

# TONALITY ANALYSIS OF THE OSCE MINSK GROUP STATEMENTS AND REPORTS ON THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT \*

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***This article provides a nuanced analysis of tonalities present in the statements and reports of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, aiming to unravel their impact on conflict resolution efforts, with a focus on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, examining the way they shaped perceptions, influenced stakeholders, and ultimately influenced the failure of the conflict's peaceful resolution process. The objectives entail discerning the range of tonalities utilized within OSCE Minsk Group statements and reports, exploring their implications for conflict dynamics, and understanding how they contribute to or hinder progress towards a sustainable resolution. To fulfill these objectives, a comprehensive tonality analysis (sentiment analysis) is applied, integrating theoretical frameworks with data drawn from OSCE Minsk Group statements and reports. The findings of this study reveal that the majority of the analyzed statements exhibited a neutral tone. While neutrality may ostensibly denote objectivity, in the context of conflict resolution, this tonal disposition proved unfavorable for the peaceful regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.***

**Keywords:** OSCE Minsk Group, statements and reports, tonality, sentiment analysis, Nagorno-Karabakh, diplomatic discourse, diplomacy

## Introduction

In the intricate landscape of conflict resolution, the role of diplomatic actors like the OSCE Minsk Group stands as a critical element in navigating complex geopolitical disputes. Amidst the persistent challenges facing the peace process, particularly in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, recent events particularly, the 44-day war, the blockade, as well as the ethnic cleansing of the of the Armenian population have underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive examination of diplomatic communication strategies employed by the OSCE Minsk Group. These official documents serve as essential tools for the international community and involved parties to gauge the progress and dynamics of the conflict resolution process.

The OSCE Minsk Group was created in 1992 by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (now the OSCE) to provide a platform for peaceful negotiations over a complex conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh

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region. It is co-chaired by three major international powers: France, Russia, and the United States. The Minsk Group operates under the framework of the OSCE, a regional organization focused on security and cooperation among European and Eurasian countries. The primary function of the Minsk Group is to act as a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The co-chairs were supposed to facilitate direct negotiations between the two parties and work to promote dialogue and compromise (Official webpage of OSCE Minsk Group).

In the framework of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the OSCE Minsk Group's statements and reports are integral components of diplomatic discourse.

By focusing on the tonality of the OSCE Minsk Group's statements and reports, this study aims to shed light on the implicit messages, attitudes, and emotional undercurrents that shape diplomatic engagements in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It seeks to unravel how tonal nuances, when analyzed in conjunction with broader geopolitical events, can inform our understanding of the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts in resolving protracted conflicts. The core objective of this study is to discern and analyze the diverse tonal expressions employed by the OSCE Minsk Group, unraveling how they shape perceptions, influence stakeholders, and ultimately impact the peaceful regulation of the conflict. Through a comprehensive tonality analysis, integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical data extracted from OSCE Minsk Group statements and reports, we will study the intricate nuances of language and rhetoric employed by the mediators.

Central to this inquiry is the recognition that a more assertive and proactive tonal stance is essential for diplomatic actors like the OSCE Minsk Group and other stakeholders. Such a stance, grounded in a genuine commitment to fostering dialogue, building trust, and advancing the peace process, could potentially yield transformative outcomes in the quest for sustainable conflict resolution.

In this context, it is vital to understand the features of the tonality in diplomatic discourse, conduct sentiment analysis, and understand the way it was developed in the OSCE Minsk Group documents.

### **Theoretical Background**

In linguistics, tonality is correlated with the category of modality, particularly with its specific type of subjective modality (Ширинкина, 2017). Т. О. Bagdasaryan considers tonality as a component of modality and identifies "pure" types of tonality, pointing out the impossibility of describing all tonal meanings (Bagdasaryan 2000, 10-11). Tonality is considered as one of the criteria for classifying discourse. It interprets it as "an emotional-style format of communication that arises in the process of mutual influence of communicants and determines their changing attitudes and choice of all means of communication," carefully noting that the tonality system is highly variable and correlates with the types of discourse (Karasik 2009, 304).

