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ETHNOLINGUISTIC PECULIARITIES OF INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE UNITS: MEANS OF VERBALIZING THE CONCEPT OF “RATIONALISM”

Summary. This article examines the effectiveness of describing the concept of “rationalism” in journalistic texts. Modern journalism allows changes in the collective consciousness of its readership (and its surrounding society) as reflected in a text to be followed quickly, as well as the characteristics accompanying the formation of new trends in the development of concepts based on their means of verbalization to be identified.

Despite attempts to distinguish ethnolinguistic methods for describing and analyzing material, ethnolinguistics primarily uses modern methods developed in other disciplines related to the study of semantic fields, frames, metaphors, and concepts. Accordingly, uncovering new approaches to the study of concepts from an ethnolinguistic perspective has evolved into a promising area of research at present, supplying both the purpose and objectives of this contribution.

Taking into consideration the field approach to the study of the components of verbalization, according to which lexical units, which belong to different parts of speech are united by a common conceptual field, 12 means of verbalization relating to the concept of “rationalism” such as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs were selected from lexicographical sources: nouns – *Rationalismus, Rationalist, Rationalistin, Vernunftmensch*; adjectives – *rational, rationalistisch, sinnvoll, vernünftig*; adverbs – *rational, rationalistisch, sinnvoll, vernünftig*.

Within the investigated sample all of the above-mentioned lexical units were recorded in combination with other components (568 examples) and the indicators of frequency of the means of verbalization were identified. The analysis of newspaper articles shows that the highest quantity of word uses was recorded for adjectives – 357 examples (62,8%), followed by adverbs – 136 lexical units (24%) and the lowest quantity of examples was found for nouns – 75 word uses (13,2%).

As shown by quantitative indicators of “rationalism’s” verbalization as a concept, which to date, has not been sufficiently explored, modern journalism is dominated by adjectives, which carry a significant aspect of meaning, among which those most frequent encountered are the following combinations: *rationales Verhalten, rationale Handeln, and rationale Entscheidungen*.

Key words: linguistic world image, concept, component of verbalization, ethnolinguistic analysis.

Introduction. Culture, in particular those of a spiritual nature, is closely related to forms of linguistic expression and, to some extent, highly dependent upon them. It is culture that defines people as a nation, and a nation cannot exist without a language. Although a component of culture, language also depends to a great extent upon it, expressing it through various means, responding to changes which occur within it, and evolving with it in tandem. The interaction of language and culture and investigation of this relationship as a holistic system is one of the primary objectives of ethnolinguistic analysis [5, p. 32]. As such, ethnolinguistics is that branch of science that has emerged at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies, examining manifestations of the culture of the people, reflected and embodied in their language. Hence, the main tasks of ethnolinguistics include defining and investigating the cultural significance of a language unit on the basis of its analysis as a cultural component [9, p. 8, 10–11]. It should be noted that only a verbal sign or a type of verbal activity, which includes cultural information, can be considered a subject of ethnolinguistic studies.

Ethnolinguistics studies materialized cultural objects, products, creative work, and cultural achievements embodied in the language of a particular people [5, p. 32]. Its subject area includes aspects retained in the people’s collective memory, and in their spiritual comprehension of the world as reflected in their ideas, behavioral/mental patterns, systems of ethical and aesthetic values, norms, customs, rituals, myths, beliefs, ways of life, etc. [9, p. 36–47]. Some researchers (V. Kononenko [7]) abstract the subject area of ethnolinguistics, including texts of various kinds and manifestations, taking into account the spiritual and conceptual, figurative and metaphorical, symbolic, and other knowledge as a result of human consciousness. According to M. Alefirenko, ethnolinguistics also studies spiritual and material culture that shape the linguistic world image (LWI [1, p. 32]).

