

COVID-19 through the Prism of Communication Research

COVID-19: Gender Specifics of Expression of Emotions in the Discourse of Social Networks

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Abstract: Abstract: The emotional context of any communication process (including Internet communication and social media and networks) is its content, but it is not identical to the content of the communication process itself, it is a reaction to it. The choice of the social media Instagram can be explained by it being a tool for active self-promotion and self-presentation with the help of which desires to manage the impression of oneself are realized, to consciously form the image of the Self in the mainstream discourse or with a claim to exclusivity. It is modern and preferable, and people present positive emotions and personal success. The significance of the emotional factor of communication is quite high, as it is associated with the subjective world of a person. The emotional sphere of a person and the ways of its manifestation are characterized by gender differentiation. Three media and their Instagram sites are analysed: tvrussia, straits_times and fox5ny. [1] The observation covers the period from 15 March – 20 September 2020 on Instagram and the selection of examples includes the topics concerning COVID-19. The assumption is the following: when an Instagram user prefers to express an emotional attitude in the pandemic (COVID-19) gender stereotypes are erased. Men and women experience differently certain events and they demonstrate diverse and varied psychological reactions. Various methods are used during the study: namely content analysis, descriptive method, analysis of verbal and visual levels.

Keywords: COVID-19, emotions, discourse of social networks, gender, evaluation, gender factor.

Introduction

Internet communication is one of the relatively new and rapidly developing speech formations. It is notable for its communicative diversity, multifunctionality, and dynamism. [2] The modern virtual space is emotionally intense. The emergence of emotions is not provoked by information exchange itself but by the decision made on the basis of the analysis of the established connection, which

leads to the development of a new relationship between communicators. The emotional context of any communicative process constitutes its content but it is not identical to the information content of the communication process itself, but is a reaction to it. The importance of the emotional factor of communication is quite high since it is associated with the subjective world of a person. [3]

The aim of this study is to examine the gender specificity of emotional-evaluative responses to COVID-19 as a natural disaster event in social media discourse. News and comments from Instagram users were used as the research material. Instagram is a tool for active self-promotion and self-presentation in which enables a user to manage the impression of themselves consciously, forming an image of the Self on the platform along with an image and discourse. In this regard, this study questions whether Instagram users' responses to COVID-19 reinforce or not gender stereotypes through language and images (e.g. emoticons).

Theoretical research

In the process of evolution, emotions have arisen as a means that allows living beings to determine the biological significance of the states of the organism and external influences.

Emotions by origin are a form of species experience: focusing on them, the individual performs the necessary actions (for example, avoids danger, continues the race), the expediency of which remains hidden for him/her. Emotions are also important for gaining individual experience. In this case, emotions are triggered by situations and signals that precede direct emotion-inducing influences, which allows the subject to prepare for them in advance.

As a subjective form of expressing needs, emotions precede activities to satisfy them, prompting and directing them. A person's emotional life is filled with diverse content: emotions express an evaluative attitude towards individual conditions that facilitate or hinder the implementation of activities (for example, fear, anger), towards specific achievements in it (joy, grief), towards existing or possible situations. [4]

Emotions are an integral part of communication and are capable of both uniting and separating its participants. Like all components of communication, they can be universal, culturally specific and individual. As V. I. Shakhovsky mentions, “every linguistic person, regardless of his cultural differences, experiences the same basic emotions, and this unites people; emotions make people of different cultures more / less similar to each other and also make us unique due to the individual variation of different emotions”. [5] In modern linguistics, all

forms of expression of emotions are taken into account, including not only the means of their expression and designation of internal experience but also the description of their non-verbal manifestations in external symptoms and situational behavior. [6; 7].

In the process of joint activity, communicants regulate actions, control thought processes and coordinate the partner's model of the world, and the impact can occur not only with the help of verbal but also non-verbal means. Non-verbal communication as "the exchange and interpretation of non-verbal messages by people, is encoded and transmitted in a special way, namely: through expressive body movements; sound design of speech; in a certain way organized microenvironment surrounding a person; use of material items that have symbolic meaning. Non-verbal messages are distinguished from verbal messages by a great polysemy, situational, synthetic, spontaneous". [8] E.I. Rogov considers that non-verbal ways of communication are of great importance and it is "facial expressions, gestures, postures, expressive sighs, changes in intonation that are the language of human feelings, a means of communicating emotions". [9] Moreover, we should bear in mind the spontaneous and unplanned character of people's demonstration of emotions since they express "an internal human emotional state, not necessarily taking into account the reaction of the interlocutor or others". [10]

Some linguists are of the opinion that speech acts containing emotion represent "repository of functioning, representation and fixation of the communicants' relations to each other and to the world". [11] It is common that in the process of communication especially when involving a dialogue of high degree of emotionality communicants use special semantics and structure. Traditional communicative actions of linguistic personalities in a social network are the use of emoticons, as well as options for color design of the text; font selection, its size, the use of various types of graphic symbols – all this attracts users' special attention.

