

# Original Research

## The creative potential of contemporary Russian political discourse: From new words to new paradigms

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*This paper analyses the creative potential of Russian political discourse in 2010-2020. The authors outline the range of lexemes making up Russian political lexicon and draw conclusions on their relevance based on their increased importance for social life, their frequency of use in spoken and written communication and their discursive migration. Creativity is viewed as one of the characteristics of linguistic consciousness. Increased creativity in political discourse may be explained by the constant dynamics of language and the process of active word derivation. The material under analysis is taken from the digital neological database of the Department of Lexicography of the Contemporary Russian Language at the Institute for Linguistic Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences that contains about 110,000 words. The linguistic material was collected from the Integrum electronic mass media archive. The authors singled out the following language processes that enable realising the creative potential of political neologisms: the ludic use of word-building resources; the activation of noun-based word-formation; and determinologisation accompanied by a change in the term's frame structure. Specific ways of fulfilling creative potential include the use of suffixes and word-building (e.g. the creation of hyphenated complexes and multi-root words). In the period under consideration, many of these new words in Russian political discourse have become part of Internet memes.*

**KEYWORDS:** *political discourse, language game, word creation, nonce word, derivation, compounding, neologism, corpus study, Integrum*



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Political lexicon is a complex of words whose intentional meaning includes the denotative component of 'politics' (Chudinov, 2020). The lexicon that forms the basis of political discourse describes

diverse segments of semantic space – denominations of realia (culture-specific words), domestic and global political processes, political activity, as well as names for phenomena related to the governmental and legal framework and to the analysis

of political and other systems. Political lexicon comprises terminology that may become an object of rapid neography under the influence of a number of properly linguistic as well as extralinguistic factors. These include its increased social relevance, its increased frequency in spoken and written usage, and discursive migration. Linguistic consciousness is a connecting link transforming external stimuli into language units (Zhanalina & Ivanova, 2019, p. 443). For examples of such linguistic creativity see Kiose (2020) and Ivanova (2019).

Linguistic consciousness has the creative potential allowing the speaker/writer to perform lexical (from sense to word) and semantic shifts (from word to sense). Almost all new political coinage belongs to the cohort of 'relevant' and 'actualised' words. The relevance of a word is a consequence of the activation of objective realities in social consciousness. Reality, and in its wake, words, become essential for resolving the urgent and pressing problems of our time. The second aspect of studying contemporary political lexicon is connected with the notion of actualisation – the return to active usage of words that had receded in collective linguistic consciousness. This return is typically accompanied by semantic shifts in the words' meanings. Creative linguistic consciousness is of particular relevance for political discourse, as it is characterised by unceasing linguistic dynamism. In the 2010s, neologisms emerging through the Russian language's word-building mechanisms continuously augmented the lexical-semantic field of 'politics'. This is evidence of the ongoing activity of contemporary word-derivational processes. Through a morphemic toolkit of its own, Russian political language is constantly producing new terms, while the pragmatic connotations contained in their meanings reflect the deep-rooted contradictions that exist in the collective consciousness (Lesnichkova, 2020).

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The subject of this research – the creative potential of contemporary Russian political discourse – is connected on a theoretical level with several

areas of linguistics. First, these are the general issues of political linguistics reflected in the works of Vorobyeva (2011), Solopova (2013), Tikhonova (2012), Chudinov (2020) and others. Political linguistics is considered an area of applied theory; its problems are connected with issues of efficient political communications. Second, it involves language derivation, as one of the primary ways to achieve communicative goals is through derivation. Contemporary word-building theory is presented in works by Zemskaya (2013), Shatskaya (2014) and others. Third, it involves lexicology and semantics. In contemporary linguistics, the problem of the timely and accurate verbal reflection of the *Zeitgeist* is among those most discussed. A word which becomes particularly important for the collective linguistic consciousness in a given period has come to be known in the literature as 'the key word of the moment' (Shmeleva, 1993). Fourth, the theory of discourse constitutes a major component of this research. This theory has been actively evolving in international linguistics (see Matras, 2000; Stenning & Lambalgen, 2005; McCreary & Dolezal, 1999; Turner, 2002; Helasvuo, 2005; Celce-Murcia, 2006).

## 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The lexical component of Russian political discourse under analysis is based on the digital neological database of the Department of Lexicography of the Contemporary Russian Language at the Institute for Linguistic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The digital neological database, which began to be compiled in the early 2000s, comprises published neographical dictionaries of various types, electronic catalogues of explanatory dictionaries and ILS RAS lexical databases, as well as unpublished materials. The latter are classified by their authors based on time and quality: the lexis attributed to the period before the 1990s and omitted by explanatory, orthographical, special and other well-regarded dictionaries; neologisms of 1990-1999; neologisms of 2000-2009; neologisms of 2000-2009; neologisms of 2010-2020; as well as language novelties that were occasionally recorded in Russian-language texts. The

neologisms of the last decade are broken down according to their years of coinage in order to compile glossaries for the renewed *New in Russian Lexicon: Dictionary Materials* series. The lexical base of the resource contains ca. 110,000 words, expressions and meanings that were lexical and semantical novelties of a certain period or that were not previously registered in explanatory Russian language dictionaries.

