

**ONLINE VERBALIZATION OF PERSONAL ASSESSMENT:  
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TWITTER REACTIONS IN THE  
PROTEST POLITICAL DISCOURSE\***

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**Abstract:** *The paper studies the verbalisation of internet users' personal assessment as a way of affecting public opinion. The authors consider the linguistic means used by the English-speaking internet users of Twitter for expression of their opinion regarding the US Tea Party movement in 2009. As the source of the language material, the authors chose the Twitter social network. The advantages of the microblog as the source of material for the linguistic analysis include the opportunity of selecting the material according to the set parameters (date, topic, and addressers), the completeness and reliability of the sampling, the linguistic diversity for the analysis, the reliability and openness of the text messages. The base for studying the linguistic peculiarities in this paper is the content-analysis of the tweets gathers for the period from February till April 2009. The processing of the collected material was performed using the Atlas.ti software. The authors defined the thematic dominants of the expressions and the expressive means as the markers of the personal opinion of Internet users. The results of the conducted research presented as the diagram illustrate the way for the English-speaking Tweeter users' opinions expression regarding a significant theme of the protest movement for the society and political world. The analysis of the data allows at some themes of the messages were expressed explicitly, however, the critical estimate towards the government and the president of the country were implicated using the linguistic means. Based on the obtained results, the authors of the paper find the answer to the following question: what is the way for the microblog users to affect the opinions of each other through the linguistic expressive means and under the conditions of the text limit of the message down to 140 symbols (as of 2009). The research*

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*scientists come to the conclusion that the language estimate is met on Twitter as both positive and negative. Its implicit or explicit expression is achieved through the use of stylistic and syntactic tricks, such as metaphor, comparison, epithet, exclamation, irony, quotations, rhetoric question, and allusion. Special attention here is paid to the study of the interrogative structures as a way of explication or implication of personal opinion.*

**Keywords:** explication/implication of estimate, protest movement, political discourse, media discourse, Twitter.

The information-communication technologies of the present time contribute to the effective implementation by the citizens of their rights and popularisation of the initiatives and resolutions by the political leaders. Through these technologies, social communities are created united by the general interests, and the decision-making process is developed in the system of governmental control. Such kind of community immediately forms common value orientations among the people removed from each other geographically, affecting their perception of reality and behaviour.

The theme of a significant American event – the Boston Tea Party – lays the basis of the tax protests of the libertarian and conservative parties for a long time. For example, the fundraising campaign for the primary election of the Republican congressman Ron Paul during the presidential election campaign 2008. The purpose of use of the libertarian protest theme of the ‘tea party’ was the attraction of attention to the fiscal conservatism, which caused the subsequent emergence of the modern widely known protest ‘Tea Party’.

In February 2009 during the TV-broadcast from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange by Rick Santelli, the editor of the CNBC Business News Network criticised the governmental plan of refinancing the mortgage and suggested the creation of the Chicago Tea Party protest movement in summer 2009. Soon after, 50 national conservative leaders agreed to take part in the conference meant the beginning of the Tea Party national movement. On the same day, in the state of New York, they created a Facebook account named Capital Chicago Tea Party – Rick’s Revolution. According to the published information of the Huffington Post periodical, the account started rapidly developing, calling people to incept the protest actions throughout the entire country. Soon after, the protests were planned in 40 cities and started on February 27, 2009, which was the beginning of the Tea Party modern movement.

Notably, the Tea Party is not an autonomous political party. It is challenging to characterise this phenomenon as an organised protest movement due to the lack of the leader, headquarters and the single political platform. The Tea Party movement may be defined as a decentralized community of the citizens united by the dissatisfaction

regarding the current economic situation in the country. However, this fact has not hindered the protest movement from the influence on the general political situation of the country.

According to a series of research scientists, political success was achieved by the protest movement due to its decentralization. Besides, the internet served as a platform for the discussion and mobilisation of the citizens, which contributed to a greater decentralisation of the movement. The basic platforms for the information exchange were Twitter and Facebook. These media from among the new ones expand the borders of communication both geographically and ideologically, enhancing the decentralization of the protest movement. Being the advocates of a particular political party or the citizens of the country's outskirts, the users of these social networks may consider themselves implicated to the general protest of Tea Party, by identifying themselves with the members of the party<sup>1</sup>.

According to John Scott Willey, namely, the Twitter became the mediator between the candidates of the Tea Party movement and the electorate during the intermediate elections 2010. By using #TCOT (Top Conservatives on Twitter) hashtag, the communities of the conservators were actively created on Twitter. The Tea Party movement took on using the 'new media bombs' during the intermediate elections 2010 in order to fill the Internet with the negative messages about the Democratic nominee Martha Coakley<sup>2</sup>.

In the inhomogeneous media environment namely Twitter contributed to the fact that the leaders of the Tea Party started directly addressing their messages to the active users, geographically remoted from each other. They influenced the decentralized vast network of advocates. Due to this network, they raised great funds in the support of the Tea Party movements' candidates. The communication in the new media environment also inevitably affects the languages servicing Internet communication. As a result of the conducted research, they revealed the set of the linguistic instruments used by the communists in order to influence public opinion on the Internet.

