

*Albota S. M.,**кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри прикладної лінгвістики**Національного університету «Львівська політехніка»*

A CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF WAR-RELATED PHRASEOLOGY IN ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN

Summary. Phraseological units are a vital component of a language system, enabling speakers to convey complex emotional, cognitive, and cultural meanings. Their analysis becomes especially relevant in extreme contexts such as war, which is accompanied by heightened emotional tension, psychological stress, the disruption of conventional perception models, and the transformation of linguistic codes. This article presents a contrastive study of phraseological units from the thematic group *war* in English and Ukrainian, with a particular focus on the expression of negative emotional states such as fear, anger, despair, anxiety, disappointment, hatred, and helplessness. The study classifies phraseological units into major semantic fields that reflect typical psycho-emotional reactions to war: expressions of fear (e.g., *to be scared stiff* – налякатися до смерті), anger (e.g., *to blow a fuse* – розлютитися), defeat (e.g., *to bite the dust* – зазнати краху), resistance (e.g., *to hold the line* – тримати оборону), resilience, and inner strength (e.g., *to keep a stiff upper lip* – зберігати витримку). The analysis includes the exploration of metaphorical foundations of these idioms, their pragmatic roles, stylistic features, and cultural specificity. Special attention is paid to how the experience of war is conceptualized in both languages through stable imagery such as battle, fire, death, defense, suffering, victory, and self-sacrifice. The findings reveal both universal features of these phraseological units – driven by the shared human experience of war – and significant linguocultural differences. In particular, the Ukrainian material exhibits a high degree of emotional-evaluative richness, expressive intensity, vivid imagery, and a strong connection with national-historical narratives of resistance and liberation. English idioms, on the other hand, often reflect imagery rooted in British military tradition, displaying tendencies toward euphemism, humorous inversion, and emotional distancing. The practical value of this research lies in its applicability to foreign language education (especially in phraseology and intercultural competence), translation studies, conflict discourse analysis, psychological counseling, media and political discourse, and military communication. The contrastive data and insights are particularly relevant for translators, language teachers, cultural analysts, and scholars engaged in the study of war narratives and trauma communication. Moreover, the results provide a foundation for further research in cognitive linguistics, emotional semantics, discourse pragmatics, conflict-related phraseology, corpus linguistics, and the development of specialized bilingual phraseological dictionaries and digital interpreting tools. This study also underscores the need for deeper integration of linguistic analysis into peacebuilding communication and education, given the ongoing geopolitical crises and the enduring power of language to shape perception, identity, and collective memory.

Key words: phraseological units, negative emotional states, war-related phraseology, semantic variation, pragmatic features, English-Ukrainian contrastive study, metaphorical language, emotional expressiveness, cultural linguistics.

Formulation of the Problem. Negative emotional states – such as fear, despair, anger, grief, and anxiety – are deeply embedded in human experience and frequently find expression in language through phraseological units. These idiomatic expressions are not only linguistically rich but also culturally and emotionally charged, often serving as powerful tools for conveying the intensity of emotional and psychological states, particularly in extreme situations like war and conflict. Phraseological units often encapsulate complex metaphorical meanings and reflect culturally specific worldviews, making them an essential subject of study in both theoretical and applied linguistics. Understanding how negative emotional states are encoded and transmitted through idioms and set expressions is particularly important in war-related discourse, where emotional expressiveness, symbolic representation, and cultural identity are foregrounded. Inaccurate interpretation or misapplication of such phraseology may result in communicative failures, cultural misunderstanding, or loss of emotional nuance – especially in translation, international diplomacy, intercultural communication, and educational contexts [1]. Despite the importance of this domain, there is a noticeable gap in comprehensive contrastive linguistic research that examines English and Ukrainian phraseological units related to war and negative emotions. This lack of scholarly attention limits our understanding of the semantic, pragmatic, and metaphorical dimensions of such expressions and restricts the development of practical tools for translators, educators, and language learners.

