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**ORCID:** 0000-0003-0894-1684**VERBALIZATION OF «BUCHA MASSACRE»  
CONCEPT IN THE ENGLISH NEWS DISCOURSE**

*The research aims at comprehending verbalized Bucha massacre concept content and structure in the news discourse. To achieve the aim the following tasks are to be attained: 1) to single out conceptual features of Bucha massacre concept; 2) to analyze means of their verbalization in the English news discourse; 3) to specify content and structure peculiarities of Bucha massacre concept in the news discourse. The scientific novelty is that the article carries out a conceptual analysis of the content and structure of the newly emerged concept. Lexicographic and definitional analyses allow distinguishing context-independent conceptual features meanwhile quantitative corpus-based approach in complex with discourse analysis assist to identify salient constituents of the conceptual features, to broaden their content, to discern an additional context-dependent conceptual feature, to define the concept structure. The obtained results reveal Bucha massacre concept content and structure through its verbalized context-dependent and context-independent conceptual features. Verbal means used in the English (British and American) news discourse actualize and specify context-independent conceptual features: mass killing of Ukrainian civilians; defenseless victims; atrocity; Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity which is presented as a cluster of subfeatures crime → evidence of the crime → investigation of the crime; Russian war criminal; the place of the massacre, and generate context-dependent contextual feature genocide, thus, forming perception of Bucha massacre concept by the international community in general and English language community in particular as a symbol of aggression against Ukraine. All conceptual features are closely interwoven, as one and the same constituents simultaneously verbalize more than one conceptual feature, hence, constructing a diffuse chainlike concept structure.*

**Key words:** concept, conceptual feature, concept structure, Bucha massacre, verbalization, verbal means, English news discourse.

**Ангеліна Демчук. ВЕРБАЛІЗАЦІЯ КОНЦЕПТУ «BUCHA MASSACRE» В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ  
НОВИННОМУ ДИСКУРСІ**

*Стаття присвячена дослідженню концепту Bucha massacre (Бучанська різанина) та засобів його вербалізації в новинному дискурсі. Метою наукової розвідки є роз'яснення змісту та визначення особливостей структури означеного вербалізованого концепту в англomовному новинному дискурсі, для досягнення якої необхідно вирішити наступні завдання: виокремити концептуальні ознаки концепту Бучанська різанина; проаналізувати засоби їхньої вербалізації в англomовному новинному дискурсі; деталізувати зміст та визначити особливості структури зазначеного концепту в англomовному новинному дискурсі. Наукова новизна полягає в тому, що у статті вперше здійснено концептуальний аналіз змісту та структури новоутвореного концепту Bucha massacre. Залучення лексикографічного та дефініційного аналізу дозволило виокремити контекстуально незалежні концептуальні ознаки досліджуваного концепту, а кількісний корпусний підхід у комплексі з дискурсивним аналізом дав змогу ідентифікувати їхні салієнтні конститuentи, розширити змістове наповнення кожної ознаки, виокремити додаткову контекстуально залежну когнітивну ознаку, визначити структуру концепту. Отримані результати доводять, що вербальні засоби, виокремлені в англomовному (британському та американському) новинному дискурсі актуалізують і деталізують контекстуально незалежні концептуальні ознаки: масове вбивство українського мирного населення; беззахисні жертви; воєнні злочини та злочини проти людяності, що репрезентована кластером підознак злочин → докази злочину → розслідування злочину; російський воєнний злочинець; місто різанини; та генерують контекстуально залежну ознаку геноцид, таким чином формуючи сприйняття концепту Бучанська різанина представниками міжнародної спільноти, зокрема англomовної, як символу російської загарбницької війни проти України. Всі концептуальні ознаки тісно переплетені між собою, оскільки одні і ті ж конститuentи одночасно вербалізують більш ніж одну ознаку, у такий спосіб конструюючи дифузну ланцюжкову структуру концепту.*

**Ключові слова:** концепт, концептуальна ознака, структура концепту, Бучанська різанина, вербалізація, вербальні засоби, англomовний новинний дискурс.

**Problem statement.** On the 24th of February 2022 Russia escalated the war that started in 2014 by invading more Ukrainian territories. One of their aims was to occupy the capital of

Ukraine, Kyiv. On their way to Kyiv Russian military forces moved into the city of Bucha killing and executing the Bucha dwellers. These dramatic events are known to the world

community as Bucha massacre. As any other events they are reflected in human cognition in the form of a mental structure which, for its part, obtains a verbal realization. This fact stipulates the necessity to research into new verbalized phenomena of our reality.

