

Ukrainian Political Internet Discourse: Signs of Language Aggression

Svitlana Yermolenko¹, Larysa Kravets², Halyna Siuta¹ & Larysa Kozlovska³

¹Department of Stylistics, Language Culture and Sociolinguistics, Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

²Department of Philology, Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Berehove, Ukraine

³Department of Business Linguistics, Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, Kyiv, Ukraine

Correspondence: Larysa Kravets, Department of Philology, Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, 90200, 6 Koshuta Sq., Berehove, Ukraine.

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Abstract

The problem of language aggression, hostility, and contempt is one of the most acute in the modern world. The rapid spread of this phenomenon is associated with the development of the Internet and social networks, which led to revolutionary changes in people's communication and the emergence of new types of socio-political interaction. The accessibility of internet resources, the absence of communication barriers that are present in real life, and the speed of information transmission have greatly expanded social contacts. The growth of language aggression, hostility, and contempt in society and the resulting need to invent and implement models of nonviolent language interaction have created new areas for research for Ukrainian linguists. The purpose of the study is to define such concepts as language aggression, hostility, and contempt; to identify the dominant areas of language aggression, hostility, and contempt in the Ukrainian political internet discourse. Language aggression, hostility, and contempt are aimed at humiliating other people or a group of people. The most frequent stereotypes of aggression are associated with discrediting based on political views, ethnicity, language views, less often – gender, age, religion, social status, etc.

Keywords: enmity, contempt, communication, interaction, expressions

1. Introduction

The problem of language aggression, hostility, and contempt is one of the most acute in the modern world. The rapid spread of this phenomenon is associated with the development of the Internet and social networks, which led to revolutionary changes in people's communication and the emergence of new types of socio-political interaction. The availability of internet resources, the absence of communication barriers that are present in real life, and the speed of information transfer greatly expanded social contacts, while Web 2.0 online technologies allowed everyone to become co-creators of content and actively interact with each other (Aizstrauts et al., 2013; Ginters & Aizstrauta, 2018). Social networks are kind of the core of the modern internet space, gathering 4.20 billion users at the beginning of 2021, which is 53.6% of the world's population (Simon Kemp..., 2021). G. Pocheptsov (2017) notes: "A man of today has received a technical replacement for their social existence, which dictates the rules of social behaviour on social platforms." By minimising various restrictions and allowing anonymity of communication, the internet expands opportunities for cooperation and co-creation, intensifies communication, but at the same time worsens conventional problems of social interaction, including aggression, hostility, and contempt. In the online world, there are "many difficulties that people have historically faced in 'real' life. Intolerance and hatred have been inherent in people since ancient times. Studies have shown that such behaviours have increased in recent years" (Kin & Georgescu, 2016; Korsunskaya et al., 2022). Politicians and journalists who, updating stereotypes about certain groups of people, resort to language aggression on the internet for political gain, also contribute to its spread.

Invective, angry accusations, offensive words have long been used in political speech for the purpose of shocking, provoking, and inciting people. The lack of censorship on the Internet and the limited possibility of prosecuting language aggression and hate speech in Ukraine have created favourable conditions for the use of various forms of language aggression in political Internet communication. The growth of aggressive and hostile expressions is recorded during periods of acute social confrontation and wars (Hate Speech..., 2015; Kostruba, 2018a). However, politicians and some

media outlets resort to language aggression and hostility even during the relative stabilisation of social processes.

The purpose of the study is to define such concepts as language aggression, hostility, and contempt; to identify the dominant areas of language aggression, hostility, and contempt in the Ukrainian political internet discourse.

