

## LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SLAVIC MEDIA TEXTS CONTAINING HATE SPEECH

*Larysa Gorodnycha*

*Department of Foreign Languages<sup>1</sup>*  
*larysa\_gorodnycha@ukr.net*

*Maryna Olkhovyk*

*Department of Philosophy and Culturology<sup>1</sup>*  
*m.v.\_olkhovik@ukr.net*

*Svitlana Gergul*

*Department of Pedagogy and Methodology of Teaching Foreign Languages<sup>1</sup>*  
*svet-gergul@ukr.net*

<sup>1</sup> *T. H. Shevchenko National University “Chernihiv Colehium”*  
*53 Hetmana Polubotka str., Chernihiv, Ukraine, 14013*

---

### Abstract

The article analyzes hate speech definitions as linguistic and cultural phenomena in the context of an interdisciplinary approach, and describes features of linguistic resources distribution in the texts with the hate speech. The paper deals with the functioning of the concept “hate speech” in the regional media space of Ukraine and Bulgaria. The authors define the causes of the hate speech usage in the media texts and study the hate speech as the source of the modern vocabulary. The article gives deeper understanding of the essence of the concept “hate speech”, more clearly defining its boundaries, reasons for distribution and the main features of the functioning, considering the interdisciplinary approach to its interpretation. The research describes the features of an editor’s work on the texts with the hate speech and methods of its neutralization, as well as proven discriminatory manifestation of hate speech in political neologisms as “refugee”, “migrant”, “internally displaced person”. For implementing the goals and objectives of the study, the complex of methods has been used: system approach, monitoring and analysis of the media texts in the regional media, summarizing the results of the analysis.

**Keywords:** media texts, neologisms, hate speech, tolerance, xenophobia, media manipulation.

DOI: 10.21303/2504-5571.2020.001540

---

### 1. Introduction

The informational space is extending its technologies of influence and has been dominated in all spheres of social life during a long period of time. Jean Bordiyar’s consumer society gives way to Gerhard Schulze’s experience society, however information stays the only significant factor that forms the global trajectory of human development. Creation, distribution, consumption of information and rules of communication inside the informational space are the most relevant and obvious topics of all scientific discourses. A phenomenon of hate speech, to which the research is dedicated, is quite important fact of informational space formation through its influence on the process of identity, interethnic communication, moral and legal relationships, degree of tolerance in society and being indicator of xenophobia and aggression by means of media.

A phenomenon of hate speech as an interdisciplinary category is used quite often however generally accepted definition is absent. It happens because taking into account the interdisciplinary approach to this notion is essential during consideration of originality of language enmity extending, as it is studied by sociologists, linguists, lawyers, journalists and other representatives of other branches. Today this category is widely explored in all humanities after first using the notion hate speech in sociological research.

The most common definition of the investigated phenomenon is that hate speech is all types of utterances, which extend, increase, support or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred, caused by impatience, especially impatience that manifests itself in form of aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, minority discrimination and enemy attitude to them, and immigrants and persons, who belong to immigrants by origin [1].

European researches are connected with studying a juridical peculiarity of using hate speech in the informational space. Negative expressions, from appeal and prejudice to hatred, discrediting, abuse of discrediting are considered in the law system and freedom of speech. Most of European researches are oriented to legal opportunity of overcoming the phenomenon of hate speech in modern media.

The main findings of these studies relate to:

- 1) the expanding scope and scale of hate speech, including on the Internet, against refugees, migrants, and more generally, Muslims as target groups;
- 2) the use of hate speech by representatives of political parties and public elites for political purposes;
- 3) the normalization of this type of discourse in print and online media.

The migrant and refugee crisis has brought forth an increase in the use of hate speech in online media and news channels. On the other hand, the institutions, responsible for the prevention, control and counteraction of hate speech, have been slow to adopt effective and adequate counter measures [2, p. 15].

