
SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL POLYMODALITY OF THE CONCEPT “PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE”

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INTRODUCTION

Verbal and non-verbal communication is determined by our social activity and is carried out in a social, cognitive and psychological aspect. The communicative strategy (Belova, Dijk, Halliday, Flechsing)¹ is an organizing pragmatic factor of contextualized discourse statements², a trinity of global, local, and speech strategies³, that correspond to declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and methods of actualizing procedural knowledge. The object of the article is the concept “psychological violence”. Psychological violence in communication has not yet received sufficient attention, especially in living everyday and professional speech. The study is aimed at analyzing the varieties and sources of the verbal and nonverbal tokens of psychological violence in communication which makes the study polymodal. Psychological violence is described as behavior intended to harm a person psychologically or physically. Psychological violence can be defined as a separate communicative style⁴, a register (Dijk) which reflects the intentions of the speaker in the strategy of subjugating a partner through the tactics of coercion, threats, etc. M. Halliday defines three dimensions of style: field (place of communication), tonality (style of discourse), modus (channel of communication)⁵. The culture of the speaker determines the style of speech, and style reflects the cultural model of the speaker, in particular, emotionality or business approach, brevity, optimism, confidence, criticality,

¹ Белова, А. Д. Комунікативні стратегії і тактики: проблеми систематики. *Мовні і концептуальні картини світу* : зб. наук. пр. К. : КНУ імені Тараса Шевченка, 2004. С. 11–16.

² Schiffrin, D. *Approaches to Discourse*. Oxford : Blackwell, 1994. С. 415, 41.

³ Dijk T. A. *Dialogue and cognition. Problems and aims*. 1.1. URL: <https://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Dialogue%20and%20Cognition.pdf> 11.03. 2022

⁴ Halliday, M. A. K. *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Arnold, 1978. 3 33.

⁵ Ibid.

politeness, phatic or analytical focus of speech, etiquette, formal or free (informal), etc. (also there). Psychological violence is an alienated and domineering style which communicative essence lies in the function of psychologic influence.

1. The preconditions of the problem and its formulation

Language belongs to the old tools of power and shows violence, corruption, coercion, belief in stereotypes of aggressive circles. Psychological violence is a global consequence of serfdom, which is revived in many families. Nowadays, language is also used by the aggressive circles as a tool of psychological violence, dehumanizing tactics for the pragmatic purpose – power over people, social ambitions, the struggle for material wealth in and outside families. Systematic verbal and nonverbal actions that cause fear, anxiety and destroy human life are defined as psychological violence⁶, in its turn violence provokes negative reactions and aggression. It is important to identify verbal and nonverbal means of psychological violence and develop the verbal opposition to this social evil by theoretical and practical work among the population, promoting the joy of rich and aesthetic language as freedom of spirit and the indicator of good intentions.

2. The analysis of the existing methods of the problem solution and formulating the tasks for the optimal communication

The psychological violence, which is manifested in discourse, should be studied in the semantic paradigm of social psychology, which covers subjective, social, mental conditions⁷, aesthetic, social, moral content (Grice), pragmatic standards of politeness, stylistic means of cooperation, curiosity⁸ (for, Leech). The linguistic analysis included classifying, structural, functional, description and interpretation methods. The psychological violence as an object of psycholinguistics is reflected in provocations and reactions, and sociolinguistics analyze their compliance with socio-cultural norms. Psycholinguistic methods included introspection⁹, intention,

⁶ Приріз, М. Психологічне насилля, як розпізнати зло, пояснює експерт. URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2019/09/18/238245/>

⁷ Психолінгвістика . *Літературознавча енциклопедія* : у 2 т. / авт.-уклад. Ю. І. Ковалів. Київ : ВЦ «Академія» 2007. Т. 2 : М–Я. С. 292. URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psycholinguistics>

⁸ Куранова С. І. Основи психолінгвістики: підручник. 2012. Київ : видавничий центр «Академія». URL: <https://evnuir.vnu.edu.ua/bistream/123456789/18655/1/psycholingv.pdf>.

