

Verbalizing emotions in texts of economic mass media

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Abstract

The paper describes peculiar features of verbalization of emotions in the texts of the English and Russian online mass media covering economic and financial spheres. Some statistical data obtained from the comparative analysis of the lexis representing emotions in the English and Russian articles are given. For the purposes of the analysis, the emotive vocabulary was broken down into groups following the authors' classification. The authors thoroughly examined syntagmatic relations and functions of the names of emotions stating tendencies of their usage in economic mass media.

Key words: verbalization of emotions, representation of emotions, emotive lexis, comparative analysis, economic mass media

Introduction

The language of mass media is considered to be of judgmental nature. Hence, authors prefer a lexical-semantic way of content transfer. The choice of lexemes, their syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations within syntactic constructions highlighting meanings define information and emotional impact on readers (Barbashov et al., 2014).

The emotional aspect of a human being, which contributes to all areas of our life, is distinguished by the variety and richness of linguistic means of expressing emotions that include corresponding vocabulary, idiomatic phrases, and syntactic constructions, as well as peculiar intonation and word order (Babenko, 1989). It should be duly noted that mass media texts are the ones that reflect current features of any language and native speakers' behavior (Barbashov et al., 2014). Pragmatic impact means triggering an emotional reaction in a reader's mind and transmitting the author's genuine intention by this 'affective message' (Strelnitskaya, 2010).

No doubt, researching verbal expression of emotions plays an important role in linguistics. This fact is supported by a huge amount of research papers dealing with this issue. However, no previous study has investigated the linguistic representation of emotions in the texts of economic mass media (Rodionova et al., 2017; Kvon et al., 2017). This paper is the first one to present comparative research of verbalizing emotions in English and Russian texts of economic and financial mass media. The study is performed following the classification of the names of emotions developed by the authors. The issue is relevant for two reasons. Firstly, the studied phenomenon specificity – verbalizing emotions – determines the specificity of emotive content. Secondly, there is no approach for the analysis of emotive content in the texts of economic mass media.

Literature Review

It is a well-known fact that any language possesses a rich variety of means that are able to express emotions. They usually include corresponding vocabulary, idiomatic syntactic constructions, a peculiar word order (Vodyakha, 2007). L.G. Babenko (1989) states that emotive lexis is a dominant means of verbalizing emotions, which also contributes to creating a linguistic worldview of feelings. Following this idea, N.A. Krassavsky (2008) argues that emotions are represented in the language mostly

through words and idioms. Nevertheless, it is common to speak about universal emotionality of a language affecting all its levels.

It is worth mentioning that emotions are a part of human evolution, they are universal and identified in every country. At the same time, scholars tend to speak of feelings that are typical only for a particular people due to the direct influence of social and cultural factors both on defining this phenomenon and its language representation (Shakhovskiy, 2008). Though E.Yu. Myagkova (2000) discovers some common patterns while comparing the words that name and express emotions, the researcher also indicates that there is no full equivalence between the terms of emotions in different cultures.

W. Wirth and H. Schramm (2005) claim that «emotions inform us quickly and in a compact form about the subjective relevance of situations. They tell us what danger results from the situations and what possibilities for coping are available to us. In this view, emotions in the media provide a very acceptable and welcome tool for the reduction of high complexity in the environment of civilized societies».

There are a number of studies devoted to the issue of identification and evaluation emotions in the text. Some scientist examined the influence of emotional context on word evaluation (Liu, Hu, Peng, 2013). The study showed that positive context made the evaluation of target words bias toward positive tone, while negative context shaped the evaluation of target words toward negative tone. It demonstrated the flexibility as well as the relative stability of emotional meaning of the word.

V. Francisco, R. Hervás, P. Gervás (2007) made an attempt to develop two approaches to automated marking up of texts with emotional labels.

D. Ghazi, D. Inkpen, S. Szpakowicz (2010) reported on the categorization of a sentence into six basic emotions (defined as emotions with universally accepted distinctive facial expressions). Those are happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, surprise, including sentences which bear no emotion.