It has been investigated, that not all verbal threats and offences can lead to crimes, but all crimes, based on hatred, are closely connected with hate speech [3, p. 157–158].

The aim of the research is to give deeper understanding of the essence of the concept “hate speech”, define its boundaries, reasons for distribution and the main features of the functioning, considering the interdisciplinary approach to its interpretation. The research describes the features of an editor’s work on the texts with the hate speech and methods of its neutralization.

## 2. Methods

To ensure the reliability of the given provisions and conclusions the complex of methods has been used:

- systematic approach, which allows to prove that the article is a holistic study which investigates the problem of nowadays print media and makes it possible to outline the typical peculiarities of vocabulary, used in modern media;
- monitoring and analysis of the media texts in Slavic media that allows to reveal such systematic linguistic features of Slavic media texts as neologisms. Furthermore, this method helps us find out the regularity of hate speech usage in modern media landscape;
- summarizing the results of the analysis gives us a possibility to single out the tendencies of media texts development in Slavic cultures, among which we can mention neologisms, meaning manipulation and xenophobia. Also using this method, we tried to find out possible ways of media development to make them tolerant and point out further possible researches in this field.

## 3. Results and discussion

The campaign about investigation of citizens’ rights in the context of using hate speech took place in Bulgaria. *Free Speech v.s Hate Speech: Online security for Environmental, gender and human rights activists in Bulgaria* was published. The aim is to reasearch ways, routs and consequences of online hate speech against civil society activists in Bulgaria as well as to give a start to effective counteractions that activists can use in their work. Activists, CSOs and citizens, supporting human, gender or environmental rights, are experiencing increasing pressure online. Rooted in mainstream political and media communication, hate speech against civil society is carried over, normalized and trivialized across internet communication and social networks. The project also aims: to compile and share best practices for countering the spread of online hate speech against migrants, refugees and minorities through awareness-raising campaigns; to provide new data on the nature, scope and impact of online hate speech, target-

ing migrants and refugees, in order to aid national and EU authorities to develop more effective integration and anti-discrimination policies; to foster shared understanding and communication between the communities, most vulnerable to hate speech and mainstream society in Europe; to educate and train the target groups about hate speech, media literacy, creation and dissemination of web content [2, p. 7].

This weakens the actions of authorities, undermines policy responses and creates a sense of impunity for perpetrators. The results are aggression and violence in real life and suppressed civil society voices. Bulgarian researches pointed out that while studying hate speech it is necessary to increase understanding of the forms and mechanisms of online pressure that they are subjected to; to equip them with skills and know-how for coordinated action against it; to raise their and the general public's awareness on the manipulations and hate speech against civil society, the purpose and identity of their perpetrators [4].

International conventions on human rights protection declare that everyone has the right for freedom of speech. So each person has the right to express their own opinion, criticize the behavior of another person. Exactly behavior, not natural features (for example, national traits). Offensive expressions about race, color, gender etc. that include disrespect to another person, and evoke hatred must be condemned. And for this, according to legislative rules, laws and contract terms, which forbid mocking, based on natural features, work quite just. But peculiarity of hate speech is to provide full domination of censorship for those, who don't agree with behavior or certain ethical norms of the environment. The application of this concept is aimed at suppressing people, who have sound mindsets. Thus, the criticism of risky behavior patterns, which include prostitution, drug addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, or condemnation of radical Islam, can be interpreted as hate speech.

There is no definition of hate speech in the Ukrainian legislation, however, the Constitution of Ukraine and some laws contain information about the prevention of information usage in order to incite hatred. For example, art. 3 of the Constitution of Ukraine claims that person, his/her life and health, honor and dignity, inviolability and security are declared in Ukraine as the highest social value. At the same time art. 24 indicates that there shall be no privileges or restrictions, based on race, colour of skin, political, religious and other beliefs, sex, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, linguistic or other characteristics [5].

