

Associative Verbal Network of the Conceptual Domain БІДА (MISERY) in Ukrainian

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Abstract. This paper presents a comprehensive study of the associative verbal network of the conceptual domain БІДА (MISERY) in the Ukrainian language. The associative test is carried out in order to obtain statistical and quantitative data necessary for modeling the conceptual domain БІДА (MISERY) and establishing the areas of its intersection with the related concepts of ENVY and GREED. Determining the ‘associative’ distance between the concepts (the index of mutual associative relation) and visualizing the test results we identify typologically common and distinct plots within the associative verbal network. The analysis of collocations in the GRAC corpus allowed us to identify associative statistical patterns of their modeling using the latest quantitative, cognitive and ethnosemiotic methods, and describe the taxonomy of the frames. Furthermore, applying Mutual Information score we revealed the ranges of intersection, gradation, opposition, areas of relative and absolute frequency, typicality, uniqueness, gender markedness, etc., of the responses to the stimulus БІДА (MISERY).

Keywords: associative verbal network, associative test, conceptual domain modeling, text corpus, associative distance between concepts, Ukrainian.

1 Introduction

Researchers claim that the associative test "allows a researcher to confirm the psychological relevance of theoretical assumptions, that is, to represent the associative network of senses ... as a reflection of hierarchical conceptual structures in speaker's mind" [1], and reactions to a particular stimulus can be viewed as the reflection of corresponding conceptual structures that are to a certain extent accompanied by emotions and evaluations in accordance with the speaker's individual conceptual worldview. In addition, the associative test is one of the effective ways of exploring linguistic consciousness and its national and cultural specificity, since it explicates the lexical semantic relations and linguistic stereotypes which are objectively given in the speaker's mind [2]. According to the authors of *Polski słownik asocjacyjny*, it is aimed at analyzing the ways of describing, interpreting and perceiving the world, its evaluative categorization by the native speakers, to reproduce the "kulturowo utrwalone systemy znaczeń" reflecting the mental structures that function in the linguistic consciousness [3].

There are a number of associative dictionaries and associative tests in Ukrainian psycholinguistics, including *The Dictionary of Associative Norms of the Ukrainian*

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Language by N. Butenko [4]. N. Butenko conducted an experiment in 1974-1975 with the students of Lviv higher educational institutions aged from 18 to 30 years, whose mother tongue was Ukrainian, believing that students were “a mature and at the same time appropriate group of the population for a mass test” [4]. N. Butenko argued that occupation and gender had little impact on respondents' answers [4]. The questionnaire contained 133 stimulus words, based on Kent-Rozanov's list and supplemented with variant equivalents of words on that list [4]. Unfortunately, the reactions are not distributed by gender and professional field in that dictionary. The author of the dictionary also made an interesting note that the weather data had been recorded, however, that information was not interpreted in any way.

In 1989 N. Butenko's *Dictionary of associative attributes of nouns in Ukrainian* was published [5], combining the idea of associative and attributive dictionaries. This dictionary is based on the results of AT (hereinafter referred to as the associative test) with 200 respondents receiving a list of 35-40 nouns, to each of which five to seven attributes were to be provided (except pronouns and ordinal numbers) [6]. The preface states that the stimuli were the most commonly used nouns of the Ukrainian language [6], however, it should be noted that this statement is rather doubtful. The stimulus words included 816 nouns [5], such as *абажур, абрикос, аварія, автобус, автомат, автомобіль, автор, агітатор, агроном, адвокат, адреса, айстра, академік* (*lampshade, apricot, accident, bus, vending machine, car, author, agitator, agronomist, lawyer, address, aster, academician*), etc. It is obvious that the stimulus words do not belong to “the most common nouns”.

The Ukrainian-language material is also presented in the *Slavic Association Dictionary: Russian, Belarussian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian* [7]. In 2007, S. Martinek published the *Ukrainian Associative Dictionary* [8]. The author used the list of 841 stimuli, “where words of different parts of speech are extensively represented: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, etc. This list includes words from the previous Ukrainian associative dictionaries [8]. This dictionary contains such stimuli as *бідний, бідність, бідніти, бідно* (*the poor, poverty, to become poor, poorly*), which makes it impossible to trace the stability / variability of associative reactions. In addition, there are a number of ‘specialized’ associative dictionaries [9].

The approach proposed in this study makes it possible to find out the specificity of the associative verbal network (hereinafter referred to as AVN), in view of the statistics and taxonomy of the frame structures and inter-conceptual associative relations. I. Sternin and Z. Popova claim that “the cognitive interpretation of the results of associative tests can be carried out by describing psycholinguistic significance, but it can also be carried out directly by the direct cognitive interpretation of associations” [10]. In general, our approach is theoretically and methodologically grounded in the experimental psycholinguistic research [11; 12; 13; 14; 15], cognitive science findings suggesting representation of concepts as frames [16] and exploitation of such findings in NLP, in particular, creating a network (or a graph) of concepts, and automatically learning the different patterns of association between concepts [17].

The results of the associative test conducted in 2019 are the material of this study. The characteristic feature of this AT is the fact that it was carried out ‘without coercion’, in other words, the test was mostly done by the Internet users of their own free will: 194 respondents, including 99 women and 95 men of the following age groups: 14-18 – 9.79%, 19-24 - 50%; 25-34 - 14.43%; 35-43 - 12.89%; 44-59 - 11.86%; 60-74 -

1.03%. A few more people out of those who have completed the test specialize in humanities. The respondents were given 67 stimuli, including *біда, бідувати; бідна як; бідний як* (*misery, to be miserable; miserable as (f); miserable as (m)*).

