

**DCCD 2020****Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding****MUSIC CRITICS AVOIDING CONFLICTS: TAKE FIVE OR WHY  
STARS MATTER**

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***Abstract***

The article presents the results of discourse analysis of the music discs from BBC Music Magazine. The research proves relevant from the multidisciplinary perspective involving not merely linguistic but also cultural, social and marketing dimensions. Music communication management aims at music values distribution, music and esthetic tastes cultivation in the audience. This process is traditionally realized at philharmonic and concert hall stages and via media sources, such as radio, television and the press. Modern music magazine exceeds the scope of a print version and becomes a multimodal and multisensory resource. The magazine editorial board is keen to reach the maximum number of potential readers with the help of their website, and by providing the ability of a postal or digital subscription. Music critics, whose reviews compile a significant part of the BBC Music Magazine volumes, play a role in introducing readers to music life. Being members of a professional discourse community, the authors of these articles indirectly influence the development of music communication in the English-speaking world. While investigating music critical activity, it is important to distinguish an advertising aspect in it, because the desire of the audience to buy this or that music disc may directly depend on critics' opinion and evaluation.

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**Keywords:** Musical discourse, professional community, star rating.



## 1. Introduction

Music as the subject and the object of investigation is interesting for many socio-humanistic sciences each with their own approaches, advantages and interests (McKerrell & Way, 2017). Being an inherent part of human life, music contributes to the processes of personal and social integration, that influences humankind (Turino, 2008). Moreover, the idea of music's capacity to effect change, and thus to be an instrument of social ordering, has been central in some research literature (DeNora, 2017). In a social linguistic context, music is a space of specific language and speech realization, which is characterized by a variety of multimodal messages of different formats (Leeuwen, 2017), appearing and transmitted on different levels of music communication. Following this, the problem of professional approach to music communication management arises, as it takes place within the frames of musical discourse, which actively functions in mass media.

## 2. Problem Statement

The study is based on several theoretical works on musical discourse. The notion itself doesn't have a unique definition. Still, giving different definitions to musical discourse, the scientists agree that its analysis should presuppose extra musical factors. Musicology, that studies music, has parental disciplines and sub disciplines, in which the interdisciplinary approach is also used.

From a linguistic point of view, musical discourse is poorly examined. We agree with the definition of musical discourse given by Aleshinskaya (2015, 2018), who implements the ideas of Fairclough (2005, 2006) and Bhatia (2008), and considers this discourse from the point of view of a critical discourse-analysis and understands it as social practice that means specific ways of representation of specific music life aspects. The author believes such definition joins together all of the above-mentioned notions about musical discourse (2018). The given definition provides a general view of the musical discourse scheme, which reveals creation, distribution and perception/evaluation of the musical product. Each of these steps generate specified communicative situations and genres, for instance, concert performances, practices, music discs recording etc.

## 3. Research Questions

To accomplish the goal of the research conducted the following research questions were posed:

- 1) How do personal evaluation of the critic and the rating scale of the magazine coincide?
- 2) What evaluative language means help the critic influence the readers and create positive, neutral or negative attitude to the disc?
- 3) How does the critic's evaluation influence the discs' purchase?

Another relevant issue to be tackled within the framework of the article is whether both the critic and the magazine tend to avoid totally negative evaluations in order to eliminate a possible conflict either with the representative of professional music society or with the audience disapproving of the ruinous and by any chance subjective view.

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

Basing on the research questions stated above, the main research purpose was to define the discs rating influence on the addressees' desire to buy recordings and to show the role of a music critic in the process of positive or negative attitude formation among the music magazine audience.

#### 5. Research Methods

Implementing the research, we refer to the genre of music disc reviews presented in BBC Music Magazine. Two hundred and fifty music disc reviews, having different star rating, from three issues of BBC Music Magazine (July 2015, December 2015 and February 2016) became the research data.