First and foremost, people receive information about recent events from mass media (the events of the Russo-Ukrainian war are not an exception), i.e. mass media are primary sources of providing knowledge about new conceptualized political, social and other events, facts, phenomena of the objective modern reality for society and correspondingly language community. As concepts are predominantly appear in the mass-media in a verbalized form (visual images are of auxiliary character), mass media discourse gives ideas about means and ways of these concepts actualization in the modern language, in the linguistic picture of the world. Thus, mass media discourse, particularly news discourse, is an appropriate empirical base to study verbalized concepts.

However, concepts, generated by recent dramatic events in the world, and simultaneously modeling this new reality by linguistic means, are lack of scientific studies.

**Literature review.** Concept as a mental structure storing human knowledge about the world, information about phenomena and people's experience has been and still is a subject of numerous studies [7; 17; 19; 21; 22]. Such constantly increasing scientific interest is explained by the dynamic nature of concepts. As J. Parthemore states, concepts are inclined to change, as they exist «in a state of continuous motion» [27]. This statement sustains the idea that the contents of concepts are continuously acquiring new conceptual features that reflect the changes in our perception of the world. Moreover, new events of the existing reality generate new concepts and, as B. Skowronek remarks, mental concepts are in constant interaction with the language, exchanging information with one another [30], these new concepts immediately obtain linguistic, i.e. verbalized forms.

If to accept L. W. Barsalou's ideas of linguistic forms as important instruments to comprehend meaning and encode conceptual content [6], word associations can be understood as pointers to the conceptual features, and words themselves as embodiments of these features. This assumption is sustained by the statement that concepts and their properties emerge in any language in the form of words and phrases which semantically interpret them modifying human knowledge of the world [4]. M. Gentilucci makes an assertion about word potential to influence physical

actions directed to the objects which they (words) denote [18]. In his turn, Borghi concludes about the properties of language to improve our thinking capabilities and change our social setting [7]. These conclusions seem to be appropriate either for perceptual interpretation of the events and, furthermore, concepts that “develop from aggregating information” [5] about these events. In other terms, words not only verbally reflect the content of concepts in the linguistic world picture along with their perception by the representatives of a definite language community but also form the perception and create associations (e.g. the name of Bucha immediately evokes associations with massacre) by identifying conceptual features.

In this connection there arises a question to what extent conceptual features depends on the context (linguistic, visual, situational). D. Frassinelli and A. Lenci argue for L. W. Barsalou's premise that concept properties can be context-independent and context-dependent, i.e. properties that are strongly associated with a concept in essence and those that are associated with it only in a particular context [16; 5]. This assumption can be extrapolated to the research into conceptual features actualization in linguistic contexts of the mass media discourse to find out whether a concept obtains context-dependent features in addition to context-independent ones, i.e. defined on the basis of lexicographic analysis.

Mass media discourse is a reliable source for researching into new concepts, their notional features and means of verbalization, particularly news discourse. This assumption is based on news properties not only to describe the facts but to build the reality, as news, on the one hand, relies on the norms, values and ideologies of a definite society, on the other hand, influences them reflecting a larger world [36; 13]. News discourse is generally defined as any new information presented by the media aimed at providing knowledge about ongoing events [36, p. 30; 37, p. 4]. It is obvious that the events described in the article can be interpreted differently as well as the suggested reaction to them. The main reason for this fact is various language means used in the mass media discourse of a particular language community [2]. Notwithstanding that mass media discourse involves various extralinguistic means, language is the most complex and significant in the process of creating senses in the social context [1] as language does not merely reflect the world but designs and composes it [3, p. 1]. Developing N. Fairclough's idea about texts as social spaces [15, p. 6], news discourse can be interpreted as a space where cognition and representation of the world along with social inter-

action occur through language. All these provide a solid grounding for an assumption about news discourse potential to create new senses and therefore new conceptual contents and features.

News discourse is predominantly studied within Critical Discourse Analysis framework. Scientists' interest is focused on research into various means of shaping readers' perception of the world's events. Yu Xiaofan and Zh. Hai-cui analyze linguistic means, modality, news sources, and sociohistorical contexts to compare different images and attitudes to the same event (the Extradition Bill Incident) created in two newspapers China Daily and The Guardian [38]. Brexit phenomenon and language strategies of its reflection in the Times news discourse are in the focus of G. Rubing and Sh. C. Sandaran's research [28]. Y. Mai and A. Jocuns have studied the New York Times and China Daily news discourse to find out what linguistic means and images were employed to convey different ideologies in their highlighting Covid-19 pandemic [24]. Having chosen headlines of news reports as a research subject, D. R. Sari made conclusions about figurative language and specificity of the vocabulary used by a journalist to create eye-catching headlines [29]. It is apparent that exactly language means are of primary interest in all these studies as well as in majority of similar pieces of research.

