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VERBAL AGGRESSION: LINGUISTIC AND LEGAL ASPECT

The article examines the phenomenon of verbal aggression as a linguistic and legal problem which, under certain conditions, can be qualified as an administrative or criminal offence. The verbal aggression is defined as a conscious communicative strategy aimed at achieving certain goals through the use of language. Theoretical aspects of communication strategies are characterised. The key characteristics, forms of manifestation and consequences of verbal aggression in the context of interpersonal communication are analysed. Various forms of verbal aggression are considered, including insults, threats, criticism, irony, manipulation and ignoring. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of linguistic means used to implement verbal aggression as a communication strategy. The lexical, syntactic and stylistic features of aggressive statements, as well as their impact on the emotional state of the interlocutor are identified.

The term “offence committed verbally” in the context of legal linguistics is considered, and its difference from more established concepts such as “hate speech” or “verbal aggression” is emphasised. It is noted that the development of jurisprudence contributes to a detailed analysis of speech actions that may have legal significance.

The main attention is paid to the characterization of offences committed verbally through the components of their legal qualification, in particular, the object, objective side, subject and subjective side. The public danger associated with their information impact on public relations, in particular, human rights, public order, state security and interests of justice, is considered. The linguistic expertise is analysed as an important tool for determining legally significant statements.

The article also deals with the issues of enshrining verbal offences in the criminal and administrative legislation of Ukraine. Examples of articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine and the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences regulating liability for aggressive speech acts, including threats, harassment and calls for offences, are provided. It is noted that an important aspect of law enforcement is to take into account the context of statements, their content and possible consequences.

The importance of further development of interdisciplinary approaches to the analysis of verbal offences is emphasised, which will allow for a more effective classification of such acts according to their semantic model. The emphasis is placed on the need to systematically consolidate the concept of ‘verbally committed offence’ in legal and scientific doctrine to ensure an adequate legal assessment of such phenomena.

Keywords: *verbal aggression, legal linguistics, crime, offence, violence, harassment, legal responsibility.*

Original article

INTRODUCTION. The decline in the level of culture of speech in the Ukrainian-language media space, the growth of political freedom in society, freedom of speech and the development of digital technologies have led to both positive and

negative trends in the development of the modern Ukrainian language. Verbal aggression as a form of interpersonal communication is becoming increasingly widespread in modern society. It manifests itself in various forms – from insulting

statements and humiliation to threats and blackmail. The relevance of the study of verbal aggression in this research is due to a number of factors that reflect the current challenges and needs of society in the field of law and language. In today's world, there is an increase in the use of verbal aggression, in particular hate speech, to incite hatred and discrimination on various grounds, such as race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Researching these phenomena is important for developing effective legal mechanisms to counter hate speech and protect human rights. The Internet and social media have become platforms for the spread of verbal aggression, including cyberbullying. A linguistic and legal analysis of the peculiarities of verbal aggression in the online environment is necessary to develop strategies to combat these phenomena and ensure the safety of users on the Internet.

The language used in legal proceedings is important for ensuring the fairness and comprehensibility of judicial proceedings. The study of verbal aggression in the legal context helps to identify and prevent the abuse of language that may lead to violations of the rights of litigants. Legal linguistic examination of texts, including documents, testimonies, and publications, is important for protecting the rights of citizens, investigating offenses, and resolving litigation. The study of verbal aggression in texts makes it possible to identify signs of hate speech, discrimination, and other forms of aggressive speech that can serve as evidence in court. The results of linguistic and legal studies of verbal aggression can be used to improve legislation, in particular to develop more effective rules aimed at combating hate speech, cyberbullying and other manifestations of aggression in speech. Such research contributes to raising public awareness of the problem of verbal aggression and its consequences, and serves as material for creating educational programs aimed at fostering a culture of respect and tolerance.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH. The *purpose* of the article is to analyze the linguistic and legal aspects of verbal aggression with a view to determining its legal consequences as an offense. Realization of this purpose entails the following *tasks*: 1) to define verbal aggression in the legal and linguistic aspects; 2) to analyze the linguistic features of verbal aggression; 3) to find out the specifics of bringing to legal liability for an offense committed verbally; 4) to classify offenses committed verbally. The object of scientific research is verbal aggression as a phenomenon of linguistic and legal analysis, and the subject matter is the linguistic and legal characteristics of verbal aggression.

