

LEXICAL REALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT AMERICAN DREAM IN 16-19th CENTURIES

The concept AMERICAN DREAM is a mental unit, mental structure expressing certain ideological, moral and materialistic basis of the American nation. The article deals with the investigation of the ways of the expression of the concept AMERICAN DREAM by various lexical means. Literature works of the 16, 17, 18 and 19th centuries that touch upon the question of the American Dream have been analyzed. Aiming to determine the main lexical means that stand for the investigated concept this research demonstrates the strong connection between language and culture and their influence on each other.

Keywords: American, dream, nation, free, success, hard work, money.

Ольга Ладика, Оксана Ярема. ЛЕКСИЧНА РЕАЛІЗАЦІЯ КОНЦЕПТУ AMERICAN DREAM УПРОДОВЖ 16-19 СТОЛІТТЯ

У статті розглянуто особливості способів вираження концепту AMERICAN DREAM різними лексичними засобами. Під концептом AMERICAN DREAM розуміли ментальну одиницю, мисленнєву структуру, що виражає певну ідеологічну, моральну та матеріалістичну основу американської нації. Основну увагу приділено характеристиці спектру засобів лексичної реалізації цієї ментальної одиниці. Проаналізовано літературні твори XVI, XVII, XVIII та XIX століть, у яких тим чи іншим способом виражено концепт AMERICAN DREAM. Основна зацікавленість статті полягає у відстеженні та відтворенні змін, яких зазнав концепт у процесі свого розвитку. Отримані дані свідчать про те, що рушійними факторами модифікації структури концепту AMERICAN DREAM та американської національної концептосфери загалом є зміна ціннісних і морально-етичних установок у соціумі. Особливості історичного розвитку США безпосередньо вплинули на формування Американської мрії як фрагменту дійсності. Історично концепт AMERICAN DREAM з'явився одночасно із зародженням американської нації наприкінці XV – початку XVI століття, коли перші паломники прибули на американський континент із метою побудувати «city upon the hill» («місто на пагорбі») для тих, хто обраний та скерований Божим провидінням. У процесі дослідження з'ясувалось, що концепт AMERICAN DREAM змінювався разом із американським способом життя, ідеологією та національним характером. Дослідження продемонструвало міцний зв'язок між мовою і культурою та їх вплив один на одного.

Ключові слова: американська, мрія, нація, вільний, успіх, працьовитість, гроші.

Problem statement, purpose of research. With the development of linguocultural studies, the emergence of a great deal of scientific research became a sign of increased interest in cultural and linguistic concepts. Nowadays the category of concept is involved in researches of philosophers, logicians, psychologists, culturologists and carries the imprints of all these linguistic interpretations. On the one hand concepts are interlinked in one global system, but on the other – each of it represents correlation of elements and processes of all possible types: mental, sensory and emotive ones.

Relevance of the research is based on the fact that anthropocentric paradigm and its affiliation to the fundamental mental notions, within the framework of which language phenomena are taken in

close relation to a human, their consciousness and worldview. This perspective has determined active research of the processes of conceptualization and categorization of reality in different spheres of modern linguistics which give new opportunities to study concepts through their operation in the language and speech. Concept is a basic form of categorization and the main means of conceptualization.

The object of the study is the complex of linguistic means of verbalization of the concept AMERICAN DREAM in American worldview (based on the literary works of 16 – first half of 19th century). The aim of the article is to reveal the linguistic and cultural peculiarity by means of clarification the characteristic linguistic means which represent it. Special emphasis is put on the evolution of the concept AMERICAN DREAM and changes in the lexical means of its realization through the concept development.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The concept AMERICAN DREAM has always been in the centre of many investigations done by researches differing by their scientific fields and interests, as well as by their nationalities. The concept AMERICAN DREAM has the greatest development in the works of historians, philosophers, cultural scientists and sociologists (J. Adams, L. Calder, J. Cullen, J. Hochschild, T. Parsons, S. Terkel, R. Wuthnow, R. Bellah, K. Gadzhiev, S. Lapeyrouse, R. Merton, O. Tuganova). Within the framework of the cognitive-communicative paradigm in linguistics, the concept AMERICAN DREAM has been partially considered by Ukrainian and foreign scholars: S. Lyubymova (2017), N. Popova (2017), N. Gach (2014), K. Karpova (2008), S. Radzievskaya (2008), M. Tomenchuk (2008), M. Boyd (2013), O. Murphy (2010), E. Dalgo (2016), etc.

