

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF WORDS EXPRESSING BASIC EMOTIONS

Bobojonova Risolat Shermat qizi*Student, Urganch Ranch Technology University**Uzbekistan*

Abstract: *This paper explores the semantic properties of lexical items used to express basic human emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise. Drawing from cognitive semantics and corpus linguistics, the study analyzes how these emotion words are structured, contextualized, and differentiated across English usage. Through semantic field analysis and collocational patterns, the research highlights how basic emotions are encoded linguistically and how their meanings shift depending on syntactic and pragmatic environments. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how language shapes emotional perception and communication.*

Keywords: *basic emotions, semantics, emotion lexicon, cognitive linguistics, collocation, semantic field*

Language is a primary tool through which human beings express, interpret, and share emotional experiences. The **semantic analysis of emotion words** provides valuable insight into how emotions are conceptualized and communicated. Emotions such as *happiness*, *anger*, and *fear* are considered **basic emotions** due to their universality and evolutionary significance (Ekman, 1992). However, the **lexical representation** of these emotions is culturally and linguistically nuanced.

In English, each basic emotion is associated with a wide array of lexical choices. For instance, *happiness* can be expressed by words like *joy*, *delight*, *cheerfulness*, or *bliss*, each carrying subtle semantic distinctions. This study investigates how such words differ in meaning, usage, and emotional intensity. Using a **semantic field approach**, we identify patterns in the language of emotion and examine the **cognitive structures** underlying their use.

The goal is to provide a structured semantic analysis of emotion-related vocabulary in English by using both qualitative linguistic theory and quantitative corpus data.

This research combines **semantic theory** and **corpus-based analysis** to study emotion words. The methodological steps included:

- **Selection of Emotion Categories:** Six basic emotions were selected based on Ekman's (1992) model: *happiness*, *sadness*, *anger*, *fear*, *disgust*, and *surprise*.

- **Lexical Data Collection:** Emotion-related words were gathered using *WordNet*, *Oxford Thesaurus*, and *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*.

- **Corpus Analysis:** The **British National Corpus (BNC)** and **Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)** were used to observe real-life usage, collocations, and syntactic environments.

- **Semantic Field Mapping:** Words were grouped by semantic proximity, connotative meaning, and register.

- **Frequency and Contextual Analysis:** Key words were examined in terms of frequency, collocational behavior, and typical syntactic structures (e.g., verb-object, adjective-noun).

Happiness

The core lexemes (*happy, joy, delight, cheerful, elated*) vary in intensity and context.

- *Happy* is the most neutral and frequent.
- *Elated, ecstatic, and overjoyed* convey higher intensity.
- Collocations like “**feel happy**,” “**radiant with joy**,” or “**cheerful mood**” reflect common syntactic patterns.

Sadness

Words such as *sad, sorrow, grief, miserable, melancholic* represent a continuum.

- *Grief* is typically used for **deep, prolonged sadness**, often linked to loss.
- *Melancholy* conveys a **literary or philosophical sadness**.
- Frequent collocates include “**deep sorrow**,” “**express grief**,” and “**melancholic tone**.”

Anger

Terms like *angry, furious, irate, annoyed, resentful* show gradation.

- *Furious* and *irate* have higher intensity than *angry*.
- *Annoyed* suggests milder, often situational anger.
- Common collocations include “**burst with anger**,” “**seethe with rage**,” and “**resentful of treatment**.”

Fear

Words analyzed: *afraid, scared, terrified, anxious, horrified*.

- *Terrified* and *horrified* indicate strong fear reactions, often with physical symptoms.
- *Anxious* implies fear mixed with **anticipation or uncertainty**.
- Phrases like “**gripped by fear**,” “**anxious about the result**” are frequent.

Disgust

This semantic field includes *disgusted, revolted, repulsed, sickened*.

- Emotion of **moral judgment or physical aversion**.
- Phrases include “**disgusted by behavior**,” “**felt sickened**,” and “**revolting image**.”

Surprise

Words include *surprised, astonished, amazed, stunned, startled*.

- *Astonished* and *amazed* often imply **positive surprise**, while *startled* may be neutral or negative.

- Frequent collocations: “**surprised to hear,**” “**utterly amazed,**” “**startled by the sound.**”

The semantic structures of basic emotion words show both **universal patterns** and **language-specific nuances**. Each emotion type consists of a semantic field, where words vary along dimensions of **intensity, duration, and social register**. For example, *happy* is casual and common, while *elated* is intense and less frequent.

Context plays a crucial role in meaning variation. Many emotion words are polysemous and can express **emotional states, traits, or reactions**, depending on usage. For instance, *sad* can describe a person (*She is sad*), a situation (*a sad story*), or an expression (*a sad face*).

The analysis also shows that **metaphorical expressions** (e.g., “burning with anger”, “flooded with joy”) reinforce emotional salience and are often tied to **embodied cognition**. Emotion words frequently appear in figurative constructions, reinforcing Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) theory of **conceptual metaphors** (e.g., *EMOTION IS HEAT, FEAR IS DOWNWARD MOVEMENT*).

The findings suggest that emotional vocabulary is not only semantically rich but deeply embedded in **cultural cognition, pragmatic convention, and social interaction**.

Emotion words in English form complex semantic networks characterized by gradability, contextual dependency, and cultural framing. Through corpus analysis and semantic mapping, we observe how emotions are **encoded, nuanced, and dynamically expressed** in natural language.

Understanding these patterns is essential for fields like **language teaching, sentiment analysis, translation, and intercultural communication**, where emotional clarity and accuracy are critical.

Future studies may explore **cross-linguistic comparisons** or examine how emotion lexicon evolves in **digital communication contexts**, such as social media and chat-based interaction.

References

- Ekman, P. (1992). *An argument for basic emotions*. *Cognition and Emotion*, 6(3-4), 169–200.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1999). *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fillmore, C. (1985). *Frames and the semantics of understanding*. *Quaderni di Semantica*.
- Davies, M. (2008). *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*.
- Oxford English Dictionary Online. (2024). *Emotion Lexicon*.
- Kövecses, Z. (2000). *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*. Cambridge University Press.