The main feature of a social network is the use of colloquial vocabulary, characterized by the use of jargon, ethnocultural words and expressions, phraseological turns, stylistically colored vocabulary that evokes a positive or negative attitude from readers. Colloquial and vernacular vocabulary, as well as diminutive forms of nouns and adjectives, correspond to the features of personality-oriented communication.

The modern improvement of information and communication technologies has led to a significant increase in the total body of mass communication texts. People's ideas about what is happening in different parts of the planet "are largely due to those images and interpretations on the basis of which we can talk about the formation of an information picture of the world reflecting the national and

cultural characteristics of the world perception and the system of axiological relations”. [12]

A social network is “a social structure of interconnected subjects with similar interests. The types of such interests are diverse – from discussing health problems to forums for poetry lovers. Accordingly, the understanding of a social network has been clarified – now it is an Internet resource that provides opportunities for communication between users”. [13] A text posted on a social network contains “various semiotic visual (verbal iconic) signs. Polymodal texts are perceived using various modalities – channels for perceiving information, in particular, visual and auditory” [14] So, we may surmise that codes and modalities are two aspects of classification functioning independently. A text which combines both a verbal and a visual code can be modal at the same time being perceived with the help of visual aids.

A person’s emotional sphere and the ways it is manifested are characterized by gender differentiation. The forms of manifestation of emotional experiences and their content are determined not only by psychophysiological mechanisms but also by social and cultural norms of behavior. The sphere of human emotions and the ways of expressing them are socially conditioned since in the process of socialization a person develops knowledge about emotions and an ability to control them. [15]

The social typicality of emotions is simultaneously formed at the level of various communities of people: universal, national, demographic, professional, gender, age and is consolidated in the process of speech and language practice in the emotive means of language. This gives reason to talk about the presence of gender characteristics of the emotional sphere of a person which are formed in the process of socialization of the individual since gender is produced in the process of social, cultural and linguistic practice.

The issue of gender factor which is understood by a natural sex of person and social environment is looked upon as a vital characteristic of a person. Naturally, it accompanies a person throughout the whole life and influences “the awareness of their identity as well as the identification of the speaker by other members of society”. [16] Contrary to the generally accepted views of numerous scientists, emotionality is a characteristic of both women and men. Gender differentiation of the emotional sphere is manifested at the qualitative level, – in the implementation of certain emotions, and formally, in the use of characteristic verbal and non-verbal means of their objectification.

Research Design and Methods

The observation covers the period from 15 March to 20 September 2020. The selection of examples includes topics concerning COVID-19 from the beginning of the pandemic before the second wave or stage. The object of study is up-to-date and it is significant and it can be examined from the point of view of various sciences.

By sampling the most popular news from the social network *Instagram*, the material was analyzed to identify the gender specificity of the emotional sphere of the individual. Three news items were taken: 1- a video from the Russia 1 channel under the nickname of *tvrussia*; 2- a news website with the nickname of *strait_times*; 3- and a TV channel with the nickname of *fox5ny* and comments to them.

The focus is on the following sites:

- <https://www.instagram.com/tvrussia/>;
- https://www.instagram.com/straits_times/;
- <https://www.instagram.com/fox5ny/>.

The assumption is the following: when an Instagram user prefers to express an emotional attitude towards the pandemic (COVID-19), gender stereotypes are erased. Men and women equally experience certain events and they demonstrate identical physiological reactions. Various methods are used during the study, namely content analysis, descriptive method, and analyses on verbal and visual levels.

Contextual and descriptive methods are used to set the scene for applying content analysis. The contextual method was applied to establish the characteristics of actualization of the studied emotional-evaluative reactions of men and women in the studied type of discourse. The descriptive method was used to identify the characteristic features of the verbal and non-verbal components of emotions. The content analysis consisted of the selection of language units of different levels that have evaluative semantics. The content analysis made it possible to carry out a qualitative and quantitative comparison of the studied units in male and female messages and allowed to prove that in the crisis both genders express emotions equally, thus erasing gender stereotypes.

