

## LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF MODERN ENGLISH TEXTS OF PUBLICISTIC STYLE

*I. O. Zelena, PhD (Pedagogy), Associate Professor of the Department  
of Foreign Languages, State institution "South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University  
named after K. D. Ushynsky" (Odesa, Ukraine)*

e-mail: zsa777green@ukr.net  
ORCID: 0000-0001-5307-9179

*The article deals with lexical and semantic features of modern English journalism. The purpose of the paper is to reveal lexical and semantic features of modern English texts of publicistic style (based on National Geographic). There has been given a brief overview of publicistic style, outlined its functions, namely informational, influencing, expressive and emotive. It has been concluded that publicistic style absorbs features of other functional styles mainly due to the fact of intertwining and interaction of language styles. Such style-forming features of publicistic style as evaluativeness, passion, emotionality, conciseness of expression, communicative and pragmatic focus on their recipients have been emphasized. To enhance the expressiveness and emotionality of the author's intentions, various lexical and semantic features of the organization of a publicistic text have been considered, namely epithets, metaphors, stylistic comparisons, insert constructions and clichés, inversions etc. The article also gives brief summarized data on the frequency of usage of the stylistic tropes and the figures showing the most productive and the least productive forms.*

**Key words:** *modern English journalism, lexical and semantic features, publicistic style, stylistic devices.*

**Introduction.** Due to the great potential of modern English publicism and its great impact upon the diverse audience, the study of the specifics of the language of the media is today one of the major tasks, since the development of technical innovations is accompanied by a huge increase in the amount of information. Considering the fact that the latest terminology and the use of figurative vocabulary acquire special significance for publicism, as its most important property is a noticeable sensitivity to the requirements of the time, there is a need to reveal the characteristic features of the publicistic style. Various aspects of the problem under study have been the focus of research, in particular defining the functions and peculiarities of publicistic style (V. Kukharenko, A. Khudolii, L. Yefimov, O. Yasinetskaya,), its semantic and stylistic features (N. Hlinka, O. Yeskin), emotive and expressive appeal of publicistic style (O. Filimonova, A. Nikolenko, O. Yemelyanova, Yu. Yurko and other).

**The relevance of research** is determined by an insufficiently complete systematic description of lexical and semantic features of publicistic style in terms of practical application of the language. Despite the fact that magazines are gradually becoming the subject of the humanitarian research due to expansion of international relations, their lexical and semantic peculiarities haven't been revealed properly in the recent scientific literature. In this context, the analysis of lexical and semantic features of modern English publicism should be the focus of linguistic studies.

Thus, the **purpose** of the paper is to reveal lexical and semantic features of modern English texts of publicistic style (based on National Geographic).

To achieve the purpose, the following objectives were set: to give an overview of publicistic style, to clarify its functions, to disclose the emotive and expressive aspect of publicistic style, to reveal lexical and semantic features peculiar to modern English texts of publicistic style and to determine the frequency of their use.

**Methods.** The method of continuous sampling has been applied to select the actual material for the research; the method of semantic and stylistic analysis has been used to identify lexical and semantic features and compile a typical inventory of publicistic style; the statistical

method made it possible to determine the frequency of use of the stylistic devices, i. e. to establish certain statistical parameters of publicistic style.

Firstly, it is worth to define the general peculiarities of journalism and the main features of publicistic style in particular.

V. Kukharenko states that publicistic style can be considered as a variant of scientific style, which in contrast to a purely scientific text is accessible, fascinating, simple and clear, contains a large number of stylistic devices, however is characterized by a limited use of terminology [1, p. 127].

According to the classification of functional styles developed by L. Yefimov and O. Yasinetskaya, publicistic style belongs to the group of bookish ones, as it has its own structure, thus there can be distinguished the oratory style (speeches, lectures, reports), the style of radio and television programs, the style of essays and journalistic articles [2, p. 20].

