UDC 811.111’42:32]:81’37’25
DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2026-103-32

Стаття поширюється на умовах ліцензії відкритого доступу CC BY 4.0

TELEOLOGICAL MODALITY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: THE THEORETICAL PREREQUISITES OF SEMANTIC SCRUTINY

Shevchenko O. I.
Doctor of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Professor at the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation
from the English Language
Zaporizhzhia National University
Universitetska str., 66, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine
orcid.org/0000-0001-6972-5761
shavch.alex@gmail.com

Key words: *telicity, future contingency, dynamic semantics, default semantics, post-Gracian pragmatics, teleological enrichment, teleological reflective sense.*

This paper addresses the problem of linguistic representation of modality with reference to future contingency in political discourse. The accuracy of comprehension and the quality of translation of the written or spoken word is unavoidably dependent on our ability to ascribe mental states to the speaker and interpret them. In terms of formal semantics, understanding implies the capacity to attribute the propositional content and propositional attitudes to the statements of those involved in the process of communication. In other words, proper understanding of an utterance requires the differentiation of what is said, what is meant and what is retrieved for many reasons. One of the factors making such a distinction necessary is modality. Lurking beyond words are the motives of the speaker, the awareness of what is necessary, possible or probable as a consequence. These semantic aspects of utterances in discourse are covered by the phenomenon of modality. The problems of meaning and modality, which are not always expressly manifested in discourse, demand more attention in modern linguistics and translation studies specifically in the wake of the latest developments in semantics, pragmatics and machine translation (Natural Language Processing). Teleological modality deals with possible or necessary means for achieving the ultimate goal. In this research teleological modality is treated as a semantic and cognitive factor determining purpose-related meaning creation. The aim of this account is to overview the current theoretical and methodological bases suitable for comprehensive analysis of teleological modality in political discourse. The basic semantically-related teleological premise of this enquiry is that the truth value of an utterance and possible or necessary means for achieving a final goal of communicative activity are supposed to accord with human fundamental values and norms.

This research is based on the methodology of moral teleology, post-Gracian pragmatics and dynamic semantics. The semantic characteristics of utterances are analysed with reference to their teleologically-related modal aspects. The initial assumptions underpinning this enquiry are: (a) a telic bias is an ontological trait of political discourse; (b) modality is an indispensable attribute of any politically-engaged statement expressed; (c) there is an inextricable purpose-related explicit or hidden attitude which represents modality in the process of creation and construal of meaning in political discourse.

The results of the analysis performed suggest that current theoretical underpinnings of teleological modality investigation in discourse can be grouped into the following major trends: (a) the lexico-syntactical approach as a conventional semantic treatment of modality; (b) the dynamic semantics approach, which incorporates default semantics, ostensive-inferential understanding of communication, post-Gracian pragmatics and access semantics; (c) the translatology perspective of modality investigation.

The analysis of the theoretical and empirical material shows that the complex process of understanding an utterance and its translation can be schematically presented as a minimalist model consisting of such principal stages: (a) understanding as decoding of the intended speaker meaning relying on the principles of compositional semantics; (b) encoding the original proposition as its mental representation in the target language domain; (c) transcoding as bringing home the intended speaker meaning to an addressee along with all modality-related salient stimuli sufficient for teleological enrichment of meaning.

ТЕЛЕОЛОГІЧНА МОДАЛЬНІСТЬ У ПОЛІТИЧНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ: ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ПІДСТАВИ СЕМАНТИЧНОГО АНАЛІЗУ

Шевченко О. І.
доктор філологічних наук, доцент,
професор кафедри теорії та практики перекладу з англійської мови
Запорізький національний університет
вул. Університетська, 66, Запоріжжя, Україна
orcid.org/0000-0001-6972-5761
shavch.alex@gmail.com

Ключові слова:
телеологічність, ймовірність, динамічна семантика, інтуїтивістська семантика, постграйсіанська прагматика, телеологічне розширення смислу, телеологічний рефлексійний смисл.

У пропонованому дослідженні розглянуто проблему лінгвістичної репрезентації телеологічної модальності в англомовному політичному дискурсі. Точність розуміння і якість перекладу висловленої думки неодмінно залежить від нашої спроможності визначати цілі, прагнення та бажання мовця, навіть якщо вони не здобули словесного вираження. У термінах формальної семантики розуміння передбачає здатність учасників комунікації осмислювати пропозиційний зміст (*propositional content*) висловлення і виявляти ставлення (*propositional attitude*) до висловленої думки. Іншими словами, адекватне розуміння висловлення потребує розмежування смислу самого висловлення, смислу, котрий вкладає в нього мовець, і смислу, котрий отримує адресат. Одним із чинників, котрий зумовлює необхідність такого розмежування, є модальність. За словами криються мотиви мовця, його усвідомлення того, що потрібне, можливе, або ймовірне як наслідок. Ці семантичні аспекти висловлення, котрі можуть бути прихованими, охоплює феномен модальності. Проблеми семантики і модальності, котрі не завжди здобувають словесне вираження у дискурсі, потребують ще більшої уваги у сучасній лінгвістиці з приходом у академічне середовище і прикладну лінгвістику штучного інтелекту. Цей аспект семантики також здобуває надзвичайну актуальність з огляду на широке застосування машинного перекладу, котрий позбавлений людської інтуїції для розуміння підсмислів. Телеологічна модальність висвітлює можливі і необхідні засоби і способи досягнення кінцевої мети діяльності. У пропонованому дослідження телеологічну модальність розглянуто як семантичний і когнітивний чинник, котрий визначає ціннісно-цільові аспекти смислоутворення. Метою цієї розвідки є створення теоретичної і методологічної бази, котра б відображала сучасні розробки і підходи, гідні для глибокого аналізу лінгвістичної репрезентації телеологічної модальності в англомовному політичному дискурсі. Пропоноване дослідження грунтується на постулатах і методології моральної телеології, постграйсіанської прагматики та динамічної семантики. Семантичні характеристики висловлень розглянуто з урахуванням їх телеологічних і модальних властивостей.