The observation covers the period from 15 March – 20 September 2020 on three Instagram sites. We took these three cases and observed the following procedure: first, we visited the website of the social media with the aim to describe

visitors and users' comments. Then we selected examples 'to create a corpus. Furthermore, we analyzed emotions on verbal and visual levels: sentences, vocabulary, and emoticons. The focus was on the verbal tool concerning emotions and on new emoticons concerning emotions. The next step was to identify the effect of using verbal and visual tools (emoji, stylistic devices on morphological and lexical levels; vocabulary with negative connotation). Moreover, we tried to show the difference between men and women on a gender level concerning COVID-19. The final step was to contrast three cases and to comment on elements in emotions and gender.

Analysis and Results

The analysis of the three media tvrussia, straits_times and fox5ny is presented sequentially in three separate parts of the article. The focus of the study is on the ways of expressing emotions in a crisis situation – that of the coronavirus pandemic. Gender specifics of expression of emotions in the discourse of the social network Instragam have been established.

Case 1: tvrussia – <https://www.instagram.com/tvrussia/>

Russia 1 posted a video on their profile under the nickname *tvrussia* of the social network *Instagram* about the COVID-19 disease in which there were monologues from those who had recovered from this disease and the doctors fighting the virus. They created the following entry for their publication: *Who did end up in a hospital bed. People who have contracted COVID-19 and conquered the disease talk about symptoms and treatment. Watch our video.*

We see the manifestation of aggression in the comments to this publication <https://www.instagram.com/tvrussia/> Over one day, the video collected 58,771 views and 73 comments: only 3 were from a male user, 1 was from a user with a gender-hidden profile, and 2 accounts contained advertising not related to the topic under discussion. From the users' comments it is clear that some users are suspicious of this situation and do not believe the published data, while others, on the contrary, are trying to convince others of the veracity and seriousness of the topic under discussion. See the examples below:

(fem)nadezda.be: stop “powdering people’s brains”, tired of it, return everything to its place, people are dying, enough already, Putin, wake up 
 (this comment got 12 likes from other users).

This comment shows a negative reaction expressed by the inaccurate use

of the phraseological unit “POWDER SOMEONE’S BRAINS. Derogatory – to fool, to deceive someone”, as well as vocabulary with a derogatory assessment “tired”, “people are dying” and the call “Putin, wake up”.

(fem)anna_trifnova_1998: Is there any more fun? More life-affirming for the duration of the quarantine? Everyone already knows that you need to “Stay at home” and try to “Wash your hands more often”. All health and a speedy recovery (this comment got 6 likes and 3 responses from other users after four hours and 10 likes and 17 responses in 11 hours).

The comment of the user (fem)anna_trifnova_1998, which caused further discussion, contains two rhetorical questions: *Is there anything more fun? More life-affirming for the duration of the quarantine?* It also contains wishes for good health.

The example below shows a follow-up discussion on the network about the fact that there is an escalating atmosphere in the media, containing both intimidation and campaigning for generally known information. There is an example from the answers under the comment of user (fem)anna_trifnova_1998: etavitum7331: “Unfortunately, not all of them. Thousands of “dolboyasters” tirelessly litter the Internet with screams of “vyfsevrete”. I want to take the machine gun.”

(fem)svet.a.m . “we also want to take a machine gun. With our people it is necessary like in China: shoot quietly.”

As it is seen from the comments above, they are full of emotional vocabulary with negative connotation and there is no gender differentiation. The next comments illustrate it further.

 (unknown) domdyshi_bp: dummy people! Great fiction damn it (comment got 5 likes).

(fem)alana_alanushkay: her mom had diabetes. Infected with the corona, pneumonia began. She was admitted to the ambulance in intensive care at the second city hospital in the city of Makhachkala and died a few hours later. (..) And you may continue not to believe and think that these are all lies and provocations, this is generally right



(fem)kris_91ti (: we had a young man who did not cough at all and walked on his feet and then suddenly was taken away

As for some users, they comment on the real cases of coronavirus and warn that the disease is real. Moreover, the emoticons used show that the overall mood is tense.

(unknown) artlova: Everyone once had either the flu or a severe cold, but no one made such a “fuss” out of this, and there are more deaths from flu than from this virus, according to statistics. Is this a new global conspiracy of the minority that controls the planet?! (comment got 3 likes)



(unknown) kravchenko8799: Don't panic

(fem) Dereviankotatyanka: alas, it's true (comment got 1 like)

The analysis of the comments presented above shows that the continuous discussion over the problem is full of rhetorical questions, suggestions and emotional vocabulary and it is difficult to single out the gender peculiarities of these comments.



