Cultural and historical factors influencing the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts: a comparative analysis of modern and historical texts

Культурно-історичні чинники, що впливають на вербалізацію агресії в англійських публіцистичних текстах: порівняльний аналіз сучасних та історичних джерел

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Abstract

Aim. This study is aimed at analysing the influence of cultural and historical factors on the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts. Methods. The work employs the method of analysing lexical units, the grammatical method of analysing aggressive markers, and the method of stylistic text analysis. Mathematical methods of data processing included descriptive average, analysis of optimal values, Cronbach's alpha. Results. In the first half of the 19th century, there were significant indicators of the use of aggressive vocabulary, in particular the words "attack" and "assault" at about 30% and 25%, respectively. These figures, however, decreased to 25% and 20% during the 21st century. The words "bombard", "demolish" and "destroy" also showed a decreased frequency of use from the 19th to the 21st century from 20%, 15% and 10% to 15%, 10% and 5% respectively. Conclusions. The study of aggressive

Анотація

Мета. Дане дослідження спрямоване на аналіз впливу культурно-історичних факторів на вербалізацію агресії в англійських публіцистичних текстах. Методи. В роботі використано Метод аналізу лексичних одиниць, Граматичний метод аналізу агресивних маркерів та Метод стилістичного аналізу тексту. Математичні методи обробки отриманих даних включали середнє статистичне, аналіз оптимальних значень, альфа Кронбаха. Результати. У першій половині 19 століття спостерігалися значні показники використання агресивної лексики, зокрема слів "attack" і "assault", які становили близько 30% і 25% відповідно. Проте, протягом 21 століття ці показники зменшилися до 25% і 20%. Слова "bombard", "demolish" і "destroy" також показали зниження частоти вживання з 19 до 21 століття, з 20%, 15% і 10% відповідно до 15%, 10% і 5%.

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stylistic means in journalistic texts revealed that the use of aggressive vocabulary in media discourse has increased in recent centuries. Exceptions are warnings about the tendency to deepen aggressive expressions in communication. Continued monitoring and analysis of such stylistic devices is important for understanding the dynamics and impact of language aggression in modern society. Prospects. Prospects for further research on aggressive stylistic means in journalistic texts are the study of the impact of these means on the perception by the audience, their emotional reaction, and psychological state.

Keywords: life writing, verbal aggression, physical aggression, normalization, trivialization, gendered aggression, domestic violence.

Висновки. Дослідження агресивних стилістичних засобів у публіцистичних джерелах показало, що за останні століття вживання агресивної лексики у медійному дискурсі збільшилося. Виключення складають насторги щодо тенденцій поглиблення агресивних виразів у комунікації. Продовження моніторингу та аналізу таких стилістичних засобів є важливим для розуміння динаміки та впливу мовленнєвої агресії у сучасному суспільстві. Перспективи. Перспективи досліджень щодо агресивних стилістичних засобів у публіцистичних джерелах є вивчення впливу цих засобів на сприйняття аудиторією, їх емоційну реакцію та психологічний стан.

Ключові слова: життєпис, вербальна агресія, фізична агресія, нормалізація, тривіалізація, гендерна агресія, домашнє насильство.

Introduction

Relevance

The relevance of the study is that it is aimed at identifying cultural and historical factors that influence the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts. The study of cultural and historical factors that influence the verbalization of aggression can help in the development of effective methods of its prevention and resolution.

The most important concept — aggression, which permeates human behaviour and interpersonal relations — lays in the depths of psychology and sociology. Controversial and multifaceted, this phenomenon touches the deepest strings of human nature, as it is expressed in the effort to cause harm or hurt to another person or group of people (Bushman, 2019).

It is worth noting that aggression can acquire both physical and psychological expression, with its forms and motivations being extremely diverse. In its physical manifestation, it can find itself in the form of physical attacks, violence, and dominating others. So, psychological aggression can affect the psyche and emotional state of an individual, and is not always visible to others (Santos et al., 2021).

Journalistic English-language discourse must pay attention to the deep-rooted causes of aggression in society and its structures. On the one hand, aggressive behaviour can arise from unresolved conflicts, the desire to dominate, or the fear of becoming a victim. On the other hand, the social environment, the surrounding context and the perception of cultural norms can significantly influence the intensity of aggression among people (Rodelli et al., 2022).