The paper deals with the stage of perception and evaluation of musical product, i.e. represents axiological approach to musical discourse. Thus, method of precise axiological qualitative analysis (Zheltukhina et al., 2017) was required to reveal and study the role of lexical means of literary nature in the process of music products evaluation. At the same time, star rating differences encouraged further interest in counting the data (text-mining).

The results of both qualitative and quantitative textual analyses applied to the star-rated music disc reviews claim such texts to reveal music critics' attitude and evaluation. Being closely connected with discourse of media musical discourse in its turn gains some media features, one of which is advertising.

#### 6. Findings

##### 6.1. BBC Music Magazine as the field for musical discourse functioning

On the cover of each BBC Music Magazine issue it is stated that it is "The world's best-selling classical music magazine". The magazine has two big sections, which include different milestones, for example: A Month in Music, Letters, The Full Score, Richard Morrison, Musical Destinations, Composer of the Month etc. A considerable part of a volume (about 28%) takes the milestone Reviews, where music discs are ranked with stars.

Figure 1 provides the scheme that shows the music critic's position in the process of music communication (Kasyanova, 2017), determines his role and reveals the addressee of the music journalistic message (Zheltukhina et al., 2016).

In our opinion it is necessary to complement the scheme with the step of musical product performance, because this stage plays an important role when lexical means, used by music critics in the genre of music disc review, are analyzed in detail.

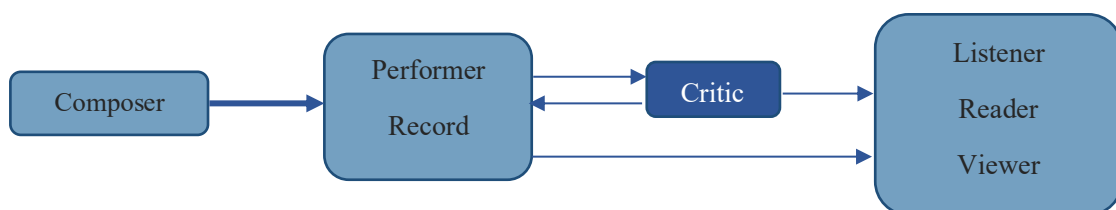


Figure 01. Music communication act

The scheme coincides with the graphic design of the reviews on BBC Music Magazine pages (Figure 2), where the parameters of evaluation are indicated. The parameters Performance and Recording reveal the addressee of the critical message.



**Figure 02.** The example of a review from BBC Music Magazine

An explicit addressee of the musical critical message are the readers of the magazine, because critics cultivate their tastes and the music industry's well-being depends on readers' decision to buy a disc. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to an implicit addressee: the performers and record companies (this group belongs to a musical professional discourse community (Swales, 1990).

The message of the music critic, who creates the text of the disc review, is addressed first of all to the performer (first parameter – Performance), because information (here – music) is always embodied in signs, otherwise it cannot be presented to the people. As there is no exact coincidence between different semiotic systems (in our case the signs of notes are used), the transmission from one semiotic or code system into another always supposes reformulating or interpretation. Thus, music as information, which was born in a composer's mind, coded in notes, metatext insertions and comments undergoes interpretational changes when performed before it reaches the listener.

Secondly, the review is addressed to a record company (second parameter – Recording), e.g. Hyperion, Harmonia Mundi, and Sony. Music critics, evaluating sound quality, directly or indirectly

announce how professional a record company is. A small number of reviews (only three in three issues in the section Reissues), in which the critic was not satisfied with the sound quality and rated it with two stars, proves that modern recording industry is on a high level and aims at producing high quality products.

The third and the main addressee of a critical message is a reader-listener-viewer. This audience category can differ in degree of music preparation: educated music lovers, uneducated music lovers and non-musical audience. In this research we analyze the language means, that music critics use in the genre of music disc review to influence the audience both esthetically and as an advertisement. Being professional and competent, the authors of these critical texts promote music values, cultivate musical tastes and favor / do not favor music discs sales.

