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THE FUNCTION OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SONG LYRICS BY UKRAINIAN ARTISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR

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ФУНКЦІЯ СТИЛІСТИЧНИХ ЗАСОБІВ В АНГЛОМОВНИХ СУЧАСНИХ ПІСЕННИХ ТЕКСТАХ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ВИКОНАВЦІВ У КОНТЕКСТІ ВІЙНИ

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This study explores the usage of stylistic devices in English-language songs performed by contemporary Ukrainian artists with special consideration given to the the impact of war. Due to the provided analysis of metaphors, repetitions, imagery, antithesis, apostrophe, and hyperbole, the paper shows how these elements convey grief, resilience, hope, and national identity. Songs by Jamala, KAZKA, KALUSH, The Hardkiss, TVORCHI, BANDERA 3000, and SHADU illustrate how English lyrics help Ukrainian musicians reach international audiences and turn personal and collective experiences into powerful messages of solidarity.

Keywords: *stylistic devices, war lyrics, Ukrainian music, English-language songs, cultural communication.*

У дослідженні представлено використання стилістичних прийомів в англомовних піснях, виконаних сучасними українськими співаками. Особливу увагу зосереджено на реалізації впливу війни. Завдяки аналізу метафори, повтору, образності, антитези, апострофи та гіперболи у статті показано, як ні зазначені елементи передають горе, стійкість, надію та національну ідентичність. Пісні виконавців Jamala, KAZKA, KALUSH, The Hardkiss, TVORCHI, BANDERA 3000 та SHADU демонструють, як англомовні тексти

допомагають українським музикантам привернути увагу міжнародної аудиторії та перетворити особистий і колективний досвід на ~~суттєві~~ потужні звернення громадської єдності.

Ключові слова: *стилістичні засоби, воєнні пісні, українська музика, англомовні пісні, культурна комунікація.*

Problem Statement in the Context of Modern Philological Science. The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has reshaped Ukrainian culture and public discourse, making music a key medium of emotional expression and communication. While stylistic devices in Ukrainian-language war poetry have been widely studied, the growing use of English-language lyrics by Ukrainian artists remains insufficiently examined. Singing in English is a strategic way to reach global audiences with messages of resilience, grief, and solidarity, which requires modern stylistics to analyse how these devices function outside the native cultural context and how wartime conditions intensify their expressive power. For this reason, the core problem lies in the lack of systematic research on English-language wartime songs by Ukrainian performers and the effectiveness with which they communicate meaning internationally.

Objectives. The article aims to analyse English-language war-related songs by Jamala, KAZKA, KALUSH, The Hardkiss, TVORCHI, BANDERA 3000, and SHADU. The objectives are to identify key stylistic devices, explain how they express ideas of war and identity, and determine how the wartime context shapes their emotional and semantic impact.

Analysis of Recent Studies and Publications. Recent studies demonstrate that song lyrics play a crucial role in expressing emotions, national identity, and collective memory during war. Scholars describe music as a type of artistic text that fuses emotional, cultural, and symbolic meanings. Western researchers note that wartime songs frequently employ metaphors, allusions, and symbolic images. According to M. P. Barman, "*war changes the emotional meaning of stylistic devices*," making them more powerful (Barman, 2019). D. Chen argues that lyrics function as "*a cultural message that reflects the experience of a community*" (Chen, 2024). Social factors also matter, i.e., I. Ramadani views music as "*a tool of unity and communication in crisis*" (Ramadani, 2017), while M. A. Flynn observes that artists use English to reach international listeners and help them understand local events (Flynn, 2016).

Ukrainian studies support this view with particular wartime examples. L. Harmash writes that songs "*motivate, inspire confidence, give strength to fight, unite people*" and act as "*a powerful weapon*" (Harmash, 2023). She shows how pre-war folk images take on new meanings, — for instance, "*In the meadow, there's a red viburnum / That has bent down low*" becomes a symbol of suffering and hope (Harmash, 2023). H. S. Tortop and G. Ghvinjilia emphasize transcultural communication: music "*fosters international solidarity*," forming "*cultural solidarity*" and "*global connection*" (Tortop & Ghvinjilia, 2024). Musicians note: "*We generally feel obliged to act … our voice could be heard by millions*," and the scholars stress that "*these songs have the war as their main topic, but … do not necessarily depict literally the combat*" (Tortop, 2024).

