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THE SEMANTICS OF TERRORISM:
NOTIONAL PROFILE OF LANGUAGE EXPRESSION

Nowadays, terrorism represents a substantive social threat on a global scale – many interpretations of this phenomenon function in a multidisciplinary dimension. Most of them come to understanding terrorism as an intended action aimed at intimidating and influencing. However, the term remains without an agreed-on definition, shaped to satisfy different legal bodies and the public. Furthermore, the difficulty of its interpretation is also complicated by blurred boundaries of the terrorism impact after its incursion into cyberspace and the establishment of multiple upgraded and trickier forms of terrorism. As of 2022, terrorism, unexpectedly for most of us, appeared among the core concepts that shape Ukrainian reality.

By this article, we open a series of research papers on conceptualizing, categorizing, and verbalizing information terrorism practiced in the context of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Being a kind of cyberterrorism, information terrorism poses great hazards to the common wealth, global stability, and sustainability. We believe that to combat information terrorism, civil society must primarily be fully aware of what terrorism is per se. By studying the lexical actualization of the concepts ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM, we aim to get a deeper insight into the phenomenon by approaching it from the perspective of linguocognitology that tends to explain the concepts of reality grounding on their verbalized reconstruction in both language and discourse.

Within the semantic-cognitive approach, a concept is a cognitive formation constituted of three layers: notional (informative), figurative-associative, and interpretative. This particular research is devoted to comparative analysis of the notional layers of ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM-concepts as reflected in Ukrainian and English. This layer accumulates the core factual characteristics of the concept, the most considerable ones for the fact of reality related to the concept that helps distinguish a particular concept within the whole conceptual field.

Key words: *terrorism, linguoconceptology, ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM-concept, notional layer, semantic summand.*

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СЕМАНТИКА ТЕРОРИЗМУ:
ПОНЯТІЙНИЙ ПРОФІЛЬ МОВНОГО ВИРАЖЕННЯ

У наш час тероризм є значною загрозою в глобальних масштабах. У міждисциплінарному вимірі функціонує чимала кількість трактувань цього явища, які переважно спираються на розуміння його як умисної дії з метою погрожування та впливу. Утім термін «тероризм» і досі не має єдиного тлумачення, що задовольняло би як окремі правові інститути, так і широкий загал. Окрім того, трактування терміну ускладнюється відсутністю чітких меж впливу тероризму, зокрема через його вторгнення у сферу кіберпростору і виникнення нових підступніших форм тероризму. Неочікувано для всіх нас у 2022 році тероризм став одним з найактуальніших концептів в житті українців.

Ця стаття відкриває серію наукових розвідок з питань концептуалізації, категоризації та вербалізації інформаційного тероризму, що практикується в контексті Російського вторгнення в Україну 2022 року. Як підвид кібертероризму інформаційний тероризм становить значну небезпеку для суспільного добробуту, світової стабільності та сталого розвитку. Ефективна боротьба з тероризмом, на нашу думку, має починатися з усвідомлення громадянським суспільством самої сутності поняття «тероризм». Оскільки лінгвокогнітивістика пояснює концепти реального світу через вивчення їх вербалізованих реконструкцій у мові та дискурсі, вивчення лексичної актуалізації концептів ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM сприятиме глибшому розумінню його сутності.

Концепт з позицій семантико-когнітивного підходу є тришаровим утворенням, в рамках якого вирізняють номінативний (інформативний), образно-асоціативний та інтерпретаційний шари. Ця стаття пропонує компаративний аналіз змісту номінативних шарів концептів ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM в українській та англійській мовах. Базові фактуальні ознаки, які містяться в номінативному шарі концепту, є найбільш значущими для співвіднесення ментальної одиниці з конкретним фактом реальності, а також допомагають розрізняти концепти в межах концептуального поля.

Ключові слова: тероризм, лінгвоконцептологія, концепти ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM, номінативний шар, семантичний множник.

Problem statement. Problem statement. Since 24 February 2022, the unfolding Russia-Ukraine war has called for greater focus on terrorist attacks on Ukraine. The last Terrorism Briefing from The Institute for Economics & Peace has clearly stated that Ukraine is accounted for the second-highest number of attacks since 2007 and is suffering persistent attacks on its territory, with many of them being attributed to Russia (The Ukraine Russia Crisis, 2022). Under President Putin, Russia has been credited as a state using terrorism to attain its political and war goals, thus threatening peace in Ukraine, Europe, and the world.

