

## THE ENGLISH INTERNET COMMENTARY: ANALYZING SYMPATHETIC EXPRESSION

*Tulanbayeva Shahnozaxon Shavkatbekovna*  
*Teacher Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages*

*Abstract. This article explores the use of English internet commentary as a platform for expressing sympathy. By analyzing a selection of articles and relevant sources, the study investigates the linguistic and syntactic features employed by users to convey empathy, understanding, and support in online discussions. The research highlights the prevalence of syntactic structures and word choices that contribute to sympathetic expression, shedding light on the unique characteristics of internet discourse. Additionally, the article examines deviations from normative syntactic patterns, suggesting that the online context promotes democratization and simplification of language structures. This study provides insights into the role of English internet commentary as a means of conveying sympathy and offers a valuable perspective on the evolving nature of online communication.*

*Key words: English internet commentary, Sympathy expression, Online communication, Internet discourse, Linguistic features.*

## INGLIZ TILIDAGI INTERNET SHARHI: SIMPATIK IFODANI TAHLIL QILISH

*Tulanbayeva Shahnozaxon Shavkatbekovna*  
*Andijan davlat chet tillar instituti o'qituvchisi*

*Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada hamdardlik bildirish uchun foydalaniladigan ingliz tilidagi onlayn internet sharhlari o'rganiladi hamda tanlangan maqolalar va tegishli manbalarni tahlil qilish orqali, onlayn munozaralarda hamdardlik, tasalli berish va qo'llab-quvvatlash uchun internet foydalanuvchilari tomonidan qo'llaniladigan lingvistik va sintaktik xususiyatlari tadqiq qilinadi. Hamdardlikni ifodalashga hissa qo'shadigan sintaktik qurilmalar va so'z tanlovlarining keng tarqalganligi va internet diskursining o'ziga xos xususiyatlari yoritiladi. Bundan tashqari, maqolada onlayn kontekst til qurilmalarini demokratlashtirish va soddalashtirishga yordam beruvchi normativ sintaktik qoidalardan chetga chiqishlar ko'rib chiqiladi hamda hamdardlikni bildirish vositasi sifatida ingliz internet sharhining roli haqida tushuncha beriladi.*

*Kalit so'zlar: Inglizcha internet sharhi, Hamdardlik bildirish, Onlayn muloqot, Internet diskurs, Til xususiyatlari.*

## АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ИНТЕРНЕТ-КОММЕНТАРИЙ: АНАЛИЗ ВЫРАЖЕНИЯ СИМПАТИИ

*Туланбаева Шахнозахон Шавкатбековна*  
*преподаватель Андийжанский государственный институт иностранных языков*

*Абстрактный. В этой статье рассматриваются онлайн-комментарии на английском языке, используемые для выражения сочувствия, и посредством анализа избранных статей и связанных с ними источников исследуются лингвистические и синтаксические особенности, используемые интернет-пользователями для выражения сочувствия, утешения и поддержки в онлайн-дискуссиях. Выделены распространенность синтаксических приемов и словесного выбора, способствующих выражению эмпатии, а также особенности интернет-дискурса. Кроме того, в статье рассматриваются отклонения от нормативных синтаксических правил, которые помогают демократизировать и упростить лингвистические средства онлайн-контекста, а также дается представление о роли англоязычных интернет-комментариев как средства выражения эмпатии.*

*Ключевые слова: Интернет-обзор английского языка, Эмпатия, Интернет-коммуникация, Интернет-дискурс, Языковые особенности.*

**Introduction:** The advent of the internet has revolutionized communication, providing individuals with new platforms to express their thoughts, emotions, and opinions. One significant aspect of online communication is the English internet commentary, which serves as a space for users to engage in discussions, share experiences, and express empathy towards others. This article explores the linguistic

features and syntactic structures employed in English internet commentary to express «sympathy,» analyzing various sources and previous research.

The importance of empathy and support in online interactions cannot be overstated. Galichkina emphasizes the crucial role of empathy in computer communication, highlighting its significance in establishing meaningful connections within virtual communities[4]. Goroshko further acknowledges the role of internet genres in facilitating empathetic exchanges and fostering a sense of belonging[5]. Understanding how sympathy is expressed in English internet commentary is essential for comprehending the dynamics of online discourse and its impact on social interactions.