2. Literature Review

Language aggression is a form of aggression that, according to theories of aggression as an instinct, is "an integral part of human nature" (Baron & Richardson, 2001). The rapid increase in aggression and hostility, conditioned by technological development, naturally attracts the attention of researchers from various branches of science, but most of all this phenomenon is studied in psychology. In recent decades, interest in aggression and related phenomena (anger, hostility) has also increased in sociology, law, journalism, pedagogy, political science, and linguistics, as evidenced by the results of search queries in various systems. Most diverse studies of aggressive human behaviour are based on the concepts of psychologists, which is explained by the nature of the phenomenon under study. A comprehensive review of psychological theories and experimental approaches to the investigation of this phenomenon was provided by R. Baron and D. Richardson (2001) in "Aggression", highlighting four main interpretations of aggression:

- 1) innate motives or inclinations;
- 2) needs activated by external stimuli;
- 3) cognitive and emotional processes;
- 4) current social conditions combined with previous experience.

The phenomena and related concepts "language aggression", "language hostility", and "language contempt" have, in addition to psychological, an equally important linguistic aspect, which is also the object of the study. The history of the linguistic study of hate speech usually begins with the work of W. Kemplerer's "A Philologist's Notebook. Language of the Third Reich" and Rwanda's Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (R.T.L.M), which sparked the Second Congolese War. However, stylistically lowered (dismissive, abusive) speech has attracted the attention of researchers before. Recently, obscene language has been analysed by O. Taranenko (2009). The researcher stated that swearing is a phenomenon that is inherent in every national language and is associated with taboos. Swearing can symbolise strong positive emotions, become a way to relieve tension, etc., but also express contempt, intolerance, hostility, aggression towards other people. Swearing often accompanies aggressive physical actions of a person, but aggression, hostility may not have a linguistic expression or even be hidden. The presence of aggression and hostility in speech can be stated only considering the context and communicative situation.

The growth of language aggression, hostility, and contempt in society and the resulting need to invent and implement models of nonviolent language interaction have created new areas for research for Ukrainian linguists. Recent studies conducted based on both Ukrainian and foreign, often English, material. The scientific findings by G. Pocheptsov (2017), which trace linguistic hostility and aggression in the context of studying Nazi and Soviet propaganda, emphasise their role in creating the image of a politician, are of particular importance. Moreover, the study involved the findings of S. Zhabotinskaya (2015), who analyses the language of politicians and participants in protest actions during the social confrontation in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, and military operations in the Donbas from December 2013 to December 2014 and qualifies it as a weapon in the conservative war. The researcher notes that the use of language is capable of disintegrating and primitivising the communicative environment, is a means of destroying the old and developing a new worldview. Language material collected from Internet resources that S. Zhabotinskaya (2015) examines using the methods of cognitive linguistics. According to the author, the compiled dictionary-thesaurus of lexical innovations of Maidan and Anti-Maidan demonstrates the movement of worldview frames from state power to people and from people to state power. The vast majority of lexical innovations recorded in the dictionary-thesaurus (368 out of 404 neologisms) relate to the enemy and have a negative meaning or connotation. They can be attributed to hate speech.

O. Kuzik's (2019) dissertation is devoted to the problem of language aggression in electronic publications of the USA and Great Britain. The researcher traces the implementation of this phenomenon in speech strategies and speech tactics and distinguishes between its explicit and implicit forms. O. Kuzik (2019) characterises explicit verbal aggression as offensive verbal behaviour expressed with language units having invective meaning, and implicit – as offensive verbal behaviour expressed with language units that acquire invective meaning only in the appropriate context. Linguists also classify language aggression by other parameters:

- degree of expression (weak and strong);
- degree of awareness of the speaker's actions and orientation (conscious, purposeful, initiated, and unconscious, not directed, reactive language aggression);
- manner, method of expression (open (direct) and hidden (indirect));

- object relation (transitive and intransitive);
- the number of participants in a speech situation (mass (group) – socially closed (interpersonal) (Shcherbinina, 2001).

Linguistics has already accumulated extensive experience in examining language aggression, hostility, and contempt, but these are only the first stages of the study. The severity of the problem necessitates further studies to solve it.

3. Materials and Methods

With the advent of the internet, a new information environment emerged, which appeared to be quite convenient for political activities. Official accounts of political and state figures in social networks, blogs, and websites of electronic publications have been added to the conventional communication tools of politicians. The information posted on them has become a determining factor in the political activity and functioning of the government, which is clearly evidenced, for example, by the election races in both the United States and Ukraine.

