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**Bachelor's thesis**

**WAYS OF EXPRESSING EMOTIONS AT THE ACADEMY  
AWARDS CEREMONY: DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS**

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«Допущено до захисту»

Протокол засідання кафедри англійської філології

та міжкультурної комунікації

Протокол 11 від 26.05.2025

Зав. кафедри \_\_\_\_\_ д. філол. н., проф. Алла БСЛОВА

KYIV – 2025

## Abstract

The thesis examines verbal and non-verbal modes of emotional expression displayed at the ceremony of the Academy Awards through diachronic linguistic analysis spanning five decades (1976-2025). The research examines the evolution of emotional speech in public speaking, analyzing the Oscar winners' acceptance speech, a specific affective genre of communication, which reflects social and cultural changes of emotional expression standards.

The first chapter sets out the theoretical foundations of emotional research in linguistics, including the categorization of emotions, paradigms to measure positive and negative factors, non-verbal components, and gender-specific patterns of affective communication. The second chapter provides an empirical analysis of 100 Oscar acceptance speeches, evenly split between two different time intervals (1976-2000 and 2001-2025) and evenly distributed with regard to gender representation.

The findings point to a significant cultural shift toward more vivid, spontaneous affective engagement and away from repressed, formalized expressions of emotion. Contemporary oratory demonstrates an increase in syntactic complexity, heightened degrees of expressiveness, and more frequent use of intensifiers. A gender analysis detects a movement toward a convergence of emotional styles, as traditional gender differences slowly diminish across time, with men increasingly adopting more open and personal forms of emotional communication. The multimodal analysis shows that emotional meanings expressed through Oscar speeches result from the rich interaction between lexical choices, prosodic features, face, bodily movement, and other embodied resources, all of them combining to transcend the simple verbal expression of emotion.

*Keywords: emotional expression, Academy Awards, diachronic analysis, multimodal discourse, gender linguistics, affective communication, public speech, sociolinguistics.*

### Анотація

Дослідження присвячене вивченню вербальних і невербальних засобів вираження емоцій під час церемонії вручення премії «Оскар» у діахронному аспекті протягом п'яти десятиліть (1976-2025). У роботі розглядається еволюція емоційного дискурсу в публічному мовленні на матеріалі промов лауреатів премії «Оскар» як унікального жанру афективної комунікації, що відображає соціокультурні трансформації норм емоційного вираження.

У першому розділі закладено теоретичні засади лінгвістичного дослідження емоцій, проаналізовано класифікації емоцій, системи позитивної й негативної оцінності, невербальні аспекти емоційної експресії та гендерні особливості афективної комунікації. У другому розділі представлено емпіричний аналіз 100 промов лауреатів премії «Оскар», рівномірно розподілених між двома часовими періодами (1976-2000 та 2001-2025) та збалансованих за гендерною ознакою.

Результати виявляють значний культурний зсув від стриманих, формальних емоційних проявів до більш експресивної, автентичної афективної комунікації. Сучасні промови демонструють підвищену синтаксичну складність, вищі ступені експресивності та частіше використання інтенсифікаторів. Гендерний аналіз показує конвергенцію стилів емоційного вираження, з традиційними гендерними відмінностями, що зменшуються з часом, оскільки чоловіки все частіше приймають більш відкриті, особистісні моделі емоційної комунікації. Мультиmodalний аналіз демонструє, що емоційна значущість у промовах на «Оскарі» походить від складних взаємодій між лексичними виборами, просодичними особливостями, виразами обличчя, жестами тіла та іншими втіленими ресурсами, які колективно перевершують просте вербальне емоційне вираження.

*Ключові слова: емоційне вираження, премія «Оскар», діахронний аналіз, мультиmodalний дискурс, гендерна лінгвістика, афективна комунікація, публічне мовлення, соціолінгвістика.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Human emotions have been a multidisciplinary research subject for a considerable period, captivating the interest of psychologists, sociolinguists, anthropologists, etc. More recently, linguists have also taken more interest in the means used to express and understand emotions in different communicative contexts, both verbal and non-verbal. One of the most revealing settings for performing such analysis is the Academy Awards ceremony, an internationally broadcasted cultural event in which emotions play a leading performative and rhetorical role. Oscar winners' acceptance speeches reveal socio-cultural and historical changes in emotional communication. The **relevance** of this research lies in the intersection of emotion studies and discourse analysis, in particular in media settings.

Numerous researchers have contributed to laying the foundation for this research. Lisa Feldman Barrett (2017, 2019) has reconstructed emotion as a socially and linguistically constructed experience. Klaus Scherer and others (2001, 2013, 2019) have significantly advanced the knowledge base on vocal and facial emotional expression across cultures. Deborah Tannen (2007), Janet Holmes (2013), and Jennifer Coates (2016) in sociolinguistics have made gendered communication clearer. Couper-Kuhlen (2018), Mondada (2019), and Atanassov et al. (2024) have developed multimodal theory with the emphasis on how bodily and technological elements are part of emotion studies.

The **aim** of this study is to examine the means of expressing emotions during the Academy Awards ceremony from a diachronic point of view.

The **objectives** of the study include:

1. to study theoretical works on emotions in linguistics;
2. to identify the main verbal and non-verbal strategies used to convey emotions in Oscar award acceptance speeches;
3. to compare changes in emotional expression during two time frames: 1976–2000 and 2001–2025;

4. to examine the influence of gender on the form and content of emotional expression in Oscar acceptance speeches;

5. to explore the level of spontaneity and preparation in emotional expression.

The **research object** is emotional expression in public speeches.

The **subject** focuses on the verbal and non-verbal linguistic means of expressing emotions in Oscar acceptance speeches.

**The material** for the study consists of 100 Oscar acceptance speeches (50 from 1976–2000 and 50 from 2001–2025), which equally represent male and female award recipients.

**The methods** employed in the study include discourse analysis, multimodal analysis, gender-based comparative analysis, diachronic comparison, and qualitative content analysis.

Its **theoretical significance** of the research lies in its contribution to understanding emotional expression as a culturally determined and socio-discursive phenomenon, combining linguistic, psychological and sociolinguistic paradigms in academic studies.

The **practical significance** is multi-faceted. The results of the study may be applied to elaborate elective courses on discourse analysis, media linguistics, gender studies, and sociolinguistics. They can be also used in practical English classes and to write students' research on related topics.

The research consists of an introduction, two main chapters, conclusions, and references. The first chapter addresses theoretical frameworks for the expression and classification of emotions, such as non-verbal and gender-oriented aspects. The second chapter offers empirical study of Oscar speeches, with a focus on verbal and non-verbal modalities, spontaneity, and gender variation over two periods. The research ends with a synopsis of findings.

# 1. THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF EMOTIONS RESEARCH IN LINGUISTICS

Emotions are a central component of human experience that permeates all spheres of social life. Linguistic encoding and expression of emotions have been the focus of significant academic attention in a variety of disciplines. In particular, linguistics provides particularly revealing information about encoding, transmitting and interpreting emotional states in language. This chapter outlines the theoretical basis of emotion research in linguistics, summarizes various classification systems, evaluative dimensions, and nonverbal components that ground our understanding of emotional expression.

## 1.1. Emotions Classifications

The taxonomic organization of emotions is perhaps the most arduous theoretical problem in linguistic research. Contemporary emotion classification accounts reflect widespread progress from earlier frameworks that treated emotions as bounded, universal categories. The field has increasingly embraced constructionist explanations that recognize emotions as emergent entities that arise out of the interaction of more basic psychological processes, where language assumes a constitutive rather than an expressive role [9, p. 23]. This theoretical shift supports the idea that emotional categories are not natural kinds with a distinct biological signature but are necessarily made by linguistic and cultural practice.

The constructionist approach has been empirically strongly supported by cross-linguistic studies uncovering enormous variation in emotional vocabulary. Scholars believe that all languages partition the emotional space differently resulting in the fact that some emotional notions are relatively similar in various cultures but others appear to be radically dissimilar. This language relativity in the concepts of emotions is even found in bilinguals, in whom there are distinct patterns of emotional conceptualization in different languages that have implications for the involvement of language

categorization systems in the determination of how emotions are experienced and expressed [28, p. 100].

Cognitive linguistic accounts have established systematicity in how abstract affective experience becomes comprehensible through the mapping of the more concrete onto the more abstract through metaphors. Evidence of the embodied nature of affective language comes in the form of stable cross-linguistic trends, for example in the conceptualization of strong emotions as pressurised fluid in containers or as overwhelming forces. Despite these similarities, there are marked cultural differences in the systems of metaphors that mark different models for self, relationship to others, and morality [24].

Dimensional models of emotion classification have emerged through empirical work that found recurring patterns in the cross-linguistic differentiation of emotions. Multidimensional scalings consistently uncover several underlying dimensions of emotion words across languages. Besides the highly publicized valence dimension (positive/negative), the emotions are also differentiated according to potency (dominance/submission), arousal (activation/deactivation), and unpredictability criteria or axes. These axes provide a compelling framework for mapping cross-linguistic equivalents of affect terms but preserve the potential for cultural specificity [20, p. 35].

Computational approaches to emotion classification also have advanced in great ways, moving past sentiment analysis at the most fundamental levels to richer theories that pick out several aspects of emotional sense. Contemporary systems fuse symbolic accounts of emotional sense and subsymbolic pattern matching in a way such that more contextualized consideration of emotional language becomes possible. They are used with real-world purpose in sentiment analysis, handling customers' opinions, and designing human-computer interface [13, p. 106].

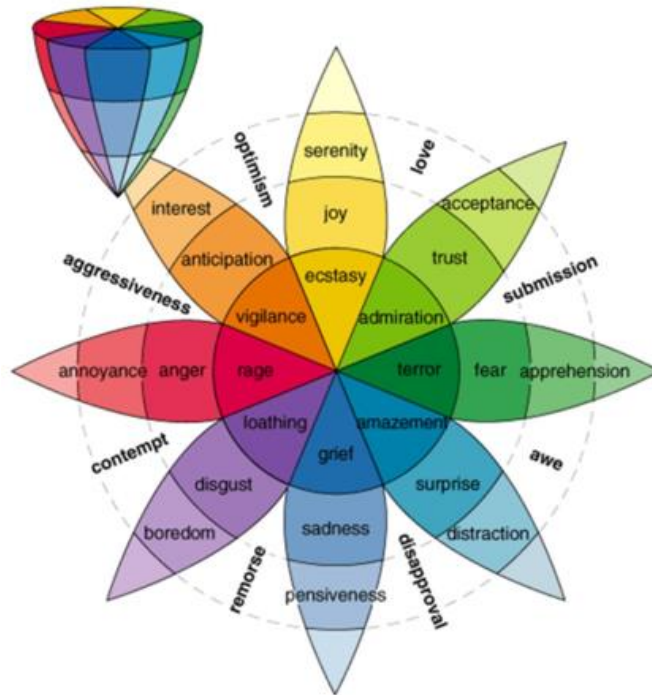
Tracy and Randles note that while early basic emotion theories proposing universally applicable, biology-based categories of emotion have come under extensive criticism, amended categorical accounts retain an influence on linguistic inquiry. Contemporary summaries of basic emotion theories acknowledge fewer

emotions (typically fear, anger, happiness, and sadness) showing relative consistency in various theoretical accounts. The basic categories of emotion serve as handy benchmarks while acknowledging complexity and cultural diversity in emotional experience [41, p. 402].

Cultural linguistics has played a major role in emotion classification by recording culturally relative emotion concepts that defy direct translation. For instance, such concepts as the German “Schadenfreude” (pleasure derived from another person’s misfortune), Japanese “amae” (the comforting feeling of being dependent on someone else’s love or indulgence), or Persian “gham” (deep sorrow or grief) emerge from particular cultural models and social practices and, thus, counter universalist expectations about emotional categories. Different studies emphasize how emotion classifications are situated within cultural conceptual systems that mirror specific historical paths and social arrangements [37, p. 22]. Natural Semantic Metalanguage techniques also try to enumerate cross-linguistically translatable semantic primitives employed in descriptions of emotional states making inter-language comparisons of emotion categories free of ethnocentric bias [21].

