VARIABLES AFFECTING TELEOLOGICAL REFLECTIVE SENSE FORMATION IN ENGLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Why is it so that people using the same language, identical words, phrases, sentences with reference to the same conceptual entity do not understand each other, and cannot agree on seemingly the same idea? It looks like the spectre of the archetypal Tower of Babel looms over any issue associated with political discourse today. It is not only the problem of merely linguistic confusion. The quandary of the mismatch between the 'speaker's meaning' and the 'recovered meaning' may acquire menacing proportions especially in situations when politicians have to grapple with existential threats like social stand-offs, international crises, military conflicts, etc. No wonder then that the problem of understanding, interpretation and evaluation is of vital importance for further advances in the artificial intelligence domain. Realising this, the developers are struggling to equip AI with 'teleological threads', with human-like 'world knowledge', and with the awareness of the final goal ('Telos'). This enquiry is focused on the 'ultimate explanation' of meaning of an utterance in political discourse relying on the terminological apparatus and methodology of teleological semantics. A qualitative research design and some elements of correlation methods to assess the relationships between and among variables were used in this research. The factors which may affect, transform, or pervert the meaning of an utterance are posited in this account as qualitative variables. The initial assumption of this study is that the concept of the common «GOOD» as the final goal («Telos») and the intended purpose of any social and political activity functions as the catalyst of teleological reflective sense attribution. «Telos» determines the semantic relationship among variables and is viewed as a dependent outcome variable and as a consequent whose semantic content is affected by independent variables functioning as antecedents. The aim of this enquiry is to identify a set of variables potentially involved in teleological reflective sense formation, to determine their types, semantically relevant characteristics and semantic correlation patterns between independent and dependent variables. The empirical material used in this research is a corpus of topically related comments as linguistic representations of teleological reflection on current political issues highlighted in the British press. The nomenclature of variables involved in teleological reflective sense attribution in political discourse is determined by the selective nature of human perception, and by the principles of causality, purposefulness, and intended consequences. The formalised propositional model is suggested using sentential logic conditional formula for the analysis of the semantically relevant correlation among intervening, moderator, predictor, proxy variables. The variables concerned highlight the cause and effect relationship between the dependent variable «Telos» and the independent variables. A group of autochthonous variables reflecting individual dispositions of speakers in political discourse has been identified. They are preferences, attitudes, obsessions, biases.

ЗМІННІ, ЩО ВПЛИВАЮТЬ НА УТВОРЕННЯ ТЕЛЕОЛОГІЧНОГО РЕФЛЕКСІЙНОГО СМИСЛУ В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ ПОЛІТИЧНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

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Чому так склалося, що мовці спілкуються однією мовою, використовують однакові слова, словосполучення і речення стосовно однакової концептуальної сутності, але не розуміють один одного, не можуть досягти згоди щодо абсолютно ідентично висловленої ідеї? Таке враження, що мара Вавилонської вежі переслідує будь-яке питання, пов'язане з політикою. Проблема не обмежується лише лінгвістичними непорозуміннями. Наслідки невідповідності смислу висловленого і смислу сприйнятого адресатом можуть здобути загрозливих масштабів, коли у політичному дискурсі йдеться про екзистенційні загрози у вигляді соціальних зіткнень, криз у міжнародних стосунках, військових конфліктів. Не дивно, що проблема розуміння, інтерпретації, здатності до моральної оцінки стала критично важливою для подальшого вдосконалення штучного інтелекту. Усвідомлюючи це, дослідники, хоча і з певними застереженнями, прагнуть надати риси «людяності» і «навчити» ШІ оперувати поняттями телеологічної семантики, як-от «телеологічні зв'язки» (teleological shreads), «кінцева мета» (Telos), «телеологічна оцінка» (teleological evaluation) та «телеологічне судження» (teleological judgement). У фокусі запропонованого дослідження є проблема «граничного пояснення» смислу висловлення в англомовному політичному дискурсі із залученням понятійного апарату і методології телеологічної семантики. Також була застосована методологія якісного (описового) та кореляційного аналізу для виявлення смислових зв'язків між семантично релевантними змінними. Чинники, котрі здатні впливати на смисл висловлення у дискурсі, розглянуто у пропонованому дослідженні як якісні змінні. Кінцеву мету (Telos), що втілює прагнення до загального БЛАГА, постульовано як залежну змінну і як консеквент, семантичні характеристики котрого зазнають впливу з боку незалежних змінних у логічній функції антецедентів. Метою розвідки є виявлення корпусу якісних змінних, котрі потенційно здатні впливати на утворення телеологічного рефлексійного смислу у політичному дискурсі, визначити їхні типи, висвітлити семантично релевантні кореляційні зв'язки між змінними, залученими до процесу рефлексійного смислоутворення. Досліджений фактичний матеріал указує на те, що номенклатура залучених до рефлексійного смислоутворення змінних зумовлена селективною природою людського сприйняття і ґрунтується на принципах каузальності та цілеспрямованості. За результатами дослідження запропоновано формалізовану пропозитивну модель для аналізу семантично релевантних зв'язків між змінними. Виокремлено групу автохтонних змінних, котрі репрезентують у політичному дискурсі індивідуальні упередження мовця.