Consequently, the formulation of this problem is not only theoretical but also practical, lying at the intersection of several disciplines: linguistics, translation studies, cultural linguistics, pragmatics, and applied pedagogy. Addressing this problem requires interdisciplinary research that integrates methods of semantic analysis, pragmatic interpretation, and contrastive linguistic comparison. The outcomes of such research can support the development of bilingual corpora, educational resources, translation guidelines, and cultural competence training, all of which are critical for enhancing mutual understanding and communication in conflict-affected and multicultural environments. **The aim** of the paper is to investigate the semantic variations and pragmatic features of phraseological units that denote negative emotional states, particularly those related to war, in English and Ukrainian. It seeks to identify cross-linguistic similarities and differences, explore cultural underpinnings, and highlight the role of these expressions in enhancing emotional expressiveness. The material for this study includes the Thesaurus, Cambridge Dictionary, Macmillan Dictionary, phraseological dictionaries, and text corpora used for sourcing illustrative examples.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In recent decades, phraseological units have attracted increasing scholarly interest due to their vital role in expressing emotions, conceptualizing

experience, and representing cultural values. Seminal works such as Wierzbicka (1992) have underscored the deep interconnection between language, emotion, and cultural scripts, demonstrating how idiomatic expressions encode culturally specific emotional frameworks [1]. Similarly, Fernando and Flavell (1981) highlighted the pragmatic functions of idioms in everyday communication, emphasizing their relevance in expressing attitudes, evaluations, and emotional states [2].

In the field of cognitive linguistics, foundational studies by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) established the importance of metaphorical mappings as a mechanism for understanding and articulating emotions [3]. These scholars showed how abstract emotional experiences are frequently understood through embodied metaphors, many of which are crystallized in idiomatic expressions (e.g., *boiling with anger* or *frozen with fear*). Subsequent research has extended these insights to the domain of war-related phraseology, illustrating how conflict-related metaphors (e.g., *inner battles*, *emotional scars*) frame psychological and emotional states in terms of physical struggle and warfare [1-3].

Ukrainian linguistic scholarship has also made notable contributions to the study of phraseology. Researchers [4, 5] have explored the richness of Ukrainian idioms, particularly those tied to war, patriotism, and suffering. These works document the emotional charge and cultural specificity of Ukrainian war-related idioms, many of which reflect historical traumas and collective memory.

Despite the breadth of existing literature in phraseology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural linguistics, there remains a significant gap in contrastive studies that integrate both linguistic systems. This study aims to address this underexplored area by offering a structured comparative investigation of English and Ukrainian war-related phraseological units expressing negative emotions. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of idiomatic meaning, cultural semantics, and emotional expression across languages.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine and its global media coverage make the understanding of war-related phraseological units more relevant than ever. Such units serve not only linguistic but also socio-cultural functions in shaping public discourse, emotional attitudes, and intercultural communication. Enhancing comprehension of these expressions aids translators, interpreters, language teachers, and learners in navigating emotionally charged discourse. Moreover, the study contributes to phraseology theory and practical linguistics by elucidating cross-cultural nuances and semantic variations. The main objectives of the paper are the following: to categorize phraseological units expressing negative emotional states in English and Ukrainian, especially in war-related contexts; to analyze their semantic variation and pragmatic functions; to identify cross-linguistic equivalents and divergences; to explore the cultural and metaphorical bases of these expressions; to discuss implications for language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication.

Presentation of the main material. Phraseological units are expressions or phrases with a fixed meaning that cannot be understood simply by analyzing the individual words that compose them [5]. In the Ukrainian language, there is a considerable number of phraseological expressions belonging to the thematic group *war*. Each lexical unit denoting war-oriented vocabulary is highlighted in bold. Among them, the most commonly used are: **Варфоломійська ніч** – brutal massacre, bloodshed; **атакувати в лоб** – to attack the enemy in a big way; **не бере ніщо [ворожа куля]** – some-