The focus on language aggression, hostility, and contempt in political discourse is also logical because politics, including political journalism, is one of the dimensions of the mental and emotional existence of a person who requests information about activities related to solving social issues, struggling for obtaining or retaining state power, etc. In these information needs a person is not only open to the perception of the content of broadcast messages but also sensitive to their form, expressiveness, axiology. Therefore, in this dimension, the emphasis on the phenomena of language aggression, hostility, and contempt is motivated and substantiated.

In view of the above, Ukrainian political Internet discourse was *chosen as the object of study, which is interpreted as an institutional type of communication in domestic and international legal relations and interactions, as a means of their development and regulation associated with the struggle to obtain or retain state power.*

Since the main habitat of political discourse is mass communication, the following publications are the source base of the study: Ukrainian Pravda (2000), Ukrainian Week (2007), Day (1997), Radio Liberty (2021), Censor.Net (2004), Glavkom (2009), Zaxid.Net (2005), High Castle (1991), the multimedia platform "Ukrinform" (2015), pages of politicians on social networks (Facebook), etc.

In accordance with the specific features of the issue under study, the following methods and techniques were applied: a methodology for monitoring internet resources – to identify linguistic means of expressing contempt, aggression, hostility; conceptual and interpretative analysis of language means that express contempt, aggression, and hostility, which involves considering macro- and micro-context to interpret their content. The following methods are used to create a corpus of contexts of linguistic means of expressing aggression, hostility, and contempt in Ukrainian political internet discourse: continuous material selection method. Additionally, the results of content analysis that are publicly available on internet resources are used.

4. Results and Discussion

The problem of language contempt, aggression, and hostility is multidimensional. The basis of its linguistic definition is psychological interpretation. However, neither psychologists nor linguists agree on the essence of contempt, aggression, and hostility. There are also disagreements in the choice of terms to denote the linguistic expression of these phenomena. Equally important are also international legal qualifications and the normative-value dimension of social manifestation of phenomena (Hnatkovych et al., 2021; Shalbolova et al., 2021). There is also no clarity or unambiguity in the definitions of this type. In the Ukrainian media space and in scientific discourse, the term *hate speech*, according to the Cambridge Dictionary (2021), means "public speaking that expresses hatred or encourages violence against a person or group of people based on something, such as race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation". In Ukrainian studies, hate speech is interpreted with reference to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1997) as all forms of expression that incite, encourage, or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of intolerance, such as militant nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, migrants, and foreigners (Kostruba, 2018b). However, Ukrainian researchers note that this definition is vague

A. Zagnitko (2012) in the "Dictionary of Modern Linguistics" fixes the terms "language aggression" and "speech aggression", the definitions of which are based on the psycholinguistic interpretation of aggression. Language aggression, according to the dictionary, is "forcible imposition on the people, the nationality of another (non-native) language as a means of communication, education, science, culture, etc., the desire to turn this non-native language into the means of self-identification of the ethnic group." Language aggression is "an oral expression, a written text with vulgarisms, words of obscene vocabulary to express indignation and contempt to the communication partner" (Zagnitko, 2012). The given interpretation of speech and language aggression clarifies the definition of aggression presented in the dictionary, namely an individual or collective behaviour aimed at causing physical or psychological harm to a certain person or group of people (Zagnitko, 2012; Kostruba, 2017). The author provides a psychological explanation of aggression and connects its speech form using vulgar and obscene vocabulary with an intention to express a negative emotion of contempt. This

interpretation can be agreed only considering the fact that contempt is a conflictogen (position of superiority, resentment) and can be a prerequisite for aggression or its accompanying factor.

