Inna Krasovska
Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor
Department of Foreign Languages for Maths Faculties
Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology
Kyiv National Shevchenko University
Kyiv, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1567-1443
3488778@gmail.com

SYNTACTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSING EMOTIONALITY IN VERBAL COMMUNICATION: A COGNITIVE–FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

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This article examines the intricate relationship between language, emotional meaning, and communicative function, arguing that emotional expression is not merely added to a linguistic structure but an inherent component of meaning-making. Drawing on auditory analysis of emotionally charged communicative situations, the study demonstrates that syntactic constructions serve as perceptual cues that shape listeners' interpretation of emotional states. Emotional meaning is conceptualized as a generalized manifestation of affect embedded within lexical and grammatical units, reflecting both individual cognition and broader communicative intentions. The findings reveal that any verbal or non-verbal sign can acquire emotional significance depending on contextual framing, discourse purpose, and interactional dynamics. Within this framework, syntax performs a binding and regulatory function: it organizes the flow of information, highlights emotional contrasts, and guides the listener's processing of affective nuance. By analysing how syntactical patterns mark emphasis, intensity, or evaluative stance, the study underscores the role of grammatical choice as a perceptual marker of emotional attitude. This article examines how emotional meaning is structured, signalled, and interpreted through the interaction of syntactic patterns, discourse organisation, and culturally shared communicative routines. Particular attention is given to discourse units and the structural peculiarities of discourse units, which determine how speakers segment information and highlight affective nuance. The study argues that emotional communication relies heavily on cliched structures, such as formulaic expressions, evaluative frames, and repeated conversational patterns that activate a familiar emotional script. These scripts provide socially recognized scenarios that guide interlocutors in interpreting the intended emotional stance, even when cues are subtle or indirect. The findings contribute to research on the lexical-constructional interface and underscore the importance of patterned discourse behaviour in modelling the expression and perception of emotion across communicative contexts.
Keywords: emotional meaning; emotivity; syntactic constructions; perceptual cues; discourse units; emotional scripts; clichéd structures; emotional intensity.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement. The evolution of human society is inseparably connected with the process of communication – information and versatile meanings are transmitted through various verbal and non-verbal means. Though non-verbal communication is relentlessly developing in the digital world, verbal communication remains the most widespread form of human interaction, since the primary function of speech is to serve as a means of exchanging ideas, opinions. In the process of verbal communication, a person exchanges not only intellectual information with others but also expresses their attitude toward it, for it is not enough to construct one's thoughts logically correctly – they must also be conveyed vividly and emotionally. Thus, the communication of thoughts constitutes the main, but not the only, function of language. While much research has focused on the emotional potential of lexical items, the syntactic realization of emotionality has not been examined as comprehensively. The central problem addressed in this article is the role of syntactic structures as perceptual cues of emotional meaning and their contribution to the interpretation of emotionally charged utterances.

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Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Previous scholarship has emphasized the dual semantic nature of linguistic signs, distinguishing descriptive (denotative) and emotive (expressive) meanings (Wierzbicka, 1999; Sorokina, 2020). The findings have proven that language serves not only as a means of transmitting and receiving rational information but also as a way of expressing emotions, since it is a universal means of externalizing the entire process of human thought. The ability of words to express not only ideas but also the speaker's emotional state determines the dual referential nature of linguistic signs, which serve as carriers of emotional meaning. Hence the division of all semantics into two types: descriptive (referential, denotative) and emotive (expressive) meaning (Sorokina, 2020, p.1187). Linguistic knowledge enables a person to correctly evaluate the information they receive. This information can be both factual and emotionally-charged.

Studies in pragmatics and cognitive linguistics have further demonstrated how expressive meaning arises from the interaction of linguistic form, emotional stance, and contextual interpretation (Croft, 2013; Jackendoff, 2010; Amaral, 2018,). Factual information, that can be verified, accepted or rejected, is conveyed through the descriptive meaning. It is based on the relationship between a lexical unit and its denotatum. In contrast to the descriptive meaning, the emotive meaning is based on the relationship between a semantic unit and the emotional reaction of the participants in communication (Amaral, 2018).