Problem statement. Human ideas are inherently purposeful. They are based on the implicit teleological assumption that "everything has a final purpose" [Buchanan, 2018, p. 479]. Teleological semantics, which is in the focus of this account, is about the "ultimate explanation" of meaning with reference to the final purpose [Devitt, Sterelny, 1999, p. 156]. Linguists, logicians and philosophers agree that "the logical form of a sentence is a property of the sentence itself, not just of the proposition it expresses" [Bach, 2006, p. 52]. This tenet was upheld by R. W. Emerson, a prominent writer and philosopher, who stressed that "all that is said <...>, describes to each reader his own idea" [Emerson, 1913, p. 3]. This is where model theoretic, compositional and minimalist semantics come to grief. Some predicative structures have "incomplete meaning" proving the point that "linguistic knowledge alone is insufficient for adequate interpretation" [Seuren, 1998, p. 400]. So much so that artificial intelligence developers today face a daunting task to equip artificial reasoning with semantically vital "teleological threads", with human-like «world knowledge», and specifically with the awareness of the final goal [Bostrom, 2017, p. 133].
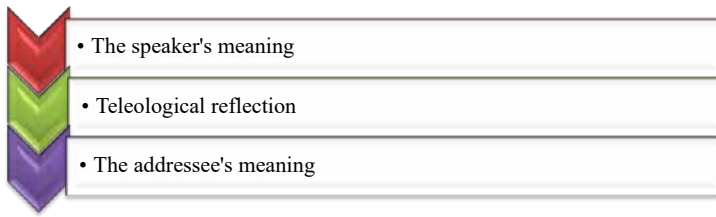
The concept of purposefulness in conjunction with morality is a crucial teleological criterion determining the attribution of meaning to an utterance. According to the principal sentiment of the Aristotelian theory of a moral purpose, if "there is some end of the things we do, <...> clearly this must be the good". Arguably this maxim also concerns politics whose "end must be the good for man" because it "legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from" [Aristotle, 1999, pp. 3-4]. In the domain of cognitive linguistics, reflection as a mental operation is associated with the notion of construal which is a cover term for "different ways of viewing a particular situation" [Verhagen, 2007, p. 48]. Construal of meaning is subject to the principles of purposefulness collectively named by I. Kant as "teleological cognition" [Kant, 1987, p. 258].

In teleological and phenomenological domains, the psychological term "reflection" is extensively used in a sense relevant to semantics. In phenomenology the term "phenomenological reflection" is posited as "reflexive inner awareness", "a distribution" of attention which presupposes intentionality, "introspective observation" [Siewert, 2005, p. 290; Smith, 2005, pp. 93-95]. Both construal and intentionality in phenomenology are the integral part of the formation of the "point of view" or "perspectiveness", viz. attitude [Verhagen, 2007, p. 58]. In teleological terms, the point of view, attitude, judgement ensue teleological reflection [Kant, 1987, pp. 329, 361]. When it comes to meaning and reflection in political discourse or in communication *per se*, everything counts: "varying conditions", "who is speaking, who they are speaking to, etc." [Matthews, 2014, pp. 349-350]. The externalist and "use-potential" approach to the analysis of the semantic content of lexical representations is especially manifest in modern semantics with the basic assumption that "semantic structure" cannot be understood without reliance on "the vast repository of non-linguistic knowledge representation" [Evans, 2019, p. 458; Recanati, 2003, p. 6].

This study is not a «model-theoretic» semantic account, it is rather a teleological enquiry about intuitive «deep» comprehension of the meaning of an utterance, about the validity of meaning, and as B. H. Partee aptly said, about "what is in the head" [Partee, 2020, p. 172]. Linguistic and mental representations of facts, events, actions and "features" as meaningful entities [Matthews, 2014, p. 426] are viewed in this paper as **variables** and as factors affecting teleologically related meaning creation in political discourse. From the methodological perspective we follow the precepts of W. V. Quine who argued that "variables must be taken metaphorically <...>, (that they) lend themselves to discourse not only of numbers but of objects of any sort!" [Quine, 1960, p. 343]. Accordingly, *«Telos»* in this research is posited as a dependent outcome variable, and as a consequent which is affected by independent variables functioning as antecedents.