Numerous studies [3; 4; 5] pay attention to the crucial functions of publicistic style, namely, informational and influencing. The task of publicism is to create public opinion, instruct and call for action. This establishes such important style-forming features of publicistic style as evaluativeness, passion and emotionality. The expressive function of language allows the speakers to express their feelings. The publicistic text usually reflects the personality of the author, differs explicitly in expression and emotion in the context of the author's attitude to the facts presented. The aesthetic function of a publicistic text is the author's intention to deliver the message in a way which would satisfy the aesthetic sense of the addressee.

According to O. Yemelyanova and Yu. Yurko, the main feature of the English publicistic discourse is the inseparable unity of informative and influential functions. This is what determines the priority of emotiveness in the content structure of such types of texts. The desire to achieve maximum expressiveness becomes a main motif in the search of emotive means of the language that can create an emotional effect and cause in the reader's mind an appropriate emotional response. This task can be achieved by means of involving various expressive means of the language. Emotiveness in contemporary English publicistic discourse is an effective means of speech influence and is presented by the selection and classification of facts and phenomena in their description at a certain angle, by the distribution of evaluative information, and by the ratio of negative and positive details in specific linguistic means [3, p. 257].

O. Filimonova [4] emphasizes that due to the combination of the characteristics of logical reasoning and appeal to emotions, coverage of events and facts by the media requires sound reasoning and compliance with the logical presentation of opinion, and on the other hand, the expression of the author's attitude to information requires the use of emotional language. Appeal to emotions is achieved through the use of words with emotional semantics, appropriate connotations, the use of images and other stylistic means similar to emotional prose. Thus, the combination of expression and certain standards is the most important feature of publicistic style.

Furthermore, it's crucial to identify and explore the peculiarities of the publicistic style in comparison with other styles. This type of language is characterized by clarity, objectivity, accuracy, logic of presentation, emotive and expressive appeal, a limited number of terminology and abstract concepts.

Given the fact that works of a publicistic nature are addressed to a wide range of readers, the main criterion for the selection of linguistic means is general clarity. The publicistic style is an open system of linguistic means, which allows journalists to refer to elements of other functional styles and, depending on the content of the publication, use a variety of vocabulary.

Meanwhile, A. Nikolenko states that the accuracy and logic of presentation in the texts of publicistic style should in no case constrain stylistic mobility, emotionality and expressiveness, the use of stylistic and linguistic devices, as well as constant interaction with other functional styles [5, p. 114].

A. Khudolii pays attention to the fact that publicistic style is characterized by conciseness of expression. This feature becomes a key and integral language tool at the same time, as the

texts of publicistic style are characterized by communicative and pragmatic focus on their recipients, and therefore are extremely informative and have a clear pragmatic attitude [6, p. 18].

N. Hlinka and O. Yeskin [7] studying the linguistic features of the texts of the “National Geographic” magazine come to the conclusion that the semantic and stylistic features of the organization of a publicistic text include the use of the following devices, in particular epithets, metaphors, stylistic comparisons, figurative expressions, cliches, metonymy etc., the purpose of which is to enhance the expressiveness and emotionality of the authorial intentions.

The vocabulary of publicistic style is distinguished by thematic diversity and stylistic richness. On a general neutral background, the evaluative lexical and phraseological means attract special attention. Admittedly, the publicistic style instantly adopts new concepts and corresponding words and phrases reflecting social and political processes in the country and the world, i. e. the use of speech standards and cliches in publicistic style deserves special attention.

Thus, the following main lexical and semantic features peculiar to publicistic style are as follows: conciseness of presentation, selection of language tools; the use of expressive means of speech, terminological vocabulary, cliches etc.; emotional and expressive appeal; combining the features of publicistic style with the features of other styles. Furthermore, publicistic style absorbs features of other functional styles mainly due to the fact of intertwining and interaction of language styles.