The expediency of linguistic differentiation of concepts from the above terminological chain can be explained by examples that show the difference between mental nature and level of internal aggression, different modalities of statements: one of the guests of the programme "Epitsentr ukrainskoi polityky" called (1) *Bandera-oriented national society the enemies of the Russian-speaking population* (4.01.2021, "Epitsentr ukrainskoi polityky"); (2) *Ukrainian nationalists and neo-fascists as the initiators of the civil war in Donbas* (P. Symonenko, January 29, "Holos narodu"), (3) *Yulia Tymoshenko – grandmother of Ukrainian politics* (T. Milovanov, "Svoboda slova na ICTV" 24.05), or (4) *Get out of here, robber* (V. Zelensky expelled the Secretary of the Boryspil City Council from the meeting). In examples 1 and 2, the language of hatred and enmity can be observed. Examples 3 and 4 show contempt, which is most likely conditioned by political posturing, but these statements cannot be attributed to accentuated hatred.

The contempt, aggression, and hostility are comparable, but most researchers distinguish between them. A. G. Buss (1971), in particular, is of opinion that hostility is a narrower state. K. E. Izard (1980) argues that hostility is a passive general state, while aggression implies active directed actions. L. Berkovits (2001) interprets aggression as behaviour motivated by the intention to harm someone. The researcher emphasises that aggression "does not mean injustice, insult, mistreatment, etc. unless all such behaviours were caused by a deliberate desire to harm another person". The psychologist explains hostility as "a negative attitude towards another person or group of people, which is expressed in an extremely unfriendly assessment of one's object – victim". A hostile person, according to the researcher, is always ready to give negative evaluations to other people, showing hostility to them. In this aspect, hostility approaches contempt as a low-tone emotion characteristic of people with a negative worldview. L. Berkovits (2001) emphasises that not all people who are hostile to others are necessarily aggressive. Given the above, the term "hate speech" refers to statements expressing hatred or encouraging violence against other people based on something that seems quite motivated.

Language aggression, hostility, and contempt are most clearly manifested by vocabulary. Lexemes with such meanings recorded in written texts and oral statements of politicians are qualified as stylistically reduced and divided into two groups: (a) words with intrinsically negative meaning and (b) words with contextual negative meaning. The first group conventionally includes pejorative colloquial vocabulary, vulgar, abusive, and obscene (bad language words), the vast majority of which is recorded in dictionaries of the Ukrainian language with the appropriate mark, including eratives and neolexemes that arose as a result of language play. The second group includes words the invectiveness or pejorativeness of which is conditioned by context and arises from their metaphorical or metonymic use (eg, animal names to denote people, plant names to denote humans, etc.), combining stylistically neutral names with ironic or stylistically reduced meanings. Notably, the lexical composition of both the first and second groups is unstable and is constantly updated due to word-forming and semantic neologisms. An increase in negative semantics in lexemes with conventionally humorous or ironic connotations is also observed (in particular, in ethnonyms and exonyms).

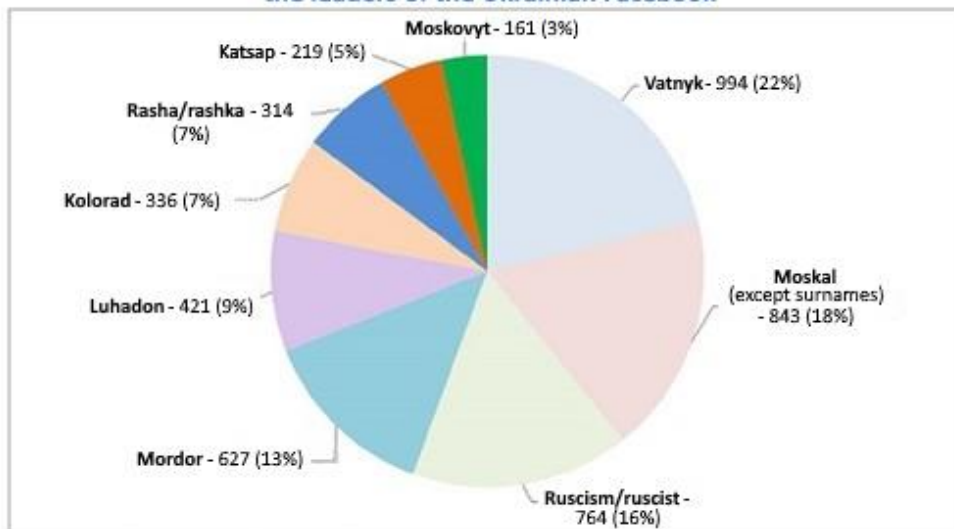
Moreover, openly or covertly aggressive semantics are recorded in various types of sentences, in particular, incentive modality (most often imperative or invocative), interrogative (mainly interrogative-rhetorical), and narrative sentences of affirmative modality. In contexts, they often have an exclamatory stylistic and emotional orientation. Language aggression, hostility, or contempt aimed at discrediting or humiliating other people or groups of persons, can be caused by political views, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, social status, language views, etc. These guidelines define the dominant areas of language aggression, contempt, or hostility (Figure 1).