There is one more significant issue related to news discourse analysis – a subject-matter of newspaper articles which is always some ongoing events. Nowadays considerable bulk of news is devoted to the Russo-Ukrainian war which finds its reflection in recent scientific research [14; 31]. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine has resulted in numerous Russian war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other horrors of war, and this consequently has led to emergence of such new concepts as *Bucha massacre*, *Azovstal resistance*, *siege of Mariupol*, *Mariupol theatre airstrike*, *Izum mass graves*, *Destruction of the Kakhovka Dam*, and others, which immediately obtain verbalized forms and are highlighted in news discourse.

This study is focused on *Bucha massacre concept* as a reflection of one of the most atrocious Russian war crimes and its verbal actualization in the English news discourse. The research **aims** at comprehending verbalized Bucha massacre concept content and structure in the news discourse. To achieve the aim the following **tasks** are to be attained: 1) to single out conceptual features of Bucha massacre concept; 2) to analyze means of their verbalization in the English news discourse; 3) to specify con-

tent and structure peculiarities of Bucha massacre concept in the news discourse.

The research is carried out on the basis of «Cognitive and communication studies» laboratory at the department of Germanic philology and methods of teaching foreign languages, the State institution «South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky».

**Methodology.** The research was carried out in three phases. The first phase was aimed at identifying context-independent conceptual features of Bucha massacre concept and involved lexicographic and definitional analyses of the concept name. A quantitative corpus-based approach was employed at the second phase which suggested data collection. The corpus consists of 57 articles about Russian war crimes in Bucha, published on the websites of «The Guardian», «BBC news», «The New York Times», «CBS news» in the period from March, 2022 to December, 2022, and includes 56484 tokens in total. The third phase is data analysis. AntConc text analysis along with contextual, quantitative and lexico-semantic analyses was applied to distinguish salient verbal constituents of context-independent and context-dependent (if any) conceptual features of Bucha massacre concept in the English news discourse.

**Results and discussion. Lexicographic analysis of the concept name.** To identify conceptual features of **Bucha massacre concept** the definitional analysis of its name has been carried out on the basis of seven English dictionaries [10; 12; 20; 23; 25; 26; 32]. The results of the concept name “massacre” analysis allow to single out the following conceptual features: (1) **mass killing of people** which is realized by such semes as «*killing*», «*murder*», «*slaughter*»; «*a lot of people*», «*a large numbers of people*», «*many people*»; (2) **defenseless victims**, this feature is verbalized by the semantic components «*people who cannot defend themselves*», «*helpless or unresisting human beings*»; (3) **atrocious** is actualized by the semes «*cruel*», «*violent*», «*brutal*», «*indiscriminate*», «*wanton*» which are combined with the seme «*killing*».

Contextual analysis of Wikipedia article about the Bucha massacre allows distinguishing additional characteristics of the above-mentioned conceptual features. Wikipedia article describes the Bucha massacre (Ukrainian: buchanska ryznynna) as «the mass murder of Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war by the Russian Armed Forces during the fight for and occupation of the city of Bucha as part of the Russian invasion of Ukraine» [9]. Thus, (1) **mass killing of people** acquires not only quite definite victims' identification including «*civilians*» and «*prisoners of war*» but also victims' nationality verbalized by

lexeme «Ukrainian»; (2) **defenseless victims** is additionally actualized by word combinations «*hands bound behind their backs*», «*shot at point-blank range*». Besides, three more conceptual features were discerned: (4) **Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity**: «*unlawful killings*», «*summary executions*», «*torture chamber*», «*mutilated and burnt bodies*», «*raped girls*»; (5) **war criminal**: «*Russian Armed Forces*», «*Russian soldiers*». An integral constituent of the analyzed concept is a Ukrainian toponym Bucha, a city in Kyiv Oblast, which verbalizes conceptual feature (6) **the place of the massacre**: «*the city of Bucha*», «*part of the Russian invasion of Ukraine*».

Thus, regarding to the results of the lexicographic analysis of the noun «massacre» and «Bucha massacre» phenomenon, the so-called context-independent conceptual features of Bucha massacre concept are defined as follows: (1) **mass killing of Ukrainian civilians**; (2) **defenseless victims**; (3) **atrocities**; (4) **Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity**; (5) **Russian war criminal**; (6) **the place of the massacre**.