## 6.2. Qualitative textual analysis

The selection of music disc reviews was made according to the number of stars, given for the Performance parameter. We grouped the reviews into three evaluation categories: positive, neutral and negative. Thus, five and four-star ratings carry positive evaluation of the critics, three stars – neutral and two and less – negative (though there were no one-star ratings in the three analyzed issues).

Table 1 shows quantitative proportions of music reviews with star ratings in the following sections of the magazine: Recording of the Month, Orchestral, Concerto, Opera, Choral (and Song), Chamber, Instrumental, Jazz and additional in July issue World and Brief Notes.

**Table 01.** Quantitative proportion of music reviews in the magazine

Star rating	July 2015	December 2015	February 2016	Total
5-star reviews	30	27	25	82
4-star reviews	57	30	29	116
3-star reviews	12	13	12	37
2-star reviews	1 (in Brief Notes)	2 (1 in Reissues)	4 (1 in Reissues)	7
Mixed star reviews	3	4	1	8
Total	103	76	71	250

Stars are widely used as graphic symbols to classify, thus, BBC Music Magazine chose a five-star rating system for the critics in the Reviews. In every issue of the magazine there is an explanation chart for readers not to be confused with what stars mean: 1\* – Poor, 2 \*\* – Disappointing, 3 \*\*\* – Good, 4 \*\*\*\* – Excellent, 5 \*\*\*\*\* – Outstanding. Such characteristics of music discs excludes neutral evaluation, because a three-star evaluation, if we take into consideration its quantitative meaning, although is placed in the middle, is marked as *Good*.

Often three-star rating with the marker *good* does not imply a critic's neutral attitude to a reviewed disc. Although the analysis of data indicates that the critic, evaluating the disc with three stars, writes both about positive and negative qualities of a music work performance, and this allows to understand his evaluation as neutral. To avoid dual understanding, we define the five-star scale in the magazine as *external*, and personal critic's evaluation scale as *inner*. The inner scale is reflected through the external one of the magazine, which is familiar and convenient for readers, as critics have to act within the frames of the title.

Music critics use different linguistic means of artistic literary language to express their evaluation,

because music criticism is a branch of literary criticism.

What is of primary importance is the way the critics evaluate the discs in a most positive way. Such behavioral pattern proves to be a representation of a communication strategy aimed at establishing successful and productive communication which in turn will trigger the demand for the disc in the audience. Thus, avoiding a conflict is likely to be the key to both communication and marketing triumph.

### 6.2.1. Positive evaluation

Five and four star ratings in the parameter Performance we account as a positive evaluation of the disc. The number of positive reviews dominates in the milestone. The first reason is the position of the critic, who, being a part of musical discourse community, the work of which he publicizes, is not distanced from it. The second reason is the quality of professional preparation of musicians in the world, which is on a high level. Five-star reviews (Outstanding), almost do not have a negative evaluation. Critics mention only positive qualities of a played composition: interpretation, performance, creative concept and its realization.

The example of a five-star evaluation is the review by Stephen Johnson, written about the choir *Tenebrae* in December 2015 issue of BBC Music Magazine (pp. 70-71):

The whole disc leaves one thinking that, if only these two men could have been freed from the artistic-political constraints and clamour of their time, they might have been able to appreciate and enjoy each other's genius.

The critic Helen Wallace on p. 88 of July 2015 issue gives four stars for the performance and the sound quality in L. van Beethoven's compositions, outlining only one gap in the musicians playing:

While Op. 1 is one of the finest readings on disc, there are some *slightly more rough-edged* moments in the Archduke: Lucy Gould and Alice Neary that *lack* the refined transparency of a partnership such as Isabelle Faust and Jean-Guihen Queyras (Harmonia Mundi).

Music critics put four stars when the compositions on the disc are played on the high level, but there is one or few nuances, which make the authors doubt. It is important to take into account the high subjectiveness of the reviews due to their genre peculiarities.

