

# “UKRAINE’S IMAGE VERBALISATION IN MODERN ENGLISH MASS MEDIA DISCOURSE”



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## ABSTRACT

The research is focused on the analysis of Ukraine's image verbalisation in modern English mass media discourse. Findings show that lexical-semantic and syntactical means play the leading role in Ukraine's image foregrounding in the world. Data testify for the fact that modern English mass media discourse abounds in lexis of negative connotation, the majority of verbs and nouns used to give an account of what is happening in Ukraine are related to conflict, corruption, politics; the only domain where Ukraine has an established and recognised positive image is culture. The researched material demonstrates high frequency use of the adverb *hardly* that belongs to intensifiers and has a negative meaning. Such adverbs as *violently*, *suddenly*, *irredeemably* add emphasis to the statement and explicitly reinforce negative evaluation. In the aspect of word formation we observe a large amount of verbs and derivatives with prefixes *dis-*, *mis-*, *over-*, *un-*, *under-* which all have negative meaning. Such tropes as epithets where we differentiate descriptive-evaluative epithets and occasionally-associated epithets, among the latter group we point out metaphoric, metonymic, hyperbolic epithets; metaphors (physiological, fitomorphic, morbid, military, sport, criminal, theatrical), metonymy, simile, and syntactical figures of speech such as reiteration and syntactical parallelism are in active use in modern English mass media discourse to intensify emotional response on addressee's part and to form Ukraine's image.

## Keywords:

modern English mass media discourse,  
Ukraine's image verbalization,  
figure of speech,  
epithet,  
metaphor,  
metonymy,  
addressee.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays discourse studies belong to one of the most productive linguistic research areas. In spite of the high philologists' interest to the notion *discourse* its interpretation is still multiple-valued and in many works is determined by the research tasks. In modern society where the key driving force is information, the main discourse that actualizes movement of the social thought and forms a person's conceptual world view is mass media discourse. As Abdulmalik Ali points out: "Media discourse has the social power to influence recipients and shape their ideological beliefs". (1p133) We share the point of view of Abramova and define mass media discourse as a socio - cognitive and socio-regulatory mechanism, directly aimed at social self-cognition and social construction, and at objectification and modelling of social consciousness (objectified in the aggregate publicly stated texts of society reflection on its reality and activities) and public opinion (evaluative judgments regarding social reality and activities) through production, distribution and regular delivery of socially significant meanings and evaluations to general public. (2p18)

Mass media discourse has the following characteristic features of: (1) openness and focus on socially high-profile facts and their conceptual and emotional consideration, (2) open social evaluation that enables to have a modelling effect, (3) an open worldview, providing representation of social-evaluative judgments (opinions) and an ideological support of debated public ideas and social projects offered by the society, (4) evaluative and ideological modality and the strategy of focusing related to it, that is, adjusting the focus of thoughts on certain fragments of social practices, and the evaluation strategy, (5) the political and ideological modus of thought formation and formulation, information content, and its encoding, (6) use of eclectic tools and techniques to represent social reality, (7) fragmented worldview, reflecting the nature, form, and the syntax of a popular social thought. (3). The objective of the research is to analyse lexical and stylistic peculiarities of Ukraine's image foregrounding in modern English mass media discourse. The subject matter is modern English mass media discourse. The specific topic of the study is lexical and stylistic devices employed to form Ukraine's image in modern English mass media discourse.

