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POPULAR TERMS OF AMERICAN MEDIA DISCOURSE. THE CASE OF CALIFORNICATION

The work presents the analysis of semantic shifts of the term Californication that appeared in American English little more than 50 years ago. Nowadays the term is used mainly in Mass Media. Affecting public opinion largely through mass media, political discourse may adapt lexis used in different media platforms. Such is the case of the word Californication, the semantic changes of which is presented in this work. The aim of this work is to discover semantic changes of the term Californication and track the line of its appearance in political discourse. The expected spin-off from this study is gaining a better understanding of the relationship between language and ideology. The term is studied descriptively in connection with extra-linguistic factors influencing its interpretation. Various procedures, including corpus analysis, are directed at explication of semantic characteristics that facilitate the record of semantic changes of the term Californication. The article presents the history of the term that was coined by a journalist to describe social undesirables of the USA, such as the spread of negative aspects of the Californian lifestyle, pollution and consumerism. Later, the word entitled a single of a famous American rock band and the Showtime's series "Californication". Now the word is used to convey the confronting views of the major American parties and consolidation efforts of Democrats to win the next presidency. In the course of its existence in the language, the word has undergone changes of its connotative meaning. Semantic polarization, manifested by the word, reflects ideological polarization of American Democratic and the Republican Party: the pursuit of comfortable life vs "barbarian" invasion of immigrants. Immigration reduction policy contravenes ethnically and racially unbiased character of California, which is apparently the stronghold of Democrats. This polarization concerns the evaluative aspects of political process, expressed in the competition for votes, support, and the struggle for political dominance.

Key words: media discourse, cognitive approach, semantic shifts, connotations, Californication.

1. Introduction. Political Discourse in Media Space

In the age of mediatized mass democracies, political discourse in the media is an important means for ordinary people to encounter politics (Lauerbach & Fetzer, 2007). Political information is transmitted in various forms of media political debates, interviews, political advertising, talk shows, publicistic articles, and so on. Routed through mass media by interactive techniques and multimedia, political discourse acquired new characteristics, such as convergence of genres.

Political discourse is a generic term that encompasses all types of verbal interaction concerning political issues of different aspects in social life (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2012). The studies of political discourse are numerous (Campbell & Jamieson 1990, Hart 1984, Snyder & Higgins 1990, Stuckey 1989, Thompson 1987, Windt 1990, Wodak 2002). The cognitive approach to political discourse considers it a product of individual and collective mental processes (Chilton 2004). One of the first to introduce cognitive approach to the study of discourse was T.

van Dijk, who defined political discourse as a specialized discourse, created by professional politicians or hired rhetoricians. Political discourse includes various participants in political communicative event as it focuses on its audiences (van Dijk 1997: 13–14).

Political discourse is managed by macrostructures that define particular themes. Local meanings, in their turn, contribute into the meaning of macrostructures (van Dijk 1997: 23-28). On the local level, we deal with lexicon that shows public issues as object of political attention (Edelman 1977). Words as major determinants of ideational structure of discourse (Halliday 1994) convey the society's values by connotative as well as denotative meanings. The specificity of lexis used by politicians is that this vocabulary defines political priorities of the society, as well as its ideology. The lexicon used in political discourse may implement directly beliefs and values, and indirectly create emotional background to consolidate the members of society around definite political parties.

Affecting public opinion largely through mass media, political discourse may adapt lexis used in different media platforms. Such is the case of the word

Californication, which is presented in this work. The studies of lexicon of political discourse focus on the special words of politics (Edelman 1977). I dwell on the term *Californication*, which is not exactly a special word of politics, but is used in American political discourse as illustration of opposition of two major American parties. The term appeared in a newspaper article, shifted to other types of mass communication until it was acquired by political discourse. Coined by a journalist to describe social undesirables of the USA, the term *Californication* has become known through American music and the dramedy series. In the course of its existence in the language, the word has undergone changes of its connotative meaning. Now, the word *Californication* manifests semantic polarization, which reflects ideological polarization of American Democratic and the Republican Party. This polarization concerns the evaluative aspects of political process: in the competition for votes, support, and the struggle for political dominance.