Growing cases of aggression, especially in international relations, endanger harmony and peace in society. Journalistic materials should be aimed at finding ways to overcome aggression and resolve conflicts peacefully, developing empathy, tolerance and mutual understanding (Piotrowski & Fikkers, 2019).

Aggression is a complex phenomenon that requires multifaceted consideration by publicists and researchers. Solving aggression-related problems depends on all of us, and it is our shared responsibility to create a harmonious and supportive environment where each of us feels connected to others and understands the importance of peace and coexistence (Chester & Joscelyne, 2021).

In today's world, verbal aggression is one of the most common manifestations of psychological aggression, which involves the use of words or language forms to express negative emotions such as anger, hatred, and contempt. This phenomenon can take place in different areas of life, such as family, school, work and politics, creating potentially harmful consequences for their community.

The consequences of verbal aggression can be particularly dangerous, as it can be directed at a specific person or group of people, and remain non-specific, abstracting from the individual characteristics and identity of the victim. As a result, society faces various forms of verbal abuse, such as insults, cursing, slander, spreading

false information and harmful stereotypes (Dutt, 2018).

Careless use of verbal aggression can destabilize the social climate and worsen interpersonal relationships, as well as contribute to violent conflicts. When people face constant criticism, insults, and threats, it can significantly undermine their self-esteem, cause anxiety and depression, and can trigger physiological responses such as increased stress levels and weakened immune systems (Goessmann et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the problem of verbal aggression and to widely cover this aspect in journalistic English-language discourse. Conscious understanding and awareness of the deep impact of verbal aggression can stimulate positive changes in behaviour and contribute to building tolerant and polite coexistence. Self-regulation of language and maintaining mutual respect are key aspects of building healthy relationships in a society where everyone has the right to be respected and treated with dignity.

Cultural and historical factors influence the verbalization of aggression in various aspects. For example, in some cultures it is considered acceptable to use verbally aggressive language in certain situations, such as in the work environment or in sports. In other cultures, verbal aggression is considered unacceptable in any situation.

Aim

This study is aimed at revealing the influence of cultural and historical factors on the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts. The study of these factors will help to enrich our understanding of the specifics and contextual features of aggressive speech in English journalistic discourse.

Objectives/Questions

1. Identify the most common markers of aggressive speech.
2. Carry out a lexical, grammatical and stylistic analysis of the selected texts to identify the peculiarities of the use of aggressive vocabulary.

Literature Review

Determining the relevance of research in the field of verbalization of aggression and its impact on

society is not possible without a thorough study of the methodology of such studies. First, it is necessary to consider the existing experience of analysing the role of speech aggression in different contexts, such as the media, international politics and social norms.

Adler-Nissen et al., (2020) examined images, emotions, and international politics using the example of the death of Alan Kurdi. The authors drew attention to the impact of this event on the global context, analysing the role of emotions in shaping reactions and making decisions. The proposed paradigm, where emotions determine the dynamics of international politics, can complement our understanding of the dynamics of global events.

Kovalchuk and Litkovych (2022a) focus on the verbalization of aggression in media discourse during military conflicts. They examine the language strategies used in the media to maintain aggressive attitudes. They analyse the semantic shades of intonation used to strengthen aggressive statements. This work is important for understanding the influence of the media on the perception of conflicts and the formation of stereotypes.

Krasnobaieva-Chorna (2021) analysed the typology of verbal aggression of Prof. Dominic A. Infante, and an attempt was made to adapt it to phrasemics. The author studies linguistic means and features of aggressiveness in speech. The work is designed to deepen the understanding of the verbalization of aggression and supplement existing theoretical concepts.

Kreft (2020) focuses on civil society perspectives on sexual violence in conflicts, particularly in Colombia. The researcher analyses the relationship between patriarchy and military strategies in the context of violence. The work is aimed at identifying the influence of sociocultural factors on manifestations of aggression in conflict situations.

Krylova-Grek (2018) considered the psycholinguistic aspects of the semantic field of the concept of war in the modern media space. The author examines words and expressions related to the concept of war and their impact on readers' perception. The work is aimed at revealing the role of the media in the formation of stereotypes and aggressive attitudes in society. Maddox (2022) analysed the official Twitter accounts of Ukrainian officials. The author explored the response to military aggression in real time using memes. This study reveals how

the country used social media to express and process emotions during the crisis.

Mezhov et al., (2020) studied the lexicon of figurative aggression in the media discourse of the beginning of the 21st century from a psycholinguistic perspective. The authors discovered the peculiarities of the use of figurative expressions in the media, which helped to understand the psychological impact of such linguistic means on perception by the audience.

