

Nataliia Mykhalchuk<sup>A</sup>, Svitozara Bihunova<sup>B</sup>,  
Dmytro Bihunov<sup>B</sup> Ernest Ivashkevych<sup>C</sup>,

Rivne State University of the Humanities, Rivne, Ukraine

<sup>A</sup>natasha1273@ukr.net, <sup>B</sup>{svitozara.rv, bihunov.d}@gmail.com, <sup>C</sup>ernest.ivashkevych@rshu.edu.ua

# The Semantic Space of Concepts in Modern British Political Discourse

## Abstract

The article examines the semantic space of concepts in modern British political discourse. The basic concepts of GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL EVENTS, CITIZEN and ECOLOGY in the British press are analysed, taking into account: 1) the main, dominant, feature; 2) additional “passive” features; 3) the actualization of the internal hidden form. It was determined that these characteristics allow the concepts to be updated on different levels, as well as to be perceived by carriers of different cultures in different ways. On the basis of the content-analysis of modern British media contexts and semantic network analysis, a field model of the political discourse of the modern British press was constructed. It is proved that all the presented sub-concepts are at the final stage of formation in British political language consciousness, which is indicated by the high density of political discourse lexemes that objectify these sub-concepts.

**Keywords:** British political discourse; semantic space of concepts; concept GOVERNMENT; concept POLITICAL EVENTS; concept CITIZEN; concept ECOLOGY; British political language consciousness

## 1 Introduction

The understanding of a language as a dynamic system, in which the language personality is of utmost importance, is characteristic of contemporary philology. The subject, as a rule, explicates his / her instructions or attitudes to reality and describes the language picture of the world via concepts. All these issues have been repeatedly analysed by philologists (Elwert & Gerhards, 2017; Khomulenko & Kuznetsov, 2019; Kostruba, 2018; Mykhalchuk & Bihunova, 2019; Shymko & Babadzhanova, 2020 and others). Concepts allow language to be seen as a procedural social activity, which is distinguished by its dynamic characteristics. These characteristics make it possible to talk about linguistic mechanisms for designing social interaction, which occurs in the paradigm of variable interpretations of the subject’s surrounding reality.

Some issues, however, have yet to be fully examined in the scientific literature. One such issue is the semantic space of the concepts of modern British political discourse. The topicality of this issue is due to the following points: 1) Considering the possibility of variable interpretations of reality, political discourse appears, on the one hand, as a systemic construct and on the other hand, as a factor of social interaction. 2) The main implementation strategy of the intentional basis of the political discourse is the strategy of language influence, which consists of the purposeful transformation of the conceptual systems of the participants of political communication. This restructuring is achieved by appealing to socially and personally significant concepts that are

constantly changing, according to changes in the socio-political situation in a particular country, changes of dominant concepts, and the attitudes of a society to certain concepts, etc.

The issues raised in this article are especially urgent at present, when the political systems of countries are changing and a transformation of conceptual values into holistic semantic structures is taking place.

## 2 The State of Research

Researchers define the notion of “concept” in different ways. Generally speaking, the different definitions do not contradict each other but are complementary, emphasizing different aspects of the understanding, interpretation and explanation of this concept. In the paradigm of adjacent linguistic directions (for example, in the paradigm of cognitive linguistics and pragma-linguistics), the compression or substitution of concepts often occurs.

Researchers describing the dominant function of concept replacement frequently correlate the content of each separate concept with the meanings which are used by an individual in the process of the perception, understanding and intellectual comprehension of the world (Brysbaert & Stevens, 2018; Bucci et al., 2016; Crookes, 1989; Drigas & Karyotaki, 2017; Hamedy & Pishghadam, 2021 and others). It is clear that these processes are directly influenced by thought, mind and memory, which create the explication of concepts (Alahmadi & Foltz, 2020; Armstrong & Dienes, 2013; Cilibrasi et al., 2019; Murphy et al., 2021). Researchers have repeatedly pointed to the importance of the integrity of a concept. A certain concept is understood as an operational unit of our mind and a person operates it as a gestalt (the so-called compressed unit, which contains a large number of attributes that contribute to the creation of a certain harmonious concept with the generalized causal meaning) (Mykhalchuk & Bihunova, 2019; Mykhalchuk, Levchuk, et al., 2021). This is why concepts (similar to some iconic models) can replace certain separate structures (cliché, scripts and frames) which are quite different in their volume and complexity (starting from the simplest images and to rather complicated organized frames) in the thinking process (Alahmadi et al., 2018; Batel, 2020; Lamme & Roelfsema, 2000; Mykhalchuk, Ivashkevych, et al., 2021; Shymko & Babadzhanova, 2020). Consequently, some researchers have made assumptions about the so-called “gestalt” basis of the functioning of concepts, which at a particular moment actualizes some individual scripts in the mind of an individual and creates various images, according to which ideas are developed (Abrams, 2005; Cui et al., 2021; Dehaene et al., 2006; Gilabert, 2007; Mykhalchuk & Kryshevych, 2019; Pimperton & Nation, 2010).

If concepts are analysed from the point of view of psycholinguistics, researchers (Khomulenko & Kuznetsov, 2019; Kostruba, 2020) often view them as functioning in the cognitive, thinking and language activity of an individual as a basic perceptually, cognitively and emotively marked formation of dynamic character, which is shaped according to the existing regularities of the mental life of the individual. Thus, psycholinguistics marks the concept as a somewhat diffuse yet dynamic notion, included in the single language code of an individual (Aleksandrov et al., 2020; Chen, 2022; Dijkgraaf et al., 2017). Psycholinguistics also explains the concept in view of the non-discrete, continuum nature of the information that at a certain moment of perception is replaced by cliché or frames, already existing in consciousness (Mykhalchuk, Bihunova, et al., 2021). The variability, instability or ambiguity of a concept is caused by a large number of clichés, which at some point in time are replaced by conscious human considerations over the content of the concept (Heidari, 2019; McCandliss et al., 2003; Peel et al., 2022).