As of today, Ukraine seeks to recognize Russia as "a state sponsor of terrorism" by other democracies worldwide. Lithuania has become the first – and so far the only country – to designate Russia as a terrorist state; however, the very process of adopting such kind of resolution is impeded by the need for creating a convincing body of evidence, the need for unanimity among the policymakers, and the differences in understanding terrorism itself.

The United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice suggested a simple definition of terrorism, referring to it as "any action [...] that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act" (Terrorism and the Media. A Handbook for Journalists, 207: 20).

Though quite substantial, the definition is not the world-agreed-upon one, with many terminological discrepancies between different legal bodies that prevent from comprehending the nature of terrorism. That along, the technological development and massive use of information have blurred the boundaries of conventional terrorism, transferring it to the cyberspace, and nurturing new kinds of terrorism (information terrorism, hacktivism, cyberterrorism), thus, perplexing the understanding of an important concept of terrorism (Liedel, Piasecka, 2016: 5).

Thus, within the intended complex research project on conceptualizing, categorizing, and verbalizing information terrorism practiced in the context of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, our prime task is to analyze the notional aspect of the concepts *ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM* resting on the data from authentic lexicographic sources of the Ukrainian and English languages.

State-of-the-art review. Linguistic efforts to analyze terrorism, its linguistic nature, and discourse are considered helpful in enhancing counter-terrorism mechanisms (Shuy, 2020: 446). So, the TERRORISM-concept has been studied in terms of discourse analysis on the material of TED-talks (Almaged, 2021); through textual approach (Miller, 1987); in terms of investigating its grammar actualization only (Etaywe, 2022), or linguistic markers (Johansson et al., 2016). It should be highlighted that there are limited works applying linguocognitive insights to the concept TERRORISM (Zhulavska, 2011; Fatyanova, 2016), and none analyzing the concept of information terrorism that constitutes the prime interest of our research project launched by this particular article.

Objective and tasks. As understanding 'terrorism' (prime concept) per se is vital before making attempts to conceptualize and categorize 'information terrorism' (derived concept), in this paper, we take a look at the notional foundation. The overall objective of the article is to define the notional core of the ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM-concepts as reflected in Ukrainian and English. Among the tasks are defining the conceptual features pertaining to the notional

layer of the concepts, interpreting them, as well as confirming or refuting the propriety of equating the terms *terrorism* and *terror*.

Main findings. Within the semantic-cognitive approach, in this study, we apply the methodology already approved in some previous studies (Yehorova, Prokopenko, 2017; Yehorova et al., 2019, etc.) to expose the notional content of the concepts *ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM* through a set of informative cognitive tokens.

Traditionally, the contents of the notional layer is described by applying the method of lexicographic analysis since the dictionary definitions reflect the nominative experience of the scientific and day-to-day cognition levels (Prykhodko, 2013: 45). We also adhere to the opinion that resorting to dictionaries as information sources is a relevant approach since dictionary glosses hold the imprints of the lexical semantics of language units both in synchrony and in diachrony.

We start to analyze the notional layer of the concepts by interpreting the actual meaning of the core components of the compounds that build up the key nominations of the concepts respectively – *тероризм / terrorism*. Moreover, already at this point, we should note that in the Ukrainian war discourse of today there is a strong tendency to equate the terms *інформаційний тероризм / інфотероризм* and *інфотерор* (Inforteror, 2022), although some researches (Kantsir, 2010; Rapin et al., 2009; Tilly, 2004) have argued such approach. Thus, we also turn to analyzing the notional contents of *терор / terror*.

As our next step, we address the modern explanatory dictionaries of Ukrainian and English: *Словник української мови (Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language, SUM)* and *Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови (Large Explanatory Dictionary of the Contemporary Ukrainian Language, VTSSUM), Lexico.com (LEXICO)* – a brand new product of collaboration between Dictionary.com and Oxford University Press (OUP), – *Macmillan English Dictionary (MED),* and *Merriam-Webster Dictionary (MWD)*. After studying the corresponding entries, we managed to perform semantic decomposing of lexemes *тероризм / terrorism* (Tables 1 and 2).