The objective of the paper is to reveal the peculiarities of verbal expression by the Twitter users of their personal assessment of the Tea

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<sup>1</sup> A. Gaslin, "Academia.edu: marketing of social networks as the novum organum of open science", in *Philosophical Problems of Information Technologies and Cyberspace*, 2018, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 73-91. DOI 10.17726/philIT.2018.1.5

<sup>2</sup> J.S. Willey, *The decentralized social movement: how the Tea Party gained relevancy in the new media era*, Georgetown University, Washington DC, 2011.

Party protest movement, having contributed to their implication and explication. By governing the obtained results, the authors resume what kind of information transfer (explicit or implicit) is more frequently implemented by the addressers of the new media when discussing the Tea Party protest movement. Alongside with this, the authors set the task of following the regularity in using the linguistic manipulation means and the way of expressing the estimate.

### Literature review

The anthropocentric approach towards the study of the linguistic phenomena currently occupying a special position in the linguistic studies is in the study of the role of scientific objects for a person, their purpose in his/her life and activities, their functions for the development and improvement of the human personality<sup>3</sup>.

According to the principle of anthropocentrism, the study of the human activities occupies the central position in the paper<sup>4</sup>. The scientists focus on the active subject of speech and the related cognitive, communication-pragmatic, semantic and other parameters. As a result of it, the consideration of the estimate (as well as the expression of the personal opinion) as an anthropocentric category is currently especially important for linguistic science<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> E.S. Kubryakova, *The evolution of linguistic ideas in the second half of the XX century (the experience of paradigmatic analysis)*. *Language and science of the late 20th century*, Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1995: E.B. Ponomarenko, N.N. Vasilkova, N.N. Volskaya, L.T. Kasperova, A.V. Nikolaeva, "Female political media discourse in American and English linguocultures: speech strategies and tactics", in *XLinguae*, 2018, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 625-638.

<sup>4</sup> V.I. Karasik, *The language spiral: values, signs, motives*, Paradigma, Volgograd, 2015; T.G. Popova, Ye.V. Sausheva, T.I. Surikova, R.R., Yusupova, A.I. Dzyubenko, "Linguistic peculiarities of feminine and masculine political media discourse in English-speaking countries", in *XLinguae*, 2018, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 147-157; Alefina Golovchun, Beibitkul Karimova, Maira Zhunissova, Gulaim Ospankulova, Kuralay Mukhamadi, „Content And Language Integrated Learning In Terms Of Multilingualism: Kazakhstani Experience,” in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 12, p. 300; E.A. Repina, M.R. Zheltukhina, N.A. Kovaleva, T.G. Popova, C. Garcia Caselles, "International media image of Russia: trends and patterns of perception", in *XLinguae*, 2018, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 557-565.

<sup>5</sup> J. Golbeck, J.M. Grimes, A. Rogers, "Twitter use by the U.S. Congress", in *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 2010, vol. 61, no. 8, p. 1612-1621; N. S. Bururueva, *Language assessment as a means of interaction between print media and readers*, Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after KD Ushinsky, Yaroslavl, 2013; M.R. Zheltukhina, M.V. Busygina, M.G. Merkulova, I.A. Zyubina, L.M. Buzinova, "Linguopragmatic aspect of modern communication: main political media speech

The status of the anthropocentric category was assigned to the estimate in the axiological linguistics – a scientific branch in the linguistic science at the end of the past century<sup>6</sup>. The anthropocentric nature of estimate, the connection of the estimate with the communicant, and his/her worldview are concluded in its definition: estimate is understood as an “object-subject or subject-object attitude of a person to the object expressed by the linguistic means explicitly or implicitly”<sup>7</sup>. The individual and collective type of the estimated subject causes its understanding as an ‘object-subject’ and ‘subject-object’ category. If the estimate divides several subjects of speech, then it is considered as subject-object<sup>14</sup>.

So, when considering the estimate structure, we may state a complicated interaction of the subjective and objective in the estimate. Supporting E.M. Wolf, we should note that at the estimate of the subjects, phenomena, and events, one is guided by his/her attitude towards the object of the estimate, as well as by the stereotypes and ideas of it and the attributive scale of the object’s estimate<sup>8</sup>. E.M. Wolf notes that the estimate in the context is implemented structurally as a modal frame presented by such elements as 1) explicit (estimate object), 2) implicit (estimate stereotype, estimate scale, estimate aspect), 3) explicit-implicit (estimate subject, estimate motivations, estimate predicates)<sup>15</sup>. The base for the estimate is a key component of the estimate structure including its estimate stereotypes and motivations<sup>15</sup>. This paper analyzes the linguistic peculiarities of implication and explication of the estimate in the English-language electronic media discourse. We see the media discourse embodying wealth and complexity of the interaction of processes and products of speech activities in the mass communication<sup>9</sup> as a “coherent, verbal or nonverbal, oral or written text in complex with the pragmatic, social-cultural, psychological and other factors expressed by the mass

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strategies and tactics in the USA and the UK”, in *XLinguae*, 2018, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 639-654.