Analysis of recent research and publications. Ethnolinguistics focuses on studying the national and cultural component, in the form of an LWI or linguistic identity of its capacity, so there is a need to examine the issues of national psychotype, seeing culture in a speaker and, conversely, the speaker in this culture. That is, apart from language as a translator of cultural information and culture, it also denotes a person who uses the language as a means of creating culture [9, p. 36]. Accordingly, it is important to consider all factors

that may affect the use of the language, i.e. the varying characteristics of its speakers (age, sex, level of education, culture, occupation, etc.) to the features of a certain speech act [12]. In this regard, scientists possess contrasting points of view. According to V. Kononenko, the object of ethnolinguistics lies in establishing the conditionality of culture and language depending on the linguistic competence of the individual who is a speaker of that language, and proponent (or bearer) of its (accompanying) culture [7, p. 26], whereas M. Alefirenko supports the definition of the object of ethnolinguistics derived from von Humboldt's conception of it, under which the language participates in the most important cultural processes – perception and the comprehension of reality [1, p. 17].

Thus, ethnolinguistics is situated at the intersection of several scientific disciplines, including linguistics, cultural studies, ethnography, and psycholinguistics [1, p. 17].

Despite attempts by some researchers to distinguish ethnolinguistic methods for describing and analyzing material, this branch of linguistics primarily uses the modern methods found in other sciences related to the study of *semantic fields, frames, metaphors, and concepts*.

As a result, discerning new approaches to the study of concepts from the perspective of ethnolinguistics has become a promising area **of research at present**. The authors consider it to be appropriate to conduct ethnolinguistic analysis of the concept of “rationalism”, which has yet to be sufficiently explored in modern German, based on the means of its verbalization in a selection of lexicographical sources [21–23]. Research materials include journalistic texts from the *Die Welt* newspaper [24], and a continuous sampling totaling 15 000 word uses, of which 568 cases verbalizations of the concept “rationalism”, belonging to different parts of speech such as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs were recorded.

The **methodology** of this study is predefined by its purpose and objectives. The *descriptive* method was used to characterize the indicators of frequency of the means of verbalization of “rationalism” as a concept in modern newspaper texts. The elements of *conceptual analysis*, as well as *the method of linguistic and cultural commentary* were used to study “rationalism” further as a concept, primarily through the peculiarities of its philosophical, social, political, and artistic meaning. Conversely, aspects of *distributive analysis* were utilized to determine the peculiarities of how units function in different contextual environments, and to study their compatibility.

Research results and discussion.

1. Concept as a category of ethnolinguistic analysis

Scientists have long debated the categories of ethnolinguistic analysis. In ethnolinguistic analysis, these often include: *cultural semes, cultural background, cultural inheritance, cultural traditions, cultural concepts, cultural process, cultural space, mentality, cultural values, language competence, symbol, archetype, metaphor, simile, and epithet*, all of which comprise the *ethnolinguistic field* [7, p. 111–124].

One of the most-heavily referenced terms in ethnolinguistics, and an essential component of our study is that of a *concept*. Generally, there exists a number of approaches to understanding the term [17; 18]. “Linguistic” definitions of this term tend to be based upon its psychological understanding. For example, according to O. Kubriakova, a concept is “a term that is used to explain the units of mental or psychological resources of our consciousness and the information that reflects the knowledge and experience

of the person; a meaningful memory unit, the whole world image reflected in the human psyche” [8, p. 90–93].

The idea that one's view of the world is influenced by culture is reflected in the works of a number of academics [2–4]. O. Babushkin notes in particular the ethnolinguistic peculiarities of concepts, suggesting that a concept is any discrete, meaningful unit of collective consciousness that reflects the subject of either a real or ideal world and is stored in national memory in the verbally indicated form [2]. As can be seen, the national-cultural component is common to both approaches. V. Ivashchenko introduces an ethnolinguistic (linguo-conceptual) line of reasoning to the research of concepts [6, p. 6], in which the researcher defines the mechanisms of conceptualization as well as the parameters of mental-verbal descriptions of modeling art concepts in scientific linguoconceptology.