Linguistic research highlights the role of rhetorical oppositions, such as the "*own — other*" dichotomy, which functions as a strong expressive marker in political and cultural discourse. On the whole, scholars agree that wartime lyrics intensify the emotional effect of stylistic devices and turn short poetic lines into symbols of identity, while English-language texts broaden international reach. However, the functioning of these devices in contemporary English-language Ukrainian wartime lyrics remains insufficiently examined — a gap this study aims to address.

Presentation of the Main Research Material: Through their English lyrics, Ukrainian musicians convey the realities of war, blending individual stories, collective memory, and cultural identity into works that engage audiences worldwide.

Jamala's "Thank You, Stranger" (2022) is a moving illustration of personal experience transposed into a universal message of gratitude and human solidarity. Jamala, a Crimean Tatar singer who won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2016 with the politically charged song "1944", has consistently integrated her cultural heritage and personal history into her music. In *Thank You, Stranger*, metaphor and imagery are prominent; the phrase "*while the sky's on fire*" vividly conveys the chaos and destruction surrounding displaced populations, while "*neighbors became family since they took part*" transforms ordinary human interactions into symbolic gestures of support and empathy. Repetition in the anaphora "*Thank you, stranger / Thank you, stranger / for being close to me*" emphasizes the emotional significance of assistance and fosters a sense of collective resilience. Words such as "*dear friend*" and the plea "*Be close when I'm crying*" further evoke deep empathy, showing how ordinary social acts acquire poetic and symbolic significance during crises. Through these devices, Jamala effectively communicates the human dimension of war while making the song emotionally accessible to an international audience.

KAZKA's "I Am Not OK" (2022) gives listeners a vivid and personal view of how war affects people's minds and emotions, using English-language lyrics to make the experience accessible internationally. KAZKA, a Ukrainian pop and electronic band founded in 2017, gained worldwide recognition with their hit "Plakala", blending modern music with Ukrainian cultural elements. In this song, the recurring chorus "*No I am not okay / It's 4 in the morning / And I'm wide awake*" emphasizes persistent anxiety and insomnia, allowing listeners to feel the singer's ongoing fear and tension. Hyperbolic expressions like "*Grateful for the fact / That I still see your face*" highlight the extreme value of small moments of safety and human connection during crisis. The simple phrase "*Take it day by day*" offers clear guidance and hope, suggesting that even in difficult times, gradual progress is possible. Through repetition and emotionally resonant language, the song communicates both the personal psychological impact of war and a universal message of endurance, stress, and hope, helping audiences worldwide connect with the lived experience of Ukrainian people.

KALUSH, a Ukrainian hip-hop group formed in 2019, gained international attention after winning Eurovision 2022 with "Stefania", blending modern rap and folk motifs. Their English-language songs "Changes" (2023) and "In the Shadows of Ukraine" (2022) convey Ukrainian wartime experiences globally. In Changes, antithesis ("*No we can't change the weather / But we can change our hearts*") contrasts uncontrollable forces with personal agency, while the metaphor "*Break the curse and threaded the needle*" shows effort to overcome challenges. Apostrophe and imagery, like "*Pray to the gods of good and evil*" and planting flowers, symbolize ethical struggle, hope, and resilience. In "In the Shadows of Ukraine", "*No sleep until I'm done with finding the answer*" reflects vigilance and determination. KALUSH combines individual and collective experiences, highlighting Ukrainian resilience and identity in war.