<sup>6</sup> V.N. Telia, *Connotative aspect of nominative semantics*, Nauka, Moscow, 1986; B.W. Hardy, D.A. Scheufele, “Examining differential gains from Internet use: Comparing the moderating role of talk and online interactions”, in *Journal of Communication*, 2005, vol. 55, no. 1, p. 71-84; M.A. Pilgun, “Means of expressing assessment in the media text in a contrasting aspect”, in *Bulletin of the Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University named after N.A. Dobrolyubov. Linguistics and Intercultural Communication*, 2008, no. 3, p. 21-35; N.D. Arutyunova, *Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Dyrektmedya Pablyshynh, Moscow, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> A.V. Kunin, *Course phraseology of modern English*, Feniks+, Dubna, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> E.M. Wolf, *Functional semantics of evaluation*, Editorial URSS, Moscow, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> T.G. Dobrosklonskaya, “Media discourse as an object of linguistics and intercultural communication”, in *Bulletin of Moscow State University. Series 10. Journalism*, 2006, no. 2, p. 20-23.

media in the event aspect, presenting an action, taking part in the social-cultural interaction and reflecting the mechanism for the communicants' consciousness", which looks as a hierarchically organized continuum of the texts with the largest text blocks including the units of a smaller structure-contents volume<sup>10</sup>. The paper considers the English-language discourse of new media, namely the amateur content of Twitter.

Notably, amateur content emerged due to new communication technologies, such as the Internet. It formed the basis for the emergence of the 'new media'. I.M. Dzyaloshinskiy<sup>11</sup> highlights the following principles of 'new media'<sup>12</sup>:

- Interactivity. Thanks to computer technologies, the users obtained the opportunity to interact with each other. The main difference of the traditional mass media is the establishing of the symmetric bilateral communication by 'many-to-many' principle. Alongside with the interaction, it made possible the creation and modification of the contents. Thus, the Internet was transformed from the source of information to the instrument of socialisation and identity management in the media environment.

- Self-reproduction of content. The notion of authorship and reader in the new media lose their special contours. Earlier, the organisations were able to control over the content and the form of its distribution, though now content become out of control. There is a trend towards collective control and content management.

- Acceleration of the information transfer. Time expenditure for the creation of content is reduced due to digital technologies. In the new media, to publish the material, one only requires its creation and uploading to the electronic space. At the same time, an important peculiarity of the content is not its static nature, but constant changeability on a real-time basis.

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<sup>10</sup> M.R. Zheltukhina, *Tropological suggestion of mass media discourse: On the problem of speech influence of tropes in the language of the media*, Publisher VF MUPK, Volgograd, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> I.M. Dzyaloshinskiy, *Russia's media space: the awakening of Solaris*, Publisher APK and PPRO, Moscow, 2012; L. Sonnenberg, *New media technologies and the transition to personal public spheres by M.F.A*, State University of New York, Buffalo, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> L. Sonnenberg, *New media technologies and the transition to personal public spheres by M.F.A*, State University of New York, Buffalo, 2009; R. D. Waters, N. T. J. Tindall, T. S. Morton, "Media catching and the journalist-public relations practitioner relationship: How social media are changing the practice of media relations", in *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 2009, vol. 22, no. 3, p. 241-264; A.K. Kapla, A. Haenlein, "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media", in *Business Horizons*, 2010, vol. 53, no. 1, p. 59-68.

As known, information is implemented as a supposition, statement or opinion. As for the content of the expression, there are layers differentiated by the level of explicitly. The statements are usually divided into explicit and implicit. Explicit are those statements, the content of which may be detected using the superficial form of the expression without supplementary sense transformations. The basis is formed by the meaning of the words composing the expression, as well as the meaning of the context. The implicit are those expressions, the meaning of which is revealed through the supplementary analysis of the connotation of words and expressions forming the expression and studying the context of using the analyzed expression. It means that explicit statements are directly reflected in the lexical-semantic structure of the sentence, unlike the implicit ones. A.N. Baranov points at the gradual, but not the binary degree of the explicit-implicit component of the expression's meaning. The scientist suggests relating the elliptic sentences and statements with the anaphoric pronoun to the explicit statements because their forms are subject to recovery from the context or the communicational situation. Notably, not all the cases of ellipsis may be related to the explicit ways of the informational presentation. Phraseological units alongside with idioms, A.N. Baranov relates to both the explicit and implicit ways of the informational presentation. Presuppositions and consequences, according to the scientist, are often of an implicit nature<sup>13</sup>.