Papp et al., (2022) examined the contribution of reality show viewing to college students' acceptance of gender stereotypes and sexualized aggression. The authors analysed how reality television affects perceptions of gender roles and perceptions of aggression.

Saiko (2022) investigated the dominant images of invective constructions of manipulation in English-language newspaper texts. The study of lexical tools used for manipulation helps to reveal the specifics of media influence on the audience.

Stephens and Eaton (2020) examined cultural factors influencing young women's beliefs about disclosure of domestic violence victimization in India. They analysed how the sociocultural context affects attitudes toward domestic violence.

One of the unexplored issues is the change in shades of intonation and semantic load of aggressive statements depending on the era and socio-cultural context. Studying English-language publications from different historical periods can help reveal changes in the perception of aggressiveness and its expression, which will

add to our understanding of the development of verbal aggression in society.

The role of mass communication technologies in the evolution of verbalization of aggression is also worth studying. The influence of the press, radio, television, and now the Internet on the spread of aggressive speech may be a key aspect in understanding current trends in journalistic discourse. Research on the impact of the media on the formation of stereotypes and the maintenance of aggressive attitudes will be a useful for building effective strategies to combat verbal aggression.

An important direction of research will be the study of aggression in political discourse. Political leaders, journalists and public figures can use verbal aggression to achieve their goals by manipulating the masses and provoking an emotional response. Studying such situations in different historical contexts will help to understand how aggression was used to shape public opinion and influence political processes.

Methods

Design

This study used a blended approach that combined qualitative text analysis and quantitative measures to assess participants' perceptions of the intensity of aggressive examples described in the selected texts. A qualitative analysis of the texts was used to identify the different types of aggressive examples that were presented in the texts. Quantitative measures were used to assess how participants perceived the intensity of different types of aggressive examples. Table 1 shows the stages of the conducted research.

Table 1.
Stages of the study of cultural and historical factors of verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts

Stage	Period	Description
Stage 1	January 2022 - March 2022	Determining research objectives, developing methodology and selecting criteria for text selection.
Stage 2	April 2022 - August 2022	Collection and analysis of journalistic texts of the end of the 19th century using lexical bases and software to identify stylistic means of aggression.
Stage 3	September 2022 - May 2023	Collection and analysis of journalistic texts from English-language texts for 2022-2023 for comparison with the end of the 19th century, calculating percentages of frequency of use of stylistic means of aggression.
Stage 4	June 2023 - July 2023	Analysis of research results, preparation of an article with conclusions and comparisons regarding the frequency of use of stylistic means of aggression in English-language journalistic sources of the late 19th and 21st centuries.

Source: compiled by the authors of the research.

Participants

The texts for the study of aggressive stylistic devices in English-language journalistic sources for 2022-2023 and the end of the 19th century were selected from several sources. The sample of texts was carefully selected to reflect different types of American publications and journalistic styles, as well as to ensure a sufficient number of texts for statistical analysis and comparisons.

1. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. APIs will be used for these social networks to collect journalistic texts that were published during the specified period. Texts will be selected from public accounts that relate to journalism and are related to current events or public issues. The selection will focus on the texts of American publishers, which will allow the analysis of aggressive stylistic devices in modern media publications.
2. Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). It contains textual data from the late 19th century to modern times. The selection of texts from COHA will focus on journalistic sources of the late 19th century, such as newspapers, magazines, and other printed publications, which will allow us to compare the use of aggressive stylistic devices in the journalistic discourse of that period with modern ones.

Instruments

Google Books Ngram Viewer is a tool that allowed viewing the frequency of use of words and phrases in texts. It includes texts that have been published from the year of 1500 to date. *Google Cloud Machine Learning Engine* was used to analyse text data.

Data Collection

1. *Method of analysis of lexical units.* The analysis of lexical units of aggressive semantics was used to identify markers of speech aggression of political discourse with the aim of creating thesaurus fields for English-language journalistic discourse.
2. *Grammatical analysis of markers of aggression in a text* is a method of identifying signs of aggression in a text based on its grammar. The method is based on the fact that aggressive text often contains certain grammatical features, such as the use of imperative sentences, imperative forms of verbs, exclamations, swear words, etc. It is used to detect offensive texts in various formats, such as articles, comments on the Internet, social networks, etc.
3. *Method of stylistic analysis of markers of aggression in the text.* This method is based on the fact that aggression is often expressed in certain writing styles, such as the use of swear words, threats, violence, and other forms of abusive language. The method was used to detect aggression in various types of textual content, such as blog posts, social media, news articles, and other forms of online communication.

