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## VERBALIZATION OF EVALUATIVE COMPONENT OF THE CONCEPT AIR POLLUTION IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH MEDIA RESOURCES

*The article presents the analysis of cognitive and semantic means of representation of the evaluative component of AIR POLLUTION as it is an integral part of a global concept ENVIRONMENT. The work aims at revealing structural and semantic elements of the concept AIR POLLUTION, which depict axiological potential of the concept under investigation, and which are peculiar for the representatives of American English-speaking cultural group. The material of the study comprises 200 text pieces bearing conceptual information about air pollution, which were extracted from speeches and texts belonging to media discourse. The methodological basis of this study includes the theory of cognitive mechanisms of elaboration, extending, questioning and combining. These mechanisms are used to investigate language modifications experienced by meaningful elements within a particular discourse. The findings of the content analysis show that such structural topical elements as “climate”, “human’s health”, “scale of air pollution” and “sustainability” are of the highest axiological value as they are fixed in the mental representation of the concept AIR POLLUTION. The structures “climate”, “human’s health”, and “scale of air pollution” are characterized as bearing negative evaluation, whereas “sustainability” – a positive one. The assessment verbalization presupposes the combination of several cognitive mechanisms that accumulate the meaning and combine two and more topical structures in one context. The language analysis suggests that lexical means which are used for the verbalization of evaluative component of the concept AIR POLLUTION, belong to emotionally neutral vocabulary including scientific terms and words that are peculiar for industrial, medical and political discourses. Their combination accumulates and specifies problems associated with air pollution, and contributes to the appearance of negative connotation. On the contrary, lexical means used to describe “sustainability” acquire positive connotation.*

**Key words:** air pollution, axiological potential, concept, media resource, negative connotation, evaluative component.

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## ВЕРБАЛІЗАЦІЯ ЦІННІСНОГО КОМПОНЕНТУ КОНЦЕПТУ AIR POLLUTION У СУЧАСНИХ АНГЛОМОВНИХ МЕДІА-РЕСУРСАХ

*У статті аналізуються когнітивні та семантичні способи репрезентації ціннісного компоненту концепту AIR POLLUTION як невід'ємної частини глобального концепту ENVIRONMENT. Метою роботи є виявлення структурних та семантичних одиниць концепту AIR POLLUTION, що описують аксіологічний потенціал досліджуваного концепту, який є характерним для світогляду представників американської англомовної лінгвокультурної групи. Матеріалом роботи виступили 200 фрагментів, які містять концептуальну інформацію щодо забруднення повітря, та які було вилучено із текстів, що належать до медійного дискурсу. Підґрунтям методології роботи стала теорія когнітивних механізмів, що включає в себе нароцування, розгортання, зитовхування та зв'язування, та застосовується для аналізу мовних модифікацій, які зазнають смислові одиниці в межах певного дискурсу. В результаті аналізу мовного матеріалу було виявлено, що найбільше аксіологічне значення у ментальній репрезентації концепту AIR POLLUTION отримують такі структури, як «клімат», «здоров'я людини», «масштабність прояву забруднення повітря» та «екологічна відповідальність». Характерно, що для структур «клімат», «здоров'я людини», «масштабність прояву забруднення повітря» характерне негативне оцінювання, в той час як для «екологічної відповідальності» – позитивне. Вербалізація оцінки передбачає комбінацію декількох когнітивних механізмів, що акумулюють смисл та комбінують декілька ціннісних одиниць в одному контексті. Встановлено, що лексичні засоби, які використовуються для вербалізації ціннісного компоненту концепту AIR POLLUTION належать до емоційно-нейтральної лексики, яка включає в себе наукові терміни, а також терміни, що характерні для промислового, медичного та політичного дискурсів. Їх комбінація та акумуляція специфікує проблеми, пов'язані із забрудненням повітря, і надає негативної конотації. Для опису «екологічної відповідальності», навпаки, застосовані лексичні засоби із нейтральною оцінкою набувають позитивної конотації.*

**Ключові слова:** аксіологічний потенціал, забруднення повітря, концепт, медіа ресурс, негативне забарвлення, ціннісний компонент.

The concept AIR POLLUTION is of a special axiological significance in the concept sphere ENVIRONMENT, which is supported by the fact that any human being is a part and parcel of the environment they exist in, they are not able to live outside it. However, this co-existence has two faces: on the one hand, people's environment modifies and contributes to the ability to experience the world and to communicate this experience to other representatives of a language group; on the other hand, people's activity has an equal (if not more) influence on the environment itself. The awareness of this influence boosts the formation of a global concept sphere ENVIRONMENT, where the concept AIR POLLUTION exists.