one stays alive, someone cannot be killed; **бути відбій** – to cease any action (especially military); **з боєм** – overcoming great difficulties, obstacles; **смертельним боєм** (зі словами *бити, дубасити*) – very cruel, merciless; **брати/взяти зброю** (меч) *в руки* – to prepare for a fight, war or to start a fight, war; **брати/взяти з бою** – to obtain something, to achieve something, making considerable efforts, overcoming great difficulties; **брати/взяти на озброєння** – to use something, to use something in work, activity, etc.; **брати/взяти під обстріл** – to criticize sharply, shout at, ridicule, etc.; **брати/взяти штурмом** – to make one's way somewhere quickly, forcefully, actively; to act decisively, achieving one's own goal; **брати/взяти реванш** – to win something after defeat, failure, loss, etc.; **важити головою (життям)** – to put someone in mortal danger; **ваша бере/взяла** – you win; **вбитися в силу** – to become strong, vigorous; to become physically strong; **пороху не вигидає** (не *видумає*) – who can't think of anything, guess about anything; **виграти бій** – to achieve, to achieve one's goal; to win; **відвести/відводити удар** – to protect someone from something; **віддати життя** – to die fighting for someone, something, defending someone, something; **відірвати голову** – to punish someone severely; **на відстані гарматного пострілу** – quite far; **воювати з вітряками** – to waste effort and energy pointlessly and fruitlessly on overcoming or eliminating imaginary, non-existent obstacles; **як із дишла гармата** – very bad, worthless; **як з гармати** – very loud [4, 6].

The theory of phraseological units states that these expressions not only have a stable meaning, but also have their own characteristics in grammar, vocabulary and stylistics, which makes them indispensable in some speech situations.

In addition, vivid examples of phraseological expressions are proverbs and sayings about war: **без доброго командира військо – отара** (without a good commander, an army is a flock); **береженого бог береже, а козака шабля стереже** (God protects the protected, but the Cossack is protected by the saber); **бій хоробрих любить** (the battle loves the brave); **війна людей їсть, а кров'ю запива** (war eats people and drinks blood); **війна й Бога забуває і пана не знає** (war forgets God and knows no master); **війна приносить шрами й рани** (war brings scars and wounds); **ворога знайти – успіх мати** (to know the size and location of the enemy army); **на війні не без убитого** (in war there are casualties); **на чужу голову йти, треба й свою нести** (to attack someone else's head, you have to carry your own); **не хвались ідучи в бій, а хвались ідучи з бою** (don't boast when going into battle, but boast when leaving battle); **не дивись на ворога, як на вівцю, а дивись на його, як на вовка** (do not look at the enemy as a sheep, but look at him as a wolf); **нема моря без води, а війни без крові** (there is no sea without water, and no war without blood); **один солдат – в полі не воює** (one soldier is not a warrior in the field); **одна війна викликає іншу** (one war causes another); **рана від кулі глибока, а від шаблі широка** (the bullet wound is deep, but the saber wound is wide); **терпи козак – отаманом будеш** (endure the Cossack – you will be an ataman); **хто мечем воює, від меча й загине** (he who fights with the sword will perish by the sword); **як війна шаліє, то закон німіє** (when war rages, the law falls silent) [4, 6].

Proverbs about the army: **без проводу і військо гине** (without leadership, the army perishes); **у війську дадуть черевик, хоч ти на то не привик** (in the army they will give you a boot, even if you are not used to it); **хто в війську не бував, той біди не знав** (whoever has never been in the army has never known trouble) [4, 6].

In Ukrainian phraseology, war is always accompanied by courage and bravery, so sayings and proverbs about courage and bravery are also quite common. Proverbs about courage: *смільливий наскок – половина спасіння* (a bold leap is half the battle); *смільливим відвага володіє* (the brave have courage); *смільність бере города і кріпості* (courage takes cities and fortresses). Proverbs about bravery: *чия відвага, того й перемога* (whose courage, his is the victory); *без відваги зазнаєш зневаги* (without courage you will be despised); *більше відваги, як розуму* (more courage than intelligence); *де відвага, там і щастя* (where there is courage, there is happiness) [4, 6].

Negative emotional states can be expressed using a variety of phraseological units. Some variations of such expressions: *бути в гніві/ наляканим/ розлюченим/ обуреним/ розчаруванням/ засмученим/ / зневіреним* (to be angry/ scared/ furious/ indignant/ disappointed/ upset/ / discouraged); *терпіти/відчувати біль/ нудьгу/ незадоволення/ зневагу/ гнів/ ворожість/ неприязнь/ роздратування/ жаль/ страх/ сором/ безсилля/ розчарування* (to endure/feel pain/ boredom/ dissatisfaction/ contempt/ anger/ hostility/ dislike/ irritation/ regret/ fear/ shame/ powerlessness/ disappointment); *мати на душі/ в душі тягар/ важко на душі/ зажерливість/ відчай/ сором/ гнів/ страх/ ворожість/ біль/ безсилля/ зневіра/ роздратування/ розчарування/ незадоволення/ нудьгу/ злість/ обурення* (to have a burden on one's soul/ to have a heavy heart/ to be greedy/ to despair/ to be ashamed/ to be angry/ to be afraid/ to be hostile/ to be hurt/ to be powerless/ to be discouraged/ to be irritated/ to be disappointed/ to be dissatisfied/ to be bored/ to be angry/ to be indignant) [4, 6]. These expressions can have different shades of meaning and are used to express different gradations of negative emotional states.