In linguistics, the question of whether emotionality is a component of linguistic meaning is generally interpreted in a similar way, since differences can arise only when language is considered outside the process of speech activity (Kalyta et al., 2019). The expression of emotions constitutes an integral part of verbal communication, which can be viewed as a type of activity. The communicative situation can prompt speakers to share not only facts and ideas in order to achieve the goal of communication, but also their emotionally biased interpretation of that situation. The study of linguistic means of communication shows that every verbal or non-verbal tool can become a carrier of emotional charge and, in this way, express a particular emotional meaning (Wierzbicka, 1999; Pavlenko, 2005).

Within this framework, emotional meaning can be defined as a generalized manifestation of emotion within a verbal or non-verbal unit – one of the forms through which human consciousness reflects reality. The cognitive activity of an individual involves the accumulation of knowledge about reality and the development of a particular attitude toward it. The foundation for considering the cognitive, emotional, and intellectual aspects of language lies in the concept that objective and subjective elements form a synergy in the process through which human consciousness reflects the surrounding world, its objects, and its phenomena (Liu, 2016).

The difference between emotional and non-emotional verbal and non-verbal means lies in the way they express how the speaker reflects the generalized properties of objects and phenomena – either rationally or with emotional bias. The predominance of rational interpretation is revealed in the extensive use of verbal tools devoid of emotional connotation, which convey solely factual information. In contrast, emotional verbal tools enable the speaker to communicate the feelings evoked by certain objects and, in this way, demonstrate how the communicative situation is interpreted – positively or negatively (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018). The expression of emotions and feelings through emotionally charged verbal tools is associated with the concept of emotivity. In general, emotivity is understood as the verbal reflection of people's emotional perception of reality, conditioned by social, cultural, and psychological factors (Ortony et al.,1990; Shakhovskiy, 1996, p.45-56). For instance, emotivity at the lexical level is characterized by the predominance of emotional meaning over denotative meaning. Although there are verbal means that possess inherent emotional connotations and serve as markers for identifying emotivity in any context, we believe that any verbal or non-verbal unit can acquire emotional meaning depending on the particular communicative context and the function that this verbal or non-verbal tool performs in the communicative situation. (Ivanov, 2017, p. 185–189; Melkumova, 2017)

Purpose of the Article. The study of emotivity focuses on different levels of the language system: lexical, grammatical, and syntactic. However, the analysis of various linguistic means that convey emotional meaning often overlooks the unity of the logical and emotional spheres in the

cognition of the speaker, which ensures the adequate perception and interpretation of emotionally charged information. The relevance of our research lies in the fact that we approach the concept of emotivity as a reflection of the cognitive process of perceiving and producing a particular emotionally charged meaning.

Syntactic peculiarities of verbal communication reflect not only the structural properties of the language system but also provide insight into the complexity of conceptual elements and how they are represented in speech (Oatley et al., 1996). Within this framework, our research aims to identify syntactic means interpreted by recipients of verbal information as perceptual cues indicating the speaker's emotional attitude toward the content of a communicative situation.

Any linguistic phenomenon, from the perspective of the cognitive approach, can be thoroughly studied only when it is viewed as both a product and a channel of information perception and generation under specific communicative conditions (Kalyta et al., 2019). To apply this cognitive approach, the syntactic means of expressing emotivity have been analyzed as perceptual cues that enable recipients to identify the emotional meaning conveyed by the speaker.

2 METHODS

The study employs a cognitive-functional approach, treating syntax as both a product and a channel of emotional information. To investigate syntactic markers of emotivity, an auditory analysis was conducted, drawing on methods used in experimental phonetics. Informants listened to segments of dialogic speech and identified syntactic units they perceived as conveying emotional meaning, selecting emotional states from a predefined list derived from the research corpus.