The linguistic material for the first stage of analysing the creative potential of the lexical component of contemporary Russian political discourse was primarily based on Integrum, the largest electronic archive of the mass media of Russia and the CIS. This e-corpus contains the textual material of over forty thousand publications of central and regional mass media outlets, analytical studies and reviews, and the full texts of the works of classic Russian literature. The Integrum database is updated on a daily basis, supplemented with over three hundred thousand papers, documents, and archival materials. Integrum also provides professional search and analytical tools for monitoring Russian-language mass media as well as for exploring the political and economic life of Russia and the world.

The methodological basis for this research is informed by works on lexicology, semantics, lexicography, social linguistics, political linguistics, linguoculturology and word formation. At the preparatory stage, the language material for the research was collected via the continuous sampling method using primary sources: dictionaries, political discourse in articles, and the language in general use. Language usage was analysed using descriptive, contextual, definitional and linguoculturological methods, as well as the method of component analysis. The descriptive method was used for the synchronic analysis of contemporary word meanings. An integral part of this method is observing the interpretation of lexemes in Russian language dictionaries as well as in specialised dictionaries. Component-based analysis allowed us to single out semantic attributes whose regrouping transforms original semantics into the 'word to term' and 'term to word' models. The contextual method

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proceeds from analysing a part through the whole, that is, the units for analysis are language structures broader than the word proper. The lexemes are analysed as part of public political discourse, as it is in this context that the relevant word meaning is actualised. In this study, the context is considered to be any textual environment, while contextual analysis per se acts as an element of distributive methodology. The 'definitive' method involves referring to various types of Russian dictionary. At the stage that identifies the specificity of political discourse the word-building method is used. Linguocultural analysis implies studying political discourse as a cultural phenomenon.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

Shmeleva (1993) defined 'the key words of the moment' by singling out their main attributes: (1) the sharp increase in their frequency of use; (2) the appearance of the relevant words in newspaper headlines and hashtags; (3) realisation of their grammatical and word-building potential; (4) the expansion of their compatibility; (5) the formation of new synonyms and antonyms connected to them; (6) their onymic use; (7) linguistic reflection on the relevant word (including its definitions); (8) wordplay using the relevant word (Shmeleva, 1993, p. 33-39). The emergence of relevant words as verbal components of Internet memes has recently been added to this list of attributes.

Analysis of the word-formation series formed from new words reflects the creative processes connected with the realisation of their grammatical and word-building potential in the most extensive and accurate way. This is due to the methodology of compilation, one of whose principles is the inclusion of all new words and phrases, including single-use units – occasional words (occa-

sionalisms), potential words and authorial innovations. These units are of no individual lexicological and lexicographical value but as a group reflect the dominant processes of spontaneous word-formation – the mechanisms of wordplay and a considerable expansion of the relevant word's derivative potential coming from them. Vasilyeva (2017) defines a word's derivative potential as *'the word's ability to produce other lexical units defined by its attribution to a certain lexical-semantic group and independent from the restrictions imposed by the language system and its individual semantic and structural singularities'* (Vasilyeva, 2017, p. 28).

A large number of cognate words belonging to one family is a distinct indicator of relevance (Levanova et al., 2020). The relevant word-building family, which includes occasionalisms, often reflects connections that prove to be wider than the real derivative potential of the motivating word, while the specific word-building paradigm is different from the one typical of this part of speech. The expansion of the derivative potential occurs, as a rule, by means of wordplay mechanisms, the conscious and purposeful manipulation of grammatical resources in order to achieve a comic effect.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the lexical material we need to make a necessary qualification. In informal political discourse word meanings typically include negative connotations. In their scholarly description of the elements of the lexical component of political discourse, the authors of this paper are guided by the principle of scientific objectivity as formulated by Kotelova (2015), the founder of Russian theoretical neology and neography. In connection with taking a working sample from a card index she writes that *'the principle requirement applied to it [this work] is objectivity. The creators of a catalogue should accumulate [all] materials, 'be they good or evil'* (Kotelova, 2015, p. 79).

All of the lexical material presented in this paper has been chosen based on linguistic criteria and in no way reflects the authors' personal political opinions or preferences.

The creative potential of neologisms is realised in political discourse in very diverse ways, yet we may single out a few major and most noticeable processes. One is the playful but pragmatically grounded use of word-formation in order to express social assessment. Such a new word that is 'outside the box' very quickly becomes the point of departure for a derivational series, the formation of which differs from the typical paradigm of word formation. Affixes introducing an additional connotation to a word's meaning are also actively used. A major feature of informal political discourse is the formation of occasional hyphenated complexes to emphasise a negative connotation.