Based on the studies conducted before, we guess that the linguistic estimate presents on Twitter with both positive and negative connotations. The ways for expression of the estimate in the social network may be both explicit and implicit due to the application of metaphor, comparison, epithet, irony, exclamation, quotation marks, allusion, and interrogation. In other words, it is performed by using the stylistic and syntactic expressive means. We consider the expression of personal assessment of communication in the Twitter as a trick for influencing the audience and the aspiration of dictating personal opinion in order to form a particular mindset in the society<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> A. N. Baranov, *Linguistic examination of the text. Theoretical foundations and practice*, FLINTA, Moscow, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> F. Schultz, S. Utz, A. Goritz, "Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via twitter, blogs and traditional media", in *Public Relations Review*, 2011, vol. 37, no. 1, p. 20-27; M. Zappavigna, "Ambient affiliation: a linguistic perspective on Twitter", in *New Media and Society*, 2011. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1461444810385097>; C. Greenhow, B. Gleason, "Twitteracy: Tweeting as a New Literacy Practice", in *The Education Forum*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131725.2012.709032>.

## Methodology

As part of this research, we analysed the texts of the statements on Twitter. The Twitter platform is a social network providing an opportunity of posting the messages limited to 140 symbols (as of 2009) to the common stream of tweets. The stream of messages may be formed by two criteria: 1) messages of the user (account), 2) messages related to a particular theme marked by special symbol # (hashtag). Tweets (user's message) are on open access for the close circle of the user, in other words, for those who are subscribed to this user. The rest of the users of the resource may also see the messages related to this hashtag. Symbol # allows forming the stream of the user's messages related to the same theme available for everyone's reading. In order to find the messages on a particular theme in a set time period, it is necessary to use the function of search with the application of such commands as 'since' and 'until'<sup>15</sup>.

For the linguistic analysis as part of this research, we collected the tweets (February – April 2009), marked by such hashtags as #teaparty, #tcot. Hashtag #tcot means Top Conservatives on Twitter. In the course of the analysis, we considered the gender characteristics of the messages. Next, the texts of the messages were subject to content-analysis using the Atlas.ti software in order to reveal the most frequently used linguistic means of implication and explication of the Twitter users' events estimate. Besides, we formed the list of the themes and analysed their transformation in the course of time and considering the events taken place. Using the Atlas.ti software one may structure and code separate elements of the entire data massive. The coding forms the basis of the software functioning and performs the presentation of the analysed elements (words or expressions) and the elements' units in the form of codes (marked words) grouped according to the purposes of the research considering the set criterion. Using Atlas.ti one may also structure the schematic pattern including the keywords, word groups and the connections between them illustrating the results of the analysis.

From the expressions hashtagged as #teaparty and #tcot for the period from February to April 2009, we selected 300 tweets for the in-depth linguistic analysis, which expressed the estimate of the protest movement. Notably, the number of tweets for the analysed period demonstrates the increase by the mid-April 2009, which is expressed by

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<sup>15</sup> J. Penny, C. Dadas, "(Re)Tweeting in the service of protest: Digital composition and circulation in the Occupy Wall Street movement", in *New Media Society*, 2013, no 1, p. 17.



the great Tea Party protest action on April 15, 2009<sup>16</sup>. Society reacted to the event differently. Special attention should be paid to the reaction of Obama, which became a special topic for discussion on Twitter<sup>17</sup>.

## Results and discussion

According to the research results, 60% of the messages were written by separate users. At the same time, males (40%) took a more active part in the discussion compared to females (20%). From the organisations regularly posted tweets one should pay special attention to RFD America, Tampa Tea Party, Easy Bay Patriots, TCUnation.com, RagingElephants.org, Accuracy in Media, HuffPost Politics. More than in half of the tweets they posted the link to the internal source of information: video on Youtube, the website of the information edition or a TV-channel, and the user's blog<sup>18</sup>.

The theme of the messages underwent changes monthly over the entire analysed period. For example, in February one may observe a great number of informative messages, which is caused by the origination of the movement. The protest participants informed the citizens through the microblog on the place and time of the meetings and other protest actions. Besides, the users shared the information on Twitter, posting in their messages the link to the external information source. There are the following examples of it, "Interested in joining your local tea party? Check out this site and let your voice be heard: <http://newamericanteaparty.com/>"; "RT Just launched a new website for centralising info on Teaparty Protests. Post your updates to [www.teapartyprotests.com](http://www.teapartyprotests.com/)"; "More pics from Chicago #teaparty... including one of me and @ericjodom. Isn't protesting romantic? lol <http://tinyurl.com/c46a4o>"; *etc.* This month one may observe the active use of imperative structures in the statements with the purpose of agitation and call of the greatest possible number of citizens for the participation in

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<sup>16</sup> J. Benton, "Statement on Ron Paul and "Tax Day Tea Parties", in *Business Wire*, 2009. Available at: [http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news\\_view&newsId=20090415005738&newsLang=en](http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20090415005738&newsLang=en).

<sup>17</sup> J. Berger, *Modern-Day Tea Parties give taxpayers chance to scream for better representation*, 2009. Available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/04/09/modern-day-tea-parties-taxpayers-chance-scream-better-representation/>.