The hypothesis. The hypothesised idea in this paper is that *«Telos»*, as the epitome of the final purpose on the way to the common «GOOD», and as a dependent variable, determines the semantic relationship among variables affecting sense formation. The basic assumption in this study is that the scope of teleological judgements and ascribed teleological reflective senses to a certain conceptual entity is potentially infinite. This conception builds on linguistic, philosophical and logical tenets postulating the idea of «irregularity» and "multifariousness of intentions with which actual words and sentences are uttered" [O»Hear, 1987, p. 138]. It is held here that the phenomenon of boundless quantity of semantic values attributable to politically sensitive statements is accounted for by (a) stochastic and probabilistic processes involved in meaning attribution in political discourse and by (b) the wide array of *«Telos»*-related variables affecting teleological reflection. The variables under consideration are predominantly of a qualitative type and those performing qualifying functions in the domain of reflective thinking. We hypothesise that the semantic value of *«Telos»* as the final goal serving the common «GOOD» and as a dependent outcome variable is affected by independent variables which are directly or indirectly involved in the process of teleological reflective sense ascription. The presumption is that the phenomenon of moral assessment by default triggers the ascription of teleological reflective sense to the propositional content (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The «*Telos*»-related process of recovery of the meaning of an utterance by the addressee

The aim of this study is to determine the tentative set of variables potentially involved in teleological reflective sense formation in political discourse.

The object of this enquiry is independent variables involved in teleological reflective sense creation process in political discourse, their types and semantically relevant characteristics.

The subject is semantic correlation between independent and dependent variables affecting teleological reflective meaning attribution in political discourse.

The empirical material used in this enquiry is the corpus of comments as linguistic representations of teleological reflection on political issues highlighted in the British press in 2024. Newspaper comments as empirical material fit the purpose of a teleologically-related linguistic account because they represent a specific succinct sample of an articulated version of conventionally latent teleological reflection or reflective judgement. We hold that, in linguistic terms, comments materialise an outcome of inherently tacit moral evaluation of an utterance by an addressee from the means-and-ends perspective.

The methodology of this research is empirical, and not experimental one. A qualitative research design and some elements of correlation methods to assess the relationships between and among semantically relevant variables in discourse are used in this study. Since this research is about linguistically represented human reasoning, viz. teleological reflective judgements, we»ll be dealing with abstract conceptual entities functioning as variables. The choice of the methodology in this paper relies on one of the basic tenets of the philosophy of science which states that "it is impossible to separate the description of an act from the variables that supposedly explain it" [Koertge, 2006, p. 782]. Qualitative analysis in this study does not specifically involve the collection and analysis of numerical data (as the term «variable» in its traditional logical sense might suggest). Qualitative analysis is used here as an "interpretive method which focuses on understanding meanings" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 432]. Teleological method is applied in this account for the assessment of moral validity of utterances. Heuristic methods are also used because the taxonomy of factors that may affect reflective thinking and the ensuing teleological judge-

ments about the semantic content of utterances is open-ended and potentially infinite. It is held that heuristic methods and intuitive presumptions are necessary in this research because we are dealing here mostly with counterfactual assertions, attitudes, probabilities, cause and effect relationships in non-truth-functional contexts. It is presumed that qualitative analysis of counterfactual assertions require reliance on heuristic reflections and the speaker»s intuition as "introspective sense of plausibility" [Seuren, 1998, p. 260].

Presentation of the main material. The analysed material suggests that teleological reflective sense attribution is concomitant with the psychological principle of «selective retention» as "the human tendency to remember messages consistent with the individual»s existing attitudes and beliefs" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 432]. Attitudes and beliefs in their turn are demonstrative of the sets of values governing the specifics of teleological reflective sense attribution to an utterance. This is where teleological judgements, political assumptions and «purpose»-related semantic conjectures come into play. To provide the empirical background to this research the corpus of comments to several articles united by the same topic has been taken (the original style, vocabulary and grammar of the comments are left intact). The overview has been done of 78 comments to the articles highlighting the same event (riots), published on the same date, in the same issue of "The Daily Mail" newspaper [The Daily Mail. 2024. 4 August] so that the corpus of comments could be tied to the temporally, locally and thematically bound propositional content. This was to show the range of the diversity, if not infinity, of teleological reflective judgements passed on the same conceptual entity in political discourse (Disclaimer: the analysed comments do not reflect the attitudes of the author of this research).

