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**Bachelor`s thesis**

# SPONTANEOUS EMOTIONAL REACTIONS IN ENGLISH SPEECH

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# АНОТАЦІЯ

*Джос О.М. Спонтанні емоційні реакції у англійському мовленні. – Кваліфікаційна робота освітнього ступеня "бакалавр".*

Дана робота досліджує зв'язок афективних реакцій та спонтанного мовлення, а також їхній вплив на вираження комунікативного наміру мовця. Актуальність теми зумовлена браком досліджень особливостей непідготовленого мовлення, зокрема під впливом емоційних станів, у лінгвістичному дискурсі.

Об'єктом дослідження виступають спонтанні емоційні реакції в сучасному англійському мовленні, відібрані з уривків відео-записів та фільмів. Предметом дослідження є лінгвістичні та просодичні закономірності, що виникають у різних контекстах спонтанного емоційного мовлення, а також як на них впливають емоційний стан і комунікативну мету мовця.

Серед методів дослідження можна виділити описовий метод, порівняльний метод, дедукцію, асоціативний аналіз, узагальнення, класифікацію, кейс-стаді, метод лінгвістичного спостереження та аналіз даних.

Метою даного дослідження є аналіз спонтанних емоційних реакцій в англомовному дискурсі, дослідити лінгвістичні та просодичні нюанси такого мовлення, та виявити вплив афективних станів на розуміння комунікативного наміру мовця слухачем.

Підсумовуючи проведений аналіз, ми можемо стверджувати, що емоційний стан мовця безпосередньо впливає на вибір лексики, інтонацію та побудову речень, зокрема у спонтанному спілкуванні. Аналіз особливостей непідготовленого емоційно забарвленого мовлення сприяє глибшому розумінню та точнішій інтерпретації комунікативної мети, а також виявленню основних мовних інструментів, використаних для вираження почуттів.

Загалом можна виділити низку характерних спонтанному мовленню особливостей, зокрема лінгвістично-граматичних, таких як недоречні паузи, повторювання слів, перебудова висловлювань, само-перебивання, спрощену граматику, обмежений вибір слів, використання слів-паразитів, риторичних

запитань, наказових речень, вигуків, асоціативної лексики тощо; а також фонетичних нюансів, наприклад змін тону, інтонації, гучності, показника співвідношення гармонії до шуму, тощо.

Ключові слова: *спонтанні емоційні реакції, лінгвістичні та просодичні особливості, афективна прагматика, емоційні стани, інтонація, вибір лексики*.

## ABSTRACT

*Dzhos O.M. Spontaneous emotional reactions in English speech. – Bachelor's degree qualification paper.*

This work investigates the relationship between affective reactions and spontaneous speech, as well as their influence on the expression of the speaker's communicative intention. The relevance of the topic is due to the lack of research on the peculiarities of unprepared speech, in particular under the influence of emotional states, in linguistic discourse.

The object of the study is spontaneous emotional reactions in modern English speech, selected from video and movie excerpts. The subject of the study is the linguistic and prosodic features that arise in different contexts of spontaneous emotional speech, as well as how they are influenced by the emotional state and the communicative goal of the speaker.

The research methods used include descriptive method, comparative method, deduction, associative analysis, generalization, classification, case study, linguistic observation method, and data analysis.

The purpose of this study is to analyze spontaneous emotional reactions in English discourse, to explore the linguistic and prosodic nuances of such speech, and to identify the influence of affective states on the listener's understanding of the speaker's communicative intention.

Summarizing the analysis, we can state that the speaker's emotional state directly affects the word choice, intonation, and sentence construction, particularly in spontaneous communication. The analysis of the features of unprepared emotionally charged speech contributes to a deeper understanding and more accurate interpretation of the communicative goal, as well as to the identification of the main linguistic tools used to express the speaker`s feelings.

In general, we can distinguish a number of features characteristic of spontaneous speech, including linguistic and grammatical ones, such as inappropriate pauses, repetition of words, restructuring of statements, self-interruptions, simplified grammar, limited word choice, use of parasitic words, rhetorical questions, imperative

sentences, interjections, associative vocabulary, etc.; as well as phonetic nuances, such as changes in tone, intonation, volume, harmony-to-noise ratio, etc.

Keywords: *spontaneous emotional reactions, linguistic and prosodic features, affective pragmatics, emotional states, intonation, word choice.*

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# INTRODUCTION

Human speech is not only a tool for sharing information, but also a powerful instrument that helps people communicate various messages, including emotional states, intentions, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. As most linguistic research mainly focused on the analysis of the patterns of written and scripted language, which didn`t allow for the examination of the nuances of word choice and intonation in natural occurring conversations, the subject of affective linguistics has been heavily under-researched. Thus, spontaneous emotional reactions offer more insight into the authentic use of language. They emerge in response to unexpected, confusing or emotionally charged stimuli, and are essential for the analysis of the natural flow of speech.

**The study is relevant** because the link between emotional expressions and spontaneous communication, as well as the analysis of underlying communicative intent and the effect of affective states on word choice and intonation, has been not researched enough in Modern Linguistics. The topic of the study combines various fields, such as linguistics, psychology and neuroscience, and can be further researched from different points of view. This study will help understand how people convey their authentic emotional states through linguistic and prosodic features.

**The theoretical background of the paper** includes recent studies on emotional expression, features of spontaneous speech, affective pragmatics, connection between emotions and linguistics, word choice, intonation, verbal and vocal aspects of spontaneous and emotional communication.

**The aim of the paper** is to analyze spontaneous emotional reactions in English speech, explore various linguistic and prosodic patterns associated with such emotional responses, and to identify their impact on understanding the speaker`s emotional state and communicative intent.

**The objectives of the study** are:

1. to explore the link between emotions and language use;
2. to define spontaneous speech and its main features;
3. to describe how emotions affect intonation and word choice;

4. to present linguistic and prosodic patterns in the spontaneous emotional speech;
5. to analyze how this patterns present in real-life interactions and whether they depend on authenticity;
6. to investigate how the linguistic and prosodic features of emotional expressions influence listener`s perception of the speaker`s spontaneous speech.

**The object of the study** is spontaneous emotional reactions in contemporary English speech.

**The subject of the study** is linguistic and prosodic patterns which occur in various contexts in spontaneous emotional speech, and how emotional states of the speaker affect them.

**Supporting materials** consist of video interviews, recorded dialogues, and interactions with various public figures, as well as movie excerpts. The conclusions presented in this paper are based entirely on the materials gathered by a student, and all the sources are properly cited and included in the list of references and supporting materials.

**Research methods** include analysis, descriptive method, comparative method, deduction, association-based analysis, case studies, the method of linguistic observation, data analysis, generalization, and classification.

**The composition of work** includes an abstract, a list of contents, an introduction, 2 chapters with conclusions, 7 subchapters, a summary, a list of references of 49 sources and a list of supportive material of 60 sources. It consists of 65 pages in total.

# 1. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDIES OF SPONTANEITY, EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION, AND PRAGMATICS OF COMMUNICATION

## 1.1. Affective pragmatics

Emotional expressions are generally recognized to be influential instruments of interpersonal communication. Observing various reactions, be it our friend`s sorrow or a stranger`s smile, can provide a valuable insight into the internal experiences of others. Moreover, emotions play a key role in preparing the body and mind for adaptive action by activating underlying motivational systems. They can significantly influence behavior by disrupting current activities and provoking new intentions and reactions. The expressive aspects of emotions have a potent communicative function, which can affect social interactions. [35; 37] Many scholars argue that emotions are doubly directed, as not only do they involve bodily sensations, but they are also oriented towards a particular emotion-eliciting object. This implies that emotions are inherently intentional and shaped by specific ways of perceiving and thinking. This aligns emotions with other mental states (e.g., beliefs & desires), which are supported by rational justification and reasoning. [30]

*Affective pragmatics* is an emerging interdisciplinary field that combines linguistics, psychology, and neuroscience. It investigates the essential role of emotional experiences in shaping language use and interpersonal communication. Within this framework, affect is understood as the emotional stance or psychological orientation toward specific objects or phenomena, characterized by varying degrees of attachment or detachment, and a consistent directional quality in its expression. [49] Whereas linguistic pragmatics focuses solely on how utterances convey meaning within specific contexts, *affective pragmatics* extends the inquiry to the significance of emotional expressions. Furthermore, it focuses on how speakers use language to convey, regulate, and respond to affective states - not only through content, but through prosody, gesture, facial expressions, and contextual clues as well. [35; 2]

The Theory of Affective Pragmatics (TAP), developed by Andrea Scarantino, is built upon two core principles: 1) emotional expressions do remarkably more than merely reflect internal emotional states; 2) many functions typically associated with

language can also be achieved through non-verbal expressions, although such communication might be limited. The central claim of the abovementioned theory is that emotional expressions serve multiple functions similar to speech acts: they express internal states, represent how the world appears to the speaker, influence others` behavior, and indicate commitment to future actions. Scarantino suggests that emotional expressions and speech acts have a common evolutionary basis, since both allow humans to express, direct, and commit to certain states or actions. Nonetheless, these two modes of communication differ in flexibility. Speech acts mainly exhibit force-content independence, which communication via emotional expressions lacks, and allow virtually any propositional content to be paired with any communicative force. Therefore, emotional expressions unaided by language are inherently constrained and can only convey a limited set of emotionally relevant propositions (e.g., anger may be used to demand a behavior change, but additional contextual cues are necessary for the receiver to interpret the reaction accurately), which leads to a significant divide between purely linguistic and purely affective modes of communication. [35] In his further investigations, Scarantino differentiates between overt and natural emotional expressions based on how they convey meaning. For example, frowning or rolling one's eyes is considered a natural expression of anger. However, when a person deliberately communicates their emotional state by saying *I`m angry*, it allows the listener to recognize the speaker's intention and understand their feelings clearly. This kind of communication is what Grice called non-natural (or overt) meaning, i.e., based on communicative intentions and shared conventions, such as a word *angry* naming the so-called emotion. [36]

However, Scarantino`s view of affective pragmatics is not always supported by other scientists. His definition of what qualifies as an emotional expression (EE) remains somewhat ambiguous. He appears to adopt a practical approach by treating expressions as emotional if an emotional state can be inferred from them. Although this might be a pragmatic solution, it raises a question of whether expressions produced during a certain emotional experience but not recognized as emotional by observers can still be considered forms of EE? For instance, in some cultures, people use sighing

to express relief or disappointment, which means people with different cultural backgrounds could attribute different meanings (or none at all) to the same expression. Though sighs are evolutionarily old and have developed a secondary communicative function, the question remains whether they qualify as emotional expressions even if their emotional meanings are not always perceived. Thus, in most cases, a mere bodily expression of one's emotion does not suffice to accurately determine the emotion, which is why contextual cues and verbal (overt) expressions are essential for reliably interpreting one`s emotional signals. [12]

From now on, this paper will mainly focus on analyzing overt emotional expressions in combination with linguistic meaning, intonation, and vocal cues, as they all contribute to forming the perception.