Результати виконаного аналізу виявили декілька головних сучасних підходів, котрі можуть бути застосовні до аналізу телеологічної модальності у політичному дискурсі: (а) традиційний лексико-семантичний підхід; (б) підхід, котрий грунтується на базових положеннях динамічної семантики і залучає принципи інтуїтивістської семантики, контекстуалізму, постграйсівської прагматики і теорії можливих світів; (в) перекладознавчий підхід.
Аналіз теоретичного і фактичного матеріалу вказує на те, що складний і багатогранний процес розуміння і перекладу висловлення може бути схематично представлений у вигляді мінімалістської моделі, котра втілює спробу поєднати композиційні, контекстуалістські і інтуїтивістські наукові підходи у сучасній семантиці для виявлення глибинних прошарків смислу ціннісно-цільового гатунку.

Problem statement. Since antiquity, the *Telos* of rhetoric, as the ultimate goal "to which all arts tend", has been "to speak well", "to think and speak rightly", and all this ought to be done by a speaker who "is in the first place a good man" [Quintilian, 2001, pp. 369, 375]. This definition of the highest aim of human communication is wrapped in opaque phrases vaguely indicating the purpose-related moral validity, the aesthetic value of an utterance, and the good character of a speaker. Such understanding of the ultimate purpose of the verbal expression of thought may be positioned and accepted as fundamental in rhetoric. However, it may cause more questions than answers in political discourse, considering the double-edged power of eloquence, biased political attitudes, the ostensive-inferential nature of meaning creation and the problems of differentiation of telic and atelic actions. The semantic quandaries associated with purposiveness, modality and moral propriety of meaning intended and meaning retrieved in discourse are specifically felt in modern linguistics and translation studies with the advent of AI and the evolvement of machine translation.

As a philosophical, logical and linguistic problem modality has been elucidated enough, especially its ontology, types and issues [Jaszczolt, 2023; Kripke, 1980]. However, teleological modality has been receiving only occasional treatment [Hegarty, 2019; Kai von Fintel, 2022; Nadathur, Filip, 2024]. For many reasons it deserves more attention, not least with reference to such aspects of teleological modality as its linguistic representation and instantiation in discourse.

Modality is a distinctly human phenomenon, which highlights motives, attitudes, desires and preferences. Along with that, modality is about "alternative ways things could have been or might be" [Holliday, Icard, 2020, p. 77]. Thus, by definition modality is heuristic. It relies on potentiality, rather than actuality. Probabilistic nature of modality may create issues even with root modals in terms of instantiation in discourse, comprehension and translation [Hegarty, 2019, p. 68]. The situation is still exacerbated when it comes to teleological modality with reference to such issues as future contingency, the compliance of a proposition with truth conditions and rules of morality, characteristic inconsistencies and fluidity of human volition.

Modality is inherent in teleology. There is a tendency of "associating futurity with modality", and for a good reason, since the future is "more speculative than the present" [Jaszczolt, 2023, p. 151]. All the more so, the "speculative" character of the future invokes the introspective idea of teleological reflection as a meaning determining factor. The purposive aspect of meaning, which concerns future contingency, possibility or necessity, instantiates teleological modality.

The aim of this study is the overview of current theoretical bases for comprehensive analysis of linguistic representation of teleological modality in political discourse. **The subject matter** research is the assessment of state-of-the-art theoretical trends, methodologies and principles befitting the objectives of teleological modality investigation.

This enquiry is based on the **methodology** and principles of moral teleology and dynamic semantics. The semantic features of utterances are analysed with regard to their teleologically-related modal aspects, and with reliance on both utilitarianist (consequential) and deontological (normative) rules. The research is conducted in accordance with the semantically-related teleological premise which asserts that possible or necessary means for achieving a particular goal ought to comply with human fundamental values and norms. The empirical material has been taken from the British press covering the time span of 2025–2026.

Presentation of the main material. The initial presuppositions and premises of this account are:

– a purpose-related bias is an inherent trait of political discourse;

– modality is part and parcel of any politically-engaged statement expressed;

– there is an intrinsic purpose-related overt or hidden belief, attitude, judgement, which instantiates

modality in the process of creation and retrieval of meaning in political discourse.

Teleological modality concerns possible or necessary means for achieving the final goal. As M. Hegarty notes, referring to the specifically linguistic aspects of teleological modality, "the prototypical teleological modal depends on the goals or interests of the overt or implicit agent of the main predicate of the clause" [Hegarty, 2019, p. 230]. In a wider perspective, teleology deals with universally valid norms and standards of human conduct in the process of achieving the final goals of activity. In modern linguistics and rhetoric, teleology is held to be "an important paradigm" to understand and explain human behaviour [Bonnett, 2024, p. 69; Shevchenko, 2024a; Shevchenko 2024b]. The core concept of teleology the final goal belongs to the set of "genuine causes", which are "invoked" in the construal and interpretation of "supreme", "preferred" or "permanent" values, norms and legal provisions, "beyond which you cannot go" [Weldon, 1955, p. 128; Lloyd, 1973, pp. 90, 91, 194, 195]. Arguably the linguistically relevant laws and principles of teleological moral canon can also be referred to the class of supreme, preferred or permanent values overriding other sense bearing and regulatory factors.

Given the inconsistencies of human aspirations, motives and moral bases, researchers find it hard to provide a clear-cut set of modality-related sense bearing factors. T. Harcup stresses that ethically- and ideologically driven instances which may acquire semantic and semiotic value in discourse "cannot be reduced to a list of discrete aspects" [Harcup, 2014, p. 96]. Another constraint on the way to rigorously established semantically- and teleologically-related supreme, preferred and permanent values is that "a dogmatically established canon" of universally accepted standards of conduct is unlikely to be universally applicable [Lloyd, 1973, pp. 166, 167]. It explains the plurality of sense construal while dealing with teleological modality.

In this research, along with overt conventional linguistic ways of modality representation, the focus is also on less obvious, opaque, ambiguous and covert ways and means of teleological modality expression. We hold that teleological modality is overtly or covertly embedded in any utterance as an indispensable semantic constituent of meaning creation in political discourse. In the following example the implied teleological modality can be easily traced, however to be adequately and accurately actualised it may require some contextual support: *Starmer is 'gambling with young lives'* [The Metro. 2026. 15 June]. The proposition of this sentence taken alone is sufficient for a reader to formulate only the general idea about the intended meaning by suggesting that the speaker/author believes that something is wrong and needing correction. The further context provides an explanation to the propositional content of the sentence, specifying the wrong means and misplaced priorities (according to the author) for achieving the final purpose (not to subject young people to the hazards of the Internet).

