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## LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF NORMS OF APOCALYPTIC AND NORMAL SOCIETIES IN INTERNET NEWS DISCOURSE: THE VANTAGE THEORETIC APPROACH

**Summary.** The article focuses on the description of the categorization of norms of apocalyptic and normal societies in terms of the Vantage Theory, which comprises the Dominant and the Recessive Vantages. The former vantage of the apocalyptic society is represented by the focal features DESTRUCTION, DISASTER, DEATH, and DAMAGE in the spheres of economy, terrorism, health service, labour market, personal security, and health damage. Constructions which modify the semantic features and denote removal of the action, or considering the action as illegal belong to the latter vantage. The Dominant Vantage of the normal society is made up by the focal features ESTABLISHED STANDARDS, ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR, and TYPICAL PROCESS in the sphere of politics. Constructions, that indicate violation of norms, represent the Recessive Vantage. The article proves that modern societal norms are represented with evident apocalyptic features.

**Key words:** Internet new discourse, apocalyptic society, normal society, norms, the Vantage Theory.

**Introduction.** Since news media have been developing at an even higher rate, keeping people updated on all what takes place and engaging them in discussions of all types of world affairs [1, 47], growing interest of scholars in an in-depth study of news texts is considered to be naturally determined. Acknowledging the immense technological achievement, Internet has become a great source of people's knowledge about the world [2, 1–3]. Nowadays, journalists often appeal to the apocalyptic motives while writing news. Such motives have become most noticeable in media discourse [3, 112]. For this reason studying apocalyptic tendencies in society representation is increasingly becoming important in modern discourse studying. Besides, ways of describing categories, in this case the category of apocalyptic and normal societies, seem disputable. Since categories appear to be fuzzy in nature and some members of the category may be more central than others [4, 253], a new linguistic approach – the Vantage Theory – has been applied.

A lot of **research** has been dedicated to the relations between media discourse and society: influence of media on society attitude [Teun van Dijk, 2006; James Curran, 2003], presentation of people and issues in media discourse [Allan Bell, 1991; Teun van Dijk, 1988], media discourse as representation of reality [Потапенко, 2009; Niklas Luhmann, 2000]. Moreover, there have been described culture-specific concepts: MULTICULTURALISM, DEMOCRACY, BUSINESS [Белова, 2008]; AMERICAN VALUES [Клиникова, 2009]; RECESSION [Баран, 2015]; TERRORISM [Жулавська, 2011]. As far as research into the description of society is concerned,

there is not much attention given to the analysis of representation of norms of apocalyptic society in the Internet news discourse.

The **aim** of the paper is to reveal linguistic representation of norms relating to apocalyptic society and those belonging to normal society in terms of the Vantage Theory in the Internet news discourse.

The **object** of the study is society in modern Internet news discourse.

The **subject** of the research is the linguistic representation of norms of apocalyptic and normal societies in the modern Internet news discourse.

**The presentation of the main research material.** Media discourse is regarded as reality constructed by communication media, which mediate the process of production, preservation, distribution, and usage of information of social value [5, 7–8]. There are distinguished the following media discourse types: newspaper, cinema, television, radio, and Internet [5, 11]. Considering the modern tendency of advances in science and technology, Internet discourse has developed as a new phenomenon in linguistics [6, 6]. Internet discourse maintains its features, and also has its own peculiarities [ibid]: a complicated and compound system that comprises multitude of subdiscourses [2, 14]. Being a specific form of media discourse, news discourse is regarded as a multidimensional linguistic phenomenon, which has conversational character, functions in real-time mode, reflects all the changes of social life, and is realized in written form [7, 74]. Consequently, news, as a form of media text, is a representation of reality [1, 53]. Taking into consideration the character of media discourse, the object of representation in news texts may be society and its characteristics. Norms are viewed as significant features of society which guide and control proper and acceptable behaviour of society members [8]. Nomination of norms may be realized by means of words, sentences, and constructions, the latter are treated as fixed pairings of form and meaning [9, 200].