In addition, the authors would like to draw attention to a culturological definition of the term. S. Vorkachov suggests understanding a *concept* as a unit of collective consciousness that has verbal expression and ethnocultural peculiarity [4, p. 42, 47]. Accordingly, it appears that the term *concept* should be understood and used in ethnolinguistics as the largest operating unit of the mental level as reflected in the language.

Nevertheless, linguists often debate about the verbalized (R. Jackendoff [16], O. Babushkin [2]) and partly verbalized nature (O. Kubriakova, Yu. Apresian, H. Hachev) of concepts, in addition to delimiting them from notions [quoted after 13].

According to A. Prykhodko, a notion becomes a concept only when it acquires national connotations, growing into a unit capable of measuring mentality [11, p. 95].

As current studies show, the national characteristics of concepts are best studied using the means of their verbalization, which reveal specificity of conceptualization in different world images [20].

In recent times, ever greater numbers of researchers have paid attention to the field structure of the term *concept*, highlighting its primary and peripheral components.

Summarizing the definitions mentioned above, for the purposes of the present study, a *concept* is denoted as a unit of mental and psychological resource, which expresses ethnic national characteristics. This stands in contrast to the definition of a *notion*, which is universal and, for the purposes of the present study, analyzes the features of the concept of “rationalism” in the German language. We consider it appropriate to consider the field principle (of J. Trier [19]) relating to organizing the means of verbalization of a concept, as well as O. Ohui and R. Melnyk's approach [10], according to which the means of verbalization expressed by different parts of speech have similar semantics.

In order to study mental peculiarities relating to verbalization of “rationalism” as a concept, we shall take the specificity how the verbalization of its components manifest into account, all-the-time comparing this with how “rationalism” is understood in philosophical, moral, aesthetic, and socio-political contexts.

2. Ethnolinguistic principles of verbalization relating to the concept of “rationalism”

The term “rationalism” is derived from the Latin *ratio* (mind) and indicates a philosophical and ideological setting in which the “true” reasons of being, cognition, and behavior among individuals can be found in the principles of the mind. The term “mind” migrated to philosophy from theology, where “rationalism” was defined as a direction, the proponents of which insisted on purification of religion from everything lacking a reasonable explanation, consequently subjecting tenets of faith to logical analysis [14].

Many of the man-made catastrophes of the 20th Century (the two world wars, genocide, the “moral” evolution of mankind, which has reached a deadlock, the risk of self-destruction to humanity, environmental collapse, etc.) were perceived by members of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer and Adorno, in particular) as a direct result of rationalism’s claim to preeminence in world culture. According to them, this over-extension of rationalism is a realization of the inherent human desire for domination and power. In the eyes of most critics of this line of reasoning, however, rationalism served only as a mask, or a kind of established cultural tradition under which a deeply rational human nature is hidden. The fates of both classical and non-classical versions of rationalism are inextricably linked with the historical evolution of culture in Europe [15] (and thus, with global development). The present crisis confronting culture, most likely at a tipping point in its history, severely affects the foundations of rationalism, criticism of which often acquires the attribution of “counterculture”. Therefore, modern rationalism, responding to the challenges of time, has evolved towards greater adaptability, assimilating the dialogical forms of cultural interaction, while at the same time insisting upon the fundamental role of the rational principles of human existence that are best reflected in language.

The problems associated with urbanization have become poignant for contemporary German society, as evidenced by numerous newspaper articles in such German dailies as “Bild”, “Zeit”, and “Die Welt”.

In contemporary German journalism definitions for analogous terms such as *rational*, *rationalistisch*, *sinnvoll*, and *vernünftig* appear even more often both to describe the philosophical views of certain artists, such as writers, architects, and painters, as well as to create images of a city, a street, a country, or of an entire era. This demonstrates the peculiarity inherent in the linguistic expression of key notions and culturally-predefined mentality units, as well as ethnolinguistic concepts.