The Hardkiss is a Ukrainian rock band formed in 2011 by singer Julia Sanina and musician-producer Valeriy Bebko. Known for combining rock, electronic, and symphonic elements with striking visual aesthetics, the band often explores themes of personal and collective experience. Their song "Festival" (2023) focuses on turning pain and trauma into hope and celebration. The lyrics use metaphor to transform destruction into beauty, as in "*Bombshells into fireworks / Bullets into raindrops*," showing how violence and suffering can be reimagined as creative energy. Repetition reinforces rhythm and emotional strength, while apostrophe and direct address in "*Oh*

my God / Hear me tonight" create a connection with a spiritual or communal witness, blending personal grief with collective hope. The line "*Our pain into my songs / I wanna feel this world as festival*" highlights music's role as both catharsis and cultural communication, turning shared suffering into artistic expression and connecting people emotionally. Overall, "Festival" conveys resilience, the power of art to transform trauma, and the importance of solidarity during difficult times.

TVORCHI is a Ukrainian electronic music duo formed in 2017 by vocalist Andrii Hutsuliak and producer Jimoh Augustus. Known for blending electronic, pop, and experimental sounds, the duo often explores themes of personal empowerment and social consciousness. In their song "Heart of Steel" (2022), TVORCHI conveys inner strength and courage, emphasizing resilience in the face of challenges. The titular metaphor, "*Heart of steel*," epitomizes steadfastness and bravery, functioning as a memorable symbol of both personal and collective defiance. Antithesis in lines such as "*Don't care what you say / Or how you feel / Get out of my way*" highlights the tension between external pressures and internal resolve, while imperative verbs reinforce agency and determination. The song encourages listeners to remain strong, confident, and active, transforming emotional or external pressure into motivation, making it a universally resonant statement of perseverance.

BANDERA 3000 is a Ukrainian music project known for combining hip-hop, electronic, and patriotic themes, often addressing historical memory and contemporary socio-political issues. In their song 'Holy War" (2022), the group presents an explicitly political and historically grounded perspective. The lyrics, "*Ancestors used to be the slaves / We'll never let you turn it back*," draw a direct line between past oppression and present struggle, invoking moral and historical responsibility. The metaphorical framing of the conflict as a "*holy war*" elevates the struggle to an existential and symbolic dimension. Repetition and direct address, particularly in the lines "*They bomb our homes / How do you ignore? / Hey world,*" create rhetorical urgency, engaging listeners globally and demanding accountability. Hyperbolic epithets, such as "*ugly asses without any regret,*" amplify the emotional intensity and moral stakes of the song, transforming lyrical narrative into a call for international attention and solidarity.

SHADU's "Stand With Ukraine" (2022) employs a similar strategy of engagement through metaphor, direct address, and imperatives. Rhetorical questions like "*Can you hear us? We can reach the sky / We're gonna fly*" symbolize freedom, resilience, and the collective aspiration of Ukrainians under siege. The repetition of lines such as "*Maybe we're born and don't just do right / Taking every step, getting harder*" emphasizes perseverance and continuous effort, while imperatives like "*Hold it out tonight / We'll ignite*" operate as calls to action and mobilization. These devices foster a direct connection between performers and global audiences, transforming the personal narrative of struggle into a universally accessible message of defiance and hope. The song gains additional weight considering Shadu's real-life experience: in 2022, while promoting her music in Moldova, she was physically attacked by a pro-Russian woman who spilled coffee on her and shouted pro-Russian slogans. This incident highlights the personal risks she faces for standing publicly with Ukraine and underscores the authenticity of her lyrics, turning Stand With Ukraine into both a musical and real-world statement of resilience, defiance, and courage.

Across these works, clear patterns emerge: metaphors and imagery convey war experiences symbolically, repetition reinforces grief and resilience, direct address and rhetorical questions engage global audiences, and culturally anchored phrases maintain national identity. Songs like "Holy War" and "Stand With Ukraine" show how English lyrics communicate urgency, historical

memory, and collective resistance, turning music into a tool of cultural diplomacy and global solidarity.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research. Contemporary English-language songs performed by Ukrainian artists employ diverse stylistic devices, namely metaphor, repetition, apostrophe, antithesis, and hyperbole to convey the emotional, psychological, and cultural effects of war. Metaphors and imagery symbolize personal and national experiences, repetition emphasizes resilience and solidarity, and direct address engages international audiences. These devices turn music into a tool of cultural diplomacy and global solidarity, while further research could compare English- and Ukrainian-language war songs and their role in crisis communication and national identity.

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