LITERATURE REVIEW. The study of a verbally committed offense as an interdisciplinary phenomenon takes place at the intersection of linguistics, law, psychology and sociology. Scholars are actively analyzing the issues of legal linguistics (jurisprudence), in particular the peculiarities of its development and functioning (Kechedzhi, 2018), as well as the acquisition of legal and linguistic competence by lawyers (Pradid, 2003).

In the linguistic aspect, a significant contribution to the study of verbal aggression was made by L. Azhniuk (2024b), who examines hate speech, as well as the semantic and pragmatic features of statements that can qualify as offenses. The author focuses on the differentiation of forms of verbal aggression, analyzes its manifestations and identifies lexical and grammatical markers of threats, slander, and discriminatory statements. Verbal aggression as a communicative strategy is the intentional use of language to cause psychological harm to another person; it can manifest itself in various forms: from direct insults to veiled manipulations. A significant contribution to the development of the theory and practice of communicative linguistics was made by Ukrainian linguist F. Batsevykh (2000), who devoted his works to various aspects of communication, in particular, communication strategies. The scientist interprets a communicative strategy as a conscious plan of the speaker to achieve a certain goal in the process of communication, which involves the choice of appropriate speech actions, tactics and means of influence on the interlocutor. The researcher emphasizes that the strategy is a general direction, and tactics are specific steps for its implementation. He distinguishes different types of communication strategies depending on the purpose, context, and participants of communication: these can be strategies of persuasion, influence, conflict, cooperation, etc. The phenomenon of verbal aggression, which is characterized by an open manifestation of the speaker's opposition to the interlocutor and covers all types of speech activities aimed at achieving dominance in the process of communication, was studied in his works by A. Zahnitko (2019).

From a legal point of view, the work of V. Haponchuk (2021), who addresses the issue of criminal liability for crimes committed verbally. Particular attention is paid to international and national legislative initiatives regulating hate speech, public calls for violence and defamation.

In the linguistic aspect, a significant contribution was made by M. Bohoslovska (2009), who studied the methods and principles of forensic linguistic examination, and proposed various

approaches to the analysis of speech acts in the context of law enforcement. In particular, the scholar considered the determination of the speaker's intention, the analysis of the context of the statement and its impact on the audience, the issue of digital communication and its role in the spread of verbal aggression, which creates new challenges for the legal system.

Thus, the current scientific literature demonstrates a multi-vector approach to the study of a verbal offense that combines linguistic and legal analysis. Further research in this area will help to improve the methods of forensic linguistic examination and develop effective legal mechanisms for preventing verbal offenses.

METHODOLOGY. The main research methods are: the method of continuous selection – to identify the linguistic means used to implement verbal aggression in the Ukrainian-language media discourse; the method of observation – for systematic and purposeful perception of the material under study in order to comprehend its properties; the method of intent analysis – to determine the speaker's intentions that form explicit and implicit communicative meanings; the method of pragmatic analysis – to find out the mechanisms of influence of language units on the recipient; the method of discourse analysis – to substantiate the conditionality of the use of certain language units by extralinguistic factors; method of jurisprudential analysis of texts – to identify, interpret and evaluate the linguistic features of texts of legal significance; method of analysis of legislation – to interpret legal norms and clarify the peculiarities of their application; analysis of normative legal acts (in particular, the Criminal Code of Ukraine, the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses) – to study the provisions regulating liability for offenses committed verbally; method of ascent from the abstract to the concrete – to analyze verbal from the general understanding of aggression as a social phenomenon to its speech manifestations that have legal consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The beginning of the twentieth century was a period of rapid technological development, which significantly affected the ways of communication. New platforms emerged that quickly spread and changed the nature of social interaction: forums, blogs, social networks, and telegram channels. The integration of diverse users on these communication platforms is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has a significant impact on modern society. One of the defining characteristics of such interaction is anonymity, which often leads to a violation of communication ethics on the Internet and causes verbal aggression.

Online space is structurally similar to real communication, and various means of communication are found at all levels of interaction. Virtual communication is marked not only by linguistic, cultural and social peculiarities, but also by an emotional component that conveys the feelings and experiences of its participants. In today's society, which is distinctly characterized by social instability, an individual is often focused on satisfying his or her own needs and desires. Such behavior, which is recorded in the comments of Ukrainian-language media discourse, can contribute to the formation of communications that are provocative.