The aim of this work is to discover semantic changes of the term *Californication* and track the line of its appearance in political discourse. The expected spin-off from this study is gaining a better understanding of the relationship between language and ideology.

2. Methodology

Eclectic research methodology applied to analysis of political discourse has to account for sociocultural and linguistic practices with the aim to interpret encoded ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings of the discourse (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2012: 85). The description of an atomic part of ideational structure of political discourse, namely a word, refers to elicitation of informative descriptors and pragmatic characteristics that constitute its cognitive aspects. The language representation of a political idea of *Californication* is realized through propositions and collocations.

Cognitive theoretical background of the research assumes heterogeneity of cognitive aspects represented by value judgments, conclusions, and mental sets, implied in national culture (Popova 2006, 2010). Within the frame of interpretation theory (Ricoeur 2007), the term *Californication* is studied with regard to the idea that the word is a symbol, decoded by interpreter on the base of social and historic background, cultural values, and social standards.

Interpretative technique in the study is designed to the following strategy: (1) a text or an abstract is perceived as the means to receive readers' response; (2) a descriptive element is extracted and specified through its verbal form; (3) the extracted element correlates

to the knowledge of extra-linguistic reality (Krasnyh 2001: 231-232).

Pragmatic aspect of the work concerns the study of meaning "as a function of context that is formed by speakers, hearers, speech situation, and background knowledge" (Chilton 2004: 48). Thus, emotional perception of the term exists in the form of implications and associative characteristics in discursive representation. Implemented pragmatic analysis is aimed at disclosing emotional perception of the term *Californication*. The analysis is maintained by the study of context, which is based on assertion that all language units (words, propositions, and texts) function beyond the language sphere (Arnold 1991: 46), thus social, cultural, and historic contexts form informative base of the term.

The purposive sampling procedure was applied in selection of data from official websites of newspapers and journals. The study adopts qualitative approach to analyze the shifts in the semantics of the term. Corpus analysis (Gries 2008, Glynn 2008) applied in the study enables to process samples aggregated from different sources in the definite period. Extracted material (collocations, propositions, and subjective definitions) undergo pragmatic, functional and distributive analysis (Gee 1999).

3. History of the Term

Primarily, the term *Californication* emerged in the Time's article on Hippie counterculture in 1966. Hippie's frame of mind was considered impermissibly free. Their life style was widely denounced by traditionalists. Showing apprehension of this trend, the author called Hippie "Hallucinogeneration". Bracketed with "LSD, pot, the Spirit of Berkeley, and not fighting in Viet Nam", *Californication* indicated condemnation of dissolute life of hippie and liberal spirit of California (Davies 2017).

Since 1972, *Californication* has become a popular term due to Sandra Burton, who described *Californication* as "haphazard, mindless development [of land] that has already gobbled up most of Southern California" (Burton 1972: 17). The term was widely used in idiomatic American English in the 1980s in states bordering California that strongly objected the formidable migrations of Californians and excited California-style culture.

The entry of the word in the American English lexicon was accompanied by the appearance of derivatives. In 1978, a noun *Californicator* was used to label a person involved in the process of *Californication* (Dyreson 2015: 174). It denotes a Californian, especially one who has moved to Oregon or Washington State. The word implies a negative attitude to

a newcomer from California (Routledge Dictionary 2018: 120).

There are no evident arguments as for the word origin. Popular etymology traces it from the fusion of *California* and *fornication* (Klug 2015: 175). This portmanteau emphasizes sexual connotation of the word. Implied information, or connotation, identifies the community attitude toward the phenomena. Connotations arise not only from the knowledge about its denotation or reference, but also from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices. A word with bad connotations, however, unjustifiable they may be, will suffer pejoration (Allan 2007: 1056). This happened to the word *Californication*, which acquired implication of a sleazy process of the spread and influence of the Western culture, especially that of California, across the world. *Californication* is reputed to be the number-one reason for the corruption of Eastern religion (Peckham 2005: 69).