Areas	• Examples of language aggression, contempt
political views	• ruscists, banderivtsi, kolorady
ethnicity	• moskal, katsap, khokhol, bulbash
gender	• baba (regarding a woman or a man), blondynka/bilyavka (foolish woman)
age	• babusia (to an older woman politician), divchynka (to a young woman politician)
religion	• spiritual contagion, sect (any church, except the Orthodox), schismatic, heretic
social status	• seliuk, rahul
language	• dermova, katsoyazyichie, uzkozyazyichnyie

Figure 1. Dominant areas of language aggression, contempt, or hostility

According to the results of the content analysis conducted by experts of the Centre for Content Analysis in August 2015, the level of use of hate speech in the Ukrainian media is not high (1.7% of the number of reports on Donbas, Crimea, and Russia) (MediaSapiens, 2010) (Figure 2).

The most commonly used words of hostility in the Ukrainian media and among the leaders of the Ukrainian Facebook



The total number of the most used words of enmity is 4679. The language of enmity in the Ukrainian information space is mainly focused on the aggression of the Russian Federation, to a lesser extent - on Donbas separatists.

Figure 2. The most commonly used words of hostility in the Ukrainian media and among the leaders of the Ukrainian Facebook

Source: MediaSapiens (2010).

According to the statistics visualised in the chart, the top 10 most commonly used words of contempt (sometimes bordering on aggression, hostility, accentuated rejection of the opponent's position) are the nomination of individuals as *vatnyk*, *kolorad*, *ruscist*, *moskal*, *moskovit*, *katsap*, what unites them is the archiseme 'pro-Russian position'. This thematic segment of the nomination is complemented by the lexemes *separ* (a resident of Ukraine who supports the idea of separating the eastern and southern regions of the country, militias and terrorist groups in the ATO zone), *luhandonets and dambasian* (a resident of Luhansk and Donetsk regions, which announced the separation from Ukraine and the creation of self-sufficient administrative units of the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Lithuania under Russian patronage), *krymnashyst* (ironic name of people who actively supported and support the

annexation of Crimea by Russia), *maloros-khokhol* (anti-Ukrainian). Eg.: *In Chernihiv, a "vatnyk" was tried for trying to damage the memorial to the Heavenly Hundred Heroes* (Zaxid.Net, 2005), *the central category of ruscism is compatriots, an analogue of the Nazi "Volksdeutsche" with Russian as the main feature* (Ukrainian Pravda, 2000); *She (Sofia Fedina) noted that "not even all separatists allowed to talk to defenders like that. Someone thinks he's immortal", – said, in particular, Fedina* (Ukrinform, 2015); *in Russian even the last luhandonets and maybe "druh stiepiei" – kalmyk. But in beautiful Ukrainian...* (Day, 1997); *Krymnashyst Basta comes to Ukraine again* (Glavkom, 2009), *In the Zelensky criticism camp*, either all the supporters of the president, that is, the majority of Ukrainians, or the overwhelming majority of his supporters are called *maloros* (Ukrainian Pravda, 2000).