Communicators perform a variety of speech actions aimed at achieving communicative goals using both verbal and non-verbal means, which forms the basis of their communication strategies. As B. Potiatynyk (2004, p. 119), the speech (communicative) strategy is the general intention of the speaker, even a set of speech actions aimed at solving the main communicative goal, reflects the mental plan of communication as a language and the organization of speech in accordance with this plan. The conditions of communication, personal characteristics of the partners, and cultural traditions play an important role. According to O. Semeniuk and V. Parashchuk (2009, p. 22), "in a broad sense, strategy should be understood as a general intention, a task on a global scale, a supertask of language, and in a narrow sense as the result of organizing speech behavior according to a pragmatic guideline". According to F. Batsevych (2000, p. 138), a communicative strategy is "a chain of decisions of the speaker, the choice of certain communicative actions and linguistic means; realization of a set of goals in the structure of communication". Within the framework of a communication strategy, speech and non-verbal influence on the addressee is exercised in order to direct his or her behavior in the direction desired by the addressee. The more important the communication goal is for the initiator of the interaction, the more thorough the analysis of the communication strategy should be. At the same time, the communicator must carefully develop his or her own methods of representing this goal to a specific audience.

Presentational, manipulative and conventional strategies are distinguished by O. Semeniuk and V. Parashchuk (2009, p. 22), emphasizing that "they also differ in the level of openness, symmetry and the way of communication; the presentation type is a passive communication; the manipulative type is an active communication; the conventional type is an interactive communication. Similarly, the main means for their realization are as follows: for presentation – a message,

for manipulation – a message, for convention – a dialogue”.

In the process of studying textual content on the Internet, it becomes obvious that language strategy plays a key role in shaping and organizing the entire communication process, the purpose of which is to achieve a certain long-term result.

Verbal aggression as a communicative strategy is one of the most prominent in Ukrainian-language media discourse, manifested in the intentional use of verbal means to achieve certain goals, often at the expense of the emotional well-being of others. Despite the fact that it is a deviant form of communication, some people use aggression to establish control, manipulate, express anger, frustration, call out, incite, and defend themselves.

Aggression is one of the most expressive strategies, which is especially noticeable in communication. It emphasizes the “friend or foe” antagonism, which in comments reflects not only the conflict between different groups of discourse participants, but also reveals the internal heterogeneity of the online community itself. Those whose position is consistent with the commenter’s views are usually perceived as “their own”, while those who hold alternative opinions are automatically classified as “outsiders”. This distinction often becomes a source of linguistic aggression.

There are several different definitions of the term “verbal (speech) aggression”. In a narrow interpretation, aggression in speech is expressed through a communicative act that replaces physical aggression. It can be an insult (including rude language), mockery, threats, unkind remarks, wishing evil, or categorical demands that ignore generally accepted norms of etiquette. In the broadest sense, verbal aggression encompasses all forms of speech behavior aimed at establishing dominance in communication. It is defined as the speaker’s openly expressed opposition to his interlocutor (Zahnitko, 2019). As emphasized by M. Pejsert (2004, p. 31), “direct verbal aggression is the one that expresses a negative attitude towards a person, realized through the use of derogatory vocabulary and with the use of neutral vocabulary; implicit verbal aggression is directed at the addressee, expressed in the form of speech actions that disgrace and humiliate the authority of the person; aggression not revealed in the content of the message follows from the analysis of the context and situation accompanying the act of speech”. According to A. Buss (1961, p. 25), verbal aggression is “the expression of negative feelings both through the form (quarrel, shouting, screaming) and the content of verbal responses (threats,

curses, swearing)”. The concept of verbal aggression also includes “a form of speech behavior aimed at insulting or intentionally harming a person, group of people, organization or society as a whole” or “verbal rudeness to the interlocutor, which is manifested in harsh, offensive words, including obscenities, swearing, the use of mocking intonations, a sharply negative assessment of the interlocutor, unpleasant hints, rude irony, etc.” (Malysheva, 2024).