Starting from the industrial revolution in Great Britain at the end of XVIII century, through the vigorous development of coal mining in XX century, the problem of air pollution has been discussed in newspapers. This fact has defined and sharpened the notion of pollution and its consequences in the English language world view. Trying to present this topic as expressive as possible, the media has been enriching the nominal sphere of AIR POLLUTION. Thus, **the relevance of this work** is stipulated by the need to identify the valuable image of the concept AIR POLLUTION as well as to study its structural and semantic peculiarities as represented by American English speaking media-resources.

**Background.** The research into global concept sphere ENVIRONMENT has involved mainly concepts adjacent to AIR POLLUTION. Scientists concentrated their attention on revealing the ways of verbalization of the notional aspect of the concepts of ECOLOGY (Бевзо, 2014) and NATURE (Пригодій, 2018), the ways of implementation of cognitive metaphors by means of the image aspect of the concepts ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE (Gong, 2019) and NATURAL DISASTER (Подуфалова, 2020), as well as analyzing axiological component of such concepts as ECOLOGICAL GLOBALIZATION (Петринська, 2015) via evaluative aspect. The notion of pollution has not been specified according to its area of influence. Instead, the concept POLLUTION itself was considered in terms of its notional component limited to the children's perception (Pruneau D. et al., 2005); whereas its image component was engaged in revealing the peculiarities of verbalizing noise in cities (Moreno-Garcia, 2021).

The concept AIR POLLUTION can be characterized as axiological, according to A. M. Prykhod'ko (Приходько, 2013, с. 45), as it reflects both national and worldwide matter of concern. Therefore, being an integral part of concept sphere ENVIRONMENT, it still needs investigating, which sets the **purpose of this work:** to reveal the structures of the concept AIR

POLLUTION that acquire axiological meaning in the subjective world view of the English language cultural group and to determine means of their verbalization. The **object** of the study is represented by the concept AIR POLLUTION, whereas the **subject** – the ways of verbalization of evaluative aspect of the concept in question.

**Materials and methods.** The present work is the case study of the evaluative component of the concept POLLUTION represented in the media discourse of American news networks such as CNN, NBC News, ABC News, Fox News Channel, and The USA Today for the last five years. Two hundred samples of texts were extracted by means of continuous sampling, thereafter they were examined for meaningful components which possess evaluative information relevant for the understanding the importance of the studied concept in the world view of American people.

The analysis presented in this work presupposes the use of two techniques: the description of cognitive operations involved in the formation of the concept as a mental structure of the notion “pollution” and the specification of valuable component of the concept. The idea of cognitive operations that are used for the analysis was introduced by J. Lakoff and M. Turner to investigate the ways of creating cognitive metaphors (Lakoff, Turner, 2003), and then adapted by S. Zhabotynska and N. Slyvka to research the modifications experienced by the speech act meanings within a particular discourse (Zhabotynska, Slyvks, 2020). These cognitive operations include **elaboration** as the specification of the information about the notion in question:

(1) *Natural gas, which typically emits less carbon dioxide than coal, is still a fossil fuel and is primarily made of methane – a significant contributor to the climate crisis* (CNN, 8 Sept, 2022). In this context, the media resource elaborates the notion of sources of air pollution by specifying the energy source (*natural gas, coal*), and the pollutant itself by indicating chemical substances that are known to be dangerous for the ozone layer (*carbon dioxide, methane*);

**extending** as attaching further information matching the context:

(2) *[Script] The climate crisis is about human security, economic security, environmental security, national security, and the very life on the planet* (ABC News, 11 Nov, 2022). The text

is extracted from J. Biden’s speech addressing UN COP27 Climate Summit to accelerate the transition from burning fossil fuels to clean energy. Emphasizing the danger of air pollution, the speaker stresses different types of security, which are affected by contaminations. Such way of lexical accumulation intensifies the urgency of the problem of climate change;

**questioning** as attaching information contradicting the context:

(3) *Ozone levels were expected to reach levels that could cause respiratory problems in sensitive individuals, [...]. Active children and adults and people with asthma and other lung diseases were advised to reduce prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion through Monday* (Fox News Channel, 6 Sept, 2022). In this case, we can notice disagreement between the negative context of shrinking of ozone layer as the reason of climate change, and following general opinion that the more ozone, the better are the climate conditions. However, the excess of ozone obviously leads to negative consequences for human health. Thus, we can see the opposition of the attitude (*good for :: bad for* and *more active :: less active*);

**combining** as a means of blending of individual pieces of information:

(4) *The world will still have demand for oil and the Gulf approach, at least in Saudi and UAE, is to produce a cleaner oil product that emits less carbon from flaring and that is more efficient in extraction methods* (CNN, 11 Nov, 2022). The text combines word combinations that belong to the economic and environmental discourses: they denote the global requirements for fossil fuels (*demand for oil, oil products*) as a supply for automobile industry as well as household, which is provided by the OPEC countries (*Saudi and UAE*). At the same time, the speaker introduces the idea of air pollution associated with fossil fuels by indicating the need to reduce the emission of pollutants (*emits less carbon, efficient extraction methods*). All together these meaningful pieces of information imply conceptual information – the need to reduce air pollution.