The key principle of modern mass media discourse is the detailed consideration of the addressee's factor. Its main function is the formation of a peculiar world model in the addressee's consciousness. And in this aspect evaluation comes to the fore. Bednarek sees evaluation as "a significant element of our lives: as a device for interpreting the world and offering this evaluation to others, it pervades human behaviour: when we interact with the world around us, we perceive, categorize and evaluate what we encounter. Our short-term evaluations may then turn into long-term values, which are as important to our lives as our beliefs". (4p4) The most important feature of evaluation is that it always comprises a subjective factor that interrelates with the objective one. The subjective component presupposes positive or negative attitude of the subject of evaluation to its object, whereas the objective (descriptive) component of the evaluation is focused on phenomena's attributes that are the basis of evaluation. Al-Hindawi and Al-Ebadi are sure that "news discourse is produced with some degree of subjective intervention". (5p114)

The analysis of the researched material proves that Ukraine's image foregrounding is based on evaluation.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material of the research is the newspaper articles published online in American and English newspapers since January 2016 to August 2017. Methods of the research are

stipulated by the tasks and analysed material and comprise: induction that determined the area of the research starting from the accumulation of the linguistic material to its systematisation and pointing out peculiarities of linguistic units functioning; methods of implicational and presuppositional analysis to identify the intentional focus of the discourse units; discourse analysis that foresees study of the key structural-compositional and notional parameters of modern English mass media discourse; method of communicative and functional analysis with the help of which the axiological elements of the modern English mass media discourse were differentiated, semantical-syntactical and stylistic methods which enable to study out main lingual features of modern English mass media discourse.

## III. RESULTS

Conducting the research we questioned the combination of the lexemes *Ukraine* and *Ukrainian* in modern English mass media discourse. Data show that the most commonly used word combinations follow the structure **Ukrainian + Noun, Ukraine('s) + Noun** and refer to the political, economic, military and cultural domain.

For example: *Ukrainian resistance/troops/army/military/citizenship/president/politics/parliament/oligarchs/law/authorities/nationalists/politicians/investigation/independence/public/television/culture/claim/ youth/singer/film/cities/town.Ukraine officials, Ukraine's forces/future.*

There are also less used word combinations where the adjective *Ukrainian* is in a row with some other adjectives before the noun. The structures are **Adjective + Ukrainian + Noun** or **Ukrainian + Adjective + Noun, Ukrainian + Noun(s) + Noun** and **Ukraine('s) + Adjective + Noun**.

For example: *current Ukrainian government, conflicting Ukrainian vision, the Ukrainian security service, the Ukrainian migration service, the Ukrainian national energy company, Ukrainian military summer camp, Ukrainian national holiday.*

*Ukraine's national colours, Ukraine's widespread corruption, Ukraine's ultrawealthy steel and natural gas tycoons.*

The analysed material shows that in modern English mass media discourse Ukraine's image formation ensues on the use of words emotiveness of which depends on associations and responses connected with denotation. These are such words as: *independence, freedom, dignity, fight, war, corruption, struggle, failure* etc.

For example: *The bureau (the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine) was created to comply with International Monetary Fund requirements to fight corruption, and the president cannot fire its leaders* (Kramer, 2017).

*At a time when the country is embroiled in a war that has seen Russia-backed rebels take control of an eastern chunk of the country, the law does not seem to work to consolidate society, but rather the opposite* (Walker, 2016).

The word *fear* that directly names "an unpleasant emotion or thought that you have when you are frightened or worried by something dangerous, painful or bad that is happening or might happen" (6) is also in active use.

For example: *Shortly after, other landfills began refusing the city's waste, allegedly out of fear of a similar catastrophe repeating itself* (Peleschuk, 2017).

Exceptionally influential in the aspect of image making of the country are slang expressions such as *kickbacks* or *cover* which became known to every Ukrainian since the late 1990s.

For example: *State property in Rivne was being reassigned to the intelligence service, which was selling it to businessmen who then developed it and paid kickbacks to the intelligence officials* (Judah, 2017).

*When Ukraine's widely respected economy minister resigned in February 2016 (along with his entire team), he said he did not want to provide "cover" for government corruption and pointed a finger at people close to Poroshenko* (Judah, 2017).