Talking about linguistic means, which are used in music discs reviews, we may distinguish adjectives and constructions, including evaluative adverbs and second participles. In five and four-star reviews they bring a positive evaluation:

What follows is a *holistically conceived, beautifully paced, exhilaratingly executed performance* that never allows the interpolated lauds to sound like cuckoos in the nest (December 2015).

Adverbs help to increase imaginative function of adjectives and express the speaker's position by giving complex characteristics to an object and reveal the author's thoughts.

Besides the epithets, the authors use evaluative nouns with positive evaluation seem to bring the readers emotions the critic felt:

Lortie's *virtues consistently abound: impeccable elegance; <...> an apparently effortless virtuosity, deployed with exemplary discretion, and a gift for 'vocal' inflection* which should be the envy of numerous rivals (July 2015).

Music critics frequently use the method of comparison to contrast the styles of musicians, orchestras,

conductors and vocalists:

Here *Hough isn't quite as effective as Marc-André Hamelin* (also on Hyperion) in delineating a narrative in the nine pieces... (December 2015).

Sometimes the critics compare the style of different composers, pointing out their influence on each other's works:

Written in his early twenties, Casella's first Symphony *ingests the influence of the Russians, along with a dose of Franck* (February 2016).

It is obvious that a reader has to have a certain level of musical knowledge and expertise to adequately comprehend the method of comparison, otherwise he won't be able to correctly decode the author's message in the review.

The method of comparison should be distinguished from the comparison as a trope. The last one is used as well as epithets to transmit the image of music, which helps to create certain feelings in readers, pointing at a specific feature of the described object. On the lexical level the critics usually use the conjunctions *as* and *like* for comparison:

<...> and the voice is now *as much dark chocolate as light caramel* (December 2015).

Lexical means the critics use are of literal nature, because the given task is difficult – to evaluate music and the emotions received from its performance in words and to emotionally move the audience of the magazine and activate the associated perception.

### 6.2.2. Neutral evaluation

BBC Music Magazine does not make neutral evaluation of music discs a point for critics, as at the first sight “neutral” reviews with a three-star rating have the explanation *Good* on the magazine scale. At the same time, the critic has their own *inner* scale, and there is also no neutral attitude on it. In relation to this, it is important to clarify, why we account a three-star rating neutral.

The reason for this is in the balance of semantically positive and negative lexical means that we revealed in the process of texts analysis. The more positive elements the critic finds on the disc, the higher its value and the number of stars. If the positive and negative characteristics balance each other, the critic puts three stars, giving the disc the status of *Good*. Relative balance of good and bad features becomes neutral evaluation as we call it, but this does not mean that the critic is indifferent to a reviewed disc.

The analysis of the texts that have neutral evaluation, show how the critics achieve the balance of good and bad with words. Alongside the above-mentioned expressive words, the critics use contrasting conjunctions: *but* and *though/although*. We suppose that with their help the authors express their ambivalent attitude to the objects of evaluation (the confirmation is in the quantitative texts analysis in Section 3.3.):

The decorated reprise of the main theme is nicely balanced *though*, and this is the place where musical intent and realisation come together most completely <...> (July 2015).

Reading this review the audience may feel, that the critic's emotions are controversial, and that there are pluses and minuses, thus it is impossible to definitely understand, whether the performance was good or bad. Neutral evaluation best describes such discs and it is expressed in the magazine with three stars.

In neutral reviews, if compared with four or five-star rated, critics use the verb *to lack* more often. Thus, the total number of this verb per 198 positive reviews is 16 (the authors mainly use them when rate

with four stars). While in 37 neutral reviews, the verb *to lack* is used 6 times. The statistics shows, that music critics have a certain music inner ideal, and the performers lack something to reach it:

<...> but their *lack* of nuance combines with sound that's way too close. Presentation is plain, *lacks* a libretto <...> (December 2015).

