it thinks we can't refuse.

Today we join the Prime Minister in saying no.

Bionote:
Franco ZAPPETTINI is a Lecturer and Director of Postgraduate Research in Communication and Media at the University of Liverpool, UK. His research focuses on the textual/discursive analysis of different forms of political and organisational communication including mediated forms of populism, such as tabloid populism and Euroscepticism in the British press. He has published internationally in peer-reviewed journals and book series. His latest publication is the monograph Brexit: A Critical Discursive Analysis forthcoming for Palgrave MacMillan.
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Сведения об авторе:
Франко ЗАППЕТТИНИ имеет степень доктора, преподает в Ливерпульском университете, Великобритания, руководит аспирантскими программами в области коммуникации и СМИ. Его исследования сосредоточены на текстуальном/дискурсивном анализе различных форм политической коммуникации, включая опосредованные формы популизма, такие как таблоидный популизм и евроскептицизм в британской прессе. Он публикует свои исследования в рецензируемых международных журналах и монографиях. Его последняя публикация – монография *Brexit: A Critical Discursive Analysis* (PalgraveMacMillan).
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Research article

Narrativised simile and emotional responses to Brexit

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Abstract
This study looks at two figurative ways in which popular media and social media represent the public's response to the process of implementing Brexit. Specifically, it contrasts analogies, which construe the nature of Brexit in terms of the nature of the problems arising (e.g. the impossibility of *taking the eggs out of the cake*), with tweets relying on simile to express emotional responses. The focus of this study is on the nature of simile, as the trope of choice in profiling emotional responses, and especially on narrativised similative constructions, such as *Brexit is like X*, where *X* as an extended narrative. These similes match the real story of Brexit, which lasted several years, with other narrative scenarios. Crucially, the scenarios created are focused on how the person *feels* about the 'story of Brexit' (e.g. the long period of hesitation and indecisiveness) and not on political affiliations and arguments. In effect, *Brexit is like X* framing could be loosely paraphrased as *Experiencing Brexit <u>makes me feel</u> similarly to experiencing a narrative such as X*, where *X* is a made-up story, depicting unimportant social events or movie genres. The emotions targeted in the *Brexit is like X* examples (such as disappointment, boredom, feeling exasperated or bemused) are complex emotional reactions to a narrative failing to reach a satisfying resolution. From the perspective of figuration, *Brexit is like X* similes suggest the need to re-evaluate the nature of simile as a conceptual mapping and to consider the role fictive stories play in expression of emotions. Also, the complex syntactic forms used to represent the narrative structure of *X* provide the material for reconsidering simile as a construction.
Keywords: *simile, analogy, Twitter, narrative, Brexit, expression of emotion*

Научная статья

Нарративное сравнение и эмоциональные реакции на Брексит

Барбара ДАНЦИГЕР

Университет Британской Колумбии
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Аннотация
        В статье рассматриваются фигуры речи, к которым прибегают популярные СМИ и социальные сети, представляя реакцию общественности на процесс реализации Брексита. В частности, сравниваются аналогии, которые объясняют природу Брексита с точки зрения характера возникающих проблем, с твитами, основанными на сравнении и выражающими

эмоциональные реакции. Основное внимание уделяется природе сравнения как тропа, предполагающего выбор эмоциональных реакций, и особенно нарративным симилятивным конструкциям, таким как *Brexit is like X* (Брексит – это как X), где X – расширенное повествование. Эти сравнения пересекаются с реальной историей Брексита, которая длилась несколько лет, и с другими нарративными сценариями. Важно отметить, что в основе созданных сценариев – не политическая принадлежность человека и его аргументы, а эмоциональное восприятие «истории Брексита» (например, долгий период колебаний и нерешительности). По сути, сравнение *Brexit is like* X приблизительно можно перефразировать как «Переживание Брексита вызывает у меня такие же чувства, как и нарратив X», где X – это выдуманная или взятая из кино история, изображающая не столь значимые социальные события. Эмоции, которые вызывает сравнение *Brexit is like X* (разочарование, скука, чувство раздражения или замешательства) – это сложные эмоциональные реакции на нарратив, в котором отсутствует достижение решения. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о необходимости переоценки природы сравнения как концептуального переноса значения и учета роли вымышленных историй в выражении эмоций. Кроме того, сложные синтаксические формы, используемые для построения нарратива, предоставляют материал для пересмотра сравнения как конструкции.

Ключевые слова: *сравнение, аналогия, Twitter, нарратив, Брексит, выражение эмоций*

1. Introduction

There has been much discussion in the media and in analytical work about the specificity of the discourse of Brexit.[1] The situation created by Great Britain's decision to leave the EU is unprecedented and complex, and it has also taken several years. Even now, when the final separation from the EU has been achieved, there are still many difficult issues. It is not surprising, then, that the discourse surrounding the success and progress of Brexit invited and continues to invite various angles of analysis, in the press and in political circles. The analyses of discourses surrounding the unprecedented event address a broad range of concepts and emerging construals of the situation.

Critical discussions of the discourse of Brexit also build on now classic theoretical approaches to political discourse, relying, to a large degree, on analyses of conceptual metaphors.[2] In this paper, however, I consider examples of much less serious nature, coming from several periods when negotiations were still ongoing – tweets, jocular analogies, and noteworthy quips by various political figures involved (gathered by journalists outside of the context of formal negotiations). The specificity of these examples results to a large degree from their brevity and (somewhat) humorous intent, but it is also quite clear that the primary goal of the

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[1] See Zappettini and Krzyżanowski (2019). Special issue on Brexit, *Critical Discourse Studies* 16.4.

[2] I cannot review the relevant research in detail, for lack of space, but my proposed approach owes much to studies of metaphor in discourse by scholars such as Charteris-Black (2005), Hart (2010), Musolff (2004), Musolff and Zinken (2009), and Chilton (2004).

speakers, columnists or Twitter users is giving expression to their evaluation of Brexit, rather than proposing a sound analysis. These informal reactions are interesting from the linguistic perspective because of the frequent use of figurative and analogical forms and constructions suggesting comparison. Thus, aspects of the saga of Brexit are described in terms of comparisons to imaginary objects or much less complex and much less important events.

My approach in this study relies on the cognitive linguistic view of figuration. The analysis proposed thus treats figurative concepts as conceptual mappings, following the theoretical grounding given in Dancygier and Sweetser (2014).[3] However, I do not focus here on conceptual metaphor – rather, I attempt to clarify the conceptual role of simile, especially in figurative representation of emotions.

The analysis proposed here considers emotions in the range of media sources selected from a specific perspective. Rather than study how emotion concepts are understood and construed in various Brexit discourses (e.g. Bouko 2020), I look at how patterns of figuration displayed in the examples represent the emotional stances expressed by the communicators (politicians outside of formal negotiations, Twitter users, or journalists). In other words, I am not considering what kinds of emotions are described, rather, I consider how 'popular' representations of the effects of Brexit rely on figurative forms to give expression to emotional stances. I also use these observations to argue that the figure which serves the purpose of reflecting emotional responses best is simile. Throughout my discussion, I point to the features of simile which make it a useful figure in the context of emotions.

Many of my examples have been, in a sense, preselected for me, as they were gathered, based on their clarity and originality, in several articles, published, among other venues, in the *Independent* and in *Politico*. The article in the *Independent*, by Aoife Kelly, shows a number of tweets, mostly formulated as "Brexit is like X" similes, while the collection of quotes by political figures gathered by two *Politico* journalists (Paul Dallison and Sanya Khetani-Shah) gives the reader a glimpse of the evaluative stances expressed outside of the mainstream negotiations and discussions. Other examples elaborate one specific Brexit analogy. The examples were not selected by the journalists with respect to the emotional stances of people commenting on Brexit, and there are thus many possible ways to approach the wording chosen. In what follows, I focus on the choice of the forms of comparison and the resulting construals of an aspect of the Brexit situation. As my examples suggest, there are essentially two general strategies – either constructing an unreal situation which helps reveal some essential flaw in the conceptualization of Brexit (and not in the idea as such), or explicitly comparing the stage in Brexit negotiations to a situation or artifact which evokes a similar emotional or evaluative stance. Importantly, these informal responses seem mostly independent of the Leave versus Remain stances, so they do not take sides in the discussion – rather, they look at Brexit as an experience.

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[3] There has been much research on the conceptual treatment of metaphor (starting with Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999). The examples considered here follow a broader model of figuration.

My discussion starts with non-similative examples – *structural analogies* – which focus on the rational evaluation of the Brexit project. In the remaining part of the paper, I focus on *similes and related constructions*, to show how their meaning profiles an emotional response. Since simile and related forms are my focus, I start with some clarification of what I refer to as **similative meaning**.

Many of the examples to be considered below use the preposition *like* and thus construct a simile. The concept of simile has many formal and interpretive aspects, and an exhaustive account of the options is beyond the scope of the present paper, but some of the main points need to be recounted. On the formal level, simile has often been studied in comparison to metaphor. The suggested correlation was often used to claim that a simile construction such *X is like Y* (as in *My job is like a jail*) should be considered in the context of a metaphorical predicative sentence such as *My job is a jail*. While the initial assumption was that simile and metaphor are essentially the same as mappings (this tradition dates back to Aristotle), recent work undermines that view, postulating different functions of the two tropes, and showing the different ways the forms are processed.

There are several important strands in the work comparing metaphor and simile. Very influential work by Gentner (1983) and Gentner and Bowdle (2001), among others, has argued that metaphor (like analogy) primarily maps relations (such as characteristic processes or functions), while simile primarily maps specific attributes (such as color or shape); however, in their later article, Gentner and Bowdle (2008) weaken their stance and show that the criterion does not distinguish the two concepts reliably. Still, further work confirms that simile can and should be treated independently of metaphor (cf. Bredin 1998), even though different aspects of simile are brought up to support that claim. To mention just a few, O'Donoghue (2009) argues that simile invites us to consciously consider the specific dimension of comparison, while Israel et al. (2004), Harding (2017) and Romano (2017) point to simile's vividness and originality, unexpectedness, increased complexity and 'daring'; and finally, Cuenca (2015) attempts to narrow down the application of the term simile. It is thus not surprising that Gargani (2016) does not see the distinction between metaphor and simile as based on reliable criteria, but at the same time recent work in psycholinguistics repeatedly confirms that simile and metaphor are not processed in the same way (Haught 2013, 2014, Roncero & de Almeida 2015). In spite of these various approaches, it seems that the majority of scholars find simile to be different from other figures. The core of its special character, though formulated in different ways, is its ability to 'draw attention to itself' and prompt the listener/reader to consider the content described from a fresh, original perspective. The examples of simile I consider below further support such an approach.

Another aspect of simile, which will also be addressed in this paper, is the way it functions in discourse (Moder 2008, 2010), especially extended discourse (Goatly 1997/2005, Dorst 2011, 2017). Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) advocate a view of simile as a construction (to account for the formal aspects) and describe the meaning

as a limited-scope blend[4] – a blend focused on one specific aspect of the situation described, a one-off comparison. A closer look at the meanings of similes (Lou 2017, Dancygier & Lou 2019) further suggests a spectrum of cases from basic perception (*His voice sounds like a squeaky wheel, This juice tastes like wine*), through depictions of intersubjectively inaccessible embodied states, such as pain (*It felt like an explosion in my head;* for a range of examples, see Semino 2016), to complex emotional experiences (*The break-up felt like being stabbed in the heart*). The fact that many of the more complex similes depict source situations that are not related to actual realistic experience further confirms the specific figurative role simile plays: evocation (rather than replication) of an exaggerated source experience to allow the hearer to construct a frame[5] representing the experience of the target situation. Additionally, similes with *like* are not the only constructions used to make such comparisons, and there is in fact quite a range of appropriate expressions: *as…as, more than, reminds me of,* etc. A thorough review of the uses of *like* and other similative expressions is beyond the limits of this paper (Goatly 1997/2005 offers a very rich overview), but it is clear that the variety of possibilities is quite broad syntactically and lexically, while what is shared is the meaning pattern, consisting primarily in evoking a salient experiential situation which can be viewed as the ground for comparison. I refer to that pattern as **similative meaning**.

Considering the full range of similative constructions here is beyond the scope of the paper. I will focus, however, on how reliance on similative meaning structures informal discussions about Brexit. I argue that similative figuration provides an experientially rich and vivid frame to help model the potential emotional response to an object or event. I also compare similes to analogies, to trace their differing communicative effects.

The meaning potential of similative constructions can be illustrated by the following quote from a conversation with a retired member of the Canadian women's soccer team, after the team's beloved coach resigned, leaving all team members sad and upset:

> (1) "That's why I *felt like* I was in it," she said. "*It was like*, 'Oh my god, this is horrible.' In terms of other people, *it's like if* you had a favourite boss and your boss said he's leaving, you're gutted."

This example illustrates three different uses of *like*. The first one (*I felt like*) represents the most typical cases of simile using experiential verbs followed by *like*; jointly, such examples refer to basic perceptions and emotions (with verbs such as *sound like*, *look like*, or *feel like*) as well as weak epistemic stance experiences

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[4] An account of the Conceptual Integration Theory (or Blending Theory), as outlined in Fauconnier and Turner (2002), is beyond the scope of this paper; I am thus assuming the reader's general familiarity with the concept.

[5] I am using the concept of a frame in the sense introduced by Fillmore (1982, 1985), further developed on the context of figurative language in Sullivan (2013). I also follow the convention whereby frames are referred to via capitalizing the initial letter.

(*appear like, seem like*). The second phrase, *It was like*, is a variant of the *be like* quotative construction which uses forms similar to reported discourse, while openly not guaranteeing the faithfulness. Typically, the construction uses forms of spoken discourse (in this case, *'Oh my god, this is horrible.'*) to represent how the person being discussed felt about the situation. The third *like* phrase is *it's like if*, which describes an imaginary source situation (of the boss leaving) to describe how that situation would make one feel about the target event (*you're gutted*). The constructional details differ across these *like*-expressions, but the construals share the pattern of evoking a situation which has clear emotional consequences. Examples of similative *like* that I have investigated so far (in journalistic prose, humor, and literature) all share the evocation of imaginary situations which give a clear (though exaggerated) depiction to the feelings the speaker attempts to describe. The examples considered below confirm the 'emotion-oriented' nature of similative meaning.

In some cases, as in the final sentence of (1), *like* is followed by an *if* clause depicting the situation construed as emotionally similar to the target situation. The joint constructional effect is that an imaginary (often counterfactual) situation is construed as an example of the emotional reaction it evokes. *Like* makes such a comparison explicit, while the *if*-situation allows the speaker to propose a more complex situation for the purposes of the comparison; this feature makes the formal aspects of the construction different from more typical cases, where *like* (as a preposition) is followed by an NP, as in *moving like a snake*, *sounding like a squeaky wheel*, etc.). The non-real situations described by *if*-clauses may serve the role of evoking emotionally loaded situations and prompting the desired inferences (for example about the desirability of the situation described). This is the case in some of the examples considered below, where *like, like if*, and *if* can all be used to profile imaginary situations to be seen from the perspective of their implied emotional impact, and then used as the comparative source domain to the emotional impact of the target situation. Additionally, the situation set up for the purposes of the comparison needs to evoke the emotional reaction unambiguously, which requires that it is somewhat exaggerated in comparison to the situation under consideration.

In what follows, I discuss four types of figurative scenarios. I start with analogy (which is structural, and not similative), to then consider variants of similative construals: explicit comparisons, narrow-scope and broad-scope similes, and, finally, narrativized Twitter similes. I use these examples to show how these constructions differ, not only structurally, but first of all in evocation of emotional responses.

2. Brexit analogies – one selected aspect

Brexit has been discussed from many angles, and various types of comparisons have been used. The broadest category is that of analogy, a concept used often (also in public discourse). The way I am approaching analogy here is quite

specific.[6] Analogies discussed below evoke a situation very different from the target one (in this case Brexit), and offer a clear and intuitively accessible concept which highlights an opinion the speaker or writer wants to express. Importantly, like various figurative forms, including simile and metaphor, such an analogy selects a salient aspect of the complex situation under discussion, but its goal, unlike in the case of experiential focus of simile, is to propose a *rational evaluation* of the target concept. As I argue below, the goal of a similative construal, whatever its form, is different – construing the *emotional response* to the target situation.

My data include several cases of such analogical construals, each of which selects an aspect of the source to express an opinion about the target. I have labelled them as follows: A. taking the eggs out of the cake, B. cheese submarine, C. taking the teabag out of the cup, D. 28 drinkers in a pub. They all suggest that the very idea of Brexit is irrational, or not feasible. I will discuss each of them briefly.

A. *Taking the eggs out of the cake*

The analogy constructs a situation which suggests the destructive character of Brexit as a general plan (not dealing at all with how it might be implemented). In this analogy, Brexit is construed in terms of the process of baking a cake, where all ingredients are blended together, to create a uniform desired structure. Undoing the process is not possible, as the eggs cannot be extracted. This analogy rationalizes the idea of the EU as a coherent structure, but inadvertently implies that the cake (EU) could also be destroyed by taking the eggs out (Brexit).[7] This analogy seems particularly apt in the context of frequent references to 'cake' metaphors in the discourse of Brexit (see Musolff 2021, this issue; Zappettini 2021 this issue).

B. *Cheese submarine*

An object such as a submarine made of cheese would not be edible and it would not serve its purpose as a sea-going vessel. Construed this way, the Brexit plan appears to be driven by wanting something that has no purpose of any kind.

C. *Taking the teabag out of the cup*

This analogy is quite complex and addresses the concept of 'strength'. The description chosen relies on the conditional form (imagining a future scenario) and then addresses the mistaken perception (*it might appear like*). It has been described as follows:

> (2) If you leave the bag in, then over time the cup of tea itself as a whole gets stronger. And it might appear like the bag is getting weaker but it's now part of a stronger cup of tea. Whereas, if you take the bag out, the tea's now quite weak and the bag itself goes directly in the bin.

You can make the tea (EU) stronger by keeping the teabag (UK) in it; taking the teabag out weakens the tea, but does not save the teabag (UK). Similarly to the 'cake' analogy, the point is avoiding an outcome that weakens both political agents.

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[6] Analogies have been discussed from various perspectives – as a common conceptual tool (Hofstadter & Sander 2013), or in comparison to metaphor. In this paper, I am focusing on the nature of the profiled connection between the target situation (Brexit) and a constructed source situation.

[7] In another text, the author used the analogy of 'taking the eggs out of the omelette', which is essentially identical. It is interesting to note, though, that such parallel construals have been evoked.

D. *28 drinkers in a pub*

The specific target is the fact that the UK initially refused to pay their Brexit bill. The analogy was coined by Jean-Claude Juncker, on the basis of an imagined (*if)* situation:

> (3) "If you are sitting in the bar and you are ordering 28 beers and then suddenly some of your colleagues [leave without] paying, that is not feasible. They have to pay, they have to pay."

The analogy shows that the refusal to pay undermines the agreement accepted by all members of the EU upon entering it. In other words, the attempt to withdraw without settling the bill is seen as a post-factum rejection of the way the organization has been set-up. Importantly, leaving without paying your share is described as *not feasible* (something that cannot be done) rather than as rude, offensive, or unfair – that is, the imagined pub scenario is not described in any emotional terms.

All these construals create an evocative source situation which makes it clear that Brexit is not a rational idea – it involves losing strength, integrity and ability to function, or breaking the rules agreed upon earlier. All of the situations prompt inferences about why Brexit is a misconstrued project, but they do not appeal primarily to the hearer's/reader's emotions. If anything, they are inviting the reader to share the speaker's surprise at the UK's inability to see the flaws inherent in the idea of leaving the EU. It is interesting to note that the forms chosen are quite varied: A and B are expressions which suggest lack of feasibility in any context – we don't have to understand Brexit at all, or even think about it, to determine that taking the eggs out of the cake is not possible, and that a submarine made of cheese is not a sea-worthy vessel. Then, C. and D. rely on the conditional *if*, thus being explicit about the fact that an unreal situation is presented as a clear example of the inferences it yields. Importantly, the analogies proposed are quite humorous, showing the UK's refusal to look at the situation rationally as surprisingly naive.

As cognitive linguistic studies of figuration have suggested, using a specific frame as the source domain of a figurative mapping is made possible by mappings and concepts of a lower level. The most skeletal concepts are referred to as image-schemas, which are basic experiential patterns such as Container, Up/Down, Source-Path-Goal, etc. These foundational concepts can then motivate the use of so-called primary metaphors – mappings which reflect primary scenes of experience and thus connect an infant's early prelinguistic experiences with the emergent conceptualizations (cf. Grady 1997 and Johnson 1997). Primary metaphors such as MORE IS UP, MIND IS A CONTAINER or PURPOSIVE ACTION IS GOAL DIRECTED MOTION thus form a substrate of more complex metaphors and blends. The do not have to be explicitly referred to in order to prompt figurative thought.

It is important to note that, in conceptual terms, the A-D analogies rely on the very basic image-schematic level, proposing an understanding of EU membership in terms of cohesive structure, where the integrity of the whole is a reflection of the structural adjustment of each of the parts. That is, the structure of the EU is assumed

to be governed by primary metaphors such as ABSTRACT STRUCTURE IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, rather than the basic idea of Containment. Being 'in' the EU or leaving it (as the UK has been framing it) suggests a simple image schema of a Container, with objects placed inside or moved outside, without structural changes. This construal indeed makes the UK approach justifiable and does not include any need to adjust anything – it is just a plain act of removal of an object beyond the boundary. The critics quoted above propose a different construal – a structure where all components are integrated to form a coherent and stable whole. Under this construal, one cannot just remove something (e.g. eggs from the cake), and if a component is extracted, it would not be a well bounded and self-supporting object. A similar concept lies behind the teabag analogy – it may seem that taking the teabag out of a cup is again an extraction of an object from a container filled with fluid, which leaves the remaining substance intact, but the analogy suggests it is not a matter of containment, but increased strength derived from substances moving between the fluid and the immersed object.

The analogy in B relies on ABSTRACT STRUCTURE IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE primary metaphor – the material in the analogy (cheese) does not allow one to build a stable structure, especially one resistant to water. This analogy is not so much about the structure of the EU, but about an attempt to achieve a result that will be stable and resilient. And finally, the pub analogy is about the shared responsibility and the spread of the weight supporting a complex structure. A plan such that every member contributes to keeping the structure 'standing' cannot be changed without re-weighing the responsibilities, and so a refusal to contribute as planned jeopardizes the stability of the whole structure (which would be captured by the PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT primary metaphor).

To sum up, the construals built in A-D require a careful one-off set-up and are not easy to extend (unlike in the case of metaphorical mappings). But they question the validity of the idea of Brexit by appealing to the reader's rationality and basic image-schemas and primary scenes of experience. The source domains built for the purpose represent unstable structures, rather than situations which would evoke specific emotions. It seems that these extended figures, depending on their nature and the expected construed response of the reader, can suggest various viewpoints on contentious ideas – such as Brexit.

The analogies discussed above provide a good ground for showing how similative construals are conceptually different. In what follows I will consider similative meaning in overt and covert comparisons, in two common types of similes – those that follow the pattern of either narrow-scope or broad-scope construction, and in narrativized similes. These similes are figurative expressions which construct experientially rich situations and appeal to readers' emotions.

3. Comparisons, similes, and similative meaning

As suggested above, using *X is like Y* similes is by far not the only formula for making comparisons, and the preposition *like* itself construes comparisons or similative meanings in combination with a range of verbs, and in constructions

(such as *be like* or *it's like if*). I have proposed above that the core of similative meaning is the focus on experiential aspects of the source situation, from basic perception (*Her room smells like a beauty salon*) to complex experiences of physical or emotional pain or pleasure. One more aspect of similative meaning was captured in earlier work as 'exaggerated' or 'vivid', but I suggest here that it is more specific – it is scalar. To sum up, similative meaning sets up a scale of experiential responses, such that the target situation (the one that the speaker describes) is put on that scale and compared to a (possibly unrealistic) source situation higher up the scale, representing the same experiential or emotional response.

3.1. Overt and covert comparisons

Examples of comparisons can easily be found in the informal discussions of Brexit. Example (4) shows how Jean-Claude Juncker described the communication with the UK during the Brexit negotiations, while example (5) represents what Boris Johnson said about the prospect of Jeremy Corbyn negotiating with the EU.

> (4) If I were to compare Great Britain to a sphinx, the sphinx would be an open book by comparison. And let's see how that book speaks over the next week, or so.
> (5) It would be a disaster. He would go into the negotiating chamber with all the authority of a smacked blancmange.

Examples (4) and (5) do not use an overt simile or a comparative construction, and yet their meaning describes two situations, source and target, where the source provides a one-off context in which the target can be construed. In both cases the source image is experientially evocative. In (4), the speaker expresses lack of satisfaction with UK's communicative choices. The source is a frame involving a mythical creature that either doesn't talk at all or speaks in riddles. In the context of negotiating a solution to a complex problem, that kind of behaviour is unhelpful and frustrating. In the construal proposed there are thus several components: an exaggerated example of non-cooperative communicative behaviour, which, in spite of being seemingly extreme, is lower on the scale of lack of communicative openness in comparison to the UK. Consequently, the emotional response of the EU negotiators is also intense. The comparison thus allows the listener to gauge the level of frustration that the EU is experiencing. Example (5) also suggests a scale of source frames representing authority and aligning the potential contribution of the political opponent with an image of a malleable and misshapen object (a soft dessert) – thus suggesting no authority at all. These comparisons represent a similative construal – a scale of experientially evocative situations or objects, where an exaggerated example of the source situation profiles an emotional response and an evaluation of the experiential/emotional reaction to the target event. In the context of Brexit, the examples are also remarkable in construing the negative sides of the handling of the negotiation – inability to communicate effectively or displaying lack of strength and authority. In contrast to analogies in A-D, they appeal to emotional or experiential reactions, rather than pointing out flaws in the reasoning.

Examples (4) and (5) represent similative construals, even though they do not use the form of simile. Example (4) uses a hypothetical comparison (actually signalling the comparison twice – with the verb *compare* and the phrase *by comparison*). The sphinx sets up a rather extreme example of failing to communicate (surely, riddles are not prime examples of informativeness), and so a comparison which suggests that the UK says even less is quite damning. In (4), the crucial expression is *all the authority of,* which sets up a scale of objects evoking authority, and putting a boundary of how high Corbyn's authority could go on that scale. The object selected as such an extreme example is a blancmange – a popular dessert, which is soft and jelly-like, the very opposite of anything exuding authority, and additionally described as *smacked* – possibly flattened or misshapen. In both cases similative meaning is construed without *like*, via the setting up of a comparative scale of examples of the feature is question (informativeness, authority), where the target is represented as comparable to an exaggerated salient example. Example (4) uses the explicit verb of comparison and (5) relies on the *all of* expression, and in both cases the meaning is inherently scalar. Importantly, both express the speaker's emotional response to the experience being described – frustration caused by inability to communicate and deep disregard for the political opponent. These comparative construals are thus different from the structural analogies discussed in A-D. In what follows I will look more closely at similes and their construal of Brexit.

3.2. Narrow-scope and broad-scope similes

Similes differ in how easy it for a hearer to access the link between the source and the target. With this criterion in mind, Moder defines two types of similes, in terms of their discourse behaviour. Narrow-scope similes can be used without additional context because they provide enough information about the source and the target by selecting appropriately evocative expressions. For example, a sentence such as *This house is like a palace* compares two types of buildings and clearly determines the difference in terms of size or opulence. Typically, narrow-scope similes refer to features which are readily accessible in experience, and hence are often focused on perception. Broad-scope similes, for comparison, require an 'elaboration' – an explanation of the nature of the conceptual link between the source and the target. One of Moder's examples describes a town in Texas as *a reality which is like those 3-D pictures of Jesus. It changes depending on your perspective*. The NP following *like* is not easily applied to the concept of a town, and thus the unique connection between source and target has to be explicitly provided. No such effect can be achieved through narrow scope similes.

In the discourse of Brexit, both similes are found. Two examples of narrow-scope similes are provided in (6):

> (6) Leaving the EU is a negotiation, […] What we don't want to find is that at the first tap it falls apart **like** a chocolate orange. It needs to be coming through **like** a cricket ball, he said.

The similes in this example both use source domains that are immediately recognizable as describing structural integrity (PERSISTING IS REMAINING ERECT) and striking power. These domains are experientially unambiguous and are thus good candidates for narrow scope similes. An elaboration of the nature of the conceptual projection from source to target is not required, because of the clear indication of the difference between an object which easily loses its integrity, and another one (also round and easy to handle) which can be used to strike its target with considerable force. It is interesting to note that narrow-scope similes seem rare in the discourse of Brexit. Apparently, the complexity of Brexit does not yield itself easily to experiential and naturally accessible domains as sources. Broad scope similes, including appropriate elaboration, are thus more common. I am including three such examples here:

(7) #Brexit is **like** consent. Just because you said yes three years ago doesn't mean you can't change your mind

(8) Q: Why is #Brexit **like** a Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle?
    A: It's fast, exciting, totally imaginary, and the driver is facing backwards

(9) "It is a bit **like** the Gandhi thing — first they laugh at you, then they attack you, and then you win." (said by former UKIP leader Paul Nuttall)

There are some interesting similarities and differences among the three examples. They are all broad-scope similes, in that the initial sentences do not specify the specific dimension of comparison across the source and the target. As Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) have argued, simile is a limited-scope blend, which means that it creates a projection link between the two domains along just one dimension. As a result, the inferences are drawn not by creating more connections between the source and the target (which would be the case in conceptual metaphor), but rather by applying the aspect of comparison specified in the elaboration to the target. Example (7) is very useful as an illustration here. Brexit is compared to "consent", which is a one time, linguistically simple acquiescence to a proposal, while anybody who has observed the developments knows very well that arriving at consent has taken a long time and even after the formal departure from the EU has been announced there remained numerous crucial issues that still await a resolution and may never reach that stage. So most of the assumed implications of consent do not apply to Brexit. However, the similarity is claimed to hold only along the one dimension clarified in the elaboration – that the approval by referendum can be annulled by another one, or by other legal means. The proposed license to 'change your mind' was and still is an emotional and contentious issue, as Theresa May's *Brexit means Brexit* mantra has been used repeatedly to deny the UK citizens the right to re-think their decision.

Example (8) belongs to the very numerous category of *Why is X like Y?* jokes, often relying on pun and other such ambiguities. For example, there are numerous jokes about the nature of men, formulated within this pattern (e.g. *Why are men like mascara? Because they run at the slightest sign of emotion*). In the case of (8), the listener/reader does not even have to know what a Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle is

(I admit I still don't), but the elaboration explains what the joke-teller means – the idea may be exciting, but it is unrealistic and dangerous. From the perspective of the passenger's experience, travelling in a fast vehicle whose driver can't see where they are going cannot be desired. Somewhat similarly to internet memes (Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2019), where top text often introduces a topic, while the bottom text adds a comment, such similes first pose an unanswerable question (there is really nothing in common between men and mascara or Brexit and imaginary vehicles) and then reveal the only way in which the source presents the target in a new (and emotionally revealing) way ('Men do not like women to show their emotions'/ 'Brexit is a spurious and dangerous idea').

Example (9) also illustrates broad-scope simile well, as it seeks to compare UKIP's success with the referendum result to Gandhi's success in making India a free country. However, the example is really a cross between typical broad-scope similes (such as (7) and (8)) and the narrativized similes to be considered in the next section. On the one hand, there is the element of surprise (UKIP and Gandhi seem to belong to very different frames), but on the other hand the similarity is revealed in the elaboration through detailing the stages leading from not being taken seriously to winning. There is also the (even more disturbing) suggestion that freeing the UK from the EU is in any way similarly courageous and desirable as freeing India from colonial rule. The parallels are clear, even if unfair. I consider this example to be a cross between an ordinary broad-scope simile (the surprising comparison followed by an explanation of the profiled dimension of comparison) and a narrativized simile (where the similarity constructed is in the emotional impact of the story, not in the nature of what the story describes). Further examples of stories used in constructing similative meaning are discussed in section 4.

4. Narrativized similes

Simile in its basic form refers to perception, feeling, and emotional or epistemic stance (*sounds like, looks like, feels like, seems like*, *is like*, etc.). As I suggested above, simile (*X is like Y* or other constructions), as opposed to inferential analogy (such as the ones in A-D), evokes an emotional or experiential response. As the examples above show, the similative construal requires several components: comparison, scalar meaning, focus on a specific situation, and an experiential or emotional core of the comparison. Brexit, as we could see in the examples above, provides an unusually complex target domain, hence the variety of forms used. There is, however, an aspect of Brexit which requires a separate treatment – and that is the fact that Brexit is a story, and thus evokes emotions in the reader in the same way in which fictional stories do. It is a series of events developing over time, it profiles two protagonists (the EU and the UK), it sets up a conflict between them, and goes through various stages, (presumably) leading to a resolution. But it is also an emotional story, where both opponents have their hopes and desires, where they both attempt to overcome obstacles, and where they both are dealing with large groups of people either supporting them or not. And finally, the observer is

responding similarly to a reader of a novel – expecting that the events lead to a resolution of the conflicts set-up without complicating the plot unnecessarily or allowing precious narrative time to pass without moving the story forward.

When looking through the collection of "Brexit is like X" tweets, published by Aoife Kelly, we find the Twitter users' reactions to Brexit as a(n) (un)satisfying narrative. Interestingly, they make a number of types of comparisons, while focusing on two things: the expectations regarding a good story and the emotional reaction to the narrative not reaching a satisfactory conclusion. The most representative tweets are quoted below, in examples (10) to (15):

> (10) Brexit is **like** half the country rang the bell on the bus by accident, and now they feel like they have to get off even though it's the wrong stop.
> (11) Realising that this whole Brexit thing is **like** season 6 of a show I stopped watching partway through season 3. I keep hearing stuff but I have no clue what is going on, or even if it's still the original cast.
> (12) Late stage Brexit is **like** one of those viral videos where a lad is shoveling snow and then hilariously slips and takes a long time to fall.
> (13) The handling of Brexit is **like** procrastinating a uni project until the last day only to realise it is way harder than you thought so you beg the lecturer for an extension. And then procrastinate some more loool
> (14) Brexit is **like** the disastrous wedding in a romantic movie and you are waiting for Richard Gere or Hugh Grant to burst in and call the whole thing off but they never do and then you realise it isn't a romantic movie but a really long tragic arthouse movie and you can't escape.
> (15) Brexit is starting to feel **like** the writers for the purge movies got asked to redo the backstory but they are having a really hard time with writer's block right now.

The most striking feature of the tweets is how they refer to a range of narrative events as the source domain of their comparison: a bus ride, a TV show (which goes through several seasons), a viral video, completing a university project, a movie. What the tweets target is not so much the nature of the narrative (types of characters, entertainment value, how interesting the story is, etc.), but the fact that stories are expected to reach a resolution at some predictable point. In other words, a successful narrative leads the reader, observer, or viewer through various events and episodes, creates expectations and suspense, but leads to a closure before the observer stops paying attention. The recurring theme of the tweets is how the Brexit story does not lead to a satisfying and timely closure. Jointly the tweets are focused on the emotional (rather than political, economic, or international) aspects of Brexit, both with regard to the primary participants and from the perspective of the observer.

Example (10) is the only tweet which suggests that the narrative is a result of a mistake, combined with the insistence to accept the unintended outcome. In narrative terms, this presents the protagonists as going ahead with the wrong solution by attributing an emotional stance to them (*they feel like they have to get off*: sense of obligation). What we expect in a typical narrative context is that the

protagonists would attempt to repair their mistakes. In a way, the desire to do the right thing should be stronger than the unwillingness to show weakness by admitting one has made a mistake. The situation set up by the tweet (a bus ride) is a type of Journey, and thus assumes that the travellers have a destination in mind. Ending the journey at the wrong place implies serious consequences – such as not knowing where to go next, being thrown into a situation one is not prepared for, etc. Evoking the Journey frame (which can metaphorically stand for any long-term purposeful activity) and implying reaching an undesirable destination allows the reader to draw many negative metaphorical entailments, such as lack of ability or determination to reach the right goal, inability to tell what the desired goal should look like, yielding to emotions such as protecting one's ego, rather than admitting a mistake, etc. Simple as it is, the tweet is rich in emotional and evaluative stance.

Importantly, the sentential structure of the tweet in (10) is not a typical *X is like Y*, where Y is an NP. Instead, what follows *like* is the entire narrative (which I will refer to as a Z), starting with half the country ringing the bell to get off by mistake. A similar structure (*X is like Z*) is used in (15) and (16). These choices suggest that the presence of *like* is treated less in terms of a traditional comparison, and more as a prompt to consider the discourse that follows (however long and syntactically complex) as a ground for evocation of the targeted emotional response. The meaning of such construals overrides the expected constructional features. For comparison, in (11), the Twitter user made an effort to refer to the story as an NP (*this whole Brexit thing*), apparently to stick to the expected form.