An outline of the main material.

Formation of the concept AMERICAN DREAM as a social system, economical institution and social movement develops in the context of its multidimensional nature. The development of this concept requires attention to the explanation of the theoretical sources of different spheres – social philosophy, theory and history of culture, general, applied and empirical sociology, political science, social and pedagogical psychology, social management. In doing so, it is necessary to take into account the extent of the development of theoretical and methodological principles that are based on the integration of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of American dream and its evolution. As the sociophilosophical analysis of American dream shows, at the heart of this phenomenon are religious and humanistic beginnings, which are realized only when pursuing the American dream activity is oriented towards the development of personal qualities and potentials of the individual and not narrowly pragmatic or materialistic interests. Despite the fact that these days American dream is often the subject of doubts of its reality, existence and meaningfulness, it remains a fact of American culture, in the context of which are implemented not only social and economic, but also existential and anthropological dimensions of human existence.

The concept AMERICAN DREAM is deeply rooted in the history, culture and identity of the American people. The analysis of linguistic material helps to reveal linguistic means and explain the peculiar features which verbalize the concept AMERICAN DREAM in its diachronic development in the American linguistic picture of the world [12, p.50]. Within the framework of this research and taking into consideration the notion of concept as the unit of cognition, which reflects person's knowledge and experience [11, p.91], after H.H. Slyishkin [18], V.I. Karasyik [10, p.129], we determine a concept as a cultural multi-functional phenomenon which accumulates the knowledge about a certain fragment of reality in the collective consciousness of the linguistic cultural unity. It serves as a mirror for cultural values, is objectivised by means of language elements and is linguistically and culturally marked.

The AMERICAN DREAM was first publicly defined in 1931. Amid the Great Depression, historian James Truslow Adams in his book *Epic of Americae* defined the “dream” in concrete terms as a vehicle that promises and allows all its citizens, regardless of origin or social status prosperity in a society founded on free and equal opportunity. Adams writes, ... *the American dream, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement.* [1, p. 415]

Adams's faith in the enduring spirit and optimism of the American dream during the Great Depression served as a reminder that the values which defined the American dream were a state of mind and part of the American consciousness. For him the materialistic values formed only the background for the realization of the American dream.

According to historic sources the idea that elucidates the notion of the American dream has a very long history before 'America' became a country, it existed in the minds of human beings as a dream. America was a mythic land for the Pilgrims, where they could not only found their commonwealth but also find their religious freedom. The Dream was in their minds, they understood the very idea of it. The Pilgrims had already had the dream of a better life and liberty when they boarded the *Mayflower* – they wanted to create a kind of *Utopia*, in which the tyranny of the Old World would be replaced by liberty, brotherhood and equality.

At early stages of the development of the United States American religious and political personalities, critics and writers referred to the American dream (W. Bradford, W. Penn, J. Winthrop, R. Williams, etc.).

... and I, having a part in the plantation, will receive you as my partners and consociates; and so may you be free from service, and we will converse, trade, plant, and live together as equals, and support and protect one another, or to like effect. (William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation) [20, p. 69]

We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with. (John Winthrop, A Model of Christian Charity) [20, p.196]

There goes many a ship to sea, with many a hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common; and is a true picture of a **commonwealth**, or a human combination, or **society**. It has fallen out sometimes, that both Papists and Protestants, Jews, and Turks, may be embarked into one ship. Upon which supposal, I do affirm, that all the **liberty** of conscience, that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges – that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews, or Turks, be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship; nor, secondly, compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practice any. I further add, that I never denied, that notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course; yea, and also command to that **justice, peace, and sobriety**, be kept and practiced, both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any seamen refuse to perform their service, or passengers to pay their freight; – if any refuse to help in person or purse, towards the common charges, or defense; – if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common peace or preservation; – if any shall mutiny and rise up against their commanders, and officers; – if any shall preach or write, that there ought to be no commanders, nor officers, because **all are equal in CHRIST**, therefore no masters, nor officers, no laws, nor orders, no corrections nor punishments – I say, I never denied, but in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel, and punish such transgressors, according to their deserts and merits. (Rodger Williams, Letter to the Town of Providence) [20, p. 225].