**Buscha massacre concept verbalization means in the English news discourse.** AntCon text analysis of the selected corpus allows discerning verbalization means, i.e. lexemes and their collocations, of the distinguished conceptual features which are analyzed on the basis of their frequency indexes (from the highest to the lowest ones), regardless of their morphological characteristic.

Conceptual feature (1) **mass killing of Ukrainian civilians** is verbalized by the following lexemes: *bodies* (260), *civilian (s)* (226), *to kill (deliberately)* (145), *dead* (137), *to shoot* (106), *mass* (78) / *deliberate* (7) / *intentional* (3) *kill-ing (s)* (67), *many civilians / men and women / children* (67), *indiscriminate fire* (32), *to die* (36), *Ukrainians* (34), *death* (34), *massacre* (21), *murder (s)* (18), *hundreds* (15), *thousands* (14), *scores* (13), *dozen* (8).

The most frequent verbal means are «*bodies*», «*civilians*», «*to kill*», «*dead*» and «*to shoot*». These quantitative results demonstrate the core content of the conceptual feature (1): the act, the way and evidence of deliberate annihilation of the civilians in Bucha. It is clearly seen from the following examples: «When videos and photos emerged in April showing *bodies of dozens of civilians strewn along a street* in Bucha, Ukrainians and the rest of the world voiced horror and outrage» [NYT, 23.12.2022]. «*Dozens of civilians who died during the Russian occupation of the Ukrainian city of Bucha were killed by tiny metal arrows from shells*» [The Guardian,

24.04.2022]. «[...] at least *300 civilians had been killed*» [BBC, 5.04.2022]; «*Russian soldiers shooting civilians*» [BBC, 12.05.2022]; «*Bucha murders: German report says Russian troops discussed killing civilians*» [BBC, 7.04.2022]. «In a suburb called Bucha, we found *a civilian massacre*» [CBS, 16.10.2022].

To have a deeper understanding of verbal actualization of the conceptual feature (1), it is mandatory to observe the concordances of the key words. The first fifteen hits show (the further 245 hits demonstrate practically the same) that «*bodies*» is collocated either with «*civilians*» or its contextual synonym «*men and women (in civilian clothes)*» in combination with definite number of the dead («*at least 410 civilians*», «*dozens of civilians*») that emphasizes the idea of mass and unprovoked murder of Ukrainian citizens in Bucha. This contextual collocation explains the frequency of «*civilian(s)*» which is the second frequent lexeme in the list.

«*Civilians*» is collocated, besides numerals, predominantly with such lexemes as «*killings*», «*murder*», «*dead*», «*massacring*», directly actualizing conceptual feature (1). It is noteworthy that a national identification of the civilian population is verbalized mainly indirectly by toponyms (Ukrainian town of) Bucha, Kyiv suburb, etc. The emphasis is laid on the fact of mass killing of the Ukrainian citizens, not on their ethnic origin.

Consequently, the third lexeme in frequency is a verb «*to kill*» in the Passive Voice – which is obvious because Ukrainian civilians were subjected to deliberate acts of violence causing death. Contextual analysis clearly shows that «*killed*» is collocated with nominations of the objects of violence exactly naming the victims (Oleksandr Khmaruk, Tetiana, Olha Sukhenko and others). In such a way mass media draw the international community's attention to horrors in Bucha, in particular, the UN war crimes tribunal to carry out an investigation. As for the «*doer of an action*», here direct nominations of those who committed war crimes prevail: Russians, Russian troops, Russian paratroopers, Russian soldiers, Russian forces. However indirect nominations are also used: by Russian fire, bullets, metal darts from Russian artillery, etc., simultaneously indicating the murder weapons and the murderers by the adjective «*Russian*». It should be noted that these lexical means also verbalize conceptual features (4) **Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity** and (5) **Russian war criminal** that will be analyzed further.

Conceptual feature (2) **defenseless victims** is closely interwoven with the first one as «*defenseless victims*» are deliberately killed civilians,

massacred men, women and children of Bucha. Therefore, there are lexemes that simultaneously verbalize two conceptual features: **mass killing of Ukrainian civilians** and **defenseless victims**. It provides grounds to claim that conceptual feature constituents of **Bucha massacre concept** are characterized by diffusivity meanwhile conceptual features form a chainlike structure.

