

## Mapping Emotional Meaning in Instapoetry: A Plutchikian Semantic Analysis

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**Abstract.** This study analyzes the semantic construction of emotional meanings in instapoetry through vocabulary selection, utilizing Robert Plutchik's framework. Although instapoetry is often regarded as simplistic because of its conciseness, this study contends that it employs intricate emotive frameworks through meticulously chosen linguistic elements. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive methodology, the study examines lexical items and expressions in chosen instapoetry pieces, categorizing them according to Plutchik's emotional model. The results indicate that emotional meanings are methodically structured, with anger constituting the predominant category (32.6%), succeeded by sadness (21.7%) and disgust (15.2%). In contrast, positive emotions like joy are scarcely represented, and surprise is entirely absent. These emotional patterns are created by linguistic tools such as repetition, negation, and contrast, which help make affective meaning stronger and more organized. The study also demonstrates that emotional categories interact dynamically and provide a clear path from vulnerability to resistance and empowerment. This research enhances the synthesis of semantic analysis and emotion theory by illustrating that emotional significance in instapoetry is not only conveyed but also actively generated through language. It emphasizes the analytical capacity of short-form digital poetry and offers a framework for investigating emotive meaning within current digital literary environments.

**Keywords:** affective meaning; emotional trajectory; instapoetry; plutchik emotion; semantic analysis

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Social media has grown so quickly that it has changed how literary works are made, shared, and read. This has led to new forms of digital expression, such as instapoetry. Instapoetry has become a popular way to share poetry in today's digital culture. It is short, easy to understand, and easy to find. Even though instapoetry is short, it can nevertheless express complex emotions very well. This shows that brevity does not take away from meaning; instead, it makes it stronger through careful word choice (Kovalik & Curwood, 2019; Murray, 2018). This circumstance signifies that even the most basic textual forms can harbor profound layers of meaning, meriting extensive linguistic examination.

Emotion is a key part of poetic discourse, helping poets share their experiences and engage readers. Instapoetry, unlike larger literary genres, uses a small number of words to evoke emotional responses; every word choice is very important. Because of this compression, poets have to use words that carry literal, symbolic, and emotional meanings simultaneously. Consequently, comprehending the role of emotional meaning in instapoetry requires more than a superficial interpretation; it demands an analytical framework that examines how meaning is constructed through language at the semantic level. This methodology enables researchers to transcend impressionistic analysis and get a more methodical comprehension of affective meaning.

This study uses Robert Plutchik's framework, which categorizes emotions into eight major groups arranged in opposing pairs, to systematically investigate emotional meaning (Plutchik, 1980). This psychoevolutionary viewpoint underscores that emotions are not discrete occurrences but rather exist (Mohammad & Turney, 2013)(Murray, 2018)(Kovalik, K., & Curwood, 2019)within dynamic interrelations and fluctuating intensities.

Further work on the model shows that emotions are both gradual and combinatorial, making it easier to understand the emotional content of texts in greater detail (Plutchik, 2001). This organized way of looking at emotions is a strong base for figuring out how small emotional changes are expressed in short poetic language.

Semantic analysis offers a methodological framework for investigating the construction of meaning through linguistic choices and emotional context. Semantic analysis examines how meaning arises from the interplay among lexical items, context, and symbolic associations, rather than treating words as having immutable meanings (Leech, 2020), 1981; Simpson, 2004). This method is especially crucial in short-form digital poetry, where content is often concise and hidden, so readers must infer the emotional meaning from carefully chosen words. Semantic analysis facilitates a more in-depth exploration of the active construction of meaning rather than its passive representation.

While prior studies have recognized the emotional influence of instapoetry and examined emotion in language more generally, these research avenues remain predominantly unconnected. Studies on instapoetry usually focus on its digital and cultural aspects, such as how readers interact with it and how the platform works (Kovalik & Curwood, 2019; Murray, 2018). On the other hand, studies on emotion in language usually focus on either identifying categories or mapping large amounts of words (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Discourse-oriented techniques offer insights into evaluative meaning, albeit they are generally utilized for longer texts. This division of viewpoints constrains a thorough understanding of the construction of emotional meaning in short-form poetry. This gap underscores the necessity for a more concentrated examination of the linguistic mechanisms that facilitate emotional expression in instapoetry. There is a lack of research on how word choice serves as a mechanism for creating emotional significance within a structured emotional framework. To improve our understanding of how digital poetry functions as a form of emotional communication, we need to fill this gap. By focusing on the interplay between language and emotion, the study can make a more precise analytical contribution.