In the realm of pragmalinguistics and stylistic analysis, tonality stands as an important unit of examination. As Crystal (2003) notes, "Tonal nuances in language often go beyond the mere choice of words, playing a fundamental role in conveying attitudes, perspectives, and positions. These tonal elements, as analyzed in diplomatic texts, can shape the narrative of international conflicts and influence the direction of negotiations. The category of tonality in diplomatic discourse refers to the emotional and expressive qualities embedded within diplomatic communication. This aspect is crucial in understanding the nuances of diplomatic interactions, as tonality can shape perceptions, influence negotiations, and impact the overall success of diplomatic efforts. Diplomatic discourse often employs a range of tonalities to convey messages effectively while maintaining diplomatic decorum. Tonality can vary from formal and conciliatory to assertive or confrontational, depending on the context and objectives of diplomatic

communication (Karasik 2009) Tonality serves an expressive function in diplomatic discourse, allowing diplomats to convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions subtly (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003) Diplomats often employ strategic tonalities to achieve diplomatic objectives, such as building rapport, exerting influence, or signaling resolve. These tonal strategies play a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of diplomatic negotiations (Duque, Laura Rosillo-López 2016). The tonality of diplomatic discourse can significantly impact diplomatic relations between states. Diplomatic messages conveyed with inappropriate tonality or misinterpreted tonal cues may lead to misunderstandings, tensions, or even diplomatic crises (Ziemke 2012). Effective interpretation of tonality in diplomatic discourse requires attention to cultural and contextual factors. Different cultural norms and diplomatic traditions may influence the perception and interpretation of tonal cues in diplomatic communication (Holmes 2000).

For analyzing the tonality of the statements and reports of OSCE Minsk Group, it is necessary to conduct a sentiment analysis. Sentiment analysis, which may be considered a separate area of computational linguistics, is used to determine the sentiment expressed in a piece of text, such as positive, negative, or neutral. It involves analyzing the words, phrases, and context within the text to gauge the underlying sentiment or attitude of the author or speaker. In the context of diplomatic discourse, sentiment analysis can be crucial for understanding the tonality and emotional nuances embedded within diplomatic communications.

Sentiment analysis is essential for analyzing tonality in diplomatic discourse as it provides valuable insights into the underlying sentiments, attitudes, and emotional dynamics shaping diplomatic communication. By leveraging sentiment analysis techniques, policymakers and diplomats can enhance their understanding of diplomatic discourse and make informed decisions to promote effective diplomacy and conflict resolution.

Sentiment analysis can be conducted both by computers and by humans, depending on the context and objectives of the analysis. In our research, we have specifically employed human-based sentiment analysis to evaluate the overall tone of each statement or report, considering various factors such as identified problems, topics, key phrases, and expressions integral to the semantic content of the articles.

Thus, for each statement or report, the overall tone of the text is based on the identified problems, topics, key phrases, and expressions.

Fine-grained sentiment analysis refers to the process of analyzing text data to discern nuanced or granular levels of sentiment beyond just positive, negative, and neutral classifications. It involves categorizing sentiment into multiple levels or degrees, allowing for a more detailed understanding of the emotional nuances expressed in the text. All statements and reports are evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. sharply negative;
2. rather negative;
3. neutral;
4. rather positive;
5. completely positive (Kalinin p. 2).

These criteria illustrate a form of fine-grained sentiment analysis. Instead of merely categorizing sentiment into broad categories (positive, negative, neutral), these criteria provide a finer distinction, capturing varying degrees of positivity and negativity in the text. For example, a statement categorized as "sharply negative" would indicate an extremely negative sentiment, while "rather negative" might suggest a sentiment that is negative but not as intense. Similarly, "rather positive" would denote a moderately positive sentiment, whereas "completely positive" would signify an overwhelmingly positive sentiment. Fine-grained sentiment analysis allows for a more nuanced

interpretation of text data, enabling analysts to capture subtle shifts and variations in sentiment expression. This approach is particularly valuable in domains where understanding the intensity or degree of sentiment is crucial, such as market research, customer feedback analysis, or political discourse analysis (Hutto 2014).

### Analysis

The chart 1 provides a comprehensive overview of sentiment analysis derived from the OSCE Minsk Group's statements and reports delineating the date of each statement, problem, associated keywords, and corresponding tonality classifications, including sharply negative, rather negative, neutral, rather positive, and completely positive sentiments. The analysis, drawing upon critical factors such as the source and date of the statements, identified problems, relevant keywords, and the tonality expressed within each statement, offers a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced dynamics of diplomatic communication. These factors serve as integral components in the systematic assessment of tonality within the OSCE Minsk Group statements and reports.

