

## **Peculiarities of Language Representation of the Concept? Englishness and Britishness in the Modern British Media Discourse**

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**Abstract:** The aim of the study is to analyze the correlation between the concepts “Englishness” and “Britishness”, peculiarities of their language representation in the modern British media discourse. Methods of the analysis are defined by objectives, a theoretical and practical orientation of the research, character of an analyzed material. The conceptual analysis (structuring and the analysis of the semantic content of concepts for the purpose of their reconstruction on the basis of studying the representative specifics of the corresponding language units); the intralinguistic semantic analysis (identification of the general and national peculiar features in semantics of language units) and etc. In today’s British Society, the concept “Britishness” is a key element in the system of British cultural values but in a number of cases the concepts “Britishness” and “Englishness” are identified as similar despite the fact that the population of the UK was and is a heterogeneous structure. The concept “multiculturalism” is represented by the notion “Britishness” which includes the idea of belonging to the British Society, on the one hand and ethno-cultural characteristics of the population of Britain related in a large number of cases to the primordial population of Britain.

**Key words:** Concept, “Englishness” and “Britishness”, modern British media course, peculiarities of the language representation, multiculturalism

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The study presents the problem of correlation of the concepts “Englishness” and “Britishness” and ways of their language representation in the modern British media.

One of the main characteristics of the modern British society is individualism. It is a social phenomenon of “Western civilization” and it is affecting a growing number of people who are aimed at an independent achievement of social positions, professional development and material well-being without the help of an ethnic group or any other similar community. However, the social conflict between the majority and individualized ethnic (cultural, language, religious) minorities is getting more and more noticeable (Bukow, 1996).

A special attention must be paid in this case to the category of the partnership realization into which is directed to the involvement of representatives of various ethnic groups to full activity within the British Society.

It manifests a refusal from multiculturalism policy in its former understanding for preservation of the British identity in the true sense of the word, replacing the principle of passive tolerance by much more active, vigorous liberalism and explaining that the British Society

must be based on the certain fundamental values including freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, the equal rights for all irrespective of sex, race or sexual orientation and all citizens of this society have to share these values.

Cameron argued that multiculturalism encourages ‘different cultures to live separate lives’ and allows for ‘segregated communities’ to behave ‘in ways that run completely counter to our values’. Multiculturalism has become a taboo word in contemporary Britain. The sociologist Steven Vertovec said that no politician wants to be associated with the M-word. Put differently, difference is bad and sameness is good (Andreouli, 2014).

The material of political journalism, undoubtedly, presents a fertile area for review of realizations of concepts “Englishness” and “Britishness” in various ideological contexts. Dijk Van, (1989) found that “unlike most other discourse forms, political discourse may be relevant for all citizens. This power derives both from this scope and from its various degrees of legitimacy. Few forms of oral discourse are as well known, routinely quoted or distributed as widely through the mass media as that of top politicians such as the president or prime minister”.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Methods of the analysis are defined by objectives, a theoretical and practical orientation of the research, character of an analyzed material. In the research, the complex technique including various types of the analysis are implied. The conceptual analysis (structuring and the analysis of the semantic content of concepts for the purpose of their reconstruction on the basis of studying the representative specifics of the corresponding language units); the intralinguistic semantic analysis (identification of the general and national peculiar features in semantics of language units); the contextual analysis (studying of features of this context causing process of semantic formation of values, representing a concept); the functional and stylistic analysis (considering the ways of representation of expressional and emotional and estimated values of language units in certain media texts for the purpose of achievement of special stylistic effect).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In today's, British society the concept "Britishness" is a key element in the system of British cultural values. The system of the most typical characteristics of the British mentality includes individualism, self-centeredness, eccentricity, originality, snobbery, privacy, the desire for isolation and others. It also should be noted that the lexical units "Britishness" and "Englishness" are not presented in special and encyclopedic dictionaries. The definition of the concepts "Britishness" and "Englishness" requires more careful consideration due to the fact that the population of the UK throughout the history of its existence has been a heterogeneous structure.

The concepts "Britishness" and "Englishness" in a number of cases are similar. For example: "It has been common in the past for the English and others to say "English" when they should really have said "British". 80% of all British citizens live in England as the political and economic centre of the UK and England and English have frequently been taken to mean the whole of Britain (Schuch, 2008). The key notion of the following statements appears the phrase "the deformation of Englishness" which is the main characteristic of processes taking place in the United Kingdom: this situation causes dissatisfaction of a certain part of British society. For example: Well I'm English and I'm fed up with the fact that only the English have to be British. If you're Scots or Welsh you can shout about, it and condemn the English at every opportunity (the Kinnock windbag even did it at Brown's Britishness love-in) but the English are expected

to be British well no, thanks not any more (Shields, 2010). One more example: A "crisis of Britishness" is prompting growing numbers of people to redefine themselves as "English", raising troubling questions about national identity and the extremes of home-grown Islamic radicals and the far right. The question of what it is to be an Englishman has exercised some of the finest minds. To George Orwell it was "solid breakfasts and gloomy Sundays, smoky towns and winding roads, green fields and red pillar-boxes" while the American-born poet T.S. Eliot argued that it lay in the Henley regatta, Wensleydale cheese and the music of Elgar (Shields, 2010).