This study examines the semantic construction of emotional meanings through language selection in instapoetry, grounded in Plutchik's wheel of emotions. This research aims to offer a more profound and nuanced understanding of how concise digital poetry encodes intricate affective experiences by integrating semantic analysis with a structured model of emotion, thereby contributing to both linguistic and literary studies within the framework of contemporary digital discourse. In this way, the study puts itself at the crossroads of language, emotion, and digital innovation.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Recent research on instapoetry has mostly examined how it fits within digital literature, particularly with respect to accessibility, multimodality, and audience engagement. Research by Kovalik and Curwood (2019) underscores how instapoetry cultivates emotional resonance through its succinct,

visually focused structure, whilst Murray (2018) and (Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, 2020) et al. (2020) contextualize it within the broader shifts in literary production influenced by social media platforms. Recent discourse (e.g., (Ohlsson, 2021)sson, 2021) further delineates instapoetry as a mode of digital creation that emphasizes immediacy and emotional resonance. Even with these contributions, the emphasis continues to be on reader reception and platform dynamics, resulting in a relative neglect of the internal language creation of emotional meaning.

Investigations of emotion in language have evolved through two principal avenues: lexicon-based methodologies and discourse-focused examinations. Lexicon-based studies, especially Mohammad and Turney (2013), offer systematic correlations between words and emotional categories, facilitating extensive discovery of affective patterns. Bednarek (2008) complementary work further illustrates how emotional meaning can be identified across corpora via repeating linguistic patterns. Nevertheless, these methodologies often treat emotional meaning as relatively fixed and intrinsic to individual lexical units, neglecting the dynamic construction of meaning through contextual and combinatory linguistic choices, particularly in brief, highly condensed works like instapoetry.

Discourse-oriented frameworks provide a more contextually attuned view of the production of emotional meaning. Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) and evaluative techniques (Hunston & Thompson, 2000) elucidate how attitudes, judgments, and interpersonal standing are encoded in discourse. Simultaneously, stylistic methods underscore that meaning is not solely embedded in individual words but arises from systematic linguistic selections and their interplay with context (Simpson, 2004; Jeffries, L., & McIntyre, 2010). Building on this viewpoint, Burke (2016) contends that stylistic analysis facilitates a deeper understanding of readers' textual experiences by linking linguistic form to cognitive and emotional processes. This broader perspective supports the idea that language actively creates emotional meaning rather than merely holding it. Nonetheless, these methodologies are predominantly used for longer, more complex texts, suggesting they inadequately capture the condensed, intensified meaning-making processes inherent in short-form digital poetry, where each lexical choice carries greater semantic weight.

Plutchik's paradigm for emotion research provides a systematic framework for classifying affective states into eight fundamental emotions, organized into opposing pairs across varying intensities (Plutchik, 1980). This psychoevolutionary paradigm views emotions as organized and interconnected rather than separate and solitary, making it easier to map their meanings in greater detail. The model (Plutchik, 2001) is further developed to show how emotions are constantly changing and can be broken down into smaller parts. This makes it a great tool for examining subtle changes in emotion in language. In numerous linguistic studies, the model is predominantly used as a classificatory instrument, emphasizing the identification of emotional categories rather than investigating how these emotions are constructed through specific lexical configurations in context. Collectively, these research threads indicate a disintegration in the examination of emotion within digital poetry. Instapoetry studies focus on the medium and audience; lexicon-based approaches focus on classification; and discourse-oriented frameworks focus on interpretive processes, particularly in longer pieces. Consequently, there is insufficient integration of different viewpoints to elucidate how emotional meaning is semantically produced through lexical selections in succinct digital poetry.

To fill this gap, the current study combines semantic analysis with Plutchik's emotional framework to look at how instapoetry creates emotional meaning at the word level. This study examines the

interplay between vocabulary selection and organized emotional categories, offering a more nuanced understanding of how affective meaning is encoded within the constraints of short-form digital texts, thereby enhancing both digital literary studies and the linguistic analysis of emotion.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive methodology to investigate the semantic construction of emotional meanings through vocabulary selections in instapoetry. The analysis aims not only to delineate emotional categories but also to elucidate the role of lexical words in the construction of affective meaning within brief lyric texts. A qualitative method is suitable because it enables a comprehensive interpretation of language use in context and promotes a sophisticated understanding of meaning production ((Creswell et al., 2014), 2014). The data comprises curated instapoetry texts sourced from social media, particularly brief poems with strong emotional expression and thematic unity. Purposive sampling guides the selection of data consisting of texts with rich lexical representations of emotion for semantic analysis. These writings are seen as linguistic entities in which specific words, sentences, and symbolic expressions serve as indicators of emotional significance.