(fem) svetlana.m.makarchuk: psychosis continues

(unknown) bbright_diamondd: oh scared “emae”, i'm going to eat barbecue
ok yes

(unknown) vel8884: didn't even look

(masc.) antoninmorozov_407: such nonsense, surprisingly one thing contradicts other available regularities

(fem) irina_irushsinka: 😞😞😞😞😞

The comments presented above show that the abundant use of emoticons point out to the importance of non-verbal communication together with the vocabulary with negative connotation.

(fem) tgpgalina: Yes. It's horrible.

(fem) maria_zuchkina_: It's a pity that not everyone observes hey Moscovites stop violating, the majority is in Moscow

(unknown) provedenie_torjestv_kmv: HOW SCARY REALLY. HELP ALL GOD. PEOPLE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

In these comments the accent should be laid on the use of capitalisation as a

device to emphasize the emotional impact the user wants to say.

(fem) *yulia_dan_00*: My God, what idiocy 🤔🤔🤔🤔 we have been ill all our lives so we spit at each other we go to work .. and why is this window dressing 🤔🤔🤔🤔

As observed, practically all the users are very emotional when talking about this problem and use certain types of non-verbal signs to express it.

The analysis of the comments presented above shows that the majority of those participating in the discussion are women. We can divide the users' mood into those who are concerned and want to convince others of the seriousness of the situation, those who do not believe in what is happening and those who relate to the situation with aggression and denial.

The most frequent emotional reactions include emoji emoticons, capitalization, the use of invective vocabulary and intensifiers.

Case 2: *straits_times* – https://www.instagram.com/straits_times/

A news website with the nickname of *straits_times* published the following news: *The ministry of health has announced 690 new COVID-19 cases in Singapore on April 29, taking the total count to 15,641. 6 Singaporeans and permanent residents are among the new patients.*

The publication has 6, 625 views and 59 comments per day. Most of the responses contained emoji emoticons or a short statement. No disputes or discussions have been identified under this publication. The commentators were both male and female, with some profiles being gender-hidden. See examples below:

(mas.) *stonielbuckle*: nice

(mas.) *pianogeniusz*: Yay new day new record 😄

(mas.) *touya_shinjitsu*: Will only increase. Not all foreigners have been tested yet (the comment got 4 likes).

(fem.) *darrellgemmapuquizpearce*: That is a good sign for Singapore. A total of 6 singaporeans/permanent residents is low. The next step is to ensure that all the foreign dormitories are tested quickly (the comment got 2 likes).

(fem.) *beulinda_*: Lol

(fem.) *ren.larry*: nice

(mas.) williamsoh2312: 😞

(unknown) tanselasela: 😞

(unknown) t3kut0: nice

(unknown) cjoeanctsmxx: 🙏

(unknown) meilingchie: ❤️

(mas.) johjyy_yw_singapore: stay calm! We must stay focused on circuit breaker! (the comment got 2 likes)

(mas.) jingweilol: Noooooo 😞 (the comment got 1 like).

(fem.) ricecrumbs: Nice (the comment got 1 like)

(unknown) noodledust: nice (the comment got 1 like)

(mas.) winson9709: 😞 😞

(unknown) pammyrose6: 🙏

(fem.) vvanitha_vasudevan: oh no!

The analysis shows that in this case the non-verbal reaction is dominant, and the emoticons do not reflect gender stereotypes attributed to men and women. The usage of emoticons is of great interest since together with the use of already known symbols which express sadness, regret or dislike some new signs have appeared, which can mean many things but contextually they show strong approval and connection with the other users. Of particular interest is the use of several emoticons in a row. It may be done to express emotions or to impact the potential viewers.

Case 3: fox5ny – <https://www.instagram.com/fox5ny/>

A news website with the nickname of *fox5ny* published the news that the quarantine in New York will be over on May 12, thereby asking subscribers if they are ready for this with the next quote: *Is it time to reopen New York city?* During the day, the news got 1,046 likes and 548 comments.

(mas.) mr_mxslvrbk_grilla: Hell no. We should do what China did. 76 days of quarantine. Also close transit in the overnights n weekends. We should start in mid June. May 15 is still too early.

In this particular comment the modal verb “should” is shown twice to emphasize the necessity of actions.