Methodology

There were a number of main methods and techniques of empirical analysis in accordance with the study purpose and objectives. The methods of linguistic description and complex analysis of text were leading, and they were applied by direct observation on the articles verbalizing emotions and in the selection, analysis, systematization of the factual material in the aspect of set objectives.

While classifying emotions, the lexical-based approach was used. The approach uses a model of text representation, built either with the help of dictionaries or on the basis of the linguistic corpus. It is assumed that the emotions expressed in the text can be determined by counting the emotional evaluation of words included in this text.

The final decision is carried out by means of some function, for example, the difference between the total number of emotional evaluation of words of positive and negative tonality.

The advantages of lexical-based approach are the opportunity to accurately classify small texts and text fragments; there is no need for a large text collection, and independence from the subject domain. However, these advantages are in evidence on condition that there is a qualitative model for presenting the text with emotional evaluations of words (Kotelnikov, Okulov, 2012).

The main objective of this paper is to perform a comparative analysis of verbalization of emotions in the English and Russian economic mass media. The vocabulary of the English and Russian economic articles is an object of the research. The scope of this study is structural and semantic properties of words representing emotions in the texts of mass media websites in the area of Economics, Finance, Business, as well as their functional features.

This paper investigates 17 articles from British and US websites (*The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*) and 26 – from the Russian ones (*Ведомости/Vedomosti*, *Коммерсант/Kommersant*, *Эксперт/Expert*).

The first step was to generate word lists of the names of emotions identified in the articles. The vocabulary items were selected following various conceptual dictionaries with those meanings only that were interesting within the scope of this study. The basic word classes represented in the lists are nouns and verbs with modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) derived from them.

The quantitative analysis of the word lists showed the following results: the English language word list consists of 31 lexemes in 44-word usages, the Russian language word list contains 17 language items in 20-word usages. Thus, the English word list is almost twice as long as the Russian one with more word usages also (more than two times).

The next step was to investigate and compare these word lists comprehensively. Firstly, the lexemes were distinguished according to word classes (see Table 1).

Table 1: Names of emotions according to word classes

Word classes	English word list		Russian word list	
	Number of lexemes	Word usages	Number of lexemes	Word usages
Noun	14	19	6	7
Verb	8	16	9	11
Adjective	6	6	2	2
Adverb	3	3	-	-

Results and Discussion

As can be seen from the table above the word lists do not match both by the number of lexemes and usages. Nouns are at the top of the English list, whereas verbs prevail in the Russian one, following the idea on a dominating position of emotional predicates in the Russian language. It is also important to note that the number of lexical units is almost equal with regard to verbs. Other parts of speech were represented by the greater number of words verbalizing emotions in the English articles than in the Russian mass media texts. Moreover, there are no adverbs in the Russian word list. In terms of word usages, the findings are the same for all parts of speech we analyzed: the overall number of word usages in the English texts is higher than the same index in the Russian articles.

The frequency word lists of names of emotions show that the most frequently used English lexemes are a noun *distress* and verbs *suffer* and *worry* (4-word usages each). The most frequently used linguistic items describing feelings in the Russian articles are a noun *страх* ‘fear’ and verbs *разочаровать* ‘disappoint’ and *нравиться* ‘like’ (2-word usages each).

For the purposes of the comparative analysis, it was decided to apply a unified classification of the Russian and English words naming emotions based on the principles introduced in ‘Russian Semantic Dictionary’, which we adopted to our data (Shvedova, 2003). The names of emotions under investigation were broken down into two categories: “Affections in General” and “Various Feelings, Emotional States,” the latter having nine subcategories.

Hence, the classification is as follows:

- I. Affections in General
- II. Various Feelings, Emotional States:
 1. Delight, joy, cheer, contentment, tranquility
 2. Love, tenderness, liking, affection, gratitude

3. Compassion, sympathy
4. Suffering, regret, embarrassment, shame
5. Fear, anxiety, impatience
6. Insult, disappointment, discontent
7. Despair, grief, sorrow
8. Disgust, contempt, envy, dislike
9. Anger, rage, fury

We suggest that this classification is applicable both to the English and Russian languages, given the inclusion of the English lexemes from *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, for the purposes of the comparative analysis (Roget's Thesaurus of English words and phrases, 2016).

