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IDIOMATIC SPACE OF THE CONCEPT MOTHERLAND IN THE ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN LANGUAGES

Abstract

The article presents the study of the verbalization of the concept MOTHERLAND in the Ukrainian and English languages. In today's world, the question of importance of the concept MOTHERLAND is more pressing than ever. In view of the tragic events in Ukraine and the sociopolitical situation in Britain, the concept MOTHERLAND acquires a special resonance, which determined the relevance of this study. The research establishes the theoretical basis for examining the concept MOTHERLAND, unveiling its essence in philosophical and theoretical contexts. The concept is analyzed in the studied languages, considering both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. The study reveals that in Ukrainian ethnic consciousness, the concept MOTHERLAND is associated with home, family and evokes warm feelings, although the illusions of the ideal are no longer present. The English concept MOTHERLAND is slightly different, as the country's rich history inspires a sense of pride, but often grappling with issues such as a lack of unity. Common basic cognitive-invariant archetypal constants of both peoples as descendants of Indo-Europeans include benevolence, patriotism, hospitality and success. However, in the process of historical and cultural development, each ethnic group acquired distinct variant profiles. Rational kindness is characteristic of the British, while openness and sincerity are typical of Ukrainians. The British exhibit abstractness in expressing feelings towards their native country, whereas Ukrainians demonstrate a close-intimate attitude towards their homeland. Stereotypically, the British may possess a sense of national superiority over other peoples, while Ukrainians harbor an interested attitude towards foreigners. Although researchers refer to the linguistic and cultural concept MOTHERLAND as abstract and universal, as its deeper reconstruction shows, it has a clearly expressed ethno-cultural marking.

Keywords: concept, semantic content, ethnic consciousness, reconstruction, ethno-cultural marking.

Анотація

Статтю присвячено дослідженню вербалізації концепту Батьківщина / MOTHERLAND в українській та англійських мовах. З огляду на трагічні події в Україні та соціополітичні ситуації в Британії, поняття Батьківщини набуває особливого резонансу, що і визначило актуальність цього дослідження. Описано теоретичні засади дослідження концепту Батьківщина та MOTHERLAND; розкрито сутність концепту у філософському осмисленні; проаналізовано згаданий концепт у мовах, що досліджуються, з діахронічної та синхронічної перспектив. В українській етносвідомості концепт Батьківщина асоціюється з домівкою, родиною і викликає теплі почуття, хоча ілюзії ідеалу вже відсутні. Британська HOMELAND дещо інша: багата історія часто викликає почуття гордості, однак багато уваги приділяється проблемам, наприклад, відсутність єдності. Спільними основними когнітивно-інваріантними архетипними константами обидвох народів як нащадків індоєвропейців є: доброзичливість, патріотизм, гостинність, успішність. У процесі історико-культурного розвитку кожного етносу ці константи набули відмінних варіантних профілей: раціональна доброта характерною є для англійців, тимчасом відверта, щира – для українців; абстрагованість у вираженні почуттів до рідної країни – для англійців та близько-інтимне ставлення до Батьківщини – для українців; відчуття національної переваги над іншими народами – як стереотип англійців та зацікавлене ставлення до іноземців як стереотип українців. Лінгвокультурний концепт Батьківщина дослідники класифікують як абстрактний, загальнолюдський, однак, як показує глибша його реконструкція, він має яскраво виражене етнокультурне маркування.

Ключові слова: концепт, семантичний зміст, етнічна свідомість, реконструкція, етнокультурна маркованість.

Introduction. The concept MOTHERLAND is central in shaping the identity of any nation, wielding substantial emotional impact by evoking feelings of affection, loyalty and belonging. The linguistic manifestation of this concept can reveal much about national cultures and their inherent values. The concept MOTHERLAND is closely connected with people's perception of their homeland, because a concept, according to Selivanova, is "an organised memory unit that contains information about an object perceived" (Селіванова, 2008, с. 410). Given that every natural language reflects a unique way of perceiving and organizing (conceptualizing) the world, the values, expressed in it, form a system of views, the so-called collective philosophy, pertained to the native speakers. The language-specific way of conceptualizing the reality is rather universal, to some extent nationally specific, so the speakers of different languages can perceive the world through the prism of their own languages (Shutova & Mudrynych, 2020). Based on this postulate, it is worth commenting once again on the ethnolinguistic ideas of Sapir and Whorf (hypothesis of linguistic relativity), according to which each language has its own ways and means of conceptualizing and categorizing the world, and therefore each people, each nation has its own formed ideas about this world, about people as representatives of their culture, and about other ethnic groups.