Aggression can be manifested through various means of linguistic expression. By studying the comments of linguistic aggressors, it is possible to form the nature of interaction according to the “addressee – addressee” scheme. However, the realization of the pragmatic function is complicated by the anonymity of commentators who hide behind nicknames devoid of any personal information. Under such conditions, the perlocutionary effect, negatively directed at the author of the post or the opponent in the comments, is most often achieved through the use of pronouns. First of all, it is necessary to define the peculiarities of using the *you*-nomination. According to the norms of language etiquette, the pronoun *you* is traditionally used when addressing older people, those who hold a certain position or have a special title, as well as strangers. It serves as a marker of politeness, demonstrating respect on the part of the speaker and emphasizing the formal nature of communication. At the same time, first names without prior agreement are often perceived as a sign of disrespect and even considered rude: “*You hear me, you zabrobud laboratory assistant, you’d better keep quiet*” (Instagram, October 30, 2023). The term “*you-nomination*” is usually used when the author of a comment addresses another reader of the material who expresses opposing views. In such a situation, *you-nomination* signals distancing and marking the opponent as an “outsider”. At the same time, if the interlocutor shares the opinions and assessments of the author of the comment, the use of *vi* nomination is retained, which emphasizes solidarity and respect in communication: “*janna_malinina: How beautifully you let him down! 10 of 10 🍷*” (Instagram, October 29, 2023). In these contexts, the pronoun *you* acts as a kind of markers that outline the boundaries of an acceptable and unacceptable cultural environment. In such situations, the pronoun *you* can acquire a connotative negative coloring within such a contrast. In the sentence “*teacher.aliona: Yura, are you crazy?*” (Instagram, October 29, 2023), we simultaneously record the use of the personal pronoun *you* along with profanity, which reduces the level of respect for the addressee, reinforcing a negative assessment of his or her

position. In some cases, speech aggressors deliberately write the pronoun *you* with a lowercase letter, thus emphasizing their disrespectful attitude towards the interlocutor: *“kyivlianka: You are an asshole. Here’s an opinion about your shitty ‘track’ from a volunteer”* (Instagram, October 29, 2023).

In the context of verbal aggression, we often note the active use of profanity, which is openly abusive. Usually, such linguistic units are modified to somewhat disguise their original form, but the semantic essence of the word remains clear to the recipient. To achieve this goal, individual letters are often replaced with symbols or graphemes of the Latin alphabet, which ensures the recognition of the content while partially veiling its verbal design: *“Let him kiss the Ukrainians in the s@ck! We don’t care about his neo-fascist greeting!”*; *“We need them to xy@ry you faster”* (Tabloid.pravda, May 9, 2022). This graphic technique is used to avoid problems with blocking accounts due to the use of foul language. In addition, this design of well-recognizable language elements significantly attracts additional attention of the audience.

There are a number of different formal features that can be used to identify direct calls or incitement to commit genocide (Article 442 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (hereinafter – the CC of Ukraine)¹) or other crimes as a manifestation of verbal aggression. Among the main markers that contribute to the identification of such speech constructions are the following:

1) verbs such as *eradicate, destroy, eliminate, prohibit, kill, call for, demand*, etc., if they are used in the context of statements that contain incitement or incitement to actions that may be qualified as genocide or other crimes: *“@tanicca22: only religious fanatics can be banned from same-sex marriage, and everyone else can be allowed to marry. I think this option will suit everyone”* (Instagram, October 11, 2023); *“tetianaboretska: When will they be allowed to shoot them on the spot?”* (Instagram, February 17, 2023);

2) statements that have modal features convey the author’s individual attitude to the calls or proposals made by him/her. In such cases, the author uses language to demonstrate a personal view, assessment, or level of confidence in the necessity or desirability of certain actions: *“uiiiuu641: God, it’s disgusting. Minefields need to be cleared with her face”* (Instagram, May 12, 2025);

3) the use of linguistic constructions containing euphemisms such as *liberate, denazify or*

purge, which actually mean actions such as murder, repression or other forms of violence, becomes a tool for manipulation and justification of violent actions. In particular, in the case of statements calling for the illegal appropriation of territories or the total or partial destruction of certain national, ethnic or other social groups, such lexical forms function as a means of concealing the real nature of such actions. Particular emphasis is also placed on the use of repressive measures against so-called political figures, which may indicate an attempt to disguise punitive policies as political expediency or necessity. In this sense, language becomes not only a means of communication, but also a tool for legitimizing violence and violations of fundamental human rights: *“@kuroneko9710: How to denationalize Russia? Quite simply: with thermonuclear weapons. Other methods will not work”* (YouTube, April 3, 2023); *“Tadeusz Olech: Nazi evil must be punished, Nazis must answer, must be denazified”* (Ukrainska Pravda, August 15, 2024);