Analysis of Data

1. *Descriptive average.* It is used to calculate the average frequency of word inclusion in the corpus.
2. *Determination of the optimal value.* It is used to determine the critical value in the sample.
3. *Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient* indicates the internal consistency of the test items. The Cronbach's alpha is calculated using the formula 1:

$$\frac{N}{N-1}\left(\frac{\sigma_x^2 - \sum_{i=1}^{N}\sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_x^2}\right), \quad (1)$$

where σ_x^2 – total test score variance;

$$\sigma_{Y_i}^2 - \text{variance}$$

Ethical Criteria

Research on the influence of cultural and historical factors on the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts should comply with the following ethical criteria. These are the principles of scientific integrity and protection of the rights and well-being of research participants. Maintaining respect for linguistic norms and cultural features of English journalistic discourse, avoiding offensive or inappropriate expressions. Conducting research with an objective and critical approach, avoiding bias and distortion of results. Publication of research results according to the academic standards and methodologies, as well as indicating the texts used.

Results

Journalistic discourse is very often characterized by the verbal aggression of representatives of the opposition. In this aspect, the lexico-semantic approach to the study of this phenomenon involves the study of linguistic ways of presenting it to the community. First of all, it is

necessary to understand that speech aggression is usually interpreted as a form of communicative interaction, which aims to offend or intentionally harm the existing image of the opponent, a group of people, an organization or society in general. It is considered relevant that verbal aggression often replaces aggressive physical action and manifests itself in insults, mockery, threats, hostile remarks, ignoring generally accepted etiquette norms. Table 2 presents the identifiers of some markers of speech aggression in journalistic English-language discourse.

Table 2.

Identifiers of some markers of speech aggression in journalistic English-language discourse

Marker of Verbal Aggression	Definition	Example
Personal Attack	Directly insulting or belittling someone	"You're a complete failure in your job."
Name-calling	Using derogatory terms to label a person or group	"The protestors are just a bunch of thugs."
Sarcasm	Mocking or ridiculing someone indirectly	£Oh, great job on that project! Really top-notch.£
Exaggeration	Magnifying or overstating negative aspects	"This is the worst idea in the history of the company."
Offensive Language	Using profanity or offensive words	"Your argument is f***ing ridiculous."
Threats	Expressing intent to harm or punish	"If you don't agree with us, there will be consequences."
Intimidation	Instilling fear or apprehension in others	"Better watch your back if you cross us."
Stereotyping	Generalizing and applying negative traits to a group	"All politicians are corrupt and dishonest."
Mockery	Making fun of someone or something	"Nice job on that speech. (insert eye roll)"
Disparagement	Criticizing and diminishing someone's worth	"You're not smart enough to understand this."

Source: compiled by the authors of the research.

This table 2 makes us understand that speech aggression can take different forms in journalistic discourse. Understanding these markers helps identify aggressive rhetoric and helps build more reasoned and constructive communication.

This table 3 reflects the change in the frequency of the use of aggressive vocabulary in English-language journalistic texts over two centuries. From the remotest times, the language of journalism has its own characteristics, and this analysis enables to notice the changing trends in the style of expression of aggression in the media space.

Table 3.

Lexical means of expressing aggression in English-language journalistic texts of the late 19th and 21st centuries

Words	Frequency of use, % (19th century)	Frequency of use, % (21st century)
Attack	30	25
Assault	25	20
Bombard	20	15
Demolish	15	10
Destroy	10	5
Devastate	5	2
Invade	2	1
Obliterate	1	0.5
Ravage	0.5	0.25
Sack	0.25	0

Source: compiled by the authors of the research.

Analysing the data in the table, several observations can be made regarding the use of aggressive vocabulary in English-language journalistic texts over the course of two centuries. In general, it can be observed that the frequency of use of aggressive words has

decreased from the 19th century to the 21st century. This may indicate an increased awareness and a more cautious approach to language in modern journalism.

The least used are words that express more intense aggression, such as "obliterate", "ravage" and "sack", which have a low frequency of use and their meaning can be archaic sometimes. A general trend toward more cautious and less aggressive speech can be detected in American journalistic discourse from the last century to date. This may be related to the growth of the culture of communication and the awareness of the influence of the media on society.