Hence the **topicality** of the research is determined by the fact that the concept MOTHERLAND holds significant cultural, historical and emotional value in both Ukrainian and English. It is the onomasiological models that provides an opportunity to build an onomasiological portrait of *hominis ethnici*.

In Ukrainian, the term БАТЬКІВЩИНА (MOTHERLAND) emphasises the significance of the family connection with the native country and is worth researching especially in the turbulent times we are facing now with a lot of people being forced to leave their native land. In English, the concept MOTHERLAND has not gained such an avid attention so far, yet it is definitely appealing to study how the English speakers treat this notion.

The article **aims** to reveal the linguistic manifestations of the concept MOTHERLAND in the Ukrainian and English languages. It presupposes the following **objectives**: to analyze the linguistic manifestation of the concept MOTHERLAND (БАТЬКІВЩИНА) in the Ukrainian language diachronically and synchronically; to analyze the linguistic manifestation of the concept MOTHERLAND in the English language diachronically and synchronically; to contrast the linguistic manifestations of this concept in both languages.

Methodology. The investigation into the concept MOTHERLAND is guided by the principles of anthropocentrism, cultural determinism and historicism, ensuring insightful and productive findings. Such an approach led to the selection of relevant methods and techniques. The descriptive method made it possible to identify the studied units and carry out their classification and interpretation; the method of semantic analysis was employed to determine the lexical and semantic features of the considered units. The method of component analysis proved instrumental in determining the type of evaluation marking (positive, negative or neutral) in the semantic structure of the studied units. The analysis proved to be fruitful given the huge differences in historical backgrounds of these two countries, and as set against the Ukrainian perspective of the concept HOMELAND. Furthermore, the study of the linguistic expression of the concept MOTHERLAND allows us to trace the historical and political development of a nation. Language is not static; it evolves and adapts to reflect changing social realities. By analysing the use of certain words and phrases over time, we can distinguish shifts in national consciousness and the impact of external influences.

Results and discussion. As it was mentioned above, this study aims to show the diverse perceptions of concept MOTHERLAND in the English and Ukrainian cultures and languages.

These include the linguistic features of the concept MOTHERLAND in modern English and Ukrainian.

The concept MOTHERLAND belongs to abstract linguistic and cultural concepts (Махух, 2012). In the philosophical and theoretical understanding, the homeland is considered as “a country that historically belongs to a given nation; the geographical environment mastered by this people, reflected in its material and spiritual culture; economic, social, political and cultural environment that has historically developed and been mastered by people” (Wit, 2020).

Analysing the concept MOTHERLAND from the theoretical standpoint, we must start with the investigation of the linguistic units used to denote it.

The term “motherland” and its linguistic designation is common in many Indo-European languages, although in some of the languages there are also other synonyms derived from the word “mother” (English *motherland*) with the meaning “native, own place, native home”; homeland (German *Heimat*, Swedish *fosterland*), etc.

Motherland is the native country in which a person was born and lives. For the author and her countrymen, this is Ukraine. Everyone has their own “small” homeland: the region, the land where they were born, their hometown or village. Nowadays, Motherland is associated with the concept of “state”. In this case, it covers the social and governmental system, the system of political relations, culture, spiritual values, peculiarities of language, lifestyle and customs (Махух, 2012, с. 86).

The etymology of the words *Motherland* and *Батьківщина* confirms their single source of origin. The compound noun *Motherland* in English comes from the Proto-Germanic root *mothær- “mother” (Barnhart, 1988), which has the root *mater and Proto-Germanic *land “land, territory of residence”. *Батьківщина* is derived from *father*, meaning “father”, which, in turn, is related to gr. *αττα* and lat. *atta*, has i.-e. root *atta “elder sister, mother” (ESUM, 2003, p. 233).

The dictionary representations of the content of *Батьківщина* are as follows “the land of fathers”, place of birth, territory developed by several generations of a certain ethnic group, its habitat – reveal the lexeme “land” as part of the internal form, which is a representative of the concept ЗЕМЛЯ. A certain natural environment (the land with its forests, meadows, rivers and lakes, adjacent sea spaces, etc.) acts as a homeland when it is appreciated by the culture, understood as its own, as evidence of the historical past of the ethnic group and the totality of its historical monuments, as a source of individual and common memories and experiences for the ethnic group (Yaylaci, 2008). Markova (Маркова, 2018) believes that the homeland is conceived by Ukrainians not just as a place or space, but as the earth, the soil that can be held in their hands, taken with them to a foreign land (atheism). The concept HOMELAND belongs to the so-called abstract, universal concepts, which at the same time has its own ethno-cultural content. Thus, the core of the concept MOTHERLAND is the following semantic content:

- a country that historically belongs to the people;
- the geographical environment mastered by the people, reflected in their material and spiritual culture (Маркова, 2018).