Continuing the theory of variation in the meaning of phraseological units associated with negative emotional states, it can be noted that such expressions can have a bright emotional coloring and add expressiveness and expressiveness to the statement. Some examples: *бігти з підковиркою* – to be frightened, have fear, fright; *бити об заклад* – to experience strong emotions, to be terrified, to feel fear, anxiety, worry; *душа в н'ятах* to be frightened, terrified, to feel fear; *мати бика в н'ілі* – to be angry, furious, uncontrollable rage; *затиснути зуби* – to grit one's teeth, to be irritated, to feel anger, unbearable dissatisfaction [4, 6]. All these expressions are used to describe negative emotional states that can occur in a person in different situations. They can have different shades of meaning and depend on the context of use and on the feelings of the person. Such expressions are an integral part of linguistic culture and have their own history and origin.

Another example of a phraseological unit related to negative emotional states is *зірвати дах* [6]. This expression describes a person's extreme upset, nervousness, irritation, or anger. It can be used in a variety of situations, such as when a person is stressed at work, during a conflict with another person, or when their plans are not going well.

One more example is the phraseological unit *крик душі* [6], which describes a state of internal tension, vagueness and inability to express your emotions. This expression can be used to describe negative emotions, such as fear, anxiety, disappointment, anger or irritation.

In addition, there are a large number of expressions in phraseology that describe a person's depressive state, for example: *зітхнути зі смутку* (to sigh with sadness), *бути в залежності*

від настрою (to be mood dependent), *зануритися у власні думки* (to be lost in one's own thoughts), *бути в потойбічному стані* (to be in an otherworldly state) etc [4, 6].

All these phraseological units can have different shades of meaning and application, depending on the context and feelings of a person. They help us express our emotions and experiences in a more expressive and understandable way, and are also an important part of language culture [5].

Another group of phraseological units that describe negative emotional states are those related to the feeling of fear. For example, *тримати за горло, душа в н'ятах* [6] – these phraseological units describe the state of a person who feels fear or danger. Such expressions can be used in different contexts, for example, when a person experiences fear on the street at night, during a scary movie or a difficult life situation.

Phraseological units can also describe a state of anxiety and nervousness. For example: *крутиться як на веретені, не виходить з голови* [6] – these phraseological units describe the state of a person who is experiencing anxiety or nervousness.

Phraseological units of the thematic group *war* in Ukrainian and English have common semantics related to the process of communication and language use. However, their specific meanings may differ. Ukrainian phraseological units of the thematic group *war* can be divided into several categories: phraseological units that describe the courage of a warrior, e.g., *смільливий наскок – половина спасіння* [6] (a bold leap is half the battle); phraseologisms that describe the courage of a warrior, e.g. *чия відвага, того й перемога* [6] (whose courage, his is the victory), and phraseologisms that describe a soldier/Cossack, e.g., *хоробий солдат – міцніше за фортецю* [6] (a brave soldier is stronger than a fortress).

English phraseological units of the thematic group *war* can also be divided into several categories:

Adjectival phraseological units have the meaning of a quality attribute and, like adjectives, act in a sentence as a definition or the nominal part of the predicate. Among the adjectival phraseological units of the military theme, the following phraseological units are distinguished: *quick on the trigger* – quick, impulsive, its antonym *slow on the trigger* – one who reacts slowly; *armed to the teeth* – be fully armored; *low on amps and voltage* – inert, stupid person [7, 8, 9].