To secure a conceptually terse propositional background for the analysis of the comments the titles of the studied articles were taken as the basis for a propositional model formation. The titles serve as a linguistic representation of the salient conceptual content subject to teleological reflection and teleological reflective sense attribution. These titles are: *Shameless thugs set a library and foodbank ablaze, target middle eastern cafes and set fire to looted shops as anarchy descends in flashpoints across Liverpool, Hull, Manchester and Belfast – with more violence expected today* [Prosser, E. J. The Daily Mail. 2024. 4 August]; *«Protest» Tensions Mount. Balaclava-clad protesters swilling beer cans begin demo outside migrant hotel in Rotherham just hours after thugs tore cities apart in violent riots - as Keir Starmer is slammed for going on holiday while Britain burns* [Lawton, K. The Daily Mail. 2024. 4 August]. The whole corpus of com-

ments to the articles concerned was analysed with a view to systematise teleologically-related lingual ways, means and specifics of the reflective sense creation and ascription.

The tentative minimal propositional model of the conceptual content of the articles can be drawn up in the following way: *Protests in many cities turned into violent riots, with thugs causing fires, looting, anarchy.* In a formalised way we can presume that the proposition "*Protests in many cities turned into violent riots*" can be regarded as a causal premise semantically correlated with the dependent variable *«Telos»*, and a set of propositional expressions "*thugs causing fires, looting, anarchy*" is viewed as a consequence representing barriers on the way to the common «GOOD» (*«Telos»*). The comments were analysed with reference to the above propositional model and with the reliance on a wider context which may involve a very wide assortment of variables – from standard dependent and independent ones to those exhibiting spurious or confounding correlation. Though there is a staggering array of attitudes and beliefs professed by the individuals engaged in political discourse, we proceed from the presumption that the involvement of different variables is not arbitrary. The concept *«riots»* is viewed here as an independent variable and an irreducible semantic component of the proposition determining the process of individuation of relevant conceptual entities as variables. The analysed material shows that the nomenclature of specific variables involved in sense attribution in political discourse is constrained by the selective nature of human perception and by the principles of causality and purposefulness, and by the apprehension of ensued consequences.

Relying on a wider context of the analysed articles, a teleological reflective sense propositional model was suggested for the analysis of the semantically relevant correlation among variables in question. A tentative teleological reflective sense ascription model was created using sentential logic conditional formula: *«if … then…»* with the sentential connective → [Forbes, 1994, pp. 13–14]. The initial assumption is that events and facts of reality are recognised as basic ontological categories that possess intrinsic semantic relevance [O'Hear, 1987, p. 152]. An antecedent as an independent variable denoting some event or fact of reality, is symbolised with the sentence-letter *«V»*. A consequent *«Telos»* as the final purpose semantically dependent on the changes of an independent variable *«V»* is designated with the sentence-letter *«T»*. Then a teleological reflective sense

propositional model can be symbolically represented as: *«V→T»*. Which is to say: If some teleologically and semantically relevant fact of reality occurs or sustains some changes it may affect the progress to the common «GOOD» (*«Telos»*) either hindering or facilitating it.

Variables potentially involved in teleological reflective sense formation in political discourse.

Conventionally, they distinguish the following main types of variables: dependent, independent and intervening [Baur, 2007, p. 5185]; Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 511]. In this account «*Telos*» is posited as a dependent variable. The taxonomy of qualitative independent variables is open-ended for reasons of their subjective, transient and overlapping nature (Fig. 2.).

Among independent variables there are some which are inextricably involved in sense creation by default, in this research they are designated as **basic**. They are **immanent reference and truth-value (*logos*)** variables. These variables are presumed to be always active and indispensable for teleological reflective sense creation, irrespective of the speaker»s intentions.