The analytical framework of this study is predicated on Plutchik's model, which classifies emotions into eight fundamental categories arranged in opposing pairs and varying intensities (Plutchik, 1980, 2001). This framework is employed not only to categorize emotional expressions but also to facilitate the analysis of the structural and relational dynamics of emotional meanings within the text. By placing lexical selections within this framework, the analysis transcends superficial identification, advancing towards a more methodical delineation of affective meaning.

There are various steps to the data analysis. First, the chosen poems are studied carefully to identify words, phrases, and symbols that may carry emotional meaning. Second, these language parts are grouped according to Plutchik's emotional framework to determine which emotions they are most closely associated with. Third, the categorized data are semantically examined by scrutinizing interactions among the selected vocabulary in the text to derive emotional meaning, encompassing patterns of emphasis, contrast, and accumulation. At this stage, the focus is on figuring out how meaning arises from the way words are used together rather than from single words.

To guarantee analytical accuracy, the interpretation is carried out methodically by ensuring consistent categorization and verifying the alignment between lexical elements and their contextual meanings. The research also examines the poems' broader themes to avoid misinterpreting them out of context. This study offers a thorough examination of the construction of emotional meanings in instapoetry, illustrating that even succinct writings can have ordered and interpretable affective structures.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study shows that the emotional meaning in the instapoetry text is systematically built through the way words are chosen and distributed throughout the text. Table 1 shows that there were 46 emotional events in all. Anger was the most common (32.6%), followed by sadness (21.7%) and disgust (15.2%). This concentration of negative feelings suggests that the poem centers on resistance and

conflict. According to Robert Plutchik (Plutchik, 1980, 2001), rage is a primary emotion linked to protection and to reactions to perceived threats, suggesting that the poem's emotional core is rooted in a response to conflict. This emotional orientation is formed by particular vocabulary choices that carry both denotative and connotative significance. (Leech, 2020) (1981) posits that meaning functions not solely at the intellectual level but also through associative and emotive dimensions. This is evident in the phrase "I will not dance to your war drum," where "war drum" extends beyond its literal meaning, evoking violence, power, and domination. These meanings are similar to wrath and disgust, which strengthen the emotional position of resistance. The negation "I will not" amplifies this connotation by converting the utterance into an act of refusal. From a stylistic standpoint, this aligns with Simpson's (2004) assertion that meaning is generated through the functional interplay of language selections within context. So, emotional meaning arises from how denotative content and connotative resonance work together.

**Table 1** Distribution of emotional categories in instapoetry

<b>Emotion</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Anger	15	32.6
Sadness	10	21.7
Disgust	7	15.2
Trust	4	8.7
Fear	4	8.7
Anticipation	4	8.7
Joy	2	4.3
Surprise	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

A fundamental component of this composition is the recurrence of negation, specifically the repeated phrase "I will not," which appears in several lines. Evaluative language theory can help us understand this pattern. Martin and White (2005) contend that appraisal encompasses the articulation of attitude, posture, and positioning within speech. In this poetry, the speaker uses repeated negation to judge people negatively, placing them against the behaviors and beliefs the text suggests. This is shown in phrases like "I will not kill for you" and "I will not die for you," where the verbs "kill" and "die" evoke feelings of sadness and fear, but, when negated, they create a complex evaluative stance. Hunston and Thompson (2000) propose that evaluative patterns facilitate meaning creation by indicating the speaker's attitude. In this instance, emotional significance is constructed through the aggregation of negative assessments, thereby emphasizing the poem's central theme of resistance. Burke (2016) argues that recurrence produces a cognitive-affective pattern that leads readers to see the text as a single emotional position rather than as a set of separate statements. Table 1 reveals that there are also secondary categories, such as trust, dread, and anticipation (each 8.7%), that add to a more complex emotional framework. These categories work with strong emotions to produce meanings that are more than one. The phrase "gather, my beloved near," for example, uses words that evoke trust and closeness, in contrast to others that convey conflict. This contrast can be understood within Plutchik's theory as an interplay of conflicting emotional qualities, in which trust mitigates fury. From a semantic standpoint, this exemplifies relational meaning creation, in which meaning is derived from the juxtaposition of contrasting aspects rather than from isolated words. This kind of interaction supports the idea that emotional meaning varies with the situation, as shown by stylistic techniques (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