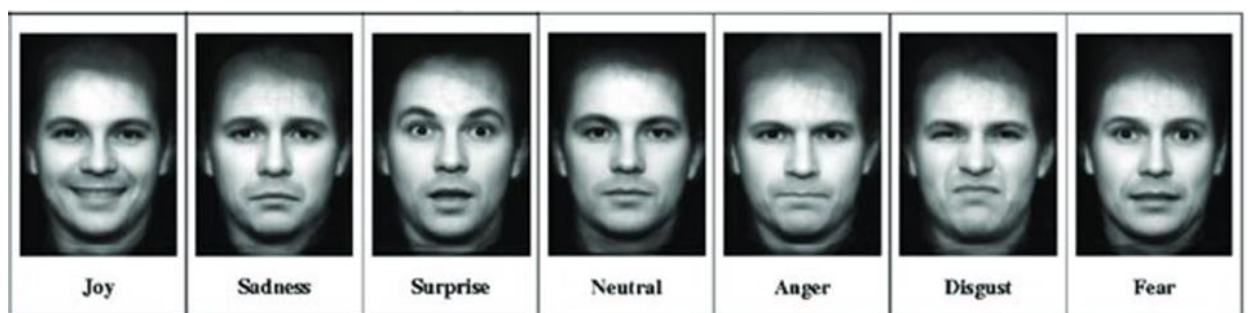
Robert Plutchik’s psycho-evolutionary theory, initially introduced in 1980 and developed during the 1980s, describes emotions as adaptive evolutionary processes with specific survival functions. Plutchik’s theory structures emotions into a three-dimensional circumplex model commonly represented as a color wheel (Figure 1.1.). The model recognizes eight basic emotions structured as four pairs of polar opposites: joy-sadness, trust-disgust, fear-anger, and anticipation-surprise. One of the greatest advantages of Plutchik’s taxonomy is its systematic ordering of emotional intensity, so that each of the basic emotions exists either on a continuum from mild to extreme expression (e.g., annoyance→anger→rage). Plutchik also hypothesized that adjacent emotions on the wheel might blend to form more complex emotional states, called “primary dyads” (e.g., joy+trust=love, fear+sadness=despair), while emotions two to the left or to the right of each other form “secondary dyads” (e.g., joy+fear=guilt) [36]. This combinatorial aspect is extremely useful for linguistic examination considering

multifaceted emotional lexicons within languages as well as between emotion words' semantic relationships.



**Fig. 1.1. Plutchik's wheel of emotions** [adapted from 23]

Paul Ekman's research on basic emotions, developed from the 1960s onwards, presents a competing taxonomy system that has had a tremendous influence on linguistic research in emotional expression. Based on massive cross-cultural research, Ekman initially presented basic emotions (joy, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and surprise) characterized by particular facial expressions found to be universally recognized in vastly disparate cultural contexts (Figure 1.2).



**Fig. 1.2. Paul Ekman's typology of basic emotions** [adapted from 7]

Later, this typology was broadened by the scholar to include contempt and, in some formulations of his theory, other feelings such as amusement, contentment, and embarrassment. The concept of universal expressions of emotion with a biological foundation is central to Ekman's theory, but he acknowledges there are "display rules" by which cultural variables moderate emotional expression.

In our study, we will to adhere to Ekman's classification of the basic emotions, and more precisely, the extended version comprising happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, surprise, and contempt. Ekman's typology is particularly beneficial for identifying prototypical emotional expressions in discourse, examining the linguistic realization of basic affective states, and searching for potential universals in emotional language.

## **1.2. Emotion: Positive and Negative Evaluation**

The way emotions are linguistically expressed fundamentally includes their evaluative aspect. The basic positive-negative opposition offers an initial intuitive framework to begin studying emotional meaning yet recent studies demonstrate more intricate methods for encoding and communicating emotional evaluation through language means.

Martin and White note that systemic-functional descriptions of evaluative language are used to describe complex networks of evaluative resources operating at different linguistic levels [29, p. 35]. Systemic-functional theories acknowledge several interconnected systems: affect (expression of emotional response directly), judgment (moral evaluation of behavior), and appreciation (esthetic evaluation of objects or events). This threefold identification is the manner in which evaluative meaning operates systemically in language, from lexico-grammatical choice of language means to their discourse-semantic configuration. The evaluative nature of systematic language enables speakers to use emotional judgments strategically when they aim at attaining rhetorical goals in certain communicative situations [40, p. 29].

Cross-linguistic research on emotion lexicon dissolves reductive binary evaluative classification. Corpus analysis of concepts of emotions illustrates that seemingly elementary emotions have richly complex evaluative sets which cannot be reduced to simple positive and negative emotion distinctions. For instance, language means denoting anger in different languages are highly internally variable since the vocabulary denoting this emotion shifts in the evaluative aspects in terms of legitimacy, control, and intentionality. Scholars argue that such complexity is present in the lexico-grammatical representation also of other domains of affect, where sense lexemes (taste and smell words) form particularly emotionally loaded and evaluatively dense part of vocabulary [45, p. 975].

The contextual nature of emotional evaluation is manifested in the way evaluative meanings are conditioned in interaction. Rather than being fixed properties of lexical items, emotional evaluations emerge through interactive interactions in which participants jointly establish, challenge, or modify evaluative attitudes. This interactive approach demonstrates that emotional evaluations are social acts that put speakers and listeners in certain relations. Pragmatic research also demonstrates that norms of evaluation as expressions of emotion vary depending on linguistic and cultural boundaries, and this situation causes potential misunderstandings in communication [19, p. 29].

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson report cognitive semantic analyses of emotion concepts and find great cross-linguistic variation in evaluative content. Translation equivalents of words for emotions are likely to have very different evaluative profiles, with seemingly corresponding concepts differing in connotations of moral judgment, social acceptability, or phenomenal experience. These differences present particular challenges to cross-linguistic emotional communication, to the extent that speakers must negotiate not just lexical differences but inherently different evaluative systems [27, p. 169].

Computational emotional assessment has progressed from binary sentiment analysis to more sophisticated models of capturing multiple evaluative dimensions. Contemporary systems integrate contextual information and pragmatic knowledge to

identify evaluative patterns in language use. These technological developments have been accompanied by increasing concern over ethical consequences, examining how computerized assessment systems can perpetuate bias or overlook cultural diversity in the expression of emotion [31].

The cultural specificity of evaluation systems is particularly evident in multilingual contexts. Research with native speakers of different languages shows that emotional evaluation functions differently in different languages, and that there are different evaluative norms that govern when and how different emotions should be expressed. These differences manifest certain cultural models of emotional adequacy, individual autonomy, and social order. According to sociocultural theories, emotional judgments emerge through active engagement situated in cultural contexts providing interpretive frameworks for the construal of emotional experience [35, p. 22].

### **1.3. Nonverbal Aspects of Emotional Expression**

Linguistic studies traditionally focused on verbal means of expressing emotions. However, recent research has begun to increasingly recognize that emotional meaning is created by the complex relation between verbal and nonverbal channels. The multimodal approach notes that paralinguistic features, facial expressions, movement of the body, and contextual information all make important contributions to emotional communication and encode information that complements, supports, or even contradicts verbal meaning [5, p. 139].

Prosodic features are a central nonverbal channel for conveying emotions, and features such as pitch, loudness, speaking rate, and voice quality communicate affective meaning in a systematic way. Cross-linguistic research has found both universals and linguistic trends in affective prosody. For example, high-arousing emotions such as excitement or anger are marked in all languages by increasing pitch and loudness, and language-specific prosodic effects are culture-typical patterns of emotion that are characteristic for a certain culture. Instrumental acoustic studies have

found characteristic prosodic profiles of specific emotional states and gained empirical evidence for systematic emotional encoding in speech acoustics [26, p. 686].

From an interaction point of view, prosodic features function as key means for shaping emotional stance during a conversation. Speakers use prosodic variations not just as an automatic expression of internal states, but as complex communicative tools that determine their emotional attitude towards the interlocutor [18]. A detailed analysis of conversations shows how elusive phonetic features contribute to the transmission of affective meanings, performing important pragmatic functions in managing an emotional situation. Ogden notes that these approaches demonstrate that emotional prosody should be understood in sequential conversational contexts, not as isolated expressive phenomena [34, p. 272].

More traditional explanations of facial expressions as universally familiar, biologically determined markers of certain states of emotion have been effectively dispelled in recent research. Constructivist explanations argue that facial movements acquire emotion through contextual assignment of meaning rather than being markers of biologically determined categories of emotion. This shift in theory has profound implications for understanding facial expressions and linguistic expressions of emotion on the basis that facial movements play roles within culturally standardized systems of meaning rather than being universal symbols of emotion. The analysis of video recordings of conversations supports this position demonstrating how facial expressions are used as a resource for interaction before, during, and after verbal displays of emotion in natural discourse [10].

Gesticulation in emotional communication provides a glimpse into the necessarily bodily nature of building emotional meaning. Studies of gesture in emotional talk show how speakers use iconic, metaphorical, and deictic hand motion to reinforce verbal descriptions of emotion. Gestural routines will invoke underlying conceptual metaphors, where upward motion corresponds to positive affect and downward movement follows description of emotional regulation. Besides gestures, studies of body movement and posture demonstrate customary patterns in how body movements convey emotional attitudes and suggest that emotional meaning is

produced through the use of the entire body rather than separate expressive channels [4, p. 272].

As Mondada notes, multimodal approaches to emotional communication emphasize the temporal coordination of different semiotic resources in the construction of emotional meanings [32, p. 49]. A detailed sequential analysis demonstrates how verbal resources combine with prosodic characteristics, facial expressions, gestures, and body movements to create complex emotional displays. This research reveals complex temporal relationships between modalities, where nonverbal cues often precede verbal content or continue to exist after verbal completion. The integrated nature of multimodal emotional communication challenges analytical approaches that artificially separate verbal and nonverbal aspects, emphasizing instead their systematic coordination in the creation of meaning [6, p. 77].

A cross-cultural study of nonverbal emotional expression reveals significant cross-cultural differences in the interpretation of bodily emotional expressions across cultures. Although some aspects of nonverbal emotional communication are quite similar across cultures, the interpretation of emotional displays is significantly influenced by cultural models and expectations. These studies perplex traditional understandings of non-verbal emotional expression and demonstrate the manner in which cultural forces build the production and meaning of bodily emotional expressions. Linguistic anthropological accounts also propose that bodily practices of emotion emerge within certain cultural and historical contexts, understanding culturally constructed conceptions of the person, relations, and emotional sufficiency [43].

The development of modern technologies has significantly expanded the methodological possibilities for studying the non-verbal aspects of emotional expression. Modern approaches combine computer intelligence, machine learning, acoustic analysis, and other computational methods to identify patterns in non-verbal emotional expressions. These methods allow you to analyze large amounts of data and identify patterns that may elude human observation [16, p. 213]. The cross-cultural application of these methods has revealed important variations in the semantic

categories which underlie emotional facial expressions and demonstrated how technological approaches can elucidate cultural differences in nonverbal emotional communication.

#### **1.4. Gender Aspects of Emotion Expression**

The meeting point of emotional expression and gender is one of the important aspects of linguistic emotion studies, and a large amount of empirical research attests to gender-differentiated emotional language use. Linguistic research on gender and emotion has come a long way in the past few decades, having transferred from essentialist models of explicating gender variation as fixed biological categories to models considering the interaction between socialization, cultural expectations, and contextual considerations in the interactional sphere.

Brody's pioneering research shows that supposed gender distinctions in emotional expression are frequently socially learned display rules instead of intrinsic emotional differences. These display rules – culturally learned norms regarding which emotions it is acceptable to express – differ significantly between the sexes, since women generally encouraged to show vulnerability and connection-related emotions (sadness, fear, empathy) and men encouraged to stifle such emotions and given greater freedom in the expression of dominance and power-related emotion, specifically anger [12]. This model accounts for enduring patterns in gendered emotional expression without appealing to biological determinism.

From a linguistic viewpoint, these gendered emotional conventions are realized through a range of systematic patterns. The early work of Lakoff, later refined by more empirically based research, established a set of characteristics of “women's language”, including a richer emotional lexicon, the use of hedges, and markers of politeness – patterns that have continued to find empirical support, though with important qualifications for context and cultural variation [25]. Building on this early question, Holmes has demonstrated that women's linguistic practices often prioritize the creation of rapport and emotional connection, while men's communication is more focused on

status negotiation and information exchange. Her research shows that women use a greater range of linguistic resources to express empathy and provide emotional support in conversational interaction [22].

Corpus linguistics has been particularly useful in capturing patterns of gendered usage in language about feelings. Newman and others, analyzing large databases of language, found systematic differences between genders in emotional word usage with more words for positive emotions and words for mental distress being used by women, while men used more anger words [33, p. 211].