In the cases where *like* is followed by an NP such as *a viral video* or *season 6* of a show the narrative construal of Brexit is clear, and the evaluation is based on the expectations one typically has of an entertainment show. In (11) the story is expected to hold your attention enough that you do not tune out to the degree that you can't follow the story anymore. And (12) refers to an event which is in fact instantaneous, to highlight the comical lack of control represented by visually spreading a fall through time. I do not want to speculate whether this Twitter user chose a Fall frame as an example for a reason. Finally, (13) creates a parallel story of procrastination and inability to complete the task, but from the perspective of a student. The slow pace and the apparent lack of focus seem to be primary reasons for dissatisfaction with the Brexit narrative.

Example (14) also refers to a narrative – a romantic movie – for a comparison, but, somewhat surprisingly, chooses 'a disastrous wedding' as the event to compare Brexit to. The irony should have been clear (Brexit has been talked about as a difficult divorce), but the choice suggests that what matters in this simile is the genre of the narrative – the film was expected to be light entertainment, but problems are not solved as they would be in a romantic comedy and so it is watched as an ambitious but grim production which the viewer cannot enjoy at all.

The examples also share another interesting formal feature. Once the narrative expectations are set up, many of the examples use coordinating conjunctions such as *but, but then, and, and then* to signal why or how the narrative does not live up

to the expectations – the desired outcome is delayed, mistakes are not corrected, the plot develops in unsatisfying ways, etc., so that the 'story of Brexit' appears to be a poorly designed story. The response of bemusement, boredom, and becoming tired with the never-ending narrative permeates all the examples. These are thus not analogies or metaphors where the nature of Brexit is compared structurally to another concept. The examples cited are similative in nature – they set up an exaggerated and transparent situation for comparison which allows the Twitter users to express their emotional or experiential response. The situation created to profile the emotional response is easily accessible experientially and marked with a specific range of emotions.

Another group of narrativized Brexit similes relies on a social situation as the source. In the three examples below, the events reported have the protagonists ready to leave the current situation, but unable to actually take appropriate action (not leaving in spite announcing it or not being able to choose the substitute for the situation abandoned). In each of these scenarios the shared concept is apparent determination to make a change, but then not being able to decide what could be done to achieve it or make it a change for the better.

> (16) Brexit is **like** when that one friend slaps their knees and loudly proclaims "RIGHT, I'm away." but then they just carry on sitting there.
> (17) Brexit is **like** a group of friends having a great evening in a fantastic pub and then deciding to go to another pub, but then everyone has a massive argument about which pub to go to and they end up stumbling from pub to pub secretly wishing that they'd stayed in the first pub.
> (18) I think I have managed to pinpoint what the Commons' approach to Brexit **reminds me of** and it is exactly **like** having a group of friends at a festival & you all agree you don't want to go to the main stage but argue for so long about where to go instead that you miss all the gigs.

Furthermore, in (16), the grammatical structure is unusual: *like* refers to a situation, introduced with the temporal conjunction *when*. In an ordinary context we would expect *when* to introduce two events (or types of events), such that one temporally (and also causally) follows another: *When you heat up water sufficiently long, it will boil*. Interestingly, as Lou has observed (2017), the standard constructional pattern is also not used in the so-called *when*-memes. Such memes follow the introductory *when* clause (such as *When people say they are open-minded*) not with the main clause, but with an image which represents how one feels in such a situation (in this case, it is an image of a can of food with a double lid – you pull off one, but there is another one underneath). Lou describes *when* memes as multimodal similes, because they use multiple modalities (text and image) to describe how the meme-maker feels about the situation described by the *when*-clause. Grammatically, such formulas are not complete linguistic structures, but as memes they perform the similative job unambiguously. It seems that in the tweet a similar formula is followed.

The tweets discussed above all use *like* to construct similative meaning, but they are not typical similes in several ways. They compare the idea of Brexit to various narratives, from the perspective of how successful these stories are as forms of entertainment. This approach explains why *like* cannot be followed by a simple NP. Instead, the structure that follows, even if grammatically unusual, has to construct a narrative which fails as a good story in ways in which Brexit fails as a good story. The primary criticism in these tweets is the slow pace and unclear focus, so that the 'story of Brexit' annoys those who follow it because it lacks clear purpose, quick pace and a swift, satisfying resolution. One might be concerned about why those Twitter users even care about Brexit having the features of a good story, as the criticism formulated in this way omits the crucial aspects of the 'story' – its political, international, and economic impact. But in fact, these tweets are not evaluating Brexit as such – they are only showing why its inability to reach a satisfying closure is disconcerting, boring, disappointing, etc. In other words, these tweets are not about Brexit, they are about emotional responses to its (lack of) progress.

5. Conclusion

This paper argues that different figurative forms address different aspects of Brexit. There are inference-rich analogies (such as A-D above) which offer a critical apprehension of Brexit as an idea, but do not evoke emotional responses. But also, there are comparisons and similes which select one specific aspect of Brexit and use a vivid and exaggerated concept (the sphinx, a damaged dessert, an imaginary vehicle, sexual consent, etc.) to profile an aspect of Brexit they are evaluating (so that describing the UK as a sphinx applies only to their informativeness in the context of the negotiations, rather than the whole idea). These examples confirm that similes rely on one selected dimension of comparison, construct a scale of examples and select an exaggerated example to compare the target behavior to it. And then there are the narrativized similes on Twitter which do not comment on the idea, the participants, or the expected outcome, because they are focused entirely on Brexit as a story. The Twitter user is someone watching the show, and, in most cases, finding it boring, too long, not well-constructed and not reaching a swift-enough conclusion. These emotional responses are structured on the basis of what is expected of a good story and the disappointment Brexit has been in this respect. At the same time, these extended examples, where various stages of the narrative have to be mentioned, accept various complex grammatical forms (so that, for example, the preposition *like* can be followed by a sentence or several clauses, rather than an NP).

The examples considered suggest some observations about similative meaning and form. As regards meaning, we have seen some very clear differences between inferential analogies and experiential similes. The analogies A-D discussed at the beginning of this paper seek examples which would reveal the perceived structural features of an event such as Brexit. Their form is quite varied, because what counts is capturing the concept which would best represent the very nature of Brexit. As

we have also seen, such choices have important inferential consequences – removing an object (UK) from a container (EU) seems easy, and so the analogies show clearly that the required figurative construct has to reflect the degree of integration of the UK with the EU.

Other examples (overt and covert comparisons, scalar construals, narrow-scope and broad-scope similes) set up a scale of experiences, such that an exaggerated example serving as the source allows one to construe the target (Brexit) in experiential terms. Finally, the narrativized Twitter similes narrow down the scope of the comparison even further, by focusing on evaluating Brexit from the perspective of it being a not-quite-satisfying story.

The variety and scope of these figurative expressions suggest some observations about the way in which such complex and temporally spread events are presented in the media. None of the texts referred to here presents a thorough political or economic analysis. Instead, they focus on how ordinary citizens conceptualize Brexit and how they respond to its delivery – and, importantly, the construals address issues other than the standard discussion of Leave versus Remain stances. The media outlets engaging readers in such considerations are perhaps not best known for their high-level political commentary, but they do make an effort to connect to UK citizens and the ways in which they respond to the puzzling and uncomfortable issue, adjusting it to the level of experience of an ordinary citizen. Even when political agents are quoted (as in the *Politico* article), they speak informally about their experiences.

And then there are the Twitter similes. We can assume, based on the types of events and artifacts chosen as source domains, that the Twitter users quoted by Aoife Kelly are members of a younger generation – possibly students. It is surprising to see how consistent these responses are in what they focus on – the unattractiveness of the story developing through weeks, months and years, without much hope for a resolution. As I am writing these words, the Brexit saga is closed, the deal has been approved and is being implemented. So why does it feel like it is not over yet? Why are there still disputes and disagreements? Perhaps the nature of this cataclysmic political event is that it will never be completely resolved? Is it indeed a story worth watching?

But beyond the sources of the figurative construal discussed above, the examples considered here clarify at least two things – the nature of similative form and of similative meaning. The examples confirm what earlier work on metaphors of Brexit (Charteris-Black 2019) has observed – that figurative forms (of all kinds) are a necessary tool in conceptualizing unfamiliar experiences, especially since they go well beyond a dry and rational analyses offered by specialists. They appeal to our reasoning skills (like analogies) or they reflect the way in which events are experienced. Furthermore, the examples suggest that English speakers have a number of forms at their disposal.[8]

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[8] I have deliberately not included a separate discussion of metaphors of Brexit. First of all, they have been discussed quite thoroughly by Charteris-Black (2019). But also, the goal of this paper has been to contrast two ways of using figuration to frame a contentious issue – a rational one and an

As regards simile as such, though, the differences in formal structure go far beyond the observations made by Moder (2008, 2010), about the different nature of narrow scope and broad scope similes. The narrativized similes discussed would seem similar to broad-scope similes in that the artifacts evoked (films, shows, social events) do not propose a clear ground for comparison without an explanation. But the kind of elaboration Moder talked about (usually one sentence long) would not be sufficient in these cases, since the Twitter users are constructing a story to match their perception of Brexit as a story. The examples quoted thus rely on coordinate conjunctions *and, but* or *and then/but then*, in order to develop the narrative in the way that demonstrates its poor structure, lack of pace, or its disappointing conclusion. Also, the stories following *like* in the tweets can deviate from the expected NP structure, or at least a gerund form which would typically follow the preposition *like*, while introducing a new sentence that starts the story (*like the writers for the purge movies got asked to redo the backstory* or *like half the country rang the bell on the bus by accident*), or even starting with a *when*-clause, more or less in the way used in *when*-memes. The use of *like* in these cases resembles the construction such as *be like* (*And I'm like, I can't believe it*), but it is also unique in its narrative structure. Still, what we are seeing is a contextual extension of the formula that simile typically depends on.

What is more, some of the comparisons found do not rely on *like* at all. My final example is (19), coined by Frans Timmermans (Vice President of the European Commission), which shows a UKIP party representative as refusing to admit the self-inflicted irreparable damage of Brexit, while focusing on the imagined harm to the EU. This one uses the verb *remind*, rather than similative *like*, to express amazement at how much in denial some of the Brexit proponents are. It is thus another instance of similative framing of an emotional response by referring to a story that evokes similar emotions.

> (19) "To say that the whole European Union is going to suffer terribly in the G20 because of Brexit is a bit rich, frankly. Mr. [Raymond] Finch really **reminds me of** a character created by John Cleese in Monty Python's 'The Holy Grail;' the Black Knight, who after being defeated terribly and having all of his limbs cut off, says to his opponent: 'Let's call it a draw.'"

One might also note that looking at the responses to Brexit offered via witty quips, jocular analogies or social media sites reveals the need for giving expression to feelings of frustration and disappointment, and doing so independently of the

emotional one. Metaphors in discourse often combine both framings, but are typically not focused on the emotional or experiential side alone. For example, a metaphor such as BREXIT IS A DIVORCE is primarily structural in nature (two parties, conjoined in a legally binding relationship, need to separate while making sure that their obligations are respected), though it may evoke the emotional aspects of the separation. However, the legal union and approved ways to separate are at the core of the proceeding in any divorce, and they at the core, though on a much larger scale, of Brexit. This metaphor confirms one of the central goals of metaphorical thinking – finding a source domain (Divorce) which simplifies and clarifies the nature of the target domain (Brexit).

mainstream media discussion. In the context of shifting attitudes towards traditional sources of information and well-tested outlets of journalistic commentary, the role of these less serious channels, where emotions can flow freely, seems to be increasing. Looking in more detail at how the low-brow media play an important role in public discourse might help us understand better how complex events require numerous, and equally complex figurative construals. At the same time, we can learn more about the roles various forms of figuration play in public discourse.

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Research article

Emergent impoliteness and persuasive emotionality in Polish media discourses

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Abstract
The focus of the paper is to identify and discuss cases of what we call emergent impoliteness and *persuasive emotionality* based on selected types of discourse strategies in Polish media which contribute to increasingly high negative emotionality in audiences and to the radicalization of language and attitudes when addressing political opponents. The role and function of emotional discourse are particularly foregrounded to identify its persuasive role in media discourses and beyond. Examples discussed are derived from current Polish media texts. The materials are collected from the large Polish monitor media corpus monco.frazeo.pl (Pęzik 2020). The analysis is conducted in terms of quantitative corpus tools (Pęzik 2012, 2014), concerning emotive and media discourse approaches (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson 2013, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2015, 2017a, 2017b). The analysis includes a presentation of the ways mass media *construe events* (Langacker 1987/1991) in terms of their *ideological framing*, understood as particular imposed/constructed event models and structures (cf. Gans 1979). Special attention is paid to the negative axiological evaluation of people and events in terms of mostly implicitly persuasive and offensive discourse, including the role *emotion clusters* of harm, hurt and offence, anger and contempt play in the media persuasive tactics. The research outcomes provide a research basis and categorization of types of emergent impoliteness and *persuasive emotionality*, which involve *implicit persuasion* directed at *negative emotionality raising* with the media public, as identifiedin the analyzed media texts.
Keywords: *Polish media discourse, persuasion, emergent impoliteness, persuasive emotionality, emotion clusters*

«Возникающая невежливость» и «убеждающая эмоциональность» в дискурсах польских СМИ

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Аннотация

Основное внимание в статье уделяется выявлению и обсуждению случаев того, что мы называем «возникающей невежливостью» ("emergent impoliteness") и «убеждающей эмоциональностью» ("persuasive emotionality"). Рассматриваются дискурсивные стратегии, используемые польскими СМИ, которые способствуют усилению отрицательных эмоций аудитории и радикализации языка и отношений при обращении к политическим оппонентам. Особое значение уделяется функциям эмоционального дискурса и его персуазивной роли в дискурсе СМИ и за его пределами. Рассматриваемые примеры взяты из современных польских медиатекстов. Источником материала послужил большой польский медиа корпус – corpus monco.frazeo.pl (Pęzik 2020). Исследование проводится с помощью инструментов статистического анализа материалов корпуса (Pęzik 2012, 2014) на основе эмотивного и дискурсивного подходов. Анализируются используемые СМИ способы интерпретации событий (Langacker 1987/1991) с точки зрения их идеологического фрейминага, понимаемого как определенные навязанные / сконструированные модели и структуры событий (Gans 1979). Особое внимание уделяется негативной аксиологической оценке людей и событий с точки зрения преимущественно имплицитного воздействующего и оскорбительного дискурса, включая роль эмоциональных кластеров обиды и оскорбления, гнева и презрения в тактике убеждения. В исследовании предлагается категоризация типов возникающей невежливости и убеждающей эмоциональности, которые включают в себя имплицитное убеждение, направленное на повышение негативной эмоциональности медиаобщественности. Результаты исследования обеспечивают основу для дальнейших исследований эмоционализации медиадискурса.

Ключевые слова: *польский медиадискурс, убеждение, возникающая невежливость, убеждающая эмоциональность, эмоциональные кластеры*

1. Introduction

The focus of the paper is to study Polish media discourse strategies which contribute to high negative emotionality increase in audiences and, eventually, to the radicalization of language and attitudes when addressing political opponents. The main idea of the paper is that selected media texts which are the focus of our discussion, aim at persuading its readers to develop or strengthen negative attitudes towards their political opponents indirectly, not by means of indicating explicitly

negative characterization of particular persons or events but rather implicitly, by insinuation, in terms of emergent rather than explicit impoliteness, expressed both on the verbal level in the media texts as well as on the relevant visual plane in the form of pictures, graphs, etc. In this way they purposefully intend to contribute to gradual raising of negative emotions in the audiences . The role and function of emotional discourse are particularly foregrounded to identify its persuasive role in media discourses and beyond. In other words, the audience's perception of particular characters, typically some well-known personalities from social, political, or cultural circles, are represented in the contexts which – only on reflection – appear to be unfavourable and difficult to accept by the audience. The emotional arousal which is likely to accompany such news triggers either negative attitude towards the characters or else, depending on the political preferences of the audience, activate negative emotionality towards the authors of the news or towards particular media organisations at large. The persuasive emotionality signals are then a consequence of acts of *emergent impoliteness* addressed at particular political figures, not accepted by a segment of the society. And yet, the impoliteness acts are not always, similarly to the persuasion objectives, explicitly marked by rude, abusive, or otherwise unacceptable language in the media texts. Rather, they can be more nuanced and more importantly, outside the actual contexts, they can even be considered if not fully polite, at least minimally, neutral. The types of such emergent impoliteness will be presented in the sections to follow, starting from more explicit cases and progressing towards gradually less and less obvious cases of persuasive emotionality.

2. Research methods and materials

The research methodology applied in this study involves a qualitative analysis of the data excerpted by language corpus tools, examined with accessible instruments of concordances and their frequencies as well as relevant collocations. In some of the cases, in which new meanings relevant to our discussion of persuasive emotionality have recently emerged, our corpus results indicate *diachronic trends* such forms underwent from less to more marked meanings. Similarly, in some of the examples – although not in all, due to their less direct relevance – the analysis indicates the ideological framing and political underpinnings and usage preferences of a segment of Polish media consumers to be sensitive to the tacit persuasive tactics used by some media, although no systematic analysis is provided of the relationship between specific outlets (e.g. left/right supporting newspapers or TV channels/programmes) and mobilisation of specific emotions narratives.The data and materials used in the present study were derived from a broad selection of Polish news sources indexed by the Monco corpus search engine (Pęzik 2020, monco.frazeo.pl). Its Polish version (MoncoPL) currently contains over 7 billion word tokens of web-based news releases, blogs and transcripts of TV shows spanning the last decade. The textual data in the corpus is timestamped and annotated for morphosyntactic features, which makes it possible

to construct corpus queries and identify examples of phrases illustrating selected impoliteness phenomena. Since the dataset indexed in MoncoPL is densely sampled at approximately 2 million words per day (Fig. 1), it is also possible to generate timeseries revealing diachronic trends in the frequency of words, phrases and lexico-grammatical structures relevant to our analysis of impoliteness.

The index of Monco currently contains over 7 billion word tokens of internet-based news releases, blogs and transcripts of TV shows spanning the last decade. The textual data in the corpus is timestamped and annotated for morphosyntactic features, which makes it possible to construct corpus queries and identify examples of phrases illustrating selected impoliteness phenomena. Since the dataset indexed in Monco is densely sampled at approximately 2 million words per day (Fig. 1), it is also possible to generate timeseries revealing diachronic trends in the frequency of words, phrases and lexico-grammatical structures relevant to our analysis of impoliteness.
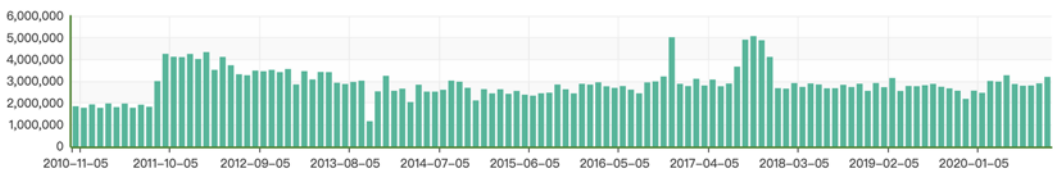
Fig. 1. The rate of sentence number increase of Monco shown in the number of sentences per month, collected since 2010

This paper utilizes a number of corpus exploration methods implemented in MoncoPL including concordance analyses, metadata and timeseries aggregation as well as collocational profiles. Their application is showcased in the discussion of specific examples of persuasive emotionality covered below. As a general procedure, we start analyzing each of these cases by devising a corpus query matching morphosyntactic variants of key lexical units. Full concordances from all the sources indexed in MoncoPL[1] are obtained and inspected to identify the distribution of predominant senses and functions (see the example of *dwórka* below). The concordance results are also ordered and aggregated by publication date in order to identify points in time where possible semantic shifts occur. Finally, collocational profiles of such key lexical items are generated and inspected to identify newly acquired connotations and semantic prosodies as in the case of *rusycystka* discussed below.

3. Impoliteness

Impoliteness is behaviour that is face-aggravating in a particular context (Locher and Bousfield 2008) which comes about when the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or else when a combination of intentional face attack

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[1] See http://monco.frazeo.pl/stats for a current list of sources (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

and its perception by the hearer (audience) as such occur at the same time (Culpeper 2005a: 38, Haugh. M. & J. Culpeper 2018.). Such behaviours always have, or are presumed to have, *emotional consequences* for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence.

The impolite behavior in the context of media events assumes a somewhat different format. First of all, impolite behaviours are typically not fully overt in media discourses. Moreover, they are most often not addressed to the readers or audiences, but targeted at persons that are likely to be well-known to audiences, their characteristics, behaviour and activities that are meant to be framed in the media as either punishable, unacceptable physically, morally, or aesthetically distasteful. The media however use a covert strategy of observing all rules of law and good manners, and yet, on close interpretation of the information the reader identifies a particular emerging impoliteness act that tends to lurk behind the politically correct discourses and illustrations. The audience then is invited to 'uncover' the negativity aura around the main character of the media news and blame the main persons described in the news for their conduct and behaviours. This is certainly what happens when the reader and, more generally, the audience, are sympathetic to the political line of the particular media profile. Nevertheless, in the cases where the audience comes from an opposite political wing or party, the emotions change. In the first scenario the emotional arousal culminates in the acts of disgust, contempt, etc. towards the main persona, while in the latter – it is the media publishers and news journalists rather that are the target of not only disgust, and contempt but they also frequently happen to be ridiculed and the news they post is considered particularly strongly negatively charged and non-trustworthy.

Impoliteness then in this sense is not negative politeness. Politeness in fact is an unmarked i.e., neutral phenomenon. When considered marked, it might refer to overpoliteness, and be treated as insincerity, insincere behaviour.

What we define as *impoliteness* is an emotional, deeply Face Threatening Act (FTA), deliberately meant to bring about emotional consequences, in particular intentional harm, resulting in intentional hurting of the person being the target of the act.

4. Persuasive Emotion Event

4.1. Emotions

In their studies of emotions Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson (2013, 2017, 2019) propose that the major part of an Emotion Event scenario is occupied by the canonical roles of an Emotion **Experiencer** and a **Source**, which can be interpreted as a **Stimulus** or Cause for the emotion to arise. The stimuli in an Emotion Event may vary. The reasons why one person gets angry and another one would not experience this emotion depend on one's culture, situational context and the experiencer's individual psycho-physiological predispositions. Sources can also be implemented by Agents, considered to act with volition and sentience, so they typically refer to animate beings. Stimuli can involve objects or events as inanimate

(nonvoluntary) causal entities. On the basis of these variables we propose a **Prototypical Emotion Event Scenario**, which covers the constituents of Context with the experiencer's biological predispositions and their social and cultural conditioning, immersed in the on-line situational context of the event. Direct stimuli act on the experiencer, which is both internally and externally manifested by means of physiological and physical symptoms accompanied by particular affective states (internally experienced emotion (cluster)), cognitive operations (conceptual **embodiment**, blending, metaphor) and possible experiencer's external reaction(s) (**exbodiment** phase) in terms of both language (emotion language and emotional talk) as well as non-verbal body reactions.

The prototype of an impoliteness emotion event assumes a *double source* of a negative emotional event. The primary source is an individual/group, *intentionally inflicting harm* (Face Threatening Act[2], FTA in (1)) on an experiencer by means of a number of – secondary – *harm sources* i.e., various exbodiment ways (oral, written, graphic, etc.), which lead to emotion affective consequences. The source of harm can also be *unintentional*, although the consequence can be similar – the experiencer identifies offence and feels hurt.

(1) **S** [FTA **intentional HURT**] >>> **A** [**HURT- OFFENCE**]
PROTOTYPE EXTENSIONS
S [non-intentional] >> **A**

Hurt is one of the strongest self-conscious emotions elicited in response to the perception that others have caused physical or psychological harm through a – typically intentional – act, considered wrongful (Liao et al. 2012).

Emotional impoliteness types of HURT – HARM scenarios can also be developed into *stacked complex Speech Act constructions* and used instrumentally to achieve particular social benefits and definite political remuneration.

4.2. Political contexts and persuasive emotionality

The first general dimension differentiating the analyzed cases is *intention*. In just a few of them there was no obvious intentional incivility or abuse on the part of the acting bodies. However, most of the instances discussed below possess an intentional, although covert, impolite persuasive character. They present a variety of persuasive – often manipulative – emotionality types. The content, publicized in the media, is *intentionally* framed as objective and legally binding on the surface. And yet, its principal objective overriding the first reading, appears to present a *complex stacked structure*. It is meant in fact to *arouse negative emotions* in the public (media readers, viewers, commentators) towards the main personae, their actions and events they are involved with and referred to in the publicised media content. More specifically, it is to *strengthen* or *arouse* the negative emotions around evaluative judgments and opinions, *elicit* these negative evaluative

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[2] See Goffmann (1962) on *Face-Work*.

judgments and, eventually, *manifest* the audiences' new or modified judgments in terms of offline *devirtualization* acts (Wilson and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, in press) reflected in growing political support and parliamentary or presidential electoral decisions in the real world.

4.3. Social cognitive context

In order to account for the nature of harm and hurt as well as negative emotion raising and the sense of their persuasive effects within communities, both their social psychological underpinnings and the linguistic manifestation as discussed in LewandowskaTomaszczyk and Wilson (in press 2) need to be discussed.

The experience of *harm-hurt* events, as demonstrated by Vangelisti et al., (2005), is determined by direct negative appraisals within social contexts. Their specific elicitors have been proposed by Leary et al. (1998) to include *active or passive interpersonal separation* (rejecting and ostracizing on the one hand and social exclusion on the other).

In most of the cases discussed here, it is precisely these negative appraisals within social contexts that constitute direct causes and aims of the linguistic and visual acts that are in focus. Connected with these, are the principal media content aims to provoke in general public, readers, internet users, and audiences negative social evaluation referred to in the presented content accompanied by different degrees of emotion arousal, in particular *repulsion* and *rejection, desire for social distance, moral disgust, anger* and *contempt* towards the deeds of the main persona of the emotive event. The ultimate aim to defame the political figures and gain (more) political power constitutes the basic social political framing of persuasive emotionality contexts. Each of the whole CAD (contempt, anger, disgust) trio is typically elicited in response to a number of autonomy violations – autonomy and individual rights (anger), questioning the moral trustworthiness of others (moral disgust), or in cases of violations of communal rules.[3]

In the model of emergent impoliteness and persuasive emotionality we propose (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Pęzik 2019) that the audiences' interpretation of a media event involves a set of *cognitive and emotional leaps* which lead to context *re-framing* in terms of its social-normative cognitive sense, synonymous to processes of semantic re-conceptualizations proposed in Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2010). Here, objectively neutral elements acquire negative connotational value in the context of specific Event Scenarios and culminate in the form of a particular affective (emotional-evaluative) climax.

In the context of our discussion seemingly neutral elements of news messages acquire the negative connotational value in the context of specific Event Scenarios to constitute *emergent impoliteness acts*. They necessarily involve affective components in the main persona of the news and cause *offence* and *hurt*, overridden

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[3] Compare Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson (in press 1) for a detailed analysis of these emotion concepts in Polish and British English.

by an intentional act of the negative emotionality stimulation (*anger, disgust, contempt*) meant to re-frame the perception of political figures and events away from possible positive ones towards ideologically and politically more desired and more profitable cognitive and social-normative evaluative contexts.

5. Reconstructing political realities

The political media discourses exert influence on the dissemination of public knowledge and the addressees' perception of reality. Of the three groups of their addressees – the personae referred to in the media content, politicians in general and the general media public, it is mostly the politicians and journalists that shape the public political discourses and play a special role in shaping a hierarchy of moral and ethical values (Czyżewski, Kowalski & Piotrowski 1997: 10–19, Piontek 2011).

Opinions concerning the outside world in the context of media discourses have always acknowledged the dialectal role of the media in its perception: primarily as projectors of the outside reality and, secondly, as its constructors. In the cases discussed in the present study the actual outside reality and its perception by the general public get either *reconstructed* or else get *constructed* anew (Kaid, Gerstlé & Sanders 1991) from bits and pieces of information that can be conjectured to profile a true image of the world.

6. Analysis of the data

The examples presented in this part of the study come from the press articles and TV programmes which, apart from the informative layer, trigger a stronger emotionality arousal with the audience, employing, often implicit, persuasive discourse strategies towards accepting a desired, often negative, perspective on a particular person or event.

An overview of distinct discursive patterns in the decreasing explicit impoliteness order is presented in the sections to follow, in which the discussed examples progress from cases of more conventional overt impoliteness towards those characterized by sets of gradually decreasing explicitness and impoliteness marking. Interestingly, the conventional impoliteness marking arouses stronger negative emotional verbal expression, as judged by the post-article comments (see 6.1. and 6.2. below) than the less explicit and/or more novel uses (6.6.). Activating less conventionally associated events in one community (see the case of *pogrom* in section 6.5.) on the other hand leaves more room for varying affect across cultures. All of the presented cases bring about arousing or strengthening negative evaluation towards the main personae or entity characterized in the discourse (e.g., 6.1., 6.2., 6.3., 6.4.) and/or towards the authors of such characterizations (e.g., 6.1., 6.5.).

6.1. Activation of connotative properties

On 31 January, 2003, BBC correspondent Rob Watson announces *"America's Poodle" is the insult of choice hurled by critics of Tony Blair for his support for*

President Bush[4], Although one has to agree that the *poodle* metaphor is not particularly original, nevertheless it displays some of the characteristic properties of the first type of persuasive emotionality discussed in the present study and in this context was to indicate the putative passive and obedient nature of Blair's British-US relations.

Connotative property activation and insertion into conventional denotational content are the characteristic attributes of this type of strategy. In the Tony Blair case, this metaphorical insult can in fact be considered quite wide off the mark in most British-American contexts, but this process of (conventional) connotative properties activation appears quite massive in press discourses, not only in Britain.

6.1.1. *Dwórka* 'lady-in-waiting, maidservant'

To substantiate the claim that the conventional negative connotative property activation is a massive tactic in press discourses, not only in Britain

let us refer to Polish political media context. The lexical item *dwórka* in Polish is not a particularly frequent word nowadays. It used to refer to a lady-in-waiting, usually of a noble family, then somewhat deteriorated to the sense of a maidservant, performing lots of basic jobs for the female part of the royalty or higher class ladies in Polish aristocratic families. Although associated with higher class in its prototypical use, Polish *dwórka* has always, denotationally in its basic sense, referred to a female person, who occupied a serving position at court.

In May 2021 the MoncoPL corpus contained 799 instances of different morphological variants of *dwórka*. The first figurative occurrence of the term usedrefers to female employees of the National Bank of Poland and was recorded in this corpus on 27th of December 2018. It was then that the "*dwórki* scandal" started. As reported on by most of the media the bank (male) president's female collaborators (two – fairly attractive – young women) earned particularly high salaries and the bank president (Adam Glapinski) was not eager to reveal the sums.

A complete analysis of the term's concordance shows that 124 of the 234 subsequent usages of *dwórka* are related to this new context. In other words, the figurative reference accounted for nearly 53 percent of its usage. The change in the meaning of this word is illustrated by the selected concordances of *dwórka* (examples 2 and 4) listed in Table 1. below, which developed from the original sense reported in examples (1) and (3) of the table.

Furthermore, to make things worse, the original title in the first newspaper using *dwórki,* complemented this word with the interjection *sio* 'pish, hoo, sqat', the form used to urge chickens to go away. As any dehumanizing expression, this one too – together with the 'maidservant' sense – make the phrase particularly insulting. When compared to the English *poodle* use, *pudel* in Polish with similar connotations, *sio, dwórki!* might be considered when used with the interjection,

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[4] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2711623.stm. Watson R. "Tony Blair: The US poodle?". BBC News/Analysis. January 31, 2003. Also https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=tony+blair+called+poodle (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

especially uncivil and also perceived as such as particularly denigrating and sexist. And although most of the audience shared the indignation about the (putative) abuse of power by the president of the National Bank of Poland, the article title was considered excessively abusive and unacceptable in most of the media comments[5]

Table 1

Concordances of Pol. *dwórki* 'ladies-in-waiting, maidservants' monco.frazeo.pl

#	Concordance	Source	Date
1	(…) Dagmara Bąk (33), która gra **dwórkę** Helenę. 'Dagmara Bąk, who plays the role of the **maidservant** Helena'	interia.pl	14/11/2018
2	Od jakiegoś czasu obie panie towarzyszą Glapińskiemu podczas oficjalnych wystąpień, szybko zostały ochrzczone mianem jego aniołków lub **dwórek**. 'For some time now, the two ladies have accompanied Glapinski (the bank's president) [and they] have been fast baptized with the names of his angels or **maidservants**'	innpoland.pl	27/12/2018
3	(…) wcielając się w role pastuszków, aniołków, **dwórek** i rycerzy. '(…) embodying [into the roles] of littel angels, **maidservants** and knights'	naszemiasto. pl	27/12/2018
4	**Dwórki** Adama Glapińskiego. 'Adam Glapinski's **'maidservants'**	gazeta.pl	27/12/2018

Although the *maidservant* metaphor as such might be regarded as less derogatory than that exploiting *poodle* as a metaphor Source Domain (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), the journalists decided to use an additional distancing marker – quotation marks – with the word *dwórki* – possibly to avoid direct external criticism and legal action.

The reasons why such fairly strong abuse markers have been used by the popular newspaper is clearly the case of, only partly successful, persuasive emotionality. The wide audience was certainly aroused, however not always in the direction the authors originally planned.

6.2. Invoking stereotypes

In their 2018 paper Aleksander B. Gundersen and Jonas R. Kunst discuss a stereotype concerning putative excessive unattractiveness of feminist women and frequent acts of derision addressed at them for being "unattractive or manly"[6]. The study demonstrates that these stereotypes are observed not only on the verbal level but also on the perceptual one and can also be identified in ways people visually represent feminists. The study also finds that people generally tend to associate

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[5] E.g., *Dzisiaj zresztą dość obraźliwie atakują prezesa Glapińskiego i jego współpracowników, bo tytuł „dwórki, sio" to wyjątkowe obraźliwe* 'And today they attack president Glapinski and his collaboraters in a fairly offendive way, as the title 'maidservants, pish' is particularly abusive'. http://300polityka.pl/live/2019/01/09/bielan-byc-moze-zeby-przeciac-ten-atak-na-prezesa-glapinskiego-on-powinien-dzisiaj-te-informacje-ujawnic/ (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020)

[6] Aleksander B. Gundersen & Jonas R. Kunst. Springer 2018. "Feminist ≠ Feminine? Feminist Women Are Visually Masculinized Whereas Feminist Men Are Feminized".

more masculine-looks of women and men's more feminine-looks with feminist movements and acts. Furthermore, masculine-looking women are also perceived as more dominant and threatening and less empathetic, warm and trustworthy.

1. Such stereotypes are also in evidence in Polish media culture. The title of an online article *Feministki nienawidzą mądrych, pięknych i odważnych kobiet* displays the author's perception of female feminists: '(Female) feminists hate clever, beautiful and brave women'. The proverbial *uroda feministki* – '(female) feminist's looks' imposes a fairly strong perceptual association between feminist activism and particularly unappealing appearance, as epitomized in one of the posts (2) to the newspaper article mentioned above:

> (2) Nienawidzą, bo są stare i brzydkie.
> To są przede wszystkim kobiety i żaden GENDER tego nie zmieni.
> One tak to mają.
> Inaczej tego nie wytłumaczę[7]
> "They hate because they are old and ugly.
> They are women first of all and no GENDER will change that.
> They are simply like that.
> I can't explain this any other way".

Female feminists supposedly (2) hate clever, beautiful and brave women 'because they (themselves) are old and ugly'.

It might be relevant to note that the meaning of the word *gender* (capitalized in the original post in (2)), used in this form in Polish too, has acquired an unambiguously negative semantic value when compared to the English form *gender*. In Polish it is used, particularly by the conservative nationalist segment of the society, as a term of abuse, a generalized anti-gender equality slur, and corresponds to the idea of a dangerous ideology which posits the unique conditioning of human sex in terms of exclusively cultural and personal preferences.

The emotion invoking persuasive act of the journalist is effective. Disgust, rejection, intolerance towards feminists reign supreme, evoked and increased by a journalist's invocation from *apartyjna i apolityczna* 'non-partisan and politically neutral' press[8].

6.3. Mixed referring terms

Similar practices, denigrating transgender people, are also observed in newspaper language where (transgender) women are referred to with male pronouns, or with both male/female within the same piece. (e.g., *The Sun* 2013). Such cases in the British press are discussed by Angela Zottola (2019) in her paper on non-binary uses of pronouns and titles in the British Press, but such practices are also familiar from numerous international contexts.