Since direct observation of such changes in the collective consciousness of a certain people is possible based on the means of verbalization, the authors of the present study have elected to examine the specificity of how linguistic expression of the concept of “rationalism” manifests itself in contemporary texts published by *Die Welt*.

3. Semantic peculiarities concerning the means of verbalizing “rationalism” as a concept

Based on the analysis of modern lexicographical sources [21–23] the following lexical units denoting “rationalism” were determined: nouns – *Rationalismus*, *Rationalist*, *Rationalistin*, *Vernunftmensch*; adjectives – *rational*, *rationalistisch*, *sinnvoll*, *vernünftig*; adverbs – *rational*, *rationalistisch*, *sinnvoll*, *vernünftig*.

Within the sample, all of the above-mentioned lexical units were recorded in combination with other components (568 incidences), while indicators of frequency of the means of verbalization were identified. The analysis of newspaper articles shows that the highest quantity of word uses was recorded for adjectives – 357 incidences (62,8%), followed by adverbs – 136 lexical units (24%), with the lowest quantity of examples found for nouns – 75 word uses (13,2%). Such a small number of examples is due to the specificity of investigated lexical items, resulting in a limited number of newspaper sections, among which the dominant areas are politics (Politik) and economics (Wirtschaft).

In contemporary German society, the achievement of profit, or advantage through “rational behavior” – *rationales Verhalten*, “rational actions” – *rationale Handeln*, or “rational decisions” – *rationale*

Entscheidungen is stressed, indicated by the adjective *rational*, comprising among 72% of the adjectival structures of the concept’s expression within our sample. There were few examples of the use of the phrase *rationale Entscheidungen* to describe the situation in education with regards to the rational planning of students’ time and future, however, an example is presented below:

“An vielen Unis des Landes sind Langzeitstudierende keine Ausnahme. Fast jeder 20. Student an der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen zählt dazu. <...> Längeren Studienzeiten liegen sehr häufig **rationale Entscheidungen als Reaktion auf biografische Situation** zugrunde <...> Dies können ein Nebenjob zur Finanzierung des Studiums, ein Kind oder die Pflege von Verwandten sein [24: *Welt*: 24.03.2017]”.

As far as the use of the adverbial structures relating to the means of verbalization is concerned, the combination “*rational handeln*” (54% of all adverbs denoting “rationalism”) has grown popular, especially in political contexts. German society is traditionally characterized by its emphasis of punctuality, which can be seen as a manifestation of “exactitude” or the so-called “healthy” rationalism. These features reflect how Germans, by and large, think, along with their desire to explain events, their causes, and the behavior of others logically, particularly within political contexts. For example, in the article “*Le Pen zeigt ihr wahres Gesicht*” (“*Le Pen shows her true face*”) from 11.04.2017 the author Martina Meister makes assumptions about the rational assessment of the actions of certain politicians:

“*Es ist rational nicht nachzuvollziehen, warum Le Pen zwei Wochen vor dem ersten Wahlgang, da sie immer noch die Umfragen anführt, einen derart offensichtlichen Fehler in ihrer Logik begehen konnte* [24: *Welt*: 11.04.2017]”.

Among the nouns denoting “rationalism” the greatest frequency of examples within the analyzed sample were recorded for the word *Vernunftmensch* (49% of all investigated nouns) denoting an individual guided by common sense, moderate views, and rational actions:

“*Als Vernunftmenschen trennen wir brav den Müll, ernähren uns aus nachhaltiger Landwirtschaft und sind ständig auf der Jagd nach Stromfressern im Ständby-Modus. Und trotzdem schlägt das Herz schneller, wenn 430 Pferde im Rücken lostoben oder wenn gerade mal 4,4 Sekunden vergehen, bis die Tachonadel an der Zahl 100 vorbeischießt* [24: *Welt*: 12.11.2014]”.