### 1.2. Linguistic aspects of emotional responses

As it has already been deduced in the previous subchapter, emotional responses are not confined to bodily expressions and physiological states; they can also be communicated verbally. In Cognitive Linguistics, it is widely accepted that language and cognition are interdependent (i.e., human cognition shapes language use, and vice versa). It is also evident that cognition is connected with emotion, which raises a question of whether we could infer that emotion and language are interrelated. A few different possibilities have been proposed to answer this question, but the idea that there are both a direct and an indirect link between utterances and emotions, and language can both reflect the perception and express the given emotion, is more commonly accepted. Scholars argue that while people can conceptualize emotions, they also possess the ability to communicate their emotions directly with the use of affective language. For instance, humans can analyze their emotions and conceptualize them (e.g., *This dish looks disgusting to me* or *I'm surprised*), or they can show their feelings directly via expressions and exclamations (e.g., *Yuck!* or *Wow*). [13]

Furthermore, language may not merely serve as a tool for articulating emotions, but also aid in shaping our perception of them. Language plays a key role in categorizing abstract notions (e.g., *anger*, *fear*), which otherwise lack consistent

perceptual features. Words act as conceptual anchors and allow different physiological and biochemical experiences triggered by emotions (e.g., high or low blood pressure, increased or decreased heart rate, chest or throat tightness, unpleasant sensations, tears) to be grouped under more tangible labels. Despite the need to understand and label the emotion to perceive it correctly, it is not necessary to name it out loud, as the grasp of the idea alone will suffice. A *constructionist approach* suggests that emotions arise when sensations are grouped into a category with the help of language. When an emotional state is ambiguous, it creates unnecessary confusion for both the speaker and the receiver, therefore, there`s an obvious link between affect labeling and emotional regulation. Moreover, it has been researched that adults with semantic dementia develop a compromised emotional understanding as their language skills deteriorate. [22; 24; 28] Prelinguistic infants encounter a similar problem, since the inability to explain and categorize their emotions directly leads to a distorted perception of feelings. [23]

Nonetheless, while conceptual vocabulary aids in the accurate identification of emotions, expressive forms serve as important social cues and play a crucial role in conveying those emotions to others. In linguistics, such forms have historically received less academic attention than conceptual or descriptive emotional vocabulary. Although expressive vocabulary forms have always been under researched, they are much more pervasive than previously assumed. They appear across all linguistic levels:

1) prosody (e.g., tone, pitch, rhythm) contributes to emotional expression;

2) morphology includes expressive elements like diminutives, which can carry emotional or evaluative meaning;

3) interjections (e.g., *wow*) and intensifiers (e.g., *horribly*, *terribly*) heighten emotional tone;

4) connotative meaning on the lexical level can trigger emotional responses (e.g., *cancer*, *die*);

5) euphemisms aim to soften such reactions (e.g., *RIP*, *passed away*);

6) syntactic constructions convey emotion with expressions of incredulity (e.g., *He, read?*), rhetorical questions, or insubordinate clauses (e.g., *To think that…!* )

A further conversational analysis has been conducted by Selting, incorporating not only constructed examples but also empirical data based on a qualitative method. Selting`s work explores how emotions are managed through speech features like swearing, short exclamations, and prosody. According to her, complaint stories mostly include swear words, negative evaluations, tense voice, and forced laughter, which emphasize dissatisfaction. On the other hand, amusing stories typically consist of positive exclamations, smiling, and approving statements. In contrast, Potts & Schwarz took a quantitative approach and analyzed 100,000 online reviews to track the use of expressive forms like *What a…?* and found clear patterns tied to review ratings. In their research, Potts & Schwarz identified a correlation between expressions like *Wow* and *Absolutely* and the highest ratings, whereas more emotionally neutral adverbial forms like *quite* or *mostly* usually appeared in 3-star reviews. [13; 31; 38]

One of the most significant elements in analyzing the linguistic aspects of emotional expressions is interjections, as they are directly connected to both speech and emotions. According to Wikipedia, "*an **interjection** is a word or expression that occurs as an utterance on its own and expresses a spontaneous feeling, situation or reaction. It is a diverse category, encompassing many different parts of speech, such as exclamations (ouch!, wow!), curses (damn!), greetings (hey, bye), response particles (okay, oh!, m-hm, huh?), hesitation markers (uh, er, um), and other words (stop, cool).*" [46] However, they can function as other word types depending on the context. For example, such words as *boy* and *awesome* act as interjections when used alone for emotional emphasis, but serve as a noun and an adjective, respectively, when used in a collocation or a sentence. Interjections that cannot belong to another part of speech are called primary interjections, and those which can take on other roles are called secondary. This part of speech is more commonly used in oral communication than in writing. Moreover, the role of some interjections can shift drastically depending on the context. Such an exclamation as *oh!* can be used to show a wide range of emotions: disappointment, joy, surprise, and even anger; therefore, additional information (e.g., intonation, facial expressions, and contextual cues) is needed to draw plausible conclusions. [29] Furthermore, it is evident that to determine the emotion behind

someone`s reaction accurately, one must pay close attention to intonation. It is very common to utter a phrase or interjection, which is believed to carry a positive denotation (e.g., *Good!*) with intonation that implies negative emotion; therefore, verbal expression only isn`t enough to evaluate what the speaker actually feels and thinks. [19]

Exclamations (e.g., *How fast he ran!*) and declaratives (e.g., *Boy, it is raining!*) also serve to express strong emotion or perform what is known as an exclamation speech act. Zanutinni and Portner made a crucial distinction between sentential force (i.e., the conventional function tied to the form of the sentence) and illocutionary force (i.e., the speaker`s intended meaning inferred through the context). For instance, *Could you come at 9?* is structurally a question, although it implies a polite command or request. It is clear that sentences like *Isn't he cute?* (a question) and *He's so cute!* ( a declarative) both convey the same exclamatory intent as *How cute he is!*, even though they are structurally different. The exclamative constructions semantically act in a similar way to sentences containing emotional predicates (e.g., *be surprised, be amazed*), and both are used to express emotion. [42]

There`s also a lexical difference between expressions of distinct emotional states. For example, language use varies depending on the level of arousal, as it can be seen with anger: mild irritation (expressed through adjectives such as *annoyed*, and *disappointed*), moderate anger (e.g., *angry*), and extreme rage (expressed through strong adjectives as *furious* and *enraged,* verbs like *hate* and *loathe*, and metaphorical phrases like *boiling over*) consist of different vocabulary, which intensifies as does the arousal. On the other hand, joy is often expressed through idiomatic phrases like *over the moon* and *on cloud nine,* and emotionally inflated adjectives like *thrilled* and *happy,* while neutral words like *glad* or *joyful* are not typically used. Metaphors are also more commonly used in emotional speech, as they are considered by many to be more engaging and truthful than literary terms or labels. [3;10] Moreover, as utterances only convey a fragmented version of the actual feeling, and literal language is often insufficient to fully express the complexity of one`s inner experience, metaphors might be crucial for bridging the gap between emotions and their verbal representations. [44]

Human understanding of emotional states is deeply intertwined with the use of expressive vocabulary, therefore, it is not uncommon to encounter metaphors and metonymy that rely on natural forces (e.g., *engulfed* or *swept off one's feet*). Nearly all the emotions, excluding shame and pride, draw on various types of physical forces for metaphorical expression: gravity, heat, flood, sudden physical impact, etc. [20]

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that whether the speaker uses interpersonal verbs describing a state of mind (e.g., *I love, hate,* or *envy*) or interpersonal adjectives describing their own feelings (e.g., *I`m angry, happy*, or *envious*) determines the speaker's attitude towards the object of emotion and level of self-awareness. A speaker can also appeal to guilt by using phrases like *you made me…* or *…because of you,* which rarely reflect the real course of events. It is the speaker's choice and responsibility to either integrate the object of emotion into verbal expression or distinguish between their feelings and actual states. [39]

Furthermore, cultural norms, too, can significantly influence the lexicon of emotional expression. The difference lies in priorities, as people from cultures where interdependence is of great importance prefer concrete vocabulary to express their emotions. People coming from cultures where independence is valued more tend to define their feelings with the help of more abstract language. [39]

Thus, it can be concluded that emotion is deeply embedded in linguistic structure and use. Emotional states influence various linguistic aspects, such as prosody, pitch, rhythm, word choice, syntax, use of figurative language, and different parts of speech. It is uncommon for people to label their feelings outright; instead, they prefer to do so with the help of metaphors, interjections, and exaggerations. In the next chapters, we will elaborate on how affective states appear in spontaneous speech, where reactions often take place before conscious use of language.

### 1.3. Intonation in spontaneous & emotional responses

One of the most impactful aspects of understanding the message implied in utterances, especially spontaneous ones, is intonation. English intonation usually comprises three core components: tonicity, tonality, and tone. Tonicity means

emphasizing particular syllables; tonality is dividing the utterance into separate units of information; tone is the modulation of pitch meant to highlight distinctions in word meanings and grammatical forms. [5] Intonation itself refers to pitch variation, which is used to express the speaker`s attitude and to convey the intended illocutionary force behind an utterance. [14] "*In the English language, there are seven intonation patterns: rising, falling, rising-falling, falling-rising, flat, high, and low…*" [5; page 25] Falling intonation is considered somewhat neutral and is used to finalize the utterance, whereas rising intonation hints that additional information is expected. It is not uncommon to illustrate global rising and falling intonations with the help of diagonal arrows, [↗] for rising and [↘] for falling intonation. These arrows can be used after the syllable or at the end of the phrase, or both, if the sentence consists of combined intonation patterns. For instance, wh-questions usually start with the rising intonation right after the question word and end with the falling intonation. Falling-rising intonation usually implies doubt and uncertainty, while rising-falling expresses astonishment, support, and agreement (or lack thereof). [7]

The main role of intonation is emotive, i.e., pitch variations convey paralinguistic meaning in speech. Speaker`s mood has a direct influence on their vocal expression, as it affects phonation and prosodic patterns. According to Bolinger, intonation is directly connected with bodily expressions and performs an attitudinal function, reinforced by the correlation between pitch movements and emotional intent. It is indeed possible to express a feeling that is somehow different from or even opposite to what we have uttered, solely with the help of intonation. Emotions might influence various aspects of intonation, such as pitch range and falls. For instance, a wide pitch hints at significant emotional investment in the matter (i.e., strong emotions like rage or joy), whereas a narrow pitch reflects disinterest and a calm state of mind. In the latter case, it is important to pay attention to contextual cues, as it might be difficult to distinguish boredom from, for example, fulfillment. High falls are believed to signify interest, while low falls tend to do the opposite. [5; 47] The findings of another study indicate that people reading the same sentence were more likely to use high pitch, high amplitude (i.e., harmony-to-noise ratio and shimmer), and a wide range

of pitch variations if they were experiencing happiness, whereas the state of despair caused participants to lower their pitch & amplitude, and sound more monotonous. [9; 18] In addition, if the speaker was expressing a complaint or sharing some painful information, they often produced speech with a higher harmonic-to-noise ratio, higher pitch, and developed a propensity to pronounce the last word in the sentence more slowly, all of which aided in evoking an empathetic reaction in listeners. [26] A recent study has proved that listeners can accurately guess the emotions of the speaker only by analyzing intonation in the recordings of natural conversations. [18]

However, prosodic differentiations must be made carefully, as they mainly represent gradations and tendencies, and not firm categories. Unfortunately, there is not yet enough clarity in the distinctions between various terms used specifically to describe attitude and its prosodic features, as there are too many labels that intersect and too few clear definitions. There have been several proposals, including the division of the attitudinal prosody into two-dimensional patterns, i.e., weak/strong and positive/negative. However, this idea has not proved to be plausible, as feelings and attitudes might go beyond the scope of the intrinsically black or white framework (e.g., *suspicious*). They, therefore, cannot be strictly divided into such categories, and caution should be taken while applying the aforementioned labels. [47] Furthermore, the difficulty may arise when non-native speakers try to produce or interpret emotional intonation, especially if irony or sarcasm takes place. [6]

Intonation should be particularly considered in spontaneous speech, which is typically structured into segments known as intonation units, which often align with syntactic units. The former units can be characterized by specific prosodic features, i.e., rhythm, pitch, and stress, and are considered universal elements across all languages. They can follow each other without pauses, or include pauses in the middle without affecting pitch or rhythm. Most of them consist of either one or two prominent (i.e., accented) syllables (one primary & one secondary), which are marked by an increase in duration, volume, and pitch movement. Such accents often coincide with stressed syllables, though there are some exceptions like contrasting emphasis (e.g., *fifTY not fifTEEN*). It has been recently discovered that intonation units occur at a

rhythm of approximately one unit/second, regardless of grammatical structure and sociocultural context. Intonation units are believed to regulate the flow of information within the discourse. [16; 15]

The use of pauses in intonation units is typically guided by four main criteria: 1) syntactic appropriateness (i.e., whether they occur in natural or unnatural places); 2) filled pauses, i.e., filling hesitations with sounds (e.g., *uhm* or *hmm*), lexical fillers (e.g., *really* or *generally*), or filler words (e.g., *well* or *like*); 3) pause duration (i.e., shortened, standard, or extended); 4) melodic contour, i.e., change in intonation before or after the pause. [40]