One of the most frequent negative-evaluative nominations of political opponents in modern political (official and unofficial) discourse – *kolorad*, *kolorades*, appeared after the beginning of the Russian military aggression in Ukraine. Novotvir arose primarily based on metonymisation of a visual feature: the so-called St. George ribbon became an external attribute of expressing pro-Russian views. The combination of yellow (orange)-black stripes in it caused an analogy with the natural colour of the Colorado potato beetle (a well-known pest of agricultural crops) and caused the appearance of a metaphor. Notably, in May 2014, the word *kolorad* was recognised as the word of the month. Apparently, a powerful extralingual factor in this intensification of word usage was the reaction of Ukrainian-centric society to the pro-Russian actions of pro-Russian forces, formally linked to Remembrance and Reconciliation Day and Victory Day over Nazism in World War II. Participants in the ceremonial actions held at that time ostentatiously flaunted St. George's ribbon as a sign of heroism and military victory of the Russian people.

There are several versions of the *kolorad* nomination as a unit of modern political discourse. In each of them, the mental and evaluative field of the secondary nomination is filled with negative, actually contemptuous and aggressive connotations. These same connotations dominate the language of the media: *"They flew and stung the kolorades a little", – AFU officer on the destroyed position of militants in the Donbas* (Novynarnia, 2021); *On February 4, posters depicting this people's deputy in a stylised "kolorad vatnyk" appeared in the Pechersk district of the capital. Kolorades are climbing into power; the poster says* (Ukrainian View, 2021).

In many contexts, the name *kolorades* synonymised with *vantyk* (people who actively support the idea of the "Russian world" and exaggerate, romanticise the greatness of the Soviet past). The nomination is created by metonymising the name of insulated outerwear popular in the Soviet period *vantyk*. However, their semantic proportionality is contextual, situational: *It is no secret that the public consciousness of Ukrainians perceives everything that is happening today in the Donbas through the prism of a number of capacious verbal caricatures, such as, "vatnyk", "kolorad", "russkomirni", etc., thus drawing a kind of ideological boundary between "we" and "they"* (Ukrainian Week, 2007).

Axiological opposition to these words is nominations with 'patriotism', 'Ukrainocentrism' archetypes for the supporters of the national idea and principles of Ukraine's sovereignty, which receive positive connotation in the pro-Ukrainian texts: *banderivtsi, svidomity, ukry, ukropy, ukrofil, maidanivtsi*. The clearly negative evaluative semantics of these lexemes, witnessed in pro-Russian texts, is a manifestation of aggression and hostility, for example, the Russian phrase *"kosyt ukrop"* – to fight against the Ukrainian army. Transformation of the semantics of Russianism *ukrop* in Ukrainian political discourse can be an example of manipulation during information confrontation. The appearance of this word is associated with Russian chauvinists and is interpreted as a metaphor based on the comparison of Ukrainians with plants to dehumanise, depersonalise the image of a Ukrainian soldier. Later, in Ukrainian political discourse, the word *ukrop* was deciphered as 'Ukrainian resistance' and as 'Ukrainian union of patriots'. Its evaluative connotation also changed from distinctly negative to distinctly positive, and then neutral.

Transformations of meaning can also be traced in the word *"vyshyvvatnyk"*, which functions as (1) a derogatory designation of a Maidan supporter, a Ukrainian, aimed at discrediting national values, and (2) the name of Ukrainian cheer-patriots. In both meanings, it has a negative connotation motivated by aggression and hostility, as evidenced by the material of the article *"Vyshyvvatnyk"* on the *"Dramatyka"* resource. An intensified manifestation of contempt, tending to hostility, or even hatred, is also implicated in the names *banderlohy, maidauny, zhydobanderivtsi, banderofashnia*.

The presented nominative series and illustrations of their actualisation in modern language practice give grounds to state the ideological, lexical-semantic, and evaluative-axiological completeness of the thematic segment "nominations of persons by certain political views" in the dictionary of the period 2014-2021.