The cluster 'Fear, anxiety, impatience' is the most verbally represented group of emotions in the articles under investigation. The research showed that there are 9 English words with 16-word usages (5 nouns, 2 verbs, 2 adjectives) and 6 Russian ones – in 7 appearances (3 nouns, 2 verbs, 1 adjective).

English word list	Russian word list
alarm <i>n</i> 1	опасение 'concern' <i>n</i> 1
concern <i>n</i> 1	опасаться 'fear' <i>v</i> 1
dreadful <i>adj</i> 1	запаниковать 'panic' <i>v</i> 1
fear <i>n</i> 3	страх 'fear' <i>n</i> 2
fear <i>v</i> 3	тревога 'alarm' <i>n</i> 1
panic <i>n</i> 1	тревожный 'alarming' <i>adj</i> 1
worry <i>v</i> 4	
scaremongering <i>n</i> 1	
terrible <i>adj</i> 1	

As can be seen from the table above the number of lexical units used by the authors to verbalize emotions in the English articles, as well as their usages, is more than the indexes of the Russian word list. The most frequently used lexeme of this group is the verb *to worry*, with 4 appearances.

*The idea that developed nations should focus on reaping the benefits of trade, and then **worry** about offsetting the costs, has produced large benefits, particularly for the wealthy — and large uncompensated costs, particularly for the workers* (The New York Times, Aug 27th, 2017).

It is worth mentioning that three of the usages were identified in the article entitled “*Markets **worry** about central banks*” (The Economist, Jul 8th, 2017):

*Bond-market investors have started **to worry** that something similar is about to happen to them.*

*The BIS also **worries** that a return of trade protectionism could sap the global economy's strength.*

Thus, the *markets* themselves experience anxiety, as well as *bond-market investors* and the *BIS*. *Central banks* become the object of this emotion. Describing the concerns of the investors, the author compares the contemporary situation in the international bond market with the plot of “Sense and Sensibility” by Jane Austen. The BIS worries about the consequences of a return to trade protectionism. The causes of growing alarm in corporate lending are defined in the article “***Alarm** grows about over-exuberance in corporate lending.*” Here the author also reminds readers about the terrific experience of 2008 financial crisis:

*When the financial crisis was at its height in 2008, being a debtor was a **dreadful experience**.*

Worries arise about renewable energy in the article entitled “*Can the world thrive on 100% renewable energy?*”.

*Some skeptics raise **concerns** about the economic ramifications if renewables' penetration rises substantially* (The Economist, Jul 13th, 2017).

The Russian noun *тревога* 'alarm' and its derivative adjective *тревожный* 'alarming' are used as parts of set expressions, referring to wake-up calls, alarming bells, etc.

*Еще один **тревожный** звонок прозвенел в ноябре: ирландская компания, сдающая самолеты в аренду, заявила о намерении создать собственную авиакомпанию, потому что она не может найти операторов, желающих взять A380* (Expert, Jan 19th 2018).

Global fears about threats to financial stability are described in the article "*Financial stability is a growing concern of central banks*" (The Economist, Aug 24th, 2017):

*Will China continue efforts to constrain credit even when growth dips below official targets? The **fear** is that it will revert to type and let credit surge again.*

The possibility of financial regulatory rationalization in the USA, gas shortages, a wide range of threats to global economic growth, and a high chance of becoming bankrupt are also among the causes of fear in the English economic mass media. The FRS, bankers and economists, and winemakers experience this feeling.

*Or perhaps the Fed itself **fears** that regulatory rationalization is code for some cutback in its own responsibilities, which have been expanded remarkably since the crisis* (The Guardian, Aug 24th, 2017).