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[7] https://obserwatorpolityczny.pl/feministki-nienawidza-madrych-pieknych-i-odwaznych-kobiet/ (Accassed: 15.12.2020).
[8] https://obserwatorpolityczny.pl/misja/ (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

In the Polish context the case of first transgender MP Anna Grodzka, no longer politically active, is publicly known and incidents of addressing her with the male forms abounded during her political career. More recently, when the LGBT community rose to respond to mass-scale anti-LGBT smear-campaign led among others by militant pro-life groups and openly supported by the political establishment of the day, Margot, a transgender activist (offical ID male name Michał Sz.) met with ridicule and calls for unacceptance and ostracism. The newspaper texts stimulate such sentiments by appeal to emotion. The press titles alone are characteristic: *Same fakty o Margot. Michał Sz. tylko bywa „kobietą". Na co dzień jest mężczyzną i nawet ma dziewczynę*[9] 'Facts alone about Margot. Michał Sz. is "a woman" only occasionally. Day to day he is male and he even has a girlfriend.'

6.4. Face-saving as face-threatening

An interesting case of emergent impoliteness combined with persuasive emotionality can be observed in cases where a conventional act of face-saving is used somewhat ambiguously as a face-threatening device. Similarly to some other countries, Polish press legislation protects the privacy of persons involved in criminal investigations (accused, plaintiffs, witnesses) by requiring that they should remain unidentifiable unless they wish to be known by their full names. In special circumstances this requirement may be overruled by court. In practice, however, there are a number of seemingly paradoxical applications of this law which make it either ineffective of counter-productive.

In the following examples, the identity of the persons with criminal charges featured in the respective news reports is fully compromised by the use of an explicit *periphrase*, signifying the use of a longer phrasing in place of a possible shorter form of expression, which stands in apposition to the abbreviated name (3).

> (3)
> – "Sławomir W., son of former president Lech Wałęsa" (Niezalezna.pl, 2017).
> – "Włodzimierz C., former owner of the Ciniewski Hotel" (Gazeta Wyborcza 1998).

This conventionally "face-saving" law strategy may become a face-threatening act even without such explicit appositions when it is applied to well-known people with some forensic criminal implications. Efficacy as a privacy protection measure may be questioned, used with reference to persons without criminal charges or convictions may be regarded as defamatory by activating appeal to the *negative semantic prosody* (Louw 1993, Sinclair 1994, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1996). The very presence of a face-saving device used to refer to a well-known person with (highly questionable) criminal charges may not only be ineffective but also

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[9] https://nczas.com/2020/08/13/same-fakty-o-margot-michal-sz-tylko-bywa-kobieta-na-co-dzien-jest-mezczyzna-i-nawet-ma-dziewczyne-video/ (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

incriminating. The question whether one can effectively resign from his/her right to remain anonymous needs to be answered and the use of initials has both linguistic and legal implications.

Name abbreviations (initials) which are directly compromised or blatantly ineffective (e.g. when applied to public persons) are the linguistic analogue of censor bars placed over the picture of a person whose right to remain anonymous is only superficially respected. Their emergent function can be incriminatory as one's positive face can be threatened by simply applying this conventionally face-saving device. By implicit appeal to emotive persuasion the original discourse goal may turn equally ineffective.

An interesting example of this phenomenon in Polish news discourse is the case of Bartłomiej Misiewicz, a former government official, arrested on corruption charges in January 2019. His last name became an ephemeral eponym in government-critical public discourse.

In left-wing/ liberal press discourse a "Misiewicz" was used to refer to someone who is underqualified, incompetent, too young and inexperienced for a government job, but also smug and arrogant. The form was often used in the plural form "Misiewicze" to imply a more common tendency for the government to hire young and inept but politically loyal people for important positions in the administration. As shown in Fig. 2 below, even after Misiewicz's name began to be anonymized, its eponymic use continued thus rendering the face-saving practice of surname abbreviation ineffective.
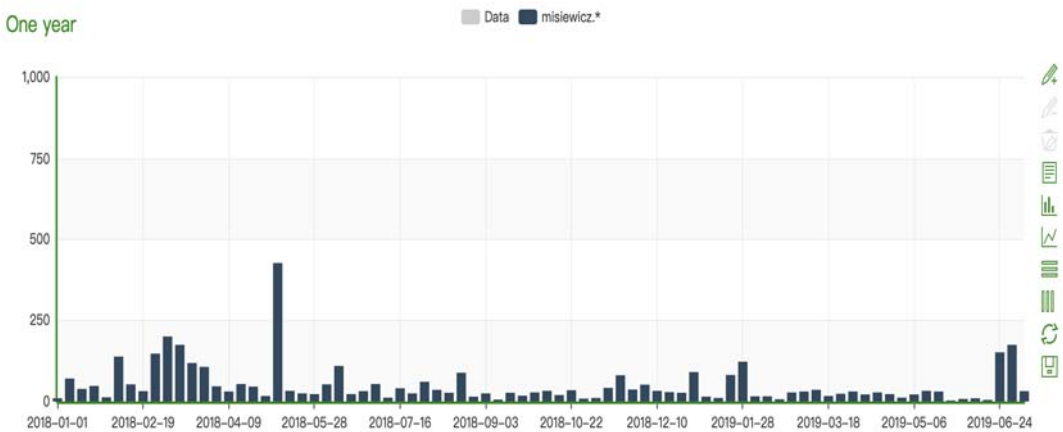
Fig. 2. Continued use of the name *Misiewicz* in the literal and eponymic sense in Polish political discourse (monco.frazeo.pl)

As shown in Table 2., the plural form of Misiewicze, which is solely used in the abovementioned eponymic sense occurs mostly in the liberal media sources indexed in the MoncoPL corpus. Nine out of ten most frequent sources of texts containing this form are clearly liberal news websites. The only conservative source contributing occurrences of this term was the weekly dorzeczy.pl in the lowest position in Table 2.

Top-ten sources of the plural form *Misiewicze* in MoncoPL

Source	Occurrences
tvn24.pl	412
natemat.pl	198
300polityka.pl	190
gazetaprawna.pl	178
dziennik.pl	161
dorzeczy.pl	149
onet.pl	127
wp.pl	127
news.google.com	124
dziennikwschodni.pl	121

On his release Misiewicz published a statement requesting everyone to use his full name, which is now common practice among individuals suspected of a misdeed on legal grounds who consider themselves innocent. This in turn confirms the widely shared perception of a derogatory tenor linked to the official practice of surname abbreviation.

6.5. Formulaic as literal

Our next example illustrates a case of impoliteness which seems to have been triggered by an inconsiderate use of a polysemous term and subsequently persuasively presented as a face-threatening act. In June 2019, the Polish Soccer Association published a post on their Facebook profile in which Poland's 4:0 victory over the Israel team was described as a *pogrom*. In reaction to this post, the Times of Israel published a story which emphasized the use of the historically loaded term *pogrom* as 'harking back to centuries of massacres perpetrated against Jews'[10]. As we further argue below, the original blunder seems to have resulted mostly from the inadvertence if not plain ignorance on the part of the post's authors.

On the other hand, the abovementioned reaction to this publication is based on the mechanism of *literalization;* an otherwise neutral use of a formulaic phrase comprising a polysemous lexical item, which in its original, frequently historic, contexts is used to refer to an event or individual with a strong evaluative and emotional marking. The case exemplified here is the widely known form *pogrom*, often used with it original historical reference to an organized massacre on a minority group or else, but later extended – at least in the Polish language use – to apply to a complete destruction and defeat of an opponent[11]. While the latter sense was most likely meant to be activated by the authors of the post, it was the original

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[10] https://www.timesofisrael.com/polish-soccer-association-celebrates-victory-over-israeli-team-as-a-pogrom/. (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

[11] The *Polish Encyclopaeadia PWN* entry for *pogrom* specifies its two conventional senses: 1. complete defeat; 2. ethnic genocide (https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/pogrom;4009566.html (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020)).

sense of *pogrom* which emerged as an act of impoliteness. There is ample corpus evidence of the present formulaicity and semantic bleaching of this form in modern Polish. As shown in Table 3., *pogrom* is widely used in reports on sports events where its original sense is almost entirely lost. All the Monco concordances (years 2013–2019) presented in Table 4. refer to such sports events.

Table 3

Polish *pogrom* concordances with the source and publication date (monco.frazeo.pl)

Wyniki od 1 do 20 z 104. Kryteria wyszukiwania.

#				Źródło	Data
1	Tam	**to już był prawdziwy pogrom**	.	tvn24.pl	7/1/2018
2	wygrała z Belgią 3 : 0 cztery lata wcześniej	**to już był przecież pogrom**	.	gazeta.pl	18/11/2015
3		**To już jest pogrom**	!	wpolityce.pl	12/6/2019
4	vojej stronie internetowej napisał we wtorek	**To już jest pogrom**	, czyli antysemicki wpis PZPN " .	wpolityce.pl	12/6/2019
5	„ : CZYTAJ RÓWNIEŻ	**To już jest pogrom**	! " .	wpolityce.pl	12/6/2019
6		**To już jest pogrom**	.	trojmiasto.pl	21/4/2013
7		**To już jest pogrom**	. . .	money.pl	3/9/2013
8		**To już jest pogrom**	. . .	money.pl	3/9/2013
9	ień : pogrom na GPW 2013-04-04 09 : 22 «	**To już pogrom**	byków , inaczej nie można tego nazwać .	forsal.pl	4/4/2013
10	ień : pogrom na GPW 2013-04-04 09 : 22 «	To już pogrom	byków , inaczej nie można tego nazwać .	forsal.pl	4/4/2013
11	dobijając naszych 25 : 16 , dwa kolejne sety	**to już pogrom**	, wynik 25 : 14 i 25 : 12 , jeden z kibiców...	nowiny.pl	26/4/2013
12	Trzecia kwarta	**to już pogrom**	przez ekipę z Niewiadowa .	nasztomaszow.pl	18/12/2012
13	W trzcim secie	**to już pogrom**	Pilanek i wygrana wrocławianek 25 : 9 .	mmwroclaw.pl	6/12/2014
14	Trzeci set	**to już pogrom**	rywala 11 : 4 .	portel.pl	2/10/2016
15	Trzecia runda tego pojedynku	**to już prawdziwy pogrom**	Grzesiaka .	nasztomaszow.pl	7/4/2014
16	dzisiaj , 15 : 50	**To już prawdziwy pogrom**	.	gazetaolsztynska.pl	19/6/2016
17	dzisiaj , 15 : 50	**To już prawdziwy pogrom**	.	gazetaolsztynska.pl	19/6/2016
18	Trzecia i czwarta partia	**to już prawdziwy pogrom**	.	swidnica24.pl	4/11/2017

The key issue relevant to the present study is that it is not the use of the form *pogrom*, now predominantly occurring in its extended sense of *defeat* in sport contexts, that arouses any affective reaction with the Polish audience, but its re-activated literal interpretation as presented in the abovementioned press reports which acted as a persuasive emotional trigger of the undesired hostile reaction.

6.6. Ordinary as derogatory

Another example of a seemingly unmarked form which acquires an impolite and emotionally-loaded character in a special context is the form *rusycystka*, a Polish term used to describe a female Russian language philologist. The average frequency of the word was very low for decades spanning the nineties of the twentieth century until November 2018, before a story published by *Gazeta Wyborcza* revealed the exorbitant salaries of some assistant directors at National Bank of Poland, as described in Section 6.1. of the present study[12].

The semantic shift in the use of the word *rusycystka* is reflected in the collocational profiles extracted from texts published before and since November

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[12] See https://businessinsider.com.pl/wiadomosci/wyborcza-rusycystka-w-nbp-zarabia-65-tys-zl-na-miesiac/9qneyh3 (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

2018. MoncoPL. As shown in Table 4. there are a number of politically charged collocates of *rusycystka* in the latter batch of texts, including *poupychać*, which literally refers to 'stuffing' (public offices) with one's own candidates and *Misiewicze*, the latter occurring in the coordinated phrase *rysycystki* and *Misiewicze*.

Table 4

Top collocations of the noun *rusycystka* generated from texts published before and since November 2018

Before November 2018				November 2018 – May 2021			
#	Lemma	Occurrences	Dice	#	Lemma	Occurrences	Dice
1	slawistka 'slavicist'	4	0,0717	1	slawistka	4	0,0453
2	germanistka 'germanist'	3	0,0237	2	poupychać	3	0,0159
3	Grzelczak [family name]	3	0,0017	3	germanistka	3	0,0136
4	Bożena [first name]	3	0,0003	4	anglistka	3	0,0088
5	Halina [first name]	3	0,0003	5	Misiewicz	11	0,0023
6	LO [abbreviation, high school]	5	0,0003	6	asystentka	4	0,0011
7	Irena 'first name'	3	0,0003	7	Grzelczak	3	0,0009
8	nauczycielka 'female teacher'	3	0,0003	8	Wojciechowska	4	0,0008
9	wykształcenie 'education'	6	0,0003	9	wykształcenie	14	0,0003
10	historyk 'history teacher'	4	0,0002	10	NBP	9	0,0002

The fact that one of the directors (in charge of public relations) was a female Russian philologist was regularly brought up to express implicit contempt for female philologists stepping out of their payscale, perhaps also because, in public perception, expertise in Russian alone does not represent sufficient qualifications for this kind of high-paying job in the banking sector. The form *rusycystka* thus emerged and, having acquired a negative connotational value, functioned for some time as a term of abuse and a negative emotion stimulus. The act of persuasive emotionality on the part of the media reporting this fact consisted in shifting the attitude of their audiences towards female philologists from more neutral to derogatory.

7. Conclusions

Media are not an abstract entity. They are people, journalists, audiences, content creators and disseminators. They do not solely observe, report and transmit. They re-frame and re-construct facts and events in numerous ways. They change the semantics of objects and human referring senses from denotational to those that identify them by connotational ones. They insert the stereotypical value senses for

the unique ones. They can intentionally mix gender references and replace a suspect for an innocent. They succeed in making neutral values contemptible, belittle the big and significant, and uncover the uncivil and abusive camouflaged in polite and acceptable forms. Provoking the emotions of anger (as in the cases of excessive salaries), disgust and contempt (as with regard to non-heteronormative communities), or, minimally, the ridicule and ostracism, are the weapons of to-day's media and social media, not only in Poland but universally (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2020).

The study discusses the ways in which mass media discourses *construe events* (Langacker 1987/1991) in terms of their *ideological framing*, understood as particular imposed or constructed event models and structures (cf. Gans 1979), which invoke harm, hurt and offence, anger or contempt. Mass media play a role in this persuasive tactics. We propose a characterization of the phenomenon of emerging impoliteness, used as a more or less *implicit persuasion* strategy towards negative *emotionality raising* and leading eventually to conceptual content *re-conceptualization*, instigated by media texts in political media culture. Taken over onto social media platforms the re-constructed conceptual content and emotions are further coloured, multiplied, and universally entrenched. The discussion and survey of the cases presented in our study confirm the key role media and media *produsers*,[13] i.e., producers and users embodied in single persons, play in the society: All media give their audiences a *version* of reality, not reality itself.[14] Whether this version conveys a negative or positive image depends on the ideological and aesthetic preferences, on the emotional arousal working as an argumentative and persuasive force which re-establishes or transforms the original conception of the world.

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[13] See Toffler (1980) for the concept of *produsers.*
[14] https://ymmediastudies.wordpress.com/2011/02/04/hello-world/ (Accassed: 12.2018–12.2020).

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Research article

Markers of emotionality in Russian news coverage of the 75-th anniversary of WWII Victory

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Abstract

The article explores how emotionality is manifested in the news texts covering politically sensitive topics, using as the case study coverage of the 75th anniversary of WWII Victory in news programmes of the Russian TV "Channel One", "Russia TV" and RT. Proceeding from the key theoretical assumption of medialinguistics defining media texts as an integral unity of verbal and media components, the author singles out and analyzes markers of emotionality at both – language and media levels, paying special attention to lexis and the way it is supplemented by illustrations and video footing. The analysis of the news flow is based on the information model, which allows to structure the process of news formation according to the following stages – selection of events for news coverage, interpretation of facts, shaping images, forming stereotypes and cultural-ideological context. The goal of the study was to identify markers of emotionality and analyze how emotionality affects the interpretation and the perception of facts, paying special attention to realization of the category of broadcasting style defined as the tone of voice, or tonality news media use when addressing their audience. Conceiving emotionality as both explicitly manifested and implicitly present quality, the study singles out its three types as represented in the analyzed media texts – 1) specific pretentious style, used by newsreaders and commentators to stress the dignity and solemnity of the event; 2) deliberate affectation disguised as emotionality on the part of news anchors while presenting topically sensitive news items; 3) emotionality as spontaneous display of sincere emotions observed in interviews, dispatches of correspondents and commentaries of the participants of the events. The results of the study could serve as a basis for further analysis of emotionality markers in different types of media discourse, including news, commentary and debate on politically sensitive issues in traditional media and social networks.

Keywords: *Medialinguistics, emotionality, news discourse, information model, broadcasting style, politically sensitive topics*

Маркеры эмоциональности в освещении российскими СМИ празднования 75-летия Победы в Великой отечественной войне

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Аннотация

В статье исследуются способы выражения эмоциональности в новостных текстах, освещающих политически значимые темы. Материалом послужили тексты российских СМИ, посвящённые празднованию 75-летия Победы в Великой отечественной войне, в частности новостных программ телеканалов «Россия 1», «Первый» и RT. Исходя из базового определения медиатекста как органичного единства компонентов вербального и медийного уровней, сформулированного в рамках медиалингвистики, автор идентифицировал и описал маркеры эмоциональности на обоих уровнях – языка и медиа, обратив особое внимание на способы соединения элементов вербального (лексики) и медийного уровней (иллюстрации, видеоряд). Анализ новостных текстов проводился на основе информационной модели, которая позволяет разделить процесс формирования новостного потока на следующие этапы – отбор событий для последующего освещения, интерпретация фактов, создание образов, формирование стереотипов, культуро-идеологический контекст. Цель исследования состояла в том, чтобы, выделив маркеры эмоциональности, изучить как эмоционализация новостных текстов влияет на репрезентацию и интерпретацию событий, обращая при этом особое внимание на особенности реализации категории информационно-вещательного стиля, определяемого как тональность обращения новостного ведущего к аудитории. Учитывая двойственную природу эмоциональности как эксплицитно выраженного и имплицитно присутствующего качества, автор выделяет три типа эмоциональности в исследуемых новостных текстах: 1) особый торжественно-приподнятый стиль, используемый новостными ведущими и комментаторами для того, чтобы подчеркнуть значимость освещаемого события; 2) намеренная аффектация, или искусственная демонстрация эмоций со стороны новостных аналитиков в целях оказания воздействия на аудиторию; 3) эмоциональность как спонтанное проявление искренних эмоций, наблюдаемое в интервью с участниками событий в сообщениях корреспондентов. Результаты исследования могут служить основанием для дальнейшего изучения маркеров эмоциональности в различных типах медиадискурса, включая новости, комментарий и обсуждение политически значимых тем в традиционных СМИ и социальных сетях.

Ключевые слова: *медиалиннгвистика, эмоциональность, новостной дискурс, информационная модель, информационно-вещательный стиль, политически-значимые темы*

1. Introduction

News have traditionally been regarded as media texts that should demonstrate objectivity and balanced representation of events, this requirement being of particular importance in the coverage of politically sensitive issues (Allan 2006, 2010, Bell 1991, Davis 2008, de Botton 2014). But for the past decade, with the

advancement of fake news and further polarization of perspectives on world events in the Russian and the Western media, international scholars have observed growing emotionalisation of news discourse on the whole (Ahmed 2014, Bleiker & Hutchison 2008, Clément & Sangar 2018, Crawford 2000, Lünenborg & Maier 2018, Chatterje-Doody & Rhys Crilley 2019).

This trend has been reflected by representatives of different research schools and approaches, who have analyzed news texts from several perspectives – theory of journalism, media studies, linguistics, discourse analysis, political communication and media linguistics (Allan 2010, van Dijk 1998, Crystal 2006, Fairclough 1995, Gillespie & Toynbee 2006, Dobrosklonskaya 2000, 2008, 2014, Matheson 2005, Thurlow & Mroczek). Due to multiple controversies in international relations, studies of political aspects of media discourse acquired special importance, giving impetus to the development of new branches of research, such as political linguistics and political media discourse (Fowler 1991, Chudinov 2018, Fu 2018, Ozyumenko 2017, Ponton 2016, Shepherd & Hamilton 2016, Sheygal 2004, van Dijk 2000, 2006). So by now the topical field of the so-called "News Studies" has considerably expanded, including such key areas as news values, agenda-setting, interpretation techniques, evaluative components, discursive characteristics, thematic structure, stylistic devices and getting noticeably important the process of emotionalisation (Doveling 2011, Solganik 2015, van Ginneken 1998, Wirth & Schramm 2005).

The aim of the present paper is to identify markers of emotionality in coverage of politically sensitive topics and find out and how emotionality affects the interpretation and the perception of facts, giving special attention to realization of the category of broadcasting style defined as the tone of voice, or tonality news media use when addressing their audience. The material used is represented by the Russian media news texts about 75th anniversary of the Victory in WWII for the period from March till June 2020.

2. Theoretical basis

The study was conducted within the frameworks of media linguistics – a relatively new but quickly developing branch of linguistics, that integrated achievements of several disciplines relevant for the analysis of media discourse, thus building a solid foundation for analyzing language in the media as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Such "holistic" approach is well-established (Bell 1991, Dobrosklonskaya 2000, 2020, Perrin 2015, Duskaeva 2018) and includes three major theoretical assumptions, applicable to the analysis of news texts:

1. definition of media texts as multi-dimensional phenomenon integrating elements of the two levels – verbal and media,

2. applying the information model for the analysis of the news flow.

3. the notion of broadcasting style conceived as the tone of voice, or tonality this or that news media is using when addressing its audience.

Undoubtedly the most important theoretical component of media linguistics is **the concept of media text,** which is mentioned actually in all studies devoted to speech production in mass communication. The meaning of this concept defined in traditional linguistics as "coherent and integral stretch of language either spoken or written" (Carter 1998), can be expanded when applied to mass communication beyond the boundaries of the verbal sign system, to a semiotic interpretation of "text" which refers to a stretch of any type of signs, not only verbal. (Dobrosklonskaya 2000, 2008, Shmelyeva 2012).

Most scholars agree that the level of mass communication adds to the text new aspects and components, determined by rapidly developing information technologies and media characteristics of this or that communication channel. Thus, texts on television function as an integrity of a verbal text, visual and audio components. Radio and newspaper texts are characterized by a certain combination of verbal units and media effects, such as voice qualities and music on radio and colorful illustrations in press. As argued by Bell: "*Definitions of media texts have moved far away from the traditional view of text as words printed in ink on pieces of paper to take on a far broader definition to include speech, music and sound effects, image and so on… Media texts, then, reflect the technology that is available for producing them"* (Bell 1998: 3). So today media texts are perceived as a multi-level poly-dimensional phenomenon representing an integral unity of its verbal and media components, which can be combined in accordance with the following five principles: illustration, supplement, connotation, association, and contrast. Illustration type presupposes that media elements remain neutral and just illustrate the verbal text, in case of supplement verbally expressed content is supplemented with visual graphics, in connotation and association types media components help to evoke certain connotations and associations, a combination type based on contrast presupposes juxtaposition of verbal and media components aimed at producing a particular effect (Dobrosklonskaya 2020).

To illustrate such dual nature of a media text it is enough to compare media coverage of the 75 anniversary of the Victory in WWII by the Russian and the British media, which makes it possible to see how the choice of pictures (media elements) adds certain ideological accents and connotations to the text, when media components are used specifically to underline differences in ideological interpretations expressed by the verbal part. Thus, pictures used in the news coverage of the Victory Parade 2020 by the Russian media (1, 2) predominantly concentrate on emotionally charged images, evoking memories about courageous solders and survived veterans as on the photos adduced below.

The pictures accompanying texts in the British newspaper "The Guardian" (3, 4) emphasize the military power of Russia and often contain implicit indication at potential threat coming from it – tanks on Red Square and military planes against the dark hand of the Minin and Pozharskiy monument.

**Photo 1. Veterans salute during
the Victory Day parade at the Red Square in
Moscow, Russia, marking the 74th anniversary
of defeating the Nazis in the WWII.
© Sputnik / Alexey Nikolskiy**

**Photo 2. President Putin with participants of
Immortal Regiment.
© Sputnik / Alexey Druzhinin**

**Photo 3. Tanks on Red Square during
Victory Day parade.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/
2016/may/09/victory-day-parades-second-
world-war-in-pictures**

**Photo 4. Military planes flying over Red
Square during Victory Day parade
https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/
2016/may/09/victory-day-parades-second-
world-war-in-pictures**

3. Methodology and data

For multidimensional analysis of news discourse, including the study of emotionality, medialinguistics developed specific methodology, the key instrument of which is represented by **Information model**, which allows to structure the unceasing news flow and other media activities into five separate but closely interrelated stages (Dobrosklonskaya 2000).
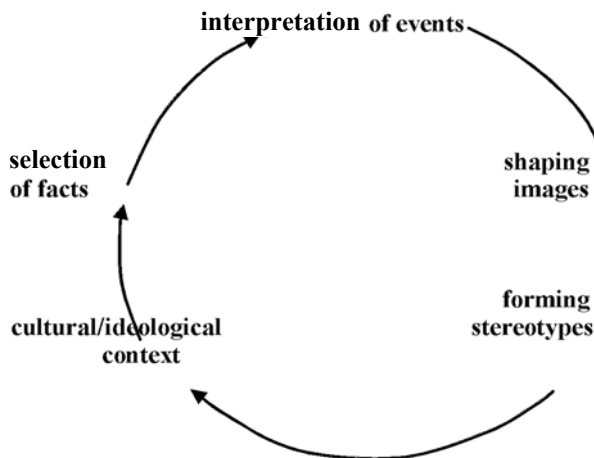
As it can be seen on the picture, the model represents a closed circle thus emphasizing that all its stages are closely interrelated: 1) selection of facts for further news coverage, 2) interpretation of events, 3) creating images, 4) forming stereotypes, 5) cultural-ideological context. Formation of the news flow begins with selection of facts, which is regulated by several co-existing factors – economic, political, regional and also by traditional news values: timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence, conflict and negativity, human interest (Galtung & Ruge 1965, Bell 1991).

The next stage, interpretation, is the most important for the study of emotionality markers, as at this very stage facts of reality are transformed by the media into a new substance – media texts, a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon, representing integral unity of the two interrelated levels – verbal and medial, which actually doubles the interpretative potential of a media text, making it possible to reinforce verbal language by media technologies (Talbot 2000). The way in which verbal and media elements are combined can be classified into five following types: illustration, supplement, contrast, connotation and association, which serve as a powerful instrument, used to construct the required meanings and images (Dobrosklonskaya 2020).

The analysis of a news item at the interpretation stage also allows to single out three main types of media representations: reflection, reconstruction and fake. In case of reflection the events are covered without any conspicuous bias, neutrally, when a news text does not contain a noticeable ideological hue. The second type "reconstruction" is perhaps the most widespread, it presupposes that political and ideological preferences of those who produce and transmit the news are clearly represented in the verbal and media texture of the news item. The third type, fake, is based on a wide range of manipulative techniques, aimed at achieving a certain political goal by influencing public opinion.

At the next stage, some interpretations due to numerous repetitions transform into media images, which inn their turn serve as a basis for creating stereotypes, defined as fixed, generalized, widespread and simplified representations (Nelson 2009). Stereotyped vision acquires particular importance in foreign news coverage, when journalists reporting the events in this or that country cannot help relying on stereotypes deeply rooted in their cultural background and political persuasions.

A closing stage of the information model, cultural-ideological context, is constituted by a continuum of the news flow which forms a certain media environment, possessing salient characteristics in each country. Cultural-ideological context has a significant impact on the initial stage of the information model – selection of facts, as it actually determines what events are newsworthy, or should be put on the news agenda. This correlation between cultural-ideological context and shaping news agenda becomes especially evident when comparing how political events are covered in mass media of different countries, or in the national media representing different political views.

Methodologically important for the analysis of emotionality in the news discourse is the **category of a broadcasting style,** which in its most general sense can be defined as the tone of voice, or tonality this or that news media is using when addressing its audience (Gubik 2010, Dobrosklonskaya 2005). Every news medium – particularly those implying audio perception – radio, television and internet with numerous podcasts and videos, talks to their audiences in a "special voice", a unique recognizable tonality which serves as an inalienable marker of its specificity. And though the notion of a broadcasting style is relevant for the analysis of any media product it acquires particular importance when applied for studying news, because it is news that shape the information picture of the world with various political accents, cultural nuances and ideological subtleties.

Such variability of "news voices" or broadcasting styles can be clearly seen when comparing news programs produced by major national broadcasters aimed at international media consumers, such as BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), RT former Russia Today), CNN, Al Jazeera and CCTV (China). Salient characteristics of a certain broadcasting style are also noticeable when comparing TV news programs in countries with different political systems. Thus, in the countries where state-media relationships are constructed in accordance with the totalitarian model (Siebert & Peterson 1956), like for instance TV news of the USSR period, or contemporary North Korea, news readers use a special affective style of presentation, with deliberate affectation aimed at constructing the official image of a powerful state possessing unquestionable authority for its citizens. Key BBC news presenters today often use deliberate "friendly" manner, thus transmitting the sense of low distance between them and the audience. The US Fox News can be easily identified by categorical pushy style of its main anchors.

It should also be noted that speaking modes of mainstream TV anchors, including their voice qualities and salient speech characteristics, are often perceived as a distinctive feature of each individual TV channel, an easily recognizable component of its "brand", like speaking manners of a well-known CNN presenter Christiane Amanpour or the anchor of the programme "Vesti nedeli" (News of the Week) at Russia One Channel Dmitriy Kiselyev, labelled by Western journalists "Russian propagandist-in-chief". Sometimes speaking manners of the news readers, who covered historically significant events, become firmly imprinted in collective people's memory like for example a unique voice of Levitan, a news reader of the Soviet information agency TASS during WWII, whose unmistakably recognizable solemn intonation became closely associated with victories of the Soviet army.

One more crucial point that is methodologically significant for the analysis of markers of emotionality in news texts is the definition of **"emotionalisation"** or **"emotionality"** as applied to news discourse**.** Though words are seemingly similar, there is a slight difference between them. Emotionalisation in its most general sense means display of emotions in any type of communication, and has been thoroughly described in past decades by representatives of social, media, cultural and communication studies (Ahmed 2014, Bleiker & Hutchison 2008*,* Clément &

Sangar 2018, Crawford 2000, Harding & Pribram 2009, Lünenborg & Maier 2018, Precious & Rhys 2019). Emotionality embraces a wider spectrum of meanings and is related not only the explicit demonstration of emotions but also to the very fact of their presence in communication, sometimes implicit (in Russian there is a distinction between *emotsionalnost'* 'emotionality' and *emotsionalizatsiya* 'emotionalisation'). In the present paper our attention will be focused on emotionality.

It should also be taken into consideration that when applied to the analysis of news, emotionality acquires additional dimension determined by the complex nature of media texts as a dual phenomenon combining verbal and media elements. So analyzing markers of emotionality in the news presupposes studying them on three following levels:

1) verbal markers of emotionality in the TV news, textual markers on lexical and phonological levels

2) media markers of emotionality, or emotional connotations interwoven in video footing,

3) emotions embedded in the commentary of correspondents and displayed by the participants of the events.

The empirical data specifically collected for the present study include 212 fragments of news texts covering the 75th anniversary of WWII Victory with markers of emotionality from news progammes of the two central Russian TV channels – "Channel One" (Perviy Kanal) and "Russia One" (Rossiya Odin), and the English-language version of RT (Russia Today). All textual examples adduced in this article are given in the language of the original version, text fragments in Russian are provided with English translation made by the author.

4. Analysis of the material

As it has been mentioned earlier one of the factors that influence emotionality in the news is the sensitivity of the covered topic – a politically sensitive topic is a topic the perception and interpretation of which evoke controversy on the part of the general public, politicians and mass media. For instance, shooting down Malaysian plane, Scripal case, the alleged poisoning of the Russian opposition blogger Navalniy, US presidential elections 2020 could undoubtedly be referred to as politically sensitive topics because the news coverage of these events by domestic and international media represent a wide spectrum of political views and ideological bias, as it is often the case with the news about Russia (Larina, Ozyumenko & Ponton 2020? Ozyumenko & Larina 2021, this issue).

In this context victory in WWII is no exception since WWII as a complex historical phenomenon with passing years is getting increasingly controversial and is certainly perceived as a politically sensitive issue, especially in Russia, the country the contribution of which to the defeat of Nazi Germany could hardly be overestimated. No wonder its media coverage gets in to the focus of scholarly attention (Solopova & Chudinov 2018).

In spring 2020 from March till July due to 75ᵗʰ anniversary of the Great Victory (the term used by the Russian authorities and media) the theme of WWII (Great Patriotic War in Russia) became the topic of intensive media coverage, or buzz-topic (Dobrosklonskaya 2000) when practically all mainstream news programmes included items on different aspects of WWII, highlighting its most significant battles and adding documentary details to long-established official versions of wartime events.

To single out and describe markers of emotionality we structured the material around three subtopics, which proved to be most controversial, causing heated discussion and agitated commentary. These topics are:

1. Historical reassessment of the results of WWII and of the role of the Soviet Army

2. Military parade on June 24ᵗʰ exactly 75 years after Victory Parade in Moscow Red Square

3. Immortal Regiment

4.1. Historical reassessment of the results of WWII and of the role of the Soviet Army in defeating Nazist Germany

Due to historical reasons, the scale of material damage and human losses on the territory of the USSR 75ᵗʰ anniversary of Victory in WWII is undoubtedly regarded as a politically sensitive topic for all swathes of the Russian society – officials, public and mass media. And for the past decade it was getting increasingly sensitive because of noticeable changes in historical interpretations of the role of the Soviet Union in defeating fascism. The Western mainstream media and the liberal Russian media in the analyzed period regularly published materials and broadcast news items diminishing the role of the Soviet Union in victory over Nazism, which consequently caused serious concern on the part of the Russian officials and historians.

(1) *Contribution of the USSR in the defeat of fascism is evaporating from public consciousness. Many Swedish citizens are not aware about millions of losses among solders and civil population in the USSR. In other European countries the ratio of people who think that victory in WWII belongs to the United States is also growing* (https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/9eb68577).

No wonder such historical reassessments served as a grounds for negative reaction of the Russian officials, and correspondingly condemning commentary in the mainstream Russian media, including central TV channels – Channel One and Russia One:

(2) *On May 8,1945, America and Great Britain had victory over the Nazis! America's spirit will always win. In the end, that's what happens" –that's what press-service of the White House wrote. The Russian Embassy in Washington has already appealed to the US to refuse from rewriting history of World War II. On their Facebook page the diplomats draw attention to the fact that in 75ᵗʰ anniversary of the Great Victory The US State Department*

"takes one more cynical attempt to rewrite history" (https://iz.ru/1009215/2020-05-08/belyi-dom-nazval-ssha-i-britaniiu-pobediteliami-natcizma)

The analysis of the news texts covering historical reassessment of the results of WWWII and the role of the Soviet Army in defeating Nazist Germany allows to conclude that one of the key emotions expressed either implicitly or explicitly could be described as "righteous indignation" and can be traced on all levels of constructing media messages: choice of lexis with negative connotations *"refuse from "rewriting history", cynical attempt at rewriting history"* is supported on the level of prosody by specific "condemning" hues in voices of the news presenters and commentators, especially those representing central TV channels – Dmitriy Kiselyev and Vladimir Kleymenov.

4.2. Victory Parade

The second politically sensitive subtopic, Victory Parade, arose no less controversy and emotional response in the Russian media, focusing on two major issues – a) whether the Parade should be held at all, and b) when exactly the Parade should be held because of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to decision of the Russian government the Victory parade was put off and took place not on the 9th of May as it had traditionally been, but on June 24th, exactly 75 years after the date of the great Victory parade on Red Square in1945, which made the event even more symbolic.

Negative reaction of the Russian public to the wave of Western criticism for holding military parade and thus overdoing Victory celebrations was illustrated by several opinion polls, one of which was described in detail in the article *"As 75th anniversary of first Victory Day parade looms, Russians believe WWII defeat of Nazis was country's finest hour"* published on RT website and showing that most Russians are comfortable with the importance attached to the event.

(3) *Ahead of Wednesday's rescheduled Victory Day parade in Moscow, and a number of other major cities, pollsters WCIOM have found that Russians believe the defeat of Hitler, and his allies, trumps all other historical incidents in the more than thousand-year life of the Russian nation. "The vast majority of Russians (95 percent) agree with the assertion that victory in the Great Patriotic War [World War II] is the main event of the 20th century for Russia," the polling agency's statement said. "For 69 percent of Russians, the victory in 1945 is the most important event in the entirety of Russian history." The study showed that the majority of respondents in every single category were of the same belief, other than the group aged between 18-24. For those aged 60 and above, the vast majority agreed (81 percent). In the category for those aged 24 and younger, only 44 percent of the respondents agreed that WWII was the most significant event ever, but all who took part in the study were massively in agreement (93 percent) about its place as the most critical event in 20th century history (RT As 75th anniversary of first Victory Day parade looms, Russians believe WWII defeat of Nazis was country's finest hour – poll 23 Jun, 2020).*

The adduced fragment (3) is a news item, reporting the results of an opinion poll and does not contain any emotionally coloured or ideologically charged connotations, thus emphasizing the neutrality of RT news, a Russian broadcaster aimed at world audience and often blamed by Western media for biased coverage of politically sensitive topics, such as for instance the alleged poisoning of Scripals.