The sociolinguistic school led by Coates is interested in how emotional variation in expression is a resource for the construction of gender in talk. Her studies show how women's groups of friends create conversation space for the legitimate expression of emotions and vulnerability through mutual floor management and encouraging feedback, but how groups of men try to manage emotional expression through humor that is competitive and ritualistic aggression [17, p. 11]. This research identifies how emotional expression is made to become a site for "doing gender" through language practice.

Cross-cultural studies have further added to our understanding of gender and emotional expression. Matsumoto's cross-cultural research shows that although some gender patterns in the expression of emotions are found across cultures (e.g., women's higher expressiveness of most emotions), the size of these differences is greatly influenced by cultural models of emotion and gender [30, p. 220]. Cultures in which there is more gender equality generally exhibit smaller differences in patterns of emotional expression. Similarly, Wilkins and Gareis found that cultural models of appropriate emotional behavior for a particular gender to a great extent predict variation in emotional expression between men and women across cultures [44, p. 51].

From a developmental perspective, the research on parent-child talk about emotion shows how gendered emotion socialization begins early in childhood through specific patterns of parents' emotion speech. Parents use more varied vocabulary of emotions, especially for emotion-sensitive ones, when they interact with daughters in comparison to when they interact with sons. Differential socialization styles produce

early blueprints for gendered emotional exchange that extend through adulthood. The research foregrounds the employment of language in cross-generational transmission of emotion norms that are gendered.

The sociopragmatic dimension of gendered talk about emotion has been extensively addressed by Tannen, whose research shows men and women responding on the premise of diverging cultural models for emotional communication. Women's positioning towards what Tannen labels as "rapport-talk" prioritizes the maintenance of affective harmony as well as relational building, while men's responsiveness towards "report-talk" targets problem-solving as well as the exchange of information. These several cultures of communication have the capability to generate systemic misunderstandings across same-sexed communication regarding feelings [39].

Indeed, recent scholarship increasingly recognizes the limitations of gender and emotional theories at their most reductive. Cameron challenges simplistic "Mars and Venus" accounts of gender difference, demonstrating how contextual factors and personality variation most commonly outstrip gender as predictors of emotional expression [14, p. 175]. Similarly, Barrett's constructionist account of emotion draws attention to the way in which emotional categories themselves are not natural kinds but are produced by language and cultural practice and are gendered one aspect of this production [9].

The relationship between gender, power, and emotional expression is another critical area of research. The works show how emotion norms serve ideological functions in perpetuating gender hierarchies, with women's emotionality both required and deprecated in most professional settings. Bonvillain takes this avenue of inquiry a step further to show how emotional discourse is a site for performing and negotiating power relations between genders in diverse cultural and historical settings [11].

Methodologically, research on gender and emotional expression has been enhanced by multimodal approaches. Psychophysiological work by Ivanova and Zozulia illustrates compelling disconnects between self-report of emotional experience, physiological arousal, and emotional expression in women and men, with women experiencing more emotional expressivity but equivalent physiological arousal

[2, p. 68-76]. This work points to the importance of decoupling emotional experience from emotional expression in examining gender patterns.

The domain of computer-mediated communication brings interesting new dimensions to emotional expression and gender. The analysis of online discourse shows how online environments both reflect and rework offline gender patterns in emotional expression, with emoji and emoticon usage echoing persistent gender patterns identical to that of face-to-face communication. Bamman, Eisenstein, and Schnoebelen found that Twitter users' gendered linguistic styles in emotional expression are aligned with the gender composition of their social networks, which is indicative of the contextual nature of gendered emotion talk [8].

Research into gender and prosody of emotion has also determined systematic differences between the acoustic qualities of emotional speech for men and women. Scherer, Banse, and Wallbott ascertained that both genders make use of comparable prosodic forms to express simple emotions but women consistently evidence greater prosodic variation and expressiveness with respect to contexts [38, p. 77]. This result supports the general pattern of enhanced expressiveness by women but underlines noteworthy consistency in prosodic marking of emotion.

Pavlenko's research in second language acquisition illustrates that bilinguals will have differently resonant emotionalities in the two languages, with gendered aspects of emotional expression at times differing across the two languages. Emotional expression in this study is not a gender identity issue per se but one mediated by certain linguistic and cultural resources present within particular languages [35].

The clinical applicability of gendered emotional expression has also been explored by Chaplin, whose research documents the link between differences in emotional expression by gender and differential rates of internalizing and externalizing psychological disorders. The patterns suggest that gendered emotion socialization may be a mechanism of gender-differentiated risk for psychological distress [15, p. 14].

Recent neuroscientific work makes purely social constructionist explanations of gender and emotion more difficult. Whittle and colleagues' neuroimaging research indicates some gender-differentiated patterns in neural response to emotional stimuli,

although these differences are modest and strongly affected by socialization and contextual influences [42, p. 319]. This work highlights the interplay between biological predispositions and sociocultural learning in gendered emotional expression.

In summary, linguistic research on gender and emotion expression registers systematic patterns indexing complex interplay among socialization processes, cultural models, and contextual influences. Although some of the gender-differentiated patterns in emotional expression are shown to be fairly stable across contexts – e.g., females’ enhanced overall expressivity of emotion and males’ enhanced suppression of vulnerable emotions – recent research emphasizes the flexibility of such patterns and sensitivity to situational controls. Beyond such simplistic binary models, modern approaches view gender as one of several key but not causal factors in emotional expression, intersecting with several other axes of identity and social circumstance.

### **Conclusions to Chapter 1**

The theoretical foundations of the study of emotions in linguistics points to the complex nature of the interaction between biological, cognitive, social and linguistic factors. Modern scholarly views have gone beyond the previous ideas that considered emotions as internal states expressed by language means. Nowadays, emotions are regarded as multi-aspect phenomena that are determined by linguistic practices and depend on cultural models.

Systems for classifying emotions have evolved from rigid taxonomies to more flexible frameworks that take into account cultural differences, contextual influences, and individual aspects. This perspective does not deny the biological aspects of emotions, but recognizes how these biological potentials are shaped into culturally meaningful patterns through language and social interaction.

The evaluative dimension of emotional vocabulary goes far beyond the simple binary oppositions of positive and negative evaluation. Recent research has documented the extreme complexity of the evaluative systems of languages, where emotions often involve mixed or ambivalent evaluative features. The contextual aspect

of emotional evaluation draws attention to how valence is realized in interactive contexts rather than in abstract dictionary entries. The interactional perspective emphasizes that emotional evaluation is a social action that positions speakers and listeners in certain relationships.

Multimodal theories of emotional expression establish that emotional meaning is created by mixing verbal and nonverbal modes. Prosody, facial expressions, gestures, and movement are not in aid of verbal content but are part and parcel of emotional expression. The multimodal coordination of such different semiotic resources creates sophisticated emotional performances that cannot be accounted for by analyzing verbal content. This holistic view refutes analytical methods that artificially separate verbal and nonverbal communication.

## 2. EMOTIONS EXPRESSIONS AT THE OSCARS

### 2.1. Verbal Means of Expressing Emotions in Oscar History

The study of verbal means of expressing emotions at the Oscars offers a unique diachronic perspective on how emotional discourse reflects broader linguistic, cultural, and societal transformations. Emotions, as complex psychophysiological states, have always required linguistic mediation for their communication, particularly in formal and semi-formal registers such as award speeches. Drawing on Plutchik's wheel of emotions (eight basic emotions) as the analytical framework, this chapter explores how verbal expressions of emotions in Oscar acceptance speeches evolved during two distinct periods: 1976–2000 (movies released in 1975-1999) and 2001-2025 (movies released in 2000-2024). The diachronic approach enables the identification of trends and shifts in lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic strategies employed by speakers to convey emotional states (see Annex A).

During the period from 1976 to 2000, Oscar speeches tended to be more restrained in tone. Verbal expressions of emotion often relied on formulaic and culturally sanctioned linguistic patterns. Joy and gratitude were the most dominant emotions, which were typically communicated through direct statements and enumeration.

The prevalent emotion of **joy** is expressed by a rich inventory of lexemes with positive connotations. In addition to the adjectives “happy”, “thrilled”, and “delighted”, speakers employ the words “wonderful”, “great”, “terrific”, “proud”, “lucky”, “blessed”, “joy”, “love”, “adore”, and “excited”. For instance, Robert Duvall's concise sentence with the enumeration of adjectives denoting emotions serves as a direct performative expression of current joy: “*I'm very excited, very happy, very moved, very everything tonight, to be up here, to be singled out from among all these very talented people*” [54]. Richard Dreyfuss's marked reluctance to relinquish the stage pragmatically implicates his profound positive affective state: “*I could go on and on and on and I don't want to leave. Can I rent this [referring to the podium] now? Thank*

*you very much*” [48]. Jane Fonda’s declarative speech act exemplifies a straightforward and sincere, expression of joy: *“I’m so happy”* [49].

Grammatically, the frequent use of exclamations, as in Nicolas Cage’s emphatic reduplication functions to amplify the expressed joy: *“Oh, boy! Oh, boy!”* [66]. Roberto Benigni enthusiastic interjections coupled with repetitions reinforce this affective tone: *“And I hope, really I don’t deserve this, but I hope to win some other Oscars! Thank you! Thank you very much! Thank you!”* [69]

Syntactically, the prevalence of simple and direct declarative sentences when conveying positive feelings contributes to a sense of sincerity and immediacy, for example, Sally Field’s acknowledgment of a gift: *“‘Norma Rae’ was a real gift to me”* [50]. Al Pacino’s recognition of his fortunate position also represents a simple declarative sentence: *“I’ve been very lucky”* [63].

Stylistic devices to enrich the expression of joy in award acceptance speeches. They include epithets, metaphors, simile, idioms, hyperbole, antithesis, various repetitions, etc. The idiomatic expression in Jessica Tandy’s speech offers a culturally embedded, intensified articulation of her elation: *“I am on cloud nine!”* [60].

Roberto Benigni’s hyperbolic epithets and metaphors use exaggeration for emphatic affective communication, for instance: *“I am not able to express all my gratitude, because now, my body is in tumult because it is a colossal moment of joy so everything is really in a way that I cannot express”* [69].

*“You are really – this is a mountain of snow, so delicate, the suavity and the kindness, it is something I cannot forget, from the bottom of my heart”* [69].

Louise Fletcher’s concise phrase representing antithesis (love-hate) also serves as an expression of her joy: *“Well, it looks like you all hated me so much that you’ve given me this award for it, and I’m loving every minute of it. And all I can say is I’ve loved being hated by you”* [46].

The less dominant emotion of **sadness** is conveyed through the choice of specific lexical units including “sorry”, “bereft”, “missing”, “tearful”, “weep”, “cry”, etc. Pragmatically, Paddy Chayefsky’s speech expresses a sense of loss through his focus on the absent Peter Finch and his rightful place: *“For some obscure reason I’m up here*

accepting an award for Peter Finch, or Finchie as everybody who knew him called him. There is no reason for me to be here” [47].

At the grammatical level, expressions of regret or longing can subtly denote sadness, as observed in Jon Voight’s ironic remark concerning Jane Fonda’s absence, which implies a counterfactual desire for her presence: “*And finally I would like to thank Jane, whose great dignity as a human being – it’s a good thing she’s not here to see this – is very moving to me*” [49].

The basic emotion fear is manifested through a tertiary emotion of **awe**, as performance anxiety, the overwhelming nature of the event. It is linguistically realized through lexemes such as “nervous”, “shock”, “overwhelmed”, and “dumbfounded”. For instance, Emma Thompson’s speech reveals a state of surprise bordering on disbelief and anxiety: “*Because it’s overwhelming to see so many faces who’ve entertained and influenced me and thrilled me all my life, and it just takes my breath away*” [63].

Robert De Niro’s declaration expresses a similar state of being rendered speechless, indicative of being overwhelmed: “*Frank Warner, Cis Corman, Pete Savage, and if Pete wasn’t involved in the film he wouldn’t have gotten it started – I’m a little nervous, excuse me – the film never would have gotten started*” [51].

The co-occurrence of several negative affects (awe + surprise) in this high-stakes context as Oscar Award is represented in Frances McDormand’s speech: “*It is impossible to maintain one’s composure in this situation. What am I doing here?*” [67]

Grammatically, the occurrence of hesitation markers and incomplete sentences is interpreted as linguistic manifestations of underlying nervousness or feeling overwhelmed by the situation, for instance, Richard Dreyfuss’s speech: “*Ahhm... [laughs]*” [48]. Another hesitation marker is present in Dustin Hoffman’s acceptance speech: “*Thank you. Thank you very much. Uh...I’m supposed to be jaded by this point*” [59].