In our opinion, the distribution of the use of lexical units denoting “rationalism” as evidenced in the authors’ sample can, and should be attributed to socio-political and cultural changes, as well as shifts in values readily apparent in contemporary German society, where the adjective *vernünftig* meaning “reasonable, sensible, rational”, which was popular in the late 20th century, has been overtaken by the means of verbalizing *rational*, as indicated by our analysis.

Conclusions. Modern trends in ethnolinguistics as a science and new approaches to analyzing the formation of concepts through their verbalization have enabled the authors to identify common mental features of comprehending “rationalism” in the German language. The results of this study demonstrate the effectiveness of describing “rationalism” as a concept in journalistic texts, in particular as modern journalism allows changes in the collective consciousness of the people reflected in the text to be followed quickly. Further, the characteristics of the formation of new trends in the development of concepts based on their means of verbalization can be swiftly identified.

Taking into consideration the field approach to studying the components of verbalization according to which lexical units, which belong to different parts of speech, are united by a common conceptual field, 12 means of verbalization of the concept of “rationalism” such as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs were selected from lexicographical sources.

As shown by quantitative indicators of “rationalism’s” verbalization as a concept, which to date, has not been sufficiently explored, modern journalism is dominated by adjectives, which carry a significant aspect of meaning, among which those most frequent encountered are the following combinations: *rationales Verhalten*, *rationale Handeln*, and *rationale Entscheidungen*.

With an eye to the future, the authors believe that it is advisable to analyze a continuous sample of the same volume from German magazines, apply statistical methods to determine the semantic features of the means of concept verbalization, and conduct comparative analysis into the use of these components in press publications.

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Черська Ж., Гладкоскок Л. Лінгвокультурологічні особливості дослідження мовних одиниць: засоби вербалізації концепту «Раціоналізм»

Анотація. У статті розкрито ефективність опису концепту «Раціоналізм» у журналістських текстах, оскільки сучасна журналістика дозволяє швидко простежити відображені в тексті зміни колективної свідомості людей, виявити особливості формування нових тенденцій у розвитку концептів, які ґрунтуються на їхніх засобах вербалізації.

Незважаючи на спроби окремих дослідників виокремити власне лінгвокультурологічні методи опису й аналізу матеріалу, ця галузь мовознавства здебільшого послуговується сучасними методиками інших наук, пов’язаних із дослідженнями семантичних полів, фреймів, метафор, концептів тощо. Тому застосування нових підходів до вивчення концептів у лінгвокультурологічному ракурсі стало перспективним напрямом дослідження на сучасному етапі, що зумовило мету та завдання статті.

Беручи до уваги польовий підхід щодо вивчення компонентів вербалізації, згідно з яким лексичні одиниці належать до різних частин мови і об’єднані загальним концептуальним полем та 12 засобами вербалізації концепту «Раціоналізм», як-от іменники, прикметники та прислівники, які були вибрані з лексикографічних джерел: іменники – *Rationalismus, Rationalist, Rationalistin, Vernunftmensch*; прикметники – *rational, rationalistisch, sinnvoll, vernünftig*; прислівники – *rational, rationalistisch, sinnvoll, vernünftig*.

У межах досліджуваної вибірки зафіксовано всі вищезгадані лексичні одиниці у сполученні з іншими компонентами (568 прикладів), виявлено частотні показники сумісної вживаності засобів вербалізації. Аналіз газетних статей показує, що найбільше слововживань зафіксовано для прикметників – 357 прикладів (62,8%), за ними слідує прислівники – 136 лексичних одиниць (24%), найменше прикладів визначено для іменників – 75 випадків слововживань (13,2%).

Як свідчать кількісні показники вербалізації досі не дослідженого концепту «Раціоналізм», у сучасній публіцистиці переважають прикметники як носії сигніфікативного аспекту значення, з-поміж яких найчастотнішою виявилася сполучуваність *rationales Verhalten, rationale Handeln, rationale Entscheidungen*.

Ключові слова: мовна картина світу, концепт, компонент вербалізації, лінгвокультурологічний аналіз.