Componental analysis of the concepts' key nominations in distant languages proves the instrumental nature of *terrorism*: the core conceptual feature 'use' is present in the semantic structure of all nominations under analysis. Summing up the obtained data, we are able to state that modern explanatory dictionaries interpret the term *terrorism* as a [*politically* ('political') *purposeful* ('aim') – only in English] *mode* ('tactics', 'means' or 'activities')

Table 1

Semantic profile of *тероризм / terrorism* nominations

Dictionary	Dictionary entry	Semantic summands
SUM	Здійснювання[1], застосовування[2] терору[3]; діяльність[1] і тактика[4] терористів[5]	здійснювання = діяльність ('commiting' = 'activities'), застосування ('**use**'), терор ('terror'), тактика ('tactics'), терористи ('terrorists')
VTSSUM		
LEXICO	The unlawful[1] use[2] of violence[3] and intimidation[4], especially against civilians[5], in the pursuit of political[7] aims[6].	'unlawful', '**use**', '**violence**', 'intimidation', 'civillians', '**political**', 'aim'
MMD	The use[1] of violence[2] to achieve political[3] aims[4]	'**use**', '**violence**', '**political**', 'aim'
MWD	The systematic[1] use[2] of terror[3] especially as a means[4] of coercion[5]	'systematic', '**use**', 'terror', 'means', '**coercion**'

Table 2

Semantic convergences of *тероризм / terrorism* nominations

Semantic summand \ Dictionary	SUM	VTSSUM	LEXICO	MMD	MWD
застосування / use	+	+	+	+	+
насильство / violence = coercion			+	+	+
терор / terror	+	+			+
тактика / tactis	+	+			
діяльність / activities	+	+			
ціль / aim				+	+
політичний / political				+	+

of applying ('use') *physical or other kind of force* ('violence', 'coercion', 'terror').

Especially interesting is the fact that 3 of 5 dictionaries, used in this study, explicate the notions *тероризм / terrorism* by referring to the terms *терор / terror* which are morphologically the root words of the analyzed above lexemes. Such state of affairs, on the one hand, sheds some light on the reasons why The Center for Countering Disinformation at the NSDC of Ukraine equates the terms *інфотероризм* (lit. "infoterrorism") and *інфотерор* (lit. "infoterror"), and, on the other, makes us turn to interpreting the meaning of the root words *терор / terror* and perform their componential analysis (see Table 3). At this stage, we refer only to those dictionaries that bear this cross-reference; thus, we exclude LEXICO and MMD from consideration for now.

Before interpreting the results, we have to make some critical notes on the contents of the dictionary entries of Ukrainian. Our fist point of concern: as of 2022, we have to admit the absence of high-quality complete up-to-date explanatory lexicographic works in Ukrainian and their variety as well.

Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language (SUM) in 11 volumes that we cite saw the world in 1970-1980. Historically, it became the first explanatory dictionary of Ukrainian. Unfortunately, all modern Ukrainian dictionaries have derived from this fundamental work, which explains the high level of coincidence of the provided interpretations. Luckily, a 20-volume-successor Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language, which has been underway since 2010 and already counts 12 volumes as of May 2022 (word spectrum covered: А – ПІДКУРЮВАЧ), seems to be the first indeed completely revised version, primarily in the aspect of "deideologization" of its content.

And here we come across our second point of concern: dictionary definitions offered by both Ukrainian sources used in this study obviously bear that "Soviet tinge" (e.g. "revolutionary movement", "class opponents", "the masses") that we by no means can take into consideration nowadays (these fragments of definition texts were put in square brackets and no semantic summands were derived).

The determined semantic summands that build up the conceptual-informative core of the concepts ТЕРОР / TERROR allow us to construe the corresponding notion: *terror* is categorized as a *strong* ('acute', 'extreme', 'overwhelming') *manifestation* ('state', 'form', 'aspect') *of violence and coercion towards either political figures* ('political', 'state leaders', 'government') *or common people* ('civilians', 'population') *by means of deterrence* ('intimidation', 'fear', 'frightening') *and physical elimination* ('killing', 'destructive', 'disruptive').