*Gas shortage **fears** are driving retail prices.*

*Bankers and Economists **Fear** a Spate of Threats to Global Growth* (The New York Times, Aug 27th, 2017).

*They had struck deals to import inexpensive wine from Spain, prompting a backlash among local winemakers who **feared** their livelihoods were under attack.*

Emotions of fear and anxiety are typical for Deputy Minister of Finance of the Russian Federation towards free cryptocurrency trade, they may be experienced by hedge funds speculating in the oil market and may be caused by potential losses. It is related to risk in the famous idiom (*на свой страх и риск* 'to your own fear and risk') and opposed to joy, the emotion of the class 'Delight, joy, cheer, contentment, tranquility.'

*Ведомство предлагает именно такой подход к регулированию криптовалют для защиты прав покупателей и продавцов. «Сейчас люди делают это на свой **страх** и риск, никакой судебной защиты они не имеют. Это наша первая задача», – сказал замминистра* (Vedomosti, 2017).

*К тому же, по опыту биржевых спекулянтов, **страх** от получения убытков субъективно примерно в два раза сильнее, чем **радость** от получения прибыли, именно поэтому рост на рынке нефти будет медленным и постепенным, а коррекция – быстрой и глубокой* (Expert, Jan 19th 2018).

The author of the article "*Developing countries rebel against the credit-rating agencies*" (The Economist, Jun 29th, 2017) and some economists claim that rating agencies caused panic at the initial stage of 1997 Asian Financial Crisis:

*They argued that, in its initial phases, the rating agencies fostered **panic** and contagion.*

The title of the article "*Глобалисты запаниковали*" "Globalists panic" (Expert, Apr 15th 2018), which focuses on the USA and the PRC different viewpoints concerning global economy growth and global trade problems on the eve of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, directly points at the emotions of economic integration supporters.

It is worth mentioning that two English emotive adjectives *scaremongering* and *terrible* were identified within the text of one article entitled "*Foreign students bring so much to Britain*" (The Guardian, Aug 28th, 2017):

Melvyn Bragg concludes that Theresa May wants to keep referring to 140,000-plus foreign students as immigrants because it suits some scaremongering tactic.

A terrible amount of damage has already been done.

The examples demonstrate criticism towards the Prime Minister of the UK and her attitude to foreign students.

The findings indicate that the group ‘Affections in General’ is the only one represented lexically wider in the Russian articles (5 words) than in the English texts (3 words), with each unit used once.

English word list

feeling *n* 1
experience *n* 1
feel *v* 1

Russian word list

ощущение ‘feeling’ *n* 1
ощущаться ‘be felt’ *v* 1
чувство ‘feeling’ *n* 1
почувствовать ‘feel’ *v* 1
чувствовать ‘feel’ *v*

However, the evidence suggests vivid negative connotation of the emotions experienced: *dreadful experience*, *feel unwelcome*; *ощущение нестабильности* ‘feeling of instability’, *смешанные чувства* ‘mixed feelings’, *соперничество ощущается* ‘competition is felt’. The same attitude is found in the following examples:

Это отложенный спрос на квартиры у населения, которое только в минувшем году смогло более или менее почувствовать ‘feel’ экономический рост (Expert, Jan 19th 2018).

Чуть лучше чувствует ‘feels’ себя рынок недвижимости в британской провинции: из-за роста цен в Лондоне все больше жителей уезжает из столицы (ее население растет за счет иммигрантов) (Vedomosti, Aug 22nd 2017).

The cluster ‘Delight, joy, cheer, contentment, tranquility’ is one of the most verbalized groups in the English articles. It is represented by six lexemes with one-word usage each:

- nouns *contentment*, *euphoria*, *pleasure*;
- verbs *cheer* and *satisfy*;
- adjective *happy*.

Two cases of verbalized emotions of this group appeared in the article “Markets worry about central banks mentioned above” (The Economist, Jul 8th, 2017), i.e., in its concluding part when the author alludes to J. Austen’s novel again:

By the end of the novel, Elinor (sense) and Marianne (sensibility) find contentment with a vicar and a retired colonel respectively. Unlike Austen, central banks cannot always arrange a happy ending.