In conclusive sentences of neutral reviews, music critics use the adverb *still*, as it allows them to sum up and define the author's position: the disc is rather good, than bad and vice versa:

<...> and his stylistic language can seem rather dated. *Still*, there is an impressive culminating effect when voices and instruments come together (February 2016).

Expressive emotional evaluative language means in neutral reviews allow the authors to recreate a controversial image of music and indicate an inhomogeneity of performance which is represented by the three stars they put for the disc, despite the fact that such quantity of stars is described as *Good*.

### 6.2.3. Negative evaluation

In BBC Music Magazine there is a low interest of reviews with negative evaluation of the critics. The total number of the reviews of this type in three issues are only seven rated with two stars and no reviews with one star evaluation (see Table 1). The critic belongs to the musical discourse community, the work of which he publicizes, and that the modern music school prepares high-levelled musicians. We also suppose, the negative reviews are not the focus of music magazines, as such evaluation reflects the way in which the magazine tries to avoid categoricalness. If the critic expresses his negative attitude about the performance, he inevitably breaks communicative collaboration, yet keeps his standpoint. In this case avoiding the conflict proves of more relevance, still, it rests with the critic to decide whether to stand for the stance expressed or to escape the disagreement.

On the language level negative evaluation is expressed with the same lexical means as in the positive and negative reviews, however the lexical-semantic units the authors use create negative images in readers:

What Gluck sought in his 'Reform' operas, of which this was the first, was 'a *beautiful simplicity*' of sound and substance <...> *Hence my disappointment* with this latest recording of the opera's original (1762) version. <...> His *remarkable voice* can reach high above the *stave like few others in his category* <...> *Yet* after a while the *fruity tone quality proves unvaried* <...> *But compared with* previous 1762 sets conducted by John Eliot Gardiner <...> this one seems *fatally bland* (December 2015).

In this example, the critic first brings a positive mood, describing difficult but strong composer's concept and beautiful voice of the singer. Then, sharply and with humility writes about this opera's interpretation and vocal skills. Doing so the critic provides the readers with an "emotional shock". Such methods are characteristic to the reviews with a negative evaluation. An explicit contrast description of the performance with directly contrary epithets allows the critics to affect the readers' emotions. The verb *to lack*, contrastive conjunctions *yet* and *but* and adjectives with negative meanings also help to create bad feelings.

One of the main features of negative reviews is contrast. The critics reach it using contrastive conjunctions and intensifying the negative attributes:

<...> *performances are* in general neat and clean but rather *too pale* <...> *A fine American orchestra, a gifted American conductor, playing core Americana: a recipe for red-hot, individualistic music-*



making (February 2016).

Another powerful way to impress the readers and to transmit the image of music is through irony, which is most often used in negative reviews:

*Devieille's delivery, for instance, of the little French song Dans un bois solitaire made my fingers itch for the off-button* (February 2016).

At large language means and methods used by the critics in positive, neutral and negative reviews are similar. Although the texts are perceived differently by the readers. In three-star reviews categoricalness is much lower than in two-star reviews; the authors seem to even increase it. With the help of contrastive nouns and adjectives the music critics share the emotion of disappointment, collapsing positive and negative performance qualities, sharply changing the direction of evaluation and therefore emotionally shocking the readers.

### 6.3. Quantitative analysis

The text mining process was carried out with the program Tropes 8.4.4. The disc reviews were grouped according to the number of stars, given by the critics for Performance parameter. At the first stage the reviews with five and four-star evaluations were compared to distinguish common characteristics of positive evaluation. At the second stage, all the reviews were compared with each other considering the following program items: Text style, Reference fields, Frequent word categories, Scenario. The results of the most significant aspects are shown in Table 2.