Therefore, ethnic, cultural, social and political determinants have caused the development and enrichment of the basic components of the concept American dream. The emergence of new meanings in new contexts enabled us to define the stages of the conceptualization of the notion American dream and their lexical elements reflecting the content of this phenomenon.

16-17th centuries are regarded as the period of the birth of the notion American dream (lexical symbols and meanings: *New World, Eden, freedom of religion, opportunity, hard work, courage, faith, individualism*). The notion of *American dream* was evolving. In the 18th century *Economic betterness* is a new meaning which evolves the concept American dream. It is verbalized in the lexemes *hardwork, success, industry, business, frugality, temperance*. Works by Benjamin Franklin and

Thomas Jefferson show how collective experience of socialization is combined with personal world perception and individual life experience.

Well done is better than well said. (Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanack, 1737) [5, p. 117].

Be always ashamed to catch thyself idle. (Benjamin Franklin, The Way to Wealth) [5, p. 272]

I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have. (Thomas Jefferson) [qtd. in 17, p.66]

The movement for independence of the nation and personality which started at the early 18th century and lasted almost the whole century shows the next direction of the evolvement of the concept. In the 18th century *Independence* became the basic meaning of the American dream. The culmination of the achievement of independence became *Declaration of Independence* (1776) and American Revolution (1765–1783). In *Declaration of Independence* there emerges a new meaning component of the concept American dream – it is *Political freedom*:

...full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. (Declaration of Independence) [2, p.A-3].

This document became a good basis for the abolition of slavery, empowering women with equal rights. It also was a push to form a dream about independent life which motivated many to migrate to the USA.

19th century in America was marked by the frontier period that is the era of massive migration and settlement. Searching for their *inalienable Rights—Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness*, enounced in the Declaration, citizens of the cities in the East left everything and encouraged by hopes to find happiness, free own land and home wondered dangerous wild western regions.

The open-ended territory offered common man the chance of an independent and self-determined existence. [7, p.710].

This process is called *booming of the West*. The central institution of the economic system is market with its principals in terms of individualism, free competition and free entrepreneurial activity.

The development of *Individualism* as a component of the American dream is defined through the exploitation of the archetype of hero of the Wild West in society and literature. Characters similar to Leatherstocking of James Fennimore Cooper were the symbols of own results, success and its benefits. Lexemes *I, me, everything, dream, can, do, act, persist, action, personal success, desire* and others are the elements of the component *Individualism*. The striving for social and material growth of cowboys became the central theme of the development of American culture. The explorer Ann-Janine Morey-Gaines calls this notion *the primacy of males, sanctity of his house, his land and his women*. [15, p.97]

The Lincoln's enactment *The Emancipation Proclamation* (1862) was an important stage in the evolution of the concept American dream. The president treated equality as *father of all moral principle* [3, p.499]. *The equality of all men* formed the centre of his campaign where the ideas *Happiness, Life and Equality* are expressed by the lexemes *happiness, value of life, all, everywhere*, and are synonymous to American dream.

Fiction and publicist works in the late 19th century are full of so called «*rags to riches*» stories. They were based on the true life stories about the growth of business magnates such as Andrew Carnage, John Davison Rockefeller, Henry Ford, etc. The characteristics of these historical personalities by the lexemes *talent, decency, hard work, luck, riches, and fortune* became the index of the meaning *Wealth*.

The end of the 19 – early 20th century witnessed the maximum penetration of the American national consciousness with the economic version of the American dream. Money and materialism became new gods. The analysis of multiple examples shows that *money* stands as the criterion of the quality of life. Nomination *money* possesses emotional and evaluative meaning and it is explicated in the phrasemes and lexemes denoting money and the way of its earning: *windfall* (a piece of unexpected good fortune, esp. financial gain), *wallow in the money* (to experience an abundance of money), *work hard*. The semantics of the words *success* and *achievements* leads us to the following thought: in American society success is seen as personal achievement, as the result of consciously made efforts.