For example, we may consider the following laws that govern the realisation of the grammatical and word-building potential of the word *либерал* (liberal). Guided by the systemic approach, The Grammatical Dictionary of the Russian Language (Zaliznyak, 2009) includes 6 words in the family – *либералка* (a liberal woman), *либеральный* (liberal, adj.), *либерализм* (liberalism), *либеральность* (liberality), *либерал* (a liberal), *либеральничать* (to act as a liberal) – while in The New Word-Formation Dictionary of the Russian Language for Everyone Who Wishes to Be Literate (Tikhonov, 2014) this series is two words longer and includes *либерально-буржуазный* (liberal-bourgeois) and *либерально-демократический* (liberal-democratic). In political discourse on the Internet, hereafter cited from the Integrum database (Integrum, 2020), neologisms based on the same root enjoy active use. For example, in the context of such provocative words as 'Anschluss', 'national traitors', 'fifth column', 'the Fuhrer', the words 'democrat' and especially 'liberal' – with the pejorative derivatives such as 'liberasty' (meaning faggoty liberals, a combination of 'liberal' and 'pederast') and 'liberasnia' (collective for 'libtards') – become abusive. Here are a few examples:

*'In response to Aleksandr Lukashenko's sixth inauguration, the pro-American Belorussian liberasts called for an act of sustained disobedience.'*

*'Liberasts are on the outs: how is it possible that Putin has introduced a law allowing him to become a lifelong senator after his presidency ends?!*



*Liberasts are groaning that Putin will become a lifelong senator, or [say that this is] an absolutely correct decision! Let the liberasts groan – what else is left there for those wretched souls?'*

*'Trump's advantage is that he is right-wing and does not like the same morons that we hate – all those stomach-churning leftists, Antifa and similar bastards. Biden is a pussy piece of shit, the ultimate liberast'.*

These linguistic innovations – sporadic and regular ones – normally follow the strategy of invectives. The pejorative connotation of the word 'liberast' (jargon, ironic) as a proponent of liberal ideology and liberal values is created by the use of linguistic contamination: liberal + pederast. The majority of cases use pejorative suffixes that introduce a constant emotional connotation of contempt and crimination: *либерастный* (liberast, adj.), *либероид* (liberoid, noun), *либероидный* (liberoid, adj.), *либерасня* (libtards), *либерастня* (libertards), *либералочка* (liberalette), *либераха*, *либеруха*. The words express derisive judgment, as do the words *либералопат* (liberalopath), referring to the speech by representatives of the liberal opposition about their opponents, and *либералопатия* (liberalopathy). A connotation of disapproval is also emphasised through the use of compound words, such as *либералопредатель* (liberal-traitor), *жидолиберал* (Kike-liberal), or *бандеролиберал* (Bandero-liberal), the latter combining 'liberal' with a reference to Stepan Bandera, leader of Ukrainian WWII nationalists responsible for atrocities and the murder of Poles, Jews and Romani; his name is often used to condemn contemporary ultranationalists.

Another type of innovation in political discourse is the use of occasional hyphenated complexes consisting of parts that are connected to each other through the semantic relations of equi-positioning and interconvertibility. Hyphenated complexes of political speech vividly display the ability to name, set apart, combine, as well as to compare, contrast and juxtapose objects and phenomena. Two- and three-member structures are used to denote single, complex and indivisible notions, and become a tool to combine words denoting different aspects of some idea – typically, one

denounced and despised by the speaker, as in *бандеро-либеральный* (Bandero-liberal), *неолиберально-монетаристский* (neoliberal-monetarist), *неолибералы-гайдарочубайсоиды* (neoliberals-GaidaroChubais-oids), *ослино-либеральный* (donkey-liberal), *хомячково-либералистический* (hamster-liberalist), etc. The second component of the hyphenated complex is used to emphasise its negative connotation and expand the associative potential of the word. Of no small importance is also the fact that such complexes as, for example, *бандеро-либеральный* (Bandero-liberal) and *неолиберально-монетаристский* (neoliberal-monetarist), reflect a distorted worldview in which miscellaneous incompatible phenomena (liberal views, macroeconomic theory, nationalism) are united in one term.

One of the manifestations of creative linguistic force is the use of relevant words as verbal components of political Internet memes that express satirical commentary. In this way, the semantic opposition of the ideologemes *либерал* – *либераст* (liberal – liberast) as part of the meme (as accompanied by a picture, sketch or a photo) becomes a tool for expressing political preferences and antipathies, sympathies and animosities. For example, one meme depicts how a naive worldview functions. It consists of a table with two opposing columns: (1) *либерал* (a liberal) loves his/her people, observes their traditions and respects their culture; while *либераст* (a liberast) despises the people, calls them gullible morons, hates their culture, and deems their traditions barbarous; and (2) *либерал* dreams of changing his/her country for the better; while *либераст* dreams of fleeing the country. An Internet meme performs major pragmatic functions – the ability to evoke various emotions, entertain and arouse interest. In political discourse, the primary function of memes is the cognitive one, as it helps form personal and public opinion, impose certain ideas and viewpoints with regard to relevant problems, and shape the collective political and ideological worldview of recipients (see Boltenkova & Bochkova, 2009).