The stereotypical image of the homeland in the minds of English speakers was formed on the basis of their ideas about the native land, which became the motivational basis for the creation of such composite nominations in the English language as *motherland*, *fatherland*, *homeland*, a component of which is the lexeme *land*. This indicates a connection with the archetype of the native land in both languages. The first components of the English composite nouns “mother”, “father”, “home” rather convey the attitude to the homeland as to the mother, father and home itself and have a clearly expressed ancestral affiliation. The archetype of the mother is directly explicated in the lexeme *Motherland*. Whilst

in the Ukrainian language there is only the component *father*, from which the lexeme *Батьківщина* was formed and which marks a man as a generic (archetypal) beginning.

While analyzing the concept under consideration in the English language, we must note that there are three linguistic units that all refer to a person's native or ancestral land: HOMELAND, MOTHERLAND and FATHERLAND, but they are associated with different cultural and historical contexts.

HOMELAND is a neutral term that simply refers to the country or region where someone was born or to which they feel a deep sense of belonging. It does not carry any gender-specific connotations and is commonly used in English to denote one's home country or the place where they have strong cultural or familial ties.

MOTHERLAND is a term that emphasizes the nurturing and protective aspect of a country. It is often used poetically or in a patriotic sense to evoke strong emotional connections. The term "motherland" is not specific to any particular country and can be used to refer to any nation in a symbolic or emotional context.

FATHERLAND conveys a sense of patriotism and national pride. However, the use of "fatherland" has declined in English and is more commonly associated with the language and rhetoric of the past. In modern contexts, it may carry connotations of authoritarianism or nationalism and is less commonly used compared to HOMELAND.

Researchers who analyzed the concept MOTHERLAND concluded that in many cultures, this archetypal symbol shows common meanings with the concept HOME (meaning zone "native land"), in particular in the English language (cf.: homeland) (Марчук, 2009, c. 11). Saadat (2020) associates HOMELAND with the idea of protection. He believes that the concept SHELTER is a fundamental human instinct, inherent to the concept HOMELAND. For him, HOMELAND acts as a framework shaping the way people with shared cultural, political, linguistic and historical traits perceive the world and organize their society.

According to the scholars who study postcolonialism, like Heckmann (2009), the concept HOMELAND, rooted in tradition, refers to the place of our origin and where our ancestors lived. This traditional view of home, however, is static, focusing on the past, without considering our current residence. It implies a passive identity linked to our roots. Home, in this context, provides orientation, connecting us to our origins and a sense of belonging in the world.

Due to Ukraine's long and painful path to independence and freedom, the concept MOTHERLAND has always had great significance in Ukrainian culture and literature. Historical laws, political changes and social norms are all factors that work together to impact language, as stated by Daniels (2020). By examining the diachronic evolution of the concept MOTHERLAND (БАТЬКІВЩИНА) in language, we can gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which this concept has been constructed and disputed over times. We can also see how the concept MOTHERLAND has been used to mobilize and inspire people, both in peaceful times and in times of war.

In addition to providing insights into the changing ways in which people have conceptualized their relationship to their homeland, national literature can also shed light on the emotional and psychological dimensions of this coherency. For example, literature can explore the feelings of belonging, nostalgia, and displacement that can be associated with the perplexity of the Motherland in some historical contexts. It can also examine the ways in which people use "the Motherland" as a source of strength and identity.

Ukrainian poets and writers of all times have often portrayed their homeland as a source of inspiration and as a nurturing force that provides a sense of belonging and identity. It has been used numerous times as a symbol of the Ukrainian people's struggle for freedom and independence, as well as a reflection of their resilience in the face of a disaster. According to the Ukrainian scholar Yevtushenko (Євтушенко, 2014), in Ukrainian literature, the

concept HOMELAND acquired a dominant status due to the creative efforts of T. Shevchenko and the literators of the post-Shevchenko era, who were able to establish a new paradigm of the idiomatic content of this concept.