There are cases when utterances in political discourse seem to be totally devoid of any formal purpose-related modal attributes. However, having assumed the shape of impartial statements, they may possess "lurking" modal potentialities, which can be recognised on the basis of certain lexical and contextual cues and inferences. The example below represents one of such instances: *Samsung workers get £300,000 bonus* [The Sun. 2026. 28 May]. The sentence itself has no expressly manifested modality, beliefs or attitudes. Taken separately, it is rather about actuality than about teleological modality with reference to the future. Only the further context and the awareness of the potential dangers highlight the whole semantic "depth" of the utterance. Its meaning may be teleologically "enriched" by the inferences concerning the possibilities of imminent *"tensions inside Samsung"*, the problems with *"global supplies"*, the dangers that *"workers in other parts of the business <...> are expected to receive much smaller bonuses"*, *"other unions may now demand similar profit-sharing deals"*, *«the agreement could reduce money available for shareholders"* [The Sun. 2026. 28 May]. And the list of potential teleologically-related inferences is not exhausted. So, considering the implications of the above seemingly innocuous statement, it may be regarded as an utterance potentially capable of expressing teleological modality (attitudes, stances, judgements) with reference to future contingencies.

The analysed theoretical and empirical material demonstrated the astounding variety of indirect ways and means of modality instantiation in discourse. It became obvious that special attention needs to be paid to the nomenclature of modality types with reference to the purposive aspects of utterances. Specifically, teleologically-related aspects of meaning in political discourse require delving into more fine-grained scrutiny of various manifestations of epistemic, deontic, bouletic and alethic modalities [Hegarty, 2019, pp. 17, 65, 80; Mautner, 2005, p. 393; Kai von Fintel, 2006, p. 2; Yalcin, 2020, pp. 339–340].

The specificity of teleological modality representation is affected by the character of agents engaged in political discourse. The analysed material shows that teleological modality can reflect attitudes and aspirations of individuals, social, political, ethnic and administrative entities with their specific ontological traits and linguistic attributes. The characteristic types of agents tend to influence the ways modality is manifested in political discourse.

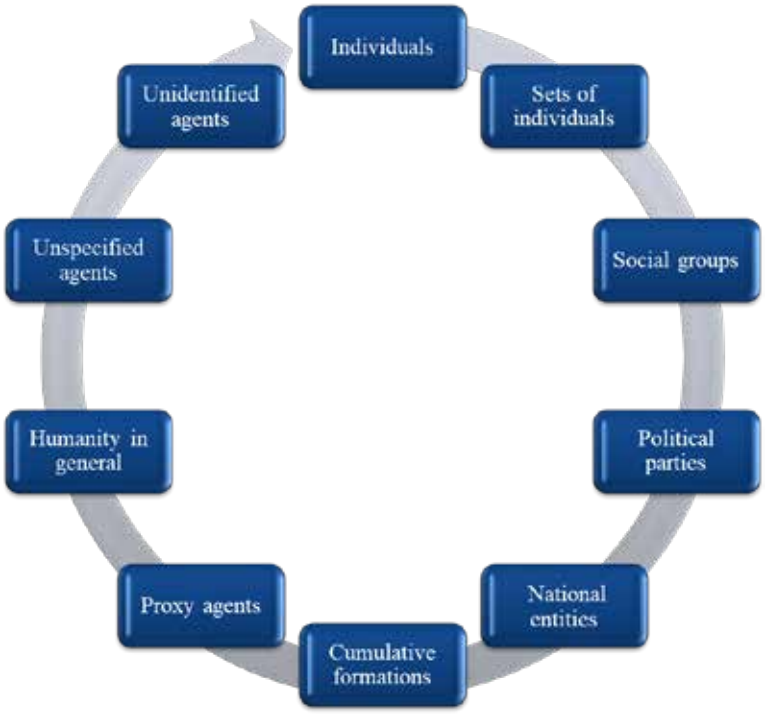


Fig. 1. The agents of teleological modality ascription

With regard to teleological modality, the agents pursuing certain goals in discourse can be represented by (*Fig. 1*):

a) individuals expressing personal aspirations: *As he continues his battle with cancer, it remains the King's abiding* ***hope*** *that in time a reconciliation will be* ***possible*** [The Daily Mail. 2025. 11 September];

b) individuals representing aims of some political parties, social or professional groups: *Labour* ***needs*** *a female deputy leader. <…> The new deputy leader* ***should*** *not be from London* [The Daily Mirror. 2025. 9 September]; *Met chief* ***wants*** *officers* ***to stop*** *policing tweets* [The Daily Mirror. 2025. 8 September];

c) sets of individuals aspiring to achieve certain aims: *Badenoch tells Starmer:* ***Let's*** *work together* ***to cut welfare*** [The Daily Telegraph. 2025. 9 September]; *Ministers* ***must confront*** *"the whole-system failure" leaving young people trapped on State handouts* [The Sun. 2026. 28 May];

d) social groups: *In an increasingly digital world, their* ***interests*** *(of elderly people)* ***need protecting*** *too* [The Daily Telegraph. 2025. 9 September];

e) political parties: *The modern labour party* ***must*** *reflect the country which it* ***seeks*** *to govern, not just the parts within Westminster bubble* [The Daily Mirror. 2025. 9 September]; ***We are going to make people better off****. That's the* ***priority*** *of this government and what this new team will be getting on with* [The Times. 2025. 8 September];

f) geographically bounded national entities: ***Britain needs to ramp up its defence*** *budget immediately <…> Failure to prepare for this new phase in history risks being not just detrimental to Britain's future, but catastrophic* [The Daily Mail. 2025. 11 September]; ***Rwanda will continue to work constructively*** *with international partners, guided by international norms and mutually beneficial co-operation* [The Financial Times. 2026. 2 June];

g) cumulative formations of technological, financial or economic kind: ***Markets appear less focused*** *on Treasury rhetoric and more on whether* ***the government can present*** *a credible plan* ***to control spending*** [The Times. 2025. 3 September];