Here are some statements of the British politicians. Garry Bushell, England Democrats Party writes: "The English are the only people in the world who are told that it is wrong to celebrate our history and heritage. Tony Blair who is Scottish gave the Scots a Parliament stating rightly that they are a 'proud and historic nation.' But his Deputy, John Prescott, who was born in Wales is on record as saying 'There is no such nationality as English.' Have you ever heard anything so absurd?" (Bushell, 2015).

Britain was faced with the problem of interchangeability of the concepts of "British" and "English" that is a definite challenge for a multicultural country. For example: one has to do with the notorious confusion of 'English' with 'British', so that both English and other British are often uncertain whose identity is in question, England's or Britain's. This is in fact partly a consequence of what is the more important problem, the absence of a tradition of reaction on the English state itself and of its character in comparison with other states. One result of this is that 'state' and 'nation' are often used interchangeably with no attention to the possible and indeed frequent divergence between them. This is especially important in a multinational state such as Britain. Crucially of course it was the English language that became the common possession of both empires. It is hardly surprising that the English and many others, both Britons and foreigners say 'English' when they mean 'British' (Kumar, 2008).

Some researchers for example K. Robbins, believes that "Englishness" is basic in the category "Britishness" as is evident in the following example: Traditionally British national identity was intrinsically linked with the supposed superiority of Britain's political institutions and the spread of the British Empire. By forging the British Nation in opposition to others and otherness, it was possible to unite the disparate classes and nations of Britain around the culture of its dominant nation, England. This of course reacted the fact that it was the English who had the highest stake in the venture. To have

celebrated their own English identity as the creators and directors of Great Britain, would have been impolitic in the extreme (Robbins, 1995).

The problem of determining evaluated attitude to the category of “Britishness” is relevant not only for linguists but also for the wider community of scientists as well as political and public figures. This example contains a direct reference to the ambiguity of the formation and explanation of its meaning: “There is a rather more pressing need for a definition of a concept which transcends party politics and political philosophy” (Leith, 2011).

This situation is reflected in the following keywords: “Britishness” is the sum of everything British people think, say and do: not a handful of ideas politicians decide are good for us and administer like a dose of cod-liver oil” (Leith, 2011).

The above citation allows to illustrate the statement that the concept “Britishness” in these contexts can be considered as a systematizing dominant in the rating of British cultural values. It determines not only belonging to the British Nation as geographically, politically and economically united group of people but also as a nation with a common history, culture, customs, traditions, character traits, language and general language consciousness as a property inherent to the British as a person who absorbed and implemented the whole complex of these characteristics.

Special attention should be paid to the problem of the historical formation of British society: “A new culture needs to be built by digging into the past, confronting the demons giving up racism/supremacy and finding a place in the world” (Osborne, 2011).

The material analysed by us is characterized by emergence of a significant amount of the examples reflecting a negative assessment of a new strategy and its consequences in connection with the promotion of the new doctrine of D. Cameron. For example: There are two serious problems with this strategy. First, many children in British schools are not British, or do not think of themselves as British or have predominantly negative feelings about Britain or rank their loyalty to Britain far below their loyalty to other groups (religious, ethnic, regional, social) to which they belong. For these children there is little to be gained from tying allegiance to liberal democratic values of national identity. And there is much to be lost by it: if I am taught that democracy and liberty and tolerance are British values but I feel no attachment to Britain, I may well draw the inference that these values are not for me. Second, the rhetoric of Britishness badly obscures the good reasons, we have to endorse liberal democratic values. If we’re going to promote these values

in schools as I’ve agreed, we should we have a duty to furnish children with sound reasons for them. Such reasons are readily available but they have nothing to do with being British. The case for liberal democracy rests on some powerful lessons from history and some compelling arguments in ethics and political philosophy and the case is exactly the same in the UK as in any other country. The danger of presenting these values as British and suggesting that their appeal as analogous to that of football and fish and chips is that children invest in them, if at all for entirely the wrong reasons. Attachment to Britain is no justification at all for allegiance to liberal democratic values. And where allegiance is secured on this basis, it is likely to be precarious. Even the most patriotic citizens sometimes feel let down by Britain, or stifled by its manners or fed up with football. The vicissitudes of national sentiment make it an unpromising foundation for a robust and stable commitment to liberal democracy. By all means, then, let’s move from merely encouraging respect for liberal democratic values to actively promoting them. But let’s also stop muddying the educational waters by conflating this task with the promotion of British national identity (Hand, 2014).