A different picture could be observed in the programme "Vesti Nedeli", analytical news summary of the week on Russia One presented by Dmitriy Kiselyev, a well-known media person, combining journalistic work with a position of the director general of Sputnik – an international information agency established with support of Russian government in December 2014. In compliance with the requirements of the analytical format "Vesti Nedeli" presupposes commentary and a certain political view on the events, so the anchor demonstrates a full range of verbal and media persuasive techniques, criticizing the "liberal opposition" and advancing the official interpretations in the debate about the necessity of the Victory Parade nowadays. In doing so he uses a special emotionally coloured style, which however could be described as pretentious, because of the deliberate character of the dominating emotion permeating the commentary – condemnation of those who are against Victory parade and pride for veterans and military power of Russia.

> (4) *The requirements to cancel military parade on Victory Day have become commonplace among our implacable and I would say totalitarian liberals. But what does this parade mean for Russia? What is it for? Our military parade is an honorary tribute to those who died for our freedom, for the freedom of Europe and the whole world. It is an honorable way to pay tribute to 27 million people who sacrificed their lives to defeat fascism. That defines the wry stylistics of our parade, preceded by the minute of silence. Our parade is a grateful memory of those who survived in horrible battles but have already passed away. Our parade is a consolation for those few veterans, who are still with us, according to estimates only 76 thousand. Ask them, ask anyone whether it is necessary to hold the parade on May the 9*th* and everyone replies – yes* (Vesti Nedeli s Dmitriem Kiselyevym https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyQAm69H_Us).

The effect of emotional narrative constructed by anchor on verbal level with the help of such collocations as *honorary tribute to those who died for our freedom, 27 million people who sacrificed their lives to defeat fascism, grateful memory of those who survived in horrible battles, consolation for few veterans*, is logically supplemented by matching video footing aimed at eliciting an emotional response from the audience.

It should be noted that such specific pretentious manner of presentation has always been and still is typical for state endorsed TV (to prove this point it is enough to watch TV news of the Soviet period), and live broadcasts of "Russia One" and "Channel One" of the Victory Parade 2020 from Red Square are no exception. To underline the solemnity and national significance of the event the media, using a wide range of verbal and audio-visual components, constructed a thoroughly

designed image aimed at making a powerful emotional impact on the audience. The excerpt from "Channel One" live broadcast of Victory parade 2020 adduced below clearly demonstrate the presence of emotionality markers on the lexical level.

> (5) *And now the event we have been waiting for so long. Red Square is in **a festive decoration**. Guests are gathering on the stands – state officials, politicians, religious leaders from different faiths, the military. Seconds before the beginning of the parade, at last **Kremlin chimes brake silence and solemn sounds of "The Saint War" could be heard**. **Hearts of participants of the parade and the spectators are hardly beating.** The whole country has been waiting for this moment since Victory Day in on May the 9th 1945. Legendary Victory Banner, that had been raised above Reichstag in 1945, is carried on Red Square. In accordance with the tradition the Defense Minister appears on Red Square under the sounds of march, which accompanied historical Victory Parade exactly 75 years ago* (Text is adduced in the author's translation, the original version could be found at https://www.1tv.ru/ news/2020-06-24/388268na_glavnyy_parad_v_chest_75_letiya_pobedy).

4.3. Immortal Regiment

If it were possible to measure emotionality on an imaginary scale, the media coverage of **the Immortal regiment**, a third singled out subtopic, would have been on top of the list. Launched in 2012 in Tomsk as non-governmental non-commercial civic initiative Immortal regiment has transformed into a massive public movement, aimed at keeping personal memories of those relatives who lost their lives in WWII. By 2019 the project spread worldwide and thousands of people marched with pictures of their grandfathers, grandmothers and other ancestors –participants of WWII not only in Russia, but in the US, Canada, Israel and other countries. It may be assumed that due to its appeal to every family's memory, the event possesses an inherent emotionality and is perceived as "a celebration with tears in the eyes".

Due to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 the Immortal Regiment was arranged online and thousands of people could place pictures of their relatives –participants of WWII on a special website https://www.polkrf.ru/, which gradually developed into a full-scale online project aimed at historical reconstruction of WWII with the help of personal memories and family documents. According to the decision of the Russian president the offline march should take place on the 9th of May 2021. Commenting his decision in the interview for Channel One Putin stressed that sanitary measures and social distancing caused by pandemic are contrary to the very nature and public character of the Immortal Regiment.

> (6) *How can we speak of social distance in case of Immortal Regiment? The very essence of such events is demonstrating the unity of the Russian people in commemorating their fathers, grandfathers and other ancestors. And it means that people march together, shoulder to shoulder. That's why following the recommendations of doctors we have to reschedule the event for the next year. And we shall organize it on a great scale, with dignity and power, as we have done previously* (https://www.1tv.ru/news/2020-05-09/385564 vypusk_ programmy_vremya_v_21_00_ot_09_05_2020).

The use of a rhetorical question *How can we speak of social distance in case of Immortal Regiment?* alongside with sincere intonation of the Russian president serves as a clear marker of emotionality, thus emphasizing the significance of the event. It is also important to note that in the adduced excerpt the interviewee demonstrates the third type of emotionality – spontaneous display of empathy for his compatriots commemorating their fathers, grandfathers and other ancestors, who defending their motherland from fascism.

4.4. Markers of emotionality and media styles

Markers of emotionality could also be found in a keynote article published in American foreign policy journal *The National Interest* and Russian government newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, in which Putin explained his view on the origins and legacy of the Second World War.

(7) *Almost 27 million Soviet citizens lost their lives on the fronts, in German prisons, **starved to death** and **were bombed**, **died in ghettos and the furnaces of the Nazi death camps.** The USSR lost one in seven of its citizens, the UK lost one in 127, and the USA lost one in 320.* (https://www.rt.com/russia/492297-putin-wwii-global-crisis-coalition/)

In the fragment of the article describing the forthcoming summit of Russia, China, France, the United States and the UK emotionality markers are linked to thematically bound collocations characteristic for political speeches reflecting positive perspective on the future of international relations.

(8) *In our opinion, it would be useful to discuss steps to develop collective principles in world affairs, **to speak frankly about the issues of preserving peace**, strengthening global and regional security, strategic arms control, as well as joint efforts in countering terrorism, extremism and other major challenges and threats. There can be no doubt that the summit of Russia, China, France, the United States, and the UK can play an important role **in finding common answers to modern challenges and threats.** Such an event would demonstrate a common commitment to the spirit of alliance, to those **high humanist ideals and values for which our fathers and grandfathers were fighting shoulder to shoulder**.* (https://www.rt.com/russia/492297-putin-wwii-global-crisis-coalition/).

The analysis of emotionality markers in the media texts covering politically sensitive issues makes it possible to assume that the quality of emotionality expressed varies depending on different genres or formats. Consequently, the following three types of emotionally charged media styles could be singled out:

1) Specific pretentious style, used by newsreaders and commentators to emphasize the solemnity of the event, as in the case of Victory parade coverage, including the style of live broadcasts from the site. However, this specific pretentious style used to transmit state authority and importance can be described as "pseudo-emotional" because of the artificial nature of emotionality demonstrated by news readers.

2) Deliberate affectation disguised as emotionality on the part of news anchors while discussing politically sensitive topics in analytical TV programmes, like for instance, "Vesti Nedeli", in which the presenter Dmitriy Kiselyev criticizes liberal opposition for their negatives views of Victory parade with due indignation, thus demonstrating an inbuilt propagandist hue.

3) Emotionality as spontaneous display of genuine emotions which is usually observed in the speech of individuals: dispatches of correspondents, commentary of the participants of the events and interviews, like for instance in Putin's remark on the necessity to reschedule the Immortal Regiment due to pandemic – *How can we speak of social distance in case of Immortal Regiment?*

5. Conclusions

The article has explored a highly timely topic – the phenomenon of emotionality in news coverage of politically sensitive topics. The research was conducted within the frameworks of medialinguistics – a rapidly developing branch of linguistics focusing on all aspects of language functioning in the media. The analysis of emotionality markers in the coverage of the 75th anniversary of victory in WWII by the Russian media was based on the key theoretical pillars of medialinguistics, such as : definition of media texts as an integral unity of verbal and media components; the information model, which allows to structure the process of news formation into succeeding stages and the category of a broadcasting style conceived as the tone of voice, or tonality this or that news media is using when addressing its audience.

The analysis of the material has shown that broadcasting styles could vary depending on political and historical factors. The news presenters on the central Russian TV channels while covering major events of the 75th anniversary of Victory in WWII, such as Victory Parade, used deliberately solemn broadcasting style to attribute official pathos to the event and underline its significance for mass audiences.

The choice of news coverage of the 75th anniversary of Victory in WWII was determined by the controversial character of the topic which can undoubtedly be described as "politically sensitive", and which from March till July 2020 became the topic of intensive media coverage, or buzz-topic, when practically all Russian media included items on different aspects of WWII, highlighting its most significant battles and adding documentary details to long-established official versions of wartime events. To optimize its thematic structure, the material was subdivided into three subtopics, that caused much controversy and debate: historical reassessment of the results of WWWII and of the role of the Soviet Army; the necessity to hold a military parade on June 24th exactly 75 years after Victory Parade in Red Square and the debate on the ideological essence and format of the Immortal Regiment action.

Multimodal markers of emotionality have been analyzed on the two following levels: verbal markers of emotionality, including textual markers on the lexical

level, and media markers of emotionality, or emotional connotations interwoven in photo illustrations and video footing.

Conceiving emotionality as both explicitly manifested and implicitly present characteristic, three types of emotionality as represented in the analyzed media have been singled out:

1) Specific pretentious style, used by newsreaders and commentators to emphasize the solemnity of the event, as in the case of Victory parade coverage. However, it is important to stress the artificial nature of the emotionality displayed by news readers whose major aim was to transmit state authority and importance.

2) Deliberate affectation disguised as emotionality on the part of news anchors while discussing politically sensitive topics in analytical TV programmes, like "Vesti Nedeli", in which the presenter Dmitriy Kiselyev criticizes liberal opposition for their negatives views of Victory parade with due indignation, thus demonstrating an inbuilt propagandist hue.

3) Emotionality as spontaneous display of genuine emotions which is usually observed in the speech of individuals: dispatches of correspondents, commentary of the participants of the events and interviews.

The results of the conducted analysis could serve as a foundation for further studies of emotionality markers in different types of media discourse, including news, commentary and debate on politically sensitive issues in traditional media and social networks. The paper was written as a contribution to the special issue of RJL on emotionality.

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War yesterday and today:
The image of Russia in British media discourse

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Abstract
The paper focuses on diachronic framing analysis of Russia's images in British media discourse. The importance of the research is determined by a need to work out adequate linguistic foundations to counteract information war, generated by some foreign media and aimed at distorting Russia's history and eroding its spiritual values. Few scholars have drawn on any systematic research into analysis of Russia's images in foreign media discourses of different historical spans. The major objective is to compare Russia's images and their emotional charge in the British media in chronologically divided periods of war and peace under the influence of changing historical and ideological factors. The authors account for the mechanisms by which Russia's images are framed and transformed in the contexts of the largest war of the XX century and the information war of the XXI century. The material comprises 500 samples per period. The data covering two historical spans are investigated through a framing approach. The criteria for diachronic analysis are dominant diagnostic and prognostic frames, constituting the macroframe WAR. The significant difference in Russia's images in war- and peacetime consists in their emotive load: Russia's contemporary negative images are contrasted to positive images activated in the retrospective period. The findings support the idea that British media discourse focusing on Russia is subject-centered: Russia's image is determined by the geopolitical situation, Great Britain's political priorities and objectives, and the bilateral relationship between the countries. The results can be used to further develop the linguistic basics of war theory.
Keywords: *British media discourse, information war, framing theory, diagnostic frame, prognostic frame, diachronic analysis*

Война вчера и сегодня:
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Аннотация

Статья посвящена диахроническому анализу образов России в британском медиадискурсе. Актуальность работы обусловлена необходимостью создания лингвистических основ противодействия информационно-психологическому воздействию со стороны зарубежных СМИ, направленному на искажение истории и размывание российских духовно-нравственных ценностей, а также дефицитом в теории языка диахронических исследований, посвященных сопоставлению образов России в зарубежных медийных дискурсах разных исторических периодов. Цель работы – установить зависимость медиадискурсивной репрезентации образов России и их эмоциональную нагруженность от исторических и идеологических факторов в военное и мирное время. Сопутствующие задачи исследования: проследить трансформацию медиа образа России в контекстах крупнейшего вооруженного конфликта в истории XX столетия и информационных войн новейшей истории начала XXI века; выявить и сопоставить особенности фреймирования образа России в британских медиа периода Второй мировой войны и через 75 лет после ее завершения. Текстовый материал британского медиадискурса (объёмом 500 контекстов в каждом хронологическом срезе) изучен с опорой на достижения теории фрейминга. Критериями диахронического сопоставления дискурсивных образов России выступают диагностические и прогностические фреймы, репрезентирующие макрофрейм «ВОЙНА». Сопоставительный анализ произведен с учетом экстралингвистических факторов конструирования образов России в избранных хронологических ракурсах. Устанавливается, что моделирование образов России британскими СМИ в военный и мирный периоды существенно отличается с точки зрения реализации их эмотивного потенциала: негативизация образа России в новейшей истории противопоставлена мелиоративности медиа образов в ретроспективном срезе. Авторы приходят к выводу о субъектоцентричности медийного дискурса о России. Доказывается, что регулярно используемые модели дискурсивной актуализации образов России детерминированы расстановкой сил на международной арене, интересами и целями Великобритании, характером двусторонних отношений. Результаты работы могут представлять интерес для дальнейшей разработки теории языка войны в лингвистике и широком круге социально-гуманитарных исследований.

Ключевые слова: *британский медиадискурс, информационная война, теория фрейминга, диагностический фрейм, прогностический фрейм, диахронический анализ*

1. Introduction

May, 8, 1945 marks the end of World War II in Europe, May, 9, 1945 – in Russia. As mankind approached the important remembrance year of 2020, which marks 75 years after the end of World War II, the notion of war gave much food for reconsideration of global conflicts, determining a drastic change of the essence of

war. The concept of war, at large, continues to shape peoples' vision of the world and of others to the present day. The problem is mainly discussed from a European historical perspective (Beevor 1999, Keegan 2002, Lightbody 2004, Mawdsley 2009, Morgan 2008, Müller & Ueberschär 2002, Overy 2006).

Arguing that Russia contributed much to the collapse of the Nazi regime and prevented many crimes against humanity, the authors try to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of war and its transformation on the time axis. The paper introduces a non-European discourse analyst's perspective. The major objective is to reveal discursive aspects of the image construal of Russia in the British media during the six-year-lasting conflict of World War II and compare them with the current representations, labelled as information war. Under information war the authors mean a media-related aspect of reporting and distribution of information in order to manipulate readers' opinion.

There has been a scarcity of studies that have utilized a framing approach and diachronic analysis to examine the notion of war and the image of Russia in its background. Our theoretical interest is to examine images of Russia, generated in the British media, to assess their emotive aspects and compare the use of frames, constituting a macroframe WAR in two historically distant periods, and to consider whether there are significant differences.

The objectives of the paper are threefold:

1) to reveal the most conspicuous frames, organizing and determining public opinion about war in general, encompassing the past and the present perspectives;

2) to deepen understanding of how the semantics of war has changed since WWII and what media reality is projected to communicate the image of Russia at present;

3) to specifically highlight the image of Russia as represented in the British media of the WWII period.

2. Theoretical framework

A framing approach has proved an adequate methodological tool for analyzing how the media construct a meaningful, comprehensible reality for the audience, how they select and organize ideas for the public to interpret. Framing theory has been taken up by sociology (Gamson & Modigliani 1987, 1989, Goffman 1974), psychology (Bartlett 1932), linguistics and discourse studies (Lakoff & Johnson 1981, Tannen 1979, van Dijk 1977), economics (Ireri et al. 2019, Kahneman & Tversky 1979), communication and media studies (Papacharissi & De Fatima Oliveira 2008, Tuchman 1978, Scheufele 1999, van Gorp 2005, 2007), political communication and policy studies (Entman 1993).

Defining frames is rather problematic, a fact which stems from a lack of consensus on how to describe frames in the news (Ireri et al. 2019: 5). In general, a frame is defined as a central idea, describing how people organize experience. Frames set parameters "in which citizens discuss public events" (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000: 94). Cappella and Jamieson have introduced four criteria that a

frame should meet: 1) a news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics; 2) a frame should be commonly observed in journalistic practice; 3) it must be possible to differentiate the frame in a reliable manner from others; 4) a frame must possess the property of representational validity and not represent a fragment of a researcher's imagination (Ireri et al. 2019: 5).

The present study mainly draws on seminal work on framing theory (Entman 1993, Brüggemann 2014, Godefroidt et al. 2016, Ireri et al. 2019, Scheufele & Iyengar 2017, Van Gorp 2007).

Fundamentally, the studies which focus on frames elaborate on Entman's definition: to frame means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993: 52). The idea of intentional selection and representation has proved relevant in contemporary research. Journalists can select some features by means of the choice of words, set phrases, repetitions, visuals, culturally marked symbols, thus, shaping the issue in a particular manner and influencing public opinion (De Vreese 2005, Godefroidt et al. 2016, Kushneruk 2018, 2019, Kushneruk & Kurochkina 2020, Larina et al. 2020, Ozyumenko 2017, Ozyumenko & Larina 2021, this issue).

Frames are complex in nature, which is why the demarcation line should be drawn between *generic frames* and *issue-specific frames* (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000). Issue-specific frames apply to a certain issue, subject or topic, while generic frames describe general features of news that can apply across different topics, times and cultural contexts (Godefroidt et al. 2016: 781).

As we focus on media representation of war and the discourse portrayal of Russia in two historically separate periods, the identification of a macroframe WAR seems relevant. In the suggested term, the morpheme *macro-* designates a conceptually complex structure, containing generic and issue-specific elements, which are textualized in the British media in both periods of time – the WWII period and the contemporary time span.

As a generic conceptual structure, it highlights: 1) a state of armed hostile conflict between states or nations; a period of armed conflict; the art or science of warfare; 2) a state of hostility, conflict, or antagonism; a struggle or competition between opposing forces or for a particular end (The dictionary by Merriam-Webster).

As an issue-specific structure, it can have several constitutive frames and subframes. They are context-specific, i.e. they depend on historical, political, ideological, international aspects of the news coverage and domestic angles in news reporting about Russia. In Sections 4 and 5, it will be demonstrated that issue-specific frames can be diagnostic and prognostic. Diagnostic framing presupposes assignment of blame or causality to someone or something. Prognostic framing is about giving solutions to the problems raised in the media (Godefroidt et al. 2016: 783). Prognostic frames can also be viewed as central organizing ideas, general

schemas for interpreting the future, which are rooted both in past and present trends, extending forward, interacting with one another, shaping new possibilities and patterns of behavior in the process (Solopova & Chudinov 2019, Chudinov & Solopova 2015).

In cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, political linguistics, cultural studies, and other fields a growing body of literature recognizes the importance of the diachronic dimension in research on conceptualization of our world, which can be explained by the temporal and dynamic dimensions of conceptualization.

The diachronic aspect of conceptual changes is a classic problem in "the history of concepts" (Begriffsgeschichte) (Konersmann 1999, Reichardt 1998, Koselleck 1983), in "the history of mentalities" of Continental Europe (l'histoire des mentalités) (Blumenberg 1998, Le Roy Ladurie 1973), and in pragmatically oriented British, American, Finnish, and Dutch research (Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans & van Vree 1998, Pocock 1971, Pulkkinnen 1999).

In Russia, the past decades have seen the rapid development of new areas of diachronic research in conceptology (Bogatyreva 2009, Kolesov 2018, Kondratieva 2011), cultural linguistics (Larina, Ozyumenko & Kurteš. 2021, Sazonova & Borozdina 2010, Shaklein 2009), comparative conceptology (Bogatyreva 2011, Kuznetsov 2007), metaphor studies (Allan 2008, Budaev & Chudinov 2020, Cánovas 2015, Díaz-Vera 2015, Geeraerts 2010, 2015, Kövecses 2005, 2009, Solopova 2015, 2020, Solopova & Saltykova 2019, Solopova & Chudinov 2018, Trim 2011, 2015, Chudinov, Budaev & Solopova 2020).

Though manifold, the foci of diachronic studies may be incorporated into a single focal point – researching the historical evolution of concepts, metaphors, schemas, frames, etc. through the ages or over a certain time span and explaining the reasons of the processes that changed a previous conception for a new one or, vice versa, accounted for their constancy.

3. Material and methods

The first step in analysing the evolution of frames, constituting a macroframe WAR, means interpreting them in detail within a specific time period, i.e. synchronous and retrospective analysis. The initial stage is parceling discourse into discrete time periods. The present research is based on focus fragmentation, understood as the process of dividing discourse into minor segments on the basis of the chosen perspective (e.g. major political events) for their further diachronic comparison: it provides a diachronic analysis of frames that highlight images of Russia in British media discourse of the World War II period, and 75 years after its end.

There exist several reasons for our focusing on the British media: Britain is one of the leading European countries; the direction of Anglo-Russian relations through ages was one of animosity to alliance and back to animosity, this fact seems relevant for studying images of Russia in the WWII period and in contemporary world when the bilateral relations are at their most strained point since the end of the Cold war. In the retrospective time span the years of WWII were deliberately

narrowed to the period of 1942–1945 when the countries were allied. The time span was chosen to analyze whether the alliance of the two countries in the war against Nazism affected the perception of Russia / the Soviet Union in the British media.

The intentionally compiled dataset includes 1000 texts (500 samples per period). The contexts from the current British media were retrieved from an online corpus (News on the Web), encompassing national and local magazines and newspapers, based on quality and having high circulation rates: Prospect, the Economist, the Daily Mail, the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian, the Independent, the Irish News, the Scotsman, the Sunday Post, the Telegraph, The Times, Verdict. Any context, containing the following tokens, was considered eligible for inclusion in the sample: *war, Russia, Russian, Russians, Russian-backed, Russian-operated, Russian-made*.

The source of the material for retrospective data is a digital archive from the British Library's collection (the British Newspaper Archive). The BNA search engine combines several powerful options: it allows for searching hundreds of millions of documents by a keyword, name or title and watch results appear in an instant. In the study the corpus was derived from all newspapers available in the BNA database. The search terms included "war, USSR, Russia, Soviet" in the 'Exact Search' checkbox (searching all the words within the text). Other options that narrowed the selection included the publication date range (1942–1945), with 'articles' and 'illustrated articles' chosen among article types. The documents matching the search query comprised 2238 texts. They were sorted by relevance; the first 500 texts made up our corpus. The periodicals containing the entries are Aberdeen Press and Journal, Belfast News-Letter, Birmingham Daily Post, Daily Record, Daily Herald, Dundee Courier, Illustrated London News, Liverpool Daily Post, etc.

The first step in understanding any document is its origin. The methods of source study comprise those of identifying and describing historical documents. When working with historical sources, the focus is on the origin of the document and its context. Sourcing includes stating the author's name, title of the article, page numbers, journal, magazine or newspaper title, volume and issue number, publication date and place (publishing house and publishing city if available).

After being retrieved from the corpora, all the documents are then manually searched for framing structures. As the research utilizes both contemporary and historical sources, the quality of the processed text of the retrospective time span greatly depends on the physical condition of the original source, paper quality, color, fading and damage defects, etc., which makes the researcher forgo automated data processing in favor of a manual selection method.

We have opted for the inductive approach, which enables us to reveal the array of frames constituting the macroframe WAR on synchronic and diachronic axes in two time periods. As frames are embodied in natural and cultural experience, their activity in discourse depends on a great number of factors that influence and alter their use.

Thus, interpreting the data in any diachronic research employs both a cognitive and discourse-based method and culture-specific analysis. They help to evaluate diagnostic and prognostic frames, constituting the macroframe WAR, through a comprehensive analysis of both political events and cultural peculiarities. Interpreting frames within the historical and cultural contexts in which they unfolded, locating them in time and place and understanding how these factors shaped them allows for deep understanding and interpreting of conceptual changes.

In section 4, we will concentrate on textual codifications to reveal the main war-related frames, constituting the macroframe WAR and contributing to the image construal of Russia during the current (the latest) historical period.

4. The Image of Russia in the British Media, 75 Years after the End of World War II

In this part of the research, we try to answer the questions: *What thematic frames are applied in the contemporary British media with reference to Russia? Which diagnostic and prognostic frames contribute most to the image of Russia 75 years after the end of WWII?* Fundamentally, the macroframe WAR is applied in current British news stories about Russia. We argue that the frames, structuring it, limit the country's image construal. These frames are singled out on a thematic principle. Thematic framing brings to the fore the most important issues related to Russia as represented in the British media of the present. The perception of Russia is primarily limited to World Wars, Russia's Soviet past (Cold war), and wars of the recent past in Georgia (2008), Syria (2011), Ukraine (2014). Besides, Russia's image is media-projected in relation to conflicts, such as information war and proxy war. The former is a struggle over information via communication technologies, including cybersecurity issues. The latter is a war fought between opponents (groups, countries) that represent the interests of other larger powers, and may have help and support from these. Thus, the following frames have been established (hereafter they are highlighted in bold type): **World Wars**, **Cold War**, **War in Ukraine, War in Syria, Information War**. Less textualized are the frames **War in Georgia, Proxy War.**

The **World Wars** frame reports current political situations in terms of devastating global war conflicts. In (1), covering the talks of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine in Paris (9.12.2019), aimed at ending the conflict in Ukraine, *The Politico* journalist generally describes World War II as "blood-soaked", though the outcome, provided by the Red Army's breakthroughs, is given less prominence than the D-Day landings. Following the professional norm of objectivity, he refers to the frame indirectly – through citing the spokeswoman of the Russian foreign ministry Maria Zakharova:

> (1) *…the spokeswoman of the Russian foreign ministry, said: «The Normandy landings were not **a game-changer for the outcome of WWII and the Great Patriotic War**. The outcome was determined by the Red Army's victories – mainly, in Stalingrad and Kursk»* (Politico, 10.12.2019).

From a subjective non-European perspective, the role of Russia as a 'game-changer' in WWII is underestimated. Objectively, Russia and Britain look at the same events and see different 'second-hand' realities.

In (2), the **Cold War** frame offers explanations for political instability in Europe. The reference is to the times of confrontation between the Soviet Union and the USA. The semantics of confusion, intrusion and dominance are expressed by the lexemes *overshadow* (becloud, blur), *incursion* (hostile entrance), *dictate* (impose, specify authoritatively):

> (2) **The United States and Russia** *overshadowed the EU leaders' summit on Thursday – an unplanned and unwelcome incursion by* **the old Cold War rivals**. *<…> The intense focus on Moscow and Washington served as a curious throwback to* **Cold War days** *when the superpower capitals dictated the global policy agenda* (Politico, 23.03.2018).

Framing is never neutral (Scheufele and Iyengar 2017).

Presumably, in (2) the flashback to the past, when the superpowers, associated with two political camps, formed a bipolar world, serves to make the readers think more of instability of the relations between the present Russia and the Western world.

Arguably, once the ontological situation related to Russia becomes epistemologically relevant in British media discourse, it acquires subjective media interpretation. First, it is 'diagnosed' – recognized by signs and 'symptoms', then, it is evaluated, and, finally, is given prognoses and recommendations. With this in mind, we specify the pragmatic aspect of framing and distinguish between **diagnostic** and **prognostic frames**, issue-specific in nature.

Diagnostic frames in contemporary British media
- assess and reassess the role of Russia in the wars of the past (1), (3);
- identify and examine causes of the problems facing British, European people, and the West in general as a result of Russia's military activities in the Cold War and post-Cold war world (2), (4), (5).

In (3), a diagnostic **World Wars** frame gives salience to Russia as a historically powerful opponent, which proved aggressive in the past and poses real danger for the West at present. The traditional metaphor (*a bear*) is employed:

> (3) *Although Britain and Russia have not been to war often, we in Britain have often seen* **a rampaging bear** *on the horizon. In the 19th Century, imperial rivalry over India, Afghanistan and Central Asia led to risky decision-making in London and almost to war. How has Russia been important to Britain in the past?* (The Sunday Post, 14.09.2019).

The image of Russia is dramatized in the context of today. The metaphor, though conventional, connotes negative evaluation, saturating the image with such features as surly, uncouth, burly, shambling, enraged, violent, attributed to the wild animal.

In (4), references to wars in Ukraine and Syria diagnose a problem, called 'the Russian threat', which is the ideological prism through which the British media see and regularly represent Russia to the readers:

(4) *While such debates are no doubt necessary, Europe hasn't found a way to move beyond them. Time is running short. Russia, after **its incursions into Ukraine** and **involvement in Syria**, continues **to sow chaos on Europe's doorstep*** (Politico, 16.02.2020).

The metaphor, expressed by the verb 'to sow' in combination with the lexeme 'chaos', enhances the semantics of disseminating, scattering, dispersing disorder and confusion. Due to this trope, the situation in Europe is represented as psychologically stressful. The image of Russia is highly negativized.

A negative image construal is also objectified in (5). Frame **Information war**, found to be common in the British news, contributes to the image of Russia as a political aggressor, striving to divide and polarize Europe, undermine the cradle of European democracy and its basic societal values:

(5) *Russia is simultaneously probing our defences and attacking our allies with repeated **cyber forays**. In this **new cold war**, they are just the tip of the iceberg. Simultaneously it is **waging an information war**, **spreading disinformation** that is designed to befuddle us so that we do nothing **to confront Russian aggression**, and using social media to divide and polarise our society, and **corrupt** our most precious asset and advantage – **democracy*** (Politics Home, 30.09.2018).

In the context, the frame **Information war** is manifest in the use of word combinations, such as 'cyber forays', 'new cold war', 'wage an information war', 'spread disinformation', 'Russian aggression'. Information war is referred to as a 'new cold war', which would indicate harsh confrontation between the sides, comparable to the Soviet times. The metaphor 'befuddle' makes explicit an expressive angle in the presentation of Russia as an aggressive offender, who tries to confuse the minds and thoughts of the Europeans.

Prognostic frames predict future and potential changes. They
● offer hypothetical situations about the future of Europe, Britain and the world, pushing forward the dangers, threats and risks, posed by Russia (6), (7), (8), (9), (10);
● prognosticate wars and conflicts (e.g. *a forthcoming war, an all-out war, a world war, world war three, war with Iran, nuclear war, a nuclear war with Russia, world war with the Russians, 21st century warfare*), (8), (9), (10).

(6) ***The risk isn't just that Europe will be sidelined on the global stage**, but that others – in particular Russia and China – will exploit those divisions for their own ends* (Politico, 13.02.2020).

Context (6) highlights that Russia and China will use Europe's weakness to their advantage, which implies real danger. The dark future of Europe is outlined in (7):

(7) ***With Russia involved**, any military intervention will have the crisis leave the Middle East, and quite possibly have bombs landing on any western city* (The Guardian, 21.08.2019).

The Russian involvement is assessed as a major threat to the West. In (8), the image of Russia as a dominant world power is closely associated with its cyber activity and spreading disinformation:

(8) *Some analysts believe **the world will look back on Russia's cyber activity in decades to come and see it as the greatest intelligence operation ever conducted**. Russia isn't some rogue state when it comes to disinformation; it's just the best – using it to settle old scores from the loss of the Cold War* (Herald Scotland, 02.12.2019).

The context emphasizes that cyber war is within the reach of Russian military art.

In headlines, prognostic frames often combine both aspects, specifying threats awaiting European people, and predicting conflicts, the most looming of which is a nuclear war:

(9) ***Threat of nuclear war*** *worst for 30 years, says House of Lords committee* (The Independent, 23.04.2019). ***Threat of nuclear war*** *is greater than at any time since World War Two* (The Daily Mail, 22.05.2019). *US-Iran crisis: are we heading towards **World War Three**?* (The Week, 13.01.2020).

In (10), the responsibility for a potential nuclear conflict is attributed to Russia. The Russian President is characterized as far-seeing:

(10) *Unfortunately **Putin holds all the cards** here, and he knows it. **Any escalation of this conflict could lead to a world war** in which nuclear and chemical weapons would be bound, sooner or later, to be used. **The threat posed by the nuclear deterrent** is being used to paralyze us. Does anyone have a clear idea of how **a world war would pan out in the twenty-first century**? It is unthinkable, but **Putin may well have thought it through*** (The Guardian, 21.08.2019).

The metaphor 'to paralyze' reveals negative evaluation of Europe as powerless and ineffective, opposed to Putin's political foresight and military efficacy of Russia.

Drawing a demarcation line between diagnostic and prognostic frames is conditional. In contemporary British media discourse, two types of frame are often simultaneously activated to assess and give interpretation of a political issue or a situation. Overall, both types contribute to the projection of a highly negative image of Russia.

In section 5, we will focus on the dominant frames, constituting the macroframe WAR, and examine images of Russia generated in the British media during the World War II period.

5. The Image of Russia in the British Media during World War II

Following our logic, in this part we will try to answer the following questions: *What thematic frames are applied in the retrospective time span with reference to Russia / the Soviet Union[1]? Which diagnostic and prognostic frames contribute most to the image of Russia / the Soviet Union during WWII?*

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[1] In the retospective time span the USSR and Russia (Soviet Russia) were regarded by the British media as one and the same international actor on the world arena (Solopova, Chudinov 2019: 330).

In the WWII time span, the macroframe WAR is structured on the thematic principle, which reflects the tendency of journalists to base a causal theme on their stories about the war and the role of Russia in the events. The dominant frames are **Great Power**, **Military Strength**, and **Friendship.** Less frequent frames are **Leadership** and **Democracy.**

Diagnostic frames in the British media of the retrospective time span

● assess the role of Russia in WWII (11), (12), (13) and the bilateral relations (14), (15), (17);

● reassess the political system (20), (21), (22), the leader of the Soviet Union (18), (19) and the reasons for WWII (16).

The **Great Power** frame (11) is central to the macroframe WAR. This turns out to be a dominant idea that organizes both diagnostic and prognostic framing, regulates the audience's perception of the country on the whole and gives meaning to specific problems, events and situation Russia was involved in:

> (11) *The U.S.S.R. has always been referred to by us as **the colossus of the North**. If for no other reason, **its immense territory and vast population warrant the use of the description 'colossus'. Three of the five Great Powers in Europe have disappeared** ... **We are, therefore, left with Great Britain and with Russia**. When we consider Russia's phenomenal rise within the past 25 years… With the others down and out, and **herself – the mistress of the Continent**… (Diss Express, 10.03.1944).*

In (11) the image of Russia is framed as "colossus". The metaphor is bleached and conventionally used in public discourse to characterise countries viewed as oppressive and hostile (typical target domains in the British media are the USA and Russia (both Tsarist and Soviet). The scholars stress that the metaphor evokes negative effects (confrontation, aggression, threat, isolation, distance from Europe), with the colossus image embodying both fear of and admiration for the colossal power [Chudinov, Budaev, Solopova 2020]. In the WWII time span the metaphor is highly positive, stressing Russia's enormous size, population, natural resources, ability, and expertise to exert its influence in the global conflict and on a global scale – key factors that make any country powerful. The metaphor "mistress of the Continent" seems to capture these notions as well, producing the image of the country that rules, directs, and dominates the Continent.

Being central to the macroframe WAR, the **Great Power** frame comprises a set of interrelated concepts that present a systematic view of Russia / the Soviet Union during the WWII period in the British media. This frame specifies relationships among other dominant frames that comprise further explanations of Russia's greatness, predictions of the outcome of the war, the future of the country and post-war world organization.

Since force has always been important in global politics, a **Military Strength** frame (2) referring to Russia is foregrounded in WWII media discourse. In wartime and in global conflicts, strength for war is always a test of a great power:

(12) *The most pregnant single fact relating to **the rise** and fall **of nations** which stands out to this war is **the emergence of Russia as a military power of the first magnitude**. More completely than any other nation **is she potentially self-supporting all the resources of economic strength**. Russia, if she desired to act in isolation, **would be militarily strong** enough to impose a settlement on the countries which **the Red Army** is on the way to liberate from the Germans* (Yorkshire Evening Post, 04.10.1943).

British journalists lay particular emphasis on military force as one of the foundations of Russia's power. Its military strength in WWII media discourse is characterized as *supreme*, *of the first magnitude*, *the greatest on earth*, etc., all the lexemes and word combinations having the semantic components "highest in rank, authority, degree", "of great size and extent", "most prominent among others". Though no country is great enough to solve the problem of global war alone, still Russia was presented to the British audience as having this capacity if it wished to exercise it.