Based on this content, researchers tend to imagine a concept as a dynamic creation of the so-called “ideal character” which is large, multi-functional, diffuse, and open to change in the aspects of content and meaning, allowing the individual (who accepts this concept) to perform the substitution of its meaning even on the basis of gestalt (Alyami & Mohsen, 2019; Dehaene & Cohen, 2011; Ferdowsi & Razmi, 2022; Phani Krishna et al., 2020; Zuniga & Simard, 2019).

In the scientific realm, concepts are usually analysed from the point of view of different aspects of study:

- in the semiotic aspect, the paradigm of which examines the cognitive characteristics of concepts (Lu et al., 2019; Valis et al., 2019);
- in the cognitive aspect, which provides the analysis of concepts, their explicit and implicit senses, not taking into account their linguistic form (Greco et al., 2020);
- in the aspect of linguo-pragmatics, which entails the study of the lexical and grammar semantics of lexical units as a means of acquiring pragmatic content of concepts, a means of their modelling, taking into account not only semantics of the language, but also the content of the concept sphere (Berkovitch & Dehaene, 2019; Ellis, 1987);
- in the context of multilingualism, which aims to conduct interdisciplinary research of concepts and their language representatives as elements of a certain national linguistic culture, taking into account the national specificity of the culture (Kostruba, 2018; Wong, 2019).

The latter aspect will be considered the most appropriate for our research, as it allows us to consider the concept as a mental pragmatic basis which is to some extent marked by ethno- or socio-semantic characteristics. This involves the consideration of concepts of ethnic and social cultural presentations by the subject. A certain linguistic concept will be defined as the basic unit of a particular culture.

There exist different ideas about the structure of concepts. Based on recent research (Kostruba, 2020; Shymko & Babadzhanova, 2020), we will analyse the concept as a multi-layer, multi-component unit with a level structure (centre and periphery).

The concept will thus be defined as a discrete, stable, multifunctional and multi-factor unit. The unity and integrity of the concept will be ensured by the identity of a particular individual denotation with which it is associated in some mental worlds. Therefore, we will consider the concept to be a harmonious, integral structure which is characterized by unstable culturally, ethnically and nationally marked content. In terms of content, the concept is a harmonious, clearly structured characteristic, with a combination of features of different degrees of complexity. Obligatory signs form the core of the concept – its most harmonious integral structure. This core in a certain way “introduces” the concept into the global cognitive structure of knowledge and will determine its place in this structure. The peripheral informational field of the concept, in turn, is considered to be an explicator of hidden features, which are directly connected with its basic, dominant nucleus. This core “attributes” the concept to the global structure of personal knowledge, which allows the creation of a large number of connections, dependencies and interactions.

When analysing concepts in political discourse, we will rely on the theory of Khomulenko and Kuznetsov, in which concepts exhibit a complex level structure, the main levels being: 1) the main, dominant, actual feature; 2) additional or several additional, “passive” features that are not fully relevant; 3) the actualization of the internal hidden form, which is usually not realized by the person to the very end, but is also reflected in the external, verbal form. These characteristics allow the concepts to be updated at different levels, as well as to be perceived by carriers of different cultures in different ways. Thus, due to the dominant and additional features, the concept will be relevant for all native speakers and will become a means of mutual understanding and communication. If only the additional features are considered, any concept will only be active for some social groups. At the same time, the internal, implicit form or the ethological feature of the concept will be accessible only to people who know and understand the specifics of the culture of the given people. For other speakers of the language it will only exist indirectly, as a basis on which various meanings and senses have arisen and are fixed.

When attempting to classify concepts in political discourse, *Roget’s International Thesaurus* (ed. by Barbara Ann Kipfer) was taken as a sample. This thesaurus has grouped all the key words in certain concepts (there are 837 of them), which, in turn, are divided into 10 categories of interests: Actions, Causes, Fields of Human Activity, Life Forms, Objects, The Planet, Qualities, Senses, States, and Weights and Measures (Kipfer, 2005).

Thus, having viewed various articles extracted from the newspapers *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Sun*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Evening Standard*, etc., it seemed expedient to allocate four concepts:

- the concept GOVERNMENT, which contains the key words related to the government, parties, elections, re-elections, etc.;
- the concept POLITICAL EVENTS, which covers the work of the government and various actions caused by its work;
- the concept CITIZEN, which describes human activities and
- the concept ECOLOGY, which represents events, related to the environment.