Therefore, in can be concluded that spontaneous speech significantly affects intonation and has a range of distinct phonetic features, such as irregular speech tempo, vowel reduction, changes in word pronunciation, disrupted rhythm, incomplete prosodic patterns, variations in pitch, the use of pauses and filler words, strong consonant presence, merging vowels, unclear stress, erasure of word boundaries, and others. [1]

### 1.4. Research of spontaneous communication in Modern Linguistics

Although it might be challenging to define spontaneous speech, it is a general term which refers to a naturally occurring, impromptu utterance shaped by both internal (e.g., mood) and external (e.g., social circumstances or setting) factors. According to Tucker & Mukai, "*spontaneous speech as a speech style includes conversational, connected, casual, fast, natural, and vernacular speech.*" It is opposed to scripted, read, and memorized speech. [43; page 3.] Spontaneous speech differs from prepared speech in several linguistic ways:

1) phonetic features (see 1.3);

2) lexico-grammatical features (e.g., irregular grammar, vague word choices, replacements, restarts, side comments, filler words, mispronunciations, ellipsis, imprecise language and incorrect word order);

3) textual features (e.g., lack of logical structure or fragmented utterance). [1; 45]

A common feature of spontaneous speech is the oversimplification of language, as focusing on the idea the speaker wants to convey is often far more important than showcasing a wide range of vocabulary. Self-interruptions, repetitions, and incomplete structures are all frequent occurrences in spontaneous speech. There's also a growing tendency to treat function words (i.e., prepositions, particles, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs) as affix-like elements (i.e., proclitics and enclitics) that cluster around content words to create phonetic words. Morphological boundaries tend to be blurred when content words act as clitics. [40] Phonetic reduction is an important phenomenon in spontaneous communication. It manifests in the shortened, omitted, or partially articulated sounds and word forms compared to dictionary standards. In order to understand speech variability, it is essential to pay close attention to the context. Comprehension of spontaneous speech taken out of context might prove challenging, especially if phonetic reduction takes place. Valuable insight can still be yielded from analysing isolated excerpts, but it rarely reflects all the nuances. [43]

Another researcher compared speech rate and prosodic features between spontaneous and recreated speech. Two men were given a task to talk about themselves, and then had to read the transcripts of these recordings out loud. After the analysis of the results of the experiment, it has been discovered that such features as fundamental frequency (i.e., F0, acoustic measure of pitch) and pitch variation were more limited in spontaneous speech, while more dramatic pitch changes could be observed in replicated speech. Spontaneous speech was described as having lower pitch frequency, as well as a smaller range of pitch variation, therefore, it sounded more monotonous. [43]

Despite this, listeners are more likely to succeed in identifying emotions in spontaneous speech when the expression is both strong and conforms to established emotional patterns. [34] It is evident that spontaneous expressions reflect unregulated, genuine feelings, while acted emotions are insincere and might not be experienced by the speaker at all. Although it is not uncommon to associate high intensity with authenticity, the real spontaneity usually manifests in subtler emotional reactions, whereas performed expressions are the ones that are more likely to capture strong basic

emotions (i.e., anger, fear, sadness) and exaggerate them. Whether a person can distinguish between genuine and played emotional reactions also relies upon the mastery of an actor, the strength of individual perception of vocal and verbal cues, the depth of one`s expressiveness, cultural differences, and context. [17] It is often more challenging to sense and recognize spontaneous emotions than scripted ones in real-life settings. [4; 21]

More so, people tend to have different emotional capability, as their attentional resources are not the same. Prior experiences, one`s comprehension of the event due to personal susceptibility, and the specific circumstances all affect situational focus and perception. For instance, it is possible for someone who does not recognize a facial expression of rage to not consider it a menace, which in turn causes little emotional reaction. Thus, particular verbal or visual cues might trigger strong emotional responsiveness or feeling of danger in one person, but fail to do so with less perceptive human beings, or elicit reactions of a lesser degree than expected. [48] When such cues do trigger emotions, there`s always a reason why. However, it mainly depends on what type of explanation one expects to hear. If one is interested in casual description, the explanation may sound like *He feels X because Y took place (*or *because he did Y).* This might not be a sufficient reply if someone is first and foremost interested in personal motivation, which sounds more like *He feels X because Y seemed provoking for him*. There is also a possibility to justify one`s reasons to feel a particular emotion (i.e., *Was Y really provoking?*), although such rationalization does not always mirror what happens in real life, as emotional responses might often not seem logical. [27] Therefore, personal emotional reactivity, situational context, and motivational basis are additional important factors in analyzing the intensity of spontaneous reactions and should be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, modern research on spontaneous communication has significant advantages due to development and advancement of computational systems, specifically speech recognition tools and improved statistical analysis methods. All of them aid researchers in conducting more in-depth studies on various aspects of

spontaneous speech, so this branch of communication has been getting more and more scientific attention.[43]

Many factors affect the flow and intensity of spontaneous emotional reactions, and all of them should be taken into consideration to arrive at an accurate result.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

In conclusion, spontaneous emotional reactions are a complex phenomenon and can be analyzed from different linguistic standpoints. The link between linguistics and emotional states is evident, although it is quite complicated. On one hand, the use of vocabulary units is very specific in this case, as it is difficult to produce sophisticated sentences without planning in advance. This leads to the appearance of certain lexicological features, such as repetition, restarting, mispronounced words, use of fillers, incorrect grammatical structures, simplified vocabulary, and a range of other nuances. Moreover, humans rarely communicate their feelings directly and tend to do so with the help of metaphors, interjections, exclamations, intensifiers, euphemisms, and other similar language units.

On the other hand, word choice does not always reflect a person's emotional state. For instance, one might feel strong anger and express it through a passive-aggressive remark or sarcasm rather than explicitly. In such cases, even words with inherently positive denotation cease to convey their initial meaning. More often than not, real emotional intensity can be observed via analyzing certain prosodic features, i.e., intonation (tonality, tonicity & tone), pitch and its variation, rhythm, pausing, etc. Different emotional reactions have a tendency to produce distinct fundamental frequency, F0 variation, stress, amplitude, and volume, while spontaneity can also have an effect on the duration of pronouncing specific syllables.

There is also a challenge in recognizing the difference between spontaneous and posed affective speech, which can sometimes prove to be unidentifiable due to particular factors. The perceived strength of person's feelings might affect the understanding of the sincerity behind the displayed emotion. There is a widely spread belief that spontaneous emotional reactions must be on the higher end of the intensity spectrum, but in reality, when it comes to verbal expressions, it is usually the opposite.

Moreover, it is less difficult to identify acted emotional speech, as it tends to be overly exaggerated, than it is to correctly recognize spontaneous one, which might be less intense and more implicit.

# 2. EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS IN SPONTANEOUS SPEECH

## 2.1. Positive emotional reactions in spontaneous speech

As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, speech and emotion are deeply intertwined in human beings, and spontaneity aids in eliciting genuine emotional responses through vocal, verbal, and facial expressions. Reactions to inherently positive stimuli, i.e., praise, surprising news, success, kindness, and other joyful events, grant others permission to better understand the inner states of the speaker and help scholars complete the analysis of the scope of expressiveness in spontaneous language at the intersection of linguistics and psychology. Unexpected events often remove the privilege of self-censoring in speech and aid in noticing smaller nuances in the language used in interpersonal communication.

This subchapter is going to focus on the linguistic aspects of spontaneous emotional reactions in response to positive stimuli. Sixteen excerpts from the interviews with famous public figures, along with five scenes from the films, have been selected as the basis for this analysis. As it is particularly challenging to spot the single dominant emotion in most of those excerpts, different combinations of positive feelings will be used to describe the speakers` mental states, i.e, at least two from the following list: gratitude, excitement, joy, calm, contentment, surprise, amusement, admiration, or other, if necessary.

Nonetheless, it is also important to remember that chosen speakers are public figures who frequently have to monitor themselves and engage in improvisation, i.e., actors and singers. This could therefore possibly give them more control over the intensity of responses, as well as help adjust their intonation, all of which might affect the final results. Some of the other factors which could influence the outcome of our research are the possibility of the interviews and conversations being semi-scripted or edited afterwards. Nonetheless, these celebrities have been chosen for this study since they are currently the most reliable native speakers, i.e., they are intelligent, do not have any known records of cognitive decline, and more readily show their private lives than ordinary people. It is also worth mentioning that emotional reactions from movie excerpts cannot be called *spontaneous* confidently, as they are mainly scripted and

performed for the camera. That is why this analysis will include a short comparison between posed spontaneous emotional reactions and genuine ones.

It is undoubtedly customary for English speakers to use **exclamations** and **interjections** as a response to hearing surprising news or a sincere compliment. For example, the most commonly uttered **interjection** for expressing astonishment is *Oh my God!*, the use of which rarely has any correlation with the speaker`s actual religious beliefs. As it is a common interjection, only a few examples of such a reaction have been included in this research to avoid the monotony in the analysis, and include some of the more unique examples. For instance, in their interview with Jimmy Fallon, singer and songwriter Halsey conveyed a mix of genuine gratitude and surprise by responding to Jimmy`s sincere congratulations with the expression "*Oh my God, thank you!* [94, 8:02]" Same did singer Billie Eilish during the ELLE prank call in conversation with her friend, actress Margot Robbie, who expressed admiration for Billie`s new album, to which the singer replied, "*Oh my God, thank you so much, oh my god, I literally love you guys.*[73, 1:34]*"* In the first instance, the singer shifted to a significantly **higher-pitched** voice and pronounced *"Oh my God"* with **higher amplitude** and **rising intonation**, which signifies feelings of excitement and surprise. However, they later **dropped in volume** while uttering *"thank you"*, showcasing a certain degree of humility and gratitude. On the other hand, Billie Eilish started laughing immediately after hearing praise, and the **pitch** of her voice became **lower** towards the end of the phrase, while the **amplitude remained unchanged**. In this conversation, the **interjection** *Oh my God* was said with a **falling intonation**, and did not represent shock, but rather hinted at a sense of emotional overwhelm and humility. Another similar reaction can be heard from Jennifer Lawrence during the interview for BBC Radio 1 in response to a question about the movies she took part in and the characters she played there: *"Are they? I`ve never seen them! Oh my god, I'd love to!* [63, 0:31]*"* While uttering *"Oh my God"*, Jennifer **increases the pitch and amplitude** of her voice, and her **intonation rises**.

Furthermore, there are other **interjections** which are frequently used to convey a feeling of surprise or disbelief, such as *No way!*, *Ah!*, *Oh*, *phew*, *Hello!*, *No*, *Really?*

etc. For instance, when actor Tom Holland met the narrator of his favorite show, WatchMojo, he instantly exclaimed *"Oh no way! Oh my god! No way!"* [97, 0:13] in a **high-pitched** voice with increased amplitude and rising intonation. His reaction shows a combination of disbelief, excitement, and admiration. Similarly, when Lana Del Rey`s fans approached her to ask for a photograph and disclosed that they were going to her concert later that night, she responded with enthusiasm: *"You are? Really? I love it!"* [81, 0:07] In this phrase, she made a **pause** between *"You are?"* and *"Really?"*, while **elongating the last syllable** of both phrases in a **high-pitched** voice and **rising intonation.** The same reaction had actor Josh Hutcherson when his fan offered the actor to sing for him: *"Sing for me? Yeah!"* [72, 0:01] He uttered the question with great surprise and disbelief, whereas *"Yeah!"* followed with a feeling of relief and **falling intonation**. On the other hand, in his interview with Cosmopolitan, a singer and songwriter, Conan Gray, reacted to an offer with *"Ah. I'll do that with you. Don`t you worry."* [71, 6:54], showing a mix of surprise and relief, and uttering *Ah* on exhale. Another singer, the lead vocalist of The Neighbourhood, Jesse Rutherford, when asked to express an opinion about Brockhampton, said, *"Amazing. Like… Phew, spent like, oh! Everything they've done is like next level. The-they're the buds, they`re awesome."* [85, 1:04] When he **exclaimed** *oh!* his **intonation went up**. An actor, Benedict Cumberbatch, responded with *"Hello! This is a perfect day, isn't it?"* [66, 3:50] when a puppy he was playing with in the interview for Buzzfeed Celeb started licking his face. The **interjection** *Hello!* with an **elongated *ou* sound** and **elevated pitch** showed admiration. In the movie Ready Player One (2018), character Parzival reacts *"Wow! That looks amazing"* [54] to his friend`s work, uttering *Wow* with **rising intonation**.

