

**LINGUISTIC MEANS OF EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IN 20TH-CENTURY
ENGLISH NOVELS: A LINGUOSTYLISTIC ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

Emotional expression constitutes a fundamental component of literary discourse, serving both as a means of character development and as a mechanism for constructing narrative meaning. This study examines the linguistic means through which emotions are represented in twentieth-century English novels, focusing on lexical, syntactic, and stylistic levels of language organization. Drawing on linguostylistic and cognitive linguistic frameworks, the research analyzes how emotional meaning emerges from the interaction of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and figurative language. The findings demonstrate that emotional expression in literary texts is not confined to explicit lexical markers but is constructed through a combination of metaphor, syntactic variation, and contextual interpretation. Modernist narrative techniques further intensify the complexity of emotional representation by relying on implicit and psychologically nuanced linguistic strategies. The study contributes to the understanding of emotional discourse in literature and highlights the importance of multi-level linguistic analysis in interpreting fictional texts.

Keywords: emotional expression; literary discourse; stylistics; syntax; metaphor; 20th-century English novels; linguostylistics

1. Introduction

Emotions play a central role in human communication and cognition, and their linguistic representation has become an important area of research in modern linguistics and literary stylistics. In literary discourse, emotional meaning is not merely an expressive feature but a fundamental mechanism through which authors construct character identity and narrative progression. Through language, writers represent the psychological states of fictional characters and shape the emotional atmosphere of narrative events.

The representation of emotions in literary texts operates across multiple levels of language organization. At the lexical level, emotional states are expressed through words that directly denote feelings, such as *anger*, *fear*, or *joy*. However, emotional meaning in literature is rarely limited to

explicit vocabulary. Instead, it emerges from a complex interaction of linguistic elements, including evaluative adjectives, expressive verbs, syntactic patterns, and stylistic devices.

Twentieth-century English literature is particularly significant in this regard, as it is characterized by psychological realism and innovative narrative techniques. Authors such as Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence introduced new ways of representing emotional experience, often relying on subtle linguistic cues rather than direct emotional statements. This shift highlights the need for a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic mechanisms that underlie emotional expression in literary discourse.

This study aims to investigate the types of linguistic means used for emotional expression in twentieth-century English novels and to demonstrate how these means function together to construct emotional meaning.

2. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative linguostylistic and discourse-analytical approach to examine the linguistic representation of emotions in literary texts. The analysis is based on theoretical frameworks from stylistics, cognitive linguistics, and functional linguistics, combined with illustrative examples drawn from twentieth-century English novels and dissertation-based material. The research focuses on identifying and interpreting linguistic features that contribute to emotional expression across different levels of language.

The analytical procedure involves a close examination of textual fragments in order to identify lexical, syntactic, and stylistic markers of emotional meaning. Particular attention is given to how these elements interact within narrative contexts to produce emotional effects. The study also incorporates insights from semantic theory and cognitive approaches to emotion, which view emotional language as a reflection of conceptual and evaluative processes¹.

In addition, the analysis draws on stylistic theories that emphasize the role of figurative language and foregrounding in literary discourse². By integrating these perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive account of how emotions are encoded linguistically and how readers interpret emotional meaning within literary texts.

¹ Wierzbicka A. (1999). *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures*. –C.: Cambridge University Press. – 349 p.; Ortony A., Clore G., Collins A. (1988). *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*. – C.: Cambridge University Press. – 207 p.

² Leech G. (1981). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. –L.: Longman. – 250 p.; Simpson P. (2004). *Stylistics*. –L.: Routledge. – 247 p.

3. Results

The analysis reveals that emotional expression in twentieth-century English novels is realized through the interaction of multiple linguistic levels, with lexical, syntactic, and stylistic means functioning in a coordinated and complementary manner.

At the lexical level, emotional meaning is frequently conveyed through direct markers such as emotion-denoting nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Words such as *rage*, *fear*, *despair*, and *joy* provide explicit indications of characters' psychological states, supporting the view that emotional vocabulary reflects underlying cognitive evaluations of experience³. However, the findings indicate that lexical markers alone are insufficient to capture the full complexity of emotional expression. Instead, they function as part of a broader linguistic system in which meaning is shaped by context and interaction with other linguistic elements.

Syntactic structures play a crucial role in intensifying emotional expression. The analysis shows that exclamatory sentences, rhetorical questions, repetition, and ellipsis are frequently used to reproduce the immediacy and spontaneity of emotional reactions. For example, constructions such as "*What have you done!*" or "*I cannot bear it... I simply cannot*" create a sense of urgency and psychological tension, reflecting the interpersonal function of grammar described by Halliday⁴. Fragmented and incomplete sentences are particularly characteristic of emotionally charged passages, as they mimic the disordered nature of emotional thought.

Stylistic devices constitute another key mechanism for emotional representation. Metaphor, simile, and imagery enable authors to express complex emotional states indirectly by transforming abstract experiences into concrete sensory images. Expressions such as "*her heart sank*" or "*he trembled with rage*" illustrate how figurative language conveys emotional intensity through embodied imagery. This supports Leech's argument⁵ that literary language relies on figurative devices to enhance expressive meaning, as well as Simpson's notion of stylistic foregrounding, whereby deviations from ordinary language draw attention to emotionally significant elements⁶.

The results further demonstrate that emotional meaning emerges from the interaction between explicit and implicit linguistic strategies. While some passages directly name emotions,

³ Ortony A., Clore G., Collins A. (1988). *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*. –C.: Cambridge University Press. – 207 p.

⁴ Halliday M.A.K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. –L.: Edward Arnold. – 434 p.

⁵ Leech G. (1981). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. –L.: Longman. – 250 p.

⁶ Simpson P. (2004). *Stylistics*. –L.: Routledge. – 247 p.

others evoke them indirectly through descriptive detail, narrative perspective, or contextual cues. This interplay between direct and indirect expression contributes to the richness and interpretive depth of literary texts, particularly in modernist fiction, where emotional states are often implied rather than explicitly stated.

Overall, the findings confirm that emotional expression in literary discourse is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be reduced to isolated linguistic features. Instead, it arises from the dynamic interaction of lexical, syntactic, and stylistic elements within specific narrative contexts.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study support the view that emotional representation in literary discourse is fundamentally multi-layered and linguistically structured. The interaction of lexical, syntactic, and stylistic means reflects the complexity of emotional experience and demonstrates that language plays a central role in shaping how emotions are perceived and interpreted.

The importance of lexical markers confirms Wierzbicka's claim that emotional vocabulary encodes culturally structured concepts⁷, while the role of syntactic variation aligns with Halliday's functional theory of language⁸. At the same time, the prominence of metaphor and stylistic devices supports cognitive and stylistic approaches, which emphasize the role of figurative language in representing abstract emotional states.

The study also highlights the distinctive features of twentieth-century English fiction, where emotional expression becomes increasingly implicit and psychologically nuanced. This reflects broader developments in literary style, including the shift toward interiority and the exploration of subjective experience.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the linguistic means used for emotional expression in twentieth-century English novels, demonstrating that emotional meaning is constructed through the interaction of lexical, syntactic, and stylistic elements. The findings emphasize the importance of a multi-level approach to linguistic analysis, as no single level of language is sufficient to capture the complexity of emotional representation.

⁷ Wierzbicka A. (1999). *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures*. –C.: Cambridge University Press. – 349 p.

⁸ Halliday M.A.K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. –L.: Edward Arnold. – 434 p.

The research contributes to linguostylistic and cognitive studies of literature and provides a foundation for further investigation into emotional discourse in different literary traditions and languages.

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