Examining the linguistic characteristics of internet commentary reveals intriguing patterns in word choices and syntactic structures. Kompantseva [7] argues that the democratization and simplification of language structures in online spaces have led to new norms and conventions in internet communication. These norms often deviate from traditional syntactic patterns, allowing for creative and concise expressions of sympathy. Furthermore, the evolving nature of online communication necessitates an exploration of how empathy and support are conveyed in this unique linguistic context.

#### Materials and Methods:

A comprehensive corpus of online comments and discussions was collected from various internet platforms, including social media websites, online forums, and comment sections of news articles. The data collection process aimed to capture a diverse range of topics and contexts in which sympathy was expressed. Previous studies on internet discourse collection methods were consulted to ensure a systematic and representative selection of the data [4,5].

The selection of the corpus followed specific criteria to ensure the relevance and representativeness of the data. Comments written in English were included, focusing on expressing sympathy or empathy. A variety of genres and discourse types were included to encompass different emotional contexts. Relevant studies on empathy in online communication and discourse were consulted to inform the selection criteria [4,21].

The collected corpus underwent a rigorous annotation process to identify instances of sympathy expressions. Trained annotators categorized the comments based on the nature and intensity of sympathy conveyed. The annotation guidelines were developed based on established frameworks for analyzing empathy and pragmatic language use in online context [4,7]. Inter-annotator agreement was measured to ensure consistency and reliability.

The annotated corpus underwent a comprehensive linguistic analysis to identify recurring patterns, syntactic structures, and lexical choices associated with expressing sympathy. The analysis focused on examining the syntactic variations and deviations from traditional sentence structures in the internet commentary. Key linguistic features, such as word order, use of intensifiers, adverbial phrases, and modal verbs, were examined. Previous studies on language and empathy, discourse analysis, and pragmatics were consulted to inform the analytical approach [5:45].

The findings from the linguistic analysis were compared and contrasted with previous research and relevant sources. This comparative analysis involved examining similar studies on internet discourse, sociolinguistic theories, and pragmatic frameworks related to empathy and online communication. Key sources included studies on internet genre and language functioning, cognitive and pragmatic aspects of internet communication, and norms of language usage in online contexts[7:65].

The results of the linguistic analysis were interpreted and discussed within the theoretical framework of empathy, online communication, and pragmatics. The discussion aimed to elucidate the underlying motivations and sociocultural factors influencing the use of specific linguistic features in expressing sympathy in the English internet commentary. Theoretical perspectives from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis were drawn upon to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the findings[4:34].

**Results and Discussion.** In this study, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of English internet commentary to explore how individuals express sympathy in online contexts. The analysis yielded significant findings pertaining to the linguistic features, strategies, cultural influences, and emotional support associated with the expression of sympathy in online discourse.

#### Linguistic Features and Strategies

Our analysis revealed a range of linguistic features and strategies employed to convey sympathy in online comments. Intensifiers and adverbial phrases were commonly used to enhance the empathetic tone of messages [9:60]. For instance, phrases such as «I truly understand your pain» or «I'm deeply sorry for

your loss» were frequently employed. Metaphorical language was another prominent strategy observed in sympathy expression [10:42]. Metaphors allow individuals to establish emotional connections by drawing on shared experiences and feelings.

1. Intensifiers and adverbial phrases:

- «I truly understand your pain.»
- «I'm deeply sorry for your loss.»
- «I can't even begin to imagine how difficult this must be for you.»
- «My heart goes out to you and your family.»

2. Metaphorical language:

- «May the light of love guide you through this dark time.»
- «Sending you virtual hugs and strength during this challenging period.»
- «Your loved one may be gone, but their spirit will forever shine bright.»
- «I hope you find solace in the memories and love that will always bloom in your heart.»

3. Shared experiences and feelings:

- «I've been through a similar situation, and I know how overwhelming it can be.»
- «You're not alone in this; we're here to support you every step of the way.»
- «There's a community of people who understand what you're going through and are here to listen.»
- «The pain of losing someone dear is something we all experience, and we stand by your side.»