In paragraph 2 of article 6 of the Law of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting it is mentioned that it shall be prohibited to use broadcasting organizations for any of the following purposes: to promote the idea of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of persons on the grounds of their religious beliefs, ideology, national or ethnic affiliation, physical or material status or social origin; to broadcast such programmes or fragments that may damage the physical, mental or moral development of children and teenagers, where they may watch such; to publish any information, which violates legal rights and interests of natural or legal persons, or encroaches upon honour and dignity of a person; to perform any other acts, which are subject to criminal prosecution [6].

Instead, European legislation seriously regulates the relationship between different forms of hatred and there has been a network of non-governmental organizations throughout Europe that monitor, in particular, the manifestations of racism and publish annual reports on the state of the problem in the European environment. Basically, these reports contain information on racist and religious crimes, based on hatred and hate speech [7, 8]

The legislative framework is based on the Framework decision "About fight against separate forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law". Except the basic European convention on protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the European environment, including Bulgarian, has two basic agreements – *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*. The main conflict in the context of hate speech functioning lies in the fact that European researchers argue about the limits of hate speech use/prohibition. Under fairly well-balanced and well-developed legislation, where issues of discrimination are strictly regulated by means of hate speech, the issue of fundamental freedoms and human rights observance remains open.

That is, actions that are used to overcome hate speech can be contradictory to several human rights simultaneously, including freedom of expression and freedom of opinion. Hence, adherents of hate speech use in media texts appeal to this. Therefore, the ability to establish and maintain the best balance becomes a complex and primary purpose of further interdisciplinary research, ensuring both freedom of expression and the protection of other rights that may affect the exercise of the right for freedom of speech in more severe and offensive forms.

While speaking about hate speech, Bulgaria media use the Council of Europe definition, which states that the term hate speech shall be understood as covering all forms of expression, which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred, based on intolerance, including: intolerance, expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin [9].

Thus, we can state that the definitive analysis of hate speech in recent years in the European legislative field has been determined as constant. The question is about the statement, which is addressed to ethnic, confessional, cultural or definite social groups or concrete persons, who use, support, show or justify aggression, violence, discrimination and other forms of hatred. Since hate speech is characterized by multidimensionality of influence, then an interdisciplinary approach is peculiar for its investigation. Although the aspects of hate speech differ between representatives of different fields, but they are unique in the fact that this phenomenon leads to negative social manifestations and it causes cruelty, aggression or even discrimination in society.

In fact, Bulgarian media note that lately hate speech, targeting mostly the Roma minority, refugees and migrants, has significantly increased. The most common victims of hate speech are the Bulgarian Roma, mentioned in 93 % of the cases, cited in the study, followed by refugees (73 %), LGBT men and people from the Middle East in general (70 % each). Also targeted are human rights activists, with their work campaigning for minorities' rights, attracting derision [10] for example, "Protests and outrages over the properties of the roma leader tsar Kiro in village of Katunitsa" [11]

The analysis of Bulgarian press outlines that one of the most popular topics, where hate speech is used, are the relationships with the UN or the coverage of European political life. "Kimchi and candour: Kim and Trump break bread for nuclear talks" [12]; "Merkel, Macron slam door in face of Europeans between Aegean and Adriatic: In Berlin this week the leaders of Germany and France in a foolish, short-sighted move announced that the western Balkan ambitions for Europe would be rejected for at least another 5–10 years" [12]

However, Ukrainian scientific discourse puts the linguistic issues of appearing hate speech and theories of this phenomenon operation in the sociocommunicative space as the priority.

In the course of the research, the peculiarity of the functioning of hate speech was analyzed on the examples of the aforesaid trends in such regional mass media of Chernihiv region (the northern region of Ukraine) as "Vysokyi Val", "SVOBODA.FM", "Khvyliya Desny", "Sivershchyna", "Suspilnyi korespondent", "Chernihivshchyna: podii i komentari" in the period of 2015–2018. The accent was placed on the examples of the implementation of the linguistic aspect of manifestation of hate speech since the connotation of these concepts is highlighted precisely on the phonetic, lexical and syntactic language levels.