Unlike modern European media, that almost always highlight the ideological zeal and fanaticism of the Red Army, the media of the WWII period stressed the major role it played during the years of 1942–1945 and expressed their profound admiration of its glorious record and victories:

(13) "*Ode To Red Army*".
Though flanks were turned and centre gone.   ***Among your ruins and your dead,***
***You stood for home and struggled on**,*   ***You stood and fought, or froze and bled**.*
A star of hope within you shone.   *The hope sill burned, the star still led.*
You struggled through a shaking time.   ***And now you reap reward, the line***
Enduring loss and grief and crime,   ***Comes west again, the foes decline**.*
***Each making hope the more sublime**.*   *O, hope, burn on. O, star, still shine.*
       (Aberdeen Evening Express, 23.02.1944).

It is worth noting that this poem was written for the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the Red Army by the Poet Laureate, Mr. John Masefield, sung at the Albert Hall in London, to music by Sir Arnold Bax, Master of the King's Music in celebration of Red Army Day on 23 February 1944, and published in more than ten newspapers and magazines, issued in different counties of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Moreover, it must be noted that 1) the genre chosen by the author is an ode – a poem praising or glorifying someone or something, usually marked by exaltation of feeling; 2) "Ode to Red Army" centers on the symbol of the star, the red star symbolizing the Red Amy and military service in Soviet heraldry (*a star of hope within you shone; the star still led; O, star, still shine*); 3) the metaphor of a star shining in the night, or a star of hope, symbolizes a grand and powerful force, divine guidance that helps people to go in the right direction, in the context of WWII – to victory. WWII media invariably highlighted the outstanding part Russia and its army played in breaking the Nazi tyranny.

In times of war, it is essential to mobilize international coalitions to address shared challenges and threats. A great power with its military strength makes a good

ally. In the news media of the WWII period the relationship between Great Britain and the USSR was characterized as one of solidarity and support, which is presented within a diagnostic frame **Friendship** (14), (15):

> (14) *No doubt we shall have our differences and controversies, but as **friends we can speak freely to each other** and **in the spirit of friendship and comradeship** seek reconciliation* (Dundee Evening Telegraph, 23.02.1944).
> (15) ***Russian Comrades**. To-morrow we shall pay a particular tribute to **our Russian comrades**, whose prowess in the field has been one of the grand contributions to the general victory* / Daily Record, 09.05.1945. (GB).

The international friendship between Great Britain and the USSR was based on things held in common – notably, shared goals and mutual motivation in the fight against the Nazis, common external enemy, armies, sacrifices, etc. The lexemes *friend, friendship, comrade, comradeship* with the semantics of amity, fellowship, and benevolence are used to achieve the desired effect on the audience: the primary focus here is on conceptualizing Russia as familiar rather than foreign, as friendly rather than hostile, as the country that deserved a significant degree of respect, admiration and trust. The concepts of trust / distrust within the frame **Friendship** play an active role in reassessing not only the USSR in its present and past, but also the reasons of the war (16), in shaping a new organization of global politics (17).

> (16) *Looking back, and being wise after the event, a great many people have made the decision that **this war would not have happened if it had not been for the misunderstandings and distrust which divided us from the Soviet Union*** (Hastings and St Leonards Observer, 11.11.1944).
> (17) *If history records Hitler as having been of any use whatever to the world, it will be because he destroyed **the distrust which had formerly existed between Soviet Russia and the rest of the civilised world**, and so opened the way to a new and more hopeful organisation of international security* (Liverpool Daily Post, 21.06.1943).

The alliance between Great Britain and the USSR influenced the way journalists framed almost all Russia-related issues in the WWII period: they demonstrated integrity, commitment, interdependence of the two countries – those foundational building blocks that make any friendship (both interpersonal and international) last.

Two more issue-specific frames textualized in the British media of WWII with reference to Russia / the Soviet Union are **Leadership** (18), (19) and **Democracy** (20), (21).

> (18) *The Russians have been led by **a great soldier and a great strategist, one the greatest of all time*** (Birmingham Mail, 27 March 1944).
> (19) ***Stalin is the greatest military strategist of this war, surpassing even Montgomery**, and the future of the peoples of the world depends on the peoples of Soviet Russia and Great Britain* (Rochdale Observer, 3 March 1945).

The head of the state is another attribute related to the state's power. A **Leadership** frame centered upon positive features of the Soviet Government and its leader. The British media stressed Stalin's outstanding quality as a military leader: the lexeme *great* and its superlative *greatest* in (18) and (19) present the Soviet leader as a skilled soldier and strategist markedly superior in quality and preeminent over others, including British Field Marshall B.M. Montgomery. It's worth mentioning that the latter was one of the most important and decorated military leaders of WWII, exceptionally popular with the British public.

Furthermore, the Soviet leader, whose dictatorship and totalitarian rule are greatly emphasized in contemporary media (e.g. the Guardian, 26.10.2019, the Daily Telegraph, 06.11.2019, BBC, 18.04.2019, etc.), was said to rule '*a free people*' (20) in '*a democratic state*' (21).

> (20) *From a message to Marshal Stalin: You have demonstrated in all your campaigns what is possible to accomplish* **when a free people** *under superlative leadership and unfailing courage rise against the forces of barbarism* (Daily Herald, 09.05.1945).
>
> (21) *The U.S.S.R. itself has by no means reached finality in constitution building.* **The present stretch of its road to democracy** *lies through a period of peaceful evolution towards that* **personal liberty** *which is* **the hallmark of democracy** (Western Mail, 18.11.1944).

In WWII media discourse, journalists developed a particular conceptualization of the Soviet leader, they reoriented the audience's thinking about Stalin by accentuating his ability to equip the Socialist State to meet the gravest external peril and to bring the country triumphantly through the years of invasion and devastation:

> (22) *It must never be forgotten that* **there was nothing in the whole world, nor could there have been created for several years any military organism which could ever have given the blow which Russia has given, or survived the losses which Russia has borne** (Nottingham Evening Post, 09.11.1943).

Though diagnostic frames aim at identifying a problem in the present and at assigning blame or causality to someone or something, in WWII media discourse the frames did not connect the negative aspect of the war to Russia. Metaphorically speaking, Russia was not thought a problem, but a solution to the problem of the war with the Nazis.

Prognostic frames in the British media during the World War II period

● offer hypothetical situations about the future of Russia / the Soviet Union (23), (24), (25), Europe (25), (27), the world (25), the war (26), Great Britain (28), (29), the relationships of Russia and Britain (30), (31);

● prognosticate future instruments of international security and cooperation, highlighting Russia's important role in post-war world organization (30), (31);

● motivate readers to remember the lessons of WWII and Russia's role in the victory over Nazi Germany (31), (32), (33).

Although the line of demarcation between diagnostic and prognostic framing is relative, it is found that nearly every diagnostic frame identified in the

retrospective time span, has a formal prognostic counterpart. The British media invariably placed Russia among the countries that projected and would project its influence on the world stage. More importantly, Russia headed this list:

(23) ***The Soviet Union will be an enormously powerful nation after this war*** (Hastings and St Leonards Observer, 11.11.1944).

(24) *Shape of things to come (the title). Mr. Catterall said **Russia** was a **power** that had come into the world affairs to stay and **to play an ever-increasing part*** (Surrey Advertiser, 04.07.1942)

The dimensions of power fixed in the diagnostic frame **Great Power** (namely, the nation's geography and the inevitable consequences of that geography, its role in the ongoing war, its military strength, etc.) gave a strong advantage for Russia / the Soviet Union to be named a moving power of the future in the corresponding prognostic frame:

(25) *We won that war, said the speaker, but Europe would play a much less important part in world affairs than in the past. **The moving powers of the future world** would be **Russia** and America. **If we had to have the United States of Europe with Russia in it, it would stretch to the Pacific, and yet one could not conceive the United States of Europe without Russia in it*** (Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette, 08.10.1945).

In (25), the hypothetical United States of Europe, envisioned by the British media of the WWII period, necessarily included Soviet Russia as a Great Power that had a claim on all international arrangements anywhere, as Tsarist Russia would as a partner in the Concert of Europe. Russia in WWII, according to the British media, had great political clout based on its **Military Strength** that determined the future of the war (26), the future of Russia in the post-war organization (27), and greatly influenced the future of Britain itself (28):

(26) ***Future of any race will be determined in Russia*** *(the title)* (Portsmouth Evening News, 30.03.1942).

(27) ***The supreme military power on the Continent of Europe is now Russia, and she will almost certainly remain in that position for a century at least. The military pre-eminence of Russia in Europe*** *indicates* ***the re-orientation*** *which* ***will inevitably take place in the post-war world*** (Birmingham Mail, 21.08.1944).

(28) ***In Russia lies our last hope of our continued national independence*** (Hull Daily Mail, 09.03.1942).

The British media stressed the fact that the engine of German might and tyranny could not be beaten and broken, outfought and out-maneuvered without Russia, its valour, generalship, and science.

The **Democracy** frame (taken together with the **Leadership** frame as in (31) is far scarcer when describing forthcoming changes, but it does occur:

(29) *Scotland is going to gain, in following in the path that Russia had set before us, far more in the way of **democracy**, as well as in breaking up Britain into **a number of free states on the plan of the U.S.S.R.*** (Stirling Observer, 29.06.1943).

In (29), the Soviet political system was framed as "democratic", "far more democratic" than the British one. Moreover, the USSR was considered a model to follow: a socialist country consisting of free states, with the ideas of freedom and equality underlying its "democratic" institutions.

The **Friendship** frame in its prognostic perspective is textualized in (30), (31).

> (30) ***Friendship with the Soviet Union and close co-operation in the future*** *would bring nearer realization of that great ideal of mankind, permanent and enduring peace* (The Lancaster Guardian, 03.12.1943).
>
> (31) *It is the simple truth that without Russia to aid us in this war we would have been in desperate jeopardy. Without Russia we cannot plan a secure peace. It is neither sensible, wise, nor right to encourage criticisms of the good faith of the Soviet Government.* ***Russia, Britain. China or any of the other United Nations, should not be alienated*** *by intolerances or little criticisms of one against the other.* ***Divided, our nations would perish*** (Daily Record, 22.06.1943).

Security and defense are areas where the interests of all the United Nations overlapped. The way the issue of friendship was framed determined how it was understood and, consequently, acted upon. The frame was embedded in a cognitive and emotional bond revolving around a shared idea of a secure and enduring peace that was unimaginable without Russia. Thus, future politics was supposed to be based on shared values and goals, on developing trust in relationships, keeping and maintaining friendships, promoting multilateral and multinational solutions in foreign policy, which needed loyalty and tolerance: putting up with differences and showing respect for other nations and ideologies.

A peculiar and a conspicuous prognostic frame, typical of the WWII media discourse with reference to Russia, is **Truth Not to Be Forgotten**, realized in (31), (32), (33):

> (32) *Nothing less than* **the utmost exertions of Britain, Russia, and the United States combined** *sufficed to bring to naught the foul ambitions of the Hitlerite conspiracy that had trampled almost all Europe underfoot.* ***That is a truth we cannot afford to forget if we are to establish a lasting peace*** (Dundee Courier, 09.05.1945).
>
> (33) *Russia, versus the might of Germany! May Almighty God guide them (the Russian people) to victory against the foul aggressor! Let us consider how we can* **immortalise Russia's magnificent courage and endurance**. *The idea of* **a combination gift** *from the peoples of our Empire and the U.S.A. is far from fantastic – one to which each and all of us ought to subscribe. May such an idea be included in the postwar plan! Russia is well deserving* **some great token** *from us and from the U.S.A.* (Dundee Courier, 13.10.1942).

The frame is prominent for the retrospective time span. It is based on the concepts of truth and remembrance. 'The simple truth' consists in the facts described in the media: the joint war effort of the Allied forces, the battles and events of the war, the losses and sacrifices of each nation. The concept of

'remembrance' implies bearing in mind the painful lessons of WWII, honoring the victors, cherishing and safeguarding peace to avoid repeating the tragedy[2]. Special place in the **Truth Not to Be Forgotten** frame is occupied by the Soviet Union and its remarkable efforts on the Eastern front, the greatest sacrifice in human history made by the Soviet people in fighting the Nazis and decolonizing the world. They ought to be *immortalized* in a *great token* to remember Russia's contribution to the winning of WWII, which was thought a kind of moral obligation for every citizen of Great Britain and the USA (*each and all of us ought to*) and seen as a guarantee of the three countries' friendship and mutual respect.

Both diagnostic and prognostic frames promoted a highly positive image of Russia / the Soviet Union in the retrospective time span. It was presented as a powerful state with great military strength that dominated and would dominate the world stage. Though ideologically different, Russia was considered an ally and a friend of Great Britain. The political system of the Soviet state was even seen as approaching democracy, and its ruler as the greatest military strategist of all time. The alliance between the two countries, the international issues of mutual interests, their shared goal to defeat the Nazis forged bonds of friendship, reinforced the meaning of amity and made the media select facts that construed positive images of Russia.

6. Conclusion

To tackle the problem of the image construal of Russia in the British media in historical periods, separated by seven and a half decades, the diachronic framing approach has been employed. It has enabled the authors to establish and typologize the main frames, organizing the media realities, representing Russia. The notion of a macroframe WAR has been introduced to denote a conceptual structure regularly objectified in the British media and constituted by Russia-related frames of the three types – thematic, diagnostic, and prognostic. Specific to the macroframe is the emphasis on expressive language means, which add to the emotional charge of Russia's media image in chronologically distant periods.

The authors have revealed the main thematic frames, profiling issues, the most prominent of which at present zero in on Russia's role in World Wars, the Cold War, the wars of recent history, information wars and cyberwars. 75 years after the end of WWII, Russia is presented as a powerful and aggressive opponent, an ideological and political adversary of the West. The systematic emphasis on Russia as war enactor and participant discloses a negative evaluation of the country and reveals a highly emotional impact on the readers. In contrast, in the WWII period the journalists primarily concentrated on Russia's power, might, strength, support and friendliness, positively evaluated and glorified in the British press of the day.

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[2] The frame is alien to the contemporary British media discourse with reference to Russia. It could symbolize that both the lessons of WWII and the records of the victors of WWII are at risk of being forgotten, or even rewritten.

It has been proved that currently textualized diagnostic frames contribute to assessing and reassessing the role of Russia in the wars of the past and identifying the causes of the challenges facing Europe, preconditioned by Russia's involvement in global politics. The diagnostic frames of the WWII period assess and reassess the role of Russia in WWII, including its political system, the actions of the Soviet leader, and the causes of the War as interpreted by the media of the time.

The prognostic frames of the present British media represent hypothetical future situations, related to Europe, and prognosticate international conflicts that might occur because of Russia's political threat. The emotive perspective of coverage induces readers' highly negative visions of the present Russia and may be characterized as ideologically biased. The drastic contrast of the two media realities, becomes more apparent considering Russia-related prognostic frames of the retrospective time span, specifically focusing on international security, the advantages of cooperation with a powerful Russia in the post-WWII period.

The research has demonstrated that the media image of Russia has changed dramatically within decades. This state of affairs has developed out of strained international relations between the major political players and a lack of spirit of understanding on the global arena. Further investigation of the image construal in synchronic and diachronic perspectives with special focus on emotion-driven coverage might provide relevant knowledge for better understanding how political elites seek to frame issues in order to control and direct public opinion.

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Research article

Threat and fear: Pragmatic purposes of emotionalisation in media discourse

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Abstract

The impact of mass media on individuals and society is to a great extent based on emotions. We concentrate on fear as it is one of the basic emotions triggered by risk and threat, which is claimed to play a key role in the twenty-first century consciousness (Furedi 20018). The study focuses on the emotionalisation of fear in contemporary media discourse about Russia, more specifically, on constructions of 'Russian threat' and 'fear of Russia' in Anglo-American media texts to highlight pragmatic effects and to speculate on possible purposes of such discourses. The study aims to explore the functioning of the lexemes *threat* and *fear*, in textual contexts with the focus on their pragma-discursive characteristics. It identifies the mechanisms as well as linguistic tools involved in media strategies of scare-mongering. The dataset was derived from quality British and American newspapers in the period 2018–2020, and was analysed drawing on an interdisciplinary approach combining critical discourse analysis, pragmatics, medialinguistics, psycholinguistics and the theory of proximisation. The paper argues that appealing to emotions as well as constructing emotions is aimed at enhancing the persuasive function of media and fulfilling their own agenda. The persistent use of the words 'threat' and 'fear' in relation to Russia as well as the obsessive discussion of this topic in media aim to shape a certain negative public opinion of Russia among readerships. The findings show that to achieve this goal different strategies and linguistic tools are used including: exaggeration, repetition, proximisation, interrogative headlines, presupposition, among others. The results go beyond linguistics, and may find implementation in political studies, since they provide researchers with tools for understanding contemporary social and political processes.

Keywords: *emotionalisation, manipulation, media discourse, threat, fear, strategy of scare-mongering*

Угроза и страх:
прагматические цели эмоционализации
в медийном дискурсе

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Аннотация

Воздействие СМИ на общество в значительной степени основано на эмоциях. Данная статья посвящена эмоционализации современного медиадискурса, рассматриваемой с позиций дискурсивнопрагматического подхода. Объектом исследования является страх, одна из базовых эмоций, вызываемая рисками и угрозами, которая в двадцать первом веке, по мнению исследователей, стала играть ключевую роль в формировании сознания (Furedi 2018). В центре внимания – идея так называемой «российской угрозы», активно навязываемая западными СМИ, и «страх перед Россией». Цель исследования – выявить особенности функционирования лексем *threat* (угроза) и fear (страх) в англо-американских медиатекстах и определить их прагма-дискурсивные характеристики, а также механизмы и языковые средства, применяемые для реализации стратегии устрашения. Материал взят из текстов, опубликованных в качественных британских и американских газетах в 2018–2020 годах, которые были проанализированы на основе междисциплинарного подхода с использованием данных медиалингвистики, психолингвистики, прагматики, критического дискурс-анализ и теории проксимизации. В статье показано, что обращение к эмоциям аудитории способствует усилению персуазивной функции, что является одной из основных целей современных СМИ. Утверждается, что частое использование слов «угроза» и «страх» по отношению к России, а также навязчивое обсуждение этой темы в СМИ нацелены на формирование определенного общественного мнения. Результаты показывают, что для достижения данной цели используются различные стратегии и языковые средства: проксимизация, пресуппозиция, преувеличение, повторы, вопросительные заголовки и другие. Результаты исследования выходят за рамки лингвистики и могут найти применение в политических исследованиях, поскольку они предоставляют инструменты для понимания современных социальных и политических процессов.

Ключевые слова: *эмоционализация, манипуляция, медиадискурс, угроза, страх, стратегия устрашения*

1. Introduction

Scholars have drawn attention to the emotionalisation of public domains such as political, academic and media contexts, presenting the emotions as important elements of social and political life (e.g. Bassols, Cros & Torrent 2013, Döveling et al. 2011, Lerner & Rivkin-Fish 2021, Schwab & Schwender 2011, Lerner, Zbenovich & Kaneh-Shalit 2021). The fact that emotion is an essential part of every kind of communication, and can be observed in all types of text and discourse has been convincingly proven by psychologically oriented linguistic studies (e.g.

Alba-Juez & Larina 2018, Alba-Juez & Mackenzie 2019, Dewaele 2010, Mackenzie & Alba-Juez 2019, Shakhovsky 2008, Wierzbicka 1999, among many others). This study focuses on the emotionalisation of contemporary media discourse, exploring its pragmatic effects and speculating on possible reasons for it.

The impact of mass media on individuals and society is to a great extent based on human emotions (Döveling et al. 2011) which are mobilised to achieve certain goals. Appealing to emotions as well as constructing emotions is one of the main purposes of media, which has become a "uniquely powerful" (Furedi 2018) institution; indeed Altheide (2002: 175), calls it the "most important social institution". This may be explained by the fact that "emotion may [...] directly shape cognition, and cognition may have fairly direct impact on behaviour" (Baumeister et al. 2007: 197). Studies in the psychology of emotions have shown that emotional events are recalled better than neutral events (Wirth & Holger 2005: 21).

Researchers of discourse highlight that the way the audience feels about something influences their rational judgements, attitudes and also the decisions they make (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie 2019). They claim that "Emotion is inextricably linked to persuasion, as can be clearly perceived in journalistic discourse, where persuasion can be used to heighten readers' sensitivity to a given issue, or on the contrary, to manipulate their emotions, stances and beliefs" (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie 2019: 18).

Emotional appeals have been defined as a strategy of manipulative discourse by Critical Discourse Analysts (e.g. van Dijk 2006: 379–380). Chomsky considers emotional impact (*Use the emotional side more than reflection)* among the top media manipulation strategies.[1] He characterizes emotional impact as a "classic technique for causing a short circuit on rational analysis, and finally to the critical sense of the individual" and further explains that the use of an emotional register opens the door to the unconscious for the implantation or grafting of ideas, desires, fears and anxieties, compulsions, or inducing behaviours (ibid). Thus, the manipulative function of emotion is determined by the fact that it suppresses the ability of rational perception of information and allows for the introduction of certain ideas into people's minds.

The current study is limited to 'fear', one of the basic emotions which, as many scholars claim, pervades modern media texts (e.g. Altheide & Michalowski 1999, Furedi 2018). Furedi claims that fear, as a response to risk and threat, plays a key role in the twenty-first century consciousness (Furedi 2018). The regular appeal to all sorts of threats (*terrorist threat, military threat, ecological threat, threat of global warming, pandemic threat, crime threat* etc.), observed in media, evidences the emergence of a discourse of threat, which constructs different types of fear (Ozyumenko & Larina 2020). As has been noticed by scholars, the word 'fear' whether used as a noun, verb, or adjective pervades news reports across all sections of newspaper (Altheide & Michalowski 1999: 75).

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[1] http://theinternationalcoalition.blogspot.com/2011/07/noam-chomsky-top-10-media-manipulation_08.html (Accessed: 12.08.2021).

A lot of studies have shown that fear is used as a tool for manipulation and exploitation by various groups, which contributes to the achievement of their social and political goals (e.g. Cap 2017, Kopytowska & Chilton 2018, Trajkova 2020, Wodak 2015, 2021). As Furedi notes, "Fear itself has become politicized to a point where debate is rarely about whether or not we should be fearful, but about who or what we should fear" (Furedi 2018: 2).

This study is focused on 'Russian threat' and the construction of 'fear of Russia' in Western media discourse. Drawing on interdisciplinary approach to discourse analysis (Ponton & Larina 2016, 2017, Bilá & Ivanova 2020, Sinelnikova 2020, among others) it aims to explore the functioning of the lexemes *threat* and *fear*, their derivatives and synonyms in textual contexts with the focus on their pragma-discursive characteristics and functions.

2. 'Threat' and 'fear' in media discourse

Scholars consider threat a universal tool for influencing an audience. They highlight that negative emotions arising in a recipient as a result of a threat act, have an intense effect on thoughts, feelings and behaviour and, accordingly, represent the most effective tool for influencing others (Kara-Murza 2015: 214). Fear, an ever present factor in much modern media discourse, is viewed as an emotion widely exploited in the manipulation of consciousness. Arguably then, one of the goals of media is to create the "fearful subject" (Furedi 2018), someone who is easy to manipulate.

The construction of fear in media, and its impact, have been widely discussed by journalists, sociologists, psychologists and linguists (Altheide 2002, 2006, Altheide & Michalowski 1999, Cap 2017, Çınarlı & Nguyen 2020, Delanti 2008, Dillard & Anderson 2004, Furedi 2018, Sedláková & Kopytowska 2018, Tunney et al. 2021, Wodak 2015, 2021, Zappettini 2021 and others). Researchers are unanimous in the opinion that fear is one of the dominant emotions in contemporary times (Kopytowska & Chilton 2018), a powerful emotion that shapes our lives and our world (Dozier 1999), not only a psychological but also a social and political phenomenon (e.g. Ahmed 2014, Altheide 2006, Wodak 2015, 2021). Discussing the affective politics of fear, Furedi (2018) writes about 'culture of fear' and states that society has become fixated on "promoting a climate of fear and cultivating a disposition to panic" (Furedi 2018: 2). He specifies that the term 'culture of fear' works as a "rhetorical idiom and carries a connotation that can encompass a variety of feelings from unease and discomfort towards a sense of insecurity, powerlessness, intimidation, etc." (Furedi 2018: 4). As observed by Delanty, "fear of others and anxieties about the future have emerged as potent social forces in contemporary society" (2008: 676).

According to the studies, the word 'fear' appeared more often at the end of the 20th century than it had done before, particularly in headlines, where its use more than doubled (Altheide & Michalowski 1999) and this tendency seems to have continued. Furedi (2018), for example, states that compared to the late twentieth

century, language has become far more inclined to "embrace the rhetoric of fear" (Furedi 2018: 2) and points out that "the messages communicated by the media are often oriented towards capturing its audience's attention through appeals to people's sense of anxiety and fear" (Furedi 2018: 13). He notes the increasing presence of fear-related linguistic phenomena such as catchphrases ('the politics of fear', the 'fear factor'), highlights the role of media in these processes, and cites Grupp (2002), who points out that "there has been a general shift from a fearsome life towards a life with fearsome media" (Furedi 2018: 14).

Such notions inform the approach of this paper, which explores how the lexemes 'threat' and 'fear' function in textual contexts, and asks what their pragma-discursive characteristics and functions are.

According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, fear is a "basic, intense emotion aroused by the detection of imminent threat, involving an immediate alarm reaction that mobilizes the organism by triggering a set of physiological changes"[2]. It is worth noting that psychologists distinguish between fear and anxiety, emphasising that "the former is considered an appropriate short-term response to a present, clearly identifiable threat, whereas the latter is a future-oriented, long-term response focused on a diffuse threat" (ibid.). This definition also mentions *intense emotion, imminent threat, immediate alarm reaction, response to a present, clearly identifiable threat,* which suggests that 'fear' is an intense emotion triggered by a present and imminent threat that is clearly identifiable, while anxiety refers to a 'diffuse threat'.

As the definitions show, there is an obvious difference between 'fear' and 'anxiety'. Fear deals with a real threat, while anxiety is provoked by a subjective idea of an imaginary threat. One feels anxious when one **thinks** that something bad **might** happen. The words 'think' and 'might' indicate that the threat is imaginary rather than real. However, in media discourse the terms 'fear' and 'anxiety' are often used interchangeably, with a preference given to 'threat'. This preference does not seem to be accidental, but rather has a specific purpose. As has been shown empirically by psycholinguistic experiments (e.g. Isenberg et al. 1999), words associated with danger, fear, threat have a demonstrable effect on the brain. Drawing on insights from neuroscientific research on the role of lexis in fear stimulation, critical discourse analysts define other words as well as discursive mechanisms that stimulate fear (Kopytowska & Chilton 2018).

3. Data and methodology

We limit our study to the word *threa*t, its derivatives and synonyms, which are frequently used in contemporary media discourse as a fear trigger, as well as the word *fear*, with a focus on their pragma-discursive characteristics and functions.

The data for the study are taken from British and American newspapers (*The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Independent, The Washington Post, The Wall Street*

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[2] APA Dictionary of Psychology. https://dictionary.apa.org/fear (Accessed: 12.08.2021).

Journal, the Chicago Tribune), news websites of the BBC, Reuters, Politico, Fox News, among other media sources that cover the relations between Russia, the USA and the UK between 2018 and 2021. For data collection we used the Google search engine using *Russian threat, Russia threatens, fear of Russia* as search terms.

The corpus consisted of 160 articles taken from the sources used. We mostly focused on the functioning of the terms 'threat' and 'fear' and their pragmatic aspects. We paid particular attention to such textual features as headlines, interrogative headlines, epistemic modality, some rhetorical tools used in media texts to perform the strategy of fearmongering. We also draw attention to presupposition, which is understood as a "taken-for-granted implicit claim, embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance" (Richardson 2007: 63), and discursive elements and mechanisms that stimulate fear.

The data were analysed drawing on some notions from Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995, 2001, van Dijk 2006, 2009; Weiss & Wodak 2007), studies of the discourse of the press and media linguistics (Bryant & Zillman 2002, Dobrosklonskaya 2020, Fowler 1991, Richardson 2007, Solopova & Saltykova 2019, among many others) and proximisation theory (Cap 2013, 2017, Kopytowska 2015a,b). We use Cap's definition of proximization and consider it a "discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events or state of affairs (including 'distant', i.e. adversarial ideologies) as increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee" (Cap 2017: 16).

In this this study, we limit ourselves to a qualitative analysis; however, there is no doubt that for a more reasoned conclusion, quantitative analysis is also needed, and it is intended to pursue this in future. We also intend to consider genre differences.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Threat

Searching for the collocation *Russian threat* returned the following results: *Russian threat to the US / to the UK/ to Israel/ to Sweden/ to Baltic states/ to Europe /to NATO* and even to such far away states as *Canada, Australia* and *South Africa.* Searching for *Russia threatens* returned instances such as: *Russia threatens Ukraine / Bosnia / Turkey / NATO/ Sweden / US / Israel / Georgia.*

These threats are presented as aggressive and terrifying:

(1)   Russia **threatens** to NUKE US cities with 6000 mph-hypersonic Zircon missile if war breaks out after successful' test (The Sun, 26.11.2020).
(2)   Putin **threatens** to target US if it deploys missiles in nearby European countries (CNBC, 20.02.2019).

Russia is also claimed as a threat to elections all over the world, especially to the US presidential elections and the European parliamentary elections, as well as elections in Bulgaria and even in South Africa. It is accused of destructive goals in America and across the European continent such as 'denigrating President Biden's

candidacy', 'undermining public confidence in the electoral process', 'exacerbating sociopolitical divisions in the US', causing havoc to the European elections (3). It is directly claimed as a 'hostile aggressor' (4):

> (3) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence released an assessment on Tuesday about foreign **threats** to the 2020 US federal elections. The assessment found that **Russia** pursued efforts aimed at "denigrating President Biden's candidacy and the Democratic Party, supporting former President Trump, undermining public confidence in the electoral process, and exacerbating sociopolitical divisions in the US (CNN, 17.03.2021).
> (4) The **threat** from a **hostile aggressor** [Russia] which the European Commission said last week would seek to cause the same havoc to the European elections in May. (The Guardian, 30.03.2019).

The analysis showed that it is not uncommon to see 'threat' in the headlines of articles referring to Russia. They explicitly claim the presence of a 'Russian threat' and the need to be prepared to confront it, though the articles do not give any details concerning the facts declared in the titles:

> (5) NATO Chief Warns of **Russia Threat**, Urges Unity in U.S. Address (Reuters, 04.04.2019).
> (6) Trump silent as top officials warn of **Russian threat** (POLITICO, 08.02.2018).
> (7) Justice Department filing contradicts Kushner's view of **Russia threat** (POLITICO, 23.04.2019).

Though the articles may not provide any convincing facts nor arguments about the 'Russian threat', its presence in the headline has an effect on an uncritical reader, as headlines primarily attract readers' attention and remain in their memory.

The role of interrogative headings in discourse that aims to manipulate has been an object of research (see Richardson 2007, Ozyumenko 2017, 2019; Ozyumenko & Larina 2020; Larina et al. 2020).

> (8) Does Russia present a credible threat to the UK? (The Guardian, 15.03.2018).
> (9) Truth or dare: how serious is Russia's missile threat to the US? (The Times, 28.02.2019).

Headings (8–9) presume that a Russian threat exists, that Russia does present a threat to the UK, and that Russian missiles do threaten the US. The question is only how credible and how serious this threat might be. Presuppositions are present in "wh-questions', e.g. in heading (10) which, despite its interrogative form, actually claims that Russia is a threat to world peace:

> (10) Why is Russia a threat to world peace? (https://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/news-events/podcasts/why-russia-threat-world-peace).

These tactics enable journalists to convey to the reader any idea, no matter how incredible without being held responsible (Larina et al. 2020: 26), since the

mechanisms of pragmatic presupposition allow them to deliver the desired idea without affirming it directly.

Co-textual analysis showed that 'Russian threat' is presented as an *ongoing, rising, escalating* and *evolving* process:

> (11) But the filing also sheds light on how the Justice Department views the **ongoing threat** of Russian attempts to influence American politics and goes well beyond what Mueller's team was able to say in its 448-page report. (POLITICO, 23.04.2019).
> (12) Britain and France must take their military alliance "to the next level" to combat **escalating threats**, the chief of the defence staff has said (The Times, 24.09.2018).
> (13) Williamson said the funding had been allocated in response to an **evolving threat** and will help ensure the UK remains a global leader in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence (The Sunday Times, 03.03.2019).

The escalation of this process is also conveyed by evaluative adjectives. In our data, we have the collocations *big threat*, *bigger threat, biggest threat*, *greatest threat* as well as *major threat*, *grave threat, reckless threat, death threat* which increase the impact on the audience's emotions:

> (14) Putin poses a bigger **threat** than populism (The Times, 26.12.2018)
> (15) Lawmakers said jointly in a statement Friday, pointing to recent reports about Facebook's efforts to discredit its political opponents and slowness to identify Russia as a **major threat** (The Washington Post, 23.11.2018).
> (16) Russia possesses **a grave threat** to our national security (USA Today, Jan. 2018).

It is worth noting that Western media reiterate that Russia and its regime pose a 'new threat' to the world, which differs considerably from the earlier dictatorship threats, and it is seen as particularly dangerous:

> (17) Britain faces a new kind of **Russian threat** (The Times, 10.09.2018).
> (18) Meister was one of the first analysts in Berlin to raise the alarm of a **new Russian threat** (The New York Times Magazine, 25.07.2019).
> (19) Putinism represents **a new threat** to the world, one very different in fundamental ways from those of earlier imperial dictatorships. (USA Today, 17.02.2019).

Another tactic of enhancing the emotional impact on the audience is repetition. The repetition of the idea of 'Russian threat' can be observed in the media space as a whole, within the framework of one newspaper and even in a short message. For instance, the short item of 78 words entitled "The Times' view on China and Russia: A Global Challenge (Again)" contains the collocations **biggest threat** and **greatest threat:**

> (20) These nations [China and Russia] have been identified as the **biggest threat** to the western alliance for many decades. It is time to close ranks and stop squabbling. China and Russia have become like "lips and teeth", said

a Beijing official recently, referring to the closeness of the relationship. The United States intelligence community this week identified the alignment as the **greatest threat** to America and its allies since the height of the Cold War in the mid-1950s. (The Times, 31.01. 2019)

The idea of Russian threat can be delivered less explicitly and directly with the use of epistemic modality which adds some uncertainty to the statement. However, as previous study has shown, uncertainty is frequently used in media as a strategy of manipulation (see Larina, Ozyumenko & Ponton 2020). Though the fact that Russia's interference in the US presidential election in 2016 has never been proven, the Guardian claims that Moscow "may seek to influence the 2020 elections" by launching cyber-attacks, disinformation, covert agent operations and other "active measures", as it did in the 2016 elections (21). It also suggests that Russia plans "to sway South Africa election" (22). The Times states that Russia "will sow dissent during European parliament elections" (23). The Sunday Times goes even further and writes about a possible invasion of Belarus or the Baltic (24).

> (21) Moscow **may seek** to influence the 2020 elections by launching cyber-attacks, social media disinformation, covert agent operations and other "active measures" as it did in the 2016 election (The Guardian, 27.05.2019).
> (22) Documents **suggest** Russian plan to sway South Africa election (The Guardian, 08.05.2019).
> (23) Russia '**will** sow dissent during European parliament elections' (The Times, 18.03.2019).
> (24) The agency's analysts fear that President Putin's regime regards the elections as a chance to sow political dissension across the continent before a **possible** invasion of Belarus or the Baltic states (The Sunday Times, 18.03.2019).

Although examples (21–24) have some markers of epistemic modality (*may seek, suggest, will sow, possible invasion*), they do not reduce the perlocutionary effect on the readers, who usually do not pay attention to shades of modality. After reading (21–24), it is most likely that what is most salient will be retained, in each case, i.e.: *Russia, cyber-attacks, disinformation, covert agent, sway elections, sow political dissension, invasion of Belarus and the Baltic states*. The publication of these facts in the newspaper make them real for the reader. It is interesting to note that the last accusation contains the modal word *possible*, but at the same time the preposition *before* indicates the planned nature of this action.

4.2. Fear

Arguably, one of the main goals of threat discourse is to trigger fear, and in this context it is interesting to note that the lexemes 'threat' and 'fear' often go together:

> (25) British man and family plead for asylum after hiding in Australia in **fear** of Russian **threats** (The Guardian, 25.01.2019) (headline).

(26) […] Pinedo has experienced harassment and death **threats** over his walk-on role in the Mueller probe. Lessem also suggested that Pinedo has curtailed his activities because of **fears** he could be the victim of attack by Russia, Russian sympathizers or their opponents. (POLITICO, 27.09.2018).

(27) The unclassified "Strategic Multilayer Assessment" marks a clear warning from the military establishment to civilian leaders about a national security **threat** that strategists **fear**, if left unchecked, could ultimately lead to armed conflict. (POLITICO, 30.06.2019).