Another **interjection** is the particle *no*, which also most often serves as a means to convey disbelief (in the case of positive reactions, it has a similar role to surprise). For example, when asked if she had been invited as a new lead singer for the band Linkin Park, Evanescence`s vocalist Amy Lee replied *"That is an incredible compliment. I have not heard it. No… That's really sweet."* [78, 7:09]

**Rhetorical questions** are a common means to show a feeling of surprise, shock or even astonishment. They usually have a **rising intonation** and are not used as ordinary questions, but rather help the speaker to show interest in the topic. For instance, Jennifer Lawrence`s **question** *"Are they?"* [63, 0:31] does not mean that she cannot believe her interlocutor and doubts his knowledge, but shows that the information is new for her and she is eager to learn more. When Josh Hutcherson said "*Sing for me?"* [72, 0:01], he also expressed shock, as the offer he received was not expected by him. The singer Lana Del Rey reacted the same way: "*You are? Really?"*[81, 0:07] An actor, Timothee Chalamet, talking to Jimmy Kimmel about Oprah Winfrey, asked in disbelief, *"I can't believe I'm following Oprah, like how am I gonna follow Oprah?!"* [79, 0:50] In this **rhetorical question**, his voice becomes **higher-pitched** and **louder**. Another actor, Benedict Cumberbatch, replied to a Buzzfeed Celeb`s interview question with *"This is a perfect day, isn't it?"* [66, 3:50], expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to spend time in the company of puppies, as well as his admiration for them. In this situation, the **intonation** initially **rises**, but **falls** when the **question tag** is uttered.

A hallmark of spontaneity is **fragmented speech**, which can be expressed through such features as **repetition, restarting, long pauses, breaks in the phrase**, and **self-interruption**. An example of this is Jesse Rutherford`s reaction to a band he admires: *"Amazing. Like… Phew, spent like, oh! Everything they`ve done is like next level. The-they`re the buds, they`re awesome."* [85, 1:04] This phrase illustrates a couple of the aforementioned aspects. Jesse`s speech has several **restarts** and **self-interruptions**, (e.g., *"Like…Phew, spent like… Everything they`ve done is…"* [85, 1:04]), **trailing thoughts**, **pauses** (e.g., *Like…*), and the constant use of **filler words** (e.g., *like, oh, phew*), which shows an attempt to formulate his feelings of admiration and respect into words. Another example of **fragmented spontaneous speech** could be taken from the 1997 movie Contact, where the main heroine Ellie is astonished as she is trying to describe her first impression of the cosmos: *"No words…no…words… to describe…they should`ve sent.. the poet. So beautiful… beautiful. So beautiful. So beautiful."* [52] In this instance, the use of **long pauses** between the words in one

sentence (e.g., *"no…words… to describe…"*) and **repetition** (e.g., *"So beautiful… beautiful. So beautiful. So beautiful."*) showcases the incredulity of one`s experience and an inability to produce a coherent speech due to intense emotional reaction. Responding to Chelsea Handler`s question, a well-known singer, Gwen Stefani, **repeatedly** emphasizes her emotional state: *"Yeah…it`s really…That makes me so happy, so happy."* [82, 10:13]*;* moreover, it can serve as another example of **self-interrupting. Hesitation** and **filler words** are other features that can be found in a lot of spontaneous utterings, e.g., *"Yeah…it`s really…"* [82, 10:13] and "*Like… Phew, spent like, oh, "* [85, 1:04].

It is very common to describe one`s heightened emotional state with the help of **intensifiers**, such as *really, literally, totally, so,* etc, which are often highlighted in speech. Amy Lee`s reaction, *"That's really sweet"* [78, 7:09], shows that the piece of news holds significant importance to her, and she wants to underscore her own appreciation upon hearing about fan speculations. The singer **stresses the word *really*** for emphasis. Another singer, Billie Eilish, expresses her gratitude with "*I literally love you, guys"* [73, 1:34], and, therefore, **intensifies** her emotional experience with the word ***literally*** to highlight the genuine affection and sincerity. Her older brother, songwriter Finneas, recalls uttering *"Aw man, it's such an honor"* [92, 3:33] upon meeting Ringo Star to emphasize how honorable this encounter was by using an **intensifier *such***. It is also extremely common to use ***so*** in order to highlight adjectives (e.g., *so happy, so much*). For instance, in the movie The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (2008), Lucy Pevensie reacts with *"I've missed you so much. … You`ve grown!"* [50] upon meeting Aslan, to highlight how she is delighted to meet her dear friend.

To convey intense emotional reactions without adding intensifiers, people often use **strong adjectives**, which already serve as emotional amplifiers. They allow the speaker to communicate intensity in the moment of speaking. This can be seen in Amy Lee`s reaction ("*That is an incredible compliment"* [78, 7:09]) where she specifically puts emphasis on the word ***incredible***, **elevating the amplitude** of her voice and **stressing the word**. Another example is Jesse Rutherford's speech (*"Amazing…they're*

*awesome"*[85, 1:04]*)*, where he uses the adjectives ***amazing*** and ***awesome*** to describe his feeling of admiration towards a music band. For the same reason, character Parzival from the movie Ready Player One (2018) exclaims *"That looks amazing!"* [54] upon seeing an impressive iron giant; in the movie Beetlejuice 2 (2024) Astrid confesses to Jeremy, a ghost she encountered, *"I've been alone for so long, It was like a… grenade will explode in my head. It was incredible. You are amazing"* [60] to emphasize the appreciation and depth of her emotional state. In his interview with Jack Whitehall, a famous pop singer, Shawn Mendes describes his first time visiting the BRIT Awards: *"Amazing! It's my first BRIT, so it feels good to be here, yeah."* [65, 0:10]. Without pausing to contemplate, Shawn chooses the adjective ***amazing*** to reflect his enthusiasm and excitement. Thus, strong adjectives can aid in conveying intense affective responses into a single word, which captures the heightened emotional state of the speaker without the necessity of further elaboration.

Although **expressions of gratitude**, such as *thank you* and *thank you so much*, appear to be simple markers of politeness, they often convey sentiments beyond social conventions, especially if highlighted by **repetition, high-pitched intonation, intensifiers,** or **exclamation**. For instance, a singer and songwriter, Sabrina Carpenter, expresses gratitude to the interviewer Jimmy Fallon with an exclamation, *"Thank you! I`m so happy to be here! Thank you."* [93, 0:27]. In the first instance of saying the phrase *Thank you*, the singer particularly **lengthens the last syllable** and **increases the loudness** for emphasis. She later uses **repetition** to highlight her gratitude. Her reaction can thus be considered a natural expression of gratefulness, not only a polite formality. Singer Halsey in their interview with Jimmy Fallon uttered *"Oh my God, thank you!"* [94, 8:02] where, as it has already been mentioned above, they pronounced *thank you* with **falling intonation** and significantly **lower amplitude**, which suggests a sense of modesty and appreciation. On the other hand, singer Billie Eilish expresses significant emotional overwhelm upon hearing praise, and in the response *"Thank you so much, oh my god, I literally love you, guys"*[73, 1:34] **intensifies** her gratitude with ***so much.*** Both Halsey and Billie Eilish use the **interjection *Oh my God!*** to emphasize the

feelings of surprise and unexpectancy, whereas Sabrina relies on **high pitch** and **amplitude** to convey her emotional state.

It is rather uncommon for speakers to **express** their **feelings explicitly**, so there is only one instance among the chosen excerpts where a speaker uses the construction ***I am*** to name a positive emotion. During her interview with Jimmy Fallon, Sabrina Carpenter confesses, *"I`m so happy to be here!"* [93, 0:27], thus combining formality with direct disclosure of her emotional state. Nevertheless, it is much more common to describe one's feelings with the help of **stative verbs** (e.g., *love, believe, adore*), and structures like ***this makes me***… Such word choice suggests that the speaker thinks that a certain emotion or feeling is embedded into their values or beliefs, and is not temporary. For example, singer Billie Eilish reacted to praise with affection: *"I literally love you, guys."* [73, 1:34]. Although it seems that intense emotional reactions ease the process of sharing vulnerable emotions and can weaken the self-censoring, it can also be inferred that Billie expressed the feeling she believes to be true. ***Love*** can be used to acknowledge feelings not only towards other human beings, but also regarding situations and activities. For instance, in her interview with Emily Ratajkowski, a dancer and an actress, Maddie Ziegler, recalls her experience of going on tour with a singer, Sia: *"The best[…] I had the best time ever, I loved it so much."* [74, 14:57]. Using the **stative verb *love*** displays a profound personal connection and lasting satisfaction linked to her experience, which she further **intensifies** by using ***so much***. Similarly to Maddie, Lana Del Rey expresses admiration to her fans with the phrase *"I love it!"* [81, 0:07], stressing the word ***love***. In his response to the interviewer, Shawn Mendes claimed, *"It`s my first Brit, so it feels good to be here, yeah."* [65, 0:10]. The construction *feels good* in this sentence is formed with the help of the **stative verb *feels*** so as to describe the singer`s inner state and how he processes a new experience. In this case, it implies a level of self-awareness rather than outright enthusiasm. A use of the **stative verb *believe*** can be observed in Timothee Chalamet's response: *"I can't believe I`m following Oprah."* [79, 0:50]. It emphasizes the speaker`s surprise, displaying that what happened exceeded his expectations. The phrase ***I can't believe*** is also frequently used as a mark for emotional overwhelm that

is difficult to process, rather than literal disbelief. In the movie called The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (2008), Lucy Pevensie expresses a combination of happiness, surprise, and relief upon meeting Aslan with the exclamation *"I've missed you so much!"* [50]. **The verb *missed*** highlights a long-term emotional condition. The use of the **delexical verb *make*** can be observed in Gwen Stefani`s reaction: *"That makes me so happy, so happy."* [82, 10:13]. In this case, *make* functions to connect a stimulus *(that)* to an outcome *(happy)*, with the singer explicitly attributing responsibility for this emotion to outer forces rather than herself. Such language is frequently found in spoken speech where the speaker wants to highlight the emotional impact of a particular situation or event.

As it has been discussed previously in 1.2, in theory, emotional speech often relies on **associative words** and **metaphors** to convey particular feelings to a listener, or even elicit them to make the listener empathize. [20; 26] Such **figurative language** should help speakers communicate intense or complicated emotions through shared sensory, cultural, universal, or collective experiences, as well as symbolic representation. For example, in the movie Contact (1997), the protagonist Ellie, seeing open space for the first time, expresses her overwhelming awe with the phrase *"they should`ve sent… the poet."* [52]. Since this character is a scientist, she appears to be struggling to find accurate literary words to reflect the beauty she witnesses. She instead appeals to a universal concept - a poet must be able to find metaphors to describe every detail she finds astonishing, as her otherwise rational mind cannot capture the scene in depth. Another instance of **figurative** and **associative language** use can be found in the movie Beetlejuice 2 (2024) in Astrid`s confession: *"I've been alone for so long, it was like a… grenade will explode in my head. It was incredible. You are amazing."* [60]. To convey the full range of her emotional state, Astrid juxtaposes her loneliness with current relief and elation through sensory experiences and **strong adjectives**. The use of a simile, *"like a… grenade will explode in my head,"* [60] shows the intensity of the impact an event had on the girl, and later becomes replaced with joy. Jack`s exclamation *"I'm the king of the world!"* [51] in the movie Titanic (1997) is an expression of exhilaration, euphoria, and freedom. Linguistically,

this phrase creates a common cultural association with power, joy, and invincibility. Furthermore, it conveys Jack`s emotional state with more precision to a listener who is familiar with the concept of kingship than an **explicit statement with *I feel* or *I am***. However, since most of the aforementioned examples come from movie scripts, it can be concluded that it is less common to appeal to associations and figurative language in spontaneous emotional responses to positive stimuli in real life than previously thought.