Mazlum states that "words have a powerful effect. They have the power to make an action or an idea un/justifiable" (7p167). The analysis of the modern English mass medial discourse shows that the majority of verbs used to give an account of what is happening in Ukraine is related to the conflict, corruption, politics. They comprise such verbs as *to ban, to block, to struggle, to fail, to die, to kill, to lock, to manipulate*.

For example: *Several Ukrainian politicians spoke in favour of the ban amid the simmering conflict with Russian-backed separatists, which has killed at least 10,000 people since 2014* (Luhn, 2017).

*As is often the case in Ukraine – an ex-Soviet republic that has struggled to adopt a transparent democracy – politics is part of the picture* (Peleschuk, 2017).

The researched material demonstrates that modern English mass media discourse abounds in lexis of negative connotation. In the aspect of word formation we observe a large amount of verbs and derivatives with the prefix *over-* the meaning of which "is too much".

For example: *Today, about a third of Lviv's waste collection sites are full, their contents often found overflowing across streets and pavements – and people worry about what the coming warm months will mean for the piles of waste* (Peleschuk, 2017).

*"We came to understand that we could become overtaken by garbage," he says* (Peleschuk, 2017).

Prefixes *un-* (the meaning is "not"), *under-* (the meaning is "insufficient"), *mis-* (the meaning is "wrongly"), *dis-* (the meaning is "opposite action or state") are also in active use to form an undoubtedly unfavourable image of Ukraine.

For example: *Chronic underfunding from both the state budget and investors has resulted in the lack of an efficient waste management strategy* (Peleschuk, 2017).

*The current template for peace, the second version of the so-called Minsk accords, has not been implemented and is unpopular among Ukrainians* (Judah, 2017).

*Though the revolution was set off in part by disgust at the corruption and systematic abuses of power of the Yanukovich government, no senior officials from before or after the revolution have been tried for misusing funds or for the deaths of those shot during the revolt* (Judah, 2017).

Data analysis of modern English mass media discourse demonstrates that the only domain where Ukraine has an established and recognised positive image is culture. It is foregrounded through lexical units with positive connotation.

*Much of Kiev's new cultural thrust has been in response to recent tumult* (Lepeska, 2016).

*Pinchuk Art Centre, perhaps the country's top independent art space, now positions "mediators" in every room of its four-floor gallery space – young art students who speak Ukrainian, Russian, and English and answer questions from visitors* (Lepeska, 2016).

Adverbs belong to a potent means of forming either positive or negative evaluation. Adverb *hardly* belongs to intensifiers and has a negative meaning. The researched material demonstrates high frequency use of the adverb *hardly* in reference to Ukraine.

For example: *Our guide tried to calm fears about our exposure to radiation by assuring us that any high levels on our body would be detected by the machines we had to pass through on the way out of Chernobyl's exclusion zone. Those machines – old Soviet steel contraptions that look like retro airport metal detectors – hardly inspire confidence* (Reed, 2017).

*Opinion polls show that hardly any politicians in the current government and parliament are popular, so further unrest could create opportunities for radicals and nationalists to destabilize the political system* (Judah, 2017).

The use of the intensifier *exceptionally* is sure to raise the emotiveness of the discourse and facilitate the evaluation.

*"It's clearly up to a combination of not only economic but also political reasons that the size of Ukrainian immigration has become exceptionally huge," said Jakub Binkowski, an immigration expert at the Polish Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers* (Bartyzel, 2017).

Such adverbs as *violently, suddenly, irredeemably* add emphasis to the statement and explicitly reinforce negative evaluation.

For example: *The move codified a phenomenon known as Leninopad, or "Lenin-fall", which saw hundreds of monuments of the Soviet leader violently and suddenly toppled by Ukrainian nationalists* (Teicher, 2017).

*And in a broader sense, they underscore the dangers that lurk for foreigners who, tempted by potentially rich payoffs, cast their lot with politicians in countries that at best have different laws about money in politics, and at worst are, like Ukraine in those years, irredeemably corrupt* (Kramer, 2017).