An immanent reference variable is based on the assumption that whatever people may communicate, inadvertently or otherwise, they speak about themselves and about the "immediate context" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 224], e.g.: ***I live in a small village** in the West Country. And **feel very far removed***
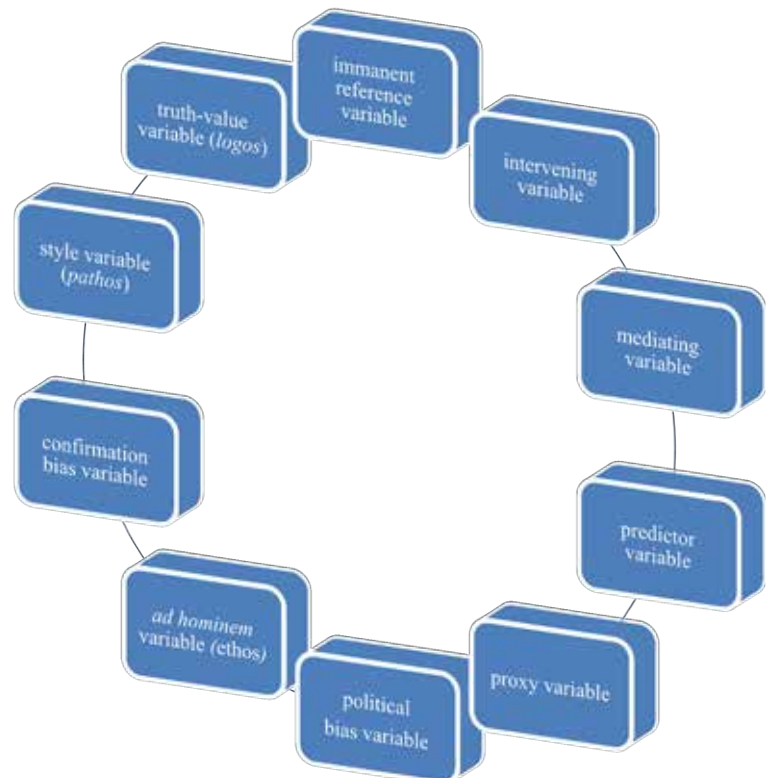

Fig. 2. Independent variables affecting teleological reflective sense formation

*from all of what is happening right now. It»s **scary to watch**. But to some extent, I understand **why this is happening*** [Mum of 2, England, United Kingdom]. In teleological terms, the immediate context is viewed as the combination of existentially important conceptual entities like events, actions and processes that may have an impact on the speaker»s purposeful behaviour and wellbeing. The author of the above comment views the ongoing events (riots) from the speaker»s own perspective indicating the location of her residence (*I live in a small village*), personal feelings (*feel very far removed*), and apprehensions (*It»s scary to watch*), and hints at the author»s personal take on the cause and effect underpinnings of it all (*I understand why this is happening*).

A truth-value (*logos*) variable is essentially a truth conditional assessment of the relation of a proposition to truth. A truth-value independent variable automatically comes into play in communication, provided the underlying reasoning is rational, e. g.: ***The vandals in Hull were 95% local kids (of all ethnicities) and had nothing to do with the earlier protest**. Perhaps, report the facts?* [Acelius, Manchester, United Kingdom]. *The mantra for the media is «**Don»t let the facts ruin a good story**»* [MJX1499929104920186, Stratford, United Kingdom]. *In France they call this **protesting** and **not rioting**!!* [ceejay1952, Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom]. The authors of the above comments openly question the truth validity of the conceptual content of the statements in the articles concerned. However, a truth-value constituent of the teleological reflective sense can be indirectly activated through a «proxy» variable which obliquely affects a quantitative or qualitative value of another variable [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 855]. In this context linguistic representation «far-right» may be qualified as a proxy variable affecting the truth-value of the independent variable representing the notion of «riots»: *Please **define far right** and **disclose your evidence** the person or people who set this fire **fall into your definition*** [In Essex, Leigh-on-Sea, United Kingdom]; *I don»t believe these protestors are «**far right**»* [Chap1988-0, London, United Kingdom].

Qualitative independent variables that are drawn into teleological reflective sense creation process only occasionally are designated in this research as **discretional** because they are the outcome of the selective nature of perception and of the ensuing reflective thinking. Functional distinctions of different qualitative independent variables are somewhat blurred, making the process of delineation difficult. This problem of identification of qualitative variables types occurs for several reasons: (a) the inherent abstract nature of qualitative variables, (b) non-linear and occasionally spurious relationship among them, (c) overlapping taxonomies and vaguely defined semantically relevant functions of qualitative variables. Discretional independent variables add bias to the semantic processes and specifics of individuation of events, actions, objects, living things as variables. They reflect the addressee»s subjective evaluative judgements of specific attributes of facts of reality in terms of causes, purposes and consequences of what is said.

Semantically relevant discretional variables viewed in this paper include: intervening, *ethos, pathos, ad hominem*, moderator, predictor, mediating, proxy variables.