The next part of the analysis deals with underpinning what kind of information is mostly evaluated when talking about air pollution and discusses the involved language means, since the most expository technique of revealing the evaluating opinion of any cultural group to a phenomenon

is to analyze the constructions with evaluating connotation (evaluative predicates and other lexical means of emotions).

**Results and Discussion.** Language fixes any value feature of a concept. Moreover, cultural paradigm in linguistics presupposes that evaluative aspect is principal to notional and image ones as it traces the most relevant phenomena of the culture. Evaluative constructions used to describe air pollution reflect the ideas of English-speaking people about those realia that really matter for them and can be nominally divided into the following groups: climate, human health, scale, and sustainability. Emotionally, the speaker can express positive, neutral, and negative attitude toward the concept being described. However, negative attitude prevails when describing different aspects associated with air pollution.

Being the part of environment, **climate** issues are characterized as those having strong axiological meaning for humanity. It is the matter of global concern; therefore, it is constantly discussed in media resources. Lexically, this notion is verbalized by means of direct nomination with the noun itself (*climate*), compound nouns (*climate change*, *climate crisis*, *climate legislation*, *climate activists* etc.), complex noun constructions (*climate change concerns*, *climate crisis rate* etc.), and compound adjectives (*climate-related*, *climate-first* etc.). In the context, the notion of climate is closely connected with air pollution. This connection is often evaluated with language that describe man's activity and usually have negative connotation.

(5) ... *this week's COP26 climate summit was once again failing to produce longterm solutions to meaningfully address global climate change* (CNN, 2 Nov, 2021). The speaker criticizes the lack of people's activity in fighting and preventing climate crisis. By combining language means that belong to different discourses (*summit* – politics, *climate change* – ecology), the recipient may form an idea about the importance of the issue that is globally discussed on the highest level. At the same time, when processing information, the recipient notices a negative attitude of the speaker which highlights the failure of global community to resolve the problem of air pollution which results in global warming and climate change. Another reference to air pollution can be done with the help of extending its meaning to the pollutants affecting the climate.

(6) [Script] *Interviewer: How and what will you prioritize so that we can make the biggest dent in this crisis for people?*

*Gina McCarthy: Look, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate, but the point I'm trying to make here is that we can do it in the way that benefits people now* (ABC News, 25 Apr, 2021). The extract explicitly shows the cause-and-effect relation between air pollution, which is verbalized by indirect nomination (*greenhouse gas emissions*) elaborating the central concept to the notion that represents its reason, and climate change crisis, which is verbalized in this text elliptically (*this crisis for people*). Thus, when assessing the influence of air pollution upon the climate, media resources tend to include scientific discourse to specify the reasons of pollution, and political discourse to reflect upon its consequences and the ways to fight and prevent climate crisis.

**Human's health** is the priority for any person, that is why this topic arises the most and causes concern, which activates such aspect of air pollution as its consequences. The material suggests two constituents that are characterized as values, i.e., physical condition and mental health.

(7) ... *links to cancer like obesity, inactivity, diabetes, alcohol, smoking, environmental pollution and Western diets high in red meat and added sugars ...* (CNN, 14 Oct, 2022). In this extract, the speaker ranks environmental pollution at the same level as other reasons that provoke cancer. Thus, using words with negative connotation in a row, the speaker extends the notion of pollution to bond it with dangerous diseases, and combines it with other vocabulary which bears negative evaluation to enhance the feeling of danger and, thus, to encourage recipients to counteract.

(8) *The report, published Monday in The Lancet Planetary Health, found air pollution was significantly associated with an increased risk of hospital admissions for several neurological disorders, including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and other dementia* (The USA Today, 19 Oct, 2020). In this case, air pollution is linked to a number of mental diseases, which are presented by congenerous objects verbalized by complex noun constructions. The connection between the notion of air pollution and its consequences for health is embodied by respective verbs both in Active Voice (*cause, contribute to, increase, link to, endanger* etc.) and in Passive

Voice (*be linked to, be associated with, be related to etc.*).

The **scale** of polluting the environment is one of the most assessed issues of the concept POLLUTION. The relevance of this topic is preconditioned by the concern about the consequences of pollution both for people's health in particular and the climate in general. The scale of pollution is evaluated by means of numerals and nouns that reflect how widespread this phenomenon is. Numerals represent integers and percentage.

(9) *Long-term exposure to **ozone pollution** is responsible for **55,000** premature deaths annually in Europe, according to a 2019 study in the journal *Environmental Research Letters* (Foxnews, 19 July 2022).* In the extract, AIR POLLUTION is verbalized by elaborating the concept to the notion associated with its reason, specifying it to *ozone pollution*. The reference to the scale of pollution is represented by an integer (*55,000*) indicating the deathly consequences.