The expression of **anger** is notably muted in these acceptance speeches, since they are conventionally oriented towards gratitude and appreciation. However, subtle traces can be identified in specific lexical choices, such as Louise Fletcher’s ironic use

of “hated” and Dustin Hoffman’s admission of being “critical”. Fletcher’s playful irony employs a negatively loaded lexeme for humorous effect, rather than genuinely angry reason: “*Well, it looks like you all hated me so much that you’ve given me this award for it...*” [46]. Hoffman’s statement hints at past negative feelings, though it is not the primary affective focus: “*I’m up here with mixed feelings. I’ve been critical of the Academy, and for reason” [50].*

The frequent experience of **surprise** upon receiving the award is linguistically indicated by lexemes belonging to different parts of speech – nouns “miracle”, “surprise” adjectives “surprised”, “unbelievable”, “overwhelmed”, and “dumbfounded”, the verbal phrase “didn’t expect”, interjections “wow”, “oh my God”. Faye Dunaway’s straightforward comment directly expresses her unexpected win, for instance: “*Well, I didn’t expect this to happen quite yet but I do thank you very much and I’m very grateful*” [47].

Richard Dreyfuss’s disbelieving interrogative sentence shows his surprise and momentary disorientation, for instance: “*Wait a second, am I here? Yes, okay*” [48]. Grammatically, the prevalence of exclamations and questions indicating disbelief serves to mark this affective state.

Surprise is expressed by stylistic devices such as metaphors, simile, aposiopesis, repetitions and parallel constructions. A vivid simile is evident in Hanks’s speech: “*I – man, I feel as though I’m standing on magic legs in a special effects process shot that is too unbelievable to imagine and far too costly to make a reality*” [65].

Sissy Spacek’s comment reveals the emotion of surprise expressed by words that downplay the affect while still conveying its depth: “*Oh my goodness. I want to thank all of you so much. I’m...this is the greatest. I...for the first time in my life I’m speechless*” [51]. The analysis of the given speech shows the usage of the superlative degree of adjectives and aposiopesis (a sudden breaking off in speech, often marked by an ellipsis (...)) where the speaker is overwhelmed or cannot continue) to express emotions.

In Shirley MacLaine’s speech, we observe different kinds of repetitions including: 1) diacope, defined as the repetition of a word or phrase with one or more

intervening words: *“It was unbelievable to watch. He's being very modest with himself tonight. It was unbelievable”* [54].

2) anaphora, which is the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences: *“God bless that principle. God bless that potential that we all have for making anything possible if we think we deserve it. I deserve this”* [54].

Humility, which is frequently manifested in the denial of personal merit, was linguistically expressed through modal constructions and concessive clauses. The verbal expression by Dustin Hoffman illustrates this performative modesty through denial expressed by “refuse + to-infinitive”, repetitions and parallel constructions: *“I refuse to believe that I beat Jack Lemmon, that I beat Al Pacino, that I beat Peter Sellers. I refuse to believe that Robert Duvall lost”* [50].

In addition, humility is often embodied in irony, irony, which allows speakers to downplay their achievements by implying the opposite of what is literally stated. This ironic approach is often accompanied by self-deprecating humor, a rhetorical strategy used by actors to mock themselves in a lighthearted manner to appear modest and relatable. In addition, they use litotes, or deliberate understatement, to further diminish the appearance of self-aggrandizement and convey humility through subtle linguistic cues. These devices often work in tandem to create a tone of modesty while still acknowledging public recognition. A representative example of this strategy can be seen in the statement by Jack Nicholson: *“Well, I guess this proves there are as many nuts in the Academy as anywhere else”* [46]. Here, the speaker humorously implies that his win reflects eccentricity in the Academy, thus, deflecting praise and reinforcing an image of modesty.

The emotion of **admiration** (trust, acceptance), which is crucial for maintaining social bonds and acknowledging collaborative efforts, is central to these speeches and is expressed by lexemes such as “admire”, “faith”, “believed”, “support”, “respect”, “trust”, and “grateful”. For instance, Michael Douglas expresses his admiration through the repetition of the verb “admire”: *“I really want to thank the actors branch*

of the Academy first, for just being a nominee with four actors that I really admire, and at least one that I consider a really good friend who I admire” [58].

Dustin Hoffman’s utterance focuses on the significance of the Academy’s trust: “I’m very honored and I thank the Academy for your support” [59].

Louise Fletcher’s act of thanking explicitly verbalizes her trust in their judgment: “I’d like to thank Fred Roos for remembering me, Milos Forman for choosing me, Michael Douglas and Saul Zaentz for taking a chance and giving me a chance...” [46].

Emma Thompson’s expression of “pressing debt” conveys profound respect and trust in the enduring influence of the people involved: “And if I could thank you all I would, but I have more pressing debts: to E. M. Forster, for creating “Margaret Schlegel;” to James Ivory, for asking me to play her; to Ismail Merchant, for paying me to play her, which feels very unnecessary at this moment” [63].

Grammatically, the use of declarative statements expressing reliance and confidence in others, as exemplified by Michael Douglas thanking Oliver Stone serves to verbalize this emotion: “A large part of this award belongs to Oliver Stone. And not only as the director, but having the courage to cast me in a part that not many people thought I could play” [58].

Finally, **anticipation**, often retrospectively framed in these speeches, is conveyed through the lexemes “waiting” and “wondered”. For example, Shirley MacLaine’s reflection reveals her long-held anticipation of this moment: “I’m gonna cry because this show has been as long as my career. I have wondered for twenty-six years what this would feel like” [54].

Kathy Bates’s simple declaration similarly conveys a sense of past anticipation now realized: “I’d like to thank the Academy. I’ve been waiting a long time to say that” [61]. Grammatically, the use of clauses relating to future or past actions viewed with a sense of looking forward or back can also denote this emotion.

Thus, the examination of Oscar speeches between 1976 and 2000 shows a complex use of language devices in expressing a range of emotional experiences, as postulated by Plutchik’s theoretical model. Although joy and appreciation most

typically predominate, the intricate use of particular lexical items, grammatical structures, syntactic options, and rhetorical devices allows for the communication of a broad array of emotional states, such as surprise, nervousness, and even subtle undertones of sadness or past critical sentiments. These concise forceful statements provide important observations on the linguistic representation of emotion in a tense, public discourse setting.

The analysis of award acceptance speeches by leading actors and actresses delivered from 2001 to 2025, viewed through the lens of Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions, reveals a consistent yet evolving deployment of linguistic strategies to articulate a spectrum of affective states. These often-brief public pronouncements serve as rich data for understanding how individuals convey deeply personal emotions within a highly formalized and globally broadcast context.

The fundamental emotion of **joy** continues to be a dominant feature, expressed through a diverse array of positive lexemes. Beyond conventional terms, speakers employ more intensified and contemporary vocabulary units such as nouns and adjectives “joy”, “happiness”, “thrilled”, “ecstatic”, “incredible”, “amazing”, “honored”, “privileged”, “bursting”, phrases such as “grateful beyond words”, and even direct expressions of affection like “love you all”, for example: “*And really, this is such a great honor, but the thing that counts the most with me is the friendships and the love and the sheer joy we have shared making movies together*” [82].

The sense of unreality and overwhelming positive emotion is also captured by phrases like “this is surreal”: “*Wow, this is very surreal*” [95].

Halle Berry's emotional outburst exemplifies joy bordering on disbelief and humility: “*Oh my God. Oh my God. I'm sorry. This moment is so much bigger than me*” [72].

Emma Stone's direct address to her cast blends joy with affectionate camaraderie: “*And I am so deeply honored to share this with every cast member, with every crew member, with every single person who poured their love and their care and their brilliance into the making of this film*” [94].

Grammatically, the use of intensifiers such as “so”, “such”, “incredibly”, “extremely”, “utterly”, and “absolutely”, as well as superlative adjectives, serves to amplify the expression of joy, for example: “*And I am just absolutely thrilled to be standing up here tonight*” [75].

Syntactically, short, exclamatory sentences and sentences expressing disbelief at the positive outcome are common. For example, Michelle Yeoh’s articulation of the significance of her win imbues her joy with a sense of purpose and wider impact: “*Thank you. Thank you. For all the little boys and girls who look like me watching tonight, this is a beacon of hope and possibilities*” [93].

Stylistically, speakers often use self-irony. Julianne Moore’s quote is a perfect example of this. She creates warmth through self-deprecating humor and demonstrates humility despite her achievement: “*Thank you so much. I read an article that said that winning an Oscar could lead to living five years longer. If that's true, I'd really like to thank the Academy because my husband is younger than me*” [85].

Another common stylistic device is the syntactical repetition of words and phrases, which reveals the emotional state: “*I'd like to thank Bennett Miller and Danny Futterman, who I love, I love, I love, I love, I love. You know the Van Morrison song, I love, I love, I love, and he keeps repeating it like that?*” [76].

While less prominent, the emotion of **sadness** is typically conveyed with more subtlety in these celebratory contexts. Lexemes such as “loss”, “grief”, “emotional” (in a somber context), phrases “miss you”, “heavy heart”, and “in memory of” appear primarily in dedications or acknowledgments of loss: “*I accept this award in memory of all the African-American actors and actresses who went before me in the difficult years, on whose shoulders I was privileged to stand to see where I might go*” [72]. Grammatically, a subdued tone and expressions of remembrance or dedication often express this emotion, though extensive grammatical structures elaborating on sadness are rare.

We have attested a stylistic device of metaphor, which verbalizes the analyzed emotion in Adrien Brody’s speech: “*This is, you know, it fills me with great joy, but I*

*am also filled with a lot of sadness tonight because I'm accepting an award at such a strange time” [73].*

Fear, which is mainly manifested as **awe** denotes performance anxiety, the sheer magnitude of the event, or respect for colleagues. It is expressed by lexemes like “awe”, “nervous”, “anxious”, “shaking”, “overwhelmed” (in a negative sense), “unreal” and phrases like “can't breathe”, “speechless”. When award winners express awe, they are often conveying a complex emotional state that includes respectful intimidation, for example: “*All my fellow nominees, I remain in awe of you guys. Truly. And I want to thank my incredible team” [94]*

Grammatically, hesitation, stammering, and self-deprecating humor function as coping mechanisms and linguistic signals of underlying anxiety, for example: Frances McDormand’s physiological description, which is also an example of self-irony, conveys the intensity of her emotional state, which is likely a mixture of joy and nervousness, for example: “*Okay. So I’m hyperventilating a little bit. If I fall over pick me up because I’ve got some things to say” [88].*

The expression of **anger** remains exceptionally rare in these speeches, given their inherent celebratory nature. Any indication of anger is typically highly veiled or channeled into broader social commentary, as seen in Patricia Arquette’s assertive advocacy for wage equality, which stems from a sense of injustice rather than personal rage: “*It’s our time to have wage equality once and for all and equal rights for women in the United States of America*” [85].

Grammatically, assertive statements might be used in such contexts, but the overall pragmatic goal is usually persuasive rather than confrontational. Direct lexical expressions of personal anger are virtually absent.

**Surprise** is a recurring and vividly expressed emotion, marked by the adjectives “shocked”, “stunned”, “unexpected”, “surreal”, “speechless”, phrases “can't believe it”, “no way”, and questioning phrases like “what just happened?”, for example: “*Wow, this is very surreal. Forgive me, I'm nervous*” [95].

*Thank you. Thank you. You commie, homo-loving sons-of-guns! I did not expect this, but I, and I want it to be very clear that I do know how hard I make it to appreciate me, often” [74].*

Grammatically, interrogatives expressing disbelief, short exclamatory phrases (“Oh, my God”, “Oh, no. Oh!”), and broken sentences all contribute to conveying this affective state: *“It’s genuinely quite stressful. This is hilarious; got an Oscar. Okay” [89].*

The emotion of trust expressed by language means denoting acknowledging the collaborative nature of filmmaking, is conveyed through lexemes such as “believe in”, “faith in”, “indebted to”, “support of”, “guidance of”, “thank you for seeing something in me”, and “championed me”. Rami Malek’s gratitude explicitly highlights the element of trust: *“I am forever in your debt. My crew and my cast, I love you” [89].*

Nicole Kidman’s thanks to her collaborators points to the reliance and belief inherent in the creative process: *“Stephen Daldry, you took a huge chance on me. I am so grateful” [73].* Grammatically, declarative statements expressing gratitude for belief and support.