An intervening variable transforms semantically relevant relationship between dependent and independent variables. An intervening variable "can be inferred and interpreted on the basis <…> of observations of the concomitant changes in a dependent variable" [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 855]. For example: *I would be interested to see real photos of the **protests**, taken by real people throughout the day, rather than this **cherry picked selection** that the media are publishing **to fit their narrative**. Not excusing the behaviour of a select few at all, but **I don»t believe** this is a balanced view* [SnowAkubraAugust, Cwmbran, United Kingdom]. In the above example the factor of «*cherry picked*» photos craftily «*fitting the narrative*» as an intervening variable may allegedly compromise the truth-value correlation between the independent variable «*protests*» and the dependent variable «*Telos*». The author of the above comment while ascribing teleological reflective sense to the proposition in question uses a logical operation of deletion and suggests the omission of some of the semantically salient elements of the original material rather than its "mere reproduction" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 106].

Ethos is posited in this account as an independent variable reflecting "the character and habits" of a speaker [Mautner, 2005, p. 202], e.g.: *As time goes on, something will have to change. Let»s see if **Kier and Co look at the big picture and change the right things*** [Mum of 2, England, United Kingdom]**; Do politicians ever talk and listen to the general populace** *or only the minorities?* [beachbrit2, Sale, United Kingdom]. *Ethos* as an independent qualitative variable may acquire *ad hominem* feel to it. An *ad hominem* independent variable shifts the focus of teleological reflection from the problem discussed to the personality of the speaker, e.g.: ***All Keir Starmer will do** for his entire term as prime minister **is blame everything on the Tories*** [Deborah, London]. Teleological reflective sense is attributed in this case on the basis of foregrounding, i. e., by "making some aspect of the discourse or representation the primary focus of attention" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 172].

Pathos as a discretional independent variable is focused on the way the message is presented, its stylistic characteristics and "the feeling that the speaker should inspire in his hearers" [Mautner, 2005, p. 455],

e.g.: ***Incendiary headlines designed to stir up*** *more* ***problems*** [Chap1988-0, London, United Kingdom]. In some contexts, *pathos* as an independent variable may verge on *ad hominem* attitude, e.g.: *Starmer»s press conference was very **clumsy**. It failed to address the underlying concerns and **made spurious claims** that all of the agitators were from outside the areas, maybe some. <...>* ***Need to show evenhandedness and address all forms of criminality*** [Bostin bitter, Bromsgrove, United Kingdom]. The above examples showcase the perceptive operation of sharpening [Colman, 2015, p. 693]. The operation of sharpening in this case makes stylistic and formal characteristics of utterances more than usually pronounced in the eyes of an addressee in the process of teleological reflective sense creation.

Ad hominem independent variable is a factor which diverts the focus of teleological reflection from the issues discussed to the personality of the speaker who is seen either as a proponent or more frequently as an obstacle on the way to the common «GOOD» which is embodied in the dependent variable *«Telos»*, e.g.: ***Starmer and Cooper are a disgrace*** *that»s for sure. This has been building up for a long time because government leaders **fail to listen to the problems and concerns of people*** [Cobber, Seaside Florida USA, United States]; ***Starmer*** *has his family holiday booked for the coming week. I hope he has a nice time, but he should leave his **resignation letter** on the desk before he jets off* [Allie WR, North Norfolk Coast, United Kingdom]. Teleological reflective sense is assigned here on the basis of «foregrounding» of alleged negative personality traits of individuals involved in discourse.

A moderator variable indicates the way the action is performed to achieve the final goal and thereby changes the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 855]. As a qualitative variable it affects teleological sense formation in political discourse, e. g.: *We need* ***to defund the government***, *they do nothing, we tried for years and years, we had elections, none of them work for us, they work for global interests.* ***Stop paying TV licence, council tax, income taxes*** *if possible* [Chillout 123, Cheshire, United Kingdom]. While affecting the semantic correlation between the independent variable («riots») and the dependent variable (*«Telos»*) the linguistic representations *«to defund the government», «stop paying TV licence, council tax, income taxes»* as suggested means to achieve the intended purpose are viewed here as moderator variables instrumental in mitigating the problems on the way to the common «GOOD». This example also illustrates the logical operation of addition in the process of teleological reflective sense ascription to the original utterance in political discourse. Addition is viewed as one of "logical ways" of transforming perceptive and

cognitive "experience" by "adding one or more elements which were not identifiably part of the original source material" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 4]. In this case the elements added «to the original source material» are linguistic representations of suggested actions, e. g.: *«to defund the government», «stop paying TV licence, council tax, income taxes».* This example shows that a logical operation of addition is capable of affecting the process of formation of teleological reflective sense.