h) individuals as proxy agents and as subjects of indoctrinated teleological modality (fostered beliefs): ***Mr Farage has been challenged*** *to release the information about the amount of tax he pays on huge outside earnings. "****As a party leader****, of course,* ***he should publish them****"* [The Daily Mirror. 2025. 8 September]; ***Keir Starmer should be popping down to Brighton*** *for this week's TUC annual Congress* ***to pick up*** *a few bold ideas* ***to revitalize his struggling Labour government*** *instead of staying away* [The Daily Mirror. 2025. 8 September]; ***He*** *(Mr Trump)* ***should*** *visit Cottingley* ***to see*** *how it all started* [The Times. 2025. 3 September]; ***They*** *(students)* ***need*** *to understand the broader context what's happening in the world from business perspective* ***to be on top of the news*** [The Financial Times Business Education. 2025. September];

i) humanity in general: ***For the sake of*** *improving the physical and mental health of the next generation for the rest of their lives,* ***we should*** *be piling resources into mother and child health* [The Times.

2025. 8 September]; ***We need*** *an educational system that right from kindergarten has a higher degree of challenge* ***to build the skills*** *of analysis, evaluation classification, extraction and synthesis* [The Financial Times Business Education. 2025. September];

j) unspecified actors: *Windrush payouts* ***need*** *significant overhaul* [The Guardian. 2026. 2 June]**;** *Benefits* ***should not*** *become the place where ambition goes to die* [The Sun. 2026. 28 May];

k) unidentified actors in impersonal modal constructs: *Benefits* ***must not be*** *allowed to kill off young people's ambitions* [The Sun. 2026. 28 May]; *The channel* ***should not be*** *allowed to broadcast the way it does* [The Guardian. 2026. 2 June].

The analysed material suggests that the theoretical underpinnings of teleological modality investigation in discourse can be grouped into such major trends (Fig. 2).

I. The conventional lexico-syntactical approach to teleological modality analysis.

The conventional linguistic take on teleological modality is focused on the linguistic representation of modality through the use of modal auxiliaries, modal adverbs, adjectives, etc. (*possibly, perhaps, probably, certainly, likely, possible*) [Palmer, Greenbaum, 1992, p. 664]. In traditional linguistic terminology the notion of modality is applicable "to grammatical or lexical indications" referring to a type of a speech act, or to "the degree of uncertainty with which something is said" [Matthews, 2014, p. 247].

However, even in cases with explicit linguistic representation of modality with the help of root modals making sense of teleological constituents of utterances is not that simple. In linguistics the notion of meaning is arguably the most debatable, so is a proposition as a unit of meaning, which is as «recalcitrant» to define [Jaszczolt, 2023, p. 6]. Proper comprehension of the future contingence propositional content of an utterance requires effort, skill, knowledge, erudition, experience and intuition on the part of an addressee or a translator. Even in simple utterances with root modals like «*There* ***must*** *be consequences»* the array of potentially ascribed meanings is not limited by the canonical set of interpretations. Depending on a great range of sense bearing factors the above utterance may convey the meanings of necessity, possibility, apprehension, threat, concern, *etc*.

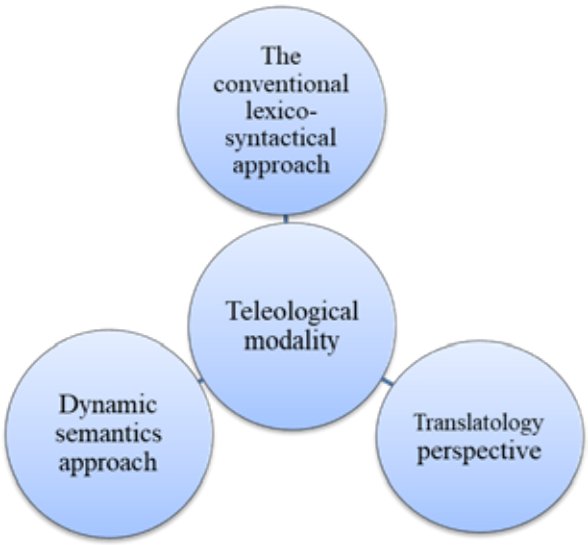


Fig. 2. Theoretical underpinnings of teleological modality investigation

Teleological modality is inextricably linked with the problem of meaning creation in political discourse. To differentiate right from wrong is notoriously challenging and frequently subjective. As Quintilian observes, "the weapons of eloquence are powerful for good or ill, it is unfair to count as evil something which it is possible to use for good" [Quintilian, 2001, p. 385]. Thus, traditional approaches to teleological modality investigation in discourse are frequently ineffective for the very reason of utilitarianist nature: the necessity to deal with inherent fluidity and plurality of judgements, attitudes and assessments of what is good and what is not.

II. Dynamic semantics as a theoretical basis for teleological modality investigation is represented by a variety of contextualist oriented semantic theories, to name just a few:

Default semantics from teleological perspective.

The contextualist treatment of meaning as hidden potential falls into line with the idea of "dynamic", "deep" or "rich" understanding of a proposition in the spirit of default semantics and ostensive-inferential sense creation [Jaszczolt, 2023, p. 262; Scott-Phillips, 2019, p. 10; Wilson, Sperber, 2012, p. 242]. Default semantics looks for "what lurks under the surface" of an utterance relying on intuitive truth conditions of post-Gracian pragmatics, relevance theory, contextualism, heuristics and dynamic semantics [Jaszczolt, 2023, pp. 167, 202, 236, 262].

The factors governing meaning recovery in political discourse include the whole gamut of linguistic and non-linguistic data: literal meaning, pragmatic charge, a contextual and situational backdrop, presumed speaker's and addressee's knowledge of the world, the speaker's and addressee's outlook, moral values and an "audience design", *etc*. [House, 2024, pp. 46–47; Jaszczolt, 2023, pp. 273–274]. For example, to retrieve the «lurking» meaning by default from a simple assertion «*Equality laws* ***should*** *be a shield, not a sword*» [The Daily Mail. 2026. 10 June] will take a lot of linguistic and non-linguistic variables to consider including immigration concerns, political infighting and a growing number of violent attacks in Britain.

Post-Gracian pragmatics as applied in teleology.