To sum up, several linguistic patterns emerged during the analysis of the spontaneous verbal expressions of positive emotions across various interview and movie excerpts and recorded conversations. Despite contextual differences, the speakers share similar emotional states and use specific vocabulary to convey their feelings. Many of the responses contained **interjections**, e.g., *Oh my God!* (see excerpts from interviews with Halsey [94, 8:02], Billie Eilish [73, 1:34], Jennifer Lawrence [63, 0:31], Tom Holland [97, 0:13]); **rhetorical questions** (see excerpts from interviews with Jennifer Lawrence [63, 0:31], Timothee Chalamet [79, 0:50], Benedict Cumberbatch [66, 3:50], and recorded dialogues with Lana Del Rey [81, 0:07], Josh Hutcherson [72, 0:01]); **strong adjectives**, e.g., *amazing, awesome, incredible, perfect* (see excerpts from interviews with Amy Lee [78, 7:09], Jesse Rutherford [85,1:04], Shawn Mendes [65, 0:10], Benedict Cumberbatch [66, 3:50], movies Beetlejuice 2 (2024) [60], Ready Player One (2018) [54]); **stative** and **delexical verbs**, e.g., *love* (see excerpts from interviews with Billie Eilish [73, 1:34], Maddie Ziegler [74, 14:57], and recorded dialogue with Lana Del Rey [81, 0:07]) *feel* (see an excerpt from the interview with Shawn Mendes [65, 0:10]), *make* (see an excerpt from the interview with Gwen Stefani [82, 10:13]), etc.; **intensifiers**, e.g., *really, literally* (see excerpts from interviews with Billie Eilish [73, 1:34] and Amy Lee [78, 7:09]). Emotional expressions that convey intense feelings of joy, surprise, astonishment, or exhilaration are frequently accompanied by **rising intonation, high pitch,** and **intensified amplitude**, whereas it tends to be the opposite for expressions of relief, contentment, and a combination of genuine gratitude and humility.

The study also showcases that it is easier for women to express the broader range of their emotional states, and they more quickly and openly use the stative verb *love* to convey gratitude or deep admiration than do men, although the reasons remain uncertain. It can be deduced that this difference mainly reflects social and cultural norms that tend to encourage emotionality in women and restrict it in men.

In addition, it has also been noticed that one of the most noticeable factors of unscripted reaction is an unpredictable event that triggers surprise.

### 2.2. Negative emotional reactions in spontaneous speech

Unlike reactions to positive emotional stimuli, reactions to negative emotional stimuli reduce self-monitoring and language fluency in the majority of cases. Although it would be wrong to claim that fragmented speech and over-emotional responses are rare phenomena among expressions of various positive emotional states, such as joy, surprise, or happiness, such reactions do not lead to repercussions, as they are mainly associated with favorable outcomes and social acceptance. Negative emotional states, e.g., frustration, anger, sadness, rage, disappointment, are more likely to resist proper regulation even when socially or situationally inappropriate. Apparently, it is not only self-control that is lacking, but clear judgment regarding what should and should not be said or done in the uncomfortable situation. Anger and frustration frequently tend to affect one's choices and cloud logical reasoning. [25; 41; 33]

This subchapter will focus on the linguistic aspects of spontaneous emotional reactions in response to negative stimuli. In order to complete the analysis, 17 excerpts from interviews and recordings with public figures (eight women and nine men) will be used, as well as 5 movie excerpts. Most of the reactions, especially those of anger and frustration, were elicited by inappropriate questions or behaviour, thus leading to the protection of crossed boundaries. In some situations, sadness and grief were responses to emotionally charged discussions about personal hardships.

However, it is impossible to determine the degree to which those emotional reactions are authentic, as in public settings, vulnerability might often either be discouraged or counterintuitive to a speaker. In addition, strong reactions frequently

conceal several emotional states, such as sadness disguised as anger, disappointment combined with sadness, etc.

During the research, several linguistic features have been particularly prominent. The first one is **fragmented speech**, which was dominant across most instances to varying degrees. Out of 22 instances, 14 included some type of **incohesion,** such as **hesitation, self-correction, restarting, repetition, pausing,** or **stammering**. The emotional state of the speaker did not have an impact on their reaction, as the most influential aspects were intensity (i.e., emotional overwhelm) and personal involvement (e.g., defensiveness, traumatic memory). For example, while being pushed by an interviewer Krishnan Guru-Murthy to answer an inappropriate question about his past hardships, an actor Robert Downey Jr became frustrated and responded: *"I'm sorry, I… I really don't wa -…Uh, what are we doing?"* [70, 6:31] and walked out of the studio. In this instance, **hesitation, restarting** (*"… I really don't wa -…Uh, what are we doing?"* [70, 6:31]), and **repetition** of the pronoun ***I*** take place and signal defensiveness and withdrawal from an unpleasant situation. The film director Quentin Tarantino, when interviewed by the same person, denied answering the question with the phrase *"Do not ask me a question like that. Uh- I`m not gonna, I'm not biting. I refuse your question […] Because I refuse your question, I`m not your slave and you`re not my master."* [69, 7:02] Unlike Robert Downey Jr, he did not **hesitate**, nor did he **repeat** himself, although before uttering *"I`m not biting"*, he **interrupted himself**, and slight **stuttering** occurred as a result. In this case, irritation and defiance affect the speaker's emotional state. A singer, Justin Bieber, tired of being followed by paparazzi, reacted to a man who thanked him while recording a video of him with *"It's disrespectful to thank me, 'cause Uh-I'm not asking you to be here. You know what I mean? …but I`m just saying… I`m saying I don't want you to be here."* [89] This is a good example of expressing discomfort and irritation in order to set one`s boundaries, although he is trying to clarify his statement by **repeating** it (*"but I`m just saying… I'm saying"*[89]*; "I'm not asking you to be here" & "I don't want you to be here"* [89]). Furthermore, similarly to Tarantino and Robert Downey Jr, he **stutters**, uttering "*Uh-I'm not asking you*." In an interview with Billboard, a rapper, Machine Gun Kelly,

expresses frustration, leaving the interview after saying, *"… uh uh you ah-I - Dude, I`ve done this so many times. Dude, can we just… I don`t wanna do an interview. Can I, can we just do - like… I don`t…"*[64, 11:22] His speech is **heavily fragmented** due to emotional overwhelm, which makes it partially incohesive as well, and it consists of **filled pauses** (*a lot of… uh uh you ah-I* ), multiple **false starts** ("*Uh I`d say I did a lot of… uh uh you ah-I - "*[64, 11:22]*; "Dude, can we just… I don`t wanna do an interview. Can I, can we just do - like… I don`t…"*[64, 11:22]), **self-interruptions,** and **hesitations.** Unable to articulate his dysregulated state and feeling powerless, the rapper eventually abandons his attempts to reply to a question. Such **fragmentation** implies that, as much as the speaker wanted to comply, it led to an inner conflict due to his not wanting to discuss the topic. Another rapper, Eminem, reacted to Machine Gun Kelly claiming that Eminem was against MGK`s success: "*…don't give a [swear word] about your career. You think I actually [swear word] think about you? You know how many [swear word] rappers that ahem... are better than you?*." [75, 20:51] Eminem`s speech is generally **not fragmented**, although he **interrupts himself** at the beginning of the sentence, and later **interjects** with a word *ahem* to imitate a cough, so as to take a small **pause** to choose the words correctly. A singer and songwriter, Billie Eilish, became seemingly frustrated when a fan threw a shoe at her during the concert, and stopped singing to comment on it: "*Can you guys not throw [swear word] at me? It's so mean…like why would you throw this at me? This doesn`t make me feel very…liked*." [90, 0:24; 62, 0:16] In this instance, even though a speech is otherwise coherent, there are a couple of **pauses**, made by a singer to self-regulate and process overwhelming emotions. While being confronted by an interviewer whom she had treated to cookies earlier, a singer and songwriter, Taylor Swift, showed her frustration with his untruthfulness: "*Don`t lie. Don`t lie on the radio. Don`t lie on the radio. No, it wasn`t. No, no. Stop. Take it back. Are you allergic to awesomeness?"* [88, 1:16] In this instance, triple **repetition** *("Don`t lie. Don`t lie on the radio. Don`t lie on the radio."* [88, 1:16]) highlights the singer`s rising shock and frustration. Moreover, she then continues to repeat *No, it wasn`t. No, no.* to openly show she disagrees with what the interviewer claims, and doesn`t believe that he responded to her kindness with

public deception. Not only such emotional states as anger and frustration affect cognition, but sadness and grief also often lead to **disfluency** and **fragmentation** in speech. For instance, during an interview for The Me You Can`t See, Lady Gaga started crying while describing her story of being sexually assaulted: *"and they didn't stop…they didn't stop asking me and then I just froze and I just…Ah.. Oh my, I don't even remember."* [61] In this excerpt, there are several instances of **repetition** ("*and they didn't stop…they didn't stop; I just froze and I just"*[61]) and **hesitation**, used to emphasize the statements, help process the emotional overwhelm, and articulate the painful experience. Millie Bobby Brown, while still being a teenage actress, recorded herself breaking down in a car after a fan proceeded with filming her despite the actress not permitting them to do so. She then continued to defend her boundaries: *"And I said I'm a human being! Like what… What more do… What more can I ask from you? [...] It just makes me upset when people try to push the boundary!"* [108, 0:42] Due to emotional overwhelm, the combination of despair and anger, and personal resistance, the speech is **fragmented**, with the occurrences of **pauses, repetitions** ("*Like what… What more do… What more can I ask from you?"* [108, 0:42]), **broken syntax** and **self-interruptions**. In her interview with People, an American actress, Peyton List, touched upon the death of her best friend and co-star Cameron Boyce: *"So…Ev-every time something big happens, I wanna…call him… uhm…yeah."* [86, 4:36] The stuttering "*Ev-every time"* signifies that this topic is emotionally heavy for the speaker, and she is overwhelmed with the feeling of grief. As it becomes difficult to convey her emotions, Peyton turns to ellipsis and then uses filler words to dilute the following pause ("… *uhm…yeah"*). A singer and songwriter, Sia, when talking about her emotions to a well-known psychiatrist, Gabor Mate, confessed: "*I-I couldn't have done it before. I thought feelings would kill me. I thought that, that I could die from feelings. That's what."* [87, 18:16] Stuttering ("*I-I couldn't"*) and repetition ("*I thought that, that"*) call attention to the importance of these thoughts, and show inner hesitation and emotional overwhelm, as the conversation touches upon traumatic experiences in the past. Although not so common, sadness can manifest in similar ways in men. Discussing how he left the pop band One Direction, singer Zayn Malik interrupted

himself to add: "*but [sob] … a lot of time it was… in the early days it was… crazy*." [109] He starts a clause, and then **interrupts himself mid-sentence**, i.e., **restarts**, as he is struggling to name the emotion and describe his experience accurately. The **pauses** indicate that he might be self-censoring in order not to say something provoking or disrespectful about former band members. In the movie excerpts, **fragmentation** is not so common, although also present. For example, in the movie Killers of the Flower Moon (2023), the protagonist Ernest Bukhart gets infuriated with his wife`s refusal to accept medical care: "*Well, am I a doctor, you a doctor? Stupid, stubborn [swear word] ought to let them men do their work! That's what you should do. So I'm the doctor now? [...] But no, no, you think you know everything, right?"* [57] The **repetition** of the word ***no*** indicates that the speaker is unsatisfied with his wife`s actions. In the 2025 TV show Adolescence, a teenage boy, Jamie, who is accused of killing a girl, also fails to control his emotional state: *"I don`t [swear word] want to sit down! You do not tell me when to sit down! You do not control what I [swear word]... Look at me now! You do not control what I do in my life!..."* [84] In this excerpt, there are examples of **repetition** and **self-interruption** ("*You do not control what I [swear word]... Look at me now!*" [84]).