In the history of Ukraine, there have been different struggles, and literature, as they say, is a mirror of life. Poets and prose writers of different times have had a diverse outlook on their homeland. The first notable figure is the pioneer of modern Ukrainian literature, Ivan Kotliarevsky and his *magnum opus* “Eneida”, where the Trojan heroes from Virgil’s Aeneid are transformed into Zaporozhian Cossacks. I. Kotliarevskyi’s poem depicts the same events, and retains the names of the characters, but the Ukrainian author added a new national colouring and meaning: Ukrainian Cossacks appear as Trojans, Ukrainian gentry as the gods of Olympus; all the realities of the work reflect the life of the Ukrainian society in the 18th century after the destruction of the Ukrainian “Troy” – the Zaporizhzhian Sich. The work reflects the author’s vision of the MOTHERLAND, characterised by nostalgia for the Cossack state, which was liquidated by Russia in 1775–1786.

In the works by Taras Shevchenko, the far-famed Ukrainian poet, writer, artist and glorified representative of the Ukrainian national revival movement in the mid-19th century, MOTHERLAND (БАТЬКІВЩИНА) is a central subject. He frequently used this concept to express his deep devotion to Ukraine, its people, culture and traditions. For Shevchenko, the Motherland was not only a physical place with “the spreading plain, // <...> the fields, the boundless steppes, // The Dnipro’s plunging shore” (Testament, translated by John Weir) but also an idea and a symbol of national identity.

Another notable representation of MOTHERLAND (БАТЬКІВЩИНА) can be found in the works of Lesya Ukrainka, one of the foremost writers in Ukrainian literature, most known for her poems and plays. Her play “The Forest Song” (1911) does justice to the natural component of the concept MOTHERLAND (БАТЬКІВЩИНА), describing the beauty of an old mysterious forest in Volyn. It also reflects the folklore element of the concept, giving a lot of attention to the creatures of Ukrainian mythology, such as Mavka (a female spirit), Vodianyк (a water goblin) and others.

Motherland is always a “personal”, “own” (“my”) personal place, archetype that is opposed to “alien”, foreign land. This is the native land, native side, native people, native graves, groves, air. Homeland is associated with the native land as a nurse, and thus with the mother-ancestor (as evidenced by the reconstruction of the lexeme homeland, see above). Hence, the image of the homeland-mother ascends to the archetype of the foremother (see K. Jung’s archetypes) as the source of all living things and as the end of the life path – the return to the womb of the raw earth mother.

The Ukrainian lexical-semantic system contains the following series of lexemes-synonyms: *native country, homeland, fatherland, cradle*; and antonyms: *stranger, foreigner, foreign land* (Полюга, 2006, с. 48). Both synonymous and antonymous relations acquire meanings that cause various associative reactions of a particular language speaker. Thus, the Motherland is *dear, beloved, strong, powerful, the best, our, beautiful, native, wonderful, happy*. Such characteristics emphasize the positive evaluative peculiarities that this concept contains. Because of that, you can *be, live, grow up, stay, rise, stand, stay* in the Motherland. One can feel *love for the Motherland, duty to the Motherland, longing (anguish) for the Motherland* (Полюга, 2006). It is these observations that show the mechanism of stereotyping of Ukrainians’ ideas about the Motherland, which their associations demonstrate.

For a representative of the Ukrainian ethnic group, the Motherland is not only the land on which they live, it is, first of all, *Ukraine, the Dnipro, the house, the willow, the viburnum*, which have acquired the status of symbols, but more broadly, concepts. Thus, in the understanding of Taras Shevchenko, in whose poetry concept words form a lexical-

semantic field with an extremely wide range of poetic meanings, Ukraine is not only a place, territory or country.

Besides, Ukrainians tend to humanize the abstract notion of the homeland. It elicits compassion from external observers and nurtures a profound sense of unity and security within the national psyche. This personification of the Motherland is vividly seen in the rhetoric of the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, who metaphorically treats Ukraine as a conscious entity with human-like qualities, as seen in the examples:

-“In this, Ukraine heavily relies on the UN”: This statement personifies Ukraine by attributing the act of relying or counting on someone (in this case, the UN).

-“Ukraine is grateful for the vital and steady support...”: by expressing gratitude, this statement endows Ukraine with the capacity for emotions, specifically gratitude.

-“Ukraine remains dedicated to its vital role”: Here, Ukraine is portrayed as a conscious entity capable of dedication.

In each of these examples, Ukraine is treated metaphorically as a person, imbuing the nation with human-like qualities and actions. This metaphorical language allows for a more vivid and relatable description of Ukraine.