A predictor variable "predicts the values on some other variable <…> in terms of how they relate to (i. e. predict) some outcome" [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 855]. For example: *Successive governments have **ignored the will of the people** for too long. This is the **inevitable result** of people feeling they»re **not represented** and their **vote counts for nothing*** [Paul1973, Chelmsford, United Kingdom]; *I agree that **manipulation of the narrative, gaslighting** and **misinformation** has been done with a sledge hammer and **that»s got people even more angry**. When govts **undermine people»s intelligence, a furious response is inevitable*** [OptimisticCynic123, Johannesburg, South Africa]. Predictor variables (*ignoring the will of the people, non-representation, manipulation, gaslighting, misinformation*) in teleological terms are instrumental in forecasting the semantic value of the dependent variable *«Telos»* as the final goal and the incarnation of "*the will of the people*". In other words, the teleological reflective sense assigned to the above utterance conveys the idea that overcoming the obstacles (represented here as a predictor variable) is supposed to facilitate the way to the common «GOOD». The following example is characteristic but not so frequent an instance of the articulated teleological reflective sense ascription with the direct reference to the moral teleology categories of «GOOD» and «BAD»: *Not excusing this, BUT it»s been a long time coming. Ignoring the majority, favouring the minority, **neglecting the good, protecting the bad is always going to end in disaster*** [No Mans Land, United Kingdom].

A mediating variable explains the way an independent variable exerts influence on a dependent variable, it «mediates the relationship between the two" [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 855], and thus affects its outcome semantic value. A mediating variable in the process of teleological reflective sense creation affects the semantic value of a dependent variable («*Telos»*) in such a way that inferences can be made about causes and tentative outcomes of the utterances or actions involved. The presumption is that in the following example the linguistic representation of the socio-political situation in the country (riots) performs the function of an independent variable, e. g.: ***This is what happens*** *when you **suppress** people»s fears, **suppress** their words, **suppress** their thoughts, **suppress** their environments, **suppress** their reasona-*

*ble wishes, **suppress** their culture...* [Lobsterisimus, Clapham, United Kingdom]. The phrase «*This is what happens*» is a pro-form for the independent variable «riots». We hold that in the given example the linguistic representation of the fact of reality «*suppression*» functions as a mediating variable highlighting the cause and effect relationship between the dependent variable *«Telos»* as the final goal (the common «GOOD») and the independent variable «riots» as a means of achieving the final goal. In a formalised propositional abstraction the dependent variable *«Telos»* can be represented as a consequent and the independent variable «riots» as an antecedent.

A proxy variable functions as "an indirect measure of another variable when that second variable is difficult to measure or observe directly" [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 855], e. g.: *Starmer has just announced he»s off on holiday* which **shows just how much he cares** [Scentedrose, Everywhere, United Kingdom]. With reference to the propositional model used in this study, the independent variable («riots») represents the socio-political situation in the country at a certain period of time and the dependent variable *«Telos»* stands for the final goal. In the above example a proxy variable (*«to be off on holiday»*) indicates an untimely desire of an individual for some respite and indirectly affects the semantic value of the dependent variable *«Telos»* by confounding the prospects of its achievement. The proxy variable in question represents the alleged propositional attitude of an agent (an individual) involved in discourse (*«shows just how much he cares»*).

A specific group of variables of an **autochthonous** type which reflect individual dispositions of speakers in political discourse has also been identified. Autochthonous (coming from within) variables are preferences, attitudes, obsessions "originating from within" a living being "(relatively) independently of outside influences" [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, pp. 77, 854]. We refer to this type of variables **a political bias, a confirmation bias, a hindsight bias, an unconscious bias, perceptive vigilance**. These autochthonous variables are viewed in this paper as "latent variables" [Eisenstein, 2019, p.93]. Latent variables in political discourse in the process of teleological reflective sense creation are made observable through linguistic representations of other variables.

A political bias is understood as "a perceived tendency to favour or disfavour a particular political party, candidate, or policy" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 368], e. g.: ***Labour are doing well**, aren»t they? As bad as they were, **we did not have this under the Tories**. I think it is fair to say that once Labour removed their hustings disguise, **people are not happy**...* [GoldenArrow57, London, United Kingdom]; *It was a **protest vote** getting this government in, **but you reap what you sow**. This is only **going to get worse**. It is not only **the far right** it is **centralists** who **have had enough**. Welcome to **a world of Labour*** [Vernon1313, Manchester, United Kingdom]. In phenomenology, a political bias is treated as "collective subjectivity" [Mathiesen, 2005, p. 235].