<sup>18</sup> E. Gabrielova, "New media in the protest movement: explicit and implicit expression of point of view on the protest movement occupy wall street on Twitter", in *Psycholinguistic Issues*, 2014, vol. 3, no. 21, p. 150-159.

the protest actions. The examples are presented in the following statements, “Join the Tea Party tomorrow at #teaparty. Speak out against the Stimulus. Go Downtown Chicago if you can. <http://tinyurl.com/b3qesa>”; “Send Tea Party pictures to [teapartyphotos@gmail.com](mailto:teapartyphotos@gmail.com). See pictures at [#teaparty](http://www.tcunation.com). Send your tea party photos directly to [teapartyphotos@gmail.com](mailto:teapartyphotos@gmail.com) to have them auto-posted to <http://www.tcunation.com/>” *etc.*

The theme of the messages over the entire time period is illustrated in Figure 1 in the form of a diagram, and the frequency is denoted as % from the general number of messages<sup>19</sup>.

According to the data presented in the diagram, at the first stage of the protest movement existence, the most popular theme of messages was the approval of the movement and the expression of involvement in this protest. It is logical that the critics of the government became the second popular theme discussed on Twitter because the protest was directed against the applicable US taxation policy. Also, the purpose of the majority of messages was the informing of the Twitter users on the ongoing protest actions, which is caused by the desire to share the information on the existence of the Tea party protest movement and to attract the maximum number of the advocates to take part in it.

One of the tasks of the research is to monitor the dynamics of the themes and the used expressive means in the messages over the entire analysed period. It has been found that the number of statements providing the information on the movement decreased in comparison with the number of the same statements in February. This phenomenon is caused by the development of the protest movement and the decrease in the distribution of information about the events<sup>20</sup>. By the second month of the protest existence, it was supported by the sufficient number of advocates, so the most frequent theme of the discussion became the government and the actions of the president. It could not but affect the increase in the number of statements criticising the state authorities and Barack Obama in March 2009. The number of dissatisfied and the outraged by the government’s actions has increased. So, the Tea party protest movement has succeeded to solve the set task on the attraction of

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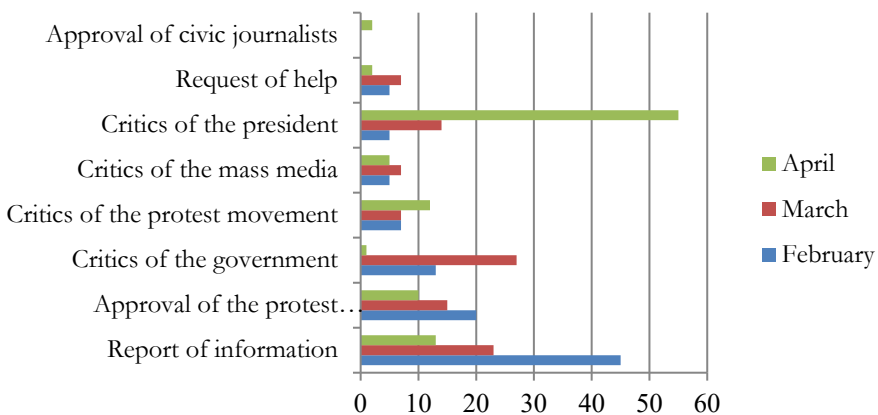
<sup>19</sup> I.V. Privalova, A.R. Shaidullina, M.R. Zheltukhina, T.E. Grinberg, C. Garcia Caselles, “Coerced loss of national colorings – linguistic issues of virtual team communication”, in *XLinguae*, 2019, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 151-164.

<sup>20</sup> S.V. Sharafutdinova, *Formation of social evaluation in the discourse of the media (on the material of sports discourse)*, Udmurt State University, Izhevsk, 2010.

the public attention to the financial problem as early as in the second month of the movement's existence.

The analysis of the Twitter messages for April 2009 showed the change in the tweets' theme, which may be observed in Figure 1. The diagram shows that the number of statements criticising the protest movement has rapidly increased, while there was a decrease in the number of tweets expressing a negative attitude to the government and the policy implemented. As the reasons for such changes, we consider the mass protest, which took place on April 15, 2009, in 750 cities of the United States and caused a mixed reaction among the citizens of the country. According to various reports, the event was attended by more than 300,000 people in a number of cities.

**Figure 1: Theme of tweets from February to April 2009**



The day of the action was chosen deliberately, as it is April 15, the Day of Taxes. By this time, the protest movement was known to many people in the country, the online discussion was embodied in large marches of protest. Special attention should be paid to the criticism expressed by the citizens regarding the media coverage of this event and to President Barack Obama and his reaction to the events. The dissatisfaction of the citizens is reflected in the statements on Twitter.

For linguistic analysis of utterances through the Atlas.ti software we used such codes as explication and implication of the estimate of events. Below there is a detailed analysis of the examples by these criteria<sup>21</sup>.