The reflection of both patriotic and pro-Western paths of Russian development is connected with the word *скрепа* (a spiritual staple, bond or value)

*‘Hyphenated complexes of political speech vividly display the ability to name, set apart, combine, as well as to compare, contrast and juxtapose objects and phenomena’*

that has taken off in political discourse, beginning in 2013, when the Russian language began to see a number of new words derived from it. *Духовные скрепы* (spiritual bonds) entered discourse on December 12, 2012 in a Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly. It suggested the concept of national spiritual unification against the backdrop of cooling relations with the West. The word and its derivatives began to be used by Putin’s political opponents with ironic, negative connotations:

*‘Pavel, the trick is that you were rescued from real prison time not by Boyakov or Prilepin but rather by those who don’t accept their views, those for whom the MKhAT in its present-day state is about staple-oriented pseudo-patriotism and a well-funded idea of ‘the Russian world’.*

*‘Meanwhile, since the First Channel is awfully spiritual and staple-oriented (as well as synodic and sovereign), i.e. not immune to the traditional values of the Russian world, I recommend recalling the words uttered by the guy from Galilee’.*

A large number of derived words reflect the surge and diversity of derivative activity of the ironically reinterpreted root *скреп-*: *скрепный* and less often *скреповый* – cementing and bonding together spiritually and through common values; *скрепно*, *скрепоносный* – described as a spiritual staple of society; *скрепостроительство* – staple-building; *скрепоразрывной* – staple-rupturing; as well as *правоскрепный* (Orthodox staple), *скрепаться* (to be cemented like a staple), *скрепануться* (to become staple-obsessed), *скрепанутый* (staple-obsessed), *скрепно-духовно* (in a staple-spiritual way), *антискрепный* (anti-staple), *антискрепно* (in an antistaple manner), *высококрепный* (highly staple-oriented), *по-скрепному* (in a staple-oriented manner), *скрепозабиватель* (a person who hammers in a staple), *скрепоносный* (staple-carry-

ing), *скрепоохранитель* (a staple guard), and *скрепность* (staple strength) (the order of this list reflects the time of these words’ appearance in Russian political discourse between 2013 and 2020).

As in previous examples, the *скреп-* paradigm includes a large number of occasional hyphenated complexes. These complexes make use of words pertaining to traditional values: people, patriotism and statehood. When included in a hyphenated complex, such words produce negative pragmatic connotations and serve as a tool to create or emphasise irony, as in *духовно-скрепно-казацкий* (spiritual-staple-Cossack), *исконно-скреповый* (archetypal-staple), *скрепно-воодушевляющий* (staple-inspiring), *скрепно-державный* (staple-sovereign), *скрепно-мракобесный* (staple-obscurantist), *народно-скрепный* (folk-staple), *скрепно-тоталитарный* (staple-totalitarian), *русско-скрепный* (Russian-staple), *военно-патриотически-скрепный* (military-patriotic-staple), *патриотично-скрепный* (patriotic-staple), *духовно-скрепный* (spiritually-staple), *скрепно-конституционный* (staple-constitutional), *скрепно-инновационный* (staple-innovative), *скрепно-духовно-чекистский* (staple-spiritual-Chekist).

Rich textual material provides evidence of the active functioning of expressive lexis containing the root *скреп-* in mass media and of the diversity of their paradigmatic and syntagmatic links, as in *поступать скрепно* (to act in a staple-oriented way), *скрепно донести* (to convey in a staple-oriented way), *правословно-скрепный* (Orthodox-staple), *самый скрепный суд в мире* (the most staple-oriented court in the world), etc.

The creative element in political and parapolitical language also manifests itself in the intensification of word building based on proper names. The analysis of a large number of neolexemes confirms the existence and development of a trend that emerged in political discourse back in the 1990s: the formation of new words from proper names, both Russian and foreign. Word formation based on foreign proper names often reflects a carnival, ludic, humorous element. As a rule, such nomination expresses a social assessment of the signified, as in *кадыринг* (Kadyring), *медведизация* (Medvedisation), *сердюковицина* (Serdyukovness),

*сечинизация* (Sechinisation), *трампнаши* (TrumpIsOurs), *трампнашевский* (TrumpIsOurs, adj.), *трампнашист* (TrumpIsOursist), *трамппокалипсис* (Trumpocalypse), *чубайсовщина* (Chubaysness).