**Table 02.** The results of percentage

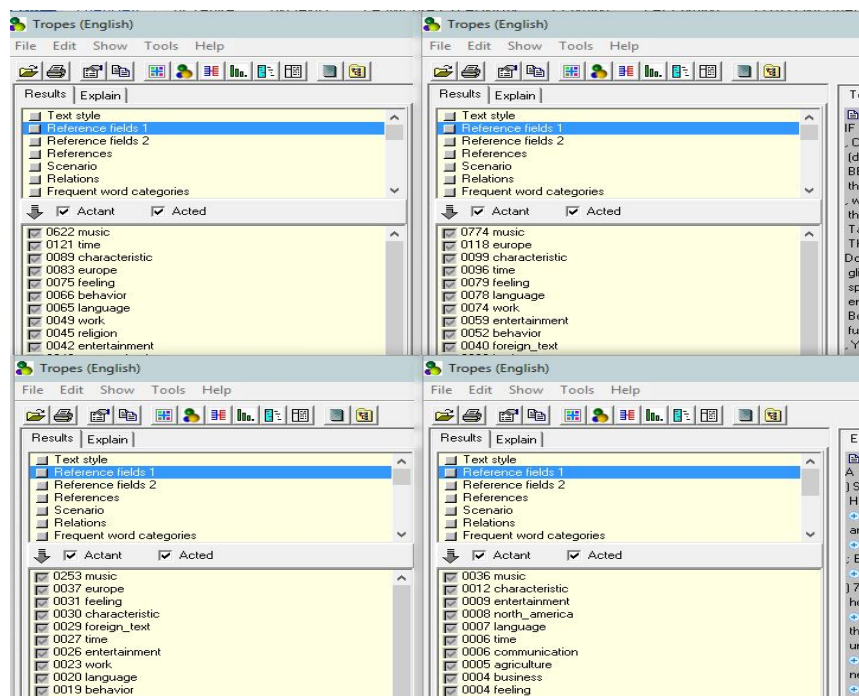
Program item	5-star reviews	4-star reviews	3-star reviews	2-star reviews
Text style	Descriptive	Descriptive	Narrative	
Reference fields (1 <sup>st</sup> position)	Music	Music	Music	
Scenario	Arts & culture	Arts & culture	Properties & characteristics	
All word categories (meaningful)				
Connectors:	13.3%	16.9%	17.9%	19 %
Opposition	15.9%	11.8%	14.3%	12.7%
Comparison				
Modalities:	17.4%	15.7%	15.2%	21.2%
Time <sub>SEP</sub> Place	10.2%	11.0%	10.1%	15.2%
Doubt	2.3%	1.9%	3.1%	4.5%
Pronouns: “I”	15.1%	12.9%	12.1%	44.4%

Descriptive text style is characteristic to all types of the reviews except for the reviews with two stars. The description allows the author to create a specific mood in the reader, and share emotions from the musical work. The reviews with two stars are written in a narrative style: the conjunction *and*, that adds

dynamics to the text, as well as the adverbs of frequency and place (*here, across, at times, sometimes*) are widely used. We explain the dominance of the style in the two-star reviews as follows: while listening to music performance that does not correspond to his inner ideal, the critic vividly responds to these discrepancies, strongly reacts; the disappointment appears and it is reflected in the dynamic paper writing.

All reviews include lexical means of doubt. It is explained by the subjectiveness of the critics' opinion toward the disc. They do not construe it as the only true. In two-star reviews the program traced an additional point "involving with "I". The expression of a negative evaluation involves maximum boldness and subjectiveness of the critic. Therefore, the authors try to emphasize, that the opinion they express on the page, is not collective.

In the item Reference fields, the field of *music* is the most frequent in all of the types of the reviews and it is evident as the main concept of musical discourse. The fields *time, characteristic, feeling, language, entertainment* are recurrent in first ten positions in every type of the review (Figure 3).