Ethnicity is one of the few topics that Ukrainian politicians and public figures cover quite consistently, controlling their language, verbalising thoughts and emotions in tones of political correctness. For example, in the modern Ukrainian political discourse the nominations *tsyhan, tsyhanka, tsyhany, tsyhanskyi* are perceived as negative, are contemptuously connoted. In the stream of political correctness, which is now actively positioned as a style of political life and a paradigm of political culture, Ukrainian politicians use synonymous nominations *rom, romka, romy, romskyi* along with a descriptive periphrastic formula *Roma representative*, even in clearly emotionally intensive contexts, which clearly

describe the negative traits, asociality, immorality of this nationality. Eg.: *Mayor of Rivne O. Tretyak offers to pack Roma to the bus and get them out of town. He suggests resorting to radical actions against Roma* (Glavkom, 2009).

However, some rudiments of the linguistic manifestation of disregard for representatives of the Roma nationality can still be observed: "You might get robbed by *tsyhany*", – the warning says. However, in English, they only warn about possible theft and do not mention Roma (Khreschatyk News, 2020), "Loyal attitude to *tsyhans* and the inaction of law enforcement agencies to the criminal activities of these individuals often lead to an increase in the crime rate. They pollute the city, use children for fraud, deceive people, commit theft, and sometimes resort to more serious crimes", – the "Sokil" YPO says (Volyn Infa, 2021). The intensifiers of the negation implied in the *tsyhan* nomination in the given contexts are the evaluative characteristics: *criminal activity, city pollution, scam, thefts, more serious crimes*, etc.

The dictionary of the language of aggression and hostility also includes expressively labeled ethnonyms *katsap, moskovit, moskal, khokhol*, etc., although in Ukrainian folklore and classical literature they were used mainly as stylistically neutral lexemes or for the purpose of creating humorous tone.

Symmetrical mechanisms of verbalisation of negative attitudes towards another person or persons are observed in the thematic segment "language views", which reflects the urgent for modern Ukraine problem of national-linguistic identification of citizens. Statements in the texts on this topic do not always comply with the coordinates of political and verbal-emotional correctness because of ideological irritability. Clearly derogatory semantics about the Ukrainian language is demonstrated by the Russian phrases "*kakaia raznitsa*", "*i tak paimut*", "*mova nie na chasie*". In the Ukrainian-language mass media, these words are not translated from Russian, but purposefully transliterated into units of Ukrainian graphics, which emphasises the teasing of their content: *And when we are told about tolerance and "a kakaia raznitsa", etc, then "kakaia raznitsa" can only be when problems with the Ukrainian language, Ukrainian culture, with the entire Ukrainian context, with knowledge of national history, are eliminated* (Radio Liberty, 2021). In the unofficial Ukrainian political discourse, numerous distorted words with disparaging, provocative semantics function to refer to the Russian language and the people who speak it.

Assessment of the realities of political life and fellow politicians is a relevant topic of Ukrainian political internet discourse. Various negative modalities are reflected in the individual language practice of Ukrainian politician Oleh Lyashko. His expressive assessments of the realities of modern Ukrainian life and the role of fellow politicians in this life are examples of the language of contempt, aggression, hostility. For example, there are a number of statements on the politician's Facebook page: *Servant of the People – a party of drug addicts and murderers!* (31.08.2021); *How long do you think we will have to put up with this lawlessness before the outraged people take out these looters on a pitchfork?* (15.07.2021).

The Ukrainian parliament and deputies of the current convocation of the Verkhovna Rada are a constant object of analysis and, consequently, assessment in O. Lyashko's statements. The politician verbalises the perception of them in extremely negatively marked phrases: *the beastly parliament, the most corrupt parliament in the history of Ukraine, the most shameful convocation*, etc. He uses no less expressive insulting nominations against the current parliamentarians: *parasites* (June 24, 2021), *gluttons* (July 13, 2021), *looters* (July 15, 2021). In the politician's speeches, there are frequent expressive sentences of an invitingly destructive nature, which are also maximally saturated with negative units: *This beastly parliament has no right to exist!* (1.07.2021); *The most corrupt parliament in the history of Ukraine – unworthy garbage dump!* (29. 06.2021); *This is the most shameful convocation that should immediately go into oblivion!* (20.07.2021).