Success is regarded as a concrete product – it is seen and valid – it has its price and is materialized in the life objects (*house, car, exotic vacations, etc.*), profitable business, etc.

In the late 19 – early 20th century the American dream concept is enriched with a meaning *Opportunity*, which is expressed by the possibilities in terms of growth, progress, enrichment, success. Industrial revolution in American society led to measuring of success in *the gathering and presentation of goods*. The desire to own *a home in the suburbs, a few automobiles, the latest home appliances and the access to higher education* – all these meant the American dream.

The first half of the 20th century was the period of the formation of a personality. A person was concentrated on job, dreamt about independence in own considerations, enrichment and increase of social status. Now the American dream is something you can buy: *a house, a car, clothes, jewellery, furniture and other things*. New meanings (*Social status, House, Diamonds, Prosperity, Achievements*) enlarge the concept. It is reflected in the following lexical units: *lucky investment, wealth, financial security, finding deposits of gold, immigration, constitutional freedom, economic opportunities, manage to rise, happiness, quick, more*.

To demonstrate the power of money the metaphors are used: *money talks* (money gives one power and influence to help get things done or get one's own way); *money begets money* (the more money you make, the easier it becomes to make still more); *it is not what is he, but has he* (he is treated not according to his personal traits, but according to his possessions); *smart money* (money that is invested (= given to companies hoping to get more back) by experienced investors who know a lot about what they are doing). Synonymous group: *American dream, money, wealth, rich, good life* represents the paradigm of the concept AMERICAN DREAM – wealth and money. Thus, achieving the American dream you are getting rich.

A car and a house become a key to personal autonomy, independence and individualism which became an inseparable part of the society construction in that historical period. In fact, first half of the 20th century demonstrates the practical approach to life and the narrowing of the American life ideal to the triangle: *money – automobile – house*.

A considerable role in the defining a new benchmark – striving for *Success* – was performed by Theodore Roosevelt election campaign. In his first inauguration speech Roosevelt explained that the success of everyone depends on the success of one united nation [9, p.77, 123, 281]. The obsession of Americans with this idea is shown in the following nominations and metaphors *worshipper of success, the American obsession with success, American success story, success is a journey not a destination*.

Conclusions. To sum up the investigation, it should be underlined that the semantic evolution of the American dream concept has been influenced by the cultural, religious, social and historical circumstances. First pilgrims came to the American continent (early 16th century) with the dream to start a *new life*, to live *free* and become *rich*. The notion of *American dream* was evolving. In the 16-17th centuries the basic notional features of the AMERICAN DREAM concept were *Equality and Unity*; in the 18th century – *Equality, Unity, God providence, Industry, Honesty, Freedom, Pursuit of Happiness*; in the 19th century – *Freedom, Success, Work, Ability, Opportunity, Happiness, Equality, Wealth* together with *Inaccessibility*; in the early – mid. 20th century – *Opportunity, Money, Choice, House, Car, Plot of land, Farm* as well as *Inequality, Inaccessibility, Unfairness*. These conceptual features are accompanied by various connotations which lead to the evolution of the AMERICAN DREAM concept. In the mid. 20th century economic changes (falling production, financial crisis, unemployment) evoke the changes in the American value system. The ideas about the *American dream* decline, collapse, and fall are becoming widespread. Therefore, the mid. 20th century is the beginning of a new stage of the concept development.

In the process of research the following tendency was found out: the AMERICANDREAM conceptual features fall into two categories: the ideal word (*Chance, Progress, Freedom, Success, Unity, Democracy* etc.) and the materialistic world (*Money, Car, House, etc.*). The materialistic component in the American dream concept in the course of its development has been becoming more potent.

Prospects for using the research findings. Perspective for modern linguistics is further consideration and investigation of ways the concept AMERICAN DREAM is represented in the

American conceptosphere as it reveals the native speakers' mentality. The psycholinguistic experiment will be applied with this purpose. The most frequent words-associations which verbalize concept AMERICAN DREAM will be further used in the experiment.

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