The demarcation of speaker meaning, sentence meaning and addressee meaning is instrumental in

delving into the vagaries and nuances of meaning creation and retrieval in post-Gracian pragmatics [Grice, 1969, p. 147; Recanati, 2020, p. 113; Scott-Phillips, 2019, p. 2]. Conventionally, semantics is held to be concerned with sentence meaning and pragmatics with speaker meaning [Saeed, 2023, p. 17]. We argue that teleology, being based on reflective assessment of human activity, along with sentence meaning and speaker meaning, takes into account the meaning recovered by an addressee who functions in the process of meaning creation as an equally important actor in this semantic triad. It should be noted that addressees are rightfully engaged in the process of evaluation and ascription of teleological modality-related constituents of meaning. In the teleological domain it is the addressee who is allotted his/her due prominence and who is bestowed with a teleological enrichment function.

Concerning the notion of addressee meaning, T. Harcup suggested a "crude" subdivision of addressees of a message into several types: (a) those accepting information at face value, "along with whatever ideology has been embedded within the text"; (b) those adopting "a questioning approach"; (c) those "rejecting outright any ideological assumptions" [Harcup, 2014, p. 94].

The above categorisation may be viable in some specific contexts, within some social or age groups, but does not seem to be universally tenable. The process of meaning construal in discourse is arguably not as straightforward. The scope of variables affecting meaning creation in political discourse is extremely wide, and, considering the possible combinations of semantically relevant variables, is potentially infinite [Shevchenko, 2025]. For example, an utterance frequently heard today «*Just peace is urgently* ***needed»*** may acquire quite different speaker and addressee meanings and different modalities ascribed depending on political, social, cultural or military considerations. The semantic salience of variables involved in meaning creation is determined and constrained by the principles of relevance. The relevance theory is held to be effective in the investigations of addressee meaning construal [Jaszczolt, 2023, pp. 10, 262; Wilson, Sperber, 2012].

The ostensive-inferential approach to meaning creation from teleological perspective.

The analysis of semantic processes in political discourse is viewed as instrumental in "recognition of informative and communicative intentions" of a speaker [Scott-Phillips, 2019, p. 10; Wilson, Sperber, 2012]. In teleological domain, ostensive-inferential meaning construal, as «deep» or «rich» understanding of an utterance, is instantiated in teleological reflection and subsequent teleological reflective sense attribution [Shevchenko, 2025].

In accordance with the ostensive-inferential approach a speaker to be adequately understood in communication is expected to produce "a stimulus which makes <…> manifest to the audience a set of assumptions" [Wilson, Sperber, 2012, p. 242]. When applied to the teleological domain, the appropriate purpose-related stimuli are supposed to prompt purpose-related inferences and assumptions which constitute teleological reflection and teleological enrichment of the meaning of an utterance by an addressee. The notion of teleological enrichment (*cf.* "pragmatic enrichment" [Noveck, 2021, p. 104] is postulated in this account as meaning creation which acts as a precursor of mental or linguistic representation of modality. Essentially, teleological enrichment is an inference concerning the teleological modality of an utterance in terms of its necessity, possibility or moral validity. Teleological explanation is in fact the result of teleological enrichment.

The idea of teleological enrichment can be substantiated by G. Frege's notion of "associated conception" as "an internal image, arising from memories of sense impressions <…> and activities <…> and often saturated with feeling" [Frege, 1948, p. 212]. However, unlike an associated conception with reference to the past, teleological enrichment is future oriented without discarding past experience. Teleological enrichment serves as the basis for modality-related inferences, entailments and attitudes, concerning future contingency. In teleological terms, enrichment is to be understood here as a semantic phenomenon which relies on the ability of an addressee to engage the "embedded implicatures" [Noveck, 2021, p. 104].

Embedded implicatures are moral values, conventions, biases and attitudes, prompting the process of inferencing for a model listener/reader to successfully recover the so-called "functional proposition" [Jaszczolt, 2021]. The term "functional proposition" in post-Gracian treatment of meaning is supposed to incapsulate along with overt propositional content also covert salient sense bearing factors, including non-linguistic ones. Teleological enrichment is viewed here as the process and result of the formation of teleological reflective sense [Shevchenko, 2025].

To be materialised in discourse, teleological modality with its focus on the juxtaposition of good and evil, needs to be either explicitly expressed or implicitated with the provision of ostensive cues. The function of a purposive ostensive stimulus aiming "to illuminate deeper meanings" can be performed by a teleological explanation. Explanations of purposive aspects of utterances may assume overt established linguistic forms or covert constructs in the shape of "reframing" [Cope, Kalantzis, 2022, pp. 1, 17, 19]. In teleological terms, reframing a purposive aspect of meaning may specify the nuances of "deep"

understanding of the proposition and highlight the degree of moral propriety of an utterance. Reframing may occur in the shape of a teleological explanation which serves as a marker of teleological reflective sense attribution [Shevchenko, 2024a].

A teleological explanation as a logical, semantic and a lexico-syntactical construct is a specific linguistic and teleological phenomenon involving such constituents as "explanandum" and "explanans". In this case, the semantically relevant facts of reality, alleged mental states, attitudes, intentions, conventions are viewed as "explanans", i.e., they are tools which explain, while the intended speaker meaning is treated as an "explanandum", *i.e.,* something to be explained [Jaszczolt, 2023, pp. 12, 239; Woodfield, 2000, pp. 492–494; Wright, 2013]. For example, the meaning of the assertion "*I **can't** send you to jail … because of Labour 'leniency'*" as an explanandum is substantiated by the further context as an explanans: *"Labour's 'soft touch' sentencing reforms", "the reforms introduced to free up space in jails"* , "*tens of thousands of prisoners freed from jail early"* [The Daily Mail. 2026. 10 June].

Addressee meaning (it is also postulated as "interpersonal meaning") is supposed to be "invoked" or recognised rather than explicated or "inscribed". Addressee meaning may depend on the hearer's specific "predefined values and assumptions" [Hart, 2016, p. 44]. Modality is regarded as one of the «most important ways» in which interpersonal meaning can be expressed [Katan, Taibi, 2021, p. 161]. Predefined values, norms, rules and assumptions of ethical and moral kind to be "invoked" by an addressee as embedded values, belong to the teleological conceptual domain.