⁹ Психолінгвістика. *Літературознавча енциклопедія* : у 2 т. / авт.-уклад. Ю. І. Ковалів. Київ : ВЦ «Академія», 2007. Т. 2 : М–Я. С. 292. URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psycholinguistics>

evaluation, differential analysis (scaling)¹⁰. The introspective method helped to determine people's sensations, the differential analysis was used to classify the nominations of psychological violence by their aggressive semantics and to provide these nominations with possible safe reactions. Sociolinguistic methods of analysis were observation in vivo and discourse. To describe and interpret age and gender variations of the tokens of psychological violence and to conclude on the methods of combating it. The sociolinguistic vector of analysis allowed to identify the speakers' typical reactions to the socio-cultural stereotypes of the partners, the intentional analysis¹¹ determined the pragmatic semantics of the speakers' motives.

The psychological violence in communication is legally blamed as "a deliberate behavior, which seriously harms another person's psychological integrity through coercion or threat, every action that causes psychological harm to a person"¹², undermines the psycho-emotional state of a person, the violator's use of his advantage and victim control, the form of domestic violence"¹³. The synonyms of the phrase *psychological violence* indicate the attack: *coercion, threat, defamation, verbal insult, harassment, abuse* conceptualizing harm. The semantic field of psychological violence includes the layers of words and phrases that reveal the multiple semantics of the key phrase:

The 1-st layer: the verbal nouns and phrases for designation of verbal psychological violence: *commit and act: n.: devaluation, constant offensive criticism, "correcting the flaws", manipulation, accusations, condemnation, devaluation of the person, tension, repentance systematically repeated as manipulation. verbal abuse, foul name calling, humiliation, swearing, insults, psychological pressure, coercion, defamation, emotional abuse, your own fault; not a single conflict in the family, an accidental insult, repeated quarrels, systematic shaming in public, before family or friends; negative attitude, constant correcting one's speech to evoke discomfort, etc.*¹⁴.

¹⁰ Mora, С. Самоспостереження: минуле і сьогодення. Другий період. *Школа психології*, 2007. том, XXVI, 2. У.К.В.

¹¹ Калішук Д. М. Аналіз інтенцій мовця як передумова адекватної інтерпретації політичних текстів. *Філологічні студії: науковий часопис*. Луцьк: Волинській академічний дім. 2007. 1/2 (39-40). 247-252. URL: <https://evnuir.vnu.edu.ua/bitstream/123456789/3936/3/political.pdf>.

¹² Psychological violence. URL: https://eige.europa.eu/publicationsresources/thesaurus/terms/1241?language_content_entity=en

¹³ Приріз М. (2019) Психологічне насилья, як розпізнати зло, пояснює експерт. URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/>

¹⁴ Макогон Х. Газлайтинг, мобінг, сталкінг: У чому різниця між видами психологічного насильства і як його розпізнати. 2022. *Депо.уа*: <https://www.depo.ua/ukr/life/gazlayting-mobing-stalking-u-chomu-riznitsya-mizh-vidami-psihologichnogo-nasilstva-i-yak-ikh-rozpiznati>.