Most of publications are oriented towards a policy of social rejection, which allows, looking for the image of a common enemy, to unite different sections of the population, based on manipulative technologies, which is grounded on the rejection of any point of view, which differ from the rest, the explanation of all internal disasters by external factors. Regional Ukrainian publications within the paradigm of social rejection represent "their" good, high-spiritual people, and "alien" – people, who destroy society, for example: "Titushky" who tried to break a blockade of heavy trucks in Chernihiv region appeared to be policemen" ("Suspilnyi korespondent" dated from 14.03.2016); "Russian terrorists passed the body of a murdered Chernihiv resident to Ukraine" ("Sivershchyna" dated from 16.02.2018).

Many publications in the modern Ukrainian media area are aimed at the ideology of social survival, which is more tolerant for national groups and less intolerant for some social groups,

which disturb for survival, according to the exponents of this ideology. Publications, which are focused on the ideology of social survival, treat well those groups of people, who are forced to suffer from someone's will or unfavorable combination of events. They are "children", "ordinary workers", "invalids", "homeless children", "women", which are considered in the context of social assistance. In this context, the publications present their "yours" as good people, who are prevented from living, dignity, and "strangers" – as individuals, who have created conditions, when "yours" are forced to survive, and which create complicated situations, preventing a calm existence, for example: "Chernihiv gas workers cut the gas off in the house of mother-invalid with many children" ("Sivershchyna" dated from 13.11.2017); "Men and women of wrong sexual orientation marched on Warsaw streets yesterday" ("Khvyliya Desny" dated from 12.06.2016).

Native media discourse also does not contain a large number of publications, where the boundary between "their" and "aliens" is almost not distinguished, they live without conflict in society, but elements of hate speech are present there, but in a slight form, for example: "Weaker sex is stronger and live longer than men" ("SVOBODA.FM" dated from 13.10.2017).

The research showed that the national minorities and/or representatives of other nationalities (mostly Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, and Roma) remained the most current object for hate speech usage in the Chernihiv publications. The concept of a national group is used in two meanings:

- 1) as a legal concept, which is in connection with citizenship; as a nationality, which is an example of a legal connection "the state is a man", which may not indicate ethnic origin;
- 2) cultural affiliation with a group, which is connected with another country than that of which a person owns the citizenship.

The linguistic features of this form consist in the creation of new meanings of words. In addition, there is the widespread usage of obsolete and long-used vocabulary of the Ukrainian language.

In the experimental publications this group of hate speech is used in the sense of nationality, which represents cultural belonging to an ethnic group. Such concepts are mostly used in the negative context, but sometimes there are events of usage in satirical context, in particular with elements of self-irony. We believe that the rise of the concepts, included in this group, is due to the usage of the outdated vocabulary of the Ukrainian language in a new meaning, which is adapted to modern realities.

"Uke is uke. That is a precise characteristic of his" ("Sivershchyna" dated from 10.02.2018); "The words "little Russian", "resident of Novorossiya" or "Uke" are imposed on us by Russian churches, mass media, theaters or films" ("Sivershchyna" dated from 22.08.2017).

Also, during the analysis of regional Chernihiv publications, a sufficient number of materials were found, where hate speech was used against representatives of other races and religions. In such articles, hostility manifests against people, which have different skin color, a shape of eyes and against people, who profess another faith (as opposed to the interlocutor). The linguistic features of this kind lie in the usage of the neologistic vocabularies, and manifest at the syntactic language level as well. Having analyzed the media, we found such examples of this group of hate speech.

Negro is the person, who represents the indigenous African population, which differs in dark color of the skin and belonging to the Negroid race. Today, the term is used mostly in a negative sense, for example: "The residents of this country are negros and arabs" ("Khvyliya Desny" dated from 06.08.2015); "Negro tourist stayed too long in Chernihiv" ("SVOBODA.FM" dated from 29.03.2017).