Finally, **anticipation**, often framed retrospectively as the culmination of a long journey, is expressed through lexemes like “hoped for this”, “imagined this moment”. While not always explicitly stated, the underlying sense of a long-held aspiration is present in some speeches. Grammatically, expressions reflecting on a long career or past hopes can convey this emotion, although it is often implicitly understood rather than elaborately articulated in the typically concise acceptance speeches. For example, Hilary Swank’s extended, visibly surprised reaction, coupled with playful banter, serves as a performative expression of anticipation: *“I don’t know what I did in this life to deserve all this. I’m just a girl from a trailer park who had a dream. I never thought this would ever happen, let alone be nominated” [75].*

A diachronic examination of this corpus illuminates both persistent patterns and dramatic shifts in emotional language across five decades. Lexically, the earlier period favored more formal and restrained lexis of emotions. The vocabulary of happiness comprised mainly typical positive adjectives during that period. The later period

exemplifies lexical intensification and extension, that is more contemporary phrasing and more emotional marking. This can be observed through the increased use of intensifiers (“so”, “such”, “incredibly”, “absolutely”) and superlatives, exemplifying a cultural trend toward more assertive emotional lexis.

Grammatically, the earlier phase relied heavily on the employment of simple declarative forms in the expression of positive emotions. Exclamations were typically the primary grammatical vehicle of emotional emphasis. The later phase exhibits greater syntactic complexity and variety, with more employment by speakers of interrogatives expressing incredulity, conditional forms placing emphasis on the gravity of the situation in question, and embedded clauses situating emotional responses within personal histories or social contexts.

Pragmatically, the function of emotion discourse is strongly characterized by diachronic evolution. The earlier phase is predominantly individually focused with feelings as isolated states severed from common environments. The later phase puts increasingly more stress on emotional expression as part of collectivist frameworks and social histories. This shift is particularly evident in the manner that negative emotions like sadness and anger have shifted from being solely personal to ending up as means of social commentary and protest, suggesting increased willingness to employ language of feelings as a means of access to higher causes and communities.

Emotional expression stylistic devices are continued and adapted. Both apply metaphor, repetition, and parallelism but with different frequencies and functions. The earlier stage used more conventional metaphors and mere repetition for emphasis, and the latter stage uses more metaphorical ingenuity and complex rhetorical structure. Self-deprecation occurs throughout both stages but in recent decades has become the overriding method of emotional modulation and is a complex way of managing the tension between actual expression of emotion and cultural pressure to be humble.

The declaration of vulnerability has also transformed. The earlier stage preferred to repress anxiety through hesitation markers and fractured syntax, performing nervousness as something to get over or apologize for. The later stage openly declares

and even flaunts emotional vulnerability, when speakers more openly report body expressions of feeling states and doing as opposed to hiding overwhelm moments.

Hedging strategies have also been changed significantly. During the earlier phase, speakers frequently employed linguistic resources to downplay their accomplishments, generally in the form of modal constructions and concessive clauses that questioned their deservingness. While modesty remains important even during the later phase, it is more characteristically expressed through relational acknowledgments rather than self-diminishment, which reflects a transformation in how speakers are addressing the cultural conflict between recognition and humility.

The diachronic line also indicates changing patterns in emotional authenticity markers. The earlier speeches are more likely to use formal claims of feeling states, while subsequent speeches employ more paralinguistic indicators rendered textually (reference to weeping, breaking voice, etc.) and meta-emotional commentary placing the speaker's affective experience.

## **2.2. Non-verbal means of expressing emotions**

Non-verbal expression of emotion in Oscar acceptance speeches is a primary means of conveying the depth and sincerity of winners' feelings and frequently to add depth beyond the mere use of language. Analysis of these non-verbal cues does reveal some shifts between 1976–2000 (movies released in 1975-1999) and 2001-2025 (movies released in 2000-2024).

In the past era, there was a degree of formality that was transferred to non-verbal communication. Facial expressions, while actually conveying joy and surprise, might have been slightly more subdued; for instance, in Jack Nicholson's speech, his sarcastic humor was conveyed in smirks and raised eyebrows, but his gratitude to colleagues was conveyed with a sincere and relatively controlled smile.



**Figure 2.1. Jack Nicholson's Non-Verbal Language (Best Actor: 48th Oscars) [46]**

Similarly, Louise Fletcher's speech, though including deeply emotional moments when she used sign language, maintained overall composure.



**Figure 2.2. Louise Fletcher's Non-Verbal Language (Best Actress: 48th Oscars) [46]**

Movements and gestures also tended to be more deliberate. In Richard Dreyfuss's speech, the actor's excitement manifested in a quicker pace and more hand gestures, but his stage presence remained relatively contained. His non-verbal communication reflects both the excitement of the moment and his awareness of the formal setting.



**Figure 2.3. Richard Dreyfuss’s Non-Verbal Language (Best Actor: 50th Oscars) [48]**

In the given frame in Figure 2.3., Dreyfuss’s hand placed against his chest is a classic gesture of sincerity and emotional expression. It manifests humility and a heartfelt connection to what he is saying – “*thank you*” and “*I’m honored.*” This move often functions as a physical manifestation of inner emotion, focusing on the genuine nature of his speech. While his facial expression conveys delight and slight awe, his upright posture and stillness suggest a level of self-control. Unlike the expansive gestures of someone overtaken by emotion, Dreyfuss’s movements are deliberate and grounded, aligning with a more introspective or reflective tone. His gestures, though present and expressive, are measured, adding energy without overwhelming his stage presence.

Jessica Tandy’s speech, delivered with visible surprise, featured hesitant movements that mirrored her genuine shock. The poignant image of Jessica Tandy at the 62nd Academy Awards (Figure 2.4.) – when she won Best Actress for her role in *Driving Miss Daisy* – is a powerful example of non-verbal communication and its capability in expressing genuine surprise, humility, and emotional overwhelm more profoundly than her spoken words.

Tandy’s body language speaks of profound emotional sincerity. The bowed head and hand over the face are universal nonverbal cues for modesty and shock. This posture indicates that she is temporarily overcome, probably attempting to compose

herself amidst being given such a high accolade. It is a self-guarding gesture, expressing vulnerability and incredulity. The other hand grasps the Oscar firmly, holding on to the moment's reality.



**Figure 2.4. Jessica Tandy's Non-Verbal Language (Best Actress: 62nd Oscars) [60]**

The difference between the firm grasp of the award and the covered face helps to highlight the inner conflict between the physical accomplishment and the overwhelming feeling it brings. Her moderately hunched shoulders and closed, inward-facing posture also indicate an introverted, intensely personal response – a response in keeping with her public image of humility and dignity. Instead of lapping up the spotlight, she looks inward for a moment, relating an untold story of silent thanks and reflective awe.

The tone of voice and pitch in earlier public speaking exemplified subtle emotional expression, with depth often conveyed through gentle modulation rather than dramatic shifts. This approach is illustrated in Dustin Hoffman's acceptance speech, where he masterfully transitions from humor to profound seriousness through controlled vocal variations, demonstrating how powerful emotional resonance can be achieved without theatrical vocal extremes.



**Figure 2.5. Dustin Hoffman’s Non-Verbal Language (Best Actor: 52nd Oscars) [50]**

In Sally Field’s speech, a cracking voice revealed her emotion. Interjections and pauses were present as well as gestures.



**Figure 2.6. Sally Field’s Non-Verbal Language (Best Actress: 52nd Oscars) [50]**

Her non-verbal communication in this moment speaks volumes and powerfully complements the words she delivered, most famously: “You like me! Right now, you like me!” Field’s facial expression illustrates sheer joy and deep emotional vulnerability. Her wide, tearful smile and glistening eyes convey a mix of happiness, disbelief, and gratitude. The intensity in her eyes reveals how much the moment means to her on a personal and professional level. Her body language reinforces this emotional intensity. With both arms raised high, one holding the golden Oscar statuette aloft, she

physically embodies triumph and elation. The raised arms also symbolize openness and a desire to connect with the audience as an invitation to share in her victory.

Conversely, the 2001-2025 era will tend more towards unadulterated, pure emotional display through non-verbal means. Facial expressions are frequently more dramatic and unrestrained. Tears and expressions of sheer astonishment are more openly displayed.

For instance, Halle Berry's acceptance speech was characterized by shaking visibly, tears, and an expression on her face of absolute incredulity that strongly conveyed the historicity of the moment.



**Figure 2.7. Halle Berry's Non-Verbal Language (Best Actress: 74th Oscars) [72]**

Halle Berry is visibly overwhelmed, her hand on her chest, eyes wide, and mouth slightly open represent a classic gesture of disbelief and deep emotional reaction. Her body language and facial expression manifest astonishment and gratitude. In the second image, she holds the Oscar close while raising her hand, trying to collect herself or address the audience passionately. Her wide-open mouth and furrowed brows suggest she's in the midst of tearfully expressing thanks and underscoring the significance of the moment.

Jamie Foxx's acceptance speech demonstrates a masterclass in non-verbal communication that serves to significantly enhance his verbal message (Figure 2.8.). His expression is one of uncontained happiness with a sincere, wide-mouthed smile

that psychologists would term a “Duchenne smile” – where eyes and mouth are both involved, exhibiting real emotion rather than social politeness.



**Figure 2.8. Jamie Foxx’s Non-Verbal Language (Best Actor: 77th Oscars)**

[75]

His attitude is bold in the guise of an open, expansive one with him center stage and in our view holding his Oscar statuette, a physical symbol of achievement that demands audience attention. This victory posture necessarily takes up space, radiating pride and success without uttering a word. Foxx’s energetic momentum is also conveyed through gestural animation, sharing a physical rhythm that accompanies his emotional state and binds him in a primal sense to the audience. Combination of his face, militant stance, and victory poses creates a moment of naked human triumph which had to have moved viewers far further than anything he actually did say. This overwhelming non-verbal presentation demonstrates how kinesic communication is more likely to express the emotional reality as more immediately, and intensely, than technically written speeches; thereby, rendering his moment of victory not merely heard but forcefully sensed by all who were there.

Cillian Murphy’s acceptance speech is a compelling turn of emotion captured on camera in these two seconds (Figure 2.9.). In the first shot, we capture uncooked, naked shock – eyes stretched to maximum, mouth hanging open with naked surprise, and one hand helpfully stroking his face in what body language experts would know as a

comforting gesture in an overwrought moment. This real reaction proves that he may not have anticipated the win, creating a human and vulnerable moment.

In the second picture, we are able to witness the change to triumphant acceptance as Murphy grins happily with his Oscar statuette held high, his face changing to a more subdued smile that balances professional poise with genuine elation.



**Figure 2.9. Cillian Murphy's Non-Verbal Language (Best Actor: 96th Oscars) [94]**

His stance has changed from the reaction of shock to greater confidence, marking victory with an arm raised aloft – a victory salute heard by everyone. This process from shock to celebratory acknowledgment speaks for itself eloquently without a word. Murphy’s non-verbal communication shows how award recipients usually have instantaneously changing emotions at these events – vulnerability and shock transforming into pride and gratitude – creating genuine moments to which audiences connect far beyond the simple words of their speeches. These natural responses humanize stars and provide traditional Oscar moments that work for the audience exactly because they are not rehearsed response but unscripted emotion.

Thus, we see that movements and gestures tend to be more expansive and expressive, winners often pace the stage, throwing their hands up in the air, or embracing others with great enthusiasm.

Tone of voice and pitch exhibit a wider range, with more frequent and dramatic shifts to convey the intensity of feelings. Winners alternate rapidly between whispers of disbelief and shouts of joy.

Natalie Portman, with her repeated, emphatic *“Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you so much to the Academy”* [81] delivered with a soaring pitch, exemplifies this. Interjections and pauses are also used more expressively.



**Figure 2.10. Natalie Portman’s Non-Verbal Language (Best Actress: 83rd Oscars) [81]**

Gasps, sobs, and extended pauses used for dramatic effect or to regain composure of speakers. The following image captures an emotionally charged moment during Emma Stone’s acceptance speech at the 96th Academy Awards, where she won Best Actress for her performance in *“Poor Things”*. The non-verbal communication on display perfectly illustrates her genuine emotion. Stone’s body language reveals vulnerability through her slightly trembling hand gesture and facial expression showing tears. The accompanying words *“Oh, boy, this is really, this is really overwhelming. Sorry, I – hmm. Okay. My voice is also a little gone. Whatever!”* [94] demonstrate how verbal expression stumbles and vocal shifts complement non-verbal cues.

The halting speech pattern with its gasps, sobs, and extended pauses serves multiple communicative functions. These natural interruptions work as emotional punctuation marks and allow her to process overwhelming feelings.