**Chart 1 Overview of the sentiment analysis of the OSCE Minsk Group's statements and reports.**

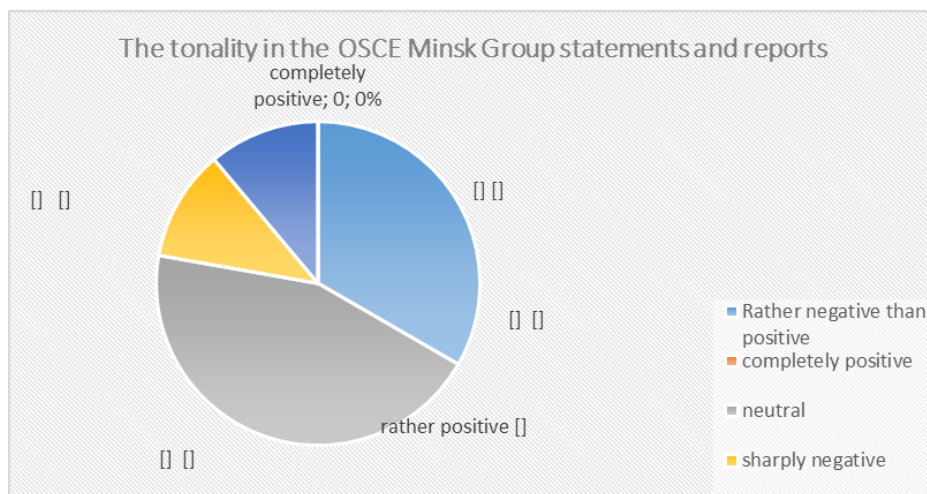
Source and date release	Problem	Keywords	Tonality
7 December 2021 Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group	To implement in full the commitments they undertook on 9 November 2020 and reconfirmed on 26 November 2021 in statements made by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, and President of the Russian Federation and other jointly agreed ceasefire arrangements.	resumption of direct dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan  promote a lasting and sustainable peace in the region.  make concrete progress on humanitarian issues	Neutral
29 July 2021 Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group	recent incidents along the Armenia - Azerbaijan border	refrain from provocative rhetoric and actions, and implement fully their commitments under the November 9 statement and other jointly agreed ceasefire arrangements	Neutral
October 7- 12, 2010 Report of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs' Field Assessment Mission to the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan Surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh	Ethnic Armenian settlers living in precarious conditions, to avoid any activities in the territories and other disputed areas that would prejudice a final settlement or change the character of these areas	the disastrous consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict  seven occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh	Rather negative than positive
Press Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group 14 September 2020	New developments following the mid-July violent escalation on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border	the resumption of monitoring activities  resuming serious substantive negotiations without preconditions	Rather negative than positive

Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group 13 October 2020	to take immediate steps to execute in full the obligations of the sides according to the October 10 Moscow statement,	violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict  the humanitarian ceasefire  a ceasefire verification mechanism	Rather negative than positive
Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group 29 March 2019	First meeting of the newly elected Prime Minister of the RA with the President of Azerbaijan	the importance of building up an environment conducive to peace  the leaders recommitted to strengthening the ceasefire and improving the mechanism for direct communication  They also agreed to develop a number of measures in the humanitarian field.	Rather Positive
Report of the OSCE Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan Surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) February 28, 2005	to observe any rebuilt or new structures, estimating their quantity and determining how many of them were or could be inhabited;  to attempt to estimate the number of people inhabiting the settlements observed, including their age, gender and family structure; to observe any agricultural activity, including farming and livestock industries and other means of livelihood, as well as their connection to any observed settlements;  to collect statements of settlers or other locals regarding their place of origin, the date of their entry to the area, possible procedures of their recruitment, if any, possible sponsorship or other sources of support, the existence of local administrative structures, taxation and the settlers' intention to continue residing in the areas.	Occupied territories total ruins basic Infrastructure Armenian Diaspora Local authorities	sharply negative
Press Statement of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs 20 June 2019	recent developments on the ground and core issues of the settlement process	implementation of the humanitarian and security measures  to observe the ceasefire strictly and to refrain from any provocative action  to reduce the risk of escalation	Neutral

Joint Statement by the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries 3 December 2020	The Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group call upon Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue implementing fully their obligations under the November 9 statement,	the November 9 statement, ceasefire commitment  cessation of military activities guarantee the non-renewal of hostile es.	Neutral
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Based upon the Chart 1, we can state that the majority of the analyzed OSCE Minsk Group documents available for the public are written in a neutral tonality to ensure that all sides involved in the conflict can agree to the terms and conditions of the document. This helps to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding between all the parties, which is essential for a successful negotiation. Additionally, a neutral tone helps to avoid any potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations that could arise from a document written in a more aggressive or biased tone.