The study made it possible to identify a number of lexical and semantic features peculiar to modern English texts of publicistic style (based on National Geographic) [8]. Thus, considering the aforementioned lexical and semantic features of the publicistic text are as follows:

– the use of epithets which transmit in the publicistic texts various shades of expression, however the degree of expression frequently depends on a wider context: *the first full-scale assessment, the pervasive spread, the ultimate solution, densely populated urban areas, a never-before-documented flower, the tiny purple-and-white flower, one-inch-long flower, a cluster of four white, pollen-bearing stamens, a sharp distinctive odor, have a pungent smell and sharp taste, unchecked populations of deer, multiple, daisy-like heads, a few scattered populations, a harmful weed, garlicky, oniony taste, a dramatic improvement, nutritious invader, a tree-planting campaign, long-term funding, harsh conditions, unforeseen pollution;*

– moderate application of metaphors, which are one of the means of creating expression, thus, they act as indicators of the author’s attitude to the content of the article. Metaphor in a publicistic text is a widely used linguistic tool, and according to O. Filimonova, is one of the dominants of speech [4, p. 252]. This is due to its high evaluative potential, its imagery, i. e. the ability to effectively implement the author’s intention and influence the audience. As for the use and functioning of metaphor in different language styles, namely publicistic, the metaphor flexibly reflects the cognitive processes that take place in society and literature: *mere conveyor belts of plastics, botanical invader (garlic mustard), this weedy troublemaker, a trash-eating machine, native competitors, to repel the invader, nutritious invader;*

– stylistic comparisons/similes when an image is created by comparing one object with another by means of comparative conjunctions as, as if, exactly, as if and the like, or it can also be expressed by the verbs seems, resembles, looks like, as well as comparative inversions or subordinate comparative inversions: *rosette-like leaves, garlic mustard like other members of its family..., sunflower roots typically extend twice as deep as those of corn and soybeans, like many sunflower relatives, just like dogs descended from wolves, common crops like corn, wheat, and sunflowers, daisy-like heads;*

– abundant use of inversions in order to achieve expressiveness and emotionality in modern English publicism: *Just like dogs descended from wolves, common crops like corn, wheat, and sunflowers evolved, with human help, from wild varieties of plants growing in a range of environments, from wetlands to deserts. After two years, the plot of land given a boost from coffee showed a dramatic improvement. In the coffee-fueled plot, trees were also four times taller on average, soil samples were more nutrient-rich, and invasive grasses had been*

*eliminated. Already capable of growing in harsh conditions, sunflowers have the potential to withstand even more;*

– the use of detachments: The tree, *related to mint and originally from Africa*, is one of the world's most critically endangered tree species. The plant produces an abundance of glucosinolates, a family of sulfur-containing chemicals present in many types of mustards, which generally have a pungent smell and sharp taste. garlic mustard does produce significant amounts of hydrogen cyanide – *the well-known toxic gas* – when its leaves are cut or bitten into. Eighty percent of the plot was covered by young tree canopy, some trees already 15 feet – *including tropical species that can grow as tall as 60 feet* – versus just 20 percent in the untreated plot. A tree-planting campaign with stable, long-term funding – *whether federal or private* – could provide nurseries the certainty they need to ramp up production, experts agreed;

– the use of phrasal verbs is a characteristic feature of publicistic style, as the main purpose of the publicistic text is popularization of scientific knowledge: *chip away, mow down, pick up, shrivel up, interfere with, lag behind, rely on, pair well with, ramp up, scale up;*

– inserts and constructions are widely used for coherence and sequence of the text: *in all, as far as..., importantly, meanwhile, however;*

– the use of hyperbole: *plastic trash issue exploded in the last decade, conditions may chip away at sunflower populations, plant explosion;*

– at the lexical level there could be also observed a wide use of terminology: *woody ecosystem, native habitat, ocean floor, native habitat, glucosinolates, symbiotic mycorrhizal fungi, excreted by, to draw nutrients from the soil, genetically resilient plants, produce noxious chemicals, eradicate, pollinate, environmentally resilient cultivars, herbivores, decomposing bacteria, flourish in the soil, resistant to diseases, fatty acid compositions, increase their Vitamin E content, tree canopy, versus, to rust pathogens, coffee pulp;*