More plausible, in my opinion, seems the origin of the word *Californication*, derived from the pattern “Noun (California) + Suffix (-ate) + Suffix (-tion)”. The verb *Californicate* means “to overdevelop the land, e.g. Don’t Californicate Montana”, or “to seduce and infect with the moral and social standards of Southern California, e.g. McKellen was, in the tradition of expatriate Englishmen, Californicated into a greater sense of individual freedom”. *Californication* is an instance of *Californicating*, e.g. Gogarty said that his task was to prevent the *Californication* of Ireland (1990s)” (Kipfer & Chapman 2007: 119). Added to a noun, suffix -ate gives the verb, which indicates a procedure or a process promoting acquisition of qualities intrinsic to a noun California from which it was derived. The idea of verbal origin of the word is maintained by other sources. In 1992, the verb *Californicate* denoted the spread of negative aspects of the Californian lifestyle, such as pollution and consumerism, especially to Oregon and Colorado (Pryde 1992: 13-14). Formed from the word denoting a verbal action in the meaning of “force to do something”, *Californication* is an abstract noun of action or condition caused by this action. Thus, California in this case is not only the US 31st state on the Pacific coast, but a medium of American culture and social standards.

Premising appearance of the word *Californication* on the suffix origin rather than the portmanteau, the frame of reference is expanded since the term *Californication* is not reduced to only sexual implication; it is much more complicated phenomenon of American social life.

4. Shifts in Semantics

The corpus analysis of News on the Web (NOW), Time Magazine, Google books, Intelligent Web-

based Corpus (iWeb), and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) showed the word *Californication* has been used more frequently in recent years (Davies 2017). The tendency concerns different spheres of communication represented in the analyzed corpora.

Table1

Frequency of the word *Californication* in analyzed corpora

Corpora	Decade/Year	Occurrence in the Period	Total in time-period
Time Magazine	1960s	1	1960-2000: 494
	1970s	3	
	2000s	490	
Google books	1980s	12	1980-2000: 230
	1990s	61	
	2000s	157	
NOW Corpus	2010	39	2010-2018: 620
	2011	68	
	2012	72	
	2013	61	
	2014	79	
	2015	50	
	2016	82	
	2017	96	
iWeb	2016 - 2017	1236	

In Contemporary American English Corpus (COCA), that comprises different genres of spoken and written texts’ samples from the year of 1990 till 2017, the word *Californication* shows not frequent occurrence (42) with the tendency to grow in number.

Table2

The word *Californication* in COCA

Years	Thematic context	Quantity
1990-1995	social issues: overpopulation of California the growth of unemployment moral decay	5
1999-2007	creative activity of Red Hot Chili Peppers	12
2007-2017	Showtime’s series “Californication”	25

In the 1990s, the word *Californication* was used as the term to denote negative impact of profit-orientated administration of California that leads to overpopulation, social and environmental problems. California “gained the enmity of neighboring states, where res-

idents lump all the evils on unbridled growth". Aimless and meaningful usage of the territory, unreasoned treatment of natural resources and unsystematic development of metropolitan areas cause indignation of public leaders and activists. Commercialized culture of Hollywood is also the subject to criticism for its misleading gloss requiring rigid beauty standards of ever-lasting youth: "Everybody has become a youth-impersonator". Diverting from rewarding goals, this trend provokes ageism.

On release of the studio album "Californication", which happened in 1999, the word *Californication* is used in reference to the world-known rock group. Aired in 2007, television show of the same name has surpassed the album "Californication" in number of references in Corpus of Contemporary American English. The scandalous series has confirmed the term derogatory status that was already evident at the time of its appearance.