For example, “It seems that the Left is trying to discredit the #teaparty.. <http://tinyurl.com/aaondz> ..are they really that afraid?” In the above-mentioned messages, the meaning of the message is transmitted implicitly and requires the context analysis to decode the meaning of the statement, so we consider them as examples of implication and estimate. “It seems” characterises the author's doubt in the correctness of his estimate. The interrogative structure used by the addressee also indicates uncertainty about the topic of discussion. Taking into account the above features of this message, we assume that it can be considered as a presupposition, rather than as a statement. According to the above material, presuppositions are often referred to as implicit statements.

“Teavana is expensive! Nationalise it! Free fancy tea for all!” This statement also illustrates the implicit way of the thought articulation. The name of the Teavana Tea Company may be veiled to mean the Tea party protest movement, which, in the author's opinion, is expensive. It is possible that the communicant implies the historic Boston tea party, which became the prototype of the present protest movement. Moreover, the statement can also be used as irony. The proposal to make tea free for all implicates its unreality.

“\$450,000 To paint all of the ducks in Lake Ontario yellow. Because duckies should be yellow, dammit?”. In the above statement, the meaning is implicated through a number of linguistic means. Undoubtedly, the author of the communication does not aim to discuss waterfowl, but thus expresses the estimate of the government's actions and the spending of a large amount of money. Perhaps the communicant thus is mocking financial support for the protest movement, which aims to fight for economic values. The message is an example of irony, which was the basis for adding this code to the list of criteria for the tweets analysis. The following are examples of explication estimate. In addition to these criteria, the implication and explication were added to the codes that relate to linguistic features of the utterances, for example, idioms, irony, imperative constructs, and prodding into action.

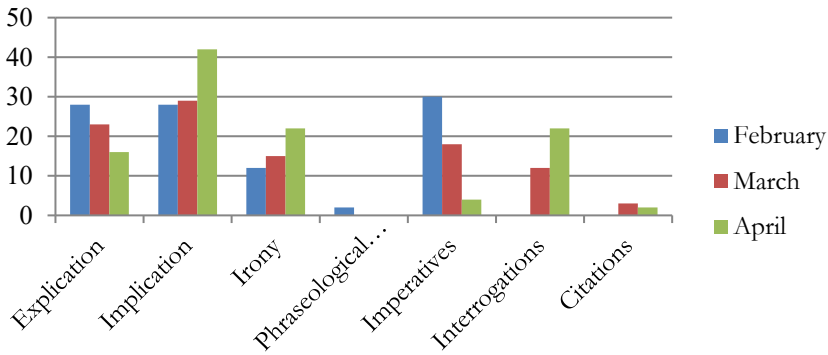
Figure 2 shows the diagram of the frequency of each code in the analysed messages for February, March and April 2009, percent. Figure 2

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<sup>21</sup> E. Vlieger, L. Leydesdorff, “Content Analysis and the Measurement of Meaning: The Visualization of Frames in Collections of Messages”, in *The Public Journal of Semiotics*, 2011, vol. III, no. 1, p. 321-339.

shows that Twitter users articulate their estimate of events both explicitly and implicitly. A significant number of imperative statements encourage users to take active joint actions and cooperation. This fact can be explained by the desire to encourage as many citizens as possible to participate in the protest, to support and to contribute to the organisation of protests and events.

**Figure 2: Frequency of using the code in the messages from February to April 2019**



In March 2009, there were changes in the use of Twitter users' estimate tools. In comparison with the analysed posts in February, the citizens equally implicated and explicated their estimate of Twitter and called to action by using imperatives. Meanwhile, there is a slight increase in the use of irony, and alongside with it, the increase in the statements of implicit nature. There is a new criterion in the form of the use of aphorisms, which indicates a desire to implicate their opinion, hiding behind the quotations of famous artists and politicians. Notably, there is the use of questions in tweets with a limit on the number of symbols. The interrogative structures are defined by scientists ambiguously, the purpose of their use is also different. So, depending on the communicative intentions embedded in the question, the research scientist T. A. Khasbulatova actually stands out a question, a rhetorical question, a question – someone else's speech, a dubitation question, an objectification question, a discussion question, a reasoning question, and an assumption question<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> T.A. Khasbulatova, *Interrogative constructions as a kind of dialogical forms in the poetry of Boris Pasternak and Osip Mandelstam*, Moscow State Linguistic University, Moscow, 2012.

These types require a brief explanation. Dubitation is a question or series of questions to the intended interlocutor and serving to mark the problems. The purpose of communication, pursued by the dubitation question, is to attract the attention of the interlocutor and the designation of the upcoming topic of conversation. For example, a question-dubitation statement on Twitter, “Want to know more about why a Tea Party?”

Discussion questions are defined as structures in which the affirmative statement comes first. Such questions are directed to inform the interlocutor on the insufficient amount of information and the designation of the unknown. For example, there are a question and the discussion on Twitter, "Hannity was just on his show acting like he's never heart of taxdayteaparty.com ahhh! Has he been asleep for the past two months?" The addressee primarily shares part of the information known to him, then marks the direction of the search for the unknown, prompting the interlocutor to put forward his hypothesis in response to the formulated question.