– the use of cliches: *the research underscores, the study also reinforces, marine scientists and other experts have long argued, separate groups of scientists concluded that..., literally, most of the research focused on, analysis of rivers and other freshwater systems has lagged behind, the researchers also took into account, as far as the plant scientists, to complicate matters, in the coming weeks, to the best of our knowledge, there certainly is no record of, from a standpoint of actual extinction, to meet such an ambitious goal, to call attention to, accumulating research suggests, as the study found.*

**The results and discussion.** To determine the frequency of the use of stylistic devices in a publicistic text, 249 examples of the use of stylistic tropes were selected by the method of continuous sampling. Among them, the most frequent and productive form were epithets, which accounted for about 17,7 % of all cases (44 units) and terminology 16,5 % (41 units). Inversions were the next most productive form, about 15,7 % of all cases (39 units). The third most frequently used were detachments – 14,8 % (37 units) and cliches 11,2 % (28 units). The next devices in terms of their frequency in a publicistic text were phrasal verbs 8,4 % (21 units). The least used tropes were similes 6,02 % (15 units), inserts and constructions 5,2 % (13 units), metaphors 3,2 % (8 units) and hyperbole 1,2 % (3 units).

We agree with the scholars M. Gillespie and J. Toynbee [9] who underline that one of the promising areas of modern media system study is examination of the specifics of a media text and give a general overview of the problem. Nevertheless, in terms of our study, we focused on the practical aspect, exploring the texts of National Geographic magazine through the prism of stylistic devices characteristic to them. The scholars [1; 2; 5] try to give the general interpretation of the publicistic style and outline its functions, however in our research we managed not only to consider the specifics of publicistic style in terms of its peculiarities, but also to reveal lexical and semantic features of the texts of publicistic style based on National Geographic.

**Conclusions and perspectives.** Summarizing the results, it is necessary to emphasize that the major point of our study is exploring the characteristic features of publicistic style, namely, logic and emotional expressiveness, evaluation, accuracy of information presentation, the use of terms, persuasiveness and simplicity. The results obtained in the course of the research proved

that there is a certain range of lexical and semantic features peculiar to the texts of publicistic style. In terms of our research, we focused our attention on exploring the most widespread features characteristic to the National Geographic texts. Thus, the perspective of our further research could embrace the study of other significant expressive language means as well as syntactical peculiarities of the publicistic texts.

#### Bibliography

1. Kukharenko V. A. A Book of Practice in Stylistics. Вінниця : Нова Книга, 2003. 160 p.
2. Єфімов Л. П., Ясінецька О. А. Стилістика англійської мови і дискурсивний аналіз. Вінниця : Нова книга, 2004. 240 с.
3. Yemelyanova O., Yurko Yu. Foregrounding of the category of emotiveness in the modern English publicistic discourse. *Naukowa Prestrzen Eurory (7–15 April 2014). Filologiczne nauki. Przemysł. Nauka i studia.* Vol. 24. 2014. Pp. 56–61.
4. Филимонова О. Е. Язык эмоций в английском тексте. Когнитивный и коммуникативный аспекты : монография. Санкт-Петербург : Издательство РГПУ им. А. И. Герцена, 2001. 259 с.
5. Ніколенко А. Г. Лексикологія англійської мови – теорія і практика. [англ.]. Вінниця : Нова Книга, 2007. 528 с.
6. Худолій А. О. Функціональні зміни у мові американської публіцистики кінця ХХ – початку ХХІ століття. Острогор : Видавництво НаУОА, 2006. 384 с.
7. Глінка Н. В. Семантико-стилістичні особливості англомовних текстів публіцистичного стилю. URL: <http://www.ela.kpi.ua/handle/123456789/10468>.
8. National Geographic magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine>.
9. Gillespie M., Toynbee J. Analyzing Media Texts. Understanding Media, 4. Maidenhead : Open University Press. 2006.