Here are examples of some key words that have been given to these concepts. Firstly, key words from the concept GOVERNMENT:

### ***ally***

*The broadcaster said Ms Truss has “so far declined to take part – but the invitation remains open” but an ally of the Foreign Secretary said she does not intend to take part because her “focus” is on speaking directly to Tory members (The Telegraph ; Maidment & Riley-Smith, 2022)*

*The warring camps traded fresh blows this morning as Truss ally Nadine Dorries publicly tore into millionaire Mr Sunak for wearing a pricey suit (The Sun; Elsom, 2022).*

*Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey, another Truss ally, said: “Helping people progress in work by getting better jobs and more hours is a key role of jobcentres” (The Daily Mirror; Burke & Buchan, 2022).*

### ***campaign***

*The decision to suspend the whip could be problematic for Mordaunt’s leadership campaign, which is fighting for second place behind Rishi Sunak (The Times; Banenoch, 2022).*

*A key ally of Ms Mordaunt has thrown his weight behind Mr Sunak amid claims that her supporters are organising a “Stop Liz Truss” campaign (The Telegraph; Martin, 2022).*

*Some Corbyn opponents saw it as a way to attack him, the report said, and moderates loathed him so much they diverted campaign resources in 2017 to help anti-Corbyn MPs keep their seats (The Sun; Ferguson, 2022b).*

### ***Partygate***

*The Partygate scandal – which Boris Johnson looks to have survived by the skin of his teeth – has taken down a number of other careers, and it may yet have the same effect on Whitehall and Downing Street’s reputation as the expenses’ scandal had for MPs and parliament (The Guardian; Elgot, 2022).*

*The Sun urges Boris Johnson to put Partygate behind him and focus on what really matters to Britain — the terrifying rise in prices and bills (The Sun; The Sun, 2022).*

*The Good Law Project said it was bringing the case because it believed the public had a right to know the truth about the Partygate investigation and why Johnson’s actions in relation to some gatherings did not attract a questionnaire (The Guardian; Mason, 2022).*

Key words from the concept POLITICAL EVENTS are:

### ***democracy***

*Democracy has also appeared in retreat in recent years, after decades in which its march seemed unstoppable (The Telegraph; Farmer, 2022).*

*Olaf Scholz said that Germany was waking up to the “value of democracy and liberty, and the fact that they are worth defending”... (The Times; Moody, 2022).*

***invasion***

*For decades, the Taiwanese have lived under the shadow of invasion from the Chinese Communist Party, which claims the island democracy as its own territory even though, since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, it has never ruled there* (The Telegraph; Smith & Barber, 2022).

*Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupted shipments and sped up a rise in global commodity prices, delivering a financial shock to Egypt* (The Guardian; Yang et al., 2022).

***refugee***

*The decision to move Ukrainian war refugees to tented accommodation at Gormanston army camp came as a surprise to many working in the immigration sector* (The Sunday Times; McCarthy, 2022).

*Two thirds of the refugees applied under the super-sponsor scheme, opened in March, after the Scottish government committed itself to accommodating at least 3,000 people* (The Times; Horne, 2022).

***Brexit***

*French politicians have blamed the chaos at Dover ferry port which has led to long delays for families travelling to Europe on the introduction of passport checks under Brexit rules* (The Telegraph; Sawyer et al., 2022).

*Downing Street insisted on Monday that Brexit wasn't responsible for the chaos seen at the Channel crossings over the past few days* (The Evening Standard; Bond, 2022).

*Ms Truss said: "What I am setting out is a plan for economic growth. The fact is we've had too low growth now for decades and by creating new low tax investment zones in places like West Yorkshire, by enabling the post-Brexit reforms to take place, unleashing more investment from the city, we will grow the economy faster – that will bring in more tax revenue, and that will enable us to afford those projects"* (The Telegraph; Maidment & Penna, 2022).

Among the key words of the concept CITIZEN there are:

***strike***

*She [NEU chief Mary Bousted] told Mr Zahawi to "get around the negotiating table now", adding: "If the Secretary of State refuses to do that, we will then survey our members to see if they are willing to take strike action, which is always a last resort."* (The Sun; Ferguson, 2022a).

*Huge swathes of Britain are without any rail services this week with coordinated strikes bringing the country's transport network shuddering to a halt after last-ditch talks failed to resolve a dispute over pay, jobs and conditions* (The Telegraph; Bird & Hall, 2022).

***struggle***

*A source close to Liz Truss's campaign told The Telegraph: "It's good that Rishi has finally woken up and decided to offer something to people struggling with the rising cost of living"* (The Daily Mail; Martin & Gutteridge, 2022).

*When the world shrugs and moves on after women's rights anywhere are attacked, abusive leaders elsewhere feel emboldened, and the global struggle for equality gets harder* (The Telegraph; Barr, 2022).

**virus**

*The US announced on Friday that it had discovered the first cases of the [monkeypox] virus in children* (The Telegraph; Ensor et al., 2022).

*Professor Andrew Pollard, chair of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and director of the Oxford Vaccine Group, said we are still in a “funny post-pandemic phase” when it comes to the spread of the [RSV] virus* (The Telegraph; Roberts & Pinkstone, 2022).

*A total of 82.2 per cent of virus positive swabs examined in the week to July 16 were the BA.5 version of Omicron, according to figures from the Sanger Institute, one of the UK’s largest surveillance sites* (The Daily Mail; Ely, 2022).

Examples of key words of the concept ECOLOGY are:

**crisis**

*Although some newspapers still question the links between the climate crisis and individual extreme events, Black [Richard Black, a former BBC environment correspondent] said it was harder for them to downplay extreme weather when its readers were watching footage of British homes burning down.* (The Guardian; Waterson, 2022)

*Jim McMahon, the shadow secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, said: “The Tories have presided over a crisis in our neglected water system which struggles to keep up with demand. The now ageing system is now at bursting point”* (The Guardian; Horton, 2022b).

*Asked about her comments on Mr Sunak’s expensive suit and shoes, Ms Dorries said: “Judgment is a huge issue. We are facing a cost-of-living crisis.”* (The Telegraph; Maidment & Penna, 2022).

**drought**

*The Colosseum could start crumbling, grapes may wither on the vine, a risotto shortage is on the cards and olive oil could run dry as Italy bakes under a crippling heatwave and drought* (The Telegraph; Mckenna, 2022).