The neolexeme 'kadyring', derived from the surname of the Chechen Republic's leader Ramzan Kadyrov, started appearing in the Russian language in 2016 simultaneously with two meanings. In extralinguistic terms, this was caused by the fact that on January 12, 2016 Kadyrov called members of the Russian opposition public enemies and traitors. This resulted in Internet flash mobs by his supporters and opponents and a public rally that took place in Grozny on January 22, 2016. In the 2016 dictionary of new words, the noun is defined as (1) a rally of Ramzan Kadyrov's supporters; (2) media activity as a response to Ramzan Kadyrov's statements (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 47).

*'A rally held to protect Ramzan Kadyrov from the fifth column took place in the Chechen capital on January, 22. Open Russia collected the most interesting 'kadyring'-related footage and comments'* (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 47).

*'Fierce kadyring started when a Krasnoyarsk deputy raised the question of allocating financial support for Chechnya and for the Academician personally at the expense of Siberian taxpayers'* (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 47).

Another example of word building based on proper names occurred after the political crisis in Ukraine when Maidan (the name of a square in the centre of Kiev) became a generic label and came to denote a mass civilian protest rally against the authorities. Starting in 2014, Russian political discourse has seen the active use of derivatives from this word – both semantic and word-formative ones. Some examples for *церковный майдан* (church maidan), *майданизироваться* (to maidanise), *майдануться* (to go maidan in the head, meaning to go crazy) and *майдауны* (maidanites) are listed below.

*'Kurayev only listens to oppositional leaders from Bolotnaya Square and is occupied with a church type of 'maidan': by the way, among the church figures he accuses is the bishop of Odessa who calls for [Ukraine's] integration with Russia'.*

*'It might be impossible to give a rational answer to this question, but I did think of one possibility: the maidanised Ukraine is clearly infringing on the independence and self-contained nature of the Russian Net'.*

*'The current situation in Ukraine has been accurately described by deputy Yu.P. Solomatin (the Communist faction): 'There is no longer a single political 'Maidan' camp, it is torn apart by the life and death struggle for leadership in the 2006 elections; 'Maidan' has gone maidan in the head!'.*

*'All of the communication among the parties to the main conflict in Eastern Europe and one of the main ones in the world is built upon exchanging insults – and the worse the insults are, the better they work: Lugandons, Russists, Russ-ka, Ukrops, Maidanites, Downbass'* (Baunov, 2014).

This last example is vivid evidence of the creative strategy of socially discrediting the object of nomination: it is a contamination of the generic name 'Maidan' (here, those who protest against the authorities) and the noun *даун* in the meaning of 'a person of very low intellect'.

In 2015, this derivative series increased by the addition of the words *замайданищина* (Maidanites, a collective noun referring to supporters of the Ukrainian Maidan) and *электромайдан* (Electro-Maidan, referring to protests in Armenia in June-September 2015 provoked by the raised cost of electricity).

*'Right now, the representatives of the university named after 'the great Ukrainian poet' [Shevchenko] that a mere year ago was a hotbed of the Bandera movement and Maidanites, have decided to hold a rally in Lugansk in which students will be performing the 'folk minstrel's' verses in as many as nine languages. Except Russian'.*

*'The US Embassy in Yerevan has already spoken in support of 'ElectroMaidan', as it was dubbed by the Western press, and rushed to voice their concern with reports of 'the unlawful use of force by the police when dispersing the protesters on the morning of June, 23'.*

'Maidan' is one of the most significant ideologemes of contemporary political discourse. Following Radbil (1998), this paper uses the term



'ideologeme' in a narrow sense as *'any verbal denomination of spiritual values that are significant for a person in which the direct, objective meaning of the word is blurred, while bringing to the foreground purely evaluative, emotionally expressive connotations that are not based on the word's immediate content'* (Radbil, 1998, p. 22). The semantic shifts in the meaning of the lexeme 'maidan' are confirmed by their functioning when the meaning of the word is expanded to refer to any protest and the wordplay functions on the word-formative level. Two proper names – *Мухó* (Mikho), a masculine proper name, the Georgian version of the name Mikhail, and nickname of the politician Mikhail Saakashvili, and *майдан* (Maidan) – are combined into a new word, *михомайдан* (Mikhomaidan), meaning acts of protest against the official Ukrainian authorities and politicians engineered by the proponents of Mikhail Saakashvili. Cf. also the derivatives, such as *михомайданец* (Mikhomandanite), *михомайданистик* (Mikhomandainist, a participant of Mikhomaidan) (Kozhevnikov & Ridetskaya, 2019, p. 85). Internet memes having fun with the ideologeme 'maidan' often target its participants as stupid, ridiculous and foolish: *'Майдан – ловушка для дураков'* ('Maidan – a trap for fools'); *'Майдан: быдломассе раздают апельсины'* ('Maidan: the dumb masses are given oranges'); *'Караоке на Майдане: новый сезон'* ('Karaoke in the Maidan: a new season') (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 67).