Access semantics and the possible worlds theory as applied in teleology.

In the cognitive and machine translation perspective the phenomena of teleological modality and meaning creation are viewed through the conceptual arsenal of access semantics. This approach is based on the idea of existence of logically and semantically accessible possible worlds as "infinite alternative realities" [Leibnitz 1990, pp. xii, 54; Kripke, 1980; Evans, 2019, p. 458; Lewis, 1986]. Accordingly, in discourse the meaning of an utterance is retrieved and evaluated through "an accessibility relation" and "assigned" to the relevant world "pertinent to the type of modal statement being expressed" [Hegarty, 2019, p. 17; Kai von Fintel, 2006, p. 3]. To assess the way the meaning of a teleological modal accords with the rules, conventions, moral values and the goals of the speaker, the evaluation of an utterance is done by arranging and selecting the relevant contextually determined potential semantic variants (sets of propositions) as "ordering possible worlds in a modal base" [Hegarty, 2019, p. 17].

The discourse mechanism of teleological modality manifestation is underpinned by the associative nature of meaning creation. Linguistic representations, viewed as "labelled" or "lexical concepts", function as "points of access to other non-linguistic conceptual domains" [Langacker, 1987, pp. 161–167; Saeed, 2023, p. 385]. In this way the "meaning potential" of lexical concepts, which integrates all relevant kinds of knowledge and experience is realised in context [Allwood, 1999, pp. 1–18; Saeed, 2023, p. 385]. For example, the meaning potential of the utterance «*Public services are systems **needing** «**transformation**»*» [The Daily Mirror. 2026. 28 May] is virtually limited by the accessibility relations to possible worlds to be conjectured by certain politicians, parties or social groups.

III. The translation studies perspective.

Modality in its various manifestations in translation has been attracting attention of scholars for centuries. In fact, intents and volitions of the speaker as the "truth", "heart" and "soul" of the original text has been the point of academic contention and unending debate concerning the quality of translation. A. Roberts, challenging the critics of the translation of Homer's "The Odyssey" by G. Chapman, argues that some alleged "deviations" and "inaccuracies in rendering of the original" serve the purpose of deep understanding of the source text. A. Roberts stresses that these deviations manage to lay bare the true meaning of what is said and the "frame of mind" of the author, rather than "slavishly reproduce the letter" of the master-text [Roberts, 2002, pp. vii, xi, xv]. Arguably the phrase "the frame of mind" here figuratively represents the essence of modality as motives, attitudes and desires.

On the other hand, depending on the material for translation, a literal reproduction of the original in a target language can sometimes prove to be more appropriate for an addressee to retrieve the depths of meaning along with modality attributes of an utterance. For example, Boethius's translations of Aristotle are hailed as "invaluable", though they "were deliberately literal rather than literary" [Walsh, 2008, pp. xxiii-xxiv]. The translator decided to leave it to the reader with his/her embedded values to reconstruct the literary aesthetics of the original. However, even in this case the fidelity of the translation was regarded to be "impressive <…> especially as Aristotle's teachings in the compressed form <…> were so difficult to interpret" [Walsh, 2008, pp. xxiii–xxiv].

Keeping above considerations in mind, the intricate procedure of understanding an utterance and its translation from one language to another can be reduced to a minimalist model consisting of such principal stages (*Fig. 3*):

(a) understanding as decoding of the intended speaker meaning of the source language utterance

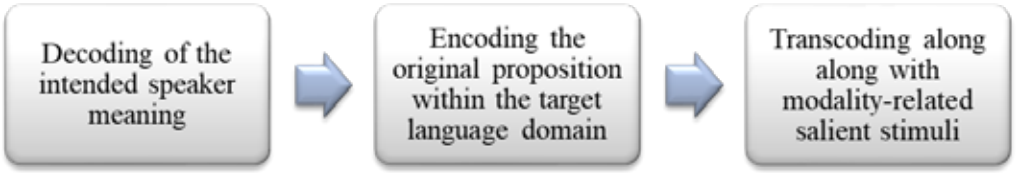


Fig. 3. The schematic model of understanding and translation of an utterance from a teleological perspective

relying on the minimalist principles of compositional semantics;

(b) encoding the original proposition as its mental representation within the target language domain;

(c) transcoding as bringing home the intended speaker meaning to an addressee along with modality-related salient stimuli necessary for teleological enrichment of meaning.

The analysis of teleological aspects of meaning and modality in the process of transcoding is bound to involve the concept of a proposition as an instantiation of the meaning of a sentence. Without delving deep into metatheoretical discussions about the essence of such a "flexible and controversial beast" as the notion of a proposition, in this research this term is used also in the sense of the "unit of meaning" which reflects the "nuances of thought" and propositional attitudes "lurking beneath the literal meaning" [Jaszczolt, 2023, pp. 6, 8, 54].

Conclusions and prospects for further research. The overview of theoretical approaches befitting teleological modality investigation in political discourse provides a tentative methodological basis for further fine-grained analysis of the purposive aspects of modality. The modern trends in semantics can be grouped into the following major approaches to meaning formation analysis: (a) the conventional lexico-syntactical approach; (b) the dynamic semantics contextualist oriented approach; (c) the translation studies perspective.

It was established that in linguistic terms teleological modality is a purpose-related introspective assessment of human communication in its contextual milieu. In the teleological domain the addressee is allotted his/her due prominence in the process of teleological enrichment of the meaning of an utterance.

The notion of teleological enrichment was introduced as the basis for modality-related meaning formation with reference to future contingency. In teleological terms, enrichment is postulated as a semantic phenomenon which relies on the ability of an addressee of an utterance to engage the *a priori* embedded moral norms and values.

A minimalist model was suggested schematically representing the process of understanding an utterance and its translation: (a) understanding as decoding of the intended speaker meaning on the principles of compositional semantics; (b) encoding the original proposition as its mental representation in the target language domain; (c) transcoding as bringing home the intended speaker meaning to an addressee along with modality-related salient stimuli sufficient for teleological enrichment of the meaning of an utterance.