In collocations that represent the immediate context in other analyzed corpora, the word *Californication* shows negative implications in the main. The juxtaposition of the word *Californication* with word *haphazard* is the most frequent, constituting 0,34% of collocates. The quantity is representative for the evidence of critical perception of the phenomenon as chaotic and disordered process with unforeseeable consequences.

In later years, the "easy label" explicitly defines a disaster that is conceived in the collocation "viral affliction". Concealed danger of it is implied in the metaphor "smug sanctimony" that shows seemingly harmless falsity of merits propagated by Hollywood that undermines the real moral values. Accompanied by judgmental epithets *imminent*, *disastrous*, *expensive*, *chaotic*, *dark*, the term represents a social vice with detrimental effect on various aspects of life not only in, but also outside the state of California, bringing confusion and disorder into the social life. The world-wide scale of this trend reveals in the phrase "*Californication* of Australia, Mexico, Ireland...". The need to curb the spread of *Californication* is shown in juxtaposition with words *threat*, *attempts*, *concern*, *fighting*, *measures*, that evoke agitation for rigorous measures against it. Perceived at the turn of the century as an adverse social phenomenon, the term has become derogatory in American usage till the recent time.

The analysis of iWeb Corpus showed that the term has acquired new connotative meanings in the last years. The term is used in the context describing a new corporate culture that has become more friendly and easy-going. The cosmopolitan character

of California that demonstrates tolerance to diverse national and racial nature determines obviously positive trend: "Call it the *Californication* of corporate America with laid-back Hollywood and West Coast-based tech companies like Google and Apple setting the new kinder, gentler tone... Today, the ethos is calm voices, a supportive atmosphere, the celebration of diversity, and an optimistic outlook".

Positive connotation of the word is shown in one of the blogs represented in iWeb Corpus. A young blogger, being on "a proper holiday", depicts her "temporary state of *Californication*" as glow of happiness. Trendy look, sunshine of California, life of ease and relaxation gives the feeling of complacency conveyed by the word *Californication*.

Since 2016, the word *Californication* has been occurring in American political discourse that refers to the politics of the current American President D. Trump. The new meaning of the term arose in the context of confrontation between the major opposing parties of the USA. Often contradictory political position of the President and his anti-globalization policy of trade protectionism has given rise to severe criticism. His immigration reduction policy contravenes ethnically and racially unbiased character of California, which is apparently the stronghold of Democrats. Unlike the current government, the administration of Democrat B. Obama, emphasized the need for global coordination of economic policies to deal with the deepening crisis. Today adherents of Democrats assert: America needs its groove back, to start its upsized, cheap gas-guzzling consumer engine and drive off into a *Californication* sunset. The 2018 midterm elections in California showed that Democrats start gradually returning the power in the country. The pursuit of comfortable life associates with *Californication* that everybody needs and wants. Californians know how to guide newbys into a life of *californication*. Opposing to strong Democratic performances in various areas, the Republicans in power disputes America's *Californication* that brings to the country "the Barbarian Invasion" and expect D. Trump "hopefully will be able to stem" the tide of immigrants that supposedly cause the country's economic slump.

The results of the corpora analysis showed that the term *Californication* has been used to denote the current trends in cultural, social, and political life of the United States. The word signifies a socially important phenomenon, which, in one way or another, refers to California that governs the public opinion in the United States. Used in a wide range of contexts, the word acquired varied connotative meanings

that produce different pragmatic effects. *Californication* comprises cultural and social aspects, which are reflected in the array of associations governed by a speaker's attitude.

5. Social Aspects of *Californication*

Conveying social concerns and vital issues in politics, economics, and demographics, the term *Californication* refers to different aspects of life in California. For years, California has been fighting for clean energy, police reform and self-contained towns. The state is a hub for immigrants, a testing site for solutions to environmental crises and a front line in America's competition with China.

For decades, California, even as it grew in size and wealth, was seen as an outlier, unimposing, and superficial. Californians spawned Apple and Google, hippies and Hollywood, but were described as "surfer dudes and California girls". "In the Trump era, the state is reinventing itself as the moral and cultural center of a new America" (Kettmann 2018).