Considering tendencies of wars, catastrophes, and natural disasters, investigating the linguistic means of representation of apocalyptic society is considered to be relevant. Thus, we distinguish two categories: normal and apocalyptic society. However, many categories are proved to be fuzzy in nature, since they neither are clearly defined and nor have definite boundaries [4, 253]. The problem is that such categories fail to trace movement of entities to other categories [5, 46]. Dynamic representation of the categories can be demonstrated by a quite new linguistic approach – the Vantage theory (VT) [ibid]. To explain the shift of normal society to the apoc-

alyptic one we apply VT, which was suggested by the American anthropologist and linguist Robert MacLaury. According to VT, the process of constructing a category consists of two levels. On the first level, we select the focus (idealized image – A) of a category and the inherently mobile similarities to the focus (S). Similarities are other stimuli that are perceived as similar to the focus. They expand range as long as they are not considered different from the focus. Then, on the second level, similarities are fixated, allowing for new information to be added. That new information is the attention to differences (D) at the expense of attention to similarities. Once differences become more prominent, the category receives its margin or boundaries [10, 24-25]. Table 1 models the process.

Table 1

Levels of categorization

Levels	Fixed Coordinates	Mobile Coordinates	Entailments
1	A	S	focus, range
2	S	D	breadth, margin

So, the category is viewed as two vantages, called dominant and recessive. The Dominant Vantage starts with the focus and the stronger attention to similarity endows it with a wider range. In the Recessive Vantage, the role of similarity weakens to make way for difference and the vantage is endowed with a margin. The Recessive Vantage arises through a reversal of the coordinates [10, 26].

In order to elucidate the notion of ‘apocalypse’ and its derivative ‘apocalyptic’ and to define the focus of the category the words were analysed and described in terms of their semantic components. As demonstrated by the analysis of dictionary definitions, the focal features of the category ‘apocalyptic’ are DESTRUCTION, DISASTER, DEATH, and DAMAGE [8]. Thus, constructions representing norms of the society with the semantic components such as DESTRUCTION, DISASTER, DEATH, and DAMAGE were singled out in the news stories from the English web site ‘BBC-News’ [11] and studied by means of semantic analysis. Norms which represent the apocalyptic society belong to the spheres of economy, terrorism, health service, labour market, personal security, and health damage.

DESTRUCTION on a massive scale in economy is represented by the nominative units ‘catastrophe’ and ‘vcollaps’, in the definitions of which the semes ‘destructive’ and ‘break-down’ [8] appeal to the DESTRUCTION category. In the example: ‘He was Britain’s Minister for Europe under Tony Blair and said the vote to leave the EU was a “catastrophe”’ [BBC-News, 06.09.2016] the noun ‘catastrophe’, which the process of leaving EU was compared to, intensifies the threats of changes, that may cause a lot of destruction to the whole society, since the seme ‘destructive’ directly indicates it. Destruction in health service may be represented by the nouns denoting interruption of work ‘disruption’, ‘strike’, ‘cancellation’, and the verbs indicating stoppage of work ‘disrupt’, ‘postpone’. For example: ‘Health Secretary... described this month’s strike as “devastating news”, predicting it would lead to the cancellation of 100,000 operations and one million appointments’ [BBC-News, 02.09.2016]. In the abovementioned sentence destruction is reflected by the nouns ‘strike’, ‘cancellation’ and the adjective ‘devastating’ (causing a lot of harm or damage [8]). The noun ‘cancellation’, intensified by the numerals ‘100,000’ and ‘one million’, indicates destructive processes in the system of health service, which are not typical of normal society.

Analysing the lexical means which appeal to the semantic feature DISASTER, the following nominative units, denoting types of criminal offence, were observed: the nouns ‘crime’, ‘abuse’, ‘exploitation’ in the constructions with the noun ‘child’ and the adjective ‘sexual’. For instance: ‘Crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse and sexual exploitation are usually dealt with by police teams known as Public Protection Units’ [BBC-News, 05.09.2016]. The nominative unit ‘crime’ represents a great harm or disaster to a member of the society. It is demonstrated by the seme ‘offence’ and intensified by the adjective ‘grave’ [8]. In addition, the semes ‘harmful’ and ‘unfair’ in the definitions of the nominative units ‘abuse’ and ‘exploitation’ [12] testify their connection to DISASTER.