According to the diagram provided below, it is evident that out of the nine statements and reports analyzed, 45% exhibit a neutral tonality, while 33% lean towards a rather negative sentiment compared to positive. Additionally, 11% are sharply negative, 11% are rather positive, and there are no instances of completely positive sentiment observed within the analyzed data.



**Diagram 1 The tonality analysis in the OSCE Minsk Group statements and reports**

The prevalence of neutral and negative sentiments within the statements and reports analyzed, accounting for a significant proportion of the data (78% in total), indicates a lack of positive sentiment or constructive outlook towards the region.

Specifically, the high percentage of neutral tonalities (45%) implies a lack of assertiveness or definitive stance in addressing the issues pertinent to Nagorno-Karabakh. This neutrality may indicate a reluctance or hesitancy to take decisive action or advocate for the interests of Nagorno-Karabakh within the diplomatic discourse analyzed.

Furthermore, the substantial percentage of rather negative sentiments (33%) suggests a prevailing atmosphere of skepticism, criticism, or dissatisfaction surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh-related matters. This sentiment leans towards a pessimistic outlook, potentially hindering efforts towards the conflict resolution and exacerbating tensions in the region.

The presence of sharply negative sentiments (11%) underscores the severity of negative perceptions or attitudes towards Nagorno-Karabakh within the analyzed discourse. Such sentiments may reflect deeply entrenched biases, hostility, or grievances, posing significant challenges to fostering dialogue and achieving peaceful resolution.

Although there are instances of rather positive tonalities (11%), their relatively low prevalence compared to neutral and negative sentiments suggests a limited impact in counterbalancing the overall unfavorable perception of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Notably, there are no statements or reports categorized as completely positive (0%). This absence of entirely positive communication could indicate that the Group's perspective on the issues within their scope of work is never without reservations or concerns.

Overall, the chart suggests a cautious approach by the OSCE Minsk Group in their official communications, with a tendency to avoid strong positive sentiments and a notable share of communications that have a negative tone. The predominance of neutral and negative tones could reflect the complex and potentially contentious nature of the issues handled by the Group.

It is necessary to provide some thorough analysis of neutrality. While neutrality is often a diplomatic norm, our observations suggest that, in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, this neutrality has not been interpreted into meaningful impact. The statements, though consistently neutral, appear to be overly general and non-specific, lacking the substance needed to drive effective change.

The neutrality displayed in these communications, rather than contributing to conflict resolution, seems to be more aligned with diplomatic conventions. While it is crucial for international bodies to maintain impartiality, the challenge arises when this neutrality results in statements that do not convey substantial measures or steps toward resolving the ongoing conflict. Our analysis indicates that the neutral tone, in this case, becomes a drawback as it fails to bring about tangible improvements or alterations to the situation on the ground.

In essence, the neutral nature of these statements, while adhering to diplomatic norms, renders them somewhat ineffective. Instead of providing a catalyst for change, they remain generalized and fail to articulate specific actions or proposals that could contribute to a meaningful resolution. In our assessment, the lack of decisiveness and specificity renders these statements less impactful, highlighting a need for more proactive and targeted diplomatic efforts in addressing the complexities of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In summary, the analysis of tonalities within the provided data highlights the predominance of neutral and negative sentiments, indicating a concerning lack of favorable outlook towards Nagorno-Karabakh within the diplomatic discourse.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the comprehensive sentiment analysis conducted on the OSCE Minsk Group statements and reports has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of diplomatic discourse surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution efforts. Through meticulous examination, it has become evident that the majority of the analyzed statements exhibited a neutral tone. While neutrality may ostensibly denote objectivity, in the context of conflict resolution, this tonal disposition often proved unfavorable for the peaceful regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The prevalence of a neutral tone suggests a hesitancy or reluctance to assertively address the complexities of the conflict, potentially hindering progress towards a sustainable resolution. Diplomatic language characterized by neutrality may inadvertently

signal a lack of urgency or commitment to addressing underlying issues, thus impeding meaningful dialogue and compromise among conflicting parties.

Furthermore, the absence of a discernible tonal stance may contribute to ambiguity and misinterpretation, exacerbating tensions and prolonging the stalemate in negotiations. Effective diplomatic communication requires clarity, empathy, and a proactive approach to bridge divergent perspectives and foster mutual understanding.

Thus, the failure of the OSCE Minsk Group, coupled with the repercussions of the 44-day war, the blockade imposed on the people residing in Nagorno-Karabakh), as well as the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians highlight the gravity of the situation extending beyond mere diplomatic discourse. In light of these challenges, it becomes evident that a more assertive and proactive tonal stance was essential for the OSCE Minsk Group and other stakeholders, which could have affected to the peaceful regulation of the conflict.