**Figure 2.11. Emma Stone’s Non-Verbal Language (Best Actress: 96th Oscars) [94]**

This combination of visible emotion, vocal tremor, and spontaneous speech patterns creates a memorable acceptance moment precisely because it feels unrehearsed. Such genuine displays of emotion, where the speaker momentarily loses composure before finding their way back, often become the most quoted and remembered moments from award ceremonies and demonstrate how powerful authentic non-verbal communication can be in creating human connection during formal events.

In comparing the two periods, the shift is to a more openly expressed and less reserved form of non-verbal communication. Previous speeches were held with some restraint, while subsequent speeches represent a more visceral and immediate experience of feeling. The shift indicates changes in cultural attitudes toward the display of emotion and show greater tolerance and even requirement for authenticity and openness in the public sphere. The greater deployment of dramatic body language, grand movement, and greater vocal ranges has the effect of emphasizing the emotional nature of the speeches, making them more sensory and more emotionally affecting for the audience. Greater frequency and variety in the employment of interjections and pauses helps to create a sense of directness and increased emotionality.

### 2.3. Spontaneity and prior preparation

When comparing speeches in 1976-2000 with speeches in 2001-2025, we note a remarkable shift not only in how winners manage their preparedness, but also in how they go about staging spontaneity.

In the past period (1976-2000), we find numerous instances where champions appeared to be genuinely unprepared or flustered. For instance, Richard Dreyfuss's 1978 Best Actor acceptance speech is representative in demonstrating several linguistic markers of confusion: *"I didn't prepare anything. Ahhm... [laughs]. Wait a second, am I here? Yes, okay"* [48]. His utterance contains classic disfluency patterns – filled pauses, nervous laughter, and disoriented questioning – that linguistically shows genuine surprise.

In the speech delivered in 1981, Sissy Spacek employed interjections and fragmented syntax in her speech: *"Oh my goodness. I want to thank all of you so much. I'm...this is the greatest. I...for the first time in my life I'm speechless"* [51]. The syntactically broken-up structure reveals her affective state. False starts and hesitations in speech mark where cognitive processing collapses with affective overload.

The interruption of scripted statements was often consciously acknowledged during this period. It is evidenced by Dustin Hoffman's acknowledgement in 1980: *"[He pulls out his notes.] I forgot my lines so the director wrote them down for me"* [50]. It reveals an awareness of preparation's failure. The reference to forgotten "lines" is particularly telling since it describes the acceptance speech as a performance with a script, one that can be forgotten just as theatrical lines might be. This linguistic verbalization manifests the inherent tension between winners' spontaneity and preparation for their speech.

Most intriguing from this previous period are cases in which speakers use preparation explicitly and then performatively abandon it. Shirley MacLaine's speech is a complex rhetorical move when she mentions rehearsing this speech for about twenty-five years and then throwing away those prepared words. This creates what linguists could call a "performed spontaneity", which is a self-aware linguistic strategy

that acknowledges preparation even while simultaneously abandoning it in the pursuit of authenticity: *“I have wondered for twenty-six years what this would feel like. Thank you so much for terminating the suspense. Oh my, I am nervous”* [54].

Common to many speeches during this time were incredulity expressions which are linguistic markers of unpreparedness: “It’s miraculous”, “My God”, “I don’t believe it”, “This is truly unexpected”. They are pragmatically effective as they represent the speaker’s affective sincerity and apologize in advance for any ensuing incoherence or lack of fluency.

The shift to the 2001-2025 range demonstrates an even more subtle interaction between preparation and spontaneity. Winners during this time have more metalinguistic awareness, being inclined to refer to the speech-preparation process itself in an explicit manner and even with a bit of humour and self-irony, for example: *“I haven’t really written a speech because every time I wrote a speech for the past one of these things I didn’t win”* [73].

Forest Whitaker’s declaration in 2006 indicates a new tendency – referring to preparation as well as attesting to the legitimacy of one’s emotional response: *“Just a second, just a second. Okay. Take it [in], okay. I wrote something down because I thought if it would happen I would be a little overwhelmed and I am. So, okay”* [77]. This demonstrates what is termed “bracketed spontaneity”, where preparation is not employed to suppress authentic feeling but to provide structure wherein authentic feeling can safely express itself.

Kate Winslet’s speech is another innovation in this verbal performance: *“Okay, that fainting thing, Penélope. I’d be lying if I haven’t made a version of this speech before. I think I was probably eight years old and staring into the bathroom mirror and this [holding up her statuette] would’ve been a shampoo bottle. Well, it’s not a shampoo bottle now!”* [79] In this speech, preparation is acknowledged but time-shifted to childhood fantasy, creating a rhetorical gap between current professional rehearsal (which threatens authenticity) and innocent childhood rehearsal (which serves authentic desire).

Olivia Colman’s 2019 speech is an example of what linguists would call “structured informality”, i.e., a consciously poised linguistic performance switching between formal expressions of gratitude and spontaneous remarks, for instance: “*And any little girl who is practicing their speech on the telly, you never know. And when I used to work as a cleaner, and I loved that job, I did spend quite a lot of my time imagining this — oh, please wrap up*” [89]. The speech contains clearly articulated thematic progression (a mark of preparation) but also includes self-directed mocking asides and apparent digressions (marks of spontaneity). The linguistic effect creates an impression of spontaneous response despite the evidence of structural preparation behind.

Christopher Plummer’s 2011 speech, by contrast, takes responsibility for its prepping with humor and concise rhetorical form. The polish of professionalism suggests a shift towards embracing preparation as compatible with sincere expression, which presents a clear break from previous standards where preparation was both denied and apologized for, for example: “[*To the Oscar:*] *You're only two years older than me, darling. Where have you been all my life? I have a confession to make. When I first emerged from my mother's womb, I was already rehearsing my Academy thank you speech. But it was so long ago, mercifully for you I've forgotten it. But I haven't forgotten who to thank*” [82].

This diachronic comparison reveals an underlying shift in the linguistic functioning of Oscar speeches. While the 1976-2000 period had more instances of actual linguistic markers of surprise (disfluencies, broken sentences, explicit expressions of lack of preparation), the 2001-2025 period has more awareness of the paradox of being prepared yet spontaneous. Modern winners sound more comfortable with the expression of being prepared but then employ some linguistic devices to express the spontaneity within the prepared text.

This shift reflects larger social changes in our understanding of public performance. With reality television and social media, audiences of today are acutely attuned to performed sincerity. Oscar acceptance winners are now required to exist in a more subtle linguistic register in which either sheer spontaneity (risking incoherence)

or overt preparation (risking denigration of sincerity) is ideal. Instead, we witness the evolution of so-called “calibrated spontaneity” – a careful balancing act with words that acknowledges preparation without sacrificing space for genuine emotional release.

The modern Oscar speech is then not merely a list of thank-yous but a complex linguistic act which walks a tightrope of competing audience expectation. The winner is required to seem at once prepared enough to do justice to the moment and spontaneous enough to make viewers believe their feelings are real. This linguistic high-wire act says a great deal about how our cultural conventions regarding public emotion have changed, with today’s audiences expecting performances which reference their own performativity as well as providing “real” emotional effect.

#### **2.4. Gender Factor in Emotion Expression in Oscar Speeches**

This analysis undertakes a diachronic study of speeches delivered by Best Actor and Best Actress recipients, focusing on the linguistic choices employed to convey emotion. The material is divided into two periods: 1976-2000 and 2001-2025, allowing for an exploration of both gender-specific patterns and evolutionary trends in emotional discourse on the Oscar stage (see Annex B).

In the earlier period, 1976-2000, a discernible pattern in the expression of emotion can be observed among Best Actor recipients, often characterized by a degree of restraint, with emotions frequently framed through humility or professional gratitude. For instance, Kevin Spacey expressed his feelings as follows: *“I am very proud to be an actor, and I have tried very hard to protect my work; and I am stunned and a bit speechless”* [70].

Ben Kingsley manifested his emotions by means of the strong adjective: *“Let me say before continuing any further that I was overwhelmed to be mentioned in the same breath as the other four gentlemen who were nominated with me”* [53]. The lexical choices “shocked”, “stunned”, “speechless”, and “overwhelmed” denote strong emotional states, yet actors often use qualifiers “a little”, “a bit”, and “somewhat” to modulate the intensity of emotion.

Robert De Niro tried to keep his speech brief. His emotional load was carried more by the context of his performance and the brevity itself rather than explicit emotional language, which is a common male strategy where conciseness implies depth of feeling: “*Frank Warner, Cis Corman, Pete Savage, and if Pete wasn't involved in the film he wouldn't have gotten it started – I'm a little nervous, excuse me – the film never would have gotten started*” [51].

The analysis of Dustin Hoffman’s speech for Best Actor shows profound emotions including gratitude, honor, pride, empathy, solidarity, but the actor does so in a way that is characteristic of the expectations for male emotional display at the time: controlled, thoughtful, often outwardly focused, and filled with humor: “*Thank you. [Inspects the Oscar.] He has no genitalia and he’s holding a sword. I'd like to thank my parents for not practicing birth control*” [50]. He uses a set of lexemes that point to his emotions: *mixed feelings, grateful, honored, laugh, appreciation, lucky, proud, thank*, etc.

Gratitude is a dominant theme in male speeches. It is often directed towards peers, family, and collaborators and functions as a primary tool for emotional expression. For example, Jack Nicholson uses humor to deflect or manage the emotional intensity of the moment, before offering more conventional thanks: “*Well, I guess this proves there are as many nuts in the Academy as anywhere else*” [46]. This use of humor as an emotional regulator was frequent among male winners.

Conversely, Best Actress winners of the period 1976-2000, while also thanking, provided a more overt and descriptive articulation of their emotions. For example, Louise Fletcher, in her unforgettable speech, addressed the audience as follows: “*It looks like you all hated me so much that you've given me this award for it, and I'm loving every minute of it*” [46]. The analysis shows that the context contains a heavy emotional load with contrasted emotions. Moreover, most of what she said was conveyed in sign language to her deaf parents, which was a profoundly emotional act that transcended words: “*And if you'll excuse me [using sign language]: for my mother and my father, I want to say thank you for teaching me to have a dream. You are seeing my dream come true. Thank you*” [46].

Awarded Actress in a Leading Role in 1979, Sally Field famously exclaimed: “*I can't deny the fact that you like me, right now, you like me!” [50]. This utterance with repeated and direct address (“you like me”) shows a raw, almost vulnerable expression of joy and validation, which may be considered a stark contrast to more contained expressions of emotions, which are often observed in male counterparts.*

Female speeches also contain more interjections and a more conversational tone comparing to male speeches. We have attested such interjections as “Oh”, “Oh my goodness”, “Oh, boy!”, “Oh my”, “Oh, thank you” repeatedly used in many female speeches of the analyzed period.

Moving into the second era, 2001-2025, it is possible to observe a noticeable shift in gender-based emotional expression of Best Actors and Best Actresses alike, which suggests a shift in cultural norms for public display of emotions, particularly among men. Gratitude is still dominant, but there is a greater tendency among Best Actor winners to express a wider range of emotions more explicitly and forcefully than their earlier colleagues. In 2002, Adrien Brody, visibly moved, kissed presenter Halle Berry, which was an unscripted act of spontaneous emotion. He spoke of the film’s heavy subject matter and his connection to it, stating, “*It fills me with great joy, but I am also filled with a lot of sadness tonight because I'm accepting an award for a film about the decimation of a people*” [73]. The speech contains lexemes that represent various positive and negative emotions including *love, joy, encouragement, admire, panic, amazing, strength, sorry, sadness*.

Being overwhelmed with emotions, a French actor Jean Dujardin expressed his state in two languages – French and English: “*And if George Valentin could speak, he'd say: Wouaou! Putain! Genial! Merci! Formidable! Merci beaucoup! I love you!” [82].*

Later in this period, Matthew McConaughey delivered a speech that was highly personal and emotional. He referenced family and spirituality with considerable affective charge, for example: “*To my father, I know he's up there right now with a big pot of gumbo... he's probably in his underwear, and he's got a cold can of Miller Lite, and he's dancing right now. To you, Dad, you taught me how to be a man*” [84].

The deeply personal and descriptive imagery bears considerable emotional significance and is rendered with a sincerity that may not have happened as frequently before for male winners. Direct address to loved ones is more common and is often accompanied by assertive statements of love and gratitude, like “I love you”, which is said more often during the studied period.