The 2-nd layer: the verbal nouns and phrases to mark restriction of place and activities: *control over the victim's life, ungrounded jealousy and control, restricting the will of a person, control in the reproductive sphere, move freely outside the home and communicate with loved ones; prohibition to express one's opinion, controlling communication by reading personal mail and messages on social media; complete control over all spheres of his or her life, persecution, ungrounded jealousy*. The 3-d layer: the verbal nouns and phrases for insulation designation: *isolate, ignoring one's presence or addressing, ignoring as a way of "punishment" (both among adults and children); refusal to communicate in order to make the victim feel guilty or humiliate them; isolating the victim from communication with friends or family*. The 4-th layer: the verbal nouns and phrases of intimidation: *physical or finance threat, punishment and threats of punishment, threats to life and health, harassment, intimidation, blackmailing, trampling on physical or finance threat, punishment and threats of punishment, threats to life and health, harassment, intimidation, blackmailing, trampling on*. The 5-th layer: the verbal nouns and phrases to mark the sensations of the victim: *cause fear for their safety or the safety of third parties, emotional uncertainty, feelings of shame and guilt, memory loss or a surreal sense of reality, emotional instability and mood swings, feelings of hopelessness, and thoughts of suicide, inability to protect themselves or harm the mental health of a person, serious damage to mental health*. The 6-th layer: the verbal nouns and phrases to mark combating violence: *prevent, combat domestic violence "take care of yourself" ask for help, share responsibility, and endure your weakness, to talk as a couple about anything that worries or makes you uncomfortable, to find a compromise*. The 7-th layer: the verbal nouns and phrases to mark the violator: *violator; perpetrator; abuser; a close relationship or authority, classmates, fellow students, coworkers, teachers, supervisors*. The 8-th layer: the verbal nouns and phrases to mark the violator's psychic state: *low self-esteem, dissatisfaction, discontent, aggression, disclaiming responsibility for the negative impact on the victim's psychological state*¹⁵. Nonverbal psychological provocations: *grimacing, jesting, touching, pushing* can be ignored and cautiously avoided. The analysis of the names of psychological violence reveals the cognitive and emotional semantics of destructive influence both on the victim and violator.

Among the modern classifications of psychological violence in communication there are modern generalizing names *outing, bullying, mobing,*

¹⁵ Макогон Х. Газлайтинг, мобінг, сталкінг: У чому різниця між видами психологічного насильства і як його розпізнати. 2022. *Depo.ua*: URL: <https://www.depo.ua/ukr/life/gazlayting-mobing-stalking-u-chomu-riznitsya-mizh-vidami-psikhologichnogo-nasilstva-i-yak-ikh-rozpiznati>.

victimblaming, gaslighting, each of them covers the psychological semantics of a number of tokens denoting discomfort, interference, etc. *Outing* means informing the public about the gender orientation of the person without his/her permission. The name *bullying* is widely known as physical, economic, sexual violence against a minor in the education system that affects the emotions of the victim: *humiliation, shame, fear, despair and wrath, decreasing his self-esteem, nervousness*, pushes one to suicide, alcohol or drug addiction. The name *victim blaming* popular with men is interpreted as accusing the victim, usually a woman, and translating responsibility for violence on her. *Gaslighting* is defined as a verbal oppression, manipulating the doubts in the memory and common sense of the victim, which is often practiced by a husband to control his wife. *Mobing* is a verbal psychological violence that is manifested in pressing on the victim by colleagues or executives to provoke his/her mistakes and forced dismissal. *Stalking* is a form of verbal and non-verbal psychological violence which includes the constant persecution of one person by another, controlling her life, creating discomfort and breaking her personal space.

The classification of nominations of psychological aggression “based on teachers’ testimony, crime study and observation” defines “indirect, relation and social aggression”¹⁶ with the intention of negative impact on the individual. Indirect aggression injures people with the following tools: *gossiping, exclusion or ignoring the victim*. Relationship aggression “*is intended threat to terminate a friendship or spreading false rumors*”. Social aggression “*is directed toward damaging another’s self-esteem, social status, or both*”. Direct forms: “*verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements*” are typical of teens (Holmes). Lewis Carol in his fairy tale “Alice in Wonderland” summarized the popular forms of psychological violence: *Derision, Uglification, Ambition, Distraction*¹⁷ which can be called traditional methods of aggressive social circles, especially among women.