The author of the article “Alarm grows about over-exuberance in corporate lending” tells readers of investors’ controlled euphoria:

On a scale of one to ten, one banker describes the current level of investor euphoria as “about eight.”

In order to describe positive emotions of European cheese and wine manufacturers the author of the article “A new trade deal between the EU and Japan uses the verb to cheer”:

European producers of Roquefort cheese or prosecco can cheer: their products become two of 205 protected “geographical indications.”

The Russian word list includes two lexemes with one appearance each: the noun *радость* ‘joy’ and the adjective *довольный* ‘content’ in its short form.

Довольны и авиаперевозчики (Expert, Jan 19th 2018).

It would be interesting to examine the usage of the compound adjective *trigger-happy* composed of two stems. The word bears a negative connotation, regardless of the root *happy*, which is the representative of the group ‘Delight, joy, cheer, contentment,

tranquility.’ Thus, *trigger-happy* is the name of emotion related to the cluster ‘Anger, rage, fury.’ The article “*Developing countries rebel against the credit-rating agencies*” mentions combative mood of rating agencies with possible consequences of such behavior:

*Some think the agencies have become **trigger-happy**, and may themselves raise the risk of a crisis* (The Economist, Jun 29th, 2017).

The group of emotive names under investigation is also represented by:

- the noun *grudge* (1-word usage), which was used by the author of the article *Developing countries rebel against the credit-rating agencies* within a set phrase *grudge match* while characterizing ‘credit-rating relations’ between the PRC and India;

- the verb *anger* (1-word usage) in the passive form:

*Alan Blinder, an economist at Princeton University, observed that people generally accept job losses that they attribute to technological change but are **angered** by job losses that they attribute to trade policies* (The New York Times, Aug 27th, 2017);

- the adverb *fiercely* (1-word usage) in the article *A new trade deal between the EU and Japan* describing negotiations between the USA and Japan.

The emotions of this cluster, as well as those of the group ‘Despair, grief, sorrow,’ are not verbalized in the Russian mass media texts. The latter class is represented only by the English adjective *desperate* and two adverbs *depressingly* and *desperately* (in one-word usage each). It is worth noting that the language units of the same word family *desperate* and *desperately* appear in the article “*Alarm grows about over-exuberance in corporate lending*” already examined above:

*Banks and companies scrambled **desperately** to get the financing they needed.*

*Investors are willing to accept such terms because they are **desperate** to earn some kind of yield on their assets* (The Economist, Jul 1st, 2017).

The unclear future of consuming renewable energy globally is spoken of in the article “*Can the world thrive on 100% renewable energy?*”.

*At first glance, the answer to that question looks **depressingly** obvious* (The Economist, Jul 13th, 2017).

The group “Suffering, regret, embarrassment, shame” includes 5 English lexemes in 11-word usages and 2 Russian words in 2-word usages (see Table 2).

Table 2: Suffering, regret, embarrassment, shame

Part of speech	English word list	Russian word list
Noun	<i>distress</i> (4) <i>woe</i> (1)	
Verb and verb forms	<i>suffer</i> (4) <i>hurt</i> (1)	обвинить ‘blame’ (1) страдать ‘suffer’ (1)
Adjective	<i>unhappy</i> (1)	

The findings indicate that the two most frequently used names of emotions, i.e., *distress* and *suffer*, are in the English word list of this group. Three appearances of the noun *distress* were identified in the idiom *financial distress*. This state is experienced by the characters of J. Austen’s “Sense and Sensibility” mentioned in the article *Markets worry about central banks*. The mass media also inform of apologies and justifications from the Royal Bank of Scotland to their clients:

*A division of the taxpayer-owned RBS bank which was meant to help companies in trouble mistreated many of its clients but did not try to “profit from their **distress**,” according to a leaked report by the regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority.*

*The FCA provided a summary of the findings last year, but the full report calls for a fundamental review of how RBS handles small business customers in **financial distress**.*