The emotion of fear is conveyed by different grammatical forms: noun, verb, adjective (fearsome), participle (feared), as well as their **synonyms** (afraid, concerned, scared, worried, troubled):

(28) The security minister has turned down a meeting with a Tory peer who has financial links to Moscow **amid fears** about Russian influence and lobbying in parliament, *The Times* can reveal. (The Times, 24.10.2018).

(29) Britain and America **fear** Vladimir Putin is prepared to cause financial chaos by attacking undersea cables between the countries and are going to extraordinary lengths to track Russian submarines (The Telegraph, 06.10.2018).

We observe in our data some inconsistency between the emotion of fear and the use of the word itself. As has been noted above, semantically to *fear* means 'to feel worried and afraid that something bad will happen or has already happened', while anxiety is a 'worried feeling you have because you think that something bad might happen'[3]. From our perspective, in many examples (e.g. 27–29), the words 'anxiety' or 'concern' would be more appropriate than 'fear'. Hence, we suggest, this emotional intensification may serve the scope of inducing this emotion in the audience.

Our analysis of 'fear' lexemes has revealed some functional similarities with that of 'threat'.

It is possible for more than one fear lexeme to be used in a sentence, and repetition enhances the emotional impact on the audience:

(30) Yet while our **threat** perception in the past year has shifted from a **fear** of non-state groups to great-power confrontation, we are still nowhere near the **fearsome** heights of the Cold War. (The Sunday Times, 30.12.2018).

We also see the word 'fear' in headlines, which focus the audience's attention:

(32) America's enemies want **fear** and chaos from our election (Dallas News, 02.11.2020).

(33) Lithuania **fears** a Russian invasion. Now, it wants to build a border fence (Washington Post, 17.01.2017).

(34) U.S. cybersecurity officials **fear** 'grave' fallout from suspected Russian hack as Trump stays silent (Daily News, 17.12.2020).

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[3] Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners.

It also occurs in interrogative headlines which trigger presuppositions, Wh-questions in particular:

(35) Is Trump **scared of** Putin? (Chicago Tribune,18.04.2018).
(36) Why is Trump **so afraid** of Russia? (The New York Times, 21.03.2018).
(37) Why is Britain **so afraid** to make a stand against Putin's clownish cronies? (The Telegraph, 10.10.2018).

If the headline in (35) simply refers to Trump's fear of Putin, the questions "Why is Trump so afraid of Putin" or "Why is Britain so afraid…" presuppose the existence of this emotional state.

Fear is described as an increasing and developing process, which also enhances the dramatic effect:

(38) Even as **fear** of Russia is rising, its military spending is actually decreasing (Washington Post, 02.05.2018).
(39) Fears are rising that the group (Wagner) is fomenting turmoil in Libya so that the Kremlin can then sweep in and stabilise the nation. (The Times, 04.03.2019).

The emotional impact can be enhanced by the use of intensifier *very* and superlative lexemes, as well as a strategy of exaggeration:

(40) But in his most recent tweet on about election meddling, Trump said, "I'm **very concerned** that Russia will be fighting very hard to have an impact on the upcoming election. (POLITICO, 26.07.2018).
(41) The **biggest fear** *is* that Russia might attempt to close the "Suwalki Gap" (Washington Post, 17.01.2017).

Exaggeration can be expressed by lexical means, for instance by superlatives as in (41) and also at the content level as in (42) where in "A clear majority of people" is used as a means of exaggeration. This statement is not based on any facts; therefore, it cannot be a rational argument:

(42) **A clear majority of people** in eastern European countries including Poland **fear** that war will break out with Russia as the US-backed liberal order **threatens** to dissolve into an era of renewed conflict (The Times, 11.02.2019).

To enhance the emotional impact, journalists use various rhetorical tropes and expressive means such as idioms, hyperboles, metaphors, word play, cultural images, animalistic symbols, etc. In our material, Russia is compared with a dangerous wounded bear[4]:

(43) "We are **very** concerned about Russian **aggression**. A **wounded bear** is **dangerous**," MEP Anders Vistisen, of the Danish People's party said last month in Milan, on the sidelines of Salvini's nationalist coalition launch (The Guardian, 17.05.2019).

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[4] Bear is an animalistic symbol of Russia.

In (43) we can see the combination of lexical means construing fear: *very concerned, aggression, dangerous.*

Some headlines contain homophonic puns with the word 'bear': beware – bear, fear – bear.

> (44) **Beware** the **wounded bear**: *Russia could hit back hard after inept spies exposed* (The Telegraph, 06.10.2018) (headline).
> (45) The Russia Anxiety by Mark B Smith review — should we **fear** the Russian **bear**? (The Sunday Times, 30.06.2019) (headline).

We agree with Richardson (2007), who notes that while such features can be viewed as a merely entertaining aspect of discourse, they often underscore a political agenda (Richardson 2007: 70), and they are an effective means of emotional impact on the audience.

It should be mentioned that besides verbal means for the realization of a scare-mongering strategy, a variety of multimodal means (Ponton 2016) are used, e.g. heading size, colour, photographs, caricatures, etc. The image of a bear is frequently used in cartoons about Russia, and the Russian president is portrayed in a frightening and threatening manner as the embodiment of evil (see e.g. Ozyumenko 2017). However, these aspects of emotional appeal are beyond this paper.

5. Discussion

The findings confirm the idea that the lexemes 'threat' and 'fear' pervade Western media discourse (Altheide & Michalowski 1999, Furedi 2018). The analysis has revealed that the ideas of the 'Russian threat' as well as 'fear of Russia' are expressed in the reviewed sources persistently and quite explicitly though implicit means are not uncommon either. Taking into account the semantics of the word 'fear', it seems that in many cases, the words 'concern' or 'anxiety' seem to be more appropriate than 'fear' (e.g. in examples 27–29, and others). Preference for the lexeme 'fear', in our opinion, is indicative of a purposeful fear-mongering strategy used by mass media.

The findings reveal some similar linguistic tools and discursive strategies used to construe the ideas of a 'Russian threat' and 'fear of Russia'. In both cases, we observe the use of superlative lexemes (e.g. *biggest / greatest threat, biggest fear*), repetition (20, 30), exaggeration (41, 42). Both threat and fear are described as growing and escalating (*escalating/evolving threat, rising fear*). Both words are used in headlines (affirmative and interrogative). As a result, the idea of a Russian threat as well as fear of Russia are expressed explicitly (5–7, 32–34) and implicitly, through presupposition (9, 10, 36, 37). To construe fear and dramatise the current situation, these two lexemes are often used together (25–27, 30).

It is worth mentioning that the declarations of Russian threat are hardly confirmed by any facts, which are not deemed necessary any more. For instance, not having a full report on Russian interference in the US elections, the Guardian claims that it was a 'terrifying' and 'incontrovertible evidence of an attack by Russia on America'.

(46) Because even while we still do not have the full report, even Barr's summary of it confirmed something extraordinary and **terrifying: incontrovertible** evidence of an attack by Russia on America. (The Guardian, 30.03.2019).

The portrayal of an alleged and never proven hacker intrusion into the campaign as an 'attack by Russia on America' heightens the dramatic effect of the situation, as does the high-intensity lexis ('terrifying').

Persistently instilling the idea that a 'Russian threat' exists, and that it affects the whole world from the USA to South Africa, journalists pursue the goal of showing that, although Russia is far away, the threat posed by it knows no boundaries; it can easily and quickly come to any country.

We suggest that such rhetoric is a meditated application of the discursive strategy of proximization (Cap 2013, 2017), which is aimed at "presenting physically and temporally distant events and state of affairs […] as directly, increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee" (Cap 2017: 16). It is a "forced construal operation meant to envoke closeness of the external threat to solicit legitimization of preventive measures" (Cap ibid.). The goal of proximisation is to move the threat from the periphery of the discursive space to its center, arouse fear among the population and enlist the support of subsequent preventive measures: unprecedented expulsion of Russian diplomats, economic sanctions against Russia and others. It is not by chance that just a few days after the notorious 'Novichok' episode, for example, in Salisbury, the newspapers were full of statements by political leaders emphasizing that this could happen on the streets of any city:

(47) The prime minister told the UK's allies that such an attack could have taken place on the streets of any of their cities. (The Guardian, 15.03.2018).

In this example, we can simultaneously see the application of all three types of proximization — spatial, temporal, and modal or axiological (Cap 2017): (1) the enemy is not in faraway Russia, but in the UK, in the small peaceful town of Salisbury (spatial proximisation); (2) this is not a hypothetical possibility, but an event that has already happened (temporal proximisation); (3) the enemy is insidious and merciless, he ruthlessly kills civilians in peacetime violating all democratic and humanistic values (axiological proximisation), and, as a result, he and his country must be severely punished.

The strategy of temporal proximisation can be performed by 'nominal presupposition' (Richardson 2017: 64), triggered by nouns and adjectives. In (48) the use of 'not ready' presupposes that this threat is not hypothetical but real and it already exists.

(48) NATO **Fears** Its Forces Not Ready to Confront **Russian Threat** (The Wall Street Journal. 28.03.2018) (headline).

As has been shown (18, 19), Western media emphasize that Russia and "Putinism" as a combination of the socio-economic and political structure of modern Russia, pose a completely new threat to peace which is constantly changing

and appearing in new forms. Trying to prove this, the journalists demonstrate their ingenuity by providing a series of facts which may be absurd, but nevertheless are eagerly discussed and actively circulated by various publications. Our material supports Furedi's idea that "at times it almost appears as if fear has become a caricature of itself" (Furedi 2018: 5).

As an instance of a patently absurd story, consider accounts of the beluga from Russia, which appeared off the coast of Norway and was immediately suspected of espionage. This was announced on April 29, 2019 by the BBC, CNN, The Telegraph and other influential sources. The reason for the assumption that the dolphin was a Russian spy was a "harness for a camera" discovered on it with the words "Equipment. St. Petersburg", testifying to its belonging to Russia. It was immediately stated that the Russians were training dolphins for underwater espionage activities against the West. While some publications reported this under a question mark (49), others quoted politicians and experts who did not doubt the fact of espionage (50):

(49) Is this whale a Russian spy? Beluga turns up in Norway with camera harness (CBC, 02.05.2019).
(50) Marine experts believe it was trained by the Russian military… Another marine mammal researcher said it was "undoubtable" that the whale was trained. (CNN, 29.04.2019).

This ridiculous story was replicated by such reputable publications as The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, The Washington Post and others. A few days after the dolphin was discovered (05.05.2019), the British newspaper Times wrote about a poll on Norwegian television to choose a name for the dolphin, where the first place was given to the name Hvaldimir, formed by adding the words *hval* (dolphin) and *Vladimir* and referring to the name of the Russian president. Other preferences included *Agent James Beluga* and *White Russian*. Soon (09.05.2019), the Times published another message stating that beluga whales suspected of espionage may have been used to treat children with mental disabilities, but this disclaimer made little headway against notions concerning the Russian spy Hvaldimir, which had long been an important news item, a favourite topic of scientific discussions and opinion polls.

The Financial Times, under the heading "Opinion: Political espionage", published an article by British writer, critic and scientist John Day under the heading "The 'Russian spy whale' has plenty of historical company". The author poses the moral and ethical question of the use of animals as weapons, and ends with the words: *Despite its apparent friendliness, there's something very sad about the Russian spy whale, and the indignity of turning a wild creature into a tool of war*. Thus, on the basis of an unproven fact, the author condemns Russia as a cruel immoral state whose values are at variance with the values of the Western world. The beluga story implies that Russian spies can appear in the most unexpected places, at any time, that is, right here and now, and one must be ready to fight them.

Our findings confirm the idea of Altheide (2002), who claims that "fear does not just happen; it is socially constructed and then manipulated by those who seek

to benefit" (Altheide 2002: 24). Emphasizing the role of mass media in shaping public opinion, he argues that "Fear begins with things we fear, but over time with enough repetition and expanded use, it becomes a way of looking at life" (Altheide 2002: 3).

To understand how justified any case of fear might be, it is necessary to analyze how real the threat is. If we take into account the lack of supporting/confirming facts, as well as the colossal difference in the military budgets of Russia and NATO countries, the intensity of threat and fear in media discourse does not seem to be proportional to the objective character of the specific threat. However, in media statements western politicians and analysts highlight the weakening of the European Union and the inability to respond to growing threats from Russia (51), the need to ready forces and have enough strength to counter this evolving threat (52–54).

> (51) He [Jakub Kalensky] said internal politics and a resistance among some European leaders have left the system too sluggish to respond to the Russian **threat**. (The New York Times, 06.06.2019).
> (52) Javid (Home Secretary) said: "We have to ensure that we have the necessary powers to meet current and evolving **threats** to the UK, both domestically and overseas. (The Guardian, 20.05.2019).
> (53) *U.S. Pushes NATO Allies to Ready Forces Against Russian **Threat*** (Reuters, 04.04.2019).
> (54) *Russia is a **strategic threat** that must be aggressively countered* (The Guardian, 17.05.2019).

Thus, the illusion is created that Russia is a powerful and aggressive state that threatens the whole world, and that it is necessary to unite in order to resist it. Such rhetoric, arguably, has the aim of influencing opinions in society regarding the need to increase military spending and support the government's actions to modernize and strengthen military forces, as well as justify unfriendly actions against Russia. As Cap (2017) rightly claims, "the construal of imminent danger paves the way for the legitimization of preventive measures in a vast number of public discourses" (Cap 2017: 9).

This purposeful, often unfounded fear-mongering is arguably used as a strategy of manipulation, which is a form of "cognitive mind control" (van Dijk 2009: 359) whose aim is to turn people into an uncritical, easily manageable mass. A vivid illustration is provided by one instance from our data, the article by Michael Trace in the New York Daily News, entitled "Never forget the Trump-Russia moral panic: By fearmongering far beyond the evidence, the media and politicians did a huge disservice to the public" (New York Daily News, 25.03.2019). He describes attending numerous Democratic rallies across the country, where people expressed their displeasure with Trump's victory. What amazed him most was the fact that the protesters focused single-mindedly on one thing that day, far above the rest: Russia. "Not just "Russian interference" broadly construed, either, but the specific notion that Trump had personally conspired with a hostile foreign state to steal the election". This is how he describes the people attending these rallies and their emotions:

> I could see the psychological stress in their eyes; it was even taking a physical toll on their bodies. They really, truly believed that the U.S. government had been subverted by an elaborate Kremlin espionage plot. And if that's what they really thought, they were right to be upset, and scared.
>
> The problem was, they were deceived. A journalistic failure of almost unfathomably monumental proportions whipped these (well-meaning, largely) people into a dangerous frenzy, and wrought untold damage on the body politic. I resolved then that I would not take out my anger on ordinary citizens, who were sold a demented conspiratorial fantasy by cynical profit-seeking media corporations and self-interested politicians. I would instead reserve my scorn for the people who should've known better: the wealthy MSNBC hosts, the progressive-leaning legislators, the savvy podcasters and YouTube stars.[5]

He concludes saying

> Journalists largely knew this, but they failed at their most basic duty: to be good stewards of the public trust. Raising questions is fine, but what they did was generate a panic.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper attempts to further understand the social construction of feelings in modern media discourse, and their role. It corroborates the idea that to appeal to emotions, as well as construct them, is a recognized characteristic of media discourse, and argues that one strand in modern Western media focuses on appealing to fears about Russia. We explored how the landscape of 'Russian threat' and 'fear of Russia' is cultivated in British and American newspapers. Our findings confirm the claim that threat and fear pervade modern media texts (Altheide & Michalowski 1999, Furedi 2018).

The findings are consistent with the idea that the power of media is illustrated by its "capacity to influence language usage and popularize the rhetoric of fear" (Furedi 2018: 17). To render the fears "palpable, visual, dramatic and intensely personal" (Furedi 2018: 16), different strategies and linguistics tools are used. As our analysis shows, exaggeration, repetition, proximisation, interrogative headlines, presuppositions are among these. As it was stated by Fairclough, presuppositions can be *sincere* or *manipulative,* but can also have *ideological* functions, when what they assume has the character of 'common sense in the service of power' (Fairclough 1989: 154). Interestingly, that exemplifying his conception of 'presupposition' he used an expressions *the Soviet threat,* which became a frequently repeated formula in newspaper reports, and "can cumulatively help to naturalize highly contentious propositions which are presupposed – in this case, that there is a threat (to Britain, Europe, 'the West') from the Soviet Union" (Fairclough, ibid).

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[5] https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-never-forget-the-trump-russia-moral-panic-20190325-i3vgecetwvcqdmuzhuv5dyt22i-story.html (Accessed: 12.08.2021).

The paper argues that the persistent use of 'Russian threat' and 'fear of Russia', as well as the obsessive discussion of this topic in the media, testify to the occurrence of Russian threat and fear discourse in the Western media. Through repetition, the notions of threat and fear are endowed with an "existential quality" (Furedi 2018: 17).

We agree with Furedi, who notes that it would be too simplistic to attribute solely to media the escalation of fear in society, as "the media itself is to a significant extent the bearer of pre-existing attitudes and values that inform society's ideas about emotions such as fear" (Furedi 2018: 19). Nevertheless, as our data demonstrate, Western media purposefully introduces the idea of a Russian threat into the minds of people, a process which arguably serves a political end. Frequent exposure to narratives of a Russian threat might produce a 'cumulative effect' (Bell 1996) on an uncritical reader. A negative image of Russia as a hostile and aggressive country is created, and the unfriendly actions of politicians in relation to Russia, which have lately been witnessed, are given justification. As has been shown by critical discourse analysists, political leaders enforce the imminence of an outside threat to claim legitimization for their preventive policies, and optimum legitimization effects may be obtained through discursively constructed appeals to fear, which, with the aid of a compliant mass media, ensure quick social mobilization (Cap 2017).

Emotional impact is an effective strategy of manipulation, widely used by contemporary media, as it suppresses the ability of rational perception of information, and helps to introduce certain ideas into the minds of the uncritical. We do not claim that the strategy of scare-mongering as well as emotional persuasion in general is only found in Western media discourse; however, in this study we limited our scope to instances found in Anglo-American media.

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Research article

"Never in my life have I heard such a load of absolute nonsense. Wtf." Political satire on the handling of the COVID-19 crisis

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Abstract

This paper problematises political satire in a time when the COVID-19 virus has provoked numerous deaths worldwide, and had dramatic effects on social behaviour, on a scale unknown in western nations since World War II. Most populations have endured 'lockdown', periods of enforced domestic imprisonment, which led to images of the empty streets of big cities appearing in media, symbols of the drastic changes that the health emergency was making necessary. Yet, from the outset, comic memes began to circulate across (social) media, while in mainstream print media political satirists continued to lampoon official responses to the ongoing crisis. The paper thus aims to explore the connection of political satire and humour, asking two principle research questions: firstly, how to explain the humorous effects of these multimodal artefacts in such depressing circumstances; secondly, from a pragmatic perspective, to account for their overall socio-political function.The study uses memes taken from various online sources (Facebook, Twitter, Google) during the crisis, analysed according to a mixed approach that blends notions from Humour studies, especially incongruity (Morreall 2016), with insights from linguistic pragmatics (e.g. Kecskes 2014). The findings emphasise the emotional dimension of this form of satire, as the memes work against the backdrop of a range of feelings (anger, bitterness, disappointment, frustration, despair, etc.), many of which have been widely generated by the COVID-19 crisis and political responses to it. In short, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin (2008: 378), man may 'run out of tears but not of laughter'. The findings contribute to our understanding of online satire as an emergent genre, one that uses the affordances of new media to extend the social potentialities of a traditional subversive discourse form.

Keywords: *humour, political satire, COVID-19, satirical discourse, memes*

«Никогда в жизни я не слышал столько абсолютной бессмыслицы»: политическая сатира как способ преодоления кризиса COVID-19

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается жанр политической сатиры в период, когда по всему миру вирус COVID-19 унес жизни многих людей и оказал глубокое драматическое влияние на социальное поведение в обществе. Население многих стран пережило «самоизоляцию», периоды принудительного домашнего заключения. В средствах массовой коммуникации появились изображения пустых улиц больших городов, символы радикальных изменений, необходимых в связи с чрезвычайной ситуацией в области здравоохранения, и неизвестные в западных странах со времен Второй мировой войны. В этой ситуации в основных печатных СМИ политические сатирики продолжали высмеивать официальные ответы властей на затянувшийся кризис, а в социальных СМИ начали появляться комические мемы. Цель данной статьи – рассмотреть связь политической сатиры и юмора, попытаться объяснить юмористический эффект этих мультимодальных артефактов в таких удручающих обстоятельствах и с прагматической точки зрения определить их социально-политическую функцию. В исследовании используются мемы, взятые из различных онлайн-источников (Facebook, Twitter, Google) в период пандемии, которые были проанализированы с применением комплексной методологии, с использованием понятий из исследований юмора, особенно понятия *несовместимости* (Morreall 2016), и основных положений лингвистической прагматики (Kecskes 2014). Результаты подчеркивают эмоциональную сторону этой формы сатиры и показывают, что мемы работают на основе ряда чувств (гнев, горечь, разочарование, отчаяние и т. д.), многие из которых были вызваны кризисом COVID-19 и политическими ответами на него. Перефразируя Уолтера Бенджамина (2008: 378), можно заключить: у человека могут «кончиться слезы, но не смех». Полученные данные способствуют нашему пониманию онлайн-сатиры как жанра, который использует возможности новых медиа для расширения социального потенциала традиционной формы оппозиционного дискурса.

Ключевые слова*: юмор, политическая сатира, COVID-19, онлайн-сатира, сатирический дискурс, мем*

1. Introduction

To paraphrase Walter Benjamin (2008: 378), man may 'run out of tears but not of laughter'. This paper highlights the emotional dimension of humour, as does Chafe (2007), who speaks of a '*feeling* of non-seriousness'. Though the connection of humour to the emotions has been questioned by some (Morreall 1983), this paper argues that satire, as a form of humour, appears to function against the backdrop, and as a release for, a range of feelings (anger, bitterness, disappointment, frustration, anxiety, fear, despair, etc.). Many of these feelings were widely generated by the COVID-19 crisis and political responses to it.

The paper focuses on political satire in social media, in memes that circulated at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was having dramatic effects on social behaviour, restricting civil liberties on a scale unknown in western nations since World War II. The rash of comic memes that began to circulate across social media were a predictable response to this unprecedented situation, while in mainstream print media political satirists lampooned the responses of governments to the crisis.

For this paper, there are two relevant approaches to COVID-19 memes: firstly, they may be seen as part of a tradition of 'gallows humour', i.e. humour which attempts to see the funny side of the most desperate circumstances (Peniston-Bird & Summerfield 2001, Kozintzev 2015). As Goffman (1961: 68) says, gallows humour is a response to 'times and places of stress where matters that are extremely difficult to bear [...] are introduced lightly and ironically.' Some memes of this kind appear to have no ulterior political motive, but simply aim to raise a chuckle (Fig. 1):

Figure 1. Back to the future meme

This meme circulated in the midst of the crisis, when there was widespread uncertainty over the global impact of the disease, in a moment when it was legitimate to wonder if the apocalypse had arrived (El Maarouf et al 2020). The meme points no accusing finger, but rather arguably works, through humour, to create a sense of solidarity (Jensen et al 2018).

A second perspective sees the memes as part of a satirical discourse genre, whose components' ideal aim is to effect social change. Goffman (op. cit) uses the phrase 'subversive irony' to describe the pragmatic purposes of such humour, which may be seen in traditional forms of media such as printed cartoons. Peniston-Bird and Summerfield (op. cit), for instance, show how British cartoonists in World War II focused on issues of class and gender inequality, targeting social problems that pre-dated war with the Nazi regime. Later political cartoonists have used their work to suggest that politicians are guilty of a range of crimes that would, in an ideal world, negatively affect their electability[1].

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[1] See, for example, De Sousa & Medhurst 1982 (who discuss sartire targeting American politicians); Al-Shaikh 2007 (Palestinian cartoons targeting Israelis, the USA, etc.); Bal et al. 2009

The paper examines a number of image macros and other memes, collected from the internet at various moments in the crisis. It explores the connection of political satire and humour, asking two principle research questions: firstly, how to explain the humorous effects of these multimodal artefacts; secondly, from a pragmatic perspective, how to account for their overall socio-political function.

2. Context: the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 is the latest in a series of so-called 'corona' viruses to emerge, the name referring to the crown-like appearance of the virus under an electro-microscope. These viruses have been the cause of two recent human epidemics, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), in 2003, and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012[2]. The virus became known to the global public in late 2019, with reports emerging from Wuhan, China of a new infectious disease that rapidly began to assume the status of a pandemic (Gates 2020).

Responses to the crisis varied, with some world leaders, notably Trump, Johnson and Bolsonaro initially favouring a laissez-faire approach, apparently aimed at the achievement of 'herd immunity', or a state where the proportion of infected to non-infected members of a population is sufficient to reduce the chances of further spreading (Randolph & Barreiro 2020). However, as Randolph and Barreiro (ibid.) point out, such policies would have entailed a widespread collapse of healthcare systems, and resulted in millions of deaths. As the crisis evolved, it became apparent that to espouse publicly a policy of 'business as usual' would be politically unacceptable. In most countries, all normal human social activity was suspended indefinitely, including concerts, sporting events, church services, shopping outings, trips to pubs, nature rambles and so on. Most western populations endured 'lockdown', periods of domestic imprisonment with strict limits on their freedom to move. Images of the empty streets of the world's major cities began to appear in media, symbols of the drastic changes that the health emergency was making necessary.

Nevertheless, some countries, among them Sweden, Belarus, South Korea and Japan did proceed with a version of business as usual, introducing certain restrictions but avoiding major shut-downs in industry and other areas of the economy. The fact that key statistics for infections and fatalities, in these countries, did not appear significantly higher than those practising lockdown (Her 2020, Rocklöv *in press*), arguably lent greater impetus to public resentment towards the lockdown regimes.

Moreover, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, which have traditionally been associated with freedom of speech (Rappaport 1998, Sangsuvan 2013), enacted a form of censorship of posts that were judged to be against the

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(allegations of rape against ANC leader Jacob Zuma), Bell and Valley 2013 (Gerald Scarfe cartoon showing Netanyahu building a wall), etc.

  [2] European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/latest-evidence/coronaviruses (Accessed: 05.08.2020).

public interest. This applied to conspiracy theories of various kinds, including claims that 5G technologies had a role in spreading the virus, or that shadowy global èlites were using the crisis to entrench their power[3]. Such material is part of a growing debate over ab/use of the internet as a means of spreading fake news, or mis-information (Ferrara 2015, 2020). However, the reduction of the flow of information to messages that accorded with a pro-lockdown, pro-social distancing orthodoxy undoubtedly enhanced the satirical potentialities of alternative communication through social media.

This is the context knowledge, shared between meme producer and online consumer, that is a fundamental pre-condition for any type of humour (Dolitsky 1983).

3. Political satire

Political satire has a long tradition, dating back to the ancient Greeks (Rosen 2007) and Romans (Kennedy 1994, Hooley 1997). In tolerant regimes, the satirist is permitted to use humour to speak the truth to power: as Gilbert Highet (in Gruner 1965: 149) puts it: 'the purpose of satire is, through laughter and invective, to cure folly and to punish evil'. In an empirical study, Plevriti (2013: 18) confirms that many of today's meme creators view their activity in these terms. Many aim to unmask rotten politicians, to 'raise awareness about situations they [deem] as in need of change and improvement', while their predominant purpose is reported as 'to use satirical humor as public commentary', to expose 'dysfunctional politics', and defend 'what they see as just'.

Though satire is both entertainment and political criticism, it has been suggested that there is an inverse relationship between these two functions; i.e. that the funnier people find the satire, the less they are able to perceive its essential message (Gruner 1965). It should also be remembered that political satire is apt to awaken the viewer's political affiliations, so that an attack on a politician's private morals may be interpreted in political terms, as an attack on their party[4].

However, studies have shown that exposure to political satire in television or other media may increase levels of political knowledge and engagement (Hardy et

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[3] See, for instance, the site Cosmos Chronicle, online at: https://cosmoschronicle.com/operation-covid-19-stands-for-a-militarized-world-takeover-scheme/ (Accessed: 05.08.2020), which makes sweeping claims such as: …when people find out that the wealthy elites have secretly protected themselves from the COVID-19 bio-weapon they recklessly let loose on humanity, that's when folks will really get mad…/…every person on planet Earth is living through an AI-simulated global live exercise where covert acts of bio-terrorism are stealthily blended with staged hoaxes…/, and so on.

[4] This consideration may work against the idea that a political satirist's exposing the 'truth' will lead to change. For example, during the Clinton / Lewinsky scandal, widely satirised at the time (see, for instance *Clinton: his struggle with dirt* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9ls4S5S_Ck (Accessed: 02.08.2020)), the facts of the case soon reached the public domain but, from a historical perspective, appear to have been widely interpreted by the American people along party lines. See Mitchell et al (2014) for a general outline of the impact of media on the political opinions of viewers.

al. 2014: 331). Feldman and Young (2008) report that interest in the US presidential election was higher among viewers of late night comedy programmes than the general population. Moreover, Young (2013: 181, in Hardy et al. 2014: 331), cites cognitive studies[5] that indicate the role of humour in covertly shaping political attitudes:

> Because humor often involves the intersection of an established frame of reference with an incongruous, unexpected one, scholars have posited that comprehension and appreciation of humor fosters attention and recall by default

From a perspective of political persuasion[6] these studies are significant because they suggest that the satirist may be able to affect, to a greater or lesser degree, the political views of meme consumers.

Again, Knobloch-Westerwick and Lavis (2017: 69) advance the suggestion that, through satire, viewers might 'engage more with counterattitudinal views and broaden their understandings of political issues'. This assertion, if correct, lends further support to claims that political memes circulating on the internet have a role in shaping the global cultural and political landscape (Jenkins, Ford & Green 2013: 44).

> Our minds are invaded by memes, as ancient bacteria invaded our ancestors' cells and became mitochondria. Cheshire Cat-like, memes merge into our minds, even become our minds (Dawkins 1999)

The concept of memes originated with Dawkins' (1976) work on genetic transmission. The biologist hypothesised that, just as biological information is passed from one being to another through DNA, a range of socio-cultural attitudes including political and religious views may be transmitted through memes, which also have the potential, as the above quote argues, to affect consumers' minds without reference to their will (see also Way 2021, this issue). In our time, memes are 'multimodal symbolic artifacts' (Milner 2013: 2359) that are distinguished from earlier satirical forms (such as the political cartoon), in that they exploit the affordances of Web 2.0 to create virtual communities of meme creators, sharers and consumers[7]. As Milner (2013) points out, processes of meme production and exchange bypass problems of access associated with traditional forms of media, since anyone with minimal computer skills and an internet connection can participate.

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[5] The research cited is from educational contexts, and claims are made that humour increases information retention and other learning outcomes (Kaplan and Pasco 1977, Ziv 1988, Garner 2006).

[6] The perspective referred to here is that of studies which suggest a form of covert persuasion through mediated exposure to political views, e.g. Fowler 1991, Halmari and Virtanen 2005, Gilbert et al 2013, Larina, Ozyumenko and Ponton 2020.

[7] For a discussion of the evolution of meme culture from its beginnings to the present day, see the article in the Guardian Online: Amalia Tait. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/12/leave-britney-alone-prototype-viral-hit-chris-crocker (Accessed: 14.08.2020).

In most memes, traditional media content (such as political slogans, videos, pop songs, movie scenes, images involving celebrities, sporting or high profile news events, etc.) are remixed in an intertextual blend (Shifman 2014) that draws on such cultural content, as well as prior user knowledge, to alter the original message or add a specific communicative spin (Plevriti 2013). Where the communicative intent relates to politics, a critical evaluation of the phenomenon in question is offered; such evaluation may be positive but is more often satirical, as discussed above.

4. Data and methodology

Over the first 18 months from the beginning of the lockdown period, which in Italy began in March 2020, approximately 100 COVID-19 memes were collected from various online sources (Facebook, Twitter, Google, etc.). These were analysed according to a mixed approach that blends notions from Humour studies, especially incongruity (Morreall 2016), with insights from linguistic pragmatics (e.g. Kecskes 2014). The findings emphasise the emotional dimension of this form of satire.

A notion current in Schopenhauer's time, and still a focus of contemporary humour studies, is that of *incongruity* (Morreall 1989, Winter 1994: 60, Forabosco 1992, Simpson 1998, Ritchie 2003, Attardo 2019: 197-8). Though humour theory has explored many other pathways, the following is still a relevant perspective:

> The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity (Schopenhauer 1818:76).

The suggestion that incongruity alone may constitute a sufficient explanation for the humorous effect is unsatisfactory, since there are types of incongruity that may not provoke laughter; for example, spotting a military tank parked outside a supermarket among the other cars, or a seagull at a garden bird table. In some cases, though, incongruity may be a significant factor in the humorous effect. As an example, consider a vicar appearing in church in football kit. The humour and satirical effect in this case, and in that of many internet memes, arguably, function thanks to the incongruity arising from the juxtaposition of experiential domains (Marín-Arrese 2008, 2015; see also Canestrari and Bianchi 2013: 8–9). There are analogies here with cognitive theories regarding the operation of metaphor, through the 'conceptual mapping of two experiential domains' (Androutsopoulos 2009: 48). Associations of an object in the source domain are applied to one in the target domain (Lakoff 1987, 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 2003), and some such processes appear to apply to the interpretation of satirical memes. Interpretation of both metaphors and memes involves considerations of what is communicatively *salient* in the comparison, another concept familiar from cognitive studies (Haslam et al 1999, Bach 2007, Kecskes 2014: 24, 2016). Some possible sterotypical associations of the footballer that might provoke amusement when applied to a vicar are that

footballers run around a lot in games, they become sweaty, they spit, in some cases they commit bad actions (fouls), use bad language, have promiscuous life-styles, and so on.

Morreall (2016) shows how Grice's pragmatic maxims (Grice 1989) may be used to explore humorous effect (see also Simpson 2009). He equates incongruity with 'the violation of our mental patterns and expectations', and says that humour may arise when the maxims are flouted. This paper focuses on violations of Grice's maxims of Relation and Manner:

> The maxim of relation, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion.
> The maxim of manner, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity (Grice 1975)

Ambiguity, for example, is the mainspring of many jokes, which exploit double meanings of words, as in Mae West's line (cited in Morreall 2016): "Marriage is a great institution–but I'm not ready for an institution." The recommendation for brevity is flouted by the long joke, or 'shaggy dog story', and so on.

As an example of this methodological approach, consider the following image macro, where the target is Boris Johnson, Britain's Prime Minister at the time of COVID-19 (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Give it Giggsy

'Giggsy' is Ryan Giggs, a prominent ex-footballer from Manchester United. The text purports to be posted by the fan in the photo, whose thoughts are indicated in the accompanying text; it mimics pundit talk about managerial vacancies. Incongruity arises from the fan's suggested solution: 'Give it Giggsy till the end of the season!', which flouts the maxim of Relation (hereafter, MR), since Giggs obviously lacks the qualifications to stand in for Johnson. The discourse is thus defective in some way, and in such instances one hypothesis, that it is intended as a joke (Kapogianni 2011), supplies a possible explanation, the hypothesis strengthened by the exclamation mark.

In terms of the juxtaposition of experiential domains, what is salient is Johnson's prominent role in the political world, where key decisions must be made, affecting the lives of many people. By contrast, the world of soccer is pure entertainment, a circus which provides temporary escape from real-world issues for millions.

By suggesting that 'Giggsy' would be an able substitute, therefore, the meme undermines the role of the Prime Minister, and indeed, the political realm in general. The perspective of the satirical BBC TV show 'Yes Minister' (Granville 2009) is relevant here: the programme showed that real power in Britain is exercised by civil servants, while narcissistic politicians of different parties come and go, competing for public attention through speeches, photo ops, TV appearances and so on (Street 2001, Van Zoonen 2005). As Apter (2006: 223) says:

> Political theatre, like its more general counterpart, can be variously tragedy, melodrama, farce, romance, and comedy with elements of each incorporated in a single dramatic instance

By blending two discrete social domains through their respective linguistic genres (political discourse and football talk), the image macro also represents Johnson as a dismissed football manager, insinuating that he is not even capable of running a football club, still less a nation.[8]

5. Data analysis

5.1. COVID-19 memes

In figure 3 are some popular image macro memes that circulated during the crisis period, with juxtaposition of domains indicated below each.

In (1), the effect of incongruity derives from: *temporal dislocation*, a modern policeman superimposed on a sample of Renaissance art depicting biblical figures. *Spatial dislocation*: this painting is situated on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, therefore the pose of the policeman would be impossible. *Thematic dislocation*: the painting is Michelangelo's rendering of the Genesis story, God passing the vital spark of life to Man, while the meme shows his creation, thousands of years later, in the act of fining his creator. The salient point appears to be the notion of physical contact, which is problematised, due to the presence of the policeman. Interpretation could involve viewers in the following inferential steps (see Giora 1991, Kearns 2000: 895):

    – The policeman is noting an offence (therefore the figures in the foreground must be breaking the law);

    – They appear to be touching (and since, due to the COVID-19 situation, physical contact is not allowed);

    – This explains the policeman's actions.