In addition to the auditory method, structured interviews were used to elicit informants' interpretations. The method of structured interviews involves interaction between the researcher and informants through clearly formulated questionnaires designed to obtain relevant interpretations of the proposed experimental corpus. The aim of the structured interview is to present informants with a set of clearly defined questions aligned with the research objectives, in order to avoid heterogeneous responses. The informants were asked to identify a syntactic unit that, in their opinion, conveys emotional meaning within a clearly described communicative situation, and to select the corresponding emotion from a list determined by the analysis of the research material. The structured questionnaires ensured uniformity of responses by presenting clearly formulated questions aligned with the research objectives (Krasovska, 2021).

The empirical material consisted of:

- dialogic passages from English literary works performed by professional actors,
- audio recordings from English-language films, and an extended corpus that enabled the identification of stable syntactic markers associated with emotional meaning.

All responses were subject to statistical processing in order to determine correlations between types of syntactic structures and perceived emotional states.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Syntactic Structures as Perceptual Markers of Emotionality

The analysis of syntactical transformations that occur in an emotionally charged situations shows that under the influence of emotions, various formal changes take place in language. These include the violation of grammatical structure, shifts of grammatical tenses, repetitions, rhetorical questions, and other linguistic devices. The answers of the informant show that syntactical structures function as perception markers of emotional states and contribute to an adequate interpretation of emotional attitudes. Unlike lexical means syntactical structures do not name specific character of emotion (surprise, anger, joy, etc.), yet they clearly signal the presence of emotional colouring in speech (Zima, 2014). Two of the most important types of syntactic colouring were identified as early as by Ch. Bally: namely, purely emotional colouring and social colouring (Bally, 1909, p.79). These two characteristics are usually applied to describe the connotative meanings of lexical units; however,

a closer examination of the data shows that they are also applicable to syntax, although in the latter case they appear in a more generalized form. We believe that syntactical constructions function as emotional descriptive signals that can perform two functions: generally signalling of emotionality (reflecting an overall emotional bias of the utterance); identifying a specific emotional content.

Analysis of the functional value performed by syntactical constructions proves that there are syntactical patterns that have inherent emotional connotation and thus they are undeniably identified by informants as general signals of emotionality. Among such constructions with inherent emotional connotation the most frequently identified (93% of responses) are exclamatory sentences. This is quite natural, since the primary communicative purpose of this type of sentence is to express emotions. However, the auditory analysis proves that any sentence expressing a high degree of emotional intensity can be identified by informants as a signal of either general or specific emotional meaning. Thus, in our study, we distinguish between inherent exclamatory sentences and specifically coined exclamatory sentences. Inherent exclamatory sentences possess a specific structure, for example:

- *How wonderful!*
- *What a revelation!*
- *How dazzling you are! (Columbus, 2001)*

Inherent exclamatory sentences are also realized in the form of linguistic clichés, such as "My God!" "Good Lord", "Holly Spirit!" (Landis, 1999), etc.

Specifically-coined exclamatory sentences occur as a result of emotional bias added by the speaker deliberately, so that imperative, interrogative or affirmative syntactical structures are turned into exclamation to convey extreme emotional state of the speaker in a particular communicative situation. Such syntactical structures are perceived by informants as markers of specific emotional state. For instance, in the given situation, the speaker is extremely indignant and enraged, what is revealed in a string of specifically-coined exclamatory sentences formed by deliberate violation of inherent syntactical structure of imperative, interrogative and declarative sentences.