4) the use of metaphors to replace statements that call for violent actions, including murder and other actions that may have signs of genocide or other crimes, for example: *“alenka_alekseevna1017: How fucked up is she? kill her somebody!”* (Instagram, February 12, 2025); *“Oksanapiastuk: It’s contagious! A stump to the Russians!”* (Instagram, February 12, 2025);

5) the use of periphrases, for example: *“Kate-rina Grabovskaya: You bald headed shit, follow the Russian warship! We don’t need people like you!”* (Facebook, February 1, 2025); *“Irina: Let Trump and Putin follow the Russian ship!!!”* (Telegram, March 1, 2025).

The psycholinguistic aspect, in particular the concept of internal speech, plays an important role in the definition of verbal offenses. Language is not a separate category from thinking, but rather is directly included in the process of thought formation. This is confirmed by the theory of the speech-thinking process, which emphasizes the interconnection of the cognitive and communicative functions of language. Modern psycholinguists define meaning as a cognitive mechanism for processing experience, a compromise between linguistic units and thought structures, which is directly related to the category of internal speech (Koval, 2021).

The analysis of legal approaches to the distinction of verbal offenses indicates their opposition to non-verbal forms of offenses. The term “verbal” comes from the Latin *verbalis* and means verbal, linguistic, related to speech. It is used in such well-established phrases as verbal communication, verbal aggression, and verbal communication. In the context of legal linguistic examinations,

¹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. (2001). *Criminal Code of Ukraine* (Law No. 2341-III). <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14>.

the concepts of “text” and “discourse” are often used, which emphasizes the importance of analyzing speech activity with regard to communicative, socio cultural and cognitive factors. Offenses committed through speech activities must contain signs of aggressive behavior. It is speech aggression that is a key criterion for assessing the social danger of such offenses (Haponchuk, 2021; Albot, 2019).

Scholars emphasize that verbality, on the one hand, is an action (active, conscious, socially dangerous, harmful, unlawful behavior of a subject) as an objective side of an offense. Depending on the nature of the impact on the object of the offense, all actions are divided into physical and informational. Informational actions involve the transfer of information to other persons and are always realized in verbal form. It is with the help of such actions that verbal offenses are committed, including death threats, extortion and other offenses that involve influence on the victim through speech (Baulin et al., 2010).

On the other hand, verbalization is an optional feature of the objective side of the offense as a method of commission (Haponchuk, 2021). However, in some articles of the codes, this feature is explicitly stated and acquires the status of mandatory. In such cases, the absence of verbal expression means the absence of the objective side of the crime, and therefore the corpus delicti as a basis for legal liability (Baulin et al., 2010).

Undoubtedly, not every manifestation of verbal aggression becomes an offense. Acts that do not directly signal danger, but may be a background aspect of crime, remain outside the law. For example, Ukrainian law criminalizes insult and slander. Dictionaries contain many definitions of the term “insult”, in particular: “1. Disrespectful statement, ugly act, etc. directed against someone and causing him/her a feeling of bitterness, emotional pain. 2. A feeling of bitterness, annoyance caused by someone’s disparaging word, ugly act, etc. 3. *jur.* A crime consisting of intentional humiliation of the honor and dignity of a person” (Bysel, 2005, p. 815). The same dictionary defines the term “slander” as “a lie spread with the intent to defame, disgrace, or tarnish someone or something; the dissemination of false information” (Bysel, 2005, p. 719). The systematic resolution of conflicts through threats, insults and slander, especially in the virtual space, leads to the desocialization of a person, and the lack of an appropriate response from society and law enforcement agencies creates a sense of impunity in a person, which, in turn, can lead to more dangerous actions.

The definition of verbal aggression in the legal field is a complex issue, as it concerns the bal-

ance between freedom of speech and the protection of personal rights. In legal practice, verbal aggression is considered a form of psychological violence that can have serious consequences for the victim.

Verbal aggression is a serious not only social but also legal problem that can have significant consequences for an individual, a group of individuals or society as a whole. In many cases, it remains in the realm of ethical condemnation, but under certain conditions it can qualify as an administrative or criminal offense, which in the national legal literature is referred to as an “offense (crime) committed verbally” (Haponchuk, 2021), while emphasizing that this term, rather than “verbal offense (crime)”, more accurately conveys the verbal nature of offenses and allows them to be associated not with the category of criminal act in general, but with a specific case of violation of the law.