Degrees of comparison of adjectives and adverbs and the construction "*the + adjective in the comparative degree..... the + adjective in the comparative degree....*" represent the explicit evaluation that can be either positive or negative.

For example: *On the other hand, the longer the territories remain completely cut off from Kiev, the greater the likelihood that, sooner or later, they will be annexed by Russia or develop an independent identity, which would make it very hard for them to be reintegrated into Ukraine* (Judah, 2017).

*Odessa may not exactly leap to mind as a hotbed for book lovers – it is perhaps better known globally for its "mail-order bride" industry* (Eden, 2017).

*In Bessarabska Square, meanwhile, the pedestal where Lenin once stood remains empty, perhaps the clearest sign of all that when it comes to Ukraine's future there are more questions than answers* (Teicher, 2017).

Axiological linguistic means utilized in modern English mass media discourse play a crucial role in establishing Ukraine's image all around the world. Epithets occupy a prominent position among other figures of speech. Expressiveness of mass media discourse is targeted on addressee's influence in order to form a preferable public opinion and impel masses to action.

The linguistic analysis of modern English mass media discourse shows that the characteristic feature of it is the vast amount of descriptive-evaluative epithets. This type of epithets focuses on some essential attribute of a referent in a certain situation.



For example: *Locals complain of huge potholes, pricey public services, and no parking* (Lepeska, 2016).

*Bold young artists, promoters, entrepreneurs and officials have quietly begun to transform this city of three million into a hotbed of urban creativity, with innovative theatre, outdoor concerts and food events, a slew of smart bars and cafes, and a flowering of film production and appreciation* (Lepeska, 2016).

In the aspect of Ukraine's image verbalization modern English mass media discourse abounds in occasionally-associated epithets where metaphoric epithets come forth. Metaphoric epithets are characterized by the implicit object of comparison.

For example: *The move comes after the actor received citizenship in Russia, which has backed separatists in a simmering conflict in eastern Ukraine* (Lyhn, 2017).

*Though his popularity has declined steadily, Poroshenko stabilized an economy in freefall, secured loans from the International Monetary Fund, prevented Russian-backed rebellions in vulnerable regions such as Odessa, and above all created a serious military force out of the weak and disorganized one he inherited* (Judah, 2017).

*Ukraine's elections are not until 2019, but RUSI's Eyal said that Ukraine's weak economy and ongoing military conflict meant that he doubts "we will get there without any surprises"* (Smith, 2017).

*The condition and location of the Lenins, Mr. Ackermann said, were telling, but insufficient alone to create a truly illuminating portrait of Ukraine*. (Teicher, 2017).

Metonymic epithets are characterized by "overlapping" of direct word meaning with its transferred meaning on the basis of contiguity.

For example: *The monument's fire pit is supposed to hold an eternal flame, but due to funding issues it now only burns on the biggest national holidays* (Morris, 2017).

Hyperbolic epithets are also widely used to form Ukraine's image.

For example: *Then they realized that the local branch of Ukraine's intelligence services was at the center of a huge scam*. (Judah, 2017).

*The three years since then have been among the most difficult in the recent history of Ukraine, with Russian military aggression and enormous economic losses aggravated by corruption* (Kyrylenko, 2017).

Analysed data prove that modern English mass media discourse is saturated with metaphors. Metaphor is not only "a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish", but "is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action". (8p4) Ayassrah and Alidmat define a metaphor as "a way of depicting something by calling it something else" and they point out that a metaphor "is not only a core concept in literary studies, but also a prevalent companion in everyday language". (9p136) Modern cognitive linguistics views metaphor not only as a trope, the primary goal of which is to make our speech more eloquent and florid, but to mode the way of thinking. In the course of communication, metaphor comes as a potent means of influencing the addressee's intellect, emotions and will. Philological studies offer a diverse classification of metaphors. In our research we follow the classification presented by Chudinov. (10)

Data analysis makes it clear that the image of Ukraine in the minds of thousands of addressees all around the world is formed via such types of metaphors as:

Physiological metaphors

*On the other hand, there is a demotivating brain drain to contend with* (Eden, 2017).