**Defenseless victims** feature is actualized in the analyzed news reports by such words and word combinations as: *civilian (s)* (226), *people* (145), *men* (67), *son (s)* (55), *victim (s)* (51), *family* (46), *children* (40), *women* (27), *daughter (s)* (24), *(civilian / massive) casualties* (10), *innocent* (9), *boys* (6), *girls* (5) collocated with lexemes denoting inability to defend themselves or evidence of such inability: (shot) in the *head* (63) *at close range* (7), *hands bound* (27) / *tied* (34) (behind their back) (68), *unarmed* (9), to force (to be forced) / to make / to order / to tell to *kneel* (9), on (their, his, her, our) *knees* (7), *hostage (s)* (6), *blindfolded* (3), *taped eyes* (3), *beaten* (3). The following examples illustrate verbalization of the conceptual feature in context: «On a single day, Kaplishny said that he had picked up about 30 bodies – 13 of whom were *men whose hands had been tied* and who had been *shot in the head at close range*» [NYT, 4.04.2022]. «*Massacre of innocents: The Times reports many victims had been bound*» [The Guardian, 3.04.2022]. «*People were on their knees, blindfolded...*» [CBS, 16.04.2022]. «*Russian soldiers took civilians hostage, kept them on their knees with their hands tied and their eyes taped*» [NYT, 23.03.2022]. In such a way news coverage foregrounds the fact of Bucha population's defenselessness in the face of unprovoked Russian aggression: innocent unarmed town dwellers of Bucha were seized by Russian invaders and held against their will (*hostage*) becoming victims of outrageous violence (*kept on their knees, blindfolded, eyes taped, hand bound / tied, shot in the head at close range, etc.*).

All the violent, destructive actions against defenseless victims of Bucha are accumulated in the conceptual feature (3) **atrocities** which is mainly verbalized by the name of the feature, i.e. the word (Russian) *atrocities (s)* (105), and by the lexemes *frantic / horrific / widespread / paroxysm of / flurry of violence* (24), *terror* (14), *brutal* (14), *brutality* (13), *terrible* (12), *horrifying* (8), *indiscriminate* (attack, fire, assaults, murder, etc.) (8), *horror (s)* (6), *outrageous* (5), *cruelty* (4), *cruel* (4), *rampage* (3), *violent* (3), *chilling* (2), *horrible* (2), *savage* (2), *butchery* (1), *murderous* (1), *wanton* (1), *nightmare* (1).

Analysis of contextual use of the lexemes that verbalize conceptual feature (3) gives a clear

picture, firstly, how Ukraine and international community perceive and react to the Bucha massacre horrifying events – it is shock, horror, revulsion, outrage and condemnation: «*Britain's foreign secretary, Liz Truss said she was appalled by atrocities in Bucha*» [The Guardian, 3.04.2022]; «[...] new revelations of *Russian atrocities* emerge, *fueling outrage among Ukrainians and across much of the world*» [NYT, 22.05.2022]; «*Biden said he'd seek more sanctions after reported atrocities in Ukraine*» [CBS, 4.04.2022]; «*Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said he was «deeply shocked by news of the exceptionally cruel acts of violence against civilians near Kyiv*» [CBS, 4.04.2022]; «*CBS News reporter Debora Patta has seen violence and death at close range before. But the atrocities she witnessed in Bucha, Ukraine this week stood out, and overwhelmed her*» [CBS, 3.04.2022]; «*Putin's frantic violence is wiping out innocent families and knows no bounds*», she [Annalena Baerbock] wrote on Twitter» [The Guardian, 3.04.2022].

Secondly, once again the focus is on the town of Bucha where the atrocities were committed, Russian army who are responsible for them, and civilians against whom the acts of violence were directed.

As for the contextual use of the lexeme «terror», it is mainly collocated with the words denoting actions that form a part of war (campaign), a period of violent actions (stage, month, 33 days), the extent of these actions (scope, level), and also with verbal means which express the high degree of fear felt by the victims of Russian terror («unimaginable terror», «put terror in the hearts of those who remained», «terror will prevail», «terror and butchery only grows», etc.), thus, emphasizing the fact that Russian occupants brought terror and death to this particular Ukrainian suburb and committed atrocities from the beginning of their control of Bucha till their final retreat.

The atrocities committed against civilians in Bucha are actually Russian war crimes. Consequently «Russian war crimes» is an integral constituent of Bucha massacre concept. Conceptual feature (4) **Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity** is presented as a cluster of subfeatures: *crime* → *evidence of the crime* → *investigation of the crime*. The subfeature *crime* is actualized in the English news discourse by the linguistic means that generally characterize Russian deeds in Bucha as war crimes and crimes against humanity and specify their types: *to kill* (145), (apparent) *Russian war crime* (117), *to shoot* (106), *killing (s)* (67), *Russia's / Russian invasion of Bucha* (50), (despicable, indis-

criminate) *attack(s)* (34), *to commit* (33), (savage / dark) *Russian occupation of Bucha* (30), *to execute* (27) *torture* (24), *assault(s)* (18), *to burn* (18), (apparent / summary) *execution (s)* (of civilians / detainees / captured) (18), *murder(s)* (18), *rape (s)* (16), (constant, indiscriminate, heavy) *shelling* (16), *to detain* (13), *crimes against humanity* (12), *destruction* (12), *bombing (of civilians / civilian infrastructure, targets / children)* (9), *tortured* (7), *raped* (5), *to slaughter* (5), *looting* (4), *sexual crimes* (4), *to squash by tanks* (3), *slaughter* (2), *to mow down* (1), *to flatten by tanks* (1), *to use children as «human shields»* (1).