Table 3

Semantic profile of *терор* / *terror* nominations

Dictionary	Dictionary entry	Semantic summands
SUM	1. Найгостріша[1] форма[2] боротьби[3] проти політичних[4] [і класових] супротивників[5] із застосуванням[6] насильства[7] аж до фізичного знищення[8]. 2. [Помилкова й шкідлива для революційного руху] тактика[9], що полягає в організації вбивств[8] державних діячів[10] [і не пов'язана з революційною боротьбою мас]. 3. Жорстока[11], масова[12] розправа[13] ворожої[5] армії[14] над мирним населенням[15] на окупованій[16] нею території[17].	гострий ('acute'), форма ('form'), боротьба ('struggle'), політичний ('**political**'), супротивник = ворог \ ворожий ('opponent', 'enemy'), застосування ('**use**'), насильство ('**violence**'), фізичне знищення = вбивство ('killing'), тактика ('tactics'), державні діячі ('state leaders'), жорстокий ('cruel'), масовий ('mass'), розправа ('punishment'), армія ('army'), мирне населення ('civilians'), окупований ('occupied'), територія ('territory')
VTSSUM	1. Найгостріша[1] форма[2] боротьби[3] проти політичних[4] [і класових] супротивників[5] із застосуванням6 насильства[7] аж до фізичного знищення[8]. 2. Надмірна[9] жорстокість[10] стосовно до кого-небудь[11]; залякування[12].	гострий ('acute'), форма ('form'), боротьба ('struggle'), політичний ('**political**'), супротивник ('opponent'), застосування ('**use**'), насильство ('violence'), фізичне знищення ('killing'), надмірний ('excessive'), жорстокість ('cruelty'), хтось ('person'), залякування ('intimidation')
MWD	1. A state[1] of intense[2] or overwhelming[2] fear[3]. 2. Violence[4] or the threat[5] of violence used[6] as a weapon[7] of intimidation[8] or coercion[9]; especially: violent or destructive[10] acts[11] (such as bombing) committed[11] by groups[12] in order to intimidate a population[13] or government[14] into granting[15] their demands[16]. 3. A very[2] frightening[3] or terrifying[3] aspect[1]. 4. a : Someone[17] or something[18] that inspires[19] fear[3]; b : informal : An extremely[2] disruptive[10] or annoying[20] person[17] or thing[18]; especially : a misbehaving[21] child[17]. 5 [= Reign of terror].	'state / aspect', 'intense / overwhelming', 'fear', '**violence**', '**use**', 'threat', 'weapon', 'intimidation', '**coercion**', 'destructive / disruptive', 'act / committing', 'group', 'population', 'government', 'grant', 'demand', 'person', 'thing', 'inspire', 'annoying', 'misbehaving'

Table 4

Semantic convergences of *терор* / *terror* nominations

Semantic summand	Dictionary SUM	VTSSUM	MWD
гострий / acute = intense = extremely	+	+	+
форма / state = aspect	+	+	+
насильство / violence = coercion	+	+	+
фізичне знищення / killing / destructive = disruptive	+	+	+
державні діячі / state leaders = government	+		+
мирне населення = люди / civilians = population	+		+
залякування = страх / intimidation = fear		+	+

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Application of componential analysis to the definitional texts of the nominations *тероризм* / *terrorism* and *терор* / *terror* helped us to specify their semic composition and derive conceptual features that constitute the notional layers of the concepts ТЕРОРИЗМ / TERRORISM in a cross-language perspective. Thus, conceptual features 'use', 'violence', 'coercion', and 'political' build up the core zone of the notion. The obtained results also support the thesis that both terms refer to the common denotatum – politically motivated use of violence. This allows us to consider rightful the use of terms *інфотероризм* (lit. "infoterrorism") and *інфотерор* (lit. "infoterror") as equivalents.

At the same time, the presence of the outdated semes in the semantic composition of the concepts' key nominations and the fact that terrorism as phenomenon of reality is being shaped by the actual state of affairs, by the immediate environment and multiple discourses call upon further study. In particular, our future research will be focused on the issues of conceptualizing, categorizing, and verbalizing information terrorism.

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