Adverbial and prepositional phraseology includes qualitative adverbial and adverbial phraseology. Qualitative adverbial idioms are stable phrases that denote the quality of any object: *with flying colors* – victoriously; *on the alert* – ready; *without (striking) a blow* – without a fight; *up in arms* – ready for battle; *above the battle* – away from the fight; *with the colors* – on active duty, in the army [7, 8, 9].

The first semantic group of phraseological units includes phraseological units indicating the beginning of a certain action, readiness to begin performing a task: *fly to arms* – to hastily prepare for war, to take up arms; *rise in (take up) arms (against)* – to arm oneself, to rise up with arms in hand (against); *join battle* – to start negotiations or competitions; *clear the decks* – to prepare for battle; *dig up the hatchet (tomahawk)* – to start a war [7, 8, 9].

The following group of verb phraseologisms characterizes the nature of the struggle, which can be both positive and hostile: *change one's battery* – to direct fire in another direction, to change tactics; *mask one's batteries* – to hide one's hostile intentions; *turn smb's battery against himself* – to beat the enemy with his own

weapon; *fling (throw) oneself into the breach* – to help someone out, to come to the aid of someone [7, 8, 9].

Verbal phraseological units denoting success, victory in one case or another should be allocated to a separate semantic group: *carry the day* – to defeat, to win a battle; *save the day* – to successfully complete an unsuccessfully started battle, to decide the outcome of the battle; *show fight* – to be ready for battle, to be belligerent, not to give up; to continue the resistance. And, conversely, there are a number of phraseological units that mean failure, collapse, defeat: *lay down one's arms* – to lay down one's arms, to surrender, to capitulate; *throw down one's arms* – to throw down one's weapons, to surrender; *fight a losing battle* – to wage a fruitless struggle, to wage a struggle that is doomed to defeat; *leave smb in possession of the field* – to be defeated [7, 8, 9].

The third class includes interdomain phraseological units and modal phraseological units of an unrelated nature (well, not at all). Intersubject phraseological units are stable combinations that serve to express emotions and feelings, modal phraseological units characterize the speaker's attitude to the topic of the statement. An example of phraseological units of military topics of this class can be the following expressions: *all clear* – the air raid passed; *as straight as an arrow* – straight as an arrow [7, 8, 9].

The fourth class includes communicative phraseological units, that is, proverbs and sayings: *attack is the best method of defense* – the best defense is offense; *a threatened blow is seldom given* – to emerge unscathed from battle; *every bullet has its billet* – what will happen cannot be avoided [7, 8, 9].

The use of phraseological units often carries pragmatic weight – conveying speaker attitude, cultural identity, and emotional coloring. Ukrainian idioms may emphasize collective historical experience, while English idioms often reflect individual action and readiness [4].

The contrastive study confirms that English and Ukrainian phraseological units connected to negative emotional states and war share significant semantic similarities but also demonstrate unique cultural nuances. Understanding these idioms enhances linguistic competence and intercultural communication, especially in conflict-related discourse. Further research could explore diachronic changes in such phraseology, their use in media discourse, and their role in shaping public sentiment. Additionally, expanding the corpus with spoken data and interdisciplinary approaches may deepen understanding of emotional phraseology's dynamics in both languages.

Conclusions and prospects for further exploration. The study of phraseological units in English and Ukrainian allows us to understand the important role they play in speech. Phraseological units have their own specific features that distinguish them from ordinary words and phrases.

When studying phraseological units in the thematic group *war*, it becomes clear that each language has its own expressions used to describe speech and its particularities. For example, in English, there is the phraseological unit *attack is the best method of defense*, and in Ukrainian, there is the expression *найкращий захист – це напад*, which has a similar meaning.

Thus, studying phraseological units in both Ukrainian and English not only helps to expand one's vocabulary but also better understand the cultural characteristics of the countries where these languages are used. Phraseological units often contain metaphorical images that reflect the specifics of thinking and culture of each country.

Moreover, studying phraseological units related to the thematic group *war* can help improve communication skills and increase language proficiency, especially at a time when the topic of war is widely present in the media. Phraseological units can add expressiveness and vividness to speech.

Therefore, the study of phraseological units is an important part of language learning that allows a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic features of each language and enhances communication skills.

It is also important to note that phraseological units may have varying degrees of stability in different languages, which requires separate study for each language individually. For example, some phraseological units may be lexically stable in English but not used in Ukrainian, and vice versa.