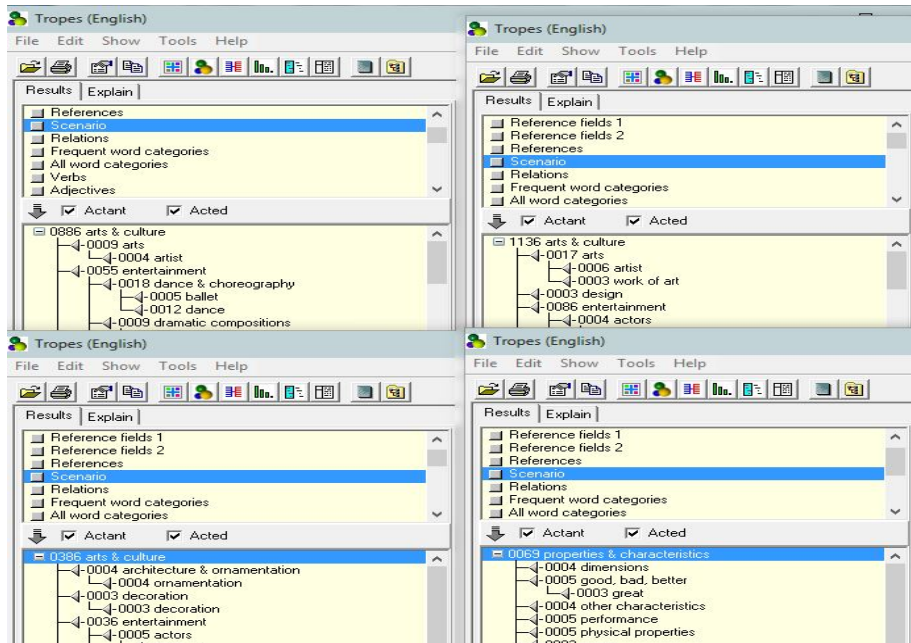


**Figure 03.** Extract from the Reference fields item

Thus, music called to fulfill artistic needs and bring artistic delight. It is inextricably bound with the category of time, both historically (music *époque*) and technically (notes and compositions length). Quite often music is metaphorically called language as, according to Levi-Strauss (1990), it has the language structure but is deprived of language meaning. There are notes, texts and signs, and "reading" them musicians play the music. All the aspects mentioned above are embodied in the reviews of the critics and are found in the Reference fields item. One of the interesting reference fields is *Europe*, although it is not placed in the first ten positions. The authors frequently use the names of European towns, cities and countries in their reviews, because the birthplace of classical music is the European continent. Secondly, the critics themselves are the representatives of European countries, they write for European magazines; all this is reflected in language.

The percentage in the item All word categories in four- and five-star reviews was almost the same and differed no more than three percent, however in the Opposition point in the subcategory Connectors, the four-star reviews numbered three percent more (13.3% vs 16.9%). This tells about more frequent use of contrastive conjunctions (*but, though, although*), because the authors find few negative nuances against the general positive background. Next, the number of contrasting conjunctions increases and reaches its peak in the two-star negative reviews: 13.3% – 16.9% – 17.9% – 19%. The figures show, that according to the critics' opinion, the number of negative elements grows and the evaluation moves downward. The number of comparative conjunctions in the four-star reviews is lower than in the five-star ones, that is difficult to explain from the first sight (15.9% vs 11.8%). But in five-star reviews the comparative conjunctions *as* and *like* dominate, and in the four-star ones the conjunction *than* is used. In the first case, the authors use comparisons as an artistic method to describe beauty, and the critics, who give four stars, compare the objects of evaluation with each other.

In two-star reviews, unlike the others, the highest rates of Modality of Time (21.2%), Place (15.2% with the most frequent adverb *here*) and Doubt (4.5%) are observed. We suppose that the first two modalities have such a high rate, because the narrative style of extremely emotional messages demands dynamic description. Hence, the authors frequently use the adverbs of time and place. High rate of doubt is explained with the highest level of subjectiveness. Negative reviews differ in the Scenario item: in three-, four- and five-star reviews the textual scenario is happening within Arts and Culture topic, while in the two-star reviews the topic is Properties and Characteristics (Figure 4). The explanation is in the authors pay more attention to the negative qualities and characteristics of the performed works, that prevent attaining music ideal.