Psychological violence nominations can also be classified by a scale of aggression using psychological differential analysis¹⁸, and safe verbal reactions can be formulated for self-protection against mental effects. Stage 1. Humiliation¹⁹: *mock, derision, denigrate, humiliate, shame, outing, gaslighting, stalking, mobing*. At this stage the reactions can copy

¹⁶ Holmes J. Language varieties. URL: <https://www.google.com/search?q=age+language+varieties&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=>

¹⁷ Carroll, L. (1865) Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. URL: [alices-adventures-in-wonderland\(1\).pdf/](http://alices-adventures-in-wonderland(1).pdf/)

¹⁸ Куранова С. І. Основи психолінгвістики: підручник. .2012. Київ: видавничий центр «Академія». URL: <https://evnuir.vnu.edu.ua/bistream/123456789/18655/1/psycholingv.pdf>.

¹⁹ Violence: synonyms and lexical field. URL: <https://www.textfocus.net/en/synonyme/violence>

provocations: *mocking for mocking, shaming for shaming, etc.* Stage 2. Verbal defamation: *lie, libel, accuse, blame, victimblaming* may be reacted to reveal the truth. Stage 3. Verbal intimidation: *fear, fright, stressing, threat, scare, endanger, terror, hostilities, bullying* may be reacted to mention the police or doctor; Stage 4. Aggressive verbal violence: *conflict, abuse, offence, brutality, violent, malicious, severity, swear* should be perceived silently, by completing the dialogue; Stage 5. Verbal enslavement: *subjugate, influence, stupefy, dumb* should be perceived silently, by completing the dialogue. Stage 5. Physical attack: *fury, ferocity, wildness force, furiousness, bloodshed brutality, aggression cruelty, criminal, violation, harm, assault, attack, ill-treatment, beating, killing, injuring, cutting, striking, socking* should be previewed and prevented. These varieties of violence characterize separate or multiple harm, and in general they conceptualize moral defects: *hatred, immorality and crime*. The scale of the names of psychological violence demonstrates the stages of degrading human mind, transforming one into a potentially antisocial individual.

Functioning of the phrase *psychological violence* and its synonyms characterizes variants of their age, gender, and professional semantics. The crime researchers have identified young people as a typical age group of psychological violators: “frequent diagnosis among youth in JCF”²⁰. Studying the aggressive behavior of young prisoners revealed their crimes rendered by the nominations *antisocial behavior, aggression, and disruptive behavior; conduct disorder (CD) or oppositional defiant disorder*. The introspective analysis brought to light the subjective feelings of the psychological violators expressed by the nominations *anxiety, depression, cognitive distortion, negative attitudes towards women* which determine the psychological problems of young people. The US scientists note the similar emotional causes of psychological violence in women, transmitted by the nominations *depression, anxiety, trauma, shame, low self-worth, substance abuse*²¹. M.K.Underwood mentions electronic communication “*cyberbullying*” as a new kind of psychological violence²². The military profession is reported as a source of psychological violence – brutal treatment, that

²⁰ Crable, A. R., . Underwood, L. A., Savage, A. P., Maclin, V. An Examination of a Gender Specific and Trauma-Informed Training Curriculum: Implications for Providers. 2013. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/Agatha-Parks-Savage2141509496>.

²¹ Nedderman, A. B. Underwood, L. A.Hardy V. L. Spirituality Group With Female Prisoners: Impacting Hope. 2010. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/>

²² Underwood M., Ehrenreich S.Scientists stress effects of cyberbullying lurking social media. Office of media relations. 2017. <https://news.utdallas.edu/health-medicine/scientists-stress-effects-of-cyberbullying-lurking/>

causes emotional stress²³ especially during the war. The psychological intention²⁴ of certain persons and groups of people demonstrate harmful communicative behavior – the victim’s public humiliation. The tokens of psychological violence form an emotional and pragmatic portraits of violators in contrast to society, however, some violators are popular “in a broad social context”²⁵. For example, it turned out that students’ *social aggression* adds popularity and status to the violators despite the dislike for them (Underwood), though it may reflect the desire of young people for demonstrating and recognition. Among the morally degraded youth there are negative emotional reactions to the socio-cultural ethical norms and indifference to other people’s sufferings.