These linguistic features and strategies help create a compassionate and empathetic tone in online comments, allowing individuals to express their sympathy effectively.

#### Cultural Influences

Cultural and contextual factors significantly influence the expression of sympathy in online environments. Cross-cultural differences were observed in condolence expressions, indicating variations in how sympathy is conveyed across different cultural backgrounds [16:67]. Cultural norms, values, and social expectations shape the ways individuals express sympathy online [15:39]. For example, some cultures may emphasize direct expressions of sympathy, while others may employ more indirect or nuanced approaches. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for effective communication and understanding within diverse online communities.

#### Role in Emotional Support and Community Building

Our analysis highlighted the role of sympathy expression in building emotional support and fostering online communities. Sympathetic comments create a sense of belonging and solidarity among community members, encouraging further engagement and support [17:349]. Empathy, a core element of sympathy, has been recognized as a vital component in developing meaningful online interactions [20:65]. The ability to express and receive sympathy online facilitates emotional connections and helps individuals cope with challenging situations.

#### Examples from Online Commentary

To illustrate these findings, let us consider examples from the analyzed online commentary. In response to a post about someone's loss, a commenter expressed sympathy by saying, «I can only imagine the pain you must be going through. My heartfelt condolences to you and your family.» This example showcases the use of intensifiers («only,» «imagine») and an empathetic phrase («heartfelt condolences») to convey sincere sympathy.

Another example demonstrates the use of metaphorical language: «May you find solace in the memories you shared with your loved one. They will forever be a guiding light in your life's journey.» Here, the metaphor of a guiding light is employed to evoke empathy and provide emotional support.

These examples highlight the diverse linguistic strategies employed in sympathy expression and emphasize the role of cultural context in shaping such expressions.

#### Implications for Online Discourse and Communication

The findings of this study have important implications for online discourse and communication. Understanding the linguistic strategies, cultural influences, and emotional dynamics involved in expressing sympathy can enhance the effectiveness of online interactions and foster a sense of empathy within digital communities. Additionally, sentiment analysis and emotion detection techniques can be applied to analyze and evaluate the impact of sympathy expressions in online platforms [13:922]. Such analyses contribute to a deeper understanding of the emotional dynamics and social support mechanisms within digital environments.

By categorizing commentaries expressing sympathy based on their semantic content, we can better understand the underlying motivations and strategies used by individuals to convey empathy and support in English internet commentaries. These categories highlight the diverse ways in which people reach out to offer comfort, understanding, and practical assistance in various online communities.

The semantic content of the comments expressing sympathy was analyzed based on the classification presented in the work of A. Micallizzi [12], and divided into five categories in accordance with it:

1. Aggressive statements towards the perpetrator:

«This monster deserves the harshest punishment! I hate him with all my heart!»

2. Commenting on the situation as a whole:

«A tragic story that touches everyone. I hope justice will prevail!»

3. Appeal to the feelings of the victim:

«My heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of the deceased. No one deserves such a terrible fate.»

4. Expression of sympathy, condolences:

«My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the deceased. May she find peace, and may they find the strength to overcome this loss.»

5. «Stop expressing your hatred and respect the mourning atmosphere. This is not the place for insults and rude comments».

When examining the aforementioned groups of commentaries, certain linguistic characteristics can be noted. For example, aggressive statements towards the perpetrator in some cases express hope for a fair punishment: «Terrible... hopefully, the perpetrator(s) will be dealt with severely. My condolences to the bereaved.» In this case, the author uses the intensifier «severely» to indicate the necessity of imposing strict punishment on the criminals. The statements can also refer to the perpetrators using derogatory terms: «Fundamentally, these villains and, above all, their masterminds seek the destruction of the world as a whole, including themselves. Killing and dying are not means to an end for these psychopaths but the end itself.» Here, the use of derogatory terms like «villains» and «psychopaths» in place of the word «criminals» aims to degrade the perpetrators as inferior members of society and demonstrates the commentator's solidarity with the victims while expressing the commentator's disapproval of the crime.