Despite the public's perception of the laws of tolerance, which are crucial in the language of international diplomacy, modern politicians, both Ukrainian and European, sometimes disregard the realities of political life and fellow politicians in their assessments. For example, the leader of the Servants of the People faction in the Verkhovna Rada, David Arahamiya, suggested in a factional chat to call one of the parties by swear words: "Someone corrected Arahamiya's statement: *Pro-Russian representatives of the oldest profession. In such a way the regulations will not be violated. Another participant in the official chat of "servants" chose the following synonymous series about colleagues from other factions: "Kurwy, larvae"* (High Castle, 1991). Former German Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Rosneft G. Schroeder in response to an interview with Ukrainian Ambassador Andriy Melnyk to the Berlin newspaper Tagesspiegel, in which a Ukrainian diplomat criticized the **Chancellor's calls to lift sanctions** on Russia, insulted the Ukrainian ambassador in his podcast: *We should not bother each other with sanctions. I tried to point out that this is also true in relation to Russia. Why then is either the ambassador or the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, a dwarf from Ukraine, criticising me? "Yes, the ambassador"* – Anda suggests. "Yes, yes, some dwarf from Ukraine", - Schroeder repeated, not pronouncing Andriy Melnyk's name, but saying the disregardful description of the current official representative of Ukraine in Germany for the second time (Ukrainian Pravda, 2000).

It is evident that the invective modality of expression *some dwarf from Ukraine* is connected not with the indication of the height of Andrei Melnik, but with the desire to humiliate his status as an international politician through the figurative

meaning of the nomination, which is universal for many European languages *dwarf* "a very minor person from a certain standpoint, a scrub.

Instead, it is noteworthy that in the projection on the political figure of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is also often disparagingly called a *dwarf* (***Moscow dwarf, bloody dwarf***), semes "short height", "malice", "worthlessness" are evident.

The use of the *pygmy* lexeme, synonymous with a *dwarf* one, is emotionally and evaluatively loaded in the Ukrainian political discourse, in the structure of the periphrastic nomination of *pygmies in power* as characteristics of ineffective, unprofessional, incompetent and unpatriotic officials, eg: ***Pygmies in power, which was to be expected from them, ignored the event. Complete degradation. Because there is nothing Ukrainian about them*** (Lyashko, FB, June 15).

The congruent to the previous significant sarcastic tone is evidenced by individual political assessments, expressed not in relation to a single figure, but in relation to the whole state. Eg.: *Makei named Lithuania pygmy.* (title). ***Pygmy-Lithuania says that it will continue to put pressure on Belarus, work with Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. They present themselves as giants who want to play almost a decisive role in our region and, possibly, even in international politics,*** "Makei said. In this context, the hate speech modality is expressed by the semantic-evaluative game of contrasting *pygmies* (1. The name of low-growing tribes with a height of about 142 – 145 cm. 2. Small people; dwarfs. *mostly, contemptuous.* Worthless people (Dictionary of..., 1970)) – *giant* (1. A man of great height and strength in folk beliefs and legends. // A person who stands out from others with a very large height. 2. An object or creature that is larger than other similar objects or creatures. 3. A person who has done or is doing something extraordinary that requires great abilities, work, courage, and a lot of effort. // A person who is extremely outstanding in a particular field).

5. Conclusions

The Ukrainian political internet discourse fully reflects the processes that are taking place in the country. The number of contemptuous, aggressive, and hostile statements in political Internet communication increases during periods of acute social confrontation and decreases with the legal and emotional settlement of problematic situations. In the era of globalisation, language aggression has a universal character, it is conditioned by the features of understanding supranational, interstate, intra-national, intra-state conditions and circumstances of political life. Therewith, it correlates with issues of reducing the personal cultural level of political figures, non-compliance with the rules of ethics of official and public communication.

Language aggression, hostility, and contempt are aimed at humiliating other people or a group of people. The most frequent stereotypes of aggression are associated with discrediting based on political views, ethnicity, language views, less often – gender, age, religion, social status, etc. The prospects for further studies are related to the urgent need for modern Ukrainian society to create a political elite, improve the national political culture, and develop language and ethical standards of public communication.

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