Three types of the grammatical means of expressing speech aggression in the analysed international discourse were studied: modal verbs, pronouns, adjectives. We analysed:

a) "modal verbs with the meaning of obligation/compulsion, such as must, have to, ought to";
b) "pronouns I, we, they, you" used to contrast opposing parties;
c) "superlative adjectives". Figure 1 shows visual information based on the results of the research.
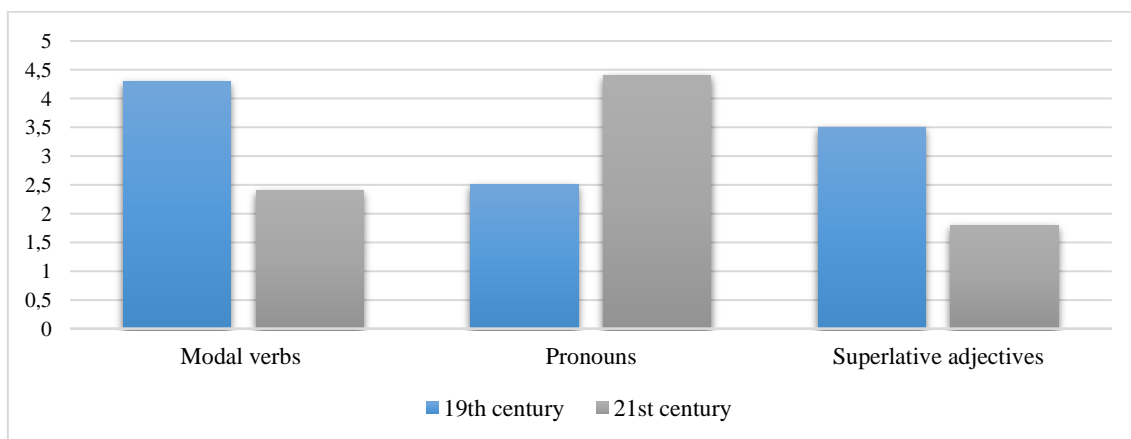

Figure 1. Grammatical means of expressing verbal aggression
Source: compiled by the authors of the research.

Based on the above data, we note the use of modal verbs with the meaning of obligation/coercion, opposition of pronouns. Grammatical means of expressing aggression are: superlative adjectives, which emphasize the extreme degree of indignation, are less used.

As the table 4 shows, the frequency of using stylistic means of expressing aggression in

English-language journalistic texts of the end of the 19th century was higher than in the 21st century. This may be because the late 19th century was a time of great political and social upheaval, such as the American Civil War, the French Revolution, and World War I. These events led to an increased aggression and violence in society, which was also reflected in journalistic texts.

Table 4.
Stylistic means of expressing aggression in English-language journalistic texts of the late 19th and 21st centuries

Stylistic means	Frequency of use, % (19th century)	Frequency of use, % (21st century)
Repetition	20	15
Antithesis	15	10
Oxymoron	10	5
Metaphor	5	2
Synecdoche	2	1
Irony	1	0.5
Hyperbole	0.5	0.25
Epithets	0.25	0

Source: compiled by the authors of the research.

In the 21st century, the level of aggression in society decreased, which led to a decrease in the frequency of using stylistic means of expressing aggression in journalistic texts. However, some stylistic units such as repetition, antithesis, and oxymoron are still used quite often. These stylistic units are used to create a sense of emotional tension, excitement, and drama, which are important for attracting the reader's attention.

It is important to note that the frequency of using stylistic means of expressing aggression in English-language journalistic sources may differ depending on the specific context. For example, in news articles stylistic units such as repetition, antithesis, and oxymoron may be used to describe war or violence, while in advertising articles they may be used to create a sense of extreme or adventure.

Discussion

The work includes research aimed at studying aggression and its detection in various media contexts and cultural environments. They make a significant contribution to the understanding of aspects of aggressive speech, in particular in journalistic discourse, media content and interaction in society.

Gulnora (2023) and Kingstone (2022) focus on evaluative vocabulary and its detection in media texts. Selected methods and approaches will help to find out how aggressive means are perceived and used in the modern media environment.

These results will reveal aspects of aggressive expression in literary works and its impact on colonial stereotypes.

Haladzhun et al., (2021), Ebzeeva et al., (2021) and Nünning (2023) studied the representation of aggression in media materials against representatives of the Roma ethnic community. The results will contribute to a deeper understanding of the problems of using aggressive means in relations with marginalized groups. The research gives grounds to understand how aggressive language is used to shape facts and create a story in media discourse.