The poetry also has a strong emotional arc, moving from violent, rejected feelings to self-definition and strength. Words like "hunted," "taken," and "stretched" used early on make people feel scared and unhappy, showing how weak and hurt they are. Later phrases like "I shall construct my own drum" and "this heartbeat is louder than death," on the other hand, show empowerment and the formation of identity. According to Plutchik's concept, this transition can be seen as a shift from one emotional state to another, with negative feelings being turned into forms of agency and resistance. This corresponds with Burke's (2016) assertion that readers engage with texts through dynamic cognitive and emotional frameworks. The ordering of lexical units generates a systematic development that helps with interpretation. This shows that emotional meaning is created not only at the lexical level but also through the organization of the text as a whole. The lack of surprise, as seen in Table 1, makes this emotional composition even more stable. Plutchik's approach links surprise to sudden changes or things that are hard to foresee. The fact that it is not there shows that the poem maintains a steady, regulated emotional direction throughout. This uniformity makes the content more coherent by guiding readers through a planned emotional journey without breaks.

The results show that the emotional significance of instapoetry arises from how word choice, repetition, evaluative posture, and emotional classification interact. The distribution in Table 1 provides numbers that reveal emotional patterns, and the semantic and stylistic analysis shows how these patterns manifest in language. This study demonstrates that short-form digital poetry can encode complex, organized affective meanings by merging Plutchik's emotional framework with semantic and stylistic considerations. Consequently, emotional significance arises from intentional linguistic creation, reinforcing the view that instapoetry is a nuanced form of modern literary expression.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that instapoetry does not just express emotional content; it also builds it up systematically by using strategic language choices and arranging them throughout the text. Using semantic analysis alongside Plutchik's theory, the findings indicate that the poem's emotional structure centers on a predominant axis of anger, bolstered by other negative emotions, including grief and contempt. These emotional categories are not separate; they interact dynamically through repetition, contrast, and progression, creating a unified emotional framework that helps the reader understand. The research also demonstrates that linguistic tools such as negation, lexical selection, and emotional juxtaposition are crucial to meaning-making. The poem adopts an evaluative posture that strengthens resistance through repeated phrases like "I will not." It also adds richness and depth by combining different emotional factors, like trust. Furthermore, the existence of a distinct emotional trajectory from vulnerability to empowerment illustrates that even succinct digital texts can maintain intricate and coherent patterns of meaning. These results validate that instapoetry operates as an intentional and structured mode of verbal expression, rather than a simplistic or solely aesthetic medium.

Theoretically, this study enhances the synthesis of semantic analysis, emotion theory, and stylistic methodologies by demonstrating how emotional meaning arises from the interplay between lexical objects and organized emotional categories. It builds on earlier work by not only finding emotional content but also explaining how these meanings are made in short-form digital poetry. The findings underscore the significance of employing structured frameworks, such as Plutchik's model, to study modern literary texts, especially in digital contexts where meaning is frequently condensed and

implied. Even though this study makes some good points, it is limited because it only examines one poem, which may not fully capture the diversity of instapoetry as a genre. The following studies should aim to broaden the analytical framework by investigating larger corpora of instapoetry to discern broader patterns of emotional formation. Moreover, subsequent research might integrate reader-response methodologies to investigate how audiences interpret and engage with these emotional frameworks, thus linking textual analysis with reception studies. Another interesting trend is the use of computational tools, such as corpus linguistics and sentiment analysis, to support qualitative findings and strengthen the study. Finally, comparative studies across various social media platforms or cultural contexts would yield a more profound understanding of how digital surroundings shape the formation and interpretation of emotional meaning.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significance of viewing instapoetry as a substantive and analyzable form of digital discourse, in which emotional meaning is meticulously crafted through language. This research elucidates the fundamental semantic and emotional frameworks of succinct poetic texts, thereby enhancing the comprehension of how modern digital literature conveys intricate human experiences.

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