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[8] In terms of Van Leeuwen's theorisation of the representation of social actors, the meme could illustrate a sub-category of overdetermination, in which the characteristics of one typology of social actor are superimposed on a person from a different category (Van Leeuwen 2008).

(1) Policing / High Art

(2) Mundane objects / High Art

(3) Popular culture/ Covid crisis

(4) Popular culture/ Medicine

(5) Politics /Medicine

(6) Junior school / Politics

Figure 3. Some COVID-19 memes

It is harder to explain why this is funny, though the notion that God, had he obeyed the draconian measures introduced by world governments, may not have been able to create the world in the first place, may account for this. This meme is a kind of *reductio ad absurdem*, protesting against the over-zealous prohibitions imposed during the crisis. The meme in (2) covers identical ground; here, the salient feature is made explicit by the use of narrowing frames, that direct the viewers' attention to the hand sanitiser. The ultimate authority figure (God) is thus aligned with the paternalistic and restrictive responses of governments.

Meme (3) depends on shared knowledge of the US television comedy 'the Big Bang Theory'; salient is the character Sheldon's phobia for germs. The meme differs from the others in that there is apparently no effect of incongruity; in fact, during the crisis, people did take more precautions. Since, however, Sheldon is

portrayed as neurotically hyper-sensitive, the meme satirises the over-reactions of ordinary people in this area.

Meme (4) is an example of *non sequitur* humour, that simply exploits the medical connotations of the band's name.

The last two are overtly political. In (5) Trump is identified with the virus, which shares some of his physical characterics (hair and pouting lips). The meme leaves ambiguous the question of whether it is Trump himself, or simply his 'incompetence' which are to be seen as a 'mortal threat'.

In (6), Johnson is cast as a junior schooler, through the text's borrowing from the 'cautionary tale' genre (Belloc 1979), which provides behavioural models for children. Johnson who, as viewers will know, himself contracted COVID-19, is ridiculed as immature, his handling of the crisis called into question.

These are samples of the genre, with some comments highlighting the pragmatic features of interpretation; it is not suggested that the selection is comprehensive nor representative. My intention is not to provide such an overview; rather, it is to show how a pragmatic perspective may be useful to explicate the construction and reception of meaning in each case.

5.2. Sarah Cooper Trump memes

In the lockdown period, a series of memes began to appear on Tik-Tok, YouTube and other social media platforms, in which comedienne Sarah Cooper lip-synchs brief utterances by US president Donald Trump, including his remarks on the COVID-19 crisis. On 23 April 2020, at a White House COVID briefing, Trump appeared after William Bryan of the Homeland Security Department, who had spoken of the effects of sunlight on the virus. The president's speech is rather incoherent, but he appears to be commending the use of ultra-violet light and bleach in treating COVID, and his remarks seem to have been understood in this sense by many listeners.[9] Studies conducted following his remarks (Gharpure et al 2020) found that many Americans had already been using household cleaning products to protect themselves from infection, through extensive cleaning, but also in ways that included gargling or in extreme cases, ingestion.[10]

The text of Trump's remarks, used by Cooper, is as follows:

> So, supposedly we hit the body with a tremendous, whether it's ultraviolet or just very powerful light, and I think you said that hasn't been checked, but you're going to test it. And then I said supposing you brought the light inside the body, which you can do either through the skin or in some other way. (To Bryan) And I think you said you're going to test that, too. Sounds interesting, right? And then I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute. One minute. And is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside

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[9] The Independent. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/coronavirus-disinfectant-drink-bleach-covid-19-atlanta-georgia-a9489566.html, (Accessed: 25.07.2020).
[10] Sky News. https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-americans-drinking-and-inhaling-bleach-to-try-to-prevent-covid-19-infections-study-12002236 (Accessed: 25.07.2020).

or almost a cleaning, because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs, so it'd be interesting to check that, so that you're going to have to use medical doctors with, but it sounds interesting to me.

One important feature of this type of political satire is that it uses the president's actual words; it cannot be objected that words are being put in his mouth, that 'he never said that'. Let us begin by discussing incongruity in the first image of Cooper, below (Fig. 4):

Figure 4. Sarah Cooper (i)

The most striking source of incongruity regards gender; the listener hears a male voice emerging from a female character. It is, however, also an instantly recognisable voice, that of the most prominent figure in American public life, which appears to belong, in these videos, to an unknown. Moreover, Trump is a white American; here, the character is black. The setting, too, construes incongruity, since Trump was speaking at a press conference, in a formal, public context, while here the scene is the interior of a typical apartment.

There is also incongruity in the discourse of Trump himself who, as has been pointed out, appears to lack control over the aspect of communicative register.[11] As a prominent social actor in an institutional setting, the language of a president of the United States ought to be formal, correct, informed and accurate; in a crisis it should consist of responsible statements that offer a guide to citizens, explain public policy and justify unpopular choices. Instead, Trump's linguistic behaviour is typical of a private conversation among peers (*sounds interesting, right?*), including colloquial rather than technical terminology (*it knocks it out in a minute, it does a tremendous number on the lungs*), and a subjective rather than a scientific perspective (*and then I said*, etc.) (see Sclafani 2017). This linguistic profile is consistent with Trump's populist, anti-intellectual political position (Kayam 2017).

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[11] See the comments of linguist John McWhorter. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Qwnpa3KhT4Y (Accessed: 16.08.2020).

From a pragmatic perspective, Trump's remarks appear to flout Grice's two maxims at many points. For instance, the obscurity of expression (Maxim of Manner, hereafter MM) in the opening:

(1) Supposedly we hit the body

The adverb/adjective 'supposedly' means 'it is/was supposed'. It usually construes counterfactuality, as in this example taken from the internet:

(2) The desert, this **supposedly** most hostile of all places, becomes the setting for free love

In temporal terms, the verbal choice 'hit' could refer to the past tense, so one possible meaning for this utterance could be:

(3) (in our experiment) [people said that we] subjected the body to.. (in fact, we did not)

The co-text makes it plain that Trump is referring to a future project (*that hasn't been checked, but you're going to test it*). Therefore, 'supposedly' is used to mean something like 'somebody has proposed a future course of action', a meaning which it may have, but only in the context of informal conversation[12]. What the president actually means appears to be something like: *a plan has been advanced which will involve hitting the body with*, a meaning which also suffers from vagueness due to the passive formulation, which does not specify the identity of those making the plan.

Trump is also vague (MM) in the pronoun 'we', which could refer to many social actors (some possibilities are US researchers, the Homeland Security Department, medical specialists generally, etc.).

Another source of confusion (MM) immediately follows:

(4) with a tremendous, whether it's ultraviolet or just very powerful light

Salient here appears to be the power of the light, but to speak of 'tremendous' or 'very powerful' is to use non-technical language, while 'ultra-violet' is more technical but is only introduced as a possibility, through the 'whether..or' construction. The effect is a) that the speaker is providing information which is imprecise (what exactly is meant by 'a very powerful light'?), and b) that he is uncertain of the details of the proposal.

The whole discourse is characterised by comparable breaches of Grice's maxims, so that it really is hard to follow the speaker's meaning, or tease it out with any certainty:

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[12] Exploring the hits for 'supposedly' in the British National Corpus (https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc, (Accessed: 16.08.2020)), there appears to be a distinction between spoken and written English. In the latter, the meaning 'was supposed to have' is common, with the counter-factual inference fairly frequent. In spoken English it appears that a general meaning of 'future possibility' may be indicated, as in: 'Well supposedly she'll come tomorrow night anyway'.

(5)   And then I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute

Trump appears to be giving a brief summary of discussions had with Bryan (*I think you said, then I said, I think you said*). Here, however, the temporal frame shifts to the present (*then I see*), implying something that happened at a time following the discussions with Bryan, or at least, at the same time. In formal terms, the implied meaning could be something like: 'the results of recent scientific tests have suggested that disinfectant is capable of eliminating the virus in one minute'. However, the colloquial register and lack of precision create an effect of ambiguity (MM); it could be that the president is referring to some unscientific notion, picked up from hearsay or a media report of some kind, possibly at a time successive to the discussions with Bryan.

Trump's final recommendation, that Bryan should 'use medical doctors' for this research, arguably flouts a different maxim, possibly subsumed under the maxim of manner, which could be expressed as 'do not waste listeners' time by stating the obvious'.

The above cursory analysis of Trump's discourse is by way of an introduction to an exploration of Cooper's satirical presentation, since her method seems to focus attention precisely on points where the speech is deficient, from a Gricean perspective. In other words, her gestures, facial expressions and the construction of the video highlight the ambiguity and/or obscurity of the discourse itself.
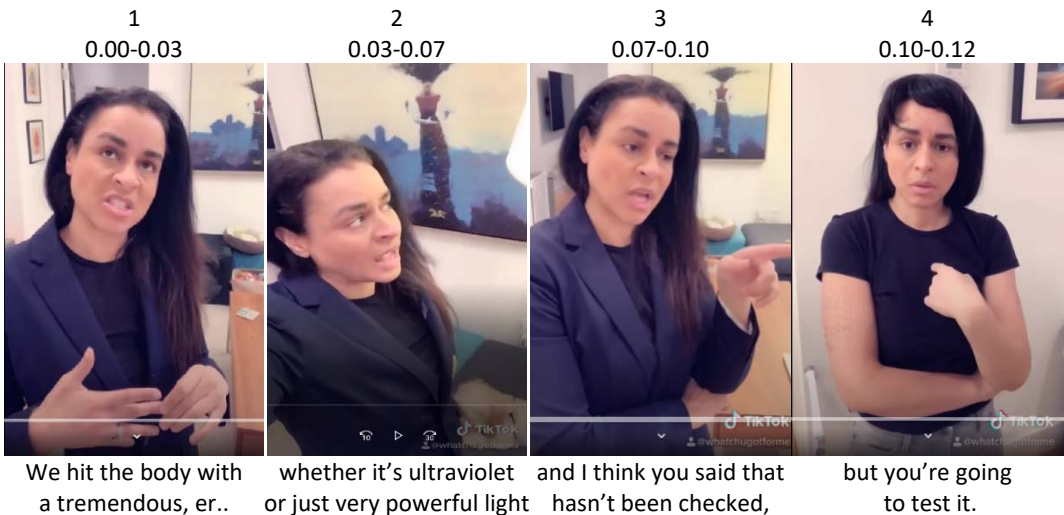
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 0.00-0.03 | 0.03-0.07 | 0.07-0.10 | 0.10-0.12 |

| We hit the body with a tremendous, er.. | whether it's ultraviolet or just very powerful light | and I think you said that hasn't been checked, | but you're going to test it. |

Figure 5. Sarah Cooper lip-synch (i)

In figure 5 (1), Cooper's gaze shifts upwards and moves from left to right in the characteristic gestures of someone searching for the right word. The hands meet in a 'self-touching gesture' (Kimura 1976), which may indicate nervousness, discomfort or boredom (Krauss et al. 1996: 393). Cooper's roving gaze encounters a large standing lamp (4.2), while she is talking about 'light', thus associating the speaker with the absurd notion that a household lamp might be used in a medical

context. Then, when the president's discourse concerns Bryan ("I think you said"), she points to a bystander whose gaze and gestures indicate denial of involvement by miming "who me?" (4.4). The inference is that Trump is out of synch with his scientific/medical advisers.

Trump continues with suggestions that the light can be brought 'inside the body'; again, note the everday language used, which contrasts with the precise, scientific terminology that would clarify exactly what is going on. As he struggles to 'explain' how this might work, Cooper's arm gestures are sweeping (5.1,2), her hands briefly indicate mouth, eyes, ears, and end up pointing at her behind (5.3–4) (Fig. 6).

1	2	3	4
0.12-0.14	0.14-0.15	0.15-0.17	0.17-0.18

| supposing you brought the light inside the body | which you can do either through | the skin or, er | in some other way… |

Figure 6. In some other way

There is a significant pause at 0.16–0.17 (4.3), marked by Trump's hesitation marker 'er', before the final hand gesture. The actress' gestures in this sequence suggest that Trump has no precise idea of how light is to be brought inside the body (if he knows, then why point to so many different bodily orifices?); the final irreverent pose suggests that Trump has been talking through his behind.

6. Conclusion

The question of why something is funny has not yet been fully answered by researchers in humour studies, nor are incongruity theories proposed as complete explanations (Latta 1999, Dynel 2013: vii). It may seem curious, in a time of global pandemic, to find enjoyment in memes that deal directly with events that have provoked such universal misery. However, as we stressed above, to laugh at a perceived danger, or seek humour in distressing circumstances, are coping mechanisms (see Young 1995). The humorous impact of COVID-19 memes, arguably, may be related to a wish for some kind of prophylactic magic; through

laughter, fear is exorcised, and at a superstitious level, the anticipated future disaster may be avoided. Humour theorists, from the time of Freud, have suggested that our sexual anxieties, weaknesses and foibles may constitute the bedrock of the humorous experience, as we seek therapeutic relief or catharsis for these emotions and states of being (Freud 1976, Billig 2002, Brottman 2004).

One of the consistent features of political satire, from its ancient origins until today, has been a socially levelling effect, showing the feet of clay on which our masters walk. People like priests, politicians, doctors and the like are fair game for satire because they are normally in positions of power over the rest of us. A vicar, for example, is surrounded by symbols of his moral authority, crucifixes and holy images, the bible and other sacred objects on the altar, and so on. When this authority is temporarily undermined by a satirical gesture such as his appearance in football kit, as discussed above, we may find it amusing because for a moment a weight is lifted, for a moment we breathe freely. In this perspective, and to return to the emotional aspect of humour, to laugh is an expression of sudden joy[13].

These reflections would account for the humorous effect of Cooper's depictions of Trump, for example. The US president has been a heavily mediated presence for some years, who has acquired enormous symbolic power over the mediated spaces we all share, through internet, television and so on (Way 2021, this issue). The incongruities in Cooper's sketch remove at a stroke many of the trappings of Trump's greatness – the mediated image, the familiar institutional settings, the celebrities that surround him. We recognise Trump, in these videos, only through the voice, and are therefore free to focus more directly on the content of what is said. By situating the speech in an everyday apartment, Cooper invites us to see the protagonists as endowed with no more social power than our neighbours. All this prepares us to respond to the most important incongruity on show; the disparity between expectation and reality in terms of the linguistic content of the speech. People look to their leaders for reliable information and strong leadership; what Trump actually offers is confused, semi-coherent rambling and medically dangerous suggestions. This, in reality, is not funny. However, I suggest that we laugh because the temporary release from our normal state of subjection to such figures, allows us to engage in a form of humorous response normally reserved for our peers or social inferiors – mockery (Haugh 2010). The same comments apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the numerous memes circulating on the internet attacking other prominent politicians during the crisis, such as Johnson or Bolsonaro.

Finally, it is worth pondering the question of how effective such satire might be in the pragmatic terms of bringing about the desired perlocutionary result sought by the satirist. In the case of the Cooper memes, which appear in the election year of 2020, it is clear that the comedienne is pushing a subliminal message that could be stated as follows: *our current leader is incompetent. Do not vote for him, but*

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[13] The Catholic sketches of Irish comic Dave Allen exemplify what I am talking about here.

vote for a more suitable leader. For Johnson memes, the message is much the same; translated into political terms, it means *vote for the opposition*.

Memes, as was mentioned above, may figure among persuasive multimodal genres with a specific political purpose in terms of influencing opinions and behaviour. Clearly, reception of such artefacts depends, to a great extent, on the recipients' political orientation: Democrats will love the Trump memes, since they are hostile to Trump, Republicans will reject them for the same reason. Arguably, the battleground is for the undecided and, though it is impossible to trace the specific effects of any single meme, it is probable that, as we mentioned above, memes do have the potential to shape the global cultural and political landscape (Jenkins, Ford & Green 2013: 44). The vision of Trump portrayed by Cooper is of a bumbling figure, out of touch with his advisers. The meme will find its place among a host of other memes pushing a similar view; it will be re-tweeted, shared, uploaded to users' facebook pages, commented on, liked, disliked, and so on. Whether all this will change a single voter's mind is unclear, and is not really the point, which is rather that political satire has always aimed at proclaiming, and illustrating, the truth. How people respond to that is their business.

The findings thus emphasise the emotional dimension of this form of satire, as the memes work against the backdrop of a range of feelings (anger, bitterness, disappointment, frustration, despair, etc.), many of which have been widely generated by the COVID-19 crisis and political responses to it. The findings contribute to our understanding of online satire as an emergent genre, one that uses the affordances of new media to extend the social potentialities of a traditional subversive discourse form.

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Research article

Trump, memes and the Alt-right:
Emotive and affective criticism and praise

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Abstract

Internet memes are the most pervasive and malleable form of digital popular culture (Wiggins 2019: vii). They are a way 'a society expresses and thinks of itself' (Denisova 2019: 2) used 'for the purpose of satire, parody, critique …to posit an argument' (Wiggins 2019, see also Ponton 2021, this issue). The acts of viewing, creating, sharing and commenting on memes that criticise or 'troll' authority figures have become 'central to our political processes… becom[ing] one of the most important forms of political participation and activism today' (Merrin 2019: 201). However, memes do not communicate to us in logical arguments, but emotionally and affectively through short quips and images that entertain. Memes are 'part of a new politics of affectivity, identification, emotion and humour' (Merrin 2019: 222). In this paper, we examine not only what politics memes communicate to us, but how this is done. We analyse memes, some in mainstream social media circulation, that praise and criticise the authoritarian tendencies of former US President Donald Trump, taken from 4Chan, a home of many alt-right ideas. Through a Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies approach, we demonstrate how images and lexical choices in memes do not communicate to us in logical, well-structured arguments, but lean on affective and emotional discourses of racism, nationalism and power. As such, though memes have the potential to emotionally engage with their intended audiences, this is done at the expense of communicating nuanced and detailed information on political players and issues. This works against the ideal of a public sphere where debate and discussion inform political decisions in a population, essential pillars of a democratic society (Habermas 1991).

Keywords: *Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies, criticisms, praise, memes, affect*

Научная статья

Трамп, мемы и альтернативные правые:
эмоциональная критика и похвала

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Аннотация

Интернет-мемы – самая распространенная и гибкая форма цифровой поп-культуры (Wiggins 2019). Это способ, которым «общество выражает себя и думает о себе» (Denisova 2019: 2), используемый для сатиры, пародии, критики, для выдвижения аргумента (Wiggins 2019,

Ponton 2021 и др.). Акты просмотра, создания, обмена и комментирования мемов, которые критикуют или «троллят» авторитетных деятелей, занимают ключевую позицию в современных политических процессах, превратились в одну из наиболее важных форм политического участия и активности (Merrin 2019: 201). Однако мемы несут информацию не через логические аргументы, а эмоционально и аффективно с помощью коротких шуток и забавных изображений. Мемы являются частью новой политики идентификации, аффективности, эмоций и юмора (Merrin 2019: 222). В данной статье исследуется не только то, что политические мемы передают, но и как они это делают. В ней анализируются мемы, широко распространенные в социальных сетях, которые восхваляют и критикуют авторитарные тенденции бывшего президента США Дональда Трампа, взятые на сайте 4Chan, продвигающего идеи альтернативных правых. Через мультимодальный подход к критическому дискурс-анализу показано, как дискурсы расизма, национализма и власти строятся при помощи мультимодальных средств эмоциональности, а не при помощи логических и хорошо структурированных аргументов. Отмечается, что, хотя мемы обладают потенциалом эмоционального взаимодействия с целевой аудиторией, это взаимодействие достигается через коммуникативные нюансы и передачу подробной информации о политических игроках. Это противоречит идеалу публичной сферы, в которой дебаты и дискуссии определяют политические решения населения и являются основой демократического общества (Habermas 1991).

Ключевые слова: *мультимодальные исследования критического дискурса, критика, похвала, мемы, эмоции*

1. Introduction

Since the Paleolithic Era when humans dwelt in caves, still imagery has been an integral part of how we communicate (Clottes 2019). Thousands of years later, modern media such as newspapers depend on images. These are 'instrumental in making meaning' based on a deep-seated societal belief that 'the sense of a technical, dispassionate point of view afforded by the camera continues to be central to journalistic authority' (Allbeson & Allan 2019: 70–71). Despite our historical love of still imagery, nothing compares in volume to the daily deluge of images we now experience online. It is estimated we took over 1.2 trillion photographs in 2017 and we share more than 3 billion images every day (Lavoie 2018). Memes are an integral part of our social media engagement with imagery.

On social media, though we view 'hard' news and political commentary, studies show we prefer entertainment that communicates to us affectively as well as cognitively (Boyd 2008). This notion is not lost on political communication scholars, many of whom 'acknowledg[e] that the historical separation of entertainment and news is obsolete…' (Esralew & Young 2012: 338). Social media users engage in 'scroll culture', where we are guided by our thumbs, skimming, reading, liking and commenting on a constant flow of artefacts that entertain and inform. Though much of this is considered 'mundane', on closer examination it is highly ideological (Way 2021a, 2021b). It is precisely through (digital) popular culture where we most experience politics 'as fun, as style, and simply as part of the taken for granted everyday world… [though these] are infused by and shaped

by, power relations and ideologies' (Machin 2013: 347). Using the case study of memes about former US President Donald Trump, this paper considers what politics memes offer us and how these communicate to us emotionally and affectively in our insatiable search to be informed and entertained.

2. Memes, politics and affect

The term 'meme', coined by biologist Richard Dawkins (1976), refers to the way we pass on 'cultural information and ideas between individuals and generations', similar to the way genes are passed on between generations. However, this concept is inadequate when considering internet memes (hereafter 'memes'). It is better to consider memes as remixes and iterations, viral texts that mutate and replicate and are readily transformed and altered by purposeful human agency, with mutation being desirable and often unavoidable (Denisova 2019, Wiggins 2019).

Memes entertain us, though they are more than just a laugh. They are a way 'a society expresses and thinks of itself', where '"everyday" media texts intertwine with public discourses' (Milner 2012: 9; Denisova 2019: 2). Throughout the 1990s-2000s, memes went from an entertaining 'geek' culture in-joke to a mainstream gimmick and 'the means of political and social deliberation' (Denisova 2019: 10). They are manipulated texts produced and distributed 'for the purpose of satire, parody, critique… to posit an argument, visually, in order to commence, extend, counter, or influence a discourse' (Wiggins 2019: 11). Memes are an integral part of 'trolling culture', as defined by Merrin (2019). Here, we are not referring to 'splenetic attacks… whose hate speech, and rape and death threats… are ruining the internet [because] their abuse and hatred are serious' (Merrin 2019: 202). Much of this behaviour has been chastised as an 'anti-social personality disorder' (Bishop 2013) used by those who take advantage of 'toxic disinhibition' of anonymous, online communication to express their anger (Suler 2005: 184). Instead, this paper considers trolling more broadly, based on the fishing term to drag a 'baited line behind a boat to see what could be caught' (Merrin 2019: 202). In this sense, memes are a part of a 'sport' that ridicules 'those who get above themselves, or set themselves above others – at those asserting, or in, authority' (Merrin 2019: 202). This activity is 'central to our political processes, spreading through the mainstream to become one of the most important forms of political participation and activism today, employed by politicians, political commentators and the public alike' (Merrin 2019: 201).

Memes influence viewers' awareness of people, issues and events and connect mainstream media topics with social media users. This is evident in the 2016 US election campaign, when memes 'highlighted and promoted the trending discourses around both candidates' (Denisova 2019: 186). They are effective because they are short, snappy, entertaining and express a particular point of view through humour. They serve as 'mind-bombs', a term coined and practiced by *Greenpeace* co-founder Bob Hunter, by distributing a symbolic text that expresses an idea in a nutshell and has an emotional impact (Weyler 2020). When used strategically, they

'help attract attention to political issues and suggest alternative interpretations' (Denisova 2019: 195). They are a way to understand and question concepts, identities and claims made by various political groups.

Despite the power ascribed to memes by some scholars, their limits are also recognised. Their political power lie in their ability to address and appeal to specific groups of political actors with particular views in society. In other words, memes tend to 'appeal to an already-existing attitude, assumption, prejudice, fear, point of pride, conspiracy theory, value etc. to achieve salience in a given group' (Wiggins 2019: 64). Phillips (2009) demonstrates this through his examination of the *Obama Joker* meme. Here, he finds this meme was used and manipulated by various groups to express a number of sometimes opposing political views. The political potential of memes are partly determined through acceptance by and incorporation into a group or community and this is limited, dependent on offline social relations and activities including people talking about and discussing memes (Wiggins 2019). Their power is also dependent on whether or not audiences indeed read memes as their producers want from a 'preferred reading position'. Furthermore, their power lies in whether audiences are able to successfully reference real-world events represented in the meme, as well as the media texts and formats memes copy, parody and/ or manipulate.

A dominant characteristic of memes is they do not communicate to us in logical well-structured arguments, but emotionally and affectively (Denisova 2019, Merrin 2019, Wiggins 2019, Way 2021a). Though both concepts are intricately linked, affect is not emotion, but 'provides and amplifies intensity [of emotion] by increasing our awareness of a certain mind or body state that we, as adults, learn to label as a particular feeling and express as a given emotion' (Papacharissi 2015: 309). So, affect, in short, is the intensity in which we experience emotion. By communicating to us affectively and emotionally, memes reduce and simplify political facts and arguments. They are 'another move away' from rational, communicative debate, 'part of a new politics of affectivity, identification, emotion and humour' (Merrin 2019: 222). This paper reveals how memes communicate to us on these affective and emotional levels.

3. Authoritarianism and Trump

In mainstream media, Trump has been criticised for being too authoritarian by some, whilst being praised for being a 'strong man' by others. Authoritarianism consists of three core components which are (1) 'security against risks of instability and disorder', (2) 'group conformity to preserve conventional traditions and guard our way of life' and (3) 'loyal obedience toward strong leaders who protect the group and its customs' (Norris & Inglehart 2019: 7). It is directly linked to the 'politics of fear' (see also Ozyumenko & Larina 2021, this issue) where there is a search for collective security of a dominant group, usually referred to as 'our people' against 'them', at the expense of personal freedoms. Our people can be defined in terms of nationality and citizenship, or more locally as in-groups based

on race, religion, ethnicity, location, generation, party, gender, or sex (Zappettini 2019; 2021). In any of these forms, authoritarianism values group loyalty, shared cultural meanings and feelings of belonging (Norris & Inglehart 2019: 7).

Authoritarianism becomes more dangerous when it is mixed with populism where populists 'pretend to speak for the underdog ['the people'] whose political identity is constructed by opposing it to an elite' (De Cleen & Carpentier 2010: 180). However, dependent on context, who are defined as 'the people' and 'the elite' is fluid. Authoritarian-populist politicians tell us that in order to defend 'us' we need to restrict 'them'. This toxic combination results in policies that justify the restriction of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and foreigners. At the time of writing, authoritarianism-populist politicians and parties had gained power in a number of states including the US, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and Switzerland. In other states, they hold sway, including UKIP and the Brexit Party in catalysing and influencing Brexit (Norris & Inglehart 2019: i). Much praise and criticism about Trump in the media are in terms of authoritarianism. Though some mainstream media criticise Trump for being too authoritarian, some right-wing media celebrate this (Merrin 2019, Way 2021a).

Trump's style of governance may easily be considered authoritarian-populist as defined above. He 'uses populist rhetoric to legitimize his style of governance, while promoting authoritarian values that threaten the liberal norms underpinning American democracy' (Norris & Inglehart 2019: 3). He and his supporters have attacked the 'the liberal press and their ideals of holding authority to account' (Happer, Hoskins & Merrrin 2019: 15). All the while, he calls his opponents 'phoney' or 'dopey', labels media and journalists as 'corrupt' or 'fake news' while discourses of violence, racism and wider uncivility become the 'new' norms of social and political doing and acting (Krzyżanowski 2020: 4). He has become the darling of the alt-right in the US, defined as 'a range of extreme far-right movements and positions broadly unified by their rejection of traditional, mainstream Christian conservativism and republicanism in favour of white nationalism and supremacism' (Merrin 2019: 206).

4. 4Chan

4Chan is one of a number of websites that have become platforms to communicate alt-right ideas (Happer, Hoskins & Merrin 2019: 13). Set up by Christopher Poole in 2003, 4Chan consists of un-archived, subject-based boards with anonymous postings. It was 'part of the anything goes, libertarian culture of the internet, but its desire to shock and drift to the right would eventually make it and Reddit key sites for the alt-right' (Happer, Hoskins & Merrin 2019: 13). It is '[t]he modern online home of trolling and the spirit of chaos… the must-see, cesspit of the internet: as Obi-Wan Kenobi says (in a quote often applied to the site): "You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy"' (Merrin 2019: 204). Here internet users experience 'gratuitous pornography, misogyny, racism, most forms of "phobia", graphic insults, general grossness and maximum

offensiveness' (Merrin 2019: 204). Many of the memes that populate our mainstream social media feeds originate from 4Chan, it being 'one of the most creative corners of the web, with its chaos birthing almost every major meme or aspect of internet culture over the last decade' (Merrin 2019: 204).

4Chan is not only creative, but also political. It has run an attack campaign aimed at the Church of Scientology for attempting to censor content on the internet. It also aimed its rage at a woman game designer and then other feminist commentators in so-called 'Gamergate'. Here posters presented themselves as underdogs and victims, despite accusations of abuse by 'snowflakes, unicorns and cry bullies'. They pitted themselves against mainstream media and feminism, naming them as both 'impossibly strong' and 'laughably weak' (Lees 2016). Not long after this campaign, 4Chan turned its attention to Trump. At first, his candidacy was seen as a joke, but then it quickly evolved into support (Merrin 2019). Its support for Trump is not surprising, considering 'his politics closely chimed with [4Chan's] the outsider-culture, anti-PC sentiment, racism and misogyny and the claims of post-truth "shitposters"' (Merrin 2019: 208). Links between 4Chan and Trump are more than just shared political views. Trump and his staff retweeted alt-right videos and images created on 4Chan and 4Chan's memes were part of Trump's campaign to relentlessly tilt sentiment on social media in his favour. As one former campaign official said: 'He clearly won the war against Hillary Clinton day after day after day' (Schreckinger 2017).

4Chan's /po/ board 'is by far the most influential disseminator of memes in terms of the raw number of memes originating from it. In particular, it is more influential in spreading racist and political memes' (De Cristofaro 2018). It delivers an important youth demographic to the alt-right, playing a central role in attacks on mainstream media, mainstream politics, the culture of political correctness and Left-wing identity politics. These attacks are evident on 4Chan and in Trump's 2016 election campaign. In fact, many memes that originate from 4Chan cross over into mainstream platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to appeal to 'normies'. It was instrumental in anti-Hillary Clinton campaigns such as Pizzagate and other conspiracy theories. All the same, 4Chan is also a thorn in Trump's side. Despite mainstream media criticising Trump, these actions have had little effect on his supporters, feeding into the narrative of Trump as an outsider. However, memes on 4Chan and other social media platforms have seen vehement responses by Trump and his supporters suggesting 'humour and satire: the same troll-culture that supports Trump and which he incarnates has become one of the most important weapons against him' (Merrin 2019: 213).

5. Data

Our study examines a sample of image-based memes of Trump taken from 4Chan's /po/ board in the spring of 2019. This time was chosen to reflect what was in digital circulation about half way through Trump's term in office. During this time, there were countless memes and images being created, manipulated and

circulated in threads about Trump on 4Chan. This is not surprising, seeing its history of promoting not only Trump, but also the alt-right. This researcher scanned hundreds of feeds in order to understand how memes expressed ideas about Trump in terms of authoritarianism. Through this authoritarianism prism, four dominant themes about Trump emerge. These are: Trump is God-like, Trump is a powerful leader, Trump is powerful against the media and Trump is not being strong enough. In the following analysis, we closely analyse two representative memes from each of these categories to reveal how they articulate discourses of authoritarianism affectively and emotionally.

6. Methodology

Memes we examine are still images and some include written text. We offer a brief description of posters' comments about the memes we analyse to consider how they were 'read' by posters. We use Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies (MCDS) to analyse how lexica and images independently and together articulate discourses. This approach has the advantage of revealing the way each mode works to articulate discourses 'on a particular occasion, in a particular text' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001: 29; see also Ponton 2016). MCDS finds its origins in Critical Discourse Analysis and Halliday's (1994) functional grammar which assume linguistic and visual choices reveal broader discourses articulated in texts (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001). MCDS draw out the details of how broader discourses are communicated and how the different modes play slightly different roles (Machin & Mayr 2012). These discourses can be thought of as models of the world and project certain social values and ideas which contribute to the (re)production of social life. The aim of analysis is to reveal what kinds of social relations of power, inequalities and interests are perpetuated, generated or legitimated in texts both explicitly and implicitly (van Dijk 1993).

We examine how participants are represented in our sample texts, an approach used extensively in previous research and shown to be central to revealing discourses (Wodak et al. 1999, Bishop & Jaworski 2003, Wodak & Weiss 2005). Written lexica is analysed (when part of a meme) by leaning on van Leeuwen (1996 & 1995) and Fairclough's (2003) seminal work on the representation of social actors. We consider participants in terms of how they are named and how their actions are represented. Here questions such as who does what to whom and how participants are represented in more active or passive roles are examined. Though originally applied to written texts, social actor analysis is also applied to images leaning on the influential work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996 & 2001) and Machin (2007). These scholars define three broad analytical categories for analysing the visual representation of social actors: Positioning, kinds of participants and actions. How viewers are symbolically positioned in relation to participants in images through gaze, angle of interaction and distance is considered. These choices have repercussions in terms of representations of power and connotations of engagement with viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 127–128).

When examining the kinds of participants, we consider whether social actors are represented as individuals or groups, culturally and/ or biologically categorised and who is included and excluded. The representation of action, including process types and agency, carry with them discourses of power and are an integral part of our visual analysis.

Choices in how imagery is organised and composed is also analysed. Here, we consider the internal 'flow' or organisation of an image, salience and the degree of modality suggested in an image. Image organisation, including the positioning of elements and framing, contribute to an image's internal 'flow' and carry with it ideological meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996). Salience, which connotes importance and power, is expressed through visual devises such as potent cultural symbols, size, colour, tone, focus and foregrounding (Machin 2007). Modality is a literary concept associated with the amount of certainty a producer assigns to a text. In visuals, 'modality can be decreased or increased depending on how much the image departs from how we would have seen the image had we been there' (Machin 2007: 46). Not all of these visual elements are analysed for each meme, just like not all memes include written text. Instead, we use the above analytical tools based on their usefulness in revealing discourses about Trump, authoritarianism, emotion and affect.

7. Analysis

7.1. Memes of God-like powers

One obvious strategy used to represent Trump as powerful is producing a visual mash up with his head on a mythical character's body. 4Chan's *God Emperor Trump* series depicts Trump as ruler of the world, wearing the armour of the immortal character Emperor of Mankind (also known as 'God Emperor' or 'Imperium of Man') from the war game *Warhammer 40,000*. According to 'Know your meme' website, these images first appeared on 4Chan on 16 June 2015.

Figure one is typical of these *God Emperor Trump* memes that appeared during our research. Trump stands tall. He wears the armour of Emperor of Mankind, culturally categorising Trump as a super-being (Machin 2007). Both the vertical and horizontal angle of interactions suggest strength. The camera looks up to Trump connoting great power (Machin 2007). His body also faces the camera, though his face looks off to the side. This connotes that he is not here to engage with viewers in a demand image that connotes interaction between viewer and subject (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 127–128). Instead, he is offered to his viewers, posing to be admired. Abousnnouga and Machin (2010: 144) examine war monuments and find that most of the subjects (soldiers) do not symbolically demand anything of their viewers, but look off to the horizon. This has the meaning potential 'of wanting the public to see the soldiers as part of a different world, one of the glory of God… metaphorically [looking] to the future and high ideals.' Here Trump gazes in a similar manner, looking thoughtful, full of high ideals, powerful and into the future. Facial expressions are stern and forceful, making clear he is in power. His head is

small compared to the massive body in the montage. However, both head and body are salient connoting importance and power. His body is salient through its size. But the meme's message of Trump as powerful would be lost on his fans if his head was difficult to identify. Light, focus and colour make his head salient. Furthermore, it is in focus and importantly, the creator of the image has suggested other-worldliness by including what looks like a halo around Trump's head to guide our eyes towards him.

Figure 1. 'God Emperor Trump' image in pro-Trump 4Chan thread

Compositional choices also contribute to Trump's mythical status. There is no distinguishable background, just modular shades of golden-red. Here, Emperor God Trump is decontextualised. There is low modality in this image, where we do not know where Trump is or what he is doing. Modality markers, including the articulation of detail, background and depth, all contribute to how 'real' an image is perceived (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996). Where figures are represented without a background, 'it usually means that the image is symbolic rather than documentary', symbolic rather than descriptive (Machin 2007: 51). Here, this contributes to the notion that this image is less about real power and Trump's actions and more about vague, emotive notions or fantasies of Trump's power experienced by his fans, however ill-defined these are (Machin 2007: 48).