The analysed empirical material has shown that the agents engaged in political discourse with their specific status and ontological attributes tend to affect the ways modality is manifested and perceived. Further investigation and fine-grained scrutiny of overt and covert manifestations of teleologically-related epistemic, deontic, bouletic and alethic modalities in discourse may be feasible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Allwood, J. (1999) Semantics as Meaning Determination with Semantic-Epistemic Operations. *Cognitive Semantics: Meaning and Cognition.* J. Allwood and P. Gardenfors (eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp. 1–18.
2. Bonnett, A. (2024) How to Argue. 4th ed. London: Sage. 121 pp.
3. Cope, B., Kalantzis, M. (2022) Making Sense. Reference, Agency, and Structure in a Gramar of Multimodal Meaning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 364 pp. DOI: 10.1017/9781316459645
4. Evans, V. (2019) Cognitive Linguistics: A Complete Guide. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 896 pp.
5. Frege, G. Sense and Reference. (1948) *The Philosophical Review.* Volume 57. Issue 3. Pp. 209–230.
6. Grice, H. P. (1969) Utterer's Meaning and Intention. *The Philosophical Review*, 78 (2). Pp. 147–177.
7. Harcup, T. (2014) A Dictionary of Journalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 355 pp.
8. Hart. C. (2016) Discourse, Grammar and Ideology. Functional and Cognitive Perspective. London: Bloomsbury. 216 pp.
9. Hegarty, M. (2019) Modality and Propositional Attitudes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 293 pp.

10. Holliday, W. H., Icard, T. F. (2020) Axiomatization in the Meaning Sciences. *The Science of Meaning. Essays on the Metatheory of Natural Language Semantics.* D. Ball and B. Rabern (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 73–97. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198739548.003.0002
11. House, J. (2024) Translation. The Basics. 2nd edition. London, New York: Routledge. 245 pp. DOI: 10.4324/9781003355823
12. Jaszczolt, K. M. (2021) Functional Proposition: A New Concept for Representing Discourse Meaning? *Journal of Pragmatics.* №. 171. Pp. 200–214. DOI https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.59889
13. Jaszczolt, K. M. (2023) Semantics, Pragmatics, Philosophy: A Journey through Meaning. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. 438 pp. DOI: 10.1017/9781108589338
14. Kai von Fintel. (2006) Modality and Language. Retrieved from: https://web.mit.edu/fintel/fintel-2006-modality.pdf
15. Kai von Fintel. (2022) Teleological Theories of Mental Content. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/content-teleological/
16. Katan, D., Taibi, M. (2021) Translating Cultures. An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators. 3rd edition. London, New York: Routledge. 418 pp.
17. Kripke, S. (1980) Naming and Necessity. Oxford: Blackwell. 180 pp.
18. Langacker, R. W. (1987) Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Theoretical Prerequisites. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Pp. 161–167.
19. Leibnitz, G. W. (1990) Philosophical Writings. G. H. R. Parkinson (ed.). Translated by M. Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson. Everyman's Library. London: J. M. Dent & Sons. 270 pp.
20. Lewis, D. K. (1986) On the Plurality of Worlds. Oxford: Blackwell. 280 pp.
21. Lloyd, D. (1973) The Idea of Law. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 363 pp.
22. Matthews, P. H. (2014) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 443 pp.
23. Nadathur, P., Filip, H. (2024) Telicity, Teleological Modality and (Non-)culmination. *Proceedings of the 39th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics.* Ed. Autry R. at al. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. Pp. 617–625.
24. Noveck, I. (2021) Experimental Pragmatics. The Making of a Cognitive Science. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 252 pp. DOI: 10.1017/9781316027073
25. Palmer, F. R., Greenbaum, S. (1992) Modality. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language.* McArthur (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 664–665.
26. Quintilian. (2001) The Orator's Education. Books 1–2. Edited and translated by D. A. Russell. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press. 430 pp.
27. Recanati, F. (2020) From Meaning to Content. *The Science of Meaning. Essays on the Metatheory of Natural Language Semantics.* D. Ball and B. Rabern (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 113–137.
28. Roberts, A. (2002) Introduction. *Homer "The Odyssey"*. Translated by G. Chapman. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics. 488 pp.
29. Saeed, J. I. (2023) Semantics. 5th edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. 568 pp.
30. Scott-Phillips, T. C. (2019) Speaking our Minds. Why Human Communication is Different, and how Language Evolved to Make it Special. London: Macmillan International Higher Education, Red Globe Press. 193 pp.
31. Shevchenko, O. I. (2024a) Telos-based Reflective Constituents of Meaning in Political Discourse. *Нова філологія: Збірник наукових праць.* Запоріжжя: ЗНУ. Вип. 95. С. 79–89. DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2024-95-11
32. Shevchenko, O. I. (2024b) Linguistic Representation of the 'Telos'-based Reflective Sense in Political Discourse. *Нова філологія: Збірник наукових праць.* Запоріжжя: ЗНУ. Вип. 96. С. 173–181. DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2024-96-21
33. Shevchenko, O. I. (2025) Variables Affecting Teleological Reflective Sense Formation in English Political Discourse. *Нова філологія: Збірник наукових праць.* Запоріжжя: ЗНУ. Вип. 98. С. 193–202. DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2025-98-24
34. The Daily Mail. 2025. 11 September.
35. The Daily Mail. 2026. 10 June.
36. The Daily Mirror. 2025. 8 September.
37. The Daily Mirror. 2025. 9 September.
38. The Daily Mirror. 2026. 28 May.
39. The Daily Telegraph. 2025. 9 September.
40. The Financial Times Business Education. 2025. September.
41. The Financial Times. 2026. 2 June.
42. The Guardian. 2026. 2 June.
43. The Metro. 2026. 15 June.
44. The Sun. 2026. 28 May.
45. The Times. 2025. 3 September.
46. The Times. 2025. 8 September.
47. Walsh, P. G. (2008) Introduction. *Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy.* Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. xi–xlix.
48. Weldon, T. D. (1955) The Vocabulary of Politics. An Enquiry into the Use and Abuse of

Language in the Making of Political Theories. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 199 pp.
49. Wilson, D., Sperber, D. (2012) Meaning and Relevance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 382 pp.
50. Woodfield, A. (2000) Teleological Explanation. *A Companion to the Philosophy of Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 492–494.
51. Wright, L. (2013) Revisiting Explanations: Reflections Three Decades on. *Functions: Selection and Mechanisms*. Dordrecht: Springer. Vol. 363. Pp. 233–243.