According to N. Savinova (2014), the allocation of criminal offenses committed verbally is due to their specific information impact on the object of criminal legal protection. Such offenses pose an increased public danger, since in modern conditions information influences are of particular importance – as the basis of remote communications, they can serve as a means of psychological preparation of the information-vulnerable population for further real actions.

In this context, the term “verbal offense” is a relatively new and still unfamiliar concept for the general public, which is used to refer to destructive forms of speech behavior. Unlike more established terms such as “verbal aggression”, “hate speech” and “political incorrectness”, which are studied within the framework of pragmalinguistics, sociolinguistics and language policy (Azhniuk, 2024a, p. 311), the concepts of “verbal offense” and “verbal crime” belong to the terminological apparatus of legal linguistics and linguistic expertise.

The identification of offenses committed verbally is directly related to the development of jurisprudence, an applied scientific discipline that studies the peculiarities of legal speech and the effective use of language in its various functional forms and genres. One of the areas of this discipline is the expert analysis of conflict texts, which allows us to determine their legal significance. Recently, linguistic expertise has been actively developing within legal linguistics. Linguistic expertise is a specialized linguistic study of textual materials and other linguistic objects in order to determine their legal significance. A statement made orally or in writing under certain circumstances may be considered as an action that entails legal consequences. The main subject of linguistic

expertise is the text in the context of the relevant discourse, communicative norms, their variations and legally significant deviations from established practices (Pradid, 2003; Kechedzhi, 2018).

Any form of verbal aggression is qualified as an offense only if certain communicative conditions and pragmatic factors are present. This occurs when the statements, by their linguistic and pragmatic features, meet the definition of the concept of “offense committed verbally” as provided for by the Criminal Code of Ukraine and the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences (hereinafter – the CAO).

The term “offense committed verbally” has not yet been clearly defined either in law or in linguistics. The absence of its systematic consolidation in the legal field is explained by the fact that the verbal factor is an objective aspect of various offenses.

It is worth noting that the generally accepted understanding of an offense is an unlawful, culpable and socially harmful (socially dangerous) act (action or inaction) of a person with legal capacity that entails legally defined negative consequences for the offender. Its social significance is determined by the fact that such behavior is dangerous for society, as it violates established legal relations and infringes on the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of subjects. The damage caused by an offense may be of a different nature, both material and moral, depending on the consequences of the unlawful act and its public assessment. Determining the degree of public harm or danger of an offense is based on several criteria, including the significance of the legal relationship that was the object of the encroachment, the amount of damage caused, the manner, time and place of the act, and the identity of the offender. Particular attention should be paid to the method of committing the offense, in particular, whether it posed a threat to others or was committed in a generally dangerous manner (Tsvik et al., 2009).

Taking into account the theory of criminal or administrative law, it should be emphasized that, like any other offense, a verbal offense is characterized by a certain composition, i.e., a set of objective and subjective features provided for by law that determine the existence of legal liability of the perpetrator – the object, objective side, subject and subjective side of the offense.

Analyzing the provisions of the CC of Ukraine and the CAO, it should be noted that the object of a verbal offense is a legally protected social relationship that is subject to unlawful information influence. Depending on the nature of the statements and their content, such objects may include human rights, freedoms and dignity, including

honor, reputation and privacy; public order and security, including public peace, moral foundations of society and protection against disinformation political and national security, including information security of the state, prohibition of calls for violence, terrorism or incitement to hatred; property, in the case of extortion or fraud through manipulative statements; and interests of justice, which may be violated by threats, pressure on the court or investigation or false testimony. Thus, the object of a verbal offense is determined by the content and direction of the information impact, as well as the potential harm that may be caused to the relevant social relations.

Describing the objective side of a verbal offense, scholars note that it is constituted by actions as a form of active speech behavior of the offender, i.e. human behavior expressed in an objective form. Neither thoughts nor intentions or desires that have not received external expression and have not led to a socially dangerous act can be considered a crime (Haponchuk, 2021; Brych, 2013).

Offenses committed by means of speech are on the verge of being punished for an act and restricting freedom of thought and expression. That is why a clear categorization of such offenses is necessary. If we consider language from the perspective of the activity approach, it should be recognized as a system of speech actions that perform a communicative function. Accordingly, speech activity in offenses can be presented not only as a way of committing them, but also as a factor accompanying the offense.