One of the reasons of young people’s aggression is the psychological opposition “We-You”²⁶ in the official sphere which demonstrates lack of attention, respect, consent, the adolescent declare *peer affiliation, fear of rejection, peer pressure, defensiveness and pessimism, and impression management*. Youth’ introspective reactions to the official barriers can be defined as emotional and evaluative²⁷, the scientists explain their aggression by the “desire of activity” or “combat instinct” (Klineberg), “need to realize their potential” (Dieter Sender) in absence of proper directions. Underwood, Dailey and Barras²⁸ emphasize the importance of cognitive, moral and social development of young people in ahead of public and personal aggression, overcoming young people’s uncertainty for their best use.

²³ Zasiakina, L., Kokun, O., Hlova, I., Wojko, M. (2023). Defining Conceptual Boundaries of Moral Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Military Population. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*. 299-314. URL: <https://eejpl.vnu.edu.ua/index.php/eejpl/issue/view/20/29>.

²⁴ Калішук Д. М. . Аналіз інтенцій мовця як передумова адекватної інтерпретації політичних текстів. *Філологічні студії: науковий часопис*. Луцьк: Волинський академічний дім. 2007. № 1/2 (39-40). 247–252. URL: <https://evnuir.vnu.edu.ua/bitstream/123456789/3936/3/political.pdf>.

²⁵ Андрейчук Н. І. (2010). Життєвий світ людини в англійському інституційному дискурсі епохи Тюдорів. *Мова і культура наукове видання*. № 13 (II, 138). 75–82. Київ: Видавничий дім Дмитра Бураго. URL: <https://burago.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/138.pdf>.

²⁶ Каптюрова В. В. Комунікативні стратегії користувачів соціальних мереж та мікроблогів. 2013. С. 104–111. *Лінгвістика XXI століття: нові дослідження і перспективи*. URL: https://langcenter.kiev.ua/Lingvistika%202013/Kapturova_V.pdf

²⁷ Загородня О. Ф. Асоціативні поля суспільно-політичної лексики в мовній картині світу українців (комп’ютерне опрацювання результатів психолінгвістичного експерименту) 2018 : дис. ... канд. філол. наук : 10.02.21. Житомир. 256 с.

²⁸ Underwood, L. A., Dailey, F., Barras, L. O. Developmental considerations in justice involved adolescents. Chapter. 2016. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/Lee-A-Underwood>.

Brutal language represents a weapon of psychological violence fighting for power and a low level of culture for people. Nora M. Isacoff reports on “degrading and dehumanizing use of language” by the politicians who promote essentialism in support of opposition groups “during the war in Ukraine”²⁹. The use of brutal language stimulates violence, justifying a well-known saying that a bad word is followed by a bad deed. Brutal language stresses both its author and listener and is considered a social taboo³⁰. Observation of live communication reveals the nature of psychological violence – social and national hatred transferred to young children by their parents abusing strangers, which facts determine family as the source of psychological violence. People name *avidity* as the worst of evils that causes other evils. Psychological violence is also generated by distorted feelings, replacing compassion for people by hatred. Therefore *avidity* and *hatred* form the conceptual semantics of the phrase *psychological violence*.

Men are considered the main social aggressors, today the psychological aggression of women has been given attention. Calculating the aggressive behavior of the characters of the cartoon films revealed “76.9% of physical aggression of men and 62.8% of women’s psychological aggression”³¹. Women are also the most unprotected victims of psychological violence by other women and physical violence by men. Women often declare home psychological violence. There are cases of the forced placement of women in psychiatric hospitals after provoking their aggression by husbands. The physical and mental consequences of psychological violence may be *dispare, fright, poor concentration, low belief in themselves, worry, pains and heart attacks*. Long-term psychological violence can lead to *troubling disfunctions, insomnia and social isolation and psychosomatic disturbancy and even to suicidal attempts*³².