Analysing the linguistic representation of the semantic feature DEATH the following lexical units, appealing to sudden unnatural death, are singled out: the nouns ‘attack’, ‘killing’, ‘murder’, ‘injury’, the verbs ‘die’, ‘kill’, ‘stab’ and the adjectives ‘frenzied’, ‘savagely’. It may be illustrated by the following example: ‘She had more than 140 injuries and been stabbed 61 times’ [BBC-News, 05.09.2016]. The noun ‘injury’ intensified by the numeral ‘140’ expresses great harm to a person that may cause death. Besides, the verb ‘stab’ in the construction with the numeral ‘61’ makes the attack more severe.

The semantic feature DAMAGE is conveyed through the nominative units denoting health damage: the nouns ‘sickness’ and ‘disability’. The semes ‘disorder’ and ‘damage’ in the definitions of the nouns appeal to the semantic feature. The following examples illustrate the point: ‘In the south west of England, just one in 13 people blamed sickness or disability for leaving work. However, that figure rises to one in seven...’ [BBC-News, 05.09.2016].

The Recessive Vantage is represented by the linguistic units which modify the focal features: DESTRUCTION, DISASTER, DEATH and DAMAGE. In order to study the words which underscore specific features of the linguistic unit and make them different (D) from the focus constructions were analysed contextually, i.e. constructions together with their associated linguistic units. The linguistic units denote mainly removal of the action, or considering the action as illegal or abnormal. Consequently, a society which removes threats to its functioning is returning to normal state. In the Recessive Vantage context detaches construction farther from the focus and moves them closer to the normal society category.

The analysed constructions which belong to this group represent the spheres of terrorism, law, government, health service, and personal security. The notion of terrorism, which refers to the focal feature DESTRUCTION, may be represented by the nouns ‘terrorism’, ‘terror’, and the proper noun naming a terrorist group ‘Islamic State Group’. However, the nouns may be combined with the verbs ‘prosecute for’, ‘jail for’, ‘sentence to’, ‘convict of’, ‘accuse of’, ‘charge with’, ‘prevent from’ which appeal to imposing a punishment, e. g. ‘Choudary, of Ilford, east London, and Rahman, from Palmers Green, north London, were convicted last month of inviting support for IS – an offence contrary to section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000 – between 29 June 2014 and 6 March 2015’ [BBC-News, 06.09.2016]. In this context terrorism, conveyed by the proper noun ‘IS’, is condemned and regarded as crime, since it is used in the construction with the verb ‘convict of’. Thus, the construction is detached from the focus contextually, as far as the society opposes terrorism.

The focal feature DEATH is reflected by the linguistic units denoting sudden unnatural death: the nouns ‘murder’, ‘killing’,

"manslaughter", the verbs "strangle", "murder" and the construction "cause deaths", but the constructions "charge with", "serve a life sentence", "appear in court" consider these norms illegal. For example: "A 30-year-old man from Manchester, charged with attempted murder, has been remanded to appear at crown court on 29 September" [BBC-News, 04.09.2016]. Though the noun "murder" appeals to the semantic feature DEATH, the verb "charge with" moves it farther from the focus defining murder as an illegal action, i.e. a criminal is likely to be punished for it. The words denoting sudden unnatural death may enter the constructions with the verb appealing to confinement: "arrest", "hold", "imprison", "remand", "charge with, sentence to", "be found guilty", "serve", e.g. "He is servicing a life sentence for murdering Sian O'Callaghan in 2011" [BBC-News, 07.09.2016]. In the example the construction "serve a life sentence" implies that the murderer is not dangerous for a society any more. This fact detaches the described linguistic units from the focus.