*Hosepipe bans for households could be brought in across the UK and farmers could be restricted from irrigating their crops if the government implements a drought plan* (The Guardian; Horton, 2022a).

*Officials are preparing to declare a drought in August if dry conditions continue, after months of very low rainfall in the UK* (The Guardian; Horton, 2022b).

**fire**

*In southern Greece, a major fire burned homes in villages not far from the famous archaeological site of Ancient Olympia and prompting the evacuations of six villages* (The Telegraph; Our Foreign Staff, 2022).

*In north-east Italy more than 300 people were evacuated from the small towns of Gabria and San Michele Del Carso when a fire in neighboring Slovenia threatened to spread across the border into Italy and several fires have broken out on the outskirts of Rome* (The Telegraph; Mckenna, 2022).

*By Sunday evening, the fire had consumed 15,603 acres (6,314 hectares), more than half the size of Paris, and was zero percent contained, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)* (The Telegraph; Our Foreign Staff, 2022).

The proposed classification is obviously conditional and to a certain extent pragmatic. Any classification has a share of subjectivity and relativity, as it provides a simpler structure under

a more complex one. The implementation of the classification is also complicated by the confusion between conceptual categories, as well as by the fact that the word often shows close logical and understandable links with several concepts. For example, the key word “the UK” can be attributed to the concept “GOVERNMENT” when it means “government” (the people who officially control and rule the country) or “country”:

*Asked whether the UK would like the French to stop stamping travellers’ passports, the Prime Minister’s Official Spokesman said: “Generally speaking we have a good relationship working with our French counterparts on these juxtaposed controls.”* (The Telegraph; Hymas & Narwan, 2022).

*A drought would be jointly declared by the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) – and it would be the first one in the UK since 2018 when some hosepipe bans were brought in.* (Daily Mail; Duell, 2022).

However, the same key word can be attributed to the concept POLITICAL EVENTS when it refers to the politics of the British government:

*Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss are “part of the problem” when it comes to improving the UK economy, Sir Keir Starmer has claimed.* (The Telegraph; Maidment & Riley-Smith, 2022).

In such cases, most researchers apply a method of analysing verbal definitions, as well as general knowledge of the extra-lingual reality.

The empirical part of the research is aimed at analysing the concepts that are part of the political discourse paradigm in the English-speaking mind. For this reason, the concepts GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL EVENTS, CITIZEN, ECOLOGY, singled out from the modern British press, will be examined and a field model of these concepts will be built.

### 3 Research Material and Methods

The research material was the data obtained in the process of:

1. corpus analysis of the concepts, using the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies, n.d.). The sample size (contexts with the concepts listed in Table 1) was 45,383 items;
2. content-analysis of the modern British media contexts with chosen concepts (listed in Table 1). In total 51,284 contexts were analysed;
3. semantic network analysis (Elwert & Gerhards, 2017), which helps present the model of concepts in the form of a figure, the vertices of which are the concepts and the edges (lines, arcs) demonstrate the connections between them. The thickness of the edges is directly proportional to the quantity of connections (the quantity will be indicated on the edges of the figure). The size of the vertex of the figure will be directly proportional to its weight (the total quantity of connections). The index of each vertex was also calculated; this index indicates either the degree of the vertex or the number of other vertices with which a connection was established.

### 4 Results of the research and their analysis

At the beginning of the study 45,383 concepts mentioned in the British press at least once were analysed. However, in order to finish the processing of the results by the methods we have specified, concepts that appeared in the above contexts with the highest frequency were selected. Data on the nominal density of common mentions of nominations in the British press, which are included in the semantic field of a certain concept, are presented in Table 1. The frequency of common use, in our opinion, reflects not only the semantic proximity of lexemes in language, but also shows the cognitive proximity of sub-concepts in English language consciousness. The procedure of lexical-grammar search with a distance of up to 10 words was used.







- the node “GOVERNMENT” (151);
- the node “POLITICAL EVENTS” (125);
- the sub-concept “Change” of the concept “POLITICAL EVENTS” (72);
- the sub-concept “Values” of the concept “CITIZEN” (91).

Thus, the concept “POLITICAL EVENTS” is the second concept by weight and significance in the modern British press.

The next dominant concept is the concept “CITIZEN”, although when compared to the concepts “GOVERNMENT” and “POLITICAL EVENTS”, this node is less significant. The concept “CITIZEN” has only 1127 connections and its degree is 14 in the graph. The concept “CITIZEN” has the largest number of connections with the node “GOVERNMENT” (94), the sub-concepts “Nation” (64), “Strike” (103), and “Values” (158).