Islamic terrorist is a derogatory name of a religious terrorism representative, a Muslim, who uses violence to receive various political goals in the name of religion, for example: "Islamic terrorist is being caught in Chernihiv region" ("Sivershchyna" dated from 20.11.015). This tendency can be observed in Bulgarian media as well.

It is worth recognizing that race and religion are social phenomena, and even though the international community has rejected all the paradigms of racial and religious prevalence,

journalists often use these concepts, which are caused by the negativity of the recipients, and also cause the spread of hatred and discrimination in society.

In 2001 Information and Analytical Center “SOVA” developed a methodology for analysis of the MMC, first of all primarily printed editions, which, in addition to the rather rigid classifications of expressions of incorrect content, contains the particularity of the authors’ attitude towards incorrect statements used. Because most often the journalist is only who repeats the statements of the interlocutors. However, most often the authors of incorrect statements are actually journalists. From 40 to 61 % of the total volume of expressions of the language of intolerance falls precisely on the author’s statements. Data analysis allows you to determine the reasons for using hate speech in the texts [13, p. 96].

According to the authors, hate speech is used by journalists for the following reasons:

- to attract more audiences;
- to draw attention to unpopular topics;
- to enhance emotional influence;
- to incite hatred;
- because of stereotyped thinking;
- while quoting;
- due to lack of or ignorance of substitute ideologues.

In new mass media we often come across neologisms of neutral and positively evaluative content, for example, Maidan. Media record contexts that indicate a change in meaning, namely: Maidan is a struggle of the people for progressive changes in Ukraine, “rally”, “protest action” [14, p. 46], for example: “Maidan is not only the place in the centre of Kyiv, where the struggle against the dictatorship takes place, it is also the symbol of citizens’ struggle for their rights and freedom. Each of them has his/her own Maidan” (“Vysokyi Val” dated from 29.11.2015); for example: “In the centre of Kyiv Maidan has been trying to reveal its pain, worries, hopes and determination to the government and the world for more than 2 months” (“Vysokyi Val” dated from 03.02.2015); the cyborg (“the defender of Donetsk airport” (from the cyborg – a cybernetic creature, “an invincible robot”). In this sense, the word appeared in the stories of Ukrainian bloggers about Donetsk separatists, who believe that there are “some cyborgs” in the Prokofiev airport [15, p. 64], for example: “The video was made by three cyborgs, defenders of Donetsk airport” (“Suspilnyi korespondent” dated from 03.05.2017); “Cyborgs address to soldiers” (“Sivershchyna” dated from 04.05.2017); “Alive cyborg was under debris of Donetsk airport for 8 days” (“Vysokyi Val” dated from 05.02.2015).

Having analyzed Bulgarian and Ukrainian media texts we can conclude that there is a tendency of using neologisms, containing hate speech, whereas authoritative media were in the centre of our attention. The given analysis shows the difference in types and emotional characteristics of hate speech in these countries. Ukrainian media texts mostly contain political neologisms, which are closely connected to the situation in the country for last 6 years. We can even notice that there is the default vocabulary, used by journalists. Bulgarian media in return contain neologisms, which outline ethical problems of society, in particular xenophobia and social stereotypes.

After analyzing the peculiarities of hate speech concept in the media space, finding out its negative potential in Slavic mass media, we can suggest some exercises, which will be useful for future editors and journalists [16, p. 67]. The suggested exercises will help to develop prospective editors’ professional competence, to make these words neutral in modern media and prepare future professionals for writing their own articles.