Contextual analysis of the focal feature DAMAGE allows to distinguish the linguistic units denoting minor physical harm: the noun "injury", the verbs "injure", "brake", "cut", "fracture". For example "The 17-year-old boy suffered a minor head injury and the other two girls were both treated for minor injuries" [BBC-News, 04.09.2016]. Though the noun "injury" indicates harm or damage done to a person's body, the adjective "minor" (in the meaning "not very large, important or serious" [12]) makes it different from the focus.

The linguistic units appealing to the focal feature DISASTER are represented by the nouns denoting economic activity: "business", "fall", "recovery", e.g. "Last month's recovery in services wiped out a shock fall in July following the Brexit vote" [BBC-News, 06.09.2016]. In the construction "a shock fall, fall" in the meaning of "a decrease in size, quantity, degree, or value" [Merriam-Webster: e-ref] is described as a disaster for the economy, since the economic activity may be suddenly reduced. Besides, the adjective "shock" intensifies the threat, representing it as "severe" [8]. On the other hand, the construction "wipe out" indicates the action removal. It detaches the construction from the focus and shifts it to the normal features.

In its turn, the category of Normal Society comprises the following focal features due to the dictionary definitions: ESTABLISHED STANDARD, ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR, and TYPICAL PROCEDURE [8]. The constructions which have been singled out in the news stories represent the sphere of politics. ESTABLISHED STANDARD in politics may be conveyed through the linguistic units denoting government control: the nouns "rule", "regulation", "law", the adjective "eligible" and the construction "have the right". In the example "They include 178 refugee children who have the right to come to the UK under an EU rule known as the Dublin III regulation because of their close family links in the country" [BBC-News, 02.09.2016] the nouns "rule" and "regulation" refer to the set of rules for standard conduct in a society. In addition, the construction "have the right" appeals to the semantic feature ESTABLISHED STANDARD through its semes (a right is a moral or legal **claim** to have or get something or to **behave in a particular way** [12]). ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR in politics is represented by the verbs denoting attention incensement: "focus", "consider", "oblige", "strengthen", "matter", for example "Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson urged the first minister to ditch the "threat" of a second referendum and focus on governance" [BBC-News, 06.09.2016]. In the sentence above

the verb "focus" indicates bringing into attention the way the country is ruled and emphasizes its importance in politicians' behaviour. TYPICAL PROCEDURE is reflected by the constructions denoting political processes: "draw up legislation", "draw up plans", "set out plans", "apply rules", "ratify agreement", "change the procedure", "unveil funds", "set out", "elect smb", "run the referendum". For example "Ms Sturgeon has already ordered ministers to start drawing up legislation for a second independence referendum" [BBC-News, 06.09.2016] the noun "legislation" represents usual procedure of "making rules that have the force of authority" [8], which appeal to this focal feature.

The Recessive Vantage of this category is demonstrated by the constructions which indicate violation of the norm which appeals to the focal features of the category: ESTABLISHED STANDARD, ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR, and TYPICAL PROCEDURE. In this case the constructions go closer to the apocalyptic society category, since the norms are broken. Though only few evidences of norms moving to apocalyptic were introduced in the BBC news stories the normal feature ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR is represented in the modern society description. The analysed constructions appeal to the sphere of politics. The semantic component ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR is reflected by the linguistic units denoting government actions: "persuade", "promise", "prioritise", "reassure", e.g. "... this is the first sign that one of the referendum's winning side's promises may not be kept" [BBC-News, 05.09.2016]. The construction "to keep promises", which may be treated "to do what you have promised to do" [12], appeals to the normal behaviour. But the negation in the construction denotes violation of the promise [8]. That's why the construction evades from the focus to its margin moving to apocalyptic features.

As was stated previously, the Recessive Vantage of apocalyptic category explains the shift from apocalyptic to normal societies. In the context of the Recessive Vantage of the normal society the movement is inverse: from normal to apocalyptic. As a result, the Recessive Vantages of both categories superimpose on one another.