REFERENCES

1. Allwood, J. (1999) Semantics as Meaning Determination with Semantic-Epistemic Operations. *Cognitive Semantics: Meaning and Cognition.* J. Allwood and P. Gardenfors (eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp. 1–18.
2. Bonnett, A. (2024) How to Argue. 4th ed. London: Sage. 121 pp.
3. Cope, B., Kalantzis, M. (2022) Making Sense. Reference, Agency, and Structure in a Gramar of Multimodal Meaning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 364 pp. DOI: 10.1017/9781316459645
4. Evans, V. (2019) Cognitive Linguistics: A Complete Guide. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 896 pp.
5. Frege, G. Sense and Reference. (1948) *The Philosophical Review.* Volume 57. Issue 3. Pp. 209–230.
6. Grice, H. P. (1969) Utterer's Meaning and Intention. *The Philosophical Review*, 78 (2). Pp. 147–177.
7. Harcup, T. (2014) A Dictionary of Journalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 355 pp.
8. Hart. C. (2016) Discourse, Grammar and Ideology. Functional and Cognitive Perspective. London: Bloomsbury. 216 pp.
9. Hegarty, M. (2019) Modality and Propositional Attitudes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 293 pp.
10. Holliday, W. H., Icard, T. F. (2020) Axiomatization in the Meaning Sciences. *The Science of Meaning. Essays on the Metatheory of Natural Language Semantics.* D. Ball and B. Rabern (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 73–97. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198739548.003.0002
11. House, J. (2024) Translation. The Basics. 2nd edition. London, New York: Routledge. 245 pp. DOI: 10.4324/9781003355823
12. Jaszczolt, K. M. (2021) Functional Proposition: A New Concept for Representing Discourse Meaning? *Journal of Pragmatics.* №. 171. Pp. 200–214. DOI https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.59889
13. Jaszczolt, K. M. (2023) Semantics, Pragmatics, Philosophy: A Journey through Meaning. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. 438 pp. DOI: 10.1017/9781108589338
14. Kai von Fintel. (2006) Modality and Language. Retrieved from: https://web.mit.edu/fintel/fintel-2006-modality.pdf
15. Kai von Fintel. (2022) Teleological Theories of Mental Content. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/content-teleological/
16. Katan, D., Taibi, M. (2021) Translating Cultures. An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators. 3rd edition. London, New York: Routledge. 418 pp.
17. Kripke, S. (1980) Naming and Necessity. Oxford: Blackwell. 180 pp.
18. Langacker, R. W. (1987) Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Theoretical Prerequisites. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Pp. 161–167.
19. Leibnitz, G. W. (1990) Philosophical Writings. G. H. R. Parkinson (ed.). Translated by M. Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson. Everyman's Library. London: J. M. Dent & Sons. 270 pp.
20. Lewis, D. K. (1986) On the Plurality of Worlds. Oxford: Blackwell. 280 pp.
21. Lloyd, D. (1973) The Idea of Law. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 363 pp.
22. Matthews, P. H. (2014) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 443 pp.
23. Nadathur, P., Filip, H. (2024) Telicity, Teleological Modality and (Non-)culmination. *Proceedings of the 39th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics.* Ed. Autry R. at al. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. Pp. 617–625.
24. Noveck, I. (2021) Experimental Pragmatics. The Making of a Cognitive Science. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 252 pp. DOI: 10.1017/9781316027073
25. Palmer, F. R., Greenbaum, S. (1992) Modality. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language.* McArthur (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 664–665.
26. Quintilian. (2001) The Orator's Education. Books 1–2. Edited and translated by D. A. Russell. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press. 430 pp.
27. Recanati, F. (2020) From Meaning to Content. *The Science of Meaning. Essays on the Metatheory of Natural Language Semantics.* D. Ball and B. Rabern (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 113–137.
28. Roberts, A. (2002) Introduction. *Homer "The Odyssey"*. Translated by G. Chapman. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics. 488 pp.

29. Saeed, J. I. (2023) Semantics. 5th edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. 568 pp.
30. Scott-Phillips, T. C. (2019) Speaking our Minds. Why Human Communication is Different, and how Language Evolved to Make it Special. London: Macmillan International Higher Education, Red Globe Press. 193 pp.
31. Shevchenko, O. I. (2024a) Telos-based Reflective Constituents of Meaning in Political Discourse. *New Philology.* no. 95. pp. 79–89. DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2024-95-11
32. Shevchenko, O. I. (2024b) Linguistic Representation of the 'Telos'-based Reflective Sense in Political Discourse. *New Philology.* no. 96. pp. 173–181. DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2024-96-21
33. Shevchenko, O. I. (2025) Variables Affecting Teleological Reflective Sense Formation in English Political Discourse. *New Philology.* no. 98. pp. 193–202. DOI https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2025-98-24
34. The Daily Mail. 2025. 11 September.
35. The Daily Mail. 2026. 10 June.
36. The Daily Mirror. 2025. 8 September.
37. The Daily Mirror. 2025. 9 September.
38. The Daily Mirror. 2026. 28 May.
39. The Daily Telegraph. 2025. 9 September.
40. The Financial Times Business Education. 2025. September.
41. The Financial Times. 2026. 2 June.
42. The Guardian. 2026. 2 June.
43. The Metro. 2026. 15 June.
44. The Sun. 2026. 28 May.
45. The Times. 2025. 3 September.
46. The Times. 2025. 8 September.
47. Walsh, P. G. (2008) Introduction. *Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy.* Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. xi–xlix.
48. Weldon, T. D. (1955) The Vocabulary of Politics. An Enquiry into the Use and Abuse of Language in the Making of Political Theories. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 199 pp.
49. Wilson, D., Sperber, D. (2012) Meaning and Relevance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 382 pp.
50. Woodfield, A. (2000) Teleological Explanation. *A Companion to the Philosophy of Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 492–494.
51. Wright, L. (2013) Revisiting Explanations: Reflections Three Decades on. *Functions: Selection and Mechanisms*. Dordrecht: Springer. Vol. 363. Pp. 233–243.

Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 21.07.2026
Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 25.08.2026
Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 18.11.2026