In the English language, love for the Motherland is expressed through undisguised antipathy towards foreigners and everything foreign. Accordingly, the words *foreign* and *foreigner* have negative connotations. These unfriendly shades are so strong that even the neutral terminological phrase *the faculty of foreign languages* has been replaced in modern English by a more neutral one: *the faculty of modern languages*.

As for the English national character, the famous British sociologist and director of the Sociological Research Center in Oxford, Kate Fox, says that its leading feature is “social complexity”. The researcher uses this term as a general name for all English social complexes. In other words, the English are rather withdrawn, socially restrained, they lack the spontaneous and direct manner of communication that is natural for other nations. It is very difficult for them to have warm and frank contact with other people (Fox, 2004).

We will comment on the researchers’ observations regarding the negative connotations of the English words *foreign* and *foreigner*. In the illustrative dictionaries of the English language we find: *He has a distrust of foreigners, Foreigners are not allowed to own land, Anne’s father would not consent to her marrying a foreigner* (CED).

The etymological origin of the lexeme *foreign* confirms its negative connotations. Foreign – borrowed from Old Fr. *forain* “stranger; remote; from another country, place”, the basis was the Latin preposition *foris* “outside; the one who is behind the door” (*foris* – door), which is reconstructed from i-e. protosynonyms **dhwer-* “door, doorway, path” (KCED, p. 344).

The Ukrainian national character is characterized by increased interest, curiosity and benevolence towards foreigners and a foreign way of life, culture, worldview. Accordingly, the words *foreign* and *foreigner* do not have negative connotations, rather, the contrary.

Foreigner (іноземець – *inozemets*’) is a compound noun consisting of two roots *in-* and *zem-*. *In-* with the meaning “other” goes back to i-e. root **oinos-* “one” (ESUM, vol. 2, p. 304). *Zem-* “earth” is reconstructed from i-e. root **ǵhǵem-*, **ǵhǵom-* “land” (ESUM, vol. 2, p. 259). These are the words that arouse interest and increased attention, set one up for the perception of something new, interesting, unknown, although they contain connotations of mistrust and prudence, imagining foreigners as strangers, i.e., classifying them as strangers. *Foreigner* – citizen, subject of another state, country (SUM, vol. 4, p. 32).

Although, John Milton, one of the most prominent English poets and writers of Stuart period, witnessed political turmoil, including the English Civil War, which led to the temporary overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Commonwealth of England. His works left a significant impact on the development of British literature in the

17th century. In his “On Reformation”, Milton refers to his homeland as “our deare Mother England”, depicting his love and respect for his MOTHERLAND. For that many scholars treat him as a true patriot and even a nationalist (Stevens, 2022).

Such an analysis portrays Britain as a nation that values its cultural diversity, cherishes its historical legacy, and takes pride in its national identity. The themes of community, resilience, innovation and global influence are central to British perceptions.

Conclusions. National character is a people’s idea of themselves, an important element of national self-consciousness, its public ethnic self, the study of which should be carried out not by identifying the specific features of the psyche of a certain people and contrasting them with another people, but by reconstructing the degree of manifestation of universal human values in different national cultures and traditions, in this case English and Ukrainian. Such values have been formed for more than one millennium, and therefore have deep roots, ontologically connected with the national differentiation of peoples.

The stereotypical image of the Motherland in the minds of English speakers was formed on the basis of their ideas about the native land, which became the motivational source for the creation of such composite nominations in the English language as *motherland*, *fatherland*, *homeland*, a component of which is the lexeme *land*. This indicates a connection with the archetype of the native land, as well as in the Ukrainian language. The first components of the English composite nouns “mother”, “father”, “home” convey the attitude to the homeland as to the mother, father and the house itself and have an evident ancestral affiliation. The archetype of the mother is directly explicated in the lexeme *motherland*. In the Ukrainian language, there is only the component *father*, from which the lexeme *Батьківщина* (Motherland) was formed and which marks a man as a generic (archetypal) beginning.

For Ukrainians, the attitude towards their country, land, Motherland is close and intimate. In the Ukrainian language, many symbolic and metaphorical phrases are stereotyped: Mother-earth, native motherland, native land, Ukraine-mother.

For the English, relations with their native country are more distant, remote, which objectively confirms the formed stereotypes about their national characters, which are dominated by restraint. Meanwhile, Ukrainians are seen as emotional people, sometimes lyrical and sentimental.

Both nations are proud of their diverse populations, considering it a source of strength and identity, shown in literature and language. Both exhibit deep love and affection for their homelands, defending their values and way of life, often depicted in literature through patriotic themes.

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