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## ԼԵՌՆԱՅԻՆ ՂԱՐԱԲԱՂԻ ՀԱԿԱՄԱՐՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՎԵՐԱԲԵՐՅԱԼ ԵԱՅԿ ՄԻՆԱԿԻ ԽՄԲԻ ՀԱՅՏԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԵՎ ՉԵԿՈՒՅՑՆԵՐԻ ԵՐԱՆԳԱԿՈՐՄԱՆ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

### ԱՆԻ ԹԱՄԱՁՅԱՆ

Հայաստանի Եվրոպական համալսարանի  
Կիրառական լեզվաբանության ամբիոնի հայցորդ,  
Եվրասիա միջազգային համալսարանի լեզուների, հաղորդակցության և  
մանկավարժության ամբիոնի վարիչ  
ժ. Երևան, Հայաստան Հանրապետություն

Սույն հոդվածը ներկայացնում է Եվրոպայի անվտանգության և համագործակցության կազմակերպության (ԵԱՀԿ) Մինսկի խմբի հայտարարություններում և զեկույցներում առկա երանգավորումների (տոնայնությունների) վերլուծությունը՝ նպատակ ունենալով բացահայտելու դրանց ազդեցությունը հակամարտությունների կարգավորման ջանքերի վրա՝ մասնավորապես կենտրոնանալով Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտության վրա:

Ուսումնասիրությունը ձգտում է բացահայտելու և վերլուծելու ԵԱՀԿ Մինսկի խմբի կողմից կիրառվող տարբեր երանգային արտահայտությունները՝ ուսումնասիրելով, թե ինչպես են դրանք ձևավորել ընկալումները, ազդել շահագրգիռ կողմերի վրա և, ի վերջո, ազդել հակամարտության խաղաղ կարգավորման գործընթացի ձախողման վրա: Այս նպատակներն իրականացնելու համար կիրառվում է երանգավորման համապարփակ վերլուծություն (սենտիմենտի վերլուծություն)՝ տեսական շրջանակները ինտեգրելով ԵԱՀԿ Մինսկի խմբի հայտարարություններից և զեկույցներից ստացված տվյալների հետ: Այս հետազոտության արդյունքները ցույց են տալիս, որ վերլուծված հայտարարությունների և զեկույցների մեծամասնությունը ունի չեզոք երանգավորում: Թեև չեզոքությունը կարող է թվացյալ նշանակել օբյեկտիվություն, սակայն հակամարտության կարգավորման համատեքստում այս երանգավորումը անբարենպաստ է եղել Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտության խաղաղ կարգավորման համար:

**Հիմնաբաներ.** *ԵԱՀԿ Մինսկի խումբ, հայտարարություններ և զեկույցներ, երանգավորում, սենտիմենտ վերլուծություն, Լեռնային Ղարաբաղ, դիվանագիտական խոսույթ, դիվանագիտություն:*

## АНАЛИЗ ТОНАЛЬНОСТИ ЗАЯВЛЕНИЙ И ОТЧЕТОВ МИНСКОЙ ГРУППЫ ОБСЕ ПО НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОМУ КОНФЛИКТУ

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В данной статье представлен детальный анализ тональности, присутствующей в заявлениях и отчетах Минской группы Организации по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе (ОБСЕ), с целью выяснить его влияние на усилия по разрешению конфликтов на примере нагорно-карабахского конфликта. В статье исследуется также, как тональность заявлений и отчетов повлияла на формирование восприятия, интересы сторон и в конечном итоге – на провал процесса мирного разрешения конфликта. Цели исследования - определить диапазон тональностей, используемых в заявлениях и отчетах Минской группы ОБСЕ, изучить их последствия для динамики конфликта и определить как она способствует или препятствует прогрессу на пути к устойчивому разрешению конфликта. Для достижения этих целей был применен комплексный тональный анализ (сентимент-анализ), интегрирующий теоретические основы с данными, полученными из заявлений и отчетов Минской группы ОБСЕ. Результаты исследования показывают, что большинство проанализированных высказываний имели нейтральный тон. При этом, хотя и предполагается, что нейтралитет подразумевает объективность, в контексте разрешения конфликта этот тональный настрой часто оказывался неблагоприятным для мирного урегулирования нагорно-карабахского конфликта.

**Ключевые слова:** *Минская группа ОБСЕ, заявления и доклады, тональность, анализ настроений, Нагорный Карабах, дипломатический дискурс, дипломатия.*