Nowadays the term *Californication* is widely used in Media to convey the confronting views of the major American parties and consolidation efforts of Democrats to win the next presidency. One or more Californian politicians could figure prominently in the 2020 presidential race, including Kamila Harris and Gavin Newsom. As reported, only 26 % of California residents approve of Mr. Trump. Democrats dominate the Legislature, statewide offices and most large city governments. However, California is not monolithic. The region around Bakersfield provides the power base for Mr. McCarthy, the House majority leader and an indefatigable defender of President Trump (Kettmann 2018). In midterm elections of 2018, Democrats have taken control of the House, while their representation in the Senate is 47 % (The Guardian Nov.6 2018).

The state tested its power as a national leader for Democrats in the election of the governor. Polls suggested two Democrats, Antonio Villaraigosa and Gavin Newsom, as leading contenders to succeed Democrat Jerry Brown, who lead the state for three terms. Gavin Newsom, the lieutenant governor and a former mayor of San Francisco won the elections with 61, 9% of votes. He has won support from power centers across the state, including Hollywood, Sacramento and his home base of San Francisco (Ramos 2018). Gavin Newsom is known mostly as a cultural pioneer, having allowed same-sex marriage as the mayor of San Francisco in 2004. He believes that government can do more for the people trying new ideas and updating old assumptions (Menez & Moore 2018).

One of the state's rising political figures, that breaks the stereotype of Californian, is the billionaire Tom Steyer, who is a hedge fund manager, philanthropist, environmentalist, a leading Democratic Party activist and fundraiser. He has spent millions of dollars on television advertisements in which he urges the need to impeach President Trump. NextGen America is Steyer's organization that focuses on developing solutions to climate change and economic inequality that resonate among the young. Promoting prosperity and protection of the fundamental rights of every American, the organization states its vision in support of alternative social and economic model opposite to "the reactionary vision of the Trump administration". The mission of California in the enterprise is to show the nation "California ingenuity and California optimism". While Mr. Trump urges the Congress to fund the border wall with Mexico, California pulls in immigrants from all over the world (NextGen Americ 2019).

Being the biggest prize in the Electoral College with 55 electoral votes, California upheld Democrats seven times in the last ten elections from 1992 to 2016. Only once the state gave birth to the American President. It was R.W. Reagan, primarily the governor of California (1967-1975) and twice the President of the US (1985-89 and 1981-85). Reagan was the next president to succeed Democrat Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the USA. Jimmy Carter's manner of speaking during his election campaign showed he was "in touch with his feelings, willing to risk self, anxious to develop an I-Thou relationship with the listeners". His confidential and friendly verbal style is depicted as "*Californication* of language" (Hart 1984: 164). This characteristic implies *Californication* is democratization of Californian community.

It was in 2003, when Timothy Garton Ash praised America for tolerance in attitude to immigrants. In the article "God's Crucible" for the Guardian he wrote about *Californication* as "perhaps the ultimate answer to the problem of racial difference" (Ash 2003). Subtitled "Europe should learn from the US and follow the example of *Californication*", the article represents *Californication* as definitely positive phenomenon, observed in the state of California, where mixed families produce a new kind of nation – American nation. Roughly one in every four of today's Californians was born outside the US. California, where confounding of races and nations is immense, shows to the US and the whole world a good example of peaceful coexistence. This is what can be described by words of Israel Zangwill "the great Melting-Pot where all the races... are melting and reforming". California undermines all ethnic quotas and blurs racial stereotyping.

Ending his article by a slogan-like statement “What Europe needs is more *Californication*”, T.G. Ash shows California as a progressive democratic state the pattern of which is exemplary. *Californication* is a process of diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural blending yet retaining common civic culture of a free and democratic nation. Though race is still the source of the most electric tension in the US, the American society is fogging the unity out of diversity: e pluri-bus unum.