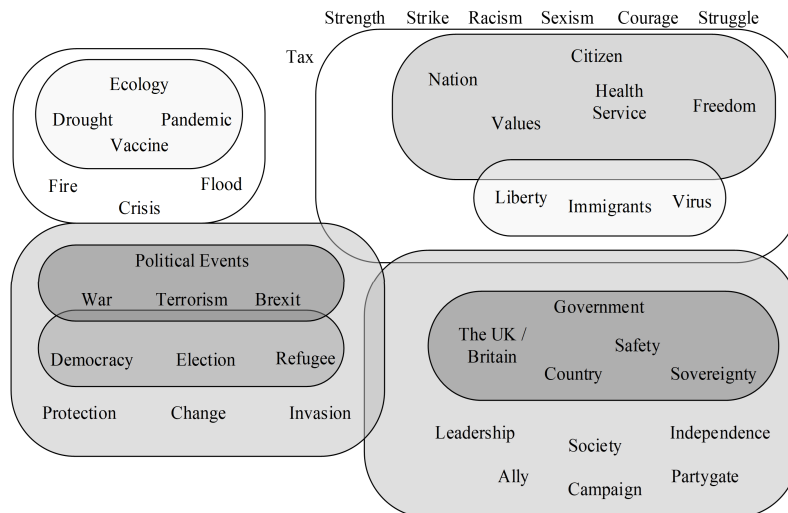
A large number of connections were observed between the sub-concept “Health Service” and the sub-concept “Vaccine”, from the node “ECOLOGY” (229 connections). The connections of the sub-concept “Courage”, which is a part of the concept “CITIZEN”, are worthy of note. A significant number of connections were identified between this sub-concept and the sub-concepts “Drought” (64), “Fire” (72) and “Flood” (51), which belong to the node “ECOLOGY”. Moreover, many connections were found between the sub-concept “Virus” of the node “CITIZEN” with sub-concepts of the node “Ecology”, such as the sub-concepts “Pandemic” (136) and “Vaccine” (182).

The least important in terms of weight is the concept “ECOLOGY” (879 connections; the degree in the graph is equal 7). It is worth mentioning that the concept “ECOLOGY” is somewhat detached from others, as it does not have significant connections with any of the dominant concepts. Instead, the largest number of connections is to be seen between the node “ECOLOGY” and the sub-concept “Drought” and the sub-concept “Virus” (189) of the node “CITIZEN”.

On the basis of the received data, a field model of the concept “Political discourse of the modern British press” was constructed.

The field model is intended to demonstrate the points of gravity and the semantics-cognitive nodes that will create some dominant basic features in the structure of the concept (with the help of such components as the core, the near and the far periphery). The field model of the concept is shown in Figure 2.

The experience of modelling allows us to notice some important features of the content structure of the concept “Political discourse of the modern British press”:



**Figure 2.** Field model of the concept of “political discourse of the modern British press”.

1. The core of the concept “GOVERNMENT” includes the cognitive features transmitted by the sub-concepts “UK/ Britain”, “Country”, “Sovereignty” and “Safety”. The sub-concepts “Leadership”, “Society”, “Independence”, “Ally”, “Campaign” and “Partygate” belong to the near periphery of the concept.
2. The concept “POLITICAL EVENTS” has a double core. The basic core includes the sub-concepts “War”, “Terrorism” and “Brexit”. The additional core is characterised by the features of the sub-concepts “Democracy”, “Election” and “Refugee”. The sub-concepts “Protection”, “Change” and “Invasion” belong to the near periphery of the concept “POLITICAL EVENTS”.
3. The concepts “GOVERNMENT” and “POLITICAL EVENTS” are closely connected. The cores of their sub-concepts are the nodes that are placed on other sub-concepts.
4. The concept “CITIZEN” is less important and not dominant. It also has two cores – basic and additional. The basic core includes such sub-concepts as “Nation”, “Health Service”, “Freedom” and “Values”. The sub-concepts “Liberty”, “Immigrants” and “Virus” belong to the additional core. This core also includes the far periphery to which the sub-concepts “Tax”, “Strength”, “Strike”, “Racism”, “Sexism”, “Courage” and “Struggle” belong.
5. The concept “ECOLOGY” is a significant concept in the political discourse of the modern British press, but it is isolated from the rest of the concepts. The core of the concept consists of the sub-concepts “Drought”, “Pandemic” and “Vaccine”. The sub-concepts “Fire”, “Flood” and “Crisis” belong to the near periphery.

The data mentioned above made it possible to build a cognitive classification model of the concept “Political discourse of the modern British press” (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Cognitive classification model of the concept “Political discourse of the modern British press”.

The model reflects the formal structure of the concept, determining the hierarchical order and the sequence of cognitive features in case of their movement from the centre to the periphery. The cognitive classification model of the concept “Political discourse of the modern British press” is two-level, where the first level contains classifiers and the second contains examples of cognitive features that are actualized in the structure of concepts.

Thus, the cognitive classification model of the concept “Political discourse of the modern British press” contains the following classifiers which are significant at the categorical level: “GOVERNMENT”, “SOCIETY”, “POLITICAL EVENTS”, “CITIZEN”, “STRUGGLE” and “ECOLOGY”. All the sub-concepts selected on the basis of the British press analysis were included in one or another component of the cognitive classification model according to the cognitive feature of the lexical structure in which the sub-concept is used in British press.

In further studies of the political discourse of the modern British press, it will be possible to elaborate on this cognitive classification model by highlighting new levels and establishing internal relations between various elements.

## 5 Conclusions

Our analysis and the constructed field model of the political discourse of the modern British press have led to the following conclusions:

1. All the presented sub-concepts are at the final stage of the formation in British political language consciousness, which is indicated by the high density of the political discourse lexemes that objectify these sub-concepts.
2. Not only the semantic connections of concepts and sub-concepts, but also their cognitive connections in users' minds are obvious. The high number of connections of nominations in the corpus point to the former, while the semantic proximity of the concepts that create the context of references of the examined nominations points to the latter.
3. The lowest nominative density of concepts, which are the dominants of the political discourse of the modern British press, as well as a large degree of formation of the nominative fields of concepts-nuclei have been recorded. The latter is the result of their frequent use in the modern British press.