The following fragments illustrate verbalized conceptual subfeature in the news discourse: «Halyna Tovkach, 55, is searching for the body of her husband, Oleg, 62. *His death*, she says, *is part of a war crime* in which Russian soldiers also *killed two young boys and their mother»* [The Guardian, 2.04.2022]. «*They were all shot*» Russia is accused of *war crimes* as Bucha reveals *horror of invasion»* [The Guardian, 3.04.2022]. «Russian forces were *guilty of murder, torture, rape and looting»* [The Guardian, 3.04.2022]. «Human Rights watch reported documented *cases of rape and summary executions»* [NYT, 6.04.2022]. «If *these crimes* are determined to be *part of a widespread or systematic attack on the civilian population based on a state policy*, they could also amount to *crimes against humanity»* [NYT, 6.04.2022].

The given examples clearly demonstrate that all the crimes, starting from Russian invasion itself, against peaceful people of Bucha (rapes, tortures, looting, violent attacks, shelling and bombing of the civilian targets) are perceived by the English language community as war crimes and crimes against humanity and verbalized by appropriate linguistic means. Adjectives like *savage, dark, despicable* (attacks, occupation, invasion), *constant, heavy, indiscriminate* (shelling, bombing), *apparent, summary* (executions), *horrific, fascist, terrible* (war crimes) emphasise the highest degree of Russian unprovoked military aggression against Ukrainians in Bucha, the severity of their war crimes.

It is apparent from the list of the subfeature verbalizers that such lexemes as *to kill, (mass) killings, murders, to shoot, etc.* have been already mentioned as the constituents of conceptual feature (1). This sustains the claim about their diffusion, i.e. mutual penetration which is definitely manifest itself in the following example: «*Killing of civilians* in Bucha and Kyiv condemned as «*terrible war crime»* [The Guardian, 3.04.2022].

Conceptual subfeature *evidence* is verbalized as follows: (*the*) *dead* (117), (*mass*) *grave (s)*

(95), *evidence* (87), *video (s)* (65), *photograph (s) / photos* (62), (*apocalyptic / haunting / horrible / gruesome / shocking*) *satellite images* (40), *basement* (34), *cellar* (26), *witness(es)* (23), *dead bodies* (20), (*human / burned*) *remains* (9), (*Bucha witness*) *testimony(ies)* (4), *crime scenes* (3), *torture chamber* (3), *gunshot wounds* (17), *bloodstained mattress* (1). These linguistic means focus the readers' attention on the documented evidence (video, photos, satellite images of crime scenes; witnesses' testimonies) of definite types of Russia's war crimes (looting, rape, torture, murders, etc.) in Bucha thus actualizing the essence of the conceptual subfeature in the mass media discourse: «I've looked at *photos of a mass grave* and read *testimonies of rape and torture»* [The Guardian, 6.04.2022]. «*An analysis of satellite images* by The New York Times rebuts claims by Russia that *the killing of civilians in Bucha*, a suburb of Kyiv, occurred after its soldiers had left the town» [NYT, 6.04.2022]. «The Ukrainian military released *video* of what it called *a basement torture chamber, showing a line of people with their hands tied and gunshot wounds to the head. More evidence of Russian war crimes, said Ukraine»* [CBS, 5.05.2022].

It is noteworthy that lexeme «evidence» is typically collocated either with «Russian war crimes» or with «Russian attacks on civilians», «Russian atrocities / violence against civilians» which are classified as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

When the first images of Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bucha appeared in mass media, Ukraine and its allies demanded an investigation. The subfeature *investigation of the crime* includes the actions aiming at discovering the truth about Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bucha along with doers of these actions. Consequently, it is realized in the news discourse by quite definite linguistic means: *to find (evidence / bodies / the dead)* (151), (*to carry out / to open*) *investigation (s)* (43), *to identify* (32), *to document* (25), *to discover (atrocities / evidence / mass graves / victim's bodies)* (28), *to collect (evidence / bodies / the dead)* (18), *to investigate* (13), *to reveal (atrocities / evidence / corpses)* (5), *inquiry* (3), *exhumation* (2). Investigators of the Russian crimes are nominated as follows: *Ukraine* (297), *Ukrainian officials* (45), (*Ukrainian, international, independent human rights, police*) *investigators* (37), *journalists* (24), *reporters* (23), *International Criminal Court* (12), *Ukrainian authorities* (12), *Ukraine's chief prosecutor* (8), *prosecutors* (7), (*news*) *correspondent* (7), (EU / non-governmental) *organizations* (7), *Human Rights Watch* (6), *International war crime experts* (2), *the Ukrainian*

*prosecutor-general* (2), *military intelligence officials* (1), *the video investigation team* (1).