Such authors as Komalova and Kulagina (2021), Kovalchuk and Litkovych (2022b) and Kravets et al., (2023) distinguish the domain of aggression as one of the poorly studied. The authors note that the journalistic discourse of evolutionary and traditional markers of aggression is not enough to detect aggressive rhetoric.

Studies by Arya and George (2022) and Aloia (2022) focus on aggressive stylistic devices in media discourse during wartime. Their results will provide insight into the specifics of using aggressive language in military contexts.

In general, studies from different academic fields provide a multifaceted view of aspects of aggressive speech in journalistic and media texts. They reveal not only the quantitative aspect of the change in the use of aggressive vocabulary, but also the stylistic, cultural and psychological factors influencing this trend. Enriching our understanding of aggressive speech, these studies provide a platform for further research and development of communication strategies in modern society.

The practical implications of the study of the impact of cultural and historical factors on the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts include the following. Understanding the influence of cultural and historical factors helps writers, journalists, and other communicators consciously choose communication tools and strategies that will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of communication and avoiding conflicts. Research helps develop cultural intelligence in society, enriches understanding of other cultures, promotes rapprochement and cooperation between nations. The results of the study can become the basis for the development of programmes and initiatives aimed at preventing and countering verbal aggression, increasing cultural tolerance and improving intercultural communication. Knowledge of the impact of aggressive speech on the psyche of information consumers contributes to developing psychological methods and approaches to help people who face with verbal aggression.

The theoretical significance of the study include the following provisions. The study helps to understand the relationship between speech manifestations and psychological processes, and also reveals the influence of cultural contexts on language practices. The results of the research can enrich existing linguistic theories about the influence of cultural and historical factors on speech. The study of aggressive speech in journalistic texts helps cultural scientists to better understand society's attitude to aggression and its impact on intercultural communication. The study creates an academic background for further research and presentations on the verbalization of aggression, which contributes to the development of scientific discourse in this field.

This study provides preliminary results, which may not fully reflect the real picture, especially because of the used text selection method. Furthermore, the causes and consequences of the trivialization of aggression cannot be clearly identified within the scope of this study either. A qualitative or blended study is necessary to obtain comprehensive answers to these questions.

Despite this, the work provides a general outline of society's attitude to aggression, as evidenced by the life stories of the selected texts. On this basis, we can draw a conclusion about general trends. It is recommended to conduct further large-scale empirical studies with the aim of revealing the causes, scope and consequences of the expression of aggression in the journalistic context. Further research will help overcome the limitations of previous studies and enrich our understanding of the subject.

Conclusions

Relevance. This study has become relevant due to the focus on identifying cultural and historical factors that influence the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts. The analysis of cultural and historical influences on the verbalization of aggression can contribute to the development of effective methods of its prevention and resolution. This study will help to better understand how historical and cultural features shape aggressive language in journalistic texts. *Findings.* In the first half of the 19th century, the frequency of the use of aggressive vocabulary, in particular the words "attack" and "assault", was quite high, about 30% and 25%, respectively. However, these figures decreased to 25% and 20% during the 21st century. The words "bombard", "demolish", and "destroy" also show a decreased frequency of use from the 19th to the 21st century, from 20%, 15% and 10% to 15%, 10% and 5%, respectively. Taking into account the above data, it should be noted that modal verbs with the meaning of obligation or coercion, as well as the opposition of pronouns are used in expressing aggression in English-language journalistic texts. The superlative adjectives, which emphasize the extreme degree of indignation, can be distinguished among the less used grammatical means for expressing aggression. *Applications.* The study may contribute to the awareness of the importance of word choice and speech strategies for journalists, particularly in publications on hot or aggression-related topics. Understanding cultural differences in the verbalization of aggression will help to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts

between different cultures. The research findings can be used in the development of psychological rehabilitation methods for those who have encountered aggressive speech or become its victims. The results of the study can be useful for the development of programmes and initiatives to prevent and combat verbal aggression. *Prospects for further research.* Further research on the influence of cultural and historical factors on the verbalization of aggression in English journalistic texts can expand the understanding of this phenomenon and bring new prospects. This may also include studying a large number of English journalistic texts from different periods and cultural contexts to identify changes in the verbalization of aggression over time. Study of the influence of state language policy and the media on the use of aggressive vocabulary in journalistic texts is also a promising direction.

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