## References

- Abrams, R. L. (2005). Unconscious processing of multiple nonadjacent letters in visually masked words. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 14(3), 585–601. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2005.01.004>
- Alahmadi, A., & Foltz, A. (2020). Effects of language skills and strategy use on vocabulary learning through lexical translation and inferencing. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 49(6), 975–991. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09720-9>
- Alahmadi, A., Shank, C., & Foltz, A. (2018). Vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size: Insights from educational level and learner styles. *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction*, 7(1), 14–34. <https://doi.org/10.7820/vli.v07.1.alahmadi>
- Aleksandrov, A. A., Memetova, K. S., Stankevich, L. N., Knyazeva, V. M., & Shtyrov, Y. (2020). Referent's lexical frequency predicts mismatch negativity responses to new words following semantic training. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 49(2), 187–198. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09678-3>
- Alyami, M., & Mohsen, M. A. (2019). The use of a reading lexicon to aid contextual vocabulary acquisition by EFL Arab learners. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(5), 1005–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09644-z>
- Armstrong, A.-M., & Dienes, Z. (2013). Subliminal understanding of negation: Unconscious control by subliminal processing of word pairs. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 22(3), 1022–1040. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2013.06.010>

- Banenoeh, K. (2022, July 19). Tory leadership race: Rishi Sunak leads in fourth vote results as Kemi Banenoeh knocked out. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tory-leadership-race-vote-results-today-candidates-latest-w3179d15x>
- Barr, H. (2022, July 25). A woman has been sentenced to death by stoning – and we should all be outraged. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/women-and-girls/woman-has-sentenced-death-stoning-should-outraged/>
- Batel, E. (2020). Context effect on L2 word recognition: Visual versus auditory modalities. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 49(2), 223–245. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09683-6>
- Berkovitch, L., & Dehaene, S. (2019). Subliminal syntactic priming. *Cognitive Psychology*, 109, 26–46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogpsych.2018.12.001>
- Bird, S., & Hall, S. (2022, July 25). Train strikes tomorrow: All the closed routes and timetable of partial services. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/06/25/rail-strike-train-timetable-what-lines-routes-affected-today-2022/>
- Bond, D. (2022, July 27). Brexit not to blame for travel chaos, says No10. *The Evening Standard*. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-travel-chaos-dover-wait-times-eurostar-forecast-airports-b1014521.html>
- Brysbaert, M., & Stevens, M. (2018). Power analysis and effect size in mixed effect models: A tutorial. *Journal of Cognition*, 1(1), Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.5334/joc.10>
- Bucci, W., Maskit, B., & Murphy, S. (2016). Connecting emotions and words: The referential process. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 15(3), 359–383. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-015-9417-z>
- Burke, D., & Buchan, L. (2022, July 26). Rishi Sunak pledges to scrap VAT on energy bills in massive tax U-turn. *The Daily Mirror*. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/rishi-sunak-pledges-scrap-vat-27584009>
- Chen, Q. (2022). Metacomprehension monitoring accuracy: Effects of judgment frames, cues and criteria. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 51(3), 485–500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-022-09837-z>
- Cilibrasi, L., Stojanovik, V., Riddell, P., & Saddy, D. (2019). Sensitivity to inflectional morphemes in the absence of meaning: Evidence from a novel task. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(3), 747–767. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09629-y>
- Crookes, G. (1989). Planning and interlanguage variation. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11(4), 367–383. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263100008391>
- Cui, G., Wang, Y., & Zhong, X. (2021). The effects of suprasegmental phonological training on English reading comprehension: Evidence from Chinese EFL learners. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 50(2), 317–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09743-2>
- Davies, M. (n.d.). *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*. <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>
- Dehaene, S., Changeux, J.-P., Naccache, L., Sackur, J., & Sergent, C. (2006). Conscious, preconscious and subliminal processing: A testable taxonomy. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 10(5), 204–211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2006.03.007>
- Dehaene, S., & Cohen, L. (2011). The unique role of the visual form area in reading. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 15(6), 254–262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2011.04.003>
- Dijkgraaf, A., Hartsuiker, R. J., & Duyck, W. (2017). Predicting upcoming information in native-language and non-native-language auditory word recognition. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 20(5), 917–930. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728916000547>
- Drigas, A., & Karyotaki, M. (2017). Attentional control and other executive functions. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)*, 12(3), 219–233. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v12i03.6587>
- Duell, M. (2022, July 25). Now England faces the worst DROUGHT since 1976: Parched regions face hosepipe bans unless heavens open... as UK is set for another week of 25C sunshine. *Daily Mail*. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11045407/Parts-England-face-official-drought-August-hosepipe-ban.html>
- Elgot, J. (2022, May 19). The shaming of Whitehall: How the Partygate scandal unfolded. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/19/the-shaming-of-whitehall-how-the-party-gate-scandal-unfolded>