#### References

1. Kukharenko, V. A. (2003). A Book of Practice in Stylistics. Vinnytsia: Nova Knyha, 160 (in Eng.).
2. Yefimov, L. P., Yasinetska, O. A. (2004). Stylistyka anhliiskoi movy i dyskursyvnyi analiz [English stylistics and discursive analysis]. Vinnytsia: Nova knyha, 240 (in Ukr.).
3. Yemelyanova, O., Yurko, Yu. (2014). Foregrounding of the category of emotiveness in the modern English publicistic discourse: *Proceedings of the Conference, Naukowa Prestrzen Eurory.* Przemysł. 7–15 April, 2014. Przemysł. Nauka i studia. 24, 56–61 (in Eng.).
4. Filimonova, O. Ye. (2001). Yazyk emotsiy v angliyskom tekste (kognitivnyi i kommunikativnyi aspekty) [The language of emotions in the English text. Cognitive and communicative aspects]. Sankt-Peterburg, 259 (in Russ.)
5. Nikolenko A. H. (2007). Leksykologhiia anhliiskoi movy – teoriia i praktyka [anhl.] [Lexicology of the English language – theory and practice.]. Vinnytsia : Nova Knyha, 528 (in Ukr.).
6. Khudolii, A. O. (2006). Funktsionalni zminy v movi amerykanskoj publitsystyky kintsia XX – pochatku XXI stolittia [Functional changes in the language of American journalism of the late XX – early XXI century]. Ostroh: Vydavnytstvo NaUOA, 384 (in Ukr.).
7. Hlinka, N. V. Semantyko-stylistychni osoblyvosti anhlo-movnykh tekstiv publitsystychnoho styliu. Retrieved from Retrieved from <http://www.ela.kpi.ua/handle/123456789/10468> (in Ukr.).
8. National Geographic magazine. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine> (in Eng.).
9. Gillespie, M., Toynbee, J. (2006). Analyzing Media Texts. Understanding Media, 4. Maidenhead: Open University Press (in Eng.).

#### I. О. ЗЕЛЕНА. ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СУЧАСНОЇ АНГЛОМОВНОЇ ПУБЛІЦИСТИКИ

**Актуальність.** Актуальність дослідження вмотивована недостатньо повним систематичним описом лексико-семантичних особливостей публіцистичного стилю з погляду практичного застосування мови.

**Мета.** Метою статті є розкриття лексичних та семантичних особливостей сучасних англомовних текстів публіцистичного стилю (на основі *National Geographic*). Для досягнення мети були поставлені такі завдання: зробити огляд особливостей публіцистичного стилю, з'ясувати його функції, розкрити емоційно-експресивний аспект публіцистичного стилю, схарактеризувати лексичні та семантичні особливості, властиві сучасним англійським текстам публіцистичного стилю та визначити частоту їх використання.

**Методи дослідження.** Для відбору фактичного матеріалу застосовано метод безперервної вибірки, метод семантико-стилістичного аналізу та статистичний метод.

**Результати дослідження.** У статті окреслено функції публіцистичного стилю, а саме інформаційну, впливову, виразну та емоційну. Визначено такі риси публіцистичного стилю, як оцінність, емоційність, лаконічність висловлення, комунікативна та прагматична спрямованість на реципієнтів. Проаналізовано лексико-семантичні особливості організації публіцистичного тексту, зокрема епітети, метафори, стилістичні порівняння, вставні конструкції та кліше, інверсію тощо. У статті представлено короткі узагальнені дані щодо частотності використання стилістичних тропів та цифри, які засвідчують найбільш та найменш продуктивні форми.

**Висновки та перспективи.** Результати, отримані в ході дослідження, довели, що існує певний діапазон лексико-семантичних особливостей, властивих текстам публіцистичного стилю. З огляду на це, зосереджено увагу на характеристиці найбільш виразних ознак, характерних для сучасних англомовних текстів публіцистичного стилю (на основі *National Geographic*).

Перспективи подальшого дослідження можуть стосуватися вивчення інших значущих виражальних мовних засобів, а також синтаксичних особливостей публіцистичних текстів.

**Ключові слова:** сучасна англійська публіцистика, лексико-семантичні особливості, публіцистичний стиль, стилістичні прийоми.

Надійшла до редакції 16.02.21

Прийнято до друку 05.04.21