The frequency indexes distinctly show that a principal goal of the concerned parties is to find out and reconstruct all the details of war crimes committed in order to force Russia to bear the whole responsibility for them. The concordances of conceptual subfeature constituents sustain this idea: «It was essential to find evidence on the extent of Russian fascist crimes» [NYT, 19.05.2022]; «Ukraine has begun a war crimes investigation into Russia's actions in Bucha» [BBC, 6.04.2022]; «The International Criminal Court is already investigating possible war crimes and other atrocities» [NYT, 13.03.2022]; «But prosecutors and military intelligence officials were investigating early on, collecting evidence to try to identify the perpetrators responsible for the mass killing, torture and rapes ... in Bucha» [NYT, 22.05.2022]; «Human Rights Watch reported documented cases of rape and summary executions» [NYT, 3.04.2022]; «they [CBS news correspondents] saw evidence of atrocities: civilians shot in the head with their hands bound; at least one resident apparently cut down by Russian tank fire ...; mass graves filled with nearly 300 bodies» [CBS, 5.04.2022]; «New York Times reporters and photographers documented the bodies of dozens of people killed in their homes and in the woods, and even set on fire in a vacant parking lot» [NYT, 30.04.2022].

It is apparent that «Ukraine» takes a leading position in the frequency rank among the lexemes nominating investigators of the Russian war crimes. It should be noted that investigations in Bucha are carried not only by Ukrainian, European and International official institutions but also by non-governmental organizations, journalists and reporters. These means of verbalization reveal a strong intention of international community to assist Ukraine in bringing the truth about Bucha massacre to light.

Conceptual feature (5) **Russian war criminal** logically develops the content of the conceptual feature (4) in the English mass-media discourse obtaining verbal realizations: *Russia* (260), *Russian soldiers* (167), *Russian forces* (139), *Russian troops* (114), *Putin* (86), *military (forces)* (74), *Moscow* (42), *Kremlin* (24), *(Russia's) the 64<sup>th</sup> (motorized rifle) brigade* (22), *Russian paratroopers (from the 234<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Regiment)* (14), *perpetrators* (12); *Russian army* (9), *paratrooper unit (based in Pskov)* (3), *culprit* (2), *army of terrorists* (1). The analysis of the conceptual feature verbalizers allows us to conclude that Russia, Putin and his army are presented as war criminals in the news reports dedicated to the atrocities in Bucha: «Russia stands accused

of «terrible» war crimes, as western leaders condemned the killings of unarmed civilians in Bucha» [The Guardian, 4.04.2022]; «However it is done, seeking justice against Mr. Putin and others responsible for war crimes in Ukraine is a goal for the longer term» [NYT, 6.04.2022]; «The evidence suggests that Russian troops killed recklessly and sometimes sadistically. Hundreds of civilian bodies were discovered after the troops finally retreated in late March» [NYT, 30.04.2022].

In addition to general notions like «soldiers», «military forces», «troops», etc. this conceptual feature is actualized by the names of concrete Russian military units, their commanders and definite number of those who committed war crimes in Bucha (*the 64<sup>th</sup> (motorized rifle) brigade, the 234<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Regiment, paratrooper unit based in Pskov*): «Ukrainian investigators have already identified 10 soldiers from the 64<sup>th</sup> Brigade and accused them of war crimes» [NYT, 22.05.2022]; «... the perpetrators of the massacre along Yablunska Street were Russian paratroopers from the 234<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Regiment led by Lt. Col. Artyom Gorodilov» [NYT, 23.12.2022]. These nominations identify those who are precisely responsible for the war crimes in Bucha and therefore build a strong cognitive association in people's minds between war crimes / crimes against humanity committed in Bucha and definite criminals' names or numbers of their military unit.