Another common linguistic feature is the use of **swear words**. To keep the academic tone of the paper, the exact phrasing has not been replicated here and instead substituted with [swear word]. The use of **explicit vocabulary** is specifically prominent in the outright expressions of anger and frustration in both real-life situations and movie scripts. In our study, strong vocabulary has been used in seven instances. For example, an actor named Will Smith became infuriated after comedian Chris Rock made a joke about his wife: *"Keep my wife`s name out of your [swear word] mouth!"* [77, 0:49], while specifically putting emphasis on the explicit word. Similar utterances can be noticed in:

- Billie Eilish`s request to her fans: "*Can you guys not throw [swear word] at me?*" [90, 0:24];
- Chapell Roan`s being angry with an intrusive photographer: "*You shut the [swear word] up.*" [91, 0:16];

- Marie`s conflict with Malcolm in the 2022 movie Malcolm & Marie: "*What the [swear word] do you know about shame and guilt? You've got […]. What the [swear word] do you know?*" [83];
- Earnest`s disapproval of his wife`s choice in the 2023 movie Killers of the Flower Moon: "*Stupid, stubborn [swear word]*" [57];
- Jamie`s rage in the 2025 TV show Adolescence: "*I don`t [swear word] want to sit down! You do not tell me when to sit down! You do not control what I [swear word]...*" [84].

Sometimes **explicit vocabulary** also serves as a means to articulate mild irritation, especially if the speaker often uses such language in their daily life, as, for example, in Eminem's comment: *"…don't give a [swear word] about your career. You think I actually [swear word] think about you? You know how many [swear word] rappers that ahem… are better than you?"* [75, 20:51].

As anger is usually thought of as an emotion elicited by another object or human, therefore, it is especially common to shift to blaming. In public or semi-public settings, this allows the speaker to regain control and a sense of justice. Blaming serves to create distance between the speaker and the emotion-eliciting object, and often manifests as **causatives** and **impersonal constructions** (e.g., *you made me, they don`t understand*), **imperative commands, rhetorical questions** implying responsibility, **the repetition** of the pronoun ***you*, deflection**, etc.

**Impersonal constructions** and **causatives** are prevalent features to highlight someone`s responsibility for one`s feelings. For instance, Billie Eilish emphasized how she felt disrespected when a fan started throwing things at her: "*This doesn`t make me feel very…liked*." [62, 0:16] Another example of this is Millie Bobby Brown, who reacted with evident dejection after her refusal had been ignored: *"It just makes me upset when people try to push the boundary!"* [108, 0:42]

Another way of communicating one`s feelings is stating that something was indeed harmful and caused these feelings. For example, *"It's disrespectful to thank me"*[89], *"It's so mean…"* [90, 0:24]. In addition, one can call to personal responsibility: *"You think you're dad, but you're not."* [53], *"Why would you throw*

*this at me?"* [90, 0:24; 62, 0:16], *"You know how many [swear word] rappers that [cough] are better than you?"* [75, 20:51], *"You do not control what I do in my life!"* [84], *"But no, no, you think you know everything, right?"* [57], *"So you can't go anywhere. I`m just a kid!"* [59]. The usage of the pronoun ***you*** highlights that the speaker aims to call to another person`s conscience and elicit a behavioral change.

In spontaneous negative reactions, especially those expressing anger and frustration, the use of **imperative forms** can act as a way to confront observed oppression or intrusion. These verb forms aid in asserting control and autonomy, and using *you* in front of the verb typically implies anger. **Imperatives** can be found in seven excerpts from our research:

- Quentin Tarantino refusing to answer a provocative question: *"Do not ask me a question like that."* [69, 7:02];
- Will Smith replying to an unpleasant joke: *"Keep my wife`s name out of your [swear word] mouth!"* [77, 0:49];
- Taylor Swift exposing a dishonest interviewer: *"Don`t lie. Don`t lie on the radio. Don`t lie on the radio. […]Stop. Take it back."* [88, 1:16];
- Chapell Roan responding to the photographer who shouted at the singer at the 2024 VMAs carpet: *"You shut the [swear word] up."* [91, 0:16];
- Jamie yelling at the therapist in the TV show Adolescence (2025): *"You do not tell me when to sit down!"* [84];
- Edmund Pevensie screaming at his brother in the movie Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005): *"Shut up! You think you're dad, but you're not!"* [53];
- Ryan Reynolds silencing his co-star while taking a polygraph test for a Vanity Fair interview: *"Suck it, Lou! It was three hours and fifty-two minutes.*" [95, 3:32]

In the aforementioned instances, **the intonation is falling**, as it usually is in **imperative statements** unless they are uttered in a questioning manner. [32] This means that the speakers are confident in their words, and what they said is consistent with the emotional states (i.e., they feel angry, frustrated, or upset).

**Passive aggressiveness** is one of the ways of expressing frustration and anger without openly stating one's feelings, although it has not been thoroughly researched in this paper. A good example of this would be Olivia Rodrigo`s sarcastic response to an interviewer, who pointed out she had a chipped tooth on her album cover: *"New insecurity unlocked, thanks so much."* [80, 8:25] In this instance, it is clear that the speaker is not happy with the interviewer`s comment, and therefore, the gratitude is not sincere. In addition, the intonation is falling instead of rising, as it would have been if Olivia were genuinely appreciative of the statement. It is also not uncommon to use ***I`m sorry*** in order to convey confusion and negative feelings, rather than apologize (e.g., Robert Downey Jr.: *"I`m sorry, I… I really don't want"*[70, 6:31])

**Rhetorical questions** are a prominent occurrence in spontaneous emotional speech and can signify various states, e.g., anger, defiance, frustration, annoyance, irony, exhaustion, injustice, hurt, etc. When said with a **rising-falling intonation**, such questions imply strong feelings of irritation and injustice, especially if there are no pauses left for the interlocutor to share their point of view, e.g., *"What the [swear word]* [↗] *do you know about shame and guilt* [↘]*?"*[83], *What more* [↗] *can I ask from you* [↘]*?"* [108, 0:42], *"You think I actually [swear word]* [↗] *think about you* [↘] *?"* [75, 20:51] **Rising intonation** is usually used in **yes/no questions** and **requests**, particularly if paired with sarcasm or frustration, e.g., *"Well, am I a doctor, you a doctor?"* [57], *"So I'm the doctor now?"* [57], *"Are you allergic to awesomeness?"* [88, 1:16], *"Can you guys not throw [swear word] at me?"* [90, 0:24], and *"You know how many [swear word] rappers that ahem… are better than you?"* [75, 20:51] **Falling intonation** can be used in **rhetorical questions** to highlight impatience and contempt, e.g., *"Uh, what are we doing?*" [70, 6:31]

One of the most prominent prosodic features of negative emotional responses in spontaneous speech is **reduced harmony-to-noise ratio**. In the majority of instances in this study, the ratio is rather low, although more commonly so in real-life interactions than in movies. Sometimes the speaker might start a sentence with high clarity, but then suddenly reduce their **harmony-to-noise ratio (HNR)** due to strong feelings of frustration and consequent vocal strain (e.g., Robert Downey Jr.: *"I`m sorry, I… I really*

*don't want…Uh, what are we doing?"* [70, 6:31]). Furthermore, if crying, yelling, emotional suppression, or breathiness are present, the **HNR** is more likely to be on the lower side of the spectrum. For instance, as Machine Gun Kelly became seemingly disappointed during the interview, the emotional conflict led to a significant reduction in **HNR** (*"… uh uh you ah-I - Dude, I`ve done this so many times. Dude can we just… I don`t wanna do an interview. Can I, can we just like… I don`t…"* [64, 11:22]).

To assert one`s authority and autonomy, a person might also use the phrase ***I don`t want to***. For example, both Robert Downey Jr. and Machine Gun Kelly expressed significant discomfort during the interview: *"I`m sorry, I… I really don't want…"* [70, 6:31], *"I don`t wanna do an interview."*[64, 11:22], whereas singer Justin Bieber got angry at the paparazzi: *"I`m saying I don't want you to be here."* [89] Another instance can be found in the movie Adolescence (2025): *"I don`t [swear word] want to sit down!"* [84]

The use of **metaphor** is more prevalent among negative emotional reactions than positive ones, and is another way of expressing emotional states without explicitly mentioning them. For example, Quentin Tarantino`s phrase *"I'm not biting"* [69, 7:02] has a figurative meaning, i.e., he does not want to and does not consider himself gullible enough to respond to a question aimed at eliciting a particular response, just as a fish would not "bite a baited hook". He further develops his thought with a phrase, *"I`m not your slave and you`re not my master."* [69, 7:02], emphasizing that the interviewer acts as an oppressor rather than an equal human being. Another instance of the use of **metaphorical language** would be Sia`s confession: *"I thought feelings would kill me. I thought that, that I could die from feelings."* [87, 18:16]. It is obvious to a listener that feelings cannot kill a person in a literal sense, although they can make one suffer painfully, therefore, the singer uses **hyperbole** to emphasize how strong her feelings were at that time. When Lady Gaga describes her experience with the phrase *"I just froze"*[61], it can be inferred that she could not say or do anything and was stuck in the freeze mode from the psychological point of view, not literally frozen.

Sometimes, **euphemisms** can be used to soften the intensity of emotional speech. For instance, in the movie IF (2024), protagonist Bea pleads to her dying dad:

“*So you can't go anywhere. I`m just a kid! Please, Daddy, please. Please.*” [59] It is obvious that *go* is a euphemism here, which means *die*. Therefore, a girl does not want her dad to die, but cannot use the word explicitly.

To conclude this subchapter, the study helped to notice specific patterns common among spontaneous expressions of anger, frustration, grief, sadness, and similar emotional states. Such reactions mainly appeared due to some emotion-eliciting factors, e.g., disrespectful behavior, inappropriate questions, lying, talking about painful past experiences, being misunderstood or not taken seriously, and even being unable to influence another human. In spontaneous communication, negative emotional responses tend to cause **fragmented** or **disfluent speech**, as succumbing to intense feelings hinders rational thinking. In most cases, such disruptions in speech lead to a **low harmony-to-noise ratio**, usage of **interjections**, **filler words**, and **explicit vocabulary**. Furthermore, there is a clear pattern of externalization in male speakers and internalization in female speakers, i.e., women tend to show sadness and grief more outwardly, while for men anger is a more common emotional response to negative stimuli. Therefore, even though this is not a rule and the line blurs with younger generations, stereotypical perception does indeed affect the acceptable levels of vulnerability and emotionality among men and women in our society.

### 2.3. Expressions of confusion in spontaneous speech

**Confusion** indicates a lack of understanding due to the ambiguity of the given information or conflicting, absurd data. [8] Even though confusion is not an emotion but a cognitive state, it still encompasses several feelings, such as frustration, surprise, shock, embarrassment, fear, disbelief, amusement, and disappointment. It often causes people to react with nervous laughter, interjections, filler words, repetition of simple words, stammering, or pauses. In media, confusion can be a good example of authentic spontaneous speech, and usually signals that something does not match the prediction, and therefore creates conflict between reality and brain`s expectation.

This subchapter will focus on how emotional states affect the linguistic aspects of the expression of confusion in spontaneous speech. For this analysis, 16

excerpts from video interviews and recordings with public figures (8 men and 8 women), with the addition of 5 excerpts from movies, have been chosen.

As well as in negative spontaneous reactions, confusion is frequently accompanied by **fragmented speech**. It can disrupt fluency and make utterances incomplete or incohesive. For instance, it can be noticed in Olivia Rodrigo`s reply to a commonly searched question, which she read incorrectly during the WIRED interview: *"In high school, uhm… Oh, I was like, uhm, a high school age? Uh…"* [107, 3:48]. Furthermore, this can serve as an example of **pausing** and **hesitation**, which she attempted to minimize with the use of the **filler words** (*"uhm… Oh, I was like, uhm,"* [107, 3:48]). Similar situation, although without overreliance on **fillers,** occurs in the movie Dream Scenario (2023): *"Well, I... Do you mean from grad school?"* [56]. In this excerpt, protagonist Sheila expresses confusion, and initially stumbles, eventually **interrupting herself**. During his interview for WIRED, an actor Chris Hemsworth was surprised by a question and reacted with a phrase *"Huh-ha… Uhhh… Hmm…Yeah. I dunno. Huh-ha"* [104, 2:12]. This reaction is another instance of **hesitation**, which is, as it could be observed, a common feature of emotional speech characterized by confusion. One more example of the use of **filler words** can be seen in the reaction of a famous pop singer and songwriter Adele, who, during her first live translation on Instagram, could not understand how to navigate the app`s complex interface: *"Huh... no… Oh my God, oh, oh, oh, it's changing! Oh… Oh my goodness"* [67, 27:57]. Furthermore, it can serve as an example of **repetition**. An instance of **pausing** can be found in the WIRED interview with Daniel Radcliffe: *"Is Daniel Radcliffe`s … leg a lefty? No, huh, I don't think so…"* [98, 2:07]. Moreover, the actor creates a disjointed question by separating *a lefty*? from the rest of the sentence, therefore showing his surprise. In general, **hesitation** can be one of the hallmarks of spontaneous speech, especially if the speaker is at loss for words or does not comprehend what answer is expected.