- Ellis, R. (1987). Interlanguage variability in narrative discourse: Style shifting in the use of the past tense. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 9(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263100006483>
- Elsom, J. (2022, July 25). Liz Truss accuses Rishi Sunak of ‘Project Fear’ in furious row over tax as Tory pair lock horns in TV debate. *The Sun*. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/politics/19311634/liz-truss-and-rishi-sunak-head-to-head/>
- Elwert, F., & Gerhards, S. (2017). Tracing concepts – Semantic network analysis as a heuristic device for classification. In T. Pommerening & W. Bisang (Eds.), *Classification from antiquity to modern times: Sources, methods and theories from an interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 311–338). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110538779-012>
- Ely, J. (2022, July 25). Time-lapse maps show how ‘most contagious Covid variant yet’ BA.5 has taken off in the UK amid calls for new mask rules, free tests and other restrictions – even though virus was just the FIFTEENTH leading cause of death last month. *The Daily Mail*. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-11045767/Time-lapse-maps-contagious-Covid-variant-taken-UK.html>
- Ensor, J., Newey, S., & Pinkstone, J. (2022, July 23). Monkeypox declared global emergency by World Health Organisation. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/07/23/monkeypox-outbreak-now-global-emergency-says-world-health-organization/>
- Farmer, B. (2022, July 23). Why it feels like the world is falling apart. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/07/23/why-feels-like-world-falling-apart/>
- Ferdowsi, S., & Razmi, M. H. (2022). Examining associations among emotional intelligence, creativity, self-efficacy, and simultaneous interpreting practice through the mediating effect of field dependence/independence: A path analysis approach. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 51(2), 255–272. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-022-09836-0>
- Ferguson, K. (2022a, June 21). Teachers set to strike despite being offered 5% pay rise piling more misery on Brit families. *The Sun*. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/18961124/teachers-summer-strikes-rmt-workers-railways-standstill/>
- Ferguson, K. (2022b, July 19). Labour under Jeremy Corbyn was ‘out of control’ with racism and sexism ‘rife’, damning report finds. *The Sun*. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/19255207/labour-jeremy-corbyn-racism-sexism-antisemitism/>
- Gilbert, R. (2007). Effects of manipulating task complexity on self-repairs during L2 oral production. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 45(3), 215–240. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2007.010>
- Greco, M., Canal, P., Bambini, V., & Moro, A. (2020). Modulating “surprise” with syntax: A study on negative sentences and eye-movement recording. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 49(3), 415–434. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09691-x>
- Hamedi, S. M., & Pishghadam, R. (2021). Visual attention and lexical involvement in L1 and L2 word processing: Emotional Stroop effect. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 50(3), 585–602. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09709-4>
- Heidari, K. (2019). Willingness to communicate: A predictor of pushing vocabulary knowledge from receptive to productive. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(4), 903–920. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09639-w>
- Horne, M. (2022, July 19). Cruise ship ‘not suitable’ to house Ukrainian refugees long-term. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cruise-ship-not-suitable-to-house-ukrainian-refugees-long-term-8jgl3tz7k>
- Horton, H. (2022a, July 25). UK facing drought in August following extreme heat. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/25/uk-drought-extreme-heat-dry>
- Horton, H. (2022b, July 26). People in England urged to curb water use amid driest conditions since 1976. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jul/26/england-drought-people-urged-curb-water-use-reservoir-level-fall-hosepipe-ban>
- Hymas, C., & Narwan, G. (2022, July 25). Dover chaos: Downing Street demands ‘proportionate’ French border checks. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/07/25/dover-chaos-downing-street-demands-proportionate-french-border/>
- Khomulenko, T., & Kuznetsov, O. (2019). Psikholingvisticheskoe znachenie kontsepta “vera”. *Psycholinguistics/Psikholingvistika/Psikholingvistika: Series Psychology*, 25(1), 338–362. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2019-25-1-338-362>
- Kipfer, B. A. (2005). *Roget’s 21<sup>st</sup> century thesaurus in dictionary form: The essential reference for home, school, or office* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Delta Trade Paperbacks.



- Kostruba, N. (2018). Verbal'na reprezentatsiia kontseptu "tserkva" (za danymy asotsiatyvnoho eksperymentu). *Psycholinguistics/Psykholinhvistyka/Psikholingvistika: Series Psychology*, 23(1), 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1211185>
- Kostruba, N. (2020). Kontsept "RELIHIIA" u svidomosti molodi: Psykholinhvistychnyĭ analiz. *Psycholinguistics/Psykholinhvistyka/Psikholingvistika: Series Psychology*, 27(1), 164–180. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2020-27-1-164-180>
- Lamme, V., & Roelfsema, P. (2000). The distinct models of vision offered by feedforward and recurrent processing. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 23(11), 571–579. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0166-2236\(00\)01657-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0166-2236(00)01657-X)
- Lu, A., Wang, L., Guo, Y., Zeng, J., Zheng, D., Wang, X., Shao, Y., & Wang, R. (2019). The roles of relative linguistic proficiency and modality switching in language switch cost: Evidence from Chinese visual unimodal and bimodal bilinguals. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-017-9519-6>
- Maidment, J., & Penna, D. (2022, July 28). You 'stabbed Boris in the back', Rishi Sunak told at first Tory leadership hustings. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/07/28/liz-truss-rishi-sunak-hustings-tory-leadership-race-conservative/>
- Maidment, J., & Riley-Smith, B. (2022, July 25). Liz Truss refuses Andrew Neil interview as Sunak quips 'just me then'. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/07/25/liz-truss-rishi-sunak-tory-leadership-keir-starmer/>
- Martin, D. (2022, July 22). Rishi Sunak wants half of Tory MPs to back him as he bids to win over party members. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/07/22/rishi-sunak-wants-half-tory-mps-back-bids-win-party-members/>
- Martin, D., & Gutteridge, N. (2022, July 26). Rishi Sunak accused of 'screeching U-turn' on tax cuts. *The Daily Mail*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/07/26/rishi-sunak-accused-screeching-u-turn-tax-cuts/>
- Mason, R. (2022, June 29). Met police face legal challenge over Partygate investigation. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/29/met-police-legal-challenge-partygate-investigation-johnson>
- McCandliss, B. D., Cohen, L., & Dehaene, S. (2003). The visual word form area: Expertise for reading in the fusiform gyrus. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7(7), 293–299. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613\(03\)00134-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613(03)00134-7)
- McCarthy, J. (2022, July 17). Ukrainian refugee crisis grows in tents in Ireland. *The Sunday Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ukrainian-refugee-crisis-grows-in-tents-in-ireland-rx7trrx26b>
- Mckenna, J. (2022, July 24). Italy on high alert as scorching temperatures threaten historic buildings and agriculture. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/07/24/italy-high-alert-scorching-temperatures-threaten-historic-buildings/>
- Moody, O. (2022, July 18). Olaf Scholz: War in Ukraine has made Germany realise democracy is worth fighting for. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/olaf-scholz-war-in-ukraine-has-made-germany-realise-democracy-is-worth-fighting-for-dgsfqzwm0>
- Murphy, S., Melandri, E., & Bucci, W. (2021). The effects of story-telling on emotional experience: An experimental paradigm. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 50(1), 117–142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-021-09765-4>
- Mykhalchuk, N., & Bihunova, S. (2019). The verbalization of the concept of "fear" in English and Ukrainian phraseological units. *Cognitive Studies | Études cognitives*, 2019(19), Article 2043. <https://doi.org/10.11649/cs.2043>
- Mykhalchuk, N., Bihunova, S., Fridrikh, A., & Vietrova, I. (2021). The cross-cultural understanding of metaphors in the information technology sphere. *Cognitive Studies | Études cognitives*, 2021(21), Article 2475. <https://doi.org/10.11649/cs.2475>
- Mykhalchuk, N., Ivashkevych, E., Nohachevska, I., Nabochuk, A., & Voitenko, O. (2021). Psycholinguistic mechanisms of understanding contemporary poetry by future philologists. *Psycholinguistics/Psykholinhvistyka/Psikholingvistika*, 30(1), 139–179. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2021-30-1-139-179>
- Mykhalchuk, N., & Kryshevych, O. (2019). The peculiarities of the perception and understanding of Sonnets written by W. Shakespeare by the students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. *Psycholin-*