In England, the very category of “British identity” is closely connected with the problem of heterogeneity of society. For example: After the decline of the Empire, post-war migration to Britain and multiculturalism as a consequence of decolonization posed the biggest challenge to an English identity. England has absorbed large numbers of people from the former colonies in particular from the Caribbean, India and Africa-to the extent that today people from ethnic minority groups make up 9% of the population of England. This fact caused by changes in the country which has become “multicultural” has led to the fact that the importance of “ethnic identity”, along with “cultural identity” has become an important factor for all Britons as a whole. For example: “The experts also admit English is not as well established as Scottish, Irish or the Welsh identities. If flying the flag is an important symbol of national identity for our neighbours, the St. George’s cross has come to be associated with football hooliganism and fascism ” (Shields, 2010).

“Britishness” is also understood in the British society as tolerance, but at the same time has certain limitations associated with the attempt to overcome the blurring of such phenomenon an entity as “nationalism”. The concept of “nationalism” belonging to the conceptualized field “Britishness” in many cases is a verbal representant of the concept patriotism. For example: “But here they are much more likely to say I am American first and a Muslim second. At least, that’s my guess. No one is ashamed of being a patriot here whereas nobody

dare be a patriot in England at least not recently, because they are likely to be hooted out. In Britain, patriotism is thought to be the preserve of right-wing nutters and that's a tragedy in my view" (O'Neill, 2005).

The author of this statement, characterizes the problem of patriotism associated with the situation in the UK as a tragedy. The estimated characteristic is conveyed with the expression "to be hooted out". The noun "patriotism" is defined here as synonymous units for a phrase "the preserve of right-wing nutters".

Syntactic parallelism ("No one is ashamed of being a patriot here whereas nobody dare be a patriot in England") allows one to oppose the state of affairs in the US and the UK and to express a negative assessment of the situation.

Note also the fact that in connection with the changes over the last century, the countries of the Commonwealth became increasingly independent from England, returning governance institutions and got a chance to revive its "national identity". For example: With a Scottish Parliament, a Welsh Assembly and devolution under way in Northern Ireland, how could any MP claim "English" and "British" were the same? The Scottish Parliament has made Scotland at least 70% independent of the rest of the UK in the most important areas of government like Health and Education and Wales and Ireland are demanding that same degree of Home-rule (Wood, 2014).

Being English is as much a state of mind as it is a way of life: if I think and behave like an English person, then I am one. Everyone should love their country and feel passionate about their nationality, whether it is their nationality of origin or of choice (Betts, 2007).

To summarise, as the research shows, in some cases conceptual frameworks "Britishness" and "Englishness" are implemented in contexts that have ideologically conditioned positive or extremely negative evaluation, which is represented through the implementation of linguistic meanings at different levels.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, the analysis of the texts of the British political press allows to conclude that the concept "Englishness" is implemented in contextual pin with such units as: possess a real sense of fair play, sense of humour, complain with firmness until there is a result, do a good job, relish your freedoms, have manners, mistrust all politicians, like machines, love the countryside, adore the sea, tolerate everyone, a complete absence of questions concerning the colour of your skin, hair or eyes, the accent with which you speak English, or your family background.

The concept "multiculturalism" is represented by the notion "Britishness" which includes the idea of belonging to the British Society on the one hand and ethno-cultural characteristics of the population of Britain related in a large number of cases to the primordial population of Britain. In other words, the concept "Britishness" can be considered as a systematizing dominant in the scale of British cultural values, referring to the British nation not only as geographically, politically and economically united group of people and a but a nation with a common history, culture, customs traditions, character traits, language and general language consciousness as a property inherent to the British as a person, absorbed and implementing the whole complex of these characteristics.

Part of the recent discourse has focused on illiberal practices of minority groups with Cameron arguing that groups will be scrutinised to ensure they promote democracy and equality. The debate, however can also quickly turn towards claiming that minority communities are problematic because of failing to speak English and subscribe to British cultural traits. Cameron clearly had minority ethnic groups in mind when he argued: "So as we think about how to bring our country together, let's not pretend there are simple, quick solutions. And let's not pretend we can bully people into feeling British. We have to inspire them. The things that divide us are not the differences in our faith or colour." Leaving aside the fact that surveys consistently suggest people of non-white backgrounds are more likely to identify as British than 'White British' people, there is an issue here with the vague nature of the concept of cohesion and related expressions such as 'what unites us' and 'bringing our country together' (Andreouli, 2014).

At the same time, the so-called energetic "liberalism", much more active, muscular liberalism and criticism that the British society mired in the so-called passive tolerance was the catalyst for the convergence of societies and forced many British people to overcome cultural split in whose citizens confident that within the liberal tradition civic integration will not replace traditional culture.

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