E.g. Oh, why doesn't he stop that damned noise! Please! Will you stop that! I can't think! Jimmy, for God's sake! (Alexie, 2007)

The usage of personal pronoun "you" or interjection "oh" is identified by informants as specific signals of emotional charge and associated with the outburst of negative emotions (anger, indignation). The irritation of the speaker becomes conspicuous due to the fact that he repeats imperative sentence and the usage of the pronoun "you" in the final imperative sentence foregrounds his discontent and irritation: "Oh, shut up! Shut up for God's sake! You shut up, Johny! (*Alexie, 2007*)

Interrogative structures are often interpreted by informants as specific markers of emotional state of the speaker. 75% of recipients attribute the rhetoric question to a general signal of emotionality which meaning becomes evident in the context of communicative situation. This syntactic construction coincides in its formal grammatical structure with any type of question, yet differs sharply from it in semantic content: rhetorical questions do not require a response from the interlocutor and, therefore, are regarded as the synergy of implicit statement and explicit question that is used to convey emotional attitude. The speaker resorts to a number of rhetoric questions in the following situation when he loses control over the emotions and throws indignation in the face of the interlocutor: "*Who feeds you? Who clothes you? Who thinks of your future?" (Alexie, 2007)*

In English discourse, declarative utterances can also convey specific emotions in certain contexts. However, if we compare utterances of different communicative types that express the same emotion (for example, surprise), it should be noted that the level of emotional intensity is much lower in a declarative utterance. An example can be seen in the following excerpt, where the degree of emotional intensity increases from mild bewilderment expressed in a declarative statement to astonishment conveyed through a general question:

E.g. *"Why, Andrew!" – she gasped. "You look wonderful. Are you going anywhere?"(Shaw,2019)*

3.2 Communicative Types and Emotional Correlates

The results of auditory analysis prove that informants perceive emotional meaning due to the usage of a specific syntactical construction. Statistically processed responses of informants show that syntactical structures function as general signals of emotionality. The table given (Table 1.) below illustrates that some emotional states are usually revealed through a specific type of a syntactical structure. Thus, interrogative structures are employed to communicate fear, fright, astonishment, suspicion, and resentment; approval, tenderness, threat, shame, and reproach – in declarative structures; while plea, despair, anger, indignation, and rage – in imperative ones.

Table 1. Correlation Of Syntactical Structure to Emotional State

Type of syntactical structure	Emotional States (%)													
	fear	surprise	resentment	tenderness	shame	reproach	suspicion	anger	rage	approval	plea	reproach	indignation	joy
Imperative sentences		87							63		74		68	
Exclamatory sentences								59	84					83
Declarative sentences			61	73	76	82				91		75		
Interrogative sentences	75		67				71							

The results of the auditory research demonstrate that recipients perceive and identify emotional meaning through the synergy of verbal and non-verbal tools, which are structured as a coherent unity within a typical syntactic framework functioning as a perceptual marker of a relevant emotion, feeling, or sensation.

3.3 Emotional Scripts and Discourse Units

Despite the fact that a particular syntactical structure may be perceived as a conventional framework for embodying emotional meaning, a thorough analysis of the experiment indicates that emotional connotations become evident to recipients only when they are realized within a discourse unit. A discourse unit is viewed as a sequence of syntactic structures united by a specific

communicative purpose, expressing an emotional attitude toward a communicative situation, and perceived by recipients as an "emotional script." Such emotional scripts are characterized by a distinct structure comprising a nucleus – the central emotional meaning – and suspense – the gradual development of emotional intensity. The alternation of utterances of various communicative types creates a distinctive structure of an emotional script, within which different degrees of emotional dynamism can be distinguished across individual segments of a discourse unit. The table below that summarizes the statistical processing of the experimental results shows that this phenomenon is observed in communicative situations when speakers are experiencing a mixture of feelings and try to express such emotions as joy, anger, indignation, fear, fright, despair, bitterness, resentment, and guilt. For instance, in the situation given below, the speaker (Mrs. Warren) is at first hesitant how to interpret the situation, so the chain of imperative sentences (*Don't you keep on asking me questions like that. Hold your tongue.),* and rhetoric question (*What next?)* build up a suspense to express a culminating emotion (*I have to say on the subject, indeed!)* that finalizes the emotional tension and is undeniably interpreted by recipients as a marker of anger.