(10) *Trucks make up only **6% of vehicles** on America's roads but produce almost **60% of smog-forming emissions** and about **55% of particulate pollution** (CNN, 5 Oct, 2022).* Here, a subsequent usage of numerals, which refer to the percentage of pollution, is accompanied by the source of contaminants. It can be inferred that the global emission of pollutants by big vehicles is enormous as only 6% of American vehicles produce more than a half of air pollution within one country. Apart from numerals, the reference to the scale of air pollution is given with the help of nouns.

(11) *The outsized industry has made New Zealand unusual in that **about half of its greenhouse gas emissions** come from farms (The USA Today, 11 Oct, 2022).* The evaluation of the scale of pollution is carried out by indicating the volume of dangerous substances in the air within one country. The speaker uses the noun "half" with a complex noun construction, which contains two semes defining the reason of pollution and belonging to the same domain of global warming.

The scale of air pollution can assess both the volume of emissions and the level of spreading the consequences within one region, country, or the world in general. Their verbalization involves both nouns (common – *region, state, district, country, continent, world etc.*; proper – *the USA,*

*Australia etc.*), adjectives (*state-wide, regional, global, Hispanic etc.*) and an adverb (*worldwide*); for example:

(12) *While more than 40% of the U.S. population lived **in cities** where air pollution levels exceeded safe standards, **areas of the country** with the largest projected increases in heat-related deaths are 40% more likely to be **Black communities** (The USA Today, 26 Oct, 2022).* In this extract, we can notice the combination of references to the scale: both numeric (*40%*) and verbal. The scope of the latter includes language means denoting the country (*the U.S.*), its regions (*in cities, areas of the country*), and the race (*Black communities*).

Thus, when dealing with the concept AIR POLLUTION, namely, the scale, people tend to evaluate how much its consequences affect the environment and the health and how much this phenomenon is spread in the world. As the general estimation of AIR POLLUTION is negative, people are looking for the ways to improve the situation, thereby developing the notion of **sustainability**, or environmentally-friendly attitude. The notion of sustainability is positively evaluated and eagerly discussed by media resources with the help of appropriate vocabulary, which covers the notions of responsible attitude towards the environment, and which is represented mostly by adjectives (*environmentally-friendly, eco-friendly, climate-conscious, green, sustainable, zero-waste etc.*). So, evaluating sustainability is highly topical when discussing air pollution in terms of industrial processes and personal attitude.

(13) *He also noted that Americans 'want' more **environmentally-friendly energy sources**. "We can come up with a **greener** society much faster as Americans than the government can mandate it" (Foxnews, 23 March, 2022).* In this extract, the media resource combines two ideas – sources of energy and community, to show that fighting air pollution is a multi-sided process that involves both individuals and industries. The cognitive mechanism used to actualize AIR POLLUTION is questioning that enables the speaker to address the concept with the lexical means having opposite meaning.

(14) *So **climate-conscious** travelers may be tempted to buy an add-on to their ticket that claims **to reduce the environmental impact** of their flights (The USA Today, 17 Nov, 2022).* The speaker elaborates personal attitude, which is described

as *climate-conscious*, to particular purpose – *to reduce the environmental impact*. The latter also specifies the topic. Thus, when discussing the scale of air pollution and issue of sustainability, media resources tend to address to industrial discourse to identify the source of air pollution and to find out ways of solving this problem. At the same time, personal attitude is depicted with the vocabulary that belongs to the discourse of ecology.

**Conclusions.** The investigation of the concept AIR POLLUTION is the part of the global concept ENVIRONMENT. This work reveals axiological potential of the latter by highlighting those issues that are the matter of concern for English-speaking community on a small scale, and the world on a large scale. The issues that are mostly evaluated are climate, human health, scale, and sustainability. Cognitive mechanisms of elaboration, extending, questioning and combining contribute to their verbalization. The language involved includes lexical means, which belong to the concept sphere of AIR POLLUTION and denote both core (climate,

environment, consequences) and peripheral (health, industry, sustainability) notions. The vocabulary which is used to depict evaluated information covers emotionally neutral scientific terms, words belonging to industrial, medical and political discourses, however, their usage in the context of assessing environmental pollution, as well as their accumulation in one context, creates a negative evaluation of the concept discussed.

Climate, human health and the scale of air pollution are associated with negative emotions and are verbalized with the help of vocabulary that possesses negative connotation. The cognitive mechanisms concentrate the recipient's attention by accumulating and specifying factual information. Whereas sustainability is evaluated positively, thus, bonding the concept and this issue by their juxtaposition.

The perspective of AIR POLLUTION investigation is justified by the necessity to study its notional and image components within the general scope of the concept ENVIRONMENT.

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