**Conclusions.** The linguistic analysis of representation of society in modern Internet news discourse in Vantage Theoretic perspective gives the opportunity to elucidate the peculiarities of verbalization of societal norms. The Dominant Vantage of Apocalyptic category is represented by such semantic features as DESTRUCTION, DISASTER, DEATH, and DAMAGE. The constructions of this category refer to the spheres of economy, terrorism, health service, labour market, personal security, and health damage (6 spheres). They corroborate the tendency of norms maintaining apocalyptic features. The Recessive Vantage is encoded by the constructions which modify the focal features. The linguistic units denote threat removal, or considering the action as illegal. The Dominant Vantage of the Normal category is constructed by the semes ESTABLISHED STANDARD, ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR, and TYPICAL PROCEDURE, represented by the linguistic units appealing to the sphere of politics (1 sphere). The Recessive Vantage of this category is represented by the constructions denoting violation of normal action in the sphere of politics. As the research suggests, the numbers of spheres, to which the apocalyptic constructions belong, exceeds the number of spheres, which represent the normal society, the following conclusion may be drawn: modern societal norms in news discourse are represented with evident apocalyptic features. Since norms are not single societal features representation of other characteristics of society in terms of Vantage theory raises questions for **further study** of society description.

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- Талавіра Н. М., Павленко М. Г. Лінгвальна репрезентація норм апокаліптичного та нормального суспільств у медійному Інтернет-дискурсі з точки зору теорії перспектив**
- Анотація.** Стаття присвячена опису особливостей категоризації норм апокаліптичного та нормального суспільств згідно з теорією перспектив, яка представлена *основною* та *другорядною* перспективами. Зазначено, що основна перспектива апокаліптичного суспільства репрезентована фокальними ознаками ДЕСТРУКЦІЯ, ЗАГРО-
- ЗА, СМЕРТЬ та ШКОДА у сферах економіки, тероризму, медичних послуг, ринку праці, особистої безпеки та шкоди здоров'ю, тоді як до другорядної належать конструкції, які модифікують головні ознаки і позначають усунення загрози та визнання дії незаконною. Основна перспектива нормального суспільства включає семантичні ознаки ВСТАНОВЛЕНИЙ СТАНДАРТ, ПРИЙНЯТНА ПОВЕДІНКА, ЗВИЧАЙНИЙ ПРОЦЕС у політичній сфері. Конструкції, що позначають порушення норм, репрезентують другорядну перспективу. Доведено, що в зображенні норм сучасного суспільства переважають тенденції апокаліптичності.
- Ключові слова:** Інтернет-дискурс новин, апокаліптичне суспільство, нормальне суспільство, норми, теорія перспектив.
- Талавіра Н. М., Павленко М. Г. Лингвистическая репрезентация норм апокалиптического и нормального обществ в Интернет-дискурсе средств массовой информации в терминах теории перспектив**
- Аннотация.** Статья посвящена описанию особенностей категоризации норм апокалиптического и нормального обществ согласно теории перспектив, представленной *основной* и *второстепенной* перспективами. Основная перспектива апокалиптического общества выражена фокальными характеристиками ДЕСТРУКЦИЯ, УГРОЗА, СМЕРТЬ и ВРЕД в сферах экономики, терроризма, медицинских услуг, рынка труда, личной безопасности и вреда здоровью. К второстепенной перспективе относятся конструкции, которые изменяют главные характеристики и указывают на устранение опасности и признание действия незаконным. Основная перспектива нормального общества состоит из фокальных компонентов УСТАНОВЛЕННЫЙ СТАНДАРТ, ПРИЕМЛЕМОЕ ПОВЕДЕНИЕ, ОБЫЧНЫЙ ПРОЦЕСС в политике. Конструкции, выражающие нарушение норм, представляют второстепенную перспективу. Доказано, что современное общество представлено с ярко выраженными апокалиптическими тенденциями.
- Ключевые слова:** новостной Интернет-дискурс, апокалиптическое общество, нормальное общество, нормы, теория перспектив.