*RBS sources said the FCA had already made clear that in a “significant majority of cases” it was unlikely that the actions of RBS “did not result in material **financial distress** to the customers it looked at” (<https://www.theguardian.com>).*

The examples show that the syntagmatic neighborhood of the lexeme *distress* is not limited to the attributive relation with the adjective *financial*. Financial problems are also characterized using the adjective *material*, one of the meanings of which is ‘concerned with money or possessions rather than the needs of the mind or spirit’ (Oxford dictionaries, 2018). The lexeme *distress* is related to other nouns through prepositions (*customers in distress, distress to customers*), as well as to verbs: *to profit from distress, to handle in distress, to result in distress, to plunge into distress*.

After studying syntagmatic relations of the verb *suffer* some personifications were identified, e.g., loans, small business owners, winemakers and even Venezuela experience agony. The economic crisis and some restrictions are the causes of this emotion.

The Russian equivalent *страдать* appears only once in the article «Заложу дом – купи вино» (*Pledge a house – buy wine*):

*Лондонский рынок недвижимости сильно **страдает** ‘suffers’ от снижения активности и все большего разрыва в ожиданиях покупателей и продавцов* (<https://www.vedomosti.ru>).

As can be seen from the example above human qualities are given to such phenomenon as *London market* ‘лондонский рынок’. The same technique was identified in the article «Потребительское отношение к банкам» (*Consumer attitude towards banks*):

*Суд сослался на закон «О защите прав потребителей» и **обвинил** ‘blamed’ банки в неказании надлежащей услуги* (Kommersant, 2018).

The group ‘Love, tenderness, liking, affection, gratitude’ is represented only in the Russian mass media texts by the verb *нравиться* ‘like’, which appears twice in the negative form:

*Минфину, по их словам, **не нравятся** ‘doesn’t like’ некоторые элементы фабрики – дополнительные траты и риски для бюджета.*

*Минфину **не нравится** ‘doesn’t like’, что чиновников отстраняют от процесса инвестиций, рассказывают собеседники «Ведомостей»* (Vedomosti, Aug 6th 2017).

The examples above demonstrate a negative attitude of Ministry of Finance representatives towards the idea of establishing the project finance factory under the auspices of VEB (Vnesheconombank).

The group ‘Insult, disappointment, discontent’ is verbalized by the English noun *frustration* (1 word usage) and the Russian verb *разочаровать* ‘disappoint’ (2-word usages).

*In **frustration**, the BRICS grouping—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—plans to set up an “independent” rating agency, expected to be launched at their summit this September in Xiamen in southern China* (The Economist, Jun 29th, 2017).

*Очередная порция статистики из Китая **разочаровала** наблюдателей* (Expert, Aug 28th 2017).

It is worth mentioning that the groups ‘Compassion, sympathy’ and ‘Disgust, contempt, envy, dislike’ were not presented in either of the word lists. We suggest that it is due to the peculiar stylistic features of economic mass media.

Conclusion

The research carried out with the use of the classification developed by the author shows active usage of emotive vocabulary in the English and Russian online mass

media covering the areas of Economy, Business, and Finance. The findings prove that there is a tight relationship between emotive lexis and economic terms. The English word list is significantly longer than the Russian one in terms of both the number of language units and their usages as well. The most striking result to emerge from the data is the low number of adverbs naming emotions in the English texts (3-word usages) and their absence in the Russian discourse. The fact that the group 'Fear, anxiety, impatience' is the most verbally represented cluster of emotions in the articles under investigation indicates the relevance of these feelings within the current global economic, social and political context. However, the role of contemporary Russia on the world financial and economic stage justifies the varieties of cause-effect relationship surrounding different groups of emotions identified in the texts within the research.

The results of the analysis of syntagmatic relations of the words naming emotions show peculiar features of their usage in the texts of economic mass media. The language of emotions tends to be figurative; some cases demonstrate human-like nature of feelings that can bear positive or negative connotation. The emotions are verbalized by various complex expressions and constructions both in the English and Russian articles.

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