Recipients of the Best Actress award from 2001-2025 continue to express profound emotion with intensity and straightforwardness. In addition, we also observe a solid trend towards expressing empowerment and togetherness, which is often coupled with individual feeling. For instance, Halle Berry, in a highly emotional and historic moment, stated through tears: “*And it's for every nameless, faceless woman of color that now has a chance because this door tonight has been opened. Thank you. I'm so honored. I'm so honored*” [72]. Here, the personal feeling (“Oh my God. I am so honored”) is located in a more general socio-political statement, as the intensity of the personal emotion highlights the message as a whole. The linguistic cues are direct address to God, exclamation, and explicit references to crying and the overwhelming nature of the experience.

A profound usage of interjections and non-verbal language is observed in Meryl Streep’s acceptance speech: “*Oh my god. Oh, c'mon! Oh! Alright. Thank you so much. Thank you, thank you. I – when they called my name I had this feeling I could hear half of America going, “Oh no! Oh, c'mon why? Her? Again?” You know? But, whatever. [Laughs]*” [82].

More recently, the actress Emma Stone has continued the trend of open emotionality, often mixed with humor and self-deprecation, but also profound gratitude: “*Oh, boy. [Turning around to show the back of her dress:] My dress has broken. I think it happened during [pointing to Ryan Gosling in the audience] “I'm Just Ken.” I'm pretty sure. Oh, boy, this is really, this is really overwhelming. Sorry, I – hmm. Okay. My voice is also a little gone. Whatever!*” [94]. The interjection “Oh, boy” and the actress’s reference to a minor mishap (“my dress is broken”), which is used to ground the overwhelming emotion, and the repetition of the intensifier “really”, contribute to the expression of a sense of genuine feeling.

Comparing the two periods, there is a general movement for both genders. However, we observe more intensive tendency towards more open and elaborated emotional expression for male actors. They have moved away from a more repressed model to one where more vulnerability and a wider intensity of expressed emotions are acceptable. In 1976-2000, actresses used more direct emotion words (e.g., “love”, “happy”, “cry”), interjections, and references to physical indicators of emotions. Actors in this time used humor, humility, and gratitude statements as primary, often indirect, modes of emotion.

In the 2001-2025 period, while actresses maintain and even combine empowerment themes with their already high existing level of emotional expressiveness, actors have characterized themselves by noticeably increasing their usage of direct emotional language, personal anecdotes filled with affect, and family references in emotionally appealing ways.

The overt emotional gender gap between the sexes appears to have closed, and both sexes now use more intensifiers (“so”, “very”, “incredibly”, “really”), direct expressions of feeling (“I feel”, “I am so [feeling]”), and stories about personal experience that are inherently emotive. However, there are still subtle distinctions. For instance, the expression of emotion in terms of collective experience or social observation is more frequent in actresses’ speeches in the later period, while actors stress more individual achievement, family relationships, or the overcoming of adversity, though these are tendencies rather than absolute oppositions. The use of tears as a public emotional signifier, previously associated with actresses, is now both more acceptable and visible for actors in the latter period, which reflects social shifts in masculine emotional expression.

## **Conclusions to Chapter 2**

The diachronic analysis of the verbal means used to express emotions in the speeches of the Academy Awards shows significant changes in emotional speech over the course of the five decades under consideration. Analysis of the development from

1976 to 2025 reveals a transition from a fairly restrained emotional repertoire typical of conventional phrases toward a more articulate and modern type of expression that shows greater emphasis on emotion. While joy and gratitude remained prevalent over both periods, more modern speeches show greater syntactic complexity, a more assertive emotional lexicon, and a greater emphasis on intensifiers, reflecting cultural shifts more broadly toward more overt displays of emotion. In addition, the pragmatic role of emotional speech evolved from an emphasis on individuals' emotions as isolated entities toward more collectivist paradigms in which emotion is a means of social commentary and activism. This development in expressive emotion not only reflects individual preference but also corresponds with extensive sociocultural change in public attitudes toward expressing emotion.

The analysis of non-verbal displays of emotion shows a marked change from the more controlled forms typical of previous decades towards the more permissive forms evident in current society. Compared with award winners of previous decades, current award winners show a wider range of facial expression, more energetic gesturing, and greater variation of vocal pitch when expressing intensity of emotion. This shift away from controlled towards more expressive forms of bodily expression marks the changed cultural assumptions that value authenticity of feeling and open expression of emotion in public spaces. The increased expression of emotion in the forms of body movement, variation of voice quality, and paralinguistic features creates richer sensory and affective moments of expression that connect with audiences on an individual basis and signal a re-evaluation of the expression of emotion in the formal settings of awards ceremonies.

The analysis of the preparation-spontaneity dichotomy within acceptance speeches shows an interesting change in the linguistic markers of sincerity. Through the earlier period (1976-2000), the speeches tended to exhibit real markers of surprise and lack of preparation in the form of disfluencies, truncated syntactic forms, and explicit acknowledgment of lack of preparation. The later era (2001-2025) shows a greater recognition of the inherent contradiction of preparation and spontaneity in that award winners develop what might be termed "calibrated spontaneity" – an artful

balance of a prepared discourse that makes room for real emotional responses within the given context. This shift represents a wider cultural trend in the understanding of public performance such that audiences have become more attuned to the vagaries of performed sincerity and require speakers both to honor the formality of the occasion and the need for authentic expression of the emotions.

The examination of gender-related aspects of emotional expression at the Oscars demonstrates a significant convergence in the emotional expressiveness of male and female winners over time. In the earlier period, female actors overwhelmingly employed more overt emotional language, spontaneous emotional displays, and acknowledgments of the physical expression of emotions, while their male counterparts generally relied on humor, humility, and expressions of gratitude as more covert means of emotional expression. In the later period, there is a striking shift toward male winners adopting more overt emotional displays, sharing personal stories filled with affect, and including family acknowledgments, which largely reduces the emotional divide between the genders. While subtle differences persist, where women tend to express emotions in terms of collective experience and social observation, and men express them in terms of individual achievement and perseverance in the face of adversity, both genders now demonstrate a wider range of emotional expression marked by greater intensity and directness. This development reflects societal changes regarding the acceptability of emotional expression across various genders.

## CONCLUSION

This linguistic analysis of affective display at the Academy Awards provides significant window onto the interactive dynamics of language, culture, and feeling in formal public discourse. Over five decades of diachronic analysis, our study shows that verbal and non-verbal expression of emotion is a shrewd marker of underlying sociocultural change in attitudes toward public displays of emotion. This shift from formal containment to expressive authenticity is indicative of deep cultural movements toward affective communication in high-stakes public spheres. Increased sensitivity in emotional communication over time toward increased comfort with emotional nuance and complexity within a larger culture contradicts one-dimensional positive-negative dualisms classically demanded of the expression of emotions.

The growing complexity of emotional discourse across the decades demonstrates an increased social tolerance of complex and detailed emotional expression, thus undercutting the traditionally simplistic good/bad dichotomy of positive and negative descriptions of emotional expression. This trend is consistent with modern theoretical models that treat emotions as cultural constructions of the subjective experience of emotions in specific contexts as opposed to purely internal events.

The interactive nature of emotional expression is most evident in the context of the Oscars, as performers have to skillfully engage with multiple audiences from peers and professionals within the industry to a world audience with the competing demands of scripted speech and spontaneous response. Spontaneity describes a performative approach that acknowledges this tension but keeps up the veneer of genuineness. This balance of preparedness and emotional immediacy reveals the very performative nature of public expression of emotions, in which speakers have the obligation both of conformity with institutional demands and the expression of true sentiments. The congruence in expressiveness across genders demonstrates visually how not only is cultural expectation of appropriate emotional behavior revealed in, but is actually constructed by, linguistic practices.

The multimodal analysis suggests that the affective significance expressed during the Oscars derives from a complex interactivity of wordings, prosodic features, facial expressions, bodily gestures, and a range of other embodied resources that individually and collectively transcend the simplistic word-for-word expression of emotions. The coordination of such semiotic resources produces complex emotional displays that convey meanings well beyond the literal sense of the spoken discourse. The increased incidence of paralinguistic cues throughout the ceremony – from prosodic modulation of the voice to more overt variation of pitch and rhythm – mirrors an increased cultural value placed on embodied sincerity as a sign of emotional truth. This cultural shift toward more embodied and nuanced forms of affective expression represents a cultural refiguring of the interrelation among body, emotion, and word in formal public spaces.

The current research makes an additional contribution towards the understanding of emotional discourse as a complex sociolinguistic process that cannot be fully explained in terms of internal psychological states alone or simplistic language principles. Instead, it shows how emotional expression arises from the intersection of biological capacities and cognitive process with social context and linguistic practice.

The acceptance speech at the Oscars represents a particularly rich example of public speaking that elicits the cultural construction of emotion in discourse. A consideration of the way that this speech genre has changed over time provides valuable information on shifts in social attitudes towards the expression of feeling and the complex linguistic strategies that public speaking requires to deal with such emotionally charged and significant contexts.

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX A

#### Diachronic Analysis of Academy Award Acceptance Speeches (1975-2000 and 2001-2024)

**Table 1**

#### Common Features in Academy Award Acceptance Speeches (1975-2000 and 2001-2024)

Category	Aspect
Common Emotional Content	<p>Joy and gratitude remain dominant emotions.</p> <p>All basic emotions from Plutchik's wheel present in speeches.</p> <p>Expression of feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of the event.</p> <p>Elements of surprise upon receiving recognition.</p>
Shared Linguistic Strategies	<p>Explicit acknowledgment of collaborative nature of filmmaking.</p> <p>Expressions of humility and modesty despite achievement.</p> <p>Expressions of disbelief when receiving the award.</p> <p>Reference to nervousness and performance anxiety.</p>
Consistent Stylistic Devices	<p>Self-deprecating humor as modesty strategy.</p> <p>Use of metaphors to convey emotional intensity.</p> <p>Repetitions and parallelism for emotional emphasis.</p> <p>References to personal journey and career aspirations.</p>

Table 2

**Distinguishing Features in Academy Award Acceptance Speeches  
(movies released in 1975-2000 and 2001-2024)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1975-2000 (Period 1)</b>	<b>2001-2024 (Period 2)</b>	<b>Evolution Summary</b>
Lexical Choices	<p>More formal and restrained emotional lexis</p> <p>Conventional positive adjectives for joy</p> <p>Limited use of intensifiers</p> <p>More formulaic expressions</p>	<p>Intensified and contemporary vocabulary</p> <p>Abundant use of intensifiers ("so", "such", "incredibly")</p> <p>More superlatives</p> <p>More diverse emotional lexicon</p>	From restrained formality to intensified expression
Grammatical Structures	<p>Simple declarative forms for positive emotions</p> <p>Exclamations for emphasis</p> <p>Less complex sentence structures</p> <p>Hesitation markers for anxiety</p>	<p>Greater syntactic complexity and variety</p> <p>Interrogatives expressing incredulity</p> <p>Conditional forms</p> <p>Embedded clauses contextualizing emotions</p>	From simplicity and directness to syntactic richness and emotional nuance
Pragmatic Functions	<p>Individually focused emotions</p> <p>Feelings seen as isolated</p> <p>Negative emotions kept private</p> <p>Anxiety apologized for</p>	<p>Emotions framed collectively</p> <p>Emotional expressions used for social commentary</p> <p>Negative emotions as protest</p> <p>Vulnerability openly embraced</p>	From individual emotional states to social commentary
Stylistic Approaches	<p>Conventional metaphors</p> <p>Simple repetition for emphasis</p>	<p>Creative and complex metaphors</p>	From conventional patterns to creative complexity

	<p>Modesty via modal constructions</p> <p>Limited authenticity markers</p> <p>Formal claims</p>	<p>Sophisticated rhetorical structures</p> <p>Modesty via relational acknowledgments</p> <p>Textual paralinguistic indicators</p> <p>Meta-emotional commentary</p>	
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## ANNEX B

**Comparative Tables of Linguistic Features in Gender-Based Emotion  
Expression**

**Table 1**

**Gender-Based Lexicon & Strategies (1975-2000)**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Best Actor (1975-2000)</b>	<b>Best Actress (1975-2000)</b>
Primary emotion words	grateful, overwhelmed, shock, happy	love, happy, cry, amazing, incredible, like
Intensifies	Less frequent; "very," "a little"	More frequent; "so," "really," "such a," repetition for emphasis
Interjections / Exclamations	Rare; occasional "Well," or humor-based	Frequent; "Oh!", "Wow!", gasps
References to tears / Crying	Very rare, usually avoided or unmentioned	More common, sometimes directly acknowledged
Emotional framing	Humility, professional gratitude, humor as modulator	Direct address, personal vulnerability, narrative of feeling
Sentence structure	More formal, declarative	More exclamatory, sometimes fragmented, conversational
Physical manifestations	Rarely mentioned	Occasionally mentioned (e.g., "hands shaking")