E.g. Don't you keep on asking me questions like that. Hold your tongue. You and your way of life, indeed! What next? Your way of life will be what I please, so it will. All. I have to say on the subject, indeed! Do you know who you're speaking to, Miss?(Shaw, 2019)

Table 2. Correlation of Syntactical Structure Complexity to Emotional State

Complexity of a syntactical unit	Emotional States (%)													
	fear	surprise	resentment	tenderness	shame	reproach	suspicion	anger	rage	approval	plea	reproach	indignation	joy
Cliched syntactical units		1		8	2	4				8	3	9		
Discourse units	5		2				3	3	9				8	7

The occurrence of discourse units is conditioned by the degree of emotional intensity caused by a certain communicative context. The degree of emotional intensity within the same group of emotional states influences the choice of a structural unit in which it is manifested. Thus, speakers express doubt, hesitation, anxiety or unease that are characterized by a mild degree of emotional intensity, in a single cliched syntactical structure that can be of declarative, imperative, interrogative or exclamatory nature. The meaning of such cliched syntactical structured is understood independently of the surrounding context. For example, the states of anxiety (1) and doubt or hesitation (2) are clearly identifiable in the following cliched utterances:

E.g. (1) What's the matter, John? (2) Do you think I should? (Shaw, 2029)

On the contrary, despair and fear experienced by the speaker are more heterogeneous in nature and usually marked by a high intensity. Thus, this higher degree of intensity tends to be realized in less independent and more coherent syntactical structures that aim to specify the emotion or feeling of the speaker in relation to the overall content of the communicative situation.

3.4. Structural Features of Emotionally Charged Discourse Units

Discourse units that serve as the framework to communicate a mixed nature of emotions display a number of structural peculiarities. Under the influence of strong emotion, the speaker foregrounds the component of the utterance that appears most essential for conveying emotionally charged information. Thus, to express joy, anger, discontent, or contempt, *inverted sentences* are often employed, with the object occupying the initial position and the predicate preceding the subject. For example, the inversion is used in the discourse unit given below to lay emphasis on the anger experienced by the speaker towards another person.

E.g. The devil he is! Rotten business he does …(Landis, 1999)

Another distinctive feature of a discourse unit is the chain of *elliptical sentences* that build up a suspense and show the degree of emotional intensity. Besides, such syntactical structures are employed to win time to embody a dominant emotional feeling towards the overall communicative content. These highly compressed utterances acquire their full meaning only within the broader context of a discourse unit, mutually connecting and complementing one another. Most of these sentences, when taken in isolation, cannot be fully understood. As a characteristic feature of a discourse unit, elliptical constructions ensure the coherence of subsequent remarks with the preceding ones and thus serve as one of the key means of creating cohesion – one of the text-forming devices. For example, the following illustrates a fleeting moment of emotional liberation, where the character, immersed in a natural setting, experiences pure aesthetic joy. This kind of moment – brief, delicate, and unspeakably human – is expressed in an elliptical syntactical construction (*Lovely!)* that functions as an emotional nucleus of the whole emotional script.

E.g. What a revel of bright minutes! What a hum of insects, and cooing of pigeons! … Lovely!"(BBC, 1967)

The spontaneous and alternating nature of dialogic interaction requires interlocutors to respond immediately to preceding utterances. Under such conditions, expressing an immediate emotional reaction is often most easily and naturally achieved through the *repetition of individual words or structural features* from the interlocutor's preceding remark. The convenience of dialogic repetition lies in the fact that it relieves the second speaker of the need to search for specific words or forms of expression, as it allows them to draw directly on the lexical material of the previous utterance. The initial remark thus carries the informational nucleus, which is further developed, generalized, intensified, and emotionally responded to in the repeated utterance. In addition to repetitions that reproduce a part of the preceding remark, discourse unit often features the repetition of a sentence element, a phrase, or a fragment of an utterance within its framework. The repetition "She" in the situation given below indicates hesitation and emotional charge. It suggests Aunt Juley is somewhat aghast and reluctant to state the accusation outright, but driven by social convention to voice disapproval. Thus, to convey confusion, anxiety, despair, and similar emotional states, repetition of the sentence beginning is commonly used – most often of the subject, and occasionally of the subject together with the predicate.