The creative potential of collective linguistic identity is realised in the formation and development of a new model of word formation by way of analogy with *крымнаш* (CrimealsOurs). In 2014, the slogan *Крым наш!* (Crimea Is Ours!) was transformed from a free-standing sentence into a nominative unit. 'This occasionalism came to be spelled as one word and viewed as a name for a standard situation – 'CrimealsOurs' (Vepreva, 2015, p. 34). The morphological and derivative dynamics of this occasionalism may be illustrated with multiple examples, such as *крымнаш* (CrimealsOurs), *крымнашевский*, *крымнашенский* (adjectival forms), *крымнашевы* (CrimealsOurs-ists), *крымнашество* (the action of CrimealsOurs), *крымнашизация*

(CrimealsOurs-isation), *крымнаши* (CrimealsNotOurs), etc. Here are some further examples illustrating this phenomenon.

*'No sooner had the Finance Minister's remark appeared in the newsfeeds than it was as if social media exploded: this is what turns out to be the true cost of CrimealsOurs – pensioners have their pension benefits taken away!'*

*'Does this mean that the cost of CrimealsOurs should be borne by teachers and doctors?'*

*'After CrimealsOurs, when many friends have turned their backs on Russia, Pyongyang supported Moscow and Moscow supported Pyongyang.'*

*'Playing around with the infectious 'CrimealsOurs' meme, we should not forget the true slogan of last spring: 'Russians do not abandon their own'.'*

*'If ... other democrats of the 'CrimealsOurs' type also want to come to Crimea to see the sights or even to spend their senior years in a decent way in a nice climate – we would welcome them just as we would welcome all other foreigners who would like to live in our country, observing its laws and refraining from meddling in its affairs'.*

*'We should give credit to our colleagues who have summarised the materials of a number of sociological studies and have painted a picture with what we may call scholarly conscientiousness, without hushing up the arguments both pro and con with regard to the two population groups singled out by our correspondents – the 'CrimealsOurs-ists' and 'CrimealsNotOurs-ists'.*

*'Russia as represented by its sports authorities promised a lot back in August yet a month later has happily forgotten about its assurances concerning soccer in light of the grandeur of the CrimealsOurs endeavours'.*

*'If the majority is united by the pathos of 'CrimealsOurs-ism' (which, as we all know, is limited in time, just like the effect of champagne), this does not mean that it is due to regressive traditionalism'.*

*'In the opinion of the 'CrimealsOurs-ists', the main problem is that an intolerance for those who are not willing to share the opinion of the majority is being imposed within the country'.*



The wordplay in these examples reflects the contentious perception of the Crimea situation, which is also evidenced in the shift in denominating politically similar phenomena: the *наши* (ours) component establishes the meaning of entering the zone of Russia's political influence. Cf. *абхазия-наши* (AbkhazialsOurs), *приднестровье-наши* (TransdnistrialsOurs), *сирия-наши* (SyrialsOurs), *чечня-наши* (ChechnyalsOurs), *южноосетия-наши* (SouthOssetialsOurs).

As noted, political discourse as reflected in the annual lexical collections – both in the expert sample and in the database – manifests a relatively small number of borrowed words. A distinct feature of the contemporary sociocultural situation is the penetration into Russian of new borrowed words and the formation of entire lexical paradigms (which in most cases reflects global trends). Hence, we have *брекзит* (Brexit), *грекзит* (Grexit), *икзит* (exit), *мекзит* (Mexit), *фрекзит* (Frexit), etc., as well as *аутеры* (outers) and *ливеры* (leavers). What is peculiar about how these words function is their non-participation in cultural appropriation, described as ‘the acclimation of borrowed words to the archetypically Russian models of language conceptualisation of the world, value-based paradigms, and communicative-pragmatic orientation’ (Radbil & Ratsiburskaya, 2017, p. 34). A prohibition of some sort is imposed by nuclear senses of meaning determined by extralinguistic factors. Cf. *аутеры* (outers) and *ливеры* (leavers) in the examples below.

*‘This refers to UK citizens who support the country’s exit from the European Union; the same as leavers. A third of the population are ‘outers’ (derived from the English word ‘out’), staunch supporters of the country’s exit from the EU’* (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 45).

*‘And then the pendulum swung to the other side: now the leadership is held by the outers and leavers, as they now call the proponents of exiting the EU, with an advantage of three, six and more percent’* (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 45).