Conclusion

Any kind of change in social life seemingly influenced by California is named *Californication*. Sprung from the word *California*, the term *Californication* refers to different aspects of life in California that has been fighting for clean energy and self-contained towns. The state is a hub for immigrants, a testing site for solutions to environmental crises and a front line in America’s competition with China.

Primarily negative connotation of criticism and disapproval of Hippie counterculture, conveyed by the word *Californication*, has changed to positive attitude to democratic values that one of the most diverse and economically developed state of the USA manifests. At the turn of the century, *Californication* represented a social vice with detrimental effect not only in, but also outside the state of California. *Californication* referred to an undesirable phenomenon that brought confusion and disorder into the social life. Used at the turn of the century to mark negative

impact of profit-orientated administration of California that lead to overpopulation, social and environmental problems, the term *Californication* nowadays implies cosmopolitan character of California that demonstrates tolerance to diverse national and racial nature of population in the state.

Since 2016, the word *Californication* has occurred in American political discourse in reference to the politics of the President D. Trump. The new meaning of the term arose in the context of confrontation between the major opposing parties of the USA. Observed semantic polarization, manifested by the word, reflects ideological polarization of American Democratic and the Republican Party. Conveyed by Democrats idea of *Californication* as a pursuit of comfortable life contradicts the criticism of barbarian invasion of immigrants enclosed in the word by Republicans. Immigration reduction policy contravenes ethnically and racially unbiased character of California, which is apparently the stronghold of Democrats. This polarization concerns the evaluative aspects of political process, expressed in the competition for votes, support, and the struggle for political dominance.

The analysis of the term *Californication* in the context of social concerns and vital issues in politics, economics, ecology, and demographics has showed the term *Californication* signifies a new kind of Americanization, a process that is to secure democratic freedoms.

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Любимова С. А. ПОПУЛЯРНІ ТЕРМІНИ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОГО МЕДІА-ДИСКУРСУ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ «CALIFORNICATION»)

В роботі представлено аналіз семантичних змін терміну «Californication», що з'явився в американській мовній культурі трохи більше 50-ти років. Нині термін використовується головним чином засобами масової інформації. Впливаючи на громадську думку перш за все через засоби масової інформації, політичний дискурс може адаптувати лексику, що використовується на різних медіа-платформах. Прикладом такого адаптування є термін Californianication, смислові зміни якого представлені в статті. Метою даної роботи є виявлення семантичних змін та відстеження шляху появи цього слова в політичних текстах медіа-дискурсу. Крім того, дослідження є внеском в розв'язання проблеми взаємозв'язку між мовою та ідеологією. Термін вивчається в роботі описово у зв'язку з екстралінгвістичними факторами, що впливають на його тлумачення. Різні дослідницькі процедури, включаючи корпусний аналіз, спрямовані на експлікацію смислових характеристик, що сприяють поясненню семантичних змін у слові «Californication». В статті представлена історія терміну, що вперше був використаний журналістом для опису соціальних проблем США, які пов'язані з поширенням негативних аспектів каліфорнійського способу життя, що спричиняють забруднення та розвиток споживчого суспільства. Пізніше це слово було використане як назва пісні відомої американської рок-групи та серіалу «Каліфорнікація». Тепер це слово використовується для позначення зростання конфронтації між основними американськими партіями та консолідації зусиль демократів для перемоги на наступних президентських виборах. В ході історії свого існування слово зазнало змін у конотативному компоненті значення. Семантична поляризація відображає ідеологічну поляризацію інтересів американських демократів та республіканців: прагнення до комфортного життя проти «варварського» навалу іммігрантів. Політика зменшення кількості іммігрантів суперечить етнічно та расово неупередженому характеру штату Каліфорнія, що є оплотом демократів. Поляризація антагонічних інтересів, що відображається в терміні «Californication» стосується оціночних аспектів політичного процесу, який спрямований на одержання перемоги у боротьбі за політичне домінування.

Ключові слова: медіа-дискурс, когнітивний підхід, семантичні зміни, конотації, «Каліфорнікація».