

How to describe the indescribable: Charlie Hebdo & Germanwings

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What does it take to describe an emotion? And how can an experience, such as shock, be described? Shock is not really classified as an emotion, due to the fact that it does not display exclusive features, but rather shares its dominant parameters with more prominent emotions, such as e.g. fear. Therefore, it is mostly considered either as something in a grey area, classified as the initial phase of other emotions, or limited to the negative counterpart of surprise.

A contrastive analysis of the linguistic realizations of emotional parameters associated with the experience of shock as well as a corpus analysis of political discourse with regard to recent tragedies, such as Charlie Hebdo and the Germanwings' accident, and their aftermaths dealing with overcoming this state of shock, will illustrate the linguistic and non-linguistic complexity of this particular, "bounded" emotion.