Conceptual feature (6) **the place of the massacre** is mainly verbalized by the Ukrainian toponym (city of) *Bucha* (567): «despicable attacks» on Ukrainian civilians in *Buch*» [BBC, 3.04.2022]; «gruesome scenes in Bucha» [CBS, 4.04.2022]; «the bodies of men in civilian clothes lying on the streets of Bucha» [NYT, 6.04.2022]; more rarely by synonymic word combinations *suburb of Kyiv / (Kyiv suburb)* (34), *region of Kyiv / Kyiv region* (22), *suburban town* (2), *Ukrainian town* (2): «Journalists entering a Ukrainian town have found dead bodies strewn on a street» [BBC, 2.04.2022]. «When a column of Russian tanks drove into the Kyiv suburb» [NYT, 3.04.2022]. Occasionally metaphoric nominations are used to emphasise the scale of tragedy: *symbol for all Russian crimes / of death and atrocity / of savagery of the war* (3): «In Bucha, a symbol of Death and Atrocity, life returns» [NYT, 17.05.2022], «Bucha quickly became a symbol of the savagery of the war» [NYT, 31.03.2022]. *Yablonska (Yablunska) street* (32), *Vokzal'na Street* (18), *Ivana Franka street* (8), *Antonia Mikhailovskoho street* (1), *Ivana Rudenka street* (1), *Rydzanych street* (1) are noteworthy toponyms of Bucha as these streets

are known for the most horrifying evidence of Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity (especially Yablunska street that is proved by the frequency index. It is explained by the fact that Yablunska street was actually a front-line through which Russian paratroopers tried to force their way to Irpin and finally to Kiev) and respectively defined as verbalizers of the conceptual feature (6): «six people [...] tortured and killed at one end of *Ivana Franka Street*» [NYT, 22.05.2022], «We identified 36 of the Ukrainian victims killed along *Yablunska Street*» [NYT, 21.12.2022], «multiple bodies scattered along *Yablonska street*» [NYT, 6.04.2022], «An older man lay in nearby *Rydzanych Street* for several weeks» [The Guardian, 10.04.2022].

Discourse analysis of the selected articles allowed to identify a context-dependent conceptual feature (7) **genocide**. The United Nations Convention defines genocide as «any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group» [35]. Basing on the definition, it may be concluded that all Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Bucha can be qualified as genocide that respectively obtains relative verbal reflection. Hence, conceptual feature (7) is mainly verbalized by its name *genocide* (43).

The analysis of genocide concordances reveals that the lexeme is mostly used in context of Russia being accused of genocide for its atrocities in Bucha by Ukrainian president Zelenskiy and other world leaders (former Prime minister of the UK Boris Johnson, EU leaders, EC president Ursula von der Leyen, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borell, the Polish leader, etc.).

The following linguistic means actualize conceptual feature (7) contextually: (*widespread / total*) *destruction of a neighboring nation* (3), (*we / Ukrainians are being*) *destroyed and exterminated* (3), *the elimination of Ukraini-*

*ans / the whole nation* (2), *the torture of the whole nation* (1), *Russians aim to eliminate as many Ukrainian as they can* (1): «Indeed, this is *genocide – the elimination of the whole nation and the people*», Zelenskiy told «Face the Nation» [CBS, 3.04.2022]. «The Ukrainian leader said Russia's invasion is about *the destruction and extermination*» [CBS, 4.04.2022], etc., emphasizing the core essence of the verbalized feature, i.e. total annihilation of the Ukrainian citizens in Bucha.

Conceptual feature **genocide** accumulates the constituents of conceptual feature **Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity** as all these crimes are genocide attributes. A similar phenomenon has been observed in other conceptual features constituents (e. g. mass killing is a Russian war crime). As it has been mentioned, one conceptual feature logically develops each of the following features, hence forming chainlike connections. Overall, these observations give ground to state that conceptual features of Bucha massacre concept create a diffuse chainlike structure.

**Conclusion.** In sum, the presented findings reveal Bucha massacre concept content and structure through its verbalized context-dependent and context-independent conceptual features. Verbal means used in the English (British and American) news discourse actualize and specify context-independent conceptual features: *mass killing of Ukrainian civilians; defenseless victims; atrocity; Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity* which is presented as a cluster of subfeatures *crime* → *evidence of the crime* → *investigation of the crime; Russian war criminal; the place of the massacre*, and generate context-dependent contextual feature *genocide*, thus, forming perception of Bucha massacre concept by the international community in general and English language community in particular as a symbol of aggression against Ukraine. All conceptual features are closely interwoven, as one and the same constituents simultaneously verbalize more than one conceptual feature, hence, constructing a diffuse chainlike concept structure. The methodology used in the present research can be applied to analyzing other Russo-Ukrainian war concepts that is a perspective line for further studies.

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