E.g. What did she do, then, Auntie?"
To which Aunt Juley interjects resolutely:
"She – she didn't behave at all well."
Then Francie elaborates:
"Well, my dear … she had a love affair which ended with the young man's death; and then she left your uncle."
And Imogen adds:
"She used to give me chocolates … and smell nice."
Followed by Aunt Juley's sharp reaction:
"I can't think what we are about … talking of such things!"(BBC, 1967)

4 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The auditory analysis of emotionally charged situations demonstrates that syntactic constructions function as perceptual cues for different emotional meanings, which are defined as generalized manifestations of emotion within linguistic units, reflecting human consciousness. Any verbal or non-verbal unit can acquire emotional meaning depending on the context and communicative function and can be identified as a perceptual marker of a particular emotion. The results of the experiment show that syntax plays a binding role in expressing emotional attitudes within communicative situations. Syntactic structures of varying structural complexity function as general signals of emotionality and as markers of specific emotional states.

Emotional meaning can be realized through fixed syntactic patterns or discourse units, depending on the degree of emotional intensity experienced by the speaker during a communicative situation. Discourse units exhibit the structure of an emotional script, consisting of a nucleus containing the central emotional content and a gradual build-up of intensity.

Overall, the findings underscore that the interplay among syntax, lexical choice, and context enables speakers to encode emotional attitudes and allows recipients to decode them, highlighting the integral cognitive-emotional function of language in communication.

Further research into the peculiarities of expressing emotionality in speech can focus on the cognitive and communicative constraints that determine the choice of lexical and non-verbal means used to express various emotional states in particular speech styles – scientific, public, or colloquial discourse. The findings may provide insight into the cognitive mechanisms responsible for the generation and perception of utterances in different emotional states.

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Інна Красовська. Синтаксичні засоби вираження емоційності у вербальній комунікації: когнітивно-функціональний підхід. У статті досліджується складний взаємозв'язок між мовою, емоційним змістом і комунікативною функцією, доводячи, що емоційне вираження є не додатковим елементом мовної структури, а її невід'ємною складовою. На основі аудіального аналізу емоційно забарвлених комунікативних ситуацій показано, що синтаксичні конструкції виконують роль перцептивних сигналів, які формують сприйняття слухача щодо емоційного стану мовця. Емоційне значення розглядається як узагальнене виявлення афекту, що закріплюється у лексичних і

граматичних одиницях, відображаючи індивідуальну когніцію та комунікативні наміри. Дослідження доводить, що будь-яка вербальна чи невербальна одиниця може набувати емоційного забарвлення залежно від контексту, цілі дискурсу та динаміки взаємодії. У цьому процесі синтаксис виконує організуючу та регулятивну функцію: він структурує потік інформації, виділяє емоційні контрасти та спрямовує сприйняття афекту. Аналіз показує, що синтаксичні патерни маркують інтенсивність, акцент або оцінну позицію мовця, виступаючи як перцептивні маркери емоційного ставлення. Особлива увага приділяється дискурсивним одиницям, структурним особливостям та клішованим конструкціям, які формують емоційні скрипти соціально визнані сценарії, що допомагають інтерпретувати емоційний намір мовця навіть за непрямими сигналами. Результати підкреслюють важливість взаємодії лексики, синтаксису та дискурсу для кодування та декодування емоцій, демонструючи когнітивно-емоційний потенціал мови у вербальній комунікації.

Ключові слова: емоційне значення; емоційність; синтаксичні конструкції; перцептивні сигнали; дискурсивні одиниці; емоційні скрипти; клішовані конструкції; інтенсивність емоцій.