**Table 2**

**Gender-Based Emotion Lexicon & Strategies (2001-2024)**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Best Actor (2001-2024)</b>	<b>Best Actress (2001-2024)</b>
Primary emotion words	love, grateful, proud, joy, honor, happy, (sadness, hope)	love, happy, grateful, incredible, overwhelmed, empowered, joy
Intensifies	Frequent; "so," "very," "really," "truly," "deeply"	Very frequent; "so," "really," "absolutely," "truly"
Interjections / Exclamations	More common; "Wow!", "Oh my God" (though less than actresses)	Very frequent; "Oh my God!", "Wow!", laughter

References to tears /Crying	More frequent and accepted, sometimes direct	Frequent, often acknowledged and part of the narrative
Emotional framing	Personal journey, familial love, inspiration, deep gratitude	Personal joy, empowerment, collective experience, gratitude
Sentence structure	More varied, often includes personal, emotive anecdotes	Conversational, often includes direct address, rhetorical questions
Physical manifestations	More frequently acknowledged (tears, voice breaking)	Frequently acknowledged (tears, breathlessness, shaking)

**Table 3**

**Diachronic Shifts in Gender Emotion Expression (Comparing 1975-2000 with 2001-2024)**

<b>Linguistic Aspect</b>	<b>Shift for Best Actors</b>	<b>Shift for Best Actresses</b>
Overall Expressiveness	Significant increase in overt emotional display	Maintained high expressiveness, with thematic evolution
Use of Direct Emotion Lexicon	Markedly increased (e.g., “love”, “joy”)	Consistently high, perhaps more detailed (e.g., “empowered”)
Intensity of Expression	Increased use of intensifiers, more forceful delivery	Consistently high, sustained intensity
Range of Emotions	Broader range expressed (e.g., vulnerability, sadness)	Broader thematic application of emotions (e.g., social issues)
Acceptance of Tears	From rare/avoided to more acceptable/visible	Consistently accepted, perhaps more framed by narrative
Personal Anecdotes (Affective)	Increased use and emotional charge	Consistently used, perhaps more linked to broader themes now
Focus on Family	Increased direct emotional address to family	Consistent, strong focus, often interwoven with career journey

## SUMMARY

This study is devoted to a comprehensive examination of verbal and nonverbal means of expressing emotions during the Oscar award ceremony in a diachronic aspect. The aim of the work is to identify changes in the ways of emotional self-expression in the public speeches of award winners over five decades (1976–2025), taking into account gender, the level of spontaneity, and the preparedness of speeches. The relevance of the study is determined by the need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and emotions in the context of formal public discourse, as well as the need to trace the evolution of sociocultural norms of emotional expression.

The theoretical basis of the study is based on contemporary concepts of the linguistics of emotions, which consider affective states not as purely individual psychological phenomena, but as socially determined discursive constructs. The first chapter analyzes the theoretical foundations of linguistic research on emotions, in particular various classifications of emotions (from Paul Ekman's basic models to Lisa Feldman Barrett's constructivist approaches), systems of positive and negative evaluation in language, nonverbal means of emotional expression, including prosodic, kinetic, and proxemic components. Special attention is paid to gender differences in the expression of emotions, and the works of Deborah Tannen, Janet Holmes, and Jennifer Coates, which highlight the specifics of male and female emotional communication in different sociocultural contexts, are considered.

The methodological basis of the study includes discourse analysis to study linguistic strategies of emotional expression, multimodal analysis to integrate verbal and nonverbal components, gender comparative analysis to identify gender differences in emotional communication, diachronic comparative analysis to track temporal changes, and qualitative content analysis for a deeper understanding of the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the research material.

The second chapter presents an empirical analysis of 100 speeches by Oscar winners in two time periods (1976–2000 and 2001–2025), 50 speeches in each, evenly distributed by gender.

The key findings of the study reveal significant transformations in the culture of public emotional expression. Diachronic analysis demonstrates an evolution from the restrained, formalized emotional expressions of the early period to the more open, sincere emotionality of recent times. Contemporary speeches are characterized by greater syntactic complexity, a higher degree of expressiveness, and more frequent use of intensifiers. There has been a shift from standardized formulas of gratitude to personalized narratives that include personal stories, family memories, and emotional confessions.

At the nonverbal level, there has been a noticeable increase in the intensity of facial expressions, gestures, and intonation variability, indicating a cultural reevaluation of public emotional expression. While controlled, restrained reactions with minimal gestures and monotonous intonation prevailed in the early period, modern speeches are characterized by a wide range of emotional expressions: from laughter to tears, from quiet whispers to emotional exclamations. Multimodal analysis shows that the emotional significance of modern speeches arises from the complex interaction of lexical choices, prosodic features, facial expressions, gestures, and other embodied resources.

The gender aspect of the study reveals interesting trends in the convergence of emotional styles. While in the early period there were clear gender differences (women were more likely to show emotion, while men remained reserved), in the most recent period there has been a trend toward equalization: men more often demonstrate emotions openly, refer to personal stories, and use emotionally colored vocabulary, which reduces the traditional gender gap in this area. At the same time, certain differences in emotional expression strategies remain.

An analysis of spontaneity reveals a complex dichotomy between preparedness and naturalness. Most modern speeches show signs of prior preparation (structure, logical sequence of acknowledgments, absence of significant pauses), but integrate

elements of spontaneous emotional response (unexpected pauses, changes in intonation, self-correction). This creates an effect of “controlled authenticity” that meets contemporary cultural expectations for public emotional expression.

The study also reveals the impact of technological changes on emotional communication. Improvements in sound and image quality allow the audience to better perceive the subtle nuances of emotional expression, which may contribute to the greater emotional openness of modern laureates. The growing role of social media and digital platforms creates additional context for emotional expression, as speeches become viral content, influencing the strategies used to construct them.

In summary, the study shows that emotional expression in public discourse is not only a manifestation of internal experiences, but also a complex sociolinguistic construct that is shaped by cultural norms, audience expectations, genre characteristics, and technological possibilities. Speeches at the Oscars are a unique example of affective discourse, allowing us to trace the transformation of social perceptions of the acceptability and form of emotional expression in formal public contexts.

The results of the study have both theoretical and practical significance. The theoretical contribution lies in the development of an understanding of emotional discourse as a culturally determined sociodiscursive phenomenon that combines linguistic, psychological, and sociolinguistic paradigms. The practical significance is multifaceted: the results obtained can be used to develop special courses in discourse analysis, media linguistics, gender studies, and sociolinguistics, in practical English language teaching, as well as in writing student research papers on related topics. The research may also be of interest to specialists in the field of communication technologies, PR specialists, and media analysts.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

Дослідження присвячене комплексному вивченню вербальних і невербальних засобів вираження емоцій під час церемонії вручення премії «Оскар» у діахронному аспекті. Метою роботи є виявлення змін у способах емоційного самовираження в публічному мовленні лауреатів премії протягом п'яти десятиліть (1976–2025) з урахуванням гендерного чинника, рівня спонтанності та підготовленості виступів. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена потребою глибшого розуміння взаємозв'язку між мовою, культурою та емоціями в контексті формального публічного дискурсу, а також необхідністю простеження еволюції соціокультурних норм емоційного вираження.

Теоретичне підґрунтя дослідження базується на сучасних концепціях лінгвістики емоцій, що розглядають афективні стани не як суто індивідуальні психологічні явища, а як соціально детерміновані дискурсивні конструкти. У першому розділі проаналізовано теоретичні основи лінгвістичного дослідження емоцій, зокрема різноманітні класифікації емоцій (від базових моделей Пола Екмана до конструктивістських підходів Лізи Фельдман Барретт), системи позитивної й негативної оцінності в мові, невербальні засоби емоційної експресії, включаючи просодичні, кінетичні та проксемічні компоненти. Окрему увагу приділено гендерним особливостям виявлення емоцій, розглянуто праці Дебори Таннен, Дженет Холмз та Дженніфер Коутс, які висвітлюють специфіку чоловічої та жіночої емоційної комунікації в різних соціокультурних контекстах.

Методологічна база дослідження включає дискурс-аналіз для вивчення лінгвістичних стратегій емоційного вираження, мультимодальний аналіз для інтеграції вербальних і невербальних компонентів, гендерний компаративний аналіз для виявлення статевих особливостей емоційної комунікації, діахронний порівняльний аналіз для простеження темпоральних змін та якісний контент-аналіз для глибшого розуміння семантичних і прагматичних аспектів досліджуваного матеріалу.

У другому розділі представлено емпіричний аналіз 100 промов лауреатів премії «Оскар» у двох часових періодах (1976–2000 та 2001–2025), по 50 виступів у кожному, рівномірно розподілених за гендерною ознакою.

Ключові результати дослідження виявляють значущі трансформації в культурі публічного емоційного вираження. Діахронний аналіз демонструє еволюцію від стриманих, формалізованих емоційних проявів раннього періоду до відкритішої, щирішої емоційності новітнього часу. Сучасні промови характеризуються більшою синтаксичною складністю, вищим ступенем експресивності та частішим використанням інтенсифікаторів. Спостерігається зсув від стандартизованих формул подяки до персоналізованих наративів, що включають особисті історії, сімейні спогади та емоційні зізнання.

У межах невербального рівня фіксується помітне зростання інтенсивності міміки, жестів і варіативності інтонації, що свідчить про культурну переоцінку публічного емоційного вираження. Якщо у ранній період превалювали контрольовані, стримані реакції з мінімальною жестикуляцією та монотонною інтонацією, то сучасні виступи характеризуються широким спектром емоційних проявів: від сміху до сліз, від тихого шепоту до емоційних вигуків. Мультимодальний аналіз показує, що емоційна значущість сучасних промов виникає з комплексної взаємодії лексичних виборів, просодичних особливостей, виразів обличчя, жестикуляції та інших втілених ресурсів.

Гендерний аспект дослідження розкриває цікаві тенденції конвергенції емоційних стилів. Якщо в ранній період існували чіткі гендерні розбіжності (жінки частіше демонстрували емоційність, чоловіки дотримувалися стриманості), то в новітній період простежується тенденція до вирівнювання: чоловіки частіше демонструють емоції відкрито, звертаються до особистих історій, використовують емоційно забарвлену лексику, що зменшує традиційний гендерний розрив у цій сфері. Водночас зберігаються певні відмінності в стратегіях емоційного вираження.

Аналіз спонтанності виявляє складну дихотомію між підготовленістю та природністю. Більшість сучасних промов демонструють ознаки попередньої

підготовки (структурованість, логічна послідовність подяк, відсутність суттєвих пауз), проте інтегрують елементи спонтанної емоційної реакції (неочікувані паузи, зміни інтонації, самокорекція). Це створює ефект «контрольованої автентичності», що відповідає сучасним культурним очікуванням щодо публічного емоційного вираження.

Дослідження також виявляє вплив технологічних змін на емоційну комунікацію. Покращення якості звуку та зображення дозволяє аудиторії краще сприймати тонкі нюанси емоційного вираження, що, можливо, сприяє більшій емоційній відкритості сучасних лауреатів. Зростання ролі соціальних мереж та цифрових платформ створює додатковий контекст для емоційного вираження, оскільки промови стають вірусним контентом, що впливає на стратегії їх побудови.

Узагальнюючи, дослідження засвідчує, що емоційне висловлювання в публічному дискурсі — це не лише прояв внутрішніх переживань, а й складний соціолінгвістичний конструкт, який формується під впливом культурних норм, очікувань аудиторії, особливостей жанру та технологічних можливостей. Промови на церемонії «Оскар» виступають як унікальний приклад афективного дискурсу, що дає змогу простежити трансформацію суспільних уявлень про допустимість та форму емоційного висловлення в офіційно-публічних контекстах.

Результати дослідження мають як теоретичну, так і практичну значущість. Теоретичний внесок полягає у розвитку розуміння емоційного дискурсу як культурно детермінованого соціодискурсивного феномену, що поєднує лінгвістичні, психологічні та соціолінгвістичні парадигми. Практична значущість є багатоаспектною: отримані результати можуть бути використані для розробки спецкурсів з аналізу дискурсу, медіалінгвістики, гендерних студій та соціолінгвістики, у практичному навчанні англійської мови, а також у написанні студентських наукових робіт з суміжної тематики. Дослідження також може становити інтерес для фахівців у галузі комунікаційних технологій, PR-спеціалістів та медіа-аналітиків.