Zoomorphic metaphors

*Unemployment hovers at around 10%, and the economy is still sluggish* (Lepeska, 2016).

Fitomorphic metaphors

*... and a flowering of film production and appreciation* (Lepeska, 2016).  
*... a hotbed of urban creativity ...* (Lepeska, 2016).

Morbial metaphors

*Corruption remains deeply endemic* (Lepeska, 2016).  
*The Ukrainian city of Lviv – long noted for its Habsburg-era buildings and vibrant cafes – is in the throes of a trash crisis* (Peleschuk, 2017).

Military metaphors

*They are children of war and over the last three years, their lives have been lived to a background of shots and explosions* (Kyrylenko, 2017).

*Occasionally, as in January of this year, there is a major flare-up of fighting*. (Judah, 2017).

Sport metaphors

*After Trump's election, Michael McFaul, former U.S. ambassador to Russia, called Ukraine the "biggest loser in the world tonight"* (Smith, 2017).

Criminal metaphors

*According to Daria Kaleniuk, who runs the Anti-Corruption Action Centre, an influential NGO in Kiev, a crucial change since the revolution is that it is far harder to hide misdeeds* (Judah, 2017).

Theatrical metaphors

*While its nationwide support remains in single digits, Samopomich has built a loyal following and its members have staged high profile protests against the government* (Peleschuk, 2017).

As they say: "Facts are stubborn things". The vast majority of metaphors used in modern English mass media discourse form quite a negative image of Ukraine as of a country in war, with unstable economy, and thriving corruption.

Simile as a figure of speech, which presents the direct comparison of two things, serves the purpose of establishing the evaluation in the addressee's mind.

For example: *The war against graft is as hard as the one against Russia* (Ukraine is struggling with corruption, sometimes successfully, 2017).

Research proves that syntactical means are as effective as lexical and semantic means in forming positive or negative evaluation. Conversion reinforces the evaluation conveyed by lexical units.

For example: *So vexing is the situation that officials have floated the idea of sending waste into the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, although such proposals are unlikely to gain significant traction* (Peleschuk, 2017).

Reiteration and syntactical parallelism are employed in modern English mass media discourse to intensify emotional response on addressee's part.

For example: *Mr Kolomoisky must explain in court why the interests of the few trump the interests of the many* (Ryanair drops plans to serve Ukraine, 2017).

*The answer is that too many politicians are doing too well and are wary of reforms that could send them to jail* (Judah, 2017).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Data show that toponyms as well as evaluative lexis are a steady resource of image coining. Such toponyms as Chernobyl, Pripyat, Hrybovychi are deeply rooted in the minds of millions of people all around the world and connected with the disasters. They stir anxiety, uneasiness and worry.

For example: *Today, visitors can stand across the street from the damaged reactor at Chernobyl, which recently was covered by a huge, \$2.3bn (£1.7bn) shield. But the highlight of the tour is, by far, the crumbling city of Pripyat. Though tour operators are warned to stay out of Pripyat's buildings, tourists routinely stomp through the city, including the hospital where dying first responders were taken* (Reed, 2017).

*Sadovyy's opponents say he is playing politics to cover for city hall's incompetence, particularly its failure to seek alternative methods of rubbish disposal before last year's fire at the landfill in the village of Hrybovychi* (Peleschuk, 2017).

Ukraine is an independent state with its own national language – the Ukrainian language. The linguistic norm requires that the Ukrainian toponyms were translated into English on the basis of their phonemic structure. It means that the capital of Ukraine should be written as *Kyiv*, but in no way as *Kiev*. The analysis of modern English mass media discourse shows that no matter how hard Ukraine is struggling to shake free from the former colonial past, for vast majority of foreign journalists *Kyiv* was and remains *Kiev*. Unfortunately, they ignore the established rules and refer to the capital of Ukraine as it was 20 years ago when Russian version of pronunciation was the one that counted.