Discussion question is opposed to objectification question, namely, it is the structure where the addressee independently gives an answer to the question. This type of question creates the appearance of a dialogue in which the communicants come to a conclusion together. For example, an objectification question on Twitter, “How soon before we see this... domestic terrorism on this side of the Atlantic? It's already here.” In this statement, the addressee himself provides an answer to the question, involving users in the discussion of the designated topic and helping them to do their own search for an answer to it.

Reflection questions are characterised by a detailed structure, often consisting of a number of questions. Such interrogative structures are aimed at inducing the development of thought and attracting new perspectives into the process of reasoning. For example, “Why ARE home buyers required to buy PMI when mortgage industry companies will get taxpayer bailout? Can I stop paying it?” In this statement, the user reflects, formulating a few questions and drawing the attention of interlocutors to the designated topic, thereby encouraging other users to reflect on the topic of concern to him.

Through the assumption question, the addresser is testing the loyalty of his supposition through the reader. The purpose of communication, in this case, is to get rid of its estimate of the absolute categoricity, which encourages the interlocutor to put forward his point of view and make an excellent estimate of the events. For example, “Should

a NC judge order kids out of home school into public school because he doesn't "like it"?" In the above message, the user is looking for support for his assumption from other interlocutors on Twitter.

Someone else's speech – question is often expressed in indirect or direct speech, contributing to the author's self-exclusion and presentation of his own estimate as to the opinion of a third party, which helps him to avoid responsibility for the expressed ideas. Such interrogative structures are mainly used in poetic speech and do not occur in personal conversations of Twitter users, which proves their desire to express their personal position and the estimate in relation to certain events.

As you know, a rhetorical question does not require an answer, because the answer is contained in the question. The question itself is informative and contains enough data, in other words, the answer is expressed by the question itself. The communicative purpose of a rhetorical question is to establish and to maintain an emotional connection with the communicant. For example, “nObama gets list of top Muslim Americans for staffing – DID he get a list of Catholics and Jews too?” In this statement, you can see that hardly anyone will answer the question. Moreover, it is unlikely that the author of the question wants to get an answer. The addressee discredits the President with such a question and emphasises the emotional attitude to the political leader of the United States.

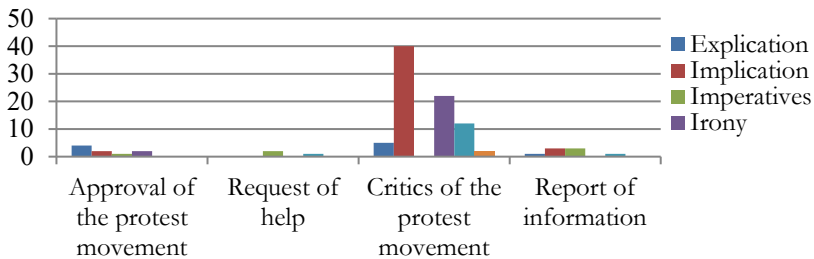
In fact, the question, on the contrary, expresses the need for information, performing, thus, the basic function of interrogative structures. Most of the above-mentioned question structures do not set themselves the task of getting an answer, but are aimed at attracting the attention of the Twitter users to the discussed problem of the Tea Party protest movement and expressing their own opinion and estimating the events taking place.

Figure 2 clearly reflects the most frequent use of irony and implicitly estimate expression in April 2009. It is interesting to analyze the correlation of message topics and linguistic tools used for their implicitly or explicitly expression. Figure 3 shows the results of a summary comparative analysis of several message topics and expressive means in a diagram.

As you can see from the diagram in Figure 3, the largest number of matches was found between such codes as the criticism of protest movement and implementation of the estimate. Let's illustrate it with the examples, “today on my way to work, lots of cars were managed by a clever

series of lights, enabling many people to travel safely”; “What do we want? WE’RE NOT EXACTLY SURE! When do we want it? NOW!”.

**Figure 3: Results of a summary comparative analysis of several message topics and expressive means**



In these messages, users do not express their critical estimate of protest movement openly. In the first statement, the author makes a hint at the inevitability of taxation, which is opposed by the participants of the Tea Party protest movement. As evidence, he cites the need for most public needs at the expense of taxes. In a similar way, he criticises the demands of the protesters. The author of the second communication ridicules the participants of the protest, putting forward slogans that emphasise the insolvency and disorganisation of the protest movement. The user alludes to the disorganisation of the Tea Party protest movement and the inability of the protesters to articulate their demands. Here you can also see the irony that is most common in the messages of Twitter users who are critical of the protest movement.