**Figure 04.** Extract from the Scenario item

The analysis revealed that the main reference field for all the messages is music. Positive and negative reviews differ in several aspects, and the basics are style and scenario. There is no great difference

between positive and neutral reviews, but it is between positive and negative. Two-star reviews are dynamic and the lexemes of place and time are frequently used. They help to influence the readers and provoke an emotional response. The subjectiveness in these types of reviews reaches its maximum and frequent use of the pronoun *I* proves that.

#### **6.4. Advertising constituent in the activity of music critics**

A star rating as with any rating method coincides with the collective choice systems (Allen, 2005), which appeared at the dawn of the democracy establishment. There are three methods of collective choice: *selection*, *opinion*, or *comparison*. Rating systems belong to the method of comparison. The most convenient and popular rating system expression is stars, so, the readers accept stars as indicators, that make them decide, whether to buy discs or not. Thus, stars matter.

They also matter from the point of view of conflicts. Low quantity of negative reviews can be explained with the strategy of any contemporary magazine, where the information is intended to inspire trust in the target audience, to create a positive image of the basic subject through information about its high qualities. By doing this the editorial board creates an appropriate communication environment therefore the intention to influence the addressee is hidden behind the carefully created illusion of objectivity. When there is no high level of opposition between the critics' evaluation (positive is overabundant) and their addressees (musicians and readers), there is no conflict.

People in English speaking world trust BBC Music Magazine and its critics. One of the reasons why people believe ratings is offered by the poll held among the smartphone users (Walz, 2015) which showed that if an app has four-star rating, 96% users download it, while those, having only two stars, will be downloaded by only 15% of users.

It is clear that this data did not touch many factors, which are crucial for the audience of BBC Music Magazine (educated and uneducated music lovers). Nevertheless, the psychology of positive evaluation plays an important role when people choose what to listen to. Consequently, the editors believe that the rubric exists to help the audience to be up to speed on all musical nuances before buying a disc.

Can the given rating thus be an advertisement? Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the reviews showed that there is no explicit advertising aspect in the texts (Suggett, 2017). The magazine contains advertising and in the milestone Reviews too, but it is placed apart and usually its volume is 12% from the total number of pages.

## **7. Conclusion**

Being of an artistic nature, music criticism is embodied in the texts of music magazines inevitably attaining literary imagery means. Such tropes as epithets, comparisons, positively and negatively colored nouns help the critics to express in words nonverbal image of music. The emotions received after listening to works of music should be transmitted to the listener and persuade them to buy the disc or not. To do so the critic expresses their opinion in today's generally accepted star rating. The reputable BBC Music Magazine has no neutral evaluation on its scale, as three stars correspond to *Good*. However, the textual analysis shows, that discs can be evaluated neutrally, whereas the authors in their descriptions use both negative and positive lexical units in balance. In connection to this, it was necessary to distinguish the

critic's inner evaluation scale.

Comparing the results of the reviews qualitative analysis with the number of stars for the performance parameter, we concluded that only positive (five-star) and negative (two-star) reviews differ drastically in verbal transfer of evaluation. Neutral reviews in their turn have approximately the same number of positive and negative elements. The authors, who try to decrease categoricalness, avoiding extreme evaluation, explain it. It is also the reason the one-star reviews absence.

The results of the quantitative analysis indicated the difference of positive and negative reviews. Two-star evaluation represents another type of scenario and style, though having the same reference fields. Personal pronoun *I* dominates in negative reviews and demonstrates high level of subjectiveness. Low quantity of negative reviews further do not provoke a conflict with representatives of professional music society or with audience.

Star rating in music disc reviews influences their sales, thus emphasizing its advertising nature. Although the analysis shows, that the rating itself is the only advertisement, as on the verbal level there are no explicit advertising markers. Still such peculiarity of the modern world as star rating system manifests itself in the high art of music, where stars matter.

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