For example: *Whether to provide more substantial weaponry to Kiev's beleaguered forces has embroiled American policy makers for several years* (Schmitt, Kramer, 2017).

*Mr. Tillerson's strongly worded statement, issued at a news conference in Kiev alongside President Petro O. Poroshenko of Ukraine, seemed to insist that Moscow withdraw Russian troops and heavy weapons from eastern Ukraine and return Crimea, the Black Sea territory that Russia annexed in 2014 — though Mr. Tillerson never specifically mentioned that disputed peninsula by name* (Sanger, 2017).

*The country's capital, Kiev, is at the forefront of a powerful new wave of creativity* (Lepeska, 2016).

The more striking is the fact that the other toponyms and the proper names mentioned in the articles are conveyed according to their Ukrainian phonemic structure. For example: Lviv, Rivne, Petro Poroshenko, Volodymyr Holubnychy, Andriy Sadovyy.

*Petro Poroshenko and Mikheil Saakashvili were two ambitious young men at Kiev's Taras Shevchenko University in the late 1980s* (Ukraine strips one of its president's rivals of his citizenship, 2017).

*In other instances, claims Lviv's mayor, Andriy Sadovyy, landfills have been ordered by central authorities not to accept deliveries of trash from his city* (Peleschuk, 2017).

*Rivne, a town of a quarter-million people in western Ukraine, a four-hour drive from Kiev, is a good place to take stock of this ambivalent progress* (Judah, 2017).

This fact leaves the question open whether the use of *Kiev* instead of *Kyiv*, is just a conventional way of spelling used by journalists, or whether it has much deeper implications.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The conducted research shows that the image of Ukraine presented in modern English mass media discourse is ambivalent. On the one hand the image of Ukraine is associated with war conflict, corruption, politics, and on the other hand Ukraine shows remarkable development in cultural sphere. This fact is traced explicitly in the combination of the lexemes *Ukraine* and *Ukrainian* where the most commonly used word combinations follow the structure **Ukrainian + Noun, Ukraine('s) + Noun**. In modern English mass media discourse the image of Ukraine is formed with the help of the words emotiveness of which depends on associations and responses connected with denotation. These are such words as: *independence, freedom, dignity, fight, war, corruption, struggle, failure* etc. Undeniably negative connotation have slang expressions *kickbacks* and *cover* which Ukrainians became aware of since the late 1990s. The analysis of modern English mass medial discourse shows that the majority of verbs used to give an account of what is happening in Ukraine are related to the conflict, corruption, politics. They comprise such verbs as *to ban, to block, to struggle, to fail, to die, to kill, to lock, to manipulate*. The researched material demonstrates high frequency use of the adverb *hardly* that belongs to intensifiers and has a negative meaning. Such adverbs as *violently, suddenly, irredeemably* add emphasis to the statement and explicitly reinforce negative evaluation. In the aspect of word formation we observe a large amount of verbs and derivatives with prefixes *dis-, mis-, over-, un-, under-* which also convey negative meaning.

Modern English mass media discourse is rich in tropes. Epithets that belong to the axiological linguistic means are a potent source of image verbalization. We differentiate descriptive-evaluative and occasionally-associated epithets. Occasionally-associated epithets comprise metaphoric, metonymic, hyperbolic epithets. Metaphor as the inherent attribute of thinking and speaking is very efficient in Ukraine's image foregrounding. The research enables to differentiate physiological, fitomorphic, morbid, military, sport, criminal, theatrical metaphors. Metonymy and simile are also actively used. Syntactical figures of speech represented in modern English mass media discourse comprise reiteration and syntactical parallelism to intensify emotional response on addressee's part and to form Ukraine's image.

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