Additionally, it should be taken into account that phraseological units can vary in their degree of formal and stylistic acceptability. Some phraseological units may be appropriate only in colloquial speech, while others are acceptable in formal or business language styles.

Hence, the study of phraseological units is a crucial element in learning any language, helping to expand vocabulary, improve communication skills, and understand the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of each language. However, it is necessary to remember that studying phraseological units requires special attention to each language individually and to their possible formal and stylistic usage.

Regarding the thematic group *war*, phraseological units related to this theme are very important for effective communication and understanding news in the media. These phraseological units not only help a person to freely express themselves on the topic of war but also assist in reading news from foreign media outlets.

Analyzing phraseological units of the theme *war* in English and Ukrainian shows that both languages are rich in phraseological units on this topic. Many phraseological units are equivalent in meaning and do not require additional translation for clear understanding. However, there are some English phraseological units that are difficult to translate into Ukrainian without losing the essence of the expression. For example, the phraseological unit *carry the day* literally translates into Ukrainian as *нести день*, although the correct meaning of this unit is to win or to be victorious in a battle.

Therefore, in any case, it is necessary to study languages thoroughly with all phraseological units, neologisms, and so forth to be able to express one's thoughts easily and understand the interlocutor.

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Альбота С. Контрастивний аналіз фразеологічних одиниць тематичної групи *війна* в англійській та українській мовах

Анотація. Фразеологічні одиниці становлять важливий елемент мовної системи, що дозволяє передавати складні емоційні, когнітивні та культурні смисли. Особливо актуальним є їхній аналіз у контексті екстремальних ситуацій, зокрема війни, яка супроводжується інтенсивним емоційним навантаженням, психологічною напругою, руйнуванням звичних моделей сприйняття світу та трансформацією мовних кодів. У межах цієї статті здійснено контрастивне дослідження фразеологічних одиниць тематичної групи «війна» в англійській та українській мовах, із фокусом на вираження негативних емоційних станів, таких як страх, гнів, відчай, тривога, розчарування, ненависть і безсилля. У дослідженні систематизовано фразеологізми за основними семантичними полями, що репрезентують типові психоемоційні реакції на війну: вираження страху (e.g., *to be scared stiff* – налякатися до смерті), гніву (e.g., *to blow a fuse* – розлютитися), поразки (e.g., *to bite the dust* – зазнати краху), опору (e.g., *to hold the line* – тримати оборону), стійкості та внутрішньої сили (e.g., *to keep a stiff upper lip* – зберігати витримку). Аналіз супроводжується вивченням метафоричних джерел цих фразеологізмів, їх прагматичної функції,

стилістичного навантаження та культурної специфіки. Особливу увагу приділено тому, як концептуалізується досвід війни в обох мовах через сталі образи: битви, вогню, смерті, оборони, страждання, перемоги та самопожертви. У результаті дослідження виявлено як універсальні риси фразеологізмів, що зумовлені спільним для людства досвідом воєнного конфлікту, так і значущі лінгвокультурні відмінності. Зокрема, український матеріал демонструє високу емоційно-оцінювальну насиченість, експресивну інтенсивність, асоціативну образність та зв'язок із національно-історичним досвідом боротьби за незалежність. Англійські фразеологізми, своєю чергою, відображають образність, закорінену у військовій традиції Британської імперії, а також поширеність евфемізмів, гумористичних інверсій та емоційного дистанціювання. Практична цінність дослідження полягає у можливості його застосування в процесі навчання англійської та української мов як іноземних, у перекладацькій діяльності, під час міжкультурної комунікації, у психологічному консультуванні, а також у медіа дискурсі, політичному дискурсі й військовій комунікації. Отримані результати можуть стати основою для подальших досліджень у сфері когнітивної лінгвістики, емоційної семантики, дискурсивної прагматики, фразеології конфлікту, корпусної лінгвістики, а також для створення спеціалізованих міжмовних фразеологічних словників, навчально-методичних посібників і цифрових інтерпретаційних ресурсів.

Ключові слова: фразеологічні одиниці, негативні емоційні стани, воєнна фразеологія, семантична варіативність, прагматичні особливості, англо-українське контрастивне дослідження, метафорична мова, емоційна експресивність, лінгвокультурологія.