(unknown) nycalh: Clearly everyone saying Yes, has not been affected 🙏
 (comment got 54 likes) followed by replies:

(fem.) *llljb42*: exactly me thoughts!!!

The user visually tells a short story through emoticons, starting with an emoticon for prayer, continuing with images of the city at night, hospital buildings and two ambulances. There is an impression of the scale of the pandemic, of the fear, there is prayer and trust, as well as evaluation of the work of medics and doctors.

On the level of using emoticons their combination presents a whole story, graphically depicting the idea of what might have been said in some sentences. But again, it does not reflect gender stereotypes and can be attributed to both genders.

(fem.) *callmesunnieee*: 

(mas.) *dubsackscomics*: my job closed down, I haven't seen my mom with MS in two months and one of my friends from school was diagnosed with it two weeks ago... obviously, not affected at all. 

(fem.) *gypsy729*: agree

The user who is a woman (based on the user's profile) uses two emoticons in the comment: hearts  thus agreeing with the emotions expressed in the dialogue. It is reasonable to conclude that both linguistic and extralinguistic elements in this case are effective to present emotions. The third user who is a man (based on the user's profile) is more verbose. He is consistent and uses both means, verbally, as he explains the sad consequences of the pandemic and the aftereffects, and on the non-verbal level, he uses an emoticon expressing his frustration. The second user who is a woman (as user's profile) uses one word "agree" to reflect solidarity.

The next thread of examples discussed the 'lockdown':

(mas.) *nicky.rich.77*: Let's see how Atlanta do first since they so in a rush. they could be the Guinea pigs. (comment scored 42 likes) followed by answers that sometimes take the form of a dialogue:

(fem.) *melissaangel93*: they already have over 200 new cases. (comment got 3 likes)

(mas.) *nicky.rich.77*:so why they opening. this shit sad (reply to the user *melissaangel93*, comment got 3 likes)

(mas.) *americanman6903*: they opened last Friday 5 days ago, so how do you know they have 200 new cases! Don't start fake rumors!!! (reply to the user *melissaangel93*, comment got 1 like)

(mas.) americanman6903: don't listen to this 😄!!! (reply to the user nicky.rich.77)

(fem.) melissaangel93: first off random person, it's called the news! Instead of calling this fake news how about you do your research!! (reply to the user americanman6903, comment got 2 likes)

(mas.) americanman6903: ha! Do your research!!! These were people who had it before they opened up!!! How can 200 people get tested in 4 ½ days??? If they reopen last Friday, and got infected Friday they might be sick now?? It takes days to come out (reply to the user melissaangel93, (comment got 1 like)

In the following discussion the users dwell on the question of whether it is a good idea to lift the lockdown. They cite Atlanta as the state willing to do it and call it “the quinea-pig” metaphorically saying that there will be nothing good in this. Moreover, they are talking about numerous new cases as the result of it. It's interesting to note the emotionality and expressiveness of male users since they put several exclamation marks in a row in their comments. They do not believe official records by expressing their doubts in questions and interjections. One can add a comment in italic and a funny emoticon after that which together with the three exclamation marks underline disbelief and doubt.

Some users simply “agree” with the statement by pitting it verbally sometimes adding an intensifier (absolutely).

(fem.) k_dyemond: I agree (reply to the user nicky.rich.77)

(mas.) gillis508: Yes absolutely (comment got 9 likes)

(unknown) lucillevaudo: NO NO NO NO. I'm sure you reported about the funeral that took place in Williamsburg SO WHAT WHOULD THAT TELL YOU IF THEY REOPENED WITH RULES. NO ONE LISTENS (comment got 32 likes)

Repeating NO three times “NO NO NO” is a verbal way to express strong emotions by the Internet user regarding news or information that is associated with a personal tragedy. This shows a phenomenon, however, which is not a trend on Instagram, namely to present events from personal life that are not associated with positive emotions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Instagram is a place where emotions such as grief, sadness, disappointment and others are presented. In this social network, the line between personal and public is already blurring.

Users are looking for compassion, sympathy, mercy, empathy in the COVID-19 situation. Differences between men and women in expressing these emotions on a verbal level begin to diminish. In this case we can observe capitalization of letters again in order to emphasize the emotional state of a person and show the importance of this utterance. The use of capital letters throughout the sentence expresses pathos and strong emotions. This comment received 32 likes. This shows empathy from other Instagram users regarding the emotion expressed.