An unconscious bias is defined as "unintentional selectivity", "automatic judgements", the activity which "lacks deliberate intention" and is reflected in "prejudicial attitudes of which an individual is not aware" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 505; Colman, 2015, p. 793], e. g.: *Unbelievable that **there were no arrests** at Manchester airport, followed quickly by the Leeds **riots** with virtually **no arrests and certainly no tear gas used*** [Dont bother replying, Not looking, United Kingdom]. The above example is viewed as an illustration of an unconscious, if illogical, bias based on randomly selected facts of reality (*no arrests, no tear gas used*) and far-fetched associations. These archetypically organised random memories of riot-related arrests and tear gas are posited here as «automatic» teleological judgements within the realm of collective unconscious "containing memories, instincts, and experiences that are shared by other people" [Colman, 2015, p. 145].

A confirmation bias is a tendency to stereotypical formulation and linguistic representation of ideas which confirm beliefs of an individual or reflect "something directly witnessed" [Matthews, 2014, p. 73]. A confirmation bias "reinforces stereotyping" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, p. 74], e. g.: ***Broken Britain**. The people aren»t happy. They were warned, but it»s fallen on deaf ears for years. Now, it seems it»s time **to reap the consequences** of their ignorance* [stickytoffee06, london, United Kingdom]; *The **looting may be orchestrated by the government** to derail the protests. It»s **a standard tactic**, right from the playbook* [DMcl1813, Stockholm, Sweden]. The examples under consideration betray cliched stereotypical beliefs (*Broken Britain, looting may be orchestrated by the government, a standard tactic*) and highlight the tendency to seek and foreground the information which confirms beliefs, convictions, expectations of a speaker.

A hindsight bias is a tendency to "assign higher likelihoods to outcomes" of the events that had already occurred [Colman, 2015, p. 341]. A hindsight bias is based on the sensation that "we knew what was going to happen beforehand" [Reber, Allen, Reber, 2009, p. 350], e. g.: *Let me say that I 100% do not agree with this violence, but **for years the politicians have been warned that illegal immigration needed to be stopped**, but they continued to ignore the people and it got to the stage where **it only needed a spark to cause trouble** and **Southport was the spark*** [brian.b, spalding, United Kingdom]. In the above utterance the speaker with the benefit of hindsight ascribes the allegedly plausible teleological reflective sense to the

proposition concerning the events occurred. The teleological reflective sense is assigned here on the basis of cause and effect coordinated relationship between a predictor variable (*illegal immigration*) and the dependent variable *«Telos»* (the implied archetypal intended outcome: the common «GOOD»). The hindsight as a latent autochthonous variable is linguistically represented here by the assertion *«for years the politicians have been warned»*, which implicitly reflects the idea of hindsight prediction by the speaker of the potential consequences (*a spark to cause trouble, Southport was the spark*).

Perceptual vigilance is viewed in this account as an autochthonous variable and is understood as "heightened sensitivity to threatening events" and "potentially threatening, offensive or unpleasant" stimuli as a complementary process to "perceptual defence" [Chandler, Munday, 2020, pp. 353, 354; Colman, 2015, p. 560], e. g.: *I think the government* **should come back from their summer break** *and* **try and sort the country out. It»s just going to get worse** [janey1806, chester, United Kingdom]. In the analysed comment the utterance *«It»s just going to get worse»* is treated as an obvious indication that the speaker is in a state of being alert and focused on potential threats caused by the riots. The perceptive vigilance of the author of the comment determines the specifics of the ascribed teleological reflective sense. The assigned teleological reflective sense to the propositional content of the article is about feasible means of securing successful achievement of the intended final goal (*should come back from the summer break, try and sort the country out*). In this context, the variables expressing the ways of achieving the final purpose are treated as moderator variables and the final purpose (*«Telos»*) as a dependent variable.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. The archetypal semantic value of *«Telos»* as the epitome of the final purpose determines the semantic relationship among variables affecting teleological reflective sense formation. The phenomenon of moral evaluation in political discourse by default triggers the ascription of teleological reflective sense to the propositional content of an utterance. The semantic value of *«Telos»* as a dependent outcome variable and as a consequent is affected by independent variables functioning as antecedents. As a result, a possibility of a mismatch is created between the «speaker»s meaning» and the «recovered meaning». The tentative set of variables potentially involved in teleological reflective sense formation in political discourse has been identified, their types have been determined, semantic correlation patterns between independent and dependent variables have been established. The formalised propositional model has been suggested for the analysis of semantically relevant correlation among variables involved in teleological reflective

meaning creation. A group of autochthonous variables reflecting individual dispositions of speakers in political discourse has been identified. Further analysis of characteristic argumentative patterns as underlying logical justification of teleological reflective sense ascription may be promising and feasible.

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