A distinctive feature of the contemporary Russian linguistic situation is the discursive migration of terms. Linguists point out that the transition of

*‘One of the most vital areas in contemporary terminology studies is the investigation of dynamic processes in special lexis’*

terms from one type of discourse into another (including migration from the language of science into political discourse) occurs through migration. The study of the migration of terms should allow scientists to identify and describe the mechanisms of transition (consubstantiality, transferminologisation, and determinologisation). One of the most vital areas in contemporary terminology studies is the investigation of dynamic processes in special lexis. The importance of pursuing this research is due to a gap in modern-day terminological studies. Against the backdrop of increased attention to terms, one cannot help but notice the near-complete lack of analytic investigation into the problem of terms which function simultaneously in several special discourses and beyond the bounds of scientific metalanguage.

The migration of special lexis into public political discourse is accompanied by the increased activity of the word. For instance, such a special lexeme is the nomen *мельдоний* (meldonium). In the Integrum periodical database the word was first registered in 2007 as a terminological denomination used exclusively in medical discourse. Since 2016, the word has been used in mass media to denote doping, or performance-enhancing drugs, which caused a sharp growth in its frequency: 2007 (4), 2008 (21), 2009 (25), 2010 (61), 2011 (62), 2012 (30), 2013 (33), 2014 (32), 2015 (69), 2016 (54,823) (the figures are based on Integrum data).

The medical term's penetration into political discourse was accompanied by a change in the frame structure: the deactualisation of the ‘medication’ rubric, which was replaced with ‘doping drug’. The alteration of the substantive term structure in political discourse does not affect the conceptual core that includes basic rubrics preserved in all terminological systems without exception.

Here thus are fragments of dictionary entries for the word *мельдоний* (meldonium) and fixed expressions derived from it: ‘*a cardiac pharmaceutical recognised as a doping drug, first used in 2007; ‘activation and determinologisation are connected to the meldonium doping scandal of 2016’* (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 65).

The word combinations *мельдониевое дело* (the meldonium case) and *мельдониевый скандал* (the meldonium scandal) denote ‘referring to the scandal connected with Russian athletes using meldonium as a doping agent’. The occurrence of these lexical novelties may be explained extralinguistically. In the summer of 2016, more than 140 athletes on the Russian National Team were banned from taking part in the Olympic Games in Brazil due to the detection of meldonium (Mildronate) in their doping tests, which gave rise to lengthy court proceedings, a number of international scandals and a subsequent ban on the Russian National Team forbidding them to compete in the Olympic Games. The substance was declared ‘banned for athletes’ on January 1, 2016 (Kozlovskaya et al., 2018, p. 68).

Another example is the activation, discursive migration and the resulting determinologisation of the nomen *новичок* (novichok). Two points of view on this process may be singled out in contemporary terminology studies. The first suggests two stages: the term’s penetration into common parlance as a word preserving its terminological meaning; and the metaphorical transfer of meaning into common usage accompanied by the creation of an everyday, vernacular word based on it (Superanskaya et al., 2009, p. 134). The second approach, shared by the authors of this paper, holds that any departure of a term beyond the limits of a special discourse may be deemed determinologisation (Kulikova & Salmina, 2019, p. 13). Interestingly, the lexeme *новичок* (novichok) as a nomen first passed through the stage of terminologisation and then, after a long time, through the stage of determinologisation.

The word *новичок* (novichok) has two meanings: (1) a person who is only starting to do something, is getting the hang of something; (2) a per-

son who has appeared somewhere for the first time (Kuznetsov, 2001). Its ironic potential was realised by adding the semantic component ‘new’ to the name of a new, previously unproduced type of chemical weapon. Starting from the 1970s–1980s, the word *новичок* (novichok), that diachronically may be traced to a vernacular word, became fixed in the language for special purposes as a chemical term – the organophosphorus nitrogenous nerve agent. Its origin and usage are based on the phenomenon of consubstantiality, which is understood as both tracing the term’s origin to a general-use word, and its systemic coexistence in different discursive zones of contemporary language.

The word *новичок* (novichok) gained broad publicity after August 20, 2020 in connection with the poisoning of Alexei Navalny. The first stage of the word’s functioning beyond specialised discourse was connected with its surge in frequency: according to Integrum data, between January 1, 2020 and August 15, 2020 the word *новичок* (in various meanings) was used in mass media 905 times, while from August 15, 2020 (the beginning of the political scandal) until Autumn of 2020 (as of this writing), the relative frequency rate index rose to 74,000 occurrences. The word quickly became part of social and public (media and analytical) discourse. The phenomenon of special lexis entering general parlance by being used in the mass media is quite common. Terminology and special vocabulary used in mass media in no way contradicts publicistic style. On the contrary, it is an integral part of it. The term or nomen functioning in publicistic texts typically begins with the stage of quotation, i.e. the use of the term with a full-fledged scientific definition.

*‘Poisoning with the A-232 substance (‘Novichok-5’), which is not a traditional organophosphorus nerve agent but a synthesised pesticide with analogous structure...’.*

The term’s incorporation into non-specialised texts was then accompanied by brief or detailed explanations, i.e. special discursive forms of realisation of the term’s heuristic function: nominative-definitive, heuristic (the formation of a special

concept), or classificatory (systematising). Hyperhyponymic connections of the word in the text reflect the place of the notion denoted by the nomen in scientific taxonomy as poison, a family of poisons, a substance, agent, a type of organophosphorus substance, etc.