It is interesting to trace the use of interrogative structures in tweets criticizing protest movement. Like irony, we refer interrogative structures to the implicit way of expressing the estimate, as they release the author from responsibility for the ideas expressed and encourage the reader to formulate a conclusion on his own. For example, “what's a group of irritated white people called? A clutch? A flock? A smegma?” In this question, the addresser encourages the addressee to choose the option of denoting a crowd of people, referring to the protesters. Considering the options proposed by the author, we come to the conclusion that he is negatively disposed towards the protesters, although he does not claim this explicitly. For example, “How exactly am I protesting by pouring a jug of Arizona tea into a filthy river? Oh, yeah. I'm actually littering. Stoopid me.” In the above statement, the user uses irony when expressing the opinion on the meaning of the protest actions, as well as ridicules the



forms of their expression by means of the objectification question, independently answering the question asked earlier. For example, “I remember life before the income tax! Who needs highways when you can walk this great land on bare foot and open mind?” In this example, the discussion question draws the attention of the addressee to the designated problem and encourages them to find an answer on their own. The example also uses the irony by which the author ridicules the idea of tax cancellation and discusses the possible consequences of such cancellation. The Twitter user compares life before and after taxes, drawing attention to the fact that many public goods (like road structure and repair, for example) are financed by tax fees.

Despite the fact that the diagram does not reflect the results of the correlation of irony and implication evaluation, the number of such coincidences was 24. For example, it can be traced in the following posts: “Hey guys, Obama's Hitler. Taxes are Hitler. When it rains, clouds are Hitler, too” “we're white! We have signs! We don't understand economics!”. In these messages, the meaning of the statement can be derived only from the context (subsequent statements). Such a coincidence is regarded by us as quite natural, since the stylistic method “irony” implies the opposition of visible and hidden meanings of judgment, creating the effect of ridicule; most often it has the form of obviously inappropriate positive meaning and negative connotation<sup>23</sup>. Consequently, and in the Internet communications, the irony expected from the addressee of the analytical action and extra effort for understanding the true meaning of the tweets, indicating implicit statements.

Alongside with the examples of implication and critical messages discussed, we noted that criticism of the President was more often expressed explicitly. “Obama beclowns himself in response to yesterday's #teaparty protest, of which he was supposedly “unaware”” Obama in his own words making fun of “those folks” that go to #teaparty Obama has INCREASED the debt 5.5 B/day!”. Based on these statements it may be concluded that the participants in the discussion on Twitter explicitly express criticism of the President, not trying to hide his estimate with the help of syntactic or stylistic techniques. In our view, this symbolises the loss of respect for the then President of the United States on the part of the population and illustrates the decline in Obama's popularity rating for

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<sup>23</sup> *New dictionary of foreign words*, 2009. Available at: [http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic\\_fwords/17590/](http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_fwords/17590/).

the second half of his reign<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, the research results have shown that the participants of the Tea Party protest movement applied the Twitter platform for several purposes. Depending on the set tasks, the communicants also changed the linguistic characteristics of their messages. In the period of origination of the protest movement, the communicants explicitly expressed their estimate of the events, which was guided by the desire to share their personal opinion with the other participants of the discussion on Twitter and an attempt of articulating their position as precisely as possible in the terms of the technical limitation of the microblog (140 symbols). They explicated the requests of help, the critics towards the president and the approval of the protest movement. However, a significant presence of the implicit statements evidences the attempt to judge the political events implicitly, especially if it is criticised. They more often expressed their opinion on the protest movement implicitly. The implication of estimate was achieved due to such linguistic instruments as irony and interrogations. Besides, in the course of analysis, we conclude about the object-subject nature of the estimate in the microblog as it is based on not only the facts but also the opinions of the rest of the Twitter users taking part in the discussion. More often, the estimated object is marked explicitly, while the estimated aspect and the estimated scale are of the implicit nature. The conducted research reflects complicated interactions of the object-subject and subject-object in the estimate structure because the statements on Twitter present both the estimate of the events by a particular person and the expression of the collective opinion based on the stereotypes and other users' perspectives. As proof, one may provide the use of the citations, aphorisms of famous persons as well as retweets, in other words, the statements copied to their own feed from the other Twitter microblog authors.

The technical limitations of the Twitter messages down to 140 symbols dictates for the users' special conditions to achieve the communication goal. It is necessary to provide the maximum short estimate for the events and to express the emotions due to the text limit. Such a short and succinct text is of great interest and attracts the attention of the linguists. According to the conducted research, the Twitter microblog is considered as a universal space for linguistic manipulation of

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<sup>24</sup> "How the presidential candidates use the web and social media", in *Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media*, 2012. Available at: [http://www.journalism.org/analysis\\_report/how\\_presidential\\_candidates\\_use\\_web\\_and\\_social\\_media](http://www.journalism.org/analysis_report/how_presidential_candidates_use_web_and_social_media).

the vast audience due to its wide coverage of the communicants geographically remoted from each other but having an opportunity of participating in the discussion of the interesting themes and forming the groups and organizing protest movements. The most efficient way of interaction, in this case, is the promotion of personal assessment of the communicants regarding the politically and socially significant events expressed implicitly or explicitly, depending on the set of linguistic instruments chosen for its articulation.