#### 4. Conclusions

Considering the peculiarity of the functioning of “broadcasting hostility” in mass media, we may conclude that social reality is effectively created under the conditions of the information MMC through hate speech using. In our opinion, the peculiarity of the hate speech functioning in Ukrainian media depends on the degree of publications tolerance, which is inherent in the internal media paradigm, and the hate speech areas, which include statements against politicians, people

with different views, representatives of other nationalities and national minorities, representatives of other Ukrainian regions, representatives of other races and religions.

As a perspective if we leave the language of hatred, ignorant from the legal point of view, it will cause much more serious violations of human rights in the future: negative stereotypes spread in society, groups of hostility are separated from society, become isolated, conflicts grow and provoke the discrimination among people, threats and insults become normative. Or even these words will be transformed and can reach the level of physical violence. The hate speech can lead to hate crimes in violation of human rights to personal integrity and security. It is believed, that crimes, based on hatred, genocide in particular, are connected with hate speech.

The usage of hate speech is one of the factors of the tolerance crisis, which is currently observed in MMC, one of the results of which is dehumanization of the media. In 2016, a “Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online” was adopted, the rules of which were agreed by Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube. In 2018, Instagram, Google+, Snapchat and Dailymotion were joined to it. Hence, the main source of broadcasting hostility is the media, especially the Internet, which among all MMC is the least-controlled by law. We hope that introduced laws will help to reduce the amount of hate speech in mass media.

### Acknowledgments

This article is the part of a research grant programme Erasmus+, Jean Monnet Project “European Antitotalitarian Practices” (№ 599704-EPP-1-2018-1-UA-EPPJMO-MODULE).

---

### References

- [1] Weber, A. (2010) *Navchalnyi posibnyk z problematyky “movy nenavysti”*. Kyiv: Tiutiukin, 96.
- [2] Mapping Out the National Context of Online Hate Speech in Bulgaria. (2017). Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/mapping-out-the-national-context-of-online-hate-speech-in-bulgaria>
- [3] Keen, E., Georgescu, M. (2016). *Bookmarks: manual for combating hate speech through human rights education*. Council of Europe. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168065dac7>
- [4] Free Speech v.s Hate Speech in Bulgaria (2018). Available at: <https://www.bluelink.net/en/novini/free-speech-vs-hate-speech-in-bulgaria.html-0>
- [5] The Constitution of Ukraine (1996). Available at: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ua/ua013en.pdf>
- [6] Law of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting (2006). Available at: <https://cedem.org.ua/en/library/the-law-of-ukraine-on-television-and-radio-broadcasting/>
- [7] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976). Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- [8] International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969) Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>
- [9] Freedom of expression and information. Explanatory Memorandum (2014). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/freedom-of-expression-and-information-explanatory-memo>
- [10] Balkaninsight (2016). Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/03/29/>
- [11] News from Bulgaria. Available at: <http://news.guide-bulgaria.com/>
- [12] Informatsionna agentsia “Fokus”. Available at: <http://www.focus-news.net/>
- [13] Verkhovsky, A. (2007). *Yazyk vrazhdy protiv obshchestva*. Moscow: Sova Center, 259.
- [14] Zhabotinskaya, S. A. (2015). *Yazyk kak oruzhie v voine mirovozzreniy maidan-antimaidan: slovar-tezaurus leksicheskikh innovatsiy*. Ukraine December 2013 – December 2014. Kyiv: Bukva, 90.
- [15] Polishchuk, N. (2014). *Terminologichna leksyka Maidanu*. Visnyk of Lviv Polytechnic National University. Series: Issues of scientific terms, 791, 138–143.
- [16] Gorodnycha, L. V., Olkhovyk, M. V. (2018) *Articles editing as means of developing professional competence while teaching English for academic writing*. Visnyk of Kyiv National Linguistic University. Series «Pedagogy and Psychology», 28, 61–69. doi: <http://doi.org/10.32589/2412-9283.28.2018.135457>

Received date 14.10.2020

Accepted date 20.11.2020

Published date 30.11.2020

© The Author(s) 2020

This is an open access article under the CC BY license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>).