*'The German government announced that the patient was exposed to the Novichok-type poison'.*

*'The patient was poisoned with Novichok... Later it turned out that it was not Novichok but some substance not on the list of forbidden substances, the OPCW, but which may be attributable to the Novichok group'.*

After a short time, the nomen came to be used in texts without employing the discursive practice of introducing a potential agnonym; the specific name started to be used without any generic identifier, in rare cases even without quotation marks, which may signify the beginning of its transition to the cohort of common nouns (genericised names).

*'If the Guardian's sources are right, the British, German and French intelligence services really think that Navalny was supposed to be 'slightly intimidated' or 'a little poisoned' with the help of Novichok'.*

*'Nick Bailey, the sergeant of the British police who was infected with Novichok in Salisbury after being the first one to examine the house of Sergey and Yulia Skripal, who were poisoned with the same substance, was released from service, as he 'could no longer do the job'.*

*'With regard to information on the development of Novichok, the list mentions the State Research Institute of Organic Chemistry and Technology'.*

*'I suggest that after a short break (we do need to give our viewers a chance to catch their breath, don't we?) we will make a statement that Navalny was poisoned with the leftovers of Novichok preserved from the poisoning attack on Skripal in Great Britain'.*

*'The Germans claim they found traces of Novichok in Navalny's body. German experts have stated that they have found evidence of a Novichok-class substance in Alexei Navalny's body. Meanwhile, the Russian medical experts had not discovered any poisons in his system'.*

This highly relevant word also featured in many headlines. Holding a semiotically strong position, headlines concentrate textual information and activate the process of perception.

*'Novichok and everything, everything; How Novichok 'leaked' out of secret laboratories and in whose hands it could have ended up; Who brought the secrets of Novichok to the West'.*

The migration of the term has led to an increase in the frequency of other terms contained in the 'chemical weapons' thematic field, such as *фосфорорганические вещества* (organophosphate chemicals/organic phosphorus agents), *ингибиторы холинэстеразы* (cholinesterase inhibitors), *боевые отравляющие вещества* (poison gas weapons), *токсикология* (toxicology), *ОЗХО* (OPCW), *Конвенция о запрещении химоружия* (Chemical Weapons Convention), *масс-спектрометрия* (mass spectrometry), *хроматография* (chromatography).

The actualisation of the term also led to the emergence of a plethora of memes reflecting opposed evaluations of the incident. Memes about Novichok to a larger extent than others reflect the process of de-tabooing in the language, which occurs via the intensive use of obscene vocabulary and taboo topics, a political stand-off being one of them. For instance, there is a photograph of a Western European head of state who is addressing an invisible interlocutor with the piteous request: *'Please give me some Novichok'.*

As language conventions in non-institutional political discourse may be broken, memes become a form or a means of wordplay and creativity. The aesthetic is replaced by the pragmatic as the leading function, so that metaphors, comparisons and other tropes are typically used to surprise, arrest attention, and to stick in one's memory. For example, there is a meme depicting Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom asking, *'When will there be a new episode of Novichok?'.* A similar effect is manifested in the meme containing an image of Navalny eating ramen noodles and asking, *'Hey, guys, how is Novichok supposed to work? I don't quite know how to fake it'.* In addition, the new kinds of wordplay are connected with the process

of increasing the semioticity of political language that is expressed using a deliberate concurrence of several semiotic codes, often involving a picture, a text, a precedent text or any other precedent phenomenon.

This paper, reflecting early research, only briefly touches upon another important process that is reflected in active neography, the phenomenon of activation determined by extralinguistic factors.

For instance, 2017 saw a rapid activation of the word *дипо́бъект* (diplomatic facility), 'a consulate, trade mission or another diplomatic institution located on the territory of one country while belonging to a different one' (Kozhevnikov & Ridetskaya, 2019, p. 45). This activation was provoked by mass media spreading information about the closure of a number of Russia's diplomatic facilities on the territory of the US and the closure of American ones in Moscow.

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## 5. CONCLUSION

The semantic and derivational processes connected with new relevant political lexis reflect the productive nature of contemporary non-institutional political discourse. The first stage, which considers how new words, including occasional ones, function in political language, demonstrates the frequent use of wordplay mechanisms on the semantic and word-formation levels. The process of forming new words in political discourse is broader and more extensive than the process of borrowing. Contexts testify to the morphological, derivational and semantic dynamics of newly coined words, while wordplay registers controversial perceptions of the political situation by contemporary society. This study has characterised the key mechanisms of extralinguistic determination of the lexical component of political discourse and identified the principal processes concerning highly active political vocabulary.



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