Blaming people of psychological violence we should not forget about the antihuman theories of scientists and politicians, such as the theory of essentialism, which presents “congenital, eternal and constant” qualities of certain groups of people, “based on such problematic criteria as gender,

²⁹ Isacoff, N. M. Mechanisms of subjugation and how to challenge them. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*. Abstract URL: <https://eejpl.vnu.edu.ua/index.php/eejpl/article/view/657>

³⁰ Що відбувається зі здоров’ям людини, коли вона матюкається або чує погані слова. URL: <https://unews24.site/zdorovya/shho-vidbuvayetsya-zi-zdorovyam-lyudini-koli-vonamatyukayetsya-abo-chuye-pogani-slova.html>

³¹ Holmes, J. Language varieties. URL: <https://www.google.com/search?q=age+language+varieties&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2>

³² Макогон Х. Газлайтинг, мобінг, сталкінг: У чому різниця між видами психологічного насильства і як його розпізнати. 2022. *Depo.ua*: URL: <https://www.depo.ua/ukr/life/gazlayting-mobing-stalking-u-chomu-riznitsya-mizh-vidami-psikhologichnogo-nasilstva-i-yak-ikh-rozpoznavati>.

race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, and class”³³. Creating an enemy image by the opposition, We-They is a harmful tactic that gives rise to generations of wicked and malefactors. Thus, the nominations *humanity, patriotism, friendship, respect, modesty, compassion, love* expressing the highest moral values are not used in speech, lost under the harmful influence of aggression. Business communicative behavior can be a model for everyone in the fight against psychological violence, and politeness is the tested method of professional communication³⁴. Sociological and psychological experiments should focus on young people’s positive thinking throughout their studies. The population should be involved in the socially useful activity of educating and employing young people and inspiring them good intentions.

CONCLUSIONS

Verbal and nonverbal psychological violence is a historical problem in society. The key phrase *psychological violence* is the nucleus of the semantic field of eight layers, reproducing the semantics of aggression, restriction, ignoring, isolation, intimidation, victim feelings, names of violators and definitions of their psychology. Classifications of nominations of psychological violence based on dictionary, scientific and fiction sources prove its destructive influence both on the victim and the violator. The functional semantics of psychological violence tokens in literature, practical psychology, military business and in vivo determines the social oppositions as violence precondition. The social and national hatred, avidity and aggression come from families and dehumanizing theories. The differential analysis revealed the degrading mentality of violators, safe reactions were proposed as a violence preventive method. Ethical business language performs a didactic function in society to preview psychological violence. The research prospects are seen in the study of verbal and nonverbal provocative semantics in literature and live speech.

SUMMARY

Psychological violence in communication has not yet received sufficient attention. The object of the article is the concept “psychological violence”. The aim of the article is to study the structural and functional social

³³ Lawrence, J. Essentialism and the Problem of Identity. Politics URL: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lawrence-jarach-essentialism-and-the-problem-of-identity-politics.pdf>

³⁴ Vlasenko O., Mastrukh V. Linguistic Strategies for Professional Politeness Among Aspiring Managers: An Analysis of Organizational Psycholinguistics. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*. 2023. Volume 10, Number 1, 2. URL: <https://eejpl.vnu.edu.ua/index.php/eejpl/article/view/744/350>.

and psychological semantics of the collocation *psychological violence*. Psychological violence is described as behavior intended to harm a person psychologically or physically. The key phrase *psychological violence* is the nucleus of the semantic field of eight layers, reproducing the negative semantics of aggression, restriction, ignoring, isolation, intimidation, victim feelings, names of violators and definitions of their psychology. Classifications of nominations denoting psychological violence were based on bibliography, scientific and fiction sources, and observation in vivo. Psychological differential analysis allowed to scale the nominations' semantics of aggression and reactions to it were proposed as a method of preventing and correcting the aggressive behavior. The negative pragmatic semantics of psychological violence of the words, collocations and life situations includes submission, competition, refusal, demonstration, control, accession, provocation, etc. The nomination *psychological violence* implies the psychological semantics of the social and national hatred, avidity and aggression that comes from families and dehumanizing theories. Ethical business language performs a didactic function to prevent psychological violence in society.

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