Since confusion denotes the state of the experience not matching the inner prediction, speakers may frequently choose the phrase ***I don`t know*** to emphasize the element of surprise, and the lack of one`s own knowledge or understanding regarding

a topic. For instance, Andrew Garfield`s reply *"Hahaha… I don`t know."* [101, 2:22] and Finn Wolfhard`s *"I don't know if it`s English or not."* [99, 4:16]. It is also not uncommon to further simplify the phrase in a casual conversation to *I dunno*: *"Yeah. I dunno. Huh-ha"* [104, 2:12]. Another word commonly used to express confusion is the clarification ***mean***, e.g., *what do you mean?* and *what is that supposed to mean?*, implying the speaker wants to hear an explanation in order to react or reply correctly. Although in our research this feature has been mostly found in movie excerpts (e.g., *"Do you mean from grad school?"* [56], *"What do you mean, in what way?"* [56]), it frequently accompanies spontaneous speech in real life as well (e.g., Kenzie Ziegler during the interview for Glamour reacted to her sister`s compliment with *"Oh, what is that supposed to mean?"* [76, 1:45]).

Furthermore, the use of **yes/no questions, wh-questions**, as well as **rhetorical questions**, can be found in many utterances expressing confusion, as they help to either highlight the lack of clarity or demonstrate shock and disbelief. In our research, 17 out of 21 excerpts contained some kind of questions. What is more, **rising intonation** is a hallmark of spontaneous expressions of surprise in response to positive stimuli, even though **wh-questions** usually have a **rising-falling intonation**. For instance, Sabrina Carpenter did not expect her birthday cake to have a meme printed on it, and her immediate response was *"Who did the cake?* [↗] *You did that?* [↗]*"* [68, 0:11], where both questions were asked with a **rising intonation**. However, if confusion is not paired with positive emotions, **wh-question** will stick to a **rising-falling intonation** pattern, e.g., in the movie Road House (2024): *"What?* [↗] *Who taught you* [↗] *shapes?* [↘]*"* [58]. **Yes/no questions** are used to clarify the situation, e.g., *"Do you mean from grad school?"* [56]; *"That I know everything?"* [103, 2:43]; *"Fallon?"* [105, 6:52], although sometimes they can be said jokingly, just as Finn Wolfhard did during his interview for WIRED *"Am I having a head injury?"* [99, 4:16]. What is more, they can express sudden realizations mixed with disbelief (e.g., singer and songwriter Halsey for their interview with Jimmy Fallon recalls her shock: *"Oh my God, was I a child star?"* [94, 4:05]; the chef in the movie The Menu (2022) doesn`t believe that a woman did not die after eating his meals, and even demanded

more food: *"You are still hungry?"* [55]). **Rhetorical questions** are a common occurrence, and mainly happen when a speaker does not want to hear a clarification, but deems the utterance or a situation strange or inappropriate. Reading an unexpected question about whether she had a twin sister, a singer Gwen Stefani simply asked *"What? huh haha"* [100, 5:52] with a **rising intonation** on *what?* and falling intonation while laughing, showcasing that a common question about her biography wasn`t something she had thought people would ever believe. Similarly, Daniel Radcliffe specifically emphasized the last word while reading a strange question: *"Is Daniel Radcliffe`s…leg a lefty?"* [98, 2:07]; whereas a singer Olivia Rodrigo couldn`t understand the question: *"I was like, uhm, a high school age?"* [107, 3:48]. While answering a question about the movie he took part in, an actor Penn Badgley asks *"Ha-has this person seen the show?"* [106, 0:12]. It serves as both a deflection and an expression of incredulity, although the speaker does not expect to hear the answer, as he probably deems it obvious. A singer Conan Gray does not hide his surprise while looking through the list of questions: *"What are you guys googling?"* [71, 9:23]. Sometimes such questions can show disbelief and despair, such as the wife asking her husband in the TV show Adolescence (2025): *"How did we make him?"* [84], even though it is obvious that there is no answer and wrong question is asked.

Furthermore, sometimes spontaneous speech of confusion can be expressed though **exclamations**, which help convey surprise and, e.g., *"Oh my God, oh, oh, oh, it's changing!"* [67, 27:57].

Some sentences in the spontaneous speech of confusion can also appear incomplete due to interrupted thoughts, leading to the use of **ellipsis**. For instance, Millie Bobby Brown asked *"Fallon?"* [105, 6:52] upon seeing a Google search featuring one of her outfits, assuming that it was from her appearance on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon". When presented with this question without any context, it is hard to come up with any plausible conclusions. Another use of **ellipsis** can be observed in Mark Wahlberg`s question *"That I know everything?"* [103, 2:43]. It can be inferred that someone presumed Mark Wahlberg is very knowledgeable about a

certain topic, and the confused actor asked whether he understood the statement correctly.

**The interjection *Oh my God!*** is commonly recognized as a hallmark of spontaneous emotional speech, and can express a range of different affective states, including confusion. In such occasions, it functions as a metalinguistic device showing the mismatch between what was expected and what actually happened. For instance, when Jacob Batalon saw a commonly searched query with his name next to the Central Philippine language, he couldn`t hide his surprise: *"[laughs] Tagalog… [laughs] Oh my God!"* [102, 4:50]. Another example of this can be found in Halsey`s reaction *"Oh my God, was I a child star?"* [94, 4:05], when presented with unexpected information leading to a shocking conclusion. Although it is typically thought of as an exclamation of surprise, *Oh my God!* can also serve as a means to **fill the pause** when the speaker doesn`t know what to do or say. Trying to use the chat during the live stream on Instagram, singer Adele faced certain difficulties, consequently attempting to adjust to new or unexpected information: *"Oh my God, oh, oh, oh, it's changing! Oh… Oh my goodness"* [67, 27:57].

Another feature of spontaneous speech is **reduced harmony-to-noise ratio**, which is also present in reactions of confusion, leading to increase in breathiness, vocal fry, non-lexical fillers, and disfluent phrasing, i.e., restarting and pausing. For example, *"Huh…no… Oh my God, oh, oh, oh, it's changing! Oh…"* [67, 27:57]; *"In highschool, uhm… Oh, I was like, uhm, a high school age? Uh…"* [107, 3:48]; *"Huh-ha… Uhhh… Hmm…Yeah. I dunno. Huh-ha"* [104, 2:12]. In addition, the speech associated with the feeling of confusion is often accompanied by the presence of **nervous laughter,** e.g., *"What? huh haha"* [100, 5:52]; *"Huh-ha… Uhhh… Hmm…Yeah. I dunno. Huh-ha"* [104, 2:12]. It usually signifies that the topic is uncomfortable for the speaker and is easier to deflect than to answer directly. **Nervous laughter** usually **reduces the HNR**. On the other hand, **high harmony-to-noise ratio** can be noticed in **rhetorical questions**, therefore cognitive disorientation does not always lead to vocal disturbances, especially if the speaker had a moment to think through.

**Metaphorical language** is not normally observed in spontaneous reactions of confusion, as it often doesn`t give the speaker enough room to focus on formulating a response, that is why **oversimplified language** is preferred. Nonetheless, if a person naturally prefers to reply with the use of **sarcastic** or **metaphorical language**, it might be their first choice even when confused, e.g., Finn Wolfhard`s response *"Am I having a head injury? Cause I don't know if it's English or no."* [99, 4:16].

In conclusion, spontaneous expressions of confusion tend to lack **coherence** and **cohesion**, and both **grammar** and **logic** might become **disrupted**, as real-time processing takes place. The most frequent feature is the use of **questions**, and it occurs in approximately 80 percent of all instances. As people feel conflicted about what to respond, it is not surprising that **rhetorical questions** and **clarifications** are chosen over **stating one`s feelings** or using **metaphor**. However, **exclamations** are also used to show bewilderment or surprise without directly addressing the interlocutor. **Interjections** (e.g., *Oh my God!, Oh!*) and **filler words** frequently occur in spontaneous expressions of confusion in order to complete the **pauses** and convey surprise. However, although the presence of **fragmentation** is common, it is not at all necessary, as one`s emotional state can be described with the use of **simple language**. It is much more common in spontaneous expressions of confusion, and can help communicate the ideas while the speaker`s brain is processing conflicting information. Another explanation as to why the simplified vocabulary is preferred in such instances is that people feel secondary emotions, i.e., frustration, shock, amusement, fear, disbelief or embarrassment, which significantly hinder the natural flow of speech and require more processing to navigate simultaneously.

In general, the use of language in displaying confusion is similar among all genders and age groups, and both posed and real-life spontaneous speech tends to be rather alike.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

To sum up, emotional reactions in spontaneous speech, no matter whether positive, negative or those of confusion, exhibit distinct yet overlapping linguistic and prosodic features, which reflect the speaker`s cognitive and affective states. Positive responses are usually associated with the use of **exclamations** (e.g., *"I`ve never seen them!"* [63, 0:31]; *"I'm the king of the world!"* [51]), **interjections** (e.g., *"Oh my God, thank you!"* [94, 8:02], *"Thank you so much, oh my god"* [73, 1:34], *"Oh my god, I`d love to!"* [63, 0:31], *"Oh no way! Oh my god!"* [97, 0:13]), **rhetorical questions** (e.g., *"…how am I gonna follow Oprah?!"* [79, 0:50], *"This is a perfect day, isn`t it?"* [66, 3:50], *"Sing for me?"* [72, 0:01]); **figurative and associative language** (e.g., "*they should`ve sent…the poet."* [52]) **stative and delexical verbs**, such as love, feel and make (e.g., *"I literally love you, guys"* [73, 1:34], *"I loved it so much"* [74, 14:57], *"…it feels good to be here…"* [65, 0:10], *"That makes me so happy"* [82, 10:13]), **intensifiers** (e.g., *"I literally love you"* [73, 1:34], *"That`s really sweet"* [78, 7:09]), **strong positive adjectives** (e.g., *"That is an incredible compliment"* [78, 7:09],*"…they`re awesome."* [85, 1:04], *"Amazing!"* [65, 0:10], *"Wow, that looks amazing"* [54]), as well as **higher pitch** and **rising intonation**. It was more common for female speakers to showcase their feelings directly, to be more expressive and emotional, whereas male speakers didn`t have major pitch changes and remained rather reserved.

On the other hand, negative reactions commonly included **fragmentation** (e.g., *"… uh uh you ah - I - Dude, I`ve done this so many times. Dude, can we just… I don`t wanna do an interview. Can I, can we just do - like… I don`t…" [64, 11:22], "I`m sorry, I… I really don't want…"* [70, 6:31], *"…but I`m just saying… I`m saying I don't want you to be here."* [89]), **low harmony-to-noise ratio**, overreliance on **interjections** (e.g., *"Well, am I a doctor, you a doctor?"* [57]), **filler words** (e.g., "*Can I, can we just like… I don`t…"* [64, 11:22], "…then I just froze and I just…" [61]), **imperatives** (e.g., *"Stop. Take it back."* [88, 1:16], *"Shut up!"* [53], *"Look at me now!"* [84]), and **explicit vocabulary** (e.g., "*Can you guys not throw [swear word] at me?"* [90, 0:24], *"You shut the [swear word] up"* [91, 0:16], *"… don't give a [swear*

*word] about your career."* [75, 20:51]). Furthermore, in our research, women were more likely to express sadness and grief, whereas men were more openly angry or enraged. However, this difference blurs with the new generations.