- guistics/Psykholinhvistyka/Psikholingvistika: Series Psychology*, 26(1), 265–285. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2019-26-1-265-285>
- Mykhalchuk, N., Levchuk, P., Ivashkevych, E., Yasnohurska, L., & Cherniakova, O. (2021). Psycholinguistic specifics of understanding by Ukrainian students the principles of nomination of linguacultural models “clothing” in English and Ukrainian. *Psycholinguistics/Psykholinhvistyka/Psikholingvistika*, 29(2), 195–237. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2021-29-2-195-237>
- Our Foreign Staff. (2022, July 25). Wildfire sweeps through Yosemite National Park destroying land more than half the size of Paris. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/07/25/wildfires-fires-california-tenerife-weather-europe-heatwave/>
- Peel, H. J., Royals, K. A., & Chouinard, P. A. (2022). The effects of word identity, case and SOA on word priming in a subliminal context. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 51(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-021-09783-2>
- Phani Krishna, P., Arulmozi, S., Shiva Ram, M., & Mishra, R. K. (2020). Sensory perception in blind bilinguals and monolinguals. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 49(4), 631–639. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09689-5>
- Pimperton, H., & Nation, K. (2010). Suppressing irrelevant information from working memory: Evidence for domain-specific deficits in poor comprehenders. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 62(4), 380–391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2010.02.005>
- Roberts, L., & Pinkstone, J. (2022, July 23). Deadly virus surging in children will be defeated within five years, vows Oxford vaccine chief. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/07/23/deadly-virus-surg-ing-children-will-defeated-within-five-years/>
- Sawer, P., Narwan, G., & Murphy, M. (2022, July 23). Stop blaming Brexit for Dover chaos, Rishi Sunak tells French. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/07/23/long-long-delays-expected-port-dover/>
- Shymko, V., & Babadzhanova, A. (2020). Study of Covid-19 related quarantine concept as an emerging category of a linguistic consciousness. *Psycholinguistics/Psykholinhvistyka/Psikholingvistika*, 28(1), 267–287. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2020-28-1-267-287>
- Smith, N., & Barber, H. (2022, July 22). Inside the weapons bootcamp preparing for a feared Chinese invasion. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/in-side-Taiwan-weapons-bootcamp-preparing-feared-chinese-invasion/>
- The Sun. (2022, May 25). Boris Johnson must put Partygate behind him & help Sun readers through cost of living crisis. *The Sun*. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/18687317/boris-johnson-partygate-cost-of-living/>
- Valis, M., Slaninova, G., Prazak, P., Poulova, P., Kacetl, J., & Klimova, B. (2019). Impact of learning a foreign language on the enhancement of cognitive functions among healthy older population. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(6), 1311–1318. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09659-6>
- Waterson, J. (2022, June 19). ‘Super scorchio!’: Heat brings out new face of climate denial in UK press. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/jul/22/climate-denial-uk-press-culture-war>
- Wong, Y. K. (2019). Role of decoding competence in the Chinese reading comprehension development of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 22(8), 1016–1029. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2017.1329273>
- Yang, M., MacSwan, A., Dugan, E., & McClure, T. (2022, July 24). Ukraine warns grain export deal will stall if there are further Russian airstrikes on key ports – as it happened. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2022/jul/24/russia-ukraine-war-ukraine-pushes-to-res-tart-grain-exports-from-odesa-after-missile-attack-live>
- Zuniga, M., & Simard, D. (2019). Factors influencing L2 self-repair behavior: The role of L2 proficiency, attentional control and L1 self-repair behavior. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(1), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-018-9587-2>


---

The publication was financed at the authors’ expense.

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

All the authors participated equally in preparing conception and academic editing of this article.



 This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en>), which permits redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, provided that the article is properly cited.

© The Authors 2023

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences

Publishing history: Received 2022-06-11; Accepted 2023-08-23; Published 2023-12-31.