Here we can observe how commentators express sympathy towards the victims and emphasize the condemnation of the crime. Commenting on the overall situation involves describing the events as shocking, intolerable, and alarming. Commentators utilize various literary techniques to convey their sentiments. For instance, they employ personification, suggesting that «the world is reeling from the impact of this tragedy.» Furthermore, metaphors are used to vividly portray the events, such as referring to a conflict as «a living nightmare that engulfs innocent lives.» The commentaries often conclude with rhetorical questions, reflecting the commentator's indignation towards the ongoing events. Commenters also make use of appropriate adjectives to express their disbelief, such as finding certain incidents «absolutely inconceivable.» Expressive language, including idiomatic expressions like «to crumble under the weight,» is employed to underscore the gravity of tragic events, as seen in the case of a cultural heritage site collapsing, leaving behind a trail of devastation and loss.

Appealing to the victim's emotions as a category of commentaries aims to demonstrate to the readers the complete unacceptability and repulsiveness of the situation the victim has experienced, evoking sympathy in the interlocutor. To achieve this, commentators often use intensifiers that carry an evaluative function and are intended to give the speech an emotional tone. In the following example, we can observe the use of the adverb «heart-wrenching» as such an intensifier: «It is truly heart-wrenching what is happening there... Even more devastating, of course, is that millions of innocent people have to endure immense suffering, people who never wanted this civil war.»

Expressions of sympathy or condolences are often found in comments, using clichés that convey «compassion,» «empathy,» and «support»: «It's a tragic incident. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families...» Another way to show sympathy is for the commenter to connect their own emotions to the described event: «I'm deeply shocked and saddened. How can such a loving God allow such a tragedy?» In this instance, the adjectives «shocked» and «saddened» serve an expressive purpose, demonstrating the commentator's emotional response to the situation described in the article.

Shaming the interlocutors for inappropriate comments is an interesting approach as a way of expressing sympathy, as it implicitly calls upon the criticized commentator to exhibit socially acceptable feelings in the context of the article's events. To add more emotional color to their statements, comment authors may also resort to using colloquial and expressive language. The following example demonstrates the use of a colloquial expression to belittle the previous commentator's statement: «Do you really need to clutter these comments with your empty words? People here have lost their homes or, even worse, family members.» The figurative colloquial expression «cluttering speech bubbles» is employed here to signify the lack of value in the words of the previous commentator within the context of the internet article, as the word «Sprechblase» not only has its literal meaning of «a speech bubble emanating from a comic book character, enclosing a statement, depicted as an elliptical line,» but also colloquially refers to «an empty, clichéd, repetitive statement» [10:42].

#### Conclusion:

As we have seen, the analysis of English internet commentary as a platform for expressing sympathy has provided valuable insights into the linguistic features, syntactic structures, cultural influences, and emotional dynamics involved in online interactions. The study highlighted the diverse strategies employed, such as the use of intensifiers, adverbial phrases, metaphorical language, and shared experiences, to convey empathy and support. The flexible syntactic structures observed, including incomplete sentences and the use of emojis, contribute to the concise and impactful nature of sympathy expressions in online discourse.

Cultural factors play a significant role in shaping the expression of sympathy in online environments, with cross-cultural differences influencing the choice of language and approaches to conveying empathy. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for effective communication and fostering a sense of community in diverse online spaces.

The findings also underscore the importance of sympathy expression in emotional support and community building within digital platforms. Sympathetic comments create a sense of belonging, solidarity, and emotional connection among users, encouraging further engagement and support. The study emphasizes the role of empathy in online interactions and highlights its significance in developing meaningful connections within virtual communities.

The implications of this research extend to the broader understanding of online discourse and communication. By analyzing the linguistic features, cultural influences, and emotional dynamics associated with sympathy expression, this study provides valuable insights for improving online interactions, developing sentiment analysis tools, and enhancing social support mechanisms within digital environments.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the unique characteristics of English internet commentary as a means of expressing sympathy. The analysis of linguistic features, syntactic structures, cultural influences, and emotional dynamics provides a comprehensive understanding of how individuals convey empathy and support in online discussions. As online communication continues to evolve, it is crucial to explore and adapt to the changing nature of language use in digital contexts, fostering empathy and meaningful connections in virtual communities.

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