In the majority of cases of spontaneous speech connected with the feelings of confusion, the prominent feature was the occurrence of **questions**, such as **rhetorical questions** (e.g., *"How did we make him?"* [84], *"Am I having a head injury?"* [99, 4:16]), **yes/no questions** (e.g., *"Fallon?"* [105, 6:52], *"You did that?"* [68, 0:11]), and **wh-questions** (e.g., *"Oh, what is that supposed to mean?"* [76, 1:45], *"Who taught you shapes?"* [58]). However, **stating one`s feelings** or using **metaphor** proved to be rather uncommon. It is easier to convey one`s surprise or cognitive dissonance with the use of **simple language** (*"I don`t know. Pretty sure none"* [101, 2:22], *"How do they do that?"* [96, 10:23]). The use of **interjections** (e.g., "*Oh my God, was I a child star?"* [94, 4:05], "*Oh my God, oh, oh, oh, it's changing!"* [67, 27:57]) and **filler words** (*"Oh, I was like, uhm, a high school age? Uh…"* [107, 3:48]) helps fill the **pauses**, and often occurs in spontaneous speech characterized by confusion. The **HNR** is usually **low** in spontaneous speech, unless the speaker is asking a **question**. **Reduced harmony-to-noise ratio** wasn`t also observed in the movie excerpts, therefore mostly occurs in real-life communication.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigates how spontaneous emotional responses (positive, negative, and those associated with confusion) are expressed in speech, specifically in real-life interactions. It examines the linguistic and prosodic features which people use to communicate emotions in naturally occurring conversations, represented by interview excerpts, live videos and recorded conversations with public figures, as compared to scripted movie excerpts. By exploring both linguistic and prosodic patterns, the research offers new insight into how emotion and cognition are connected in spontaneous speech, and how they affect the word choice and intonation.

Firstly, spontaneous emotional reactions represent a phenomenon which can be analyzed from the point of view of several different disciplines: linguistics, psychology and neuroscience. Although under-researched, the connection between emotional expression and linguistic features is quite evident and rather complex. Since such reactions occur in spontaneous, unscripted speech, they tend to lack syntactic complexity and present certain lexical and structural patterns, such as false starts, hesitation, pausing, repetition, phonetic errors, simplified grammar, the use of filler words, interjections, rhetorical questions, exclamations, explicit and figurative language. In addition, affective states are rarely articulated in a literal way, as speakers tend to rely on metaphor, associations, intensifiers and strong adjectives in order to convey their feelings. Among prosodic patterns mostly found in spontaneous speech there are pitch changes, low or high harmony-to-noise ratio, changes in amplitude and tempo of voice, falling, rising, falling-rising or rising-falling intonation, and breathiness. Such features reveal how various emotional states are processed and externalized in real-time conversations with the help of linguistics.

Secondly, emotions are experienced as dynamic, multisensory events that can trigger memories, strong reactions and specific neural connections. They require the correct word choice from the speaker and comprehension from the other party, and can only be fully processed when labeled and articulated. However, in spontaneous speech the goal is usually not only to explain one`s emotions explicitly, but also to reveal them implicitly, which usually happens through tone, laughter, interjections, associative

language, and fragmented speech. From a linguistic point of view, spontaneous speech reflects the unpredictability of human feelings, and how it can be expressed through the word choice and vocal changes.

Furthermore, even though spontaneous emotional reactions are believed to be intense, they are most commonly not, as higher intensity of expression is a more frequent occurrence in scripted speech. It can be inferred that due to the inherently affective and immediate nature of emotion, it is often difficult to articulate clearly at the moment of talking, as the brain is occupied with the processing of one`s inner state and emotion-eliciting information. This is why disruptions commonly occur in the unscripted speech, and include hesitation, pausing, filler words and repetition. They directly mirror the cognitive and emotional overload that the speaker is facing, and can pinpoint the real intensity of one`s feelings without the speaker directly naming them. Thus, spontaneous emotional reactions typically use familiar, accessible and often simplified vocabulary, such as *Oh my God!*, *What?*, *I don`t know*, *I dunno*, *amazing*, *happy*, etc. Those are easily recognized by listeners and effortlessly interpreted within the context. The presence of the latter, however, is essential for the correct understanding of someone`s emotional expression.

Overall, our research emphasizes the significant function of language and prosody in deciphering the speaker`s emotional speech, which further aids in maintaining valuable human interaction. Even when speech appears to be fragmented, commonly recognized expressions play an important role in conveying emotional states and fostering mutual understanding between speakers and listeners. Our findings point to the complexity and communicative value of unscripted reactions, and offer a rich foundation for further interdisciplinary research on real-time emotional expressions, specifically in linguistics, psychology, neuroscience, media discourse, or related fields.

# РЕЗЮМЕ

Дане дослідження зосереджене на вивченні лінгвістичних характеристик спонтанних емоційних реакцій в англійській мові, що виникають під час невимушеного усного спілкування. Актуальність теми зумовлена зростаючим інтересом до взаємозв'язку між мовленням та емоційним станом, особливо у випадках, коли афективна реакція формується імпульсивно та без попереднього планування. Спираючись на аналіз лінгвістичних та просодичних закономірностей, дослідження допомагає розкрити як емоції впливають на лексичний вибір та інтонацію, і як саме цей вибір допомагає передати емоційний стан мовця. Дана тема може бути розкрита з точки зору декількох дисциплін: лінгвістики, психології та нейробіології, однак саме лінгвістичний аналіз спонтанних емоційних реакцій надає необхідне підґрунтя для подальших досліджень.

Метою представленої роботи є аналіз окремих лексичних, просодичних, та граматичних особливостей, які виникають у спонтанному мовленні та пов'язані з конкретними афективними станами. Окрім того, важливо було проаналізувати комунікативний намір мовця та загальний контекст ситуації, у якій виникла відповідна реакція. Для досягнення поставленої дослідницької мети було реалізовано низку завдань:

- дано визначення спонтанного мовлення та його основних ознак;
- визначено зв'язок між емоційним станом та його вираженням за допомогою мовлення;
- проаналізовано вплив емоцій на вибір слів та змін інтонації мовця;
- визначено основні лінгвістичні та просодичні особливості спонтанного емоційного мовлення;
- досліджено зв'язок між інтенсивністю емоційної реакції, фрагментарністю мовлення та автентичністю емоційного стану;
- виявлено спільні та відмінні риси позитивних і негативних емоційних реакцій, а також реакцій збентеження, у спонтанній комунікації;

- проаналізовано вплив лінгвістичних та просодичних особливостей мовлення на сприйняття афективного стану мовця слухачем.

Об’єктом дослідження є вибірка з 46 відео-фрагментів з інтерв’ю та записами діалогів з різними публічними особами, а також 18 уривків з відомих фільмів для того, щоб зіставити автентичне спонтанне мовлення з підготовленим заздалегідь, і порівняти інтенсивність емоційної реакції. Предметом дослідження є лінгвістичні та просодичні закономірності, які відслідковуються в різних контекстах у спонтанному афективному мовленні, та вплив на них відмінних емоційних станів мовця.

Робота складається з анотації, змісту, вступу, 2 розділів з висновками, 7 підрозділів, висновків, резюме, списку використаних джерел з 49 найменувань та списку допоміжних матеріалів з 60 джерел. Загальний обсяг бакалаврської роботи становить 65 сторінок. Висновки, представлені в цій роботі, повністю ґрунтуються на матеріалах, зібраних студентом, а всі джерела належним чином процитовані та включені до списку використаних джерел та допоміжних матеріалів.

У ході дослідження було з’ясовано, що спонтанне емоційне мовлення можна розглядати як окремий різновид комунікативної складової у лінгвістичному дискурсі, який формується під впливом реакції на певний емоційно-зумовлений подразник, та характеризується порушеннями структурованості мовлення, наприклад паузами, ваганням, повторами, перебудовою висловлювання, само-перебиванням, а також надмірним використанням слів-паразитів, вигуків, риторичних запитань, спонукальних речень, наказового способу, метафор, лексики як у прямому, так і в переносному значеннях. Окрім того, спонтанне мовлення зазвичай характеризується браком синтаксичної складності, спрощеними граматичними структурами та використанням обмеженого словникового запасу. Серед просодичних складників спонтанного емоційного мовлення можна виділити зміни висоти звукового тону та амплітуди голосу, низьке або високе співвідношення гармонійності до шуму (harmony-to-noise ratio), спадну, висхідну та висхідно-

спадну інтонації, а також наявність придиху, штробасу або перерваної ритмічності мовлення.

У процесі аналізу вдалося виокремити притаманність таких лексично-граматичних ознак спонтанним реакціям у відповідь на позитивні подразники: використання спонукальних речень, вигуків, наприклад *Oh my God*, риторичних питань (особливо при здивуванні), художніх засобів та асоціацій, семантично слабких дієслів та дієслів стану, такі як *love, feel* та *make*, інтенсифікаторів, таких як really та literally, сильних прикметників, наприклад awesome, amazing, incredible та perfect, а також збільшення звукового тону та наявність висхідної інтонації. Загалом, аналіз вираження таких емоцій як подив, захоплення та радість не показав суттєвих відмінностей між автентичними та підготовленими реакціями, однак яскравіше емоційне забарвлення частіше зустрічалось саме в уривках з фільмів, а також під час вираження здивування. Однак у мовленні в режимі реального часу переважно було присутнє порушення структурованості. Окрім того, дослідження показує, що жінки переважно частіше та з більшою легкістю висловлюють власні почуття, і більш відкрито використовують вираження вдячності або глибокого захоплення, особливо за допомогою дієслова стану *love,* у той час як чоловіки залишаються більш стриманими, навіть за використання сильних прикметників та вигуків. Хоча точні причини такої відмінності неясні, можна припустити, що вона здебільшого зумовлена соціально-культурними нормами, які заохочують емоційність у жінок та пригнічують її у чоловіків. Ця різниця нівелюється з представниками молодших поколінь.

З іншого боку, спонтанні емоційні реакції на негативні подразники характеризувались надмірною фрагментарністю (тобто наявністю недоречних пауз, само-перебивання, перебудовою висловлювань, заіканням тощо), низьким співвідношенням гармонійності до шуму, використанням вигуків, слів-паразитів, наказового способу, метафор, гіперболізації, крилатих виразів, пасивної агресії, фрази *I don`t want to,* а також ненормативної лексики. В уривках з фільмів інтенсивність емоційних реакцій була вираженішою, ніж у більшості

прикладів автентичного мовлення, однак не було явного порушення структурованості, притаманного спонтанним реакціям на негативні чинники під час живої розмови. У результаті дослідження було також з'ясовано, що жінки переважно відвертіше виражають сум та скорботу, а чоловікам легше висловлювати злість та гнів, однак описана ситуація має помітну тенденцію до змін.

Для більшості випадків спонтанного мовлення, пов'язаного з почуттями спантеличення, характерною ознакою було використання питань, зокрема риторичних. На відміну від реакцій гніву та суму, вживання художніх засобів та крилатих висловів досить обмежене під час стану збентеження, навіть якщо присутні дорікання, осуд або фрустрація. Поширеними є використання слова *mean* (наприклад, *What do you mean?*), фрази *I don`t know* та виклику *Oh my God*. Окрім того, у частині випадків присутні фрагментарність мовлення та зниження співвідношення гармонійності до шуму, однак ці ознаки набагато рідше трапляються в разі вираження реакції питанням. Аналізуючи уривки з фільмів, можна помітити, що там також відсутні порушення структурованості мовлення у питаннях, навіть якщо вони не риторичні. Одним з ключових факторів спонтанного мовлення у стані збентеження є використання обмеженого словникового запасу, так як здебільшого когнітивні зусилля мозку направленні на обробку ситуації, що викликає розгубленість.

Отже, дане дослідження підтверджує, що емоційний стан мовця та його комунікативна мета мають прямий вплив на вибір лексики, зміну інтонації, а також формулювання речень, особливо під час спонтанного спілкування. Проаналізовані у цій роботі особливості допоможуть краще розпізнавати емоції у невимушених реакціях; помітити почуття, які мовець хотів висловити; і проаналізувати лінгвістичні засоби, використані для досягнення комунікативної мети. Наведені властивості спонтанного емоційного мовлення можуть стати тлом для подальших досліджень даної теми.

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