(mas.) gillis508: first off they are only suggested rules. Rules are meant to be broken so new rules can be made. (reply to the user lucillevaudo)

(unknown) lucillevaudo: I guess you like seeing people dying!!!!!!!!!!!! (reply to the user gillis508)

...

(fem.) bernadette199: Nope    

(fem.) kathleent519: God no!

(fem.) paulina.vas: Nooo

(mas.)henrydr217: Hell no!

(fem.) claud38177: Noooooooooooooooooo way

(unknown) el.goldo: Hell no    

The most emotional comments concerning COVID-19 are given by women. The comments contain emoji, emoticons, exclamations with the mention of God. Moreover, women use doubling letters for stylistic coloring. When a dialogue appears, users speak out quite aggressively and they repeat letters probably because they use a large number of exclamation marks.

The results of the analysis show that users use colors to express different emotions. Users choose colors because it is well-known that color affects the psychological and physiological indicators of a person. Different colors of emoticons, for example, the heart are manifestations of emotional strategy.

Discussion

As it has already been said some new emoticons have appeared to illustrate emotions and together with the repetitive use and sometimes even a 'picture' (several emoticons representing a story they present a strong emotive strategy and it is aimed to influence the potential viewers.

Users took part in the short virtual dialogue and they used short and elliptical sentences, which are typical for the language of social networks. In the

pandemic situation, however, the use of short sentences is increasing. Also, the words are used to express strong and extreme emotions, including fear, compassion, help from God, presenting the situation with COVID-19 as hell and others.

Repetition is also observed on a visual level. Instagram users repeat the emoticons, for example, the prayer emoticon is repeated four times with folded hands in fervent prayer. Summarizing, there are grounded sayings, there is a synchronicity between the verbal and visual elements in the small and temporary virtual community on Instagram in terms of the emotions expressed in connection with the pandemic.

The users use familiar face emoticons on Instagram and they aim to present emotions. At the same time, users use newly created emoticons that have a situational use (🙏). They express the emotions of sadness, suffering, sorrow, compassion, etc. There are also new emoticons, such as the one with the face with the mask, which express the situation of compliance with the rules and social distance. There are also emoticons that represent a situation connected with suffering, coughing, abandonment. In summary, we can say that both well-known and new emoticons are used on Instagram in connection with the pandemic. The aim is for participants to express different emotions.

The results of the analysis and the comparison of the used emoticons and techniques on a visual level show that in the COVID-19 pandemic the use of more than one emoticon increases, reaching four repetitions. This is a visual way to express strong emotions in a situation of social crisis and personal tragedy. Emoticons are most often repeated, expressing sadness, grief, despair, suffering, prayer and asking God and others for help.

Conclusion

The analysis of the social network Instagram to find out the emotional reactions of users about the issue of coronavirus, led to the following conclusions. The assumption that women are more active in social networks in comparison with male participants is confirmed to a very large extent. Women show a more active interest in Instagram when they present positive emotion. This manner of active behavior continues during the situation concerning COVID-19 but women prefer to present negative emotions because the situation is very complicated.

In expressing their emotions, women use vocabulary with both exclamation and derogatory evaluation. The most common way of expressing emotions for a given event, both among men and women, are non-verbal (emoji) and graphic means (exclamation marks) to express the intensity of the emotional experience. The most frequent emotional reactions include emoji emoticons, capitalization,

the use of invective vocabulary and intensifiers. The usage of various emoticons is of great interest. Along with the use of already known symbols (e.g. sad and angry faces) which express sadness, regret or dislike, some new signs have appeared. These can mean many things but contextually they show strong approval and connection with the other users. Of particular interest is the use of several emoticons in a row. It may be done to express emotions or to impact the potential viewers. Many comments contain emoji emoticons, exclamations with the mention of God as well as doubling letters for stylistic coloring. When a dialogue appears, users speak out quite aggressively, using a large number of exclamation marks. Rather remarkable is the use of colours since using color is an emotional strategy.

To express an emotional attitude in a crisis situation, gender stereotypes are erased. Men and women experience certain events, demonstrating physiological reactions. Gender is a powerful tool that structures our social engagement. It is impossible to deny the social reality of the categories 'male – female', but these categories are not descriptive, they cannot be reduced to limiting binarity which is reflected in all spheres of life, including social networks which are an integral part of everyday life.

Summarizing we can say that the gender factor affects the communicative behavior of the individual as well as the specifics of the choice of linguistic means of verbalizing the emotional state. The emotional sphere of a person, as well as the ways of its linguistic representation, are characterized by gender differentiation.

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