The subject of an offense committed verbally is a natural person of sound mind who has reached the legal age of responsibility and is aware of the nature of his or her actions. In some cases, the subject may be a special person with a certain status or authority, such as an official, journalist or public figure whose communication activities have a significant impact on society.

The key characteristics of the subject are their ability to understand the content and consequences of their own statements, awareness of the socially dangerous nature of the act, and the presence of direct intent or, in some cases, negligence. Since a verbal offense is committed through speech, written or media forms of communication, the perpetrator may be any person who uses these means to disseminate unlawful information, in particular through public speeches, social networks, the press or other information platforms. Thus, the subject of a verbal offense is a person capable of bearing legal responsibility for his or her own statements and their impact on public relations.

The subjective side of an offense committed verbally is characterized by the presence of direct intent. Scientists note that the relevant corpus delicti of an offense implies that a person is aware of the socially dangerous nature of his or her own actions (intellectual feature) and his or her desire to commit this act (volitional feature). Since the subjective side of any offense is assessed through its objective features, in order to find a person guilty of an offense committed verbally, it is necessary to establish that he or she was aware of all its objective characteristics, including the content of the statements, the manner and consequences of their dissemination. In addition, it is important to prove that the person understood the social danger of his or her actions and purposefully committed them, which is a key sign of direct intent.

To summarize, we propose to understand a verbal offense as a socially harmful (socially dangerous) act committed through communication activities.

In Ukrainian law, legal liability for aggressive speech acts is provided for in the CC of Ukraine and the CAO. The study of offenses is usually carried out in accordance with the articles of the CC of Ukraine – “Threat of murder” (Article 129), “Threat of destruction of property” (Article 195), “Calls for actions that threaten public order” (Article 295)¹, and the CAO – “Committing domestic violence” (Article 173-2), “Bullying (harassment) of a participant in the educational process” (Article 173-4), “Mobbing (harassment) of an employee” (Article 173-5), “Committing gender-based violence” (Article 173-6), “Sexual harassment” (Article 173-7)², but much less often they use interdisciplinary approaches that allow combining offenses according to their semantic model.

Verbal offenses can be classified according to various criteria. According to the legal nature and object of the offense, there are the following offenses committed verbally: against life and health of a person; against the will, honor and dignity of a person; against sexual freedom and sexual inviolability of a person; against public safety, etc.

Taking into account the semantic and legal categorization, offenses committed verbally can be grouped into general categories, including: public calls (for aggressive war, violent change or overthrow of the constitutional order), insult (to the honor and dignity of a serviceman), threats

(to a serviceman, murder), disclosure (of information, medical secrecy), misleading (of a court or other authorized body), extortion (of weapons, drugs).

The content and functional orientation of a speech offense allows us to distinguish four main types of speech situations that can be qualified as verbal offenses: verbal violence or verbal aggression (insult, death threats, extortion, driving a person to suicide, foul language, humiliation, threats, public disrespect or insulting statements against civil servants, judges, law enforcement officers) illegal information (illegal collection, receipt or disclosure of information, public appeals, incitement to hatred); false information (slander, knowingly false report of a crime, knowingly false testimony); information with low motives accompanying a crime (threats of murder or harm to health for certain reasons, discrimination).

CONCLUSIONS. Thus, verbal aggression is a serious problem that requires a comprehensive approach that lies at the intersection of linguistics and law. Its legal definition and regulation is a difficult but necessary task, as it requires a clear distinction between freedom of speech and an offense. Verbal aggression can cause no less harm than physical violence, as it affects a person’s psyche, emotional state and self-esteem. It can have long-term consequences, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.

The definition of verbal aggression in the legal field is complicated by the need to take into account the intent of the aggressor, the form of expression of aggression, the contexts in which it was expressed, the consequences for the victim, and the specifics of bringing to legal responsibility for unlawful communication actions. In certain cases, it goes beyond ethical condemnation and is qualified as an administrative or criminal offense. The term “offense committed verbally” emphasizes the specificity of speech actions that may pose a threat to public relations. The information influence exerted through language has considerable power, especially in modern society, where communication technologies facilitate the rapid spread of aggressive speech.