The discourse of power, but not any real tangible power, is common throughout this series. In feeds with these memes, most posters express admiration for Trump and disdain for those who do not like him. Accompanying memes two, we see this in posts such as 'Dubs confirm Trump is God Emperor. Sorry Liberals' and 'That's God Emperor of Mankind Trump to you, you lowly worm'. In both these posts (and many others) we find an 'us' group of Trump fans, united in their admiration for Trump. 'Dubs' is a personal naming of one member of this group, active in confirming Trump's power. This presupposes that Dubs indeed has the

authority to confirm, a positive representation of power. Distinct from this group is an 'other' group named using the pronoun 'you' above (elsewhere 'them'). This group is impersonally and generically named as 'Liberals' and evaluated negatively in 'you lowly worm'. By Dubs saying 'sorry' to Liberals for Trump's power, the writer presupposes Liberals are saddened by Trump's (great?) power.

Like the posts, the meme expresses admiration for Trump. Again, this is not about 'real' political power, like the power to cancel Obamacare, build a wall on the Mexican border, close the borders to Muslims or curtail criticisms in the press. This is symbolic power, confirming posters' admiration and pride towards Trump and Trump's America. Similarities between figures one and two include Trump's head mashed-up with the body of Emperor of Mankind. Both images see Trump's head small, yet salient through the use of colours, lighting and focus. Low modality through an indistinguishable background is also common, connoting both symbolic power over 'real' power and Trump as a mythical character.

Figure 2. Symbolic power and nationalism in 'God Emperor Trump' images

Despite similarities, this meme is different than the first one we examined. Now potent cultural symbols change the discourse to one of nationalism and power. Salient are reminders of America that tap into fans' national pride. Most salient is the large American flag in focus. Also, an American bald eagle sits on Trump's left hand. This national symbol is not free to fly like the bird in the background of Trump's halo, but has been tamed, suggesting it has submitted to Trump's power. The America being promoted here is Trump's America. On the right knee of his armour is a face shot of Trump. He looks directly at viewers, demanding our

attention and connoting power (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 127–128). He is represented yelling suggesting aggression and power.

MAGA hats sit on top of Trump's and the bald eagle's heads. This cultural ornamentation is recognisable worldwide. MAGA, short for 'Make America Great Again', has become synonymous with a world view associated with Trump that includes controversial perspectives on race, immigration, the environment, politicians, authoritarianism and even knowledge (Makovicky, Tremon, & Zanonai 2019). Part of this outlook is branding Trump as an unconventional, aggressive politician, symbolised here by the flaming sword with 'Trump' written on the handle. This image is not just about America, but about a style of leadership that is unconventional, authoritarian and populist. Though imagery such as this connotes great power and suggests authoritarianism, discourses admired by many 4Chan users and expressed in their comments, power is not 'real' or defined. As such, these memes affectively reflect and echo dominant discourses on 4Chan, discourses that celebrate Trump's America, his power and authoritarianism.

7.2. Trump as powerful president/ presidential candidate

Trump's power is not just represented in God-like imagery in our sample. There are more descriptive representations of Trump's power, such as being a powerful president and presidential candidate. Figure three is an example used in a thread in June 2019. The feed is made up of insults and bantering amongst users about the merits of Trump and his supporters. This image accompanies a post that claims 'Losers lose their shit over how awesome this guy is'. Here we see Trump critics named as 'losers' and acting negatively by 'los[ing] their shit'. This very negative representation is opposed to this 'awesome … guy', lexical choices that not only praise ('awesome'), but also suggest closeness and being one of 'us' by using the friendly colloquial term 'guy'.

Figure three, again we find discourses of power. This is a close up head shot, giving viewers a point of identification and making it easy for them to symbolically interact with Trump (Machin 2007). He looks straight at the camera, directly addressing viewers and suggesting power (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 127–128). A slight smile on his face suggests confidence. Smiles can take on a variety of meanings depending on context and in some cases 'there may be a kind of smile that invites us in or allows us to share the joy of a moment' (Machin 2007:111). Here, Trump's smile indicates he wants us to be happy with him, to share in his victory. This is emphasised by the pronoun 'we' instead of 'I' in the accompanying written text. Groups constructed using 'we' in political discourse are constantly shifting and vague, referring to party, nation, government, residents or other combinations used to serve politicians' purposes (Fairclough 1989: 148). Here, 'we' is not defined, it possibly meaning Trump and his Republican party, conservatives, or even the alt-right. However, what is connoted is Trump is powerful, being central to a winning group of 'we' Trump supporters.

Though there is no action represented in the image, Trump is represented strong through cultural categorisation. His suit, white shirt and tie tell us this is a

formal occasion and he is someone to be respected. The colours of the accompanying writing and surrounding boxes mirror those of the American flag suggesting a national event. What has been 'won' is not indicated in the thread or image, though it is likely the meme originally referred to Trump's election in 2016. In any circumstance, this is an empowering image. But like the images in the previous section, this is more symbolic than real. The background, again, gives no clues as to any particular event or issue. The image and context connote no real action and agency. Trump is not represented doing anything to anybody. However, this meme is about his power and 'us' being a part of this, though nothing is defined or quantifiable.

Figure 3. Descriptive representations of Trump's power in 4Chan memes

Trump supporters started the slogan 'Can't Stump the Trump' during his campaign to become the Republican presidential candidate. A Trump supporter first posted the slogan on 4Chan on 15 June 2015. A number of conservative media outlets repeated the phrase and Trump tweeted it on 13 October 2015. The now famous meme that incorporates this slogan (Fig. 4) appears regularly on 4Chan. The slogan implies an oppositional 'you' while the parochial lexical choice of 'stump' suggests informality. As such, Trump's unorthodox populist and confrontational style of politicking is connoted alongside his intellectual prowess. However, with no details or context represented in the slogan, this communicates to its audiences symbolically and affectively rather than in a tangible, descriptive manner.

Choices in the image further articulates discourses of Trump as a powerful leader of America. As is the case with the previous meme, Trump is salient connoting his importance. Aside from written text, excluded are any details of where he is and what he is doing. This is all about Trump. Unlike any of the previous images, there is no background here further suggesting the image is more symbolic than descriptive (Machin 2007: 34). Trump's head has low modality. That is, 'the image departs from how we would have seen the image had we been there'

(Machin 2007: 46). Facial details, such as wrinkles, blemishes and faults are not present. There is a visual effect applied to the image that eliminates these realities and offers us a young, unreal version of Trump's head. Choosing a youthful-looking version of Trump has more associations with strength than that of an old, over-weight man. Power is also connoted by Trump staring at viewers in a demand image, directly addressing his fans. His eyes are wide open as though he is afraid of nothing. His forehead slightly leans forward and his chin is tucked in as though he is daring viewers to question his intelligence asserted in the slogan. As seen in the last meme, there is a slight smile, connoting confidence.
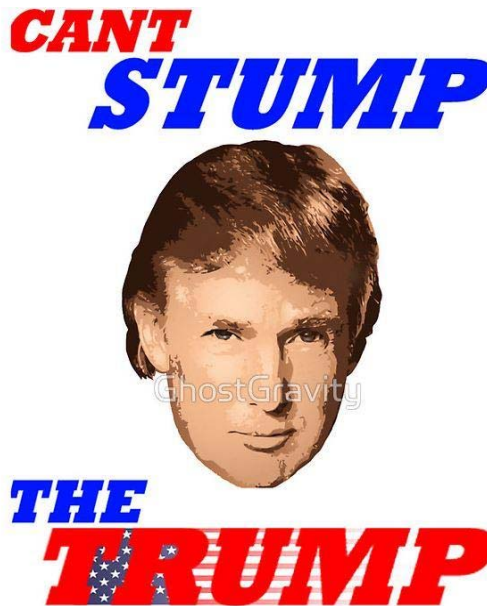
Figure 4. 'Can't Stump the Trump' meme on 4Chan

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 193) claim that the position of elements in images create 'compositional structures' which have meaning potential. One structure is the 'Triptych' where one element is centrally placed, acting as a mediator between other elements. Within this meme, Trump occupies the middle of the meme surrounded by colours of the American flag. He is literally at the centre of America. This discourse of Trump being an essential part of American nationalism is further articulated in how Trump's name is presented in the meme. His name is integrated with the US flag connoting a natural connection between the two (Machin 2007: 154). In fact, by having Trump's name on top of the flag, overlapping occurs again connoting Trump's strength and importance in America (Eisner 1985). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 193) also identify the top of compositions as the 'ideal', generalisation or simplification of an image. The bottom is the 'real', factual and grounded in the everyday that adds weight and credibility to the ideal. Here, the ideal is 'can't stump' while 'the Trump' is the factual that adds weight to the ideal. This construction emphasises Trump as

unstoppable and clever in the context of power in America. As such, this appeals to posters' emotions of being proud to be a part of Trump's America. What this is missing is any details and specifics about exactly what is this power, who it effects and how.

7.3. Images of Trump's relations with mainstream media

Trump's relations with mainstream media are combative at best, well documented and discussed extensively in academia (see Hopper, Hoskin & Merrin 2019). He makes no secret of his dislike for critical media, these being regular targets for his angst in his political rallies and press conferences. This tendency to attack critical mainstream media is aligned with authoritarian notions of loyal obedience toward a strong leader. Trump also shares his critical views on Twitter, including a GIF in 2017 of him body slamming the CNN logo. This GIF resulted in a meme campaign instigated by 4Chan on 5 July 2017 named 'Operation Autism Storm' or the 'Great CNN Meme War'. The campaign urged users to engage in a meme war with CNN because the network threatened to reveal the identity of the producer of this controversial GIF. 4Chan and Reddit users began spreading anti-CNN images, videos and animated GIFs, including a contest for the best meme in the 'Great CNN Meme War'. A compilation of these memes, clips and GIFs subsequently appeared on YouTube. Much of this imagery is recycled and appears in feeds on 4Chan.

In this section we examine two memes that originate from the meme war. Posters' comments that accompany the memes, such as 'CNN is the fakest news of them all' and 'Destroy CNN by any memes possible', echo Trump sentiments of anger, and frustration at mainstream media. In both memes, Trump is salient. His head, which is mashed on to other characters, is large, light in colour and is in the foreground of the images. Unlike memes and images we have analysed thus far, here Trump is represented acting with agency connoting great power (Fairclough 1995: 113). The origins of figure five is the game *Mortal Kombat*. As is the case with all memes, knowledge of original media contribute to the meanings articulated in memes. This image is part of a fatality sequence in *Mortal Kombat* in which a character called Liu Kang (Trump here) turns into a dragon and eats the top half of his opponent. In the altered image, the Trump dragon dominates. He is much larger than the CNN character and in the centre of the image, a salient position. His body is puffed out in a posture that connotes a threat to the CNN character. The horizontal angle of interaction does not allow us to have any symbolic interaction with Trump. This image is offered to us as information available for scrutiny (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 124). We are here to observe his strength. Trump's mouth is open, yelling, threatening and possibly ready to eat his opponent (CNN). His eyed glare down at CNN, again emphasising his anger and power. CNN leans back, cowering under his threats. Here representations of power are clear. Represented actions of yelling, threatening and attacking are an emotional metaphor for Trump's actions and relations with mainstream media.

Figure 5. Meme of Trump as Liu Kang from the *Mortal Combat* game

In figure six, Trump again dominates the image. Here, his head is mashed on to the Hulk from *The Avengers* film (2012). In this image, Trump faces us, allowing viewers to witness his anger. The vertical angle of interaction emphasises his strength. In the original film, the Hulk fights Loki, a villain. Here Trump's head is mashed on to the superhero's body as he holds the villain by the feet in a sequence that sees the Hulk physically brutalise Loki. It is a one-sided fight due to the Hulk's enormous strength. Here, the superhero Trump physically brutalises CNN. This show of strength and connotations of who is right and who is wrong would not be lost on viewers, confirming their beliefs that mainstream media are wrong, it being 'fake news'. All the while, the meme offers no evidence or context for such assertions, just metaphoric over literal representations of actions that emphasise power and anger.

Figure 6. Trump as the Hulk from *The Avengers* film (2012)

7.4. Criticisms of Trump for not being strong enough

There is a lot of criticisms of Trump in mainstream media and digital popular culture. Criticism is aimed at a large number of issues including his authoritarian tendencies, his (un)lawful actions, his style of governing and even his policies. Mostly, these come from a position that may be considered more liberal than Trump. However, in our search of 4Chan in 2019, there was a lot of criticism of Trump from the right. He is represented as not authoritarian enough and too tolerant towards minorities such as the Gay community, asylum seekers, Jewish people and Israel. In this section, we examine a two-image meme to reveal some of the strategies used to affectively connote praise and criticism about Trump's power.

As noted above, viewers of 4Chan inevitably engage with racist texts, whether viewing, posting, commenting or creating these (Merrin 2019: 204). This is evident in threads that defend and criticise Trump. One common theme during our sample time was an anti-Semitic discourse. Accompanying figure seven, we find the media is 'Jewish controlled' while YouTube is named 'Jewtube' and Facebook 'Faceberg'. These namings accompany an array of conspiracy theories where Jewish people are to blame for a whole host of injustices. In the thread that accompanies figure seven, we find some users attack Trump and some defend him. Trump is attacked as being weak, represented as following Israel in 'Trump is blind and Netanyahu is guiding him' and 'Make these shill memes that show him MIGA instead of MAGA.' We can only assume MIGA is an acronym that exchanges 'America' for 'Israel' in Trump's 'Make America Great Again' slogan. Elsewhere in the thread, the 'Jewish controlled media' are attacked for being against Trump who will 'destroy groping Joe [Biden] in 2020', while some users believe this thread is part of a Jewish-led conspiracy to turn voters against Trump. These comments express fear of the other, in this case Jewish people and Isreal, as well as anger at Trump for being too accommodating towards Isreal. These emotions are also represented in this meme.

The meme is in the style of a before and after sequence. Scholars tell us an image can be organised from left to right where the left can represent the old while the right can represent the new and the possible (Halliday 1994: 277). In this composition, the left is the past, something we already know, while the right is something new. In the left image, we see Trump culturally categorised as a Crusader. In popular fiction, the red on white cross we see on Trump's shield and chest plate is associated with not only the English flag, but also the Crusades and Saint George, England's 'patron saint'. Though not a symbol of America, this image resonates with Trump's policies towards Muslims, keeping in mind the eight Crusader wars were 'a series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims started primarily to secure control of holy sites considered sacred by both groups' ('Crusades' 2019). The background, though low in modality, depicts a dry, desert-like landscape, a large sun and a building with a dome roof. All these lean on stereotypes that suggest Trump is in the Middle East and most probably Isreal.

Figure 7. An anti-Semitic far-right meme critical of Trump on 4Chan

On the left, Trump is salient, with his head mashed on to a knight. But his head is not as salient as in previous memes that used lighting, colour, focus and/or size for salience. Here his head is distinguishable, but small. The horse and American flag are far more salient, the flag being both large and a potent cultural symbol. Like the positive images examined above, Trump is looking to the horizon – a man with a vision. This image connotes positivity, though not as obvious as previous examples. It provokes longing for a time when Trump had a vision as a candidate. His facial expressions, though difficult to distinguish, are stern and serious, like a crusader, off to make America Great Again.

The right-hand image has less certainty and positivity and lower modality than the left image. A 'realistic' photograph of Trump's head on the left is replaced with a caricature of Trump. It is biologically categorised based on racist stereotypes. He now has a large nose, squinting eyes and big eyebrows. Some of these qualities are used in Jewish hate literature. He looks untrustworthy connoted by his gaze that no longer looks to the horizon, but off to the side. He is now a flag bearer for Israel not America, indicated by the flag changes. What is connoted here is he now works in the national interest of Israel, playing on fears of betrayal by Trump fans. This is nothing short of treasonous behaviour for a president. He no longer is a warrior crusader fighting for America and its interests. Instead, he is a traitor, fighting for Israel and Jewish people. Though these criticisms are powerful, they are not specific. There is no articulation of an argument in the meme or in the thread of what Trump has done for or against America and/ or Israel. Though these memes may stir up emotional nationalist and racist feelings in 4Chan users, their lack of direct criticism is stark.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, we have considered how image-based memes about Donald Trump's power shared on social media articulate political discourses. Whether pro or anti-Trump, the power represented is not about any real tangible power or actions, but symbolic and/ or metaphoric. We find memes lean on emotional discourses about nationalism, racism and authoritarianism. Criticism and praise is not communicated through logical, clearly articulated, tangible arguments but affectively and emotionally. 4Chan users are presented with memes that manipulate images and lexica (sometimes) to communicate to us affectively, drawing on feelings and stereotypes that connote other-worldly strength and power. These lean on discourses of authoritarianism, discourses close to many 4Chan audience members.

Though these lean on emotion and affect, memes like these are important. They are pervasive, popular and effective. Many memes originate from the alt-right and seep into mainstream social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Here, they are viewed, considered, commented upon and shared by millions, social media being a primary source of entertainment and information for many of us. These activities get audiences to consider politicians and their actions. For example, the Israel meme analysed above suggests that Trump said one thing as a candidate but acted differently as a president. This message has the potential to stir anger in users and be part of a decision making process on how to vote. However, we should not over-stress their importance in terms of democratic ideals. Unlike mainstream media, these offer little room for their viewers to analyse and question issues, events and people, confirming rather than challenging already-held beliefs. Their affective, comical and simplified nature do not invite us to consider a range of views on pertinent issues in order for us to make informed political decisions. Instead, memes are a part of 'scroll culture' that metaphorically shouts emotionally-laden viewpoints at us. This does little in terms of creating an informed public as envisioned by Habermas (1991), thereby adding a further blow to an essential component of a healthy functioning democracy.

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Book review

Review of Andreas Musolff. 2021.
National conceptions of the body politic.
Cultural experience and political imagination. Cham, Springer.
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Рецензия

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Today, after over four decades of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), it would be hard to deny the importance of metaphor in shaping, expressing and reproducing concepts that resist other forms of explanation. The use of figurative references – particularly those grounded in the human body – to signify mental states or explain abstract notions is widespread across cultures, and is integral to human communication. However, metaphorical language is also

characterized by profound cultural diversity and variation: use of metaphor is clearly subject to variation at a linguistic, cultural, national and social level, as well as being influenced by individual choices and inspirations. Although this variation has been addressed in various ways within the field of conceptual metaphor theory, the preference for "universalist" explanations among member of this school has often led scholars to regard variability as a "surface" phenomenon that distracts us from the "primary" bodily metaphors. Universalist approaches may, of course, have some relevance when we are looking at metaphors used to express (supposedly) shared human phenomena such as certain physical or emotional states. But in most culturally complex contexts it might well be misguided to seek universals. One case in point is the way people think of their country, which is not the product of a physiological state or a universal mental frame, but rather the result of years of education and socialization within a specific national culture. The nation, after all, is an "imagined community" (Anderson 2006), a discursive construction, built up through years of symbolic activity on a societal, group and individual level, and one which is dynamic and subject to historical change.

Against this background, the representation of the nation is obviously a highly relevant topic, with many social and political implications. How people envisage their "fatherland" has a direct impact on the way they feel about it, and by implication also on their sense of its place in the world and its role with regard to other nations. Metaphors of the "nation" are an integral and powerful aspect I political discourse. In this volume, Andreas Musolff sets out directly to research the notion of the "body politic" as used by participants from different cultural backgrounds, with a view to exploring the middle-range (neither completely embedded nor highly inventive) conventional images that ordinary people in different countries have concerning their homeland.

Of course, it is clear that when approaching the phenomenon of cultural differences in metaphors, appropriate analytical tools are needed. For the purposes of this volume, Musolff builds on the useful analytical construct of the "metaphor scenario" that he himself developed previously (2006, 2016). This construct is essentially an elaboration of the notion of "frame", see Taylor (1995), which is expanded to include narrative, affective and argumentational aspects. Importantly, the "scenario" is not envisaged as part of people's universal mental apparatus: "the scenario category is only designed as an analytical tool to represent empirically observable usage patterns in a corpus of metaphor data" (p. 9). This makes it a practical tool to use for identifying semantic and pragmatic clusters occurring in the context of particular metaphors, and teasing out the links between observable data and the preferred conceptualizations among different cultural groups.

After setting the scene for his conceptual and methodological approach in the first chapter, Musolff traces the history of the nation-as-body metaphor from Aristotle's *Politics*, through key texts by the Church Fathers and Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, via Rousseau, Herder and Marx to the present day, showing how this concept retained some similarities but also took on new aspects from the age of

empires through feudalism to the nation state and beyond. In a stimulating discussion, Musolff points out that over this vast expanse of time our conceptualization of the body has undergone dramatic changes, from Hippocrates' theory of the four humors to decoding the human genome. This, of course, presents researchers with a double dilemma: both source and target domain have changed substantially over time, which means that to research the two together, it is only possible to establish the most plausible source- and target-connotations in each example. To this end, the notion of scenario again comes to the fore, as this focus privileges the target meaning, which sheds light on what the metaphor means in context, rather than on different possible complications of the source. In the course of his discussion in this chapter, Musolff identifies three main scenarios that will prove useful to structure the later sections of the book: the need for solidarity among body members, the hierarchical structure of the body (head or heart being in control), and the illness-cure scenario.

Following on from this by way of an illustrative case study, Chapter 3 then examines the pervasiveness of the "body politic" scenarios in the immediate context of the Brexit referendum and aftermath, tracing how they serve as templates for debates about national identity. Using data gathered from newspaper corpora, the author shows how the relationship between Britain and the European Union was problematized in terms of "sickness-health" and "amputation" metaphors. He identifies six key body/person scenarios that proved relevant to the conceptualization of UK/EU relations. On the strength of these data, he shows that body- and health-based metaphors in contemporary British debates about UK-EU relations mainly invoke traditional body concepts and only marginally incorporate more recent scientific research findings (e.g. DNA). Moreover, the metaphors used still bear the hallmark of the "body politic" tradition developed in Western political thought, outlined in the previous chapter, revolving around topics such as hierarchy and control within the body, illness and health, and "personal" responsibility for national decisions. These scenarios were found across all the sectors of the debate, used by Eurosceptics and Remainers alike to structure their arguments or national narratives, suggesting a high degree of pervasiveness and conventionality.

After setting the scene in these preliminary chapters, Musolff then presents what is essentially the main contribution of this book, namely the analysis of his corpus of questionnaire responses collected over eight years from more than two thousand L1 and L2 students of English in 29 countries to investigate differences in the use and interpretation of body- and person-based metaphors for nations across the world (see also Musolff 2019). Chapter 4 introduces the survey, explaining how it came about and providing an overview of the sample, research process and analytical methodology. The findings of a pilot study with local (UK-based) and Chinese students yielded five scenarios featuring the nation as whole body, as a geobody, as part of body, as part of the ego and as a person, and on this basis a grid was constructed to represent these main scenarios and related sub-constructs. Importantly, for the main study to follow, the pragmatic uses of the different

metaphors were also analyzed where possible, including critical, sarcastic and humorous uses. In the remaining chapters, the results of this survey are discussed in terms of language group, which brings out interesting intercultural differences in metaphor use and interpretation. For English-speaking subjects (Chapter 5), the body scenario was found to be the most pervasive, and there was a high frequency of critical, negative or satirical interpretations. The German sample (Chapter 6) (complemented by a small Dutch and Norwegian sample) provided similar results, with the notable difference that the "person" representations dwelled more on serious moral-ethical evaluations alluding to 20th century history, which found no equivalent in the English L1 sample. Of the samples in Romance languages, the Italian one was the most sizeable, and was dominated by a range of stereotypes such as the highly emotional "nation as mother" personification. Unlike the German group, the Italian one contained hardly any negatively loaded allusions to history, and only a few references to current problems, which were represented as "illnesses" or "injuries" and generally embedded in scenarios with an overall positive slant. Another relatively large sample was the Russian one (Chapter 7), in which representations centered on the "heart" and sometimes "soul" of the nation. Arabic and Turkish samples (Chapter 10) presented interesting differences from these, with many Algerian participants expressing the relationship between their own country and its neighbours (Algeria is "the lungs of Africa") and revealing a patriotic slant. The Chinese and Japanese samples (Chapter 11) also showed contrasts, with Chinese students preferring the "person" and "geobody" scenario, and using large numbers of body/health concepts. Many of the Chinese examples quoted here suggest an uncritical approach to political centralism ("I think the central government is like the brain of a body"), with a key role for the security forces as the "immune system". China was also conceptualized as essential for the participants' own wellbeing ("my nation China is like my heart"). Of particular interest was the "geobody" representation, including explanations such as "Taiwan is China's hair". Unsurprisingly, some respondents from Hong Kong presented a radically different stance, with use of the "geobody" scenario that appeared to justify separate status. The Japanese sample, on the other hand, was distinct in its focus on the figure of the emperor (the "heart" or "face" of the country), and its depiction of the "lower" strata of society as "legs" or "feet". Temples, shrines and ancestors were variously associated with the "soul" of the country when the "person" scenario was used.

The last chapter (12) sums up the main findings, bringing out some of the different patterns in the various groups, and suggesting some perspectives for further investigation. In the age of globalisation, the proposal that this could be an interesting way to research the attitudes and experiences of minority groups towards their host (and possibly home) countries is particularly relevant. Overall, this book makes a useful contribution to our understanding of the workings of metaphor, and also adds to our knowledge of the way people from different backgrounds understand their own nation and their relationship towards it. Regarding limitations,

it is important to remember that the aim of the study was to open doors rather than provide definitive answers. The survey was expressly not designed to determine whether specific metaphors occur in different languages/cultures like much contrastive metaphor research (e.g. Breeze and Casado-Velarde 2018), but rather to find out about culture-specific preferences in using the various scenarios. Both in its methodology and its results, this study breaks new ground and yields a large number of pointers for future studies.

Of course, the finding that metaphors for the nation are culturally determined does not answer the question in itself, but rather opens the door to inquiring what kind of further questions should be posed in order to learn more. On the one hand, a given example might instantiate the collective worldview that prevails in a particular national culture, might merely reflect a conventionalized mapping that is no longer generative, or could also be a one-off example that is not grounded in the shared worldview, and so a degree of caution needs to be exercised when handling the results. On the other hand, some patterns of representation seem to be strongly associated with participants from particular cultures, and to investigate the reasons for this in any depth could involve wide-ranging philosophical, historical and sociological explorations, such as that undertaken by the same author in previous studies (Musolff 2016). The middle-range approach taken here, homing in precisely on how normal people habitually represent their nation, ultimately proves both tantalizing and, perhaps, somewhat frustrating, since any one of the national analyses presented here would lend itself to considerably deeper investigation. But in the last analysis, this shortcoming is outweighed by the positive contribution of the book itself, which presents a practical methodology for exploring metaphor in discourse across large datasets without losing the human or contextual focus.

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Book review

Review of Rodney Jones (ed.). 2021.
Viral Discourse Cambridge Elements in Applied Linguistics
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Рецензия

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Viral Discourse, edited by Rodney H. Jones, consists of 10 articles that address a vital and core aspect of the literature on discourse analysis, with special emphasis on 'emotional discourse'. This trendy title of *Viral Discourse* depicts the COVID-19 implications and ramifications in a multimodal fashion of pain, agony, suffering, and suspense. It also alludes to conspiracy and skepticism, the 'Us vs. Them' debate, to affect all aspects of life, including health, economy, social life,

psychological and mental health, education, transportation, media, and the news. This wide array of diversity brought a myriad of discourse analysis approaches to the scene, including critical discourse analysis, genre analysis, corpus-assisted discourse analysis, and mediated discourse analysis, to respond to real-world problems and perhaps to provide solutions.

In Chapter one, Jones sets the stage for the major theme dominating this work, namely 'emotional discourse' in the time of the COVID-19 crisis. With all the eloquence and power of rhetoric Jones has as a discourse analyst, in this very situation, he was helpless, failing to find the words talking to his COVID-19-stricken dying father, only to say from a 4,000-mile distance and over the phone 'I love you', 'I forgive you', and 'Forgive me'. It is this very theme of emotional discourse that prevails in this volume, especially in Chapters six, seven, and eight. Jones came to believe that while discourse analysts do not count as 'essential workers' or among those who save lives, they still can, through words, help us to live with pain and alleviate the suffering of those who experience the loss of loved ones. But while Jones believes that discourse analysts cannot save lives, they might help people be aware of some actions which are likely to minimize the effects of COVID-19, and how to be essential to people around you by creating meaningful, self and other boosting Discourse.

In Chapter two, by invoking the 'social semiotics' paradigm, Rodney Jones points out that the heat of the pandemic did not subside but has only taken a different path, simulating the clash of cultures, Eastern and Western on wearing face-masks. In some cultures, particularly some western countries, surgical mask-wearing in public is associated with racist reactions and even mask-phobia (Weale 2020). Similar negative remarks of abuse were leveled against westerners living in some Asian countries, reproducing, to some extent, the 'Us vs. Them' debate. Some discourse analysts tend to interpret this difference as an approach of social semiotics explaining the social meaning of a sign according to context (see Ho & Li, 2019). In some cultures, masks are meant to 'conceal', and in some others, especially in the VOVID-19 context, they are there to 'protect' self and others. Such differences about masking, according to Klein (2020), "reveal troubling cracks in our healthcare, our tolerance, and in our ability to negotiate common meanings" (p. 13).

In Chapter three, Christoph Hafner approaches the COVID-19 crisis from a genre analytical perspective. The Discourse of expert scientists was the main source of information to the public through mainstream media outlets. A case in point is the controversy over face-masking. As communicative events, genres are meant to inform and educate through scientific evidence and reasoning provided by experts who use discursive forms of thinking (Hafner 2013). Questions such as 'can face masks protect from coronavirus?' and 'can face masks slow the virus spread?' were featured in the views of professional experts (Renwick 2020, Heymann 2020). A limitation of the current article is the small set of data used, where a larger data set, as stated by the author, would have given a more predictive power of the analysis as different standards of evidence may be used by different experts.

In Chapter four, Wing Yee Jenifer Ho brings to light the controversial issue of face masks and cultural identity on YouTube. Ho reports that the debate about the effectiveness of face masks in curbing the coronavirus is far from over where 'cultural positioning' comes into play in YouTube videos. By utilizing a social semiotic approach of Discourse, Ho explains that communication is multimodal in nature; it rests on a social semiotic approach that is not nurtured only by language but is a blend of images, sound, color, and gesture. The multimodal construction of cultural positioning featuring the American 'Teacher Mike' in Ho's YouTube experiment about face-masking and social distancing in a Chines supermarket is conducted through a combination of modes including speech, writing, audio-visuals, and camera. The experiment shows how multilingual and multimodal semiotic systems work together to educate people about how to conduct themselves to reduce the dangers of the pandemic by adhering to the face-masking culture (Zhu Hua et al. 2017). While acknowledging the value of this study, it would have been more advantageous if the author had added a comparative dimension. This enables him to investigate the results of cultural positioning with regard to face-masking in a western locality, with less favorable attitudes to face masking than what has been experienced in the Chinese supermarket example.

In Chapter five, Sylvia Jaworska sheds light on the importance of a Comparative Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis approach in understanding the COVID-19 pandemic based on media representation. Jaworska's investigation of the media representation of the coronavirus in the UK, USA, and Germany contributes to people's understanding of how the virus crisis is viewed elsewhere. The article studies lexical choices, collocations, word formation processes, and lemmatization to understand meaning. The results showed that collocations were very helpful in uncovering the most salient ways of representing the virus. Metaphors were also dominant in the UK and USA context. While acknowledging the importance of the comparative method in the data analysis and in interpreting the results obtained, it should be pointed out, as reported by the author, that by focusing only on collocations, "this study is small in scope and does not utilize the full potential of corpus-based methods to study discourse" (Partington et al. 2013).

In Chapter six, Zhu Hua explores the meaning of 'sense and sensibility' through investigating the linguistic landscape in a London street during the COVID-19 lockdown period. This concept was reflected in the responses of the shops to the pandemic, and the words, terms, metaphors, and images carried similar representations of the linguistic landscape. It is a personalization of the images to express attitudes, feelings, motives, and emotion to the place and surroundings in order to understand language in its different forms and multiple meanings. The ethnographic diversity during the COVID-19 crisis was reflected in the data collection process and how the linguistics landscape has changed during the Pandemic (Kuiper 2020). The multicultural and linguistic interaction was also reflected in the mix between the different communities, creeds, and religions, where ethnic shops with signs in different languages have added to the emotional

dimension of Discourse. The 200 handwritten signs targeted in this study, and which appeared in public places, reflect the informality and spontaneity of those signs, and at the same time people's spirit of unity, cooperation, and concern for the safety and well-being of self and others. Interestingly, signs, even in bilingual communities, were mostly written in English, and only a few of them were bilingual. The idea is for the directives, instructions, and notices to reach the general public and not only to be directed to a particular group.

In Chapter seven, Irhan Aslan sheds light on the spread of Internet memes expressing users' creativity and humor in describing aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic such as face masks, sanitizers, home quarantine, and social distancing. In this context, the author presents humor in a three-element mold including, intertextuality, wordplay, and incongruity. Creating Internet memes of humor and creativity can help people engage in social and political events brought by the pandemic. The textual and visual components of the meme combine to provide an interpretation of the intended meaning, which is often changed due to applying word-formation processes of blending, compounding, clipping, acronyms, folk etymology, among others (see Al-Salman & Haider 2021, see Ponton 2021, this issue and Way 2021. this issue). The textual and visual images create some kind of humor that helps people cope with the impact of the virus, reduce stress, boost their psychological state and mental health. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, Internet memes have gained great popularity and reached out to a large audience of different cultures, values and ideologies which fuel and intensify the emotionalism of media discourse.

In Chapter eight, Carmen Lee tackles the question of the COVID-19 'Hate' speech from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective and how it is interpreted discursively (Wodak 2015). Hate speech which is associated with discriminatory practices and attitudes based on race, ethnicity, religion, and gender, often leads to conflict and violence. In the context of COVID-19, the author explains that associating the name of the virus with a certain country (e.g., Chinese Virus) is considered 'hate' speech as WHO is the authority of naming viruses and diseases. On the other hand, supporters of the use of Chinese Virus legitimize their use through some discourse legitimization strategies where the meaning of hate speech may be discursively interpreted; it is not a crime but an expression of emotions, including anger. However, from a critical discourse analysis perspective, a discursive action must be interpreted within its larger discursive social, political, and discursive social, political, and historical contexts. Therefore, it is important that discourse analysts uncover the discourse strategies which construct hate speech so that people refrain from using online hateful expressions of abuse which go viral.

In Chapter nine, Rodney Jones comes back to call for 'Order out of Chaos: Coronavirus Communication and the Construction of Competence'. In the process of organizing the captions of the COVID-19 governmental signs and slogans in the UK, Jones used the mediated discourse analysis (MDA) approach which focuses on actions (i.e., what people need to do with it). A case in point is the UK's

three-caption podium signs of: 'STAY HOME', PROTECT NHS', and 'SAVE LIVES' which were heavily criticized by social media due to pun of words and the unclarity of the proper action for the general public to take. The same applies to the government's new slogan for the color-coded 'COVID-19 Alert System' – based on terrorist alert – with five-threat levels ranging from yellow to red, an analogy which does not work with infectious diseases as it has limited impact on public behavior. However, Jones says that while the COVID-19 alert system proved to be of little use to the general public, it was a good performative tool for the government.

In Chapter ten, Elisabetta Adami explains how discourse analysts and social semioticians can guide people to act in the times of global emergency like the COVID-19 crisis. Consequently, Adami proposes a four-element formula for changing the semiotic regime: 1) keeping people physically apart, 2) having people connected through online communication, 3) responding to abrupt changes, and 4) re-disciplining process of self and behaviour. In order to make sense and act properly, Adami calls for collective action through establishing communication networks and contacts with people across the world to set up *Pandemic Meaning Making of Interaction and Communication (PanMeMic)* Facebook groups. This system allows people to share ideas and points of view which allow for wider perspectives and insights for better practices (see Goddard & Wierzbicka 2021).

To conclude, the wealth of this volume resides in presenting a well-scaffolded collection of articles representing different discourse analysis approaches with special focus on "Emotionalisation of Media Discourse". This element has most successfully showed how discourse analysts pool their efforts by using all available discourse tools to address issues of direct bearing on people's lives, health, and well-being. By so doing, discourse analysis can make a difference through educating the general public about how to face and guard against the killer virus by watching, recognizing, and noticing so that they have a better understanding of how the virus is evolving. Through their varied approaches (CDA, MDA, corpus-assisted Discourse, multimodal digital Discourse), discourse analysts can contribute to forming real-world solution to emerging problems, not only COVID-19 specific issues, but also global issues of inequality, racism, discrimination, power, cultural identity, and the like. After all, it is this thread of humanitarian values and principles of sharing and caring, emotional touch and reaching out that discourse analysts can help strengthen for the service humanity at large irrespective of spatial and temporal constraints.

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