Legal linguistics plays an important role in identifying and qualifying offenses committed verbally. Linguistic expertise allows us to determine whether a particular statement contains signs of an offense by assessing its content, context and possible consequences. At the same time, Ukrainian legislation provides for liability for such acts in the CC of Ukraine and the CAO, but the problem is the lack of a clear definition of the concept of “offense committed verbally”, which complicates its enforcement.

¹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. (2001). *Criminal Code of Ukraine* (Law No. 2341-III). <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14>.

² Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. (1984). *Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences* (Law No. 8073-X). <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/80731-10>.

The corpus delicti of an offense committed verbally includes an object, a subject, objective and subjective parties. The key aspect is the person's awareness of the socially dangerous nature of their actions. Since speech is a form of activity that affects social relations, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between freedom of speech and offenses. It is important to further develop interdisciplinary approaches to the analysis of such acts, which will allow for more effective regulation of verbal aggression in the legal sphere.

It is important to distinguish between ordinary offensive statements and those that have signs of systematic harassment, persecution or threats for which a person is legally liable. A lin-

guistic examination can help establish the presence and nature of verbal aggression, as well as the intent of the aggressor. It makes it possible to analyze the language used to express aggression and its impact on the victim. We believe it is necessary to develop a clear legislative regulation of verbal aggression that would take into account its specifics, ensure the protection of victims' rights and provide for the aggressor's legal liability. It is also important to educate the public about the inadmissibility of verbal aggression and its consequences, as well as to develop methods of countering verbal aggression that would include both legal and linguistic tools.

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ВЕРБАЛЬНА АГРЕСІЯ: ЛІНГВІСТИЧНО-ПРАВОВИЙ АСПЕКТ

Досліджено феномен вербальної агресії як лінгвістично-правову проблему, яку за певних умов можна кваліфікувати як адміністративне або кримінальне правопорушення. Вербальну агресію визначено як свідому комунікативну стратегію, спрямовану на досягнення певних цілей шляхом використання мовних засобів. Охарактеризовано теоретичні аспекти комунікативних стратегій. Проаналізовано основні характеристики, форми прояву та наслідки вербальної агресії в контексті міжособистісного спілкування. Розглянуто різновиди вербальної агресії, зокрема образи, погрози, критику, іронію, маніпуляції та ігнорування.

Особливу увагу приділено аналізу мовних засобів, що використовуються для реалізації вербальної агресії як комунікативної стратегії. Визначено лексичні, синтаксичні та стилістичні особливості агресивних висловлювань, а також їхній вплив на емоційний стан співрозмовника.

Розглянуто термін «правопорушення, вчинене вербально» у контексті юридичної лінгвістики, наголошено на його відмінності від більш усталених понять, таких як «мова ворожнечі» чи «вербальна агресія». Зазначено, що розвиток юридичної лінгвістики сприяє детальному аналізу мовленнєвих дій, які можуть мати юридичне значення.

Основну увагу зосереджено на характеристиці правопорушень, учинених вербально, через аналіз елементів їх правової кваліфікації, зокрема об'єкта, об'єктивної сторони, суб'єкта та суб'єктивної сторони. Розглянуто їхню суспільну небезпеку, що пов'язана з інформаційним впливом на суспільні відносини, зокрема на права особи, громадський порядок, державну безпеку та інтереси правосуддя. Проаналізовано лінгвістичну експертизу як важливий інструмент для встановлення юридично значущих висловлювань.

Висвітлено питання нормативного закріплення правопорушень, учинених вербально, у кримінальному та адміністративному законодавстві України. Наведено приклади статей Кримінального кодексу України та Кодексу України про адміністративні правопорушення, які регулюють відповідальність за агресивні мовленнєві акти, зокрема погрози, цькування та заклики до вчинення правопорушень. Зазначено, що важливим аспектом правозастосування є врахування контексту висловлювань, їхнього змісту та можливих наслідків.

Наголошено на необхідності подальшого розвитку міждисциплінарних підходів до аналізу правопорушень, учинених вербально, що дасть змогу ефективніше класифікувати такі діяння за їхньою смисловою моделлю. Акцентовано на потребі системного закріплення поняття «правопорушення, учинене вербально» у правовій та науковій доктрині задля забезпечення адекватної юридичної оцінки подібних явищ.

Ключові слова: вербальна агресія, юридична лінгвістика, злочин, правопорушення, насильство, цькування, юридична відповідальність.

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