2 The Associative Test Methodology

Describing the methodology for conducting the AT, the Russian researcher A. Baranov emphasizes that respondents should give responses on the spot. In our opinion, N. Butenko's instruction is indicative in this sense: “<...> After every stimulus word is given to you, write down the first word that comes to your mind in connection with the stimulus. Then move on to the next word. Always answer in one word; do not omit the words <...>. Do not look away, do not look in the neighbor's questionnaire, do not ask him/her. It is important that your answer is individual. Work quickly until you complete the entire questionnaire” [4]. Presenting the methodology for conducting AT, O. Ulanovich emphasizes that respondents are to answer within a limited period of time, but the author does not indicate the exact time [18]. S. Martinek states that the respondent spent 5-7 seconds on each response during her experiment [8]. The remarks about ‘not thinking’ and omitting words are symptomatic in this context. Unfortunately, an experimenter cannot claim that a respondent gave the response ‘without thinking’ that it was the first word that came to mind. In our opinion, indicating non-omission puts a certain pressure on a respondent. The outcomes of our testing show that the respondents provided responses without omitting stimuli, mostly until the middle of the given list, by the end of the list the number of responses decreased. Even at the beginning of the list, some respondents put ‘no association’ or a dash mark indicating no response. Thus, 194 people took part in our experiment, however, for example, the stimulus *біда* (*misery*) received 171 responses.

Another problem is the ‘regularity’ or even ‘normativity’ of responses. A. Goroshko states that association is “a relation formed under certain conditions between two or more mental entities (feelings, acts, perceptions, ideas, etc.); the effect of this relation – the actualization of association – is that the emergence of one member of association regularly triggers the emergence of the other one (others)” [19]. The statement concerning the regularity of reactions raises some doubts, in particular about the ‘degree’ of regularity. In this regard, it is important, according to Yu. Ulyanov; “... the perceived word (stimulus) generates in our mind a boundless system of relations and relationships that reflect the images of objects, phenomena, concepts, actions and words, our emotional state at that moment, as well as the life experience of the individual” [20]. In other words, the regularity of emergence of certain associations may be peculiar to a particular period of a linguistic community existence due to the shared experience of the speakers. To a certain extent, this is proved by comparing the results of associative tests with native speakers, but in different periods of time. The dynamics of responses, in particular, may be driven by the dynamics of the semiotic system. In addition, we can speak about the typical appearance of certain words in response to certain stimuli, since they belong to the relevant frames.

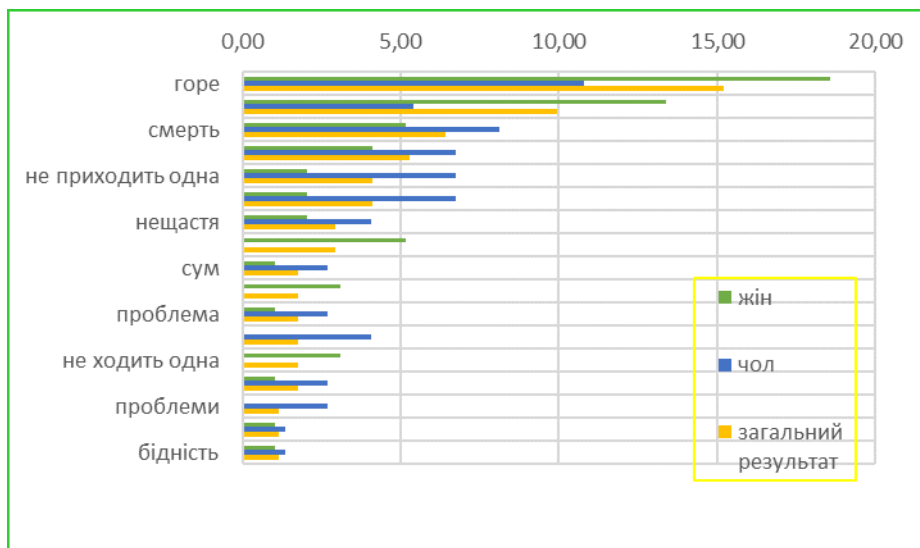


Fig. 3. Most frequent responses to the stimulus *бiда (misery)* (Gender Distribution)

It should be noted that the corpus data are compared (see Table 1), although the frequency of occurrence, or rather the occurrence order, of the corresponding word combinations is different from those in the associative test. Table 1. shows collocations with a component *бiда (misery)*. The analysis of the corpus data shows that the collocation *велика бiда (great misery)* is of the highest absolute frequency collocation model ADJECTIVE + NOUN. However, according to the results of the associative test, the most frequent responses are *чорна (black)*, *страшна (terrible)*. The methods currently available to determine ‘candidates’ for collocations do not allow us to obtain the desired result in terms of determining metaphorical expressions. Today, different methods are used to identify collocations. V.P. Zakharov and M.V. Khokhlova state that most often such methods as MI-score, t-score and log-likelihood are used to detect collocations [22]. The researchers claim that the simplest way to detect a collocation pair is based on the relative frequency, which gives the most common collocation associations, however, this method has a number of drawbacks. Considering this, it is obvious that one of the options could be Mutual Information score (MI) [23]. E. Yagunova and L. Pivovarova concluded that the lists of collocations obtained using MI and t-score differ fundamentally: MI is the best one for distinguishing object names, terms, complex nominations; t-score, on the contrary, works better when distinguishing between ‘lexical bundles’ (derivative functional words, discourse markers) and ‘set expressions’ [24]. A word combination is considered to be statistically significant if the MI score is greater than 1, but the COCA corpus states that the semantic relations between words can only occur if the MI score between them is at least 3. Thus, for example, O. Shyshygina accepts a low MI score range of 1.0–2.9, an average one of 3.0–5.0 and a high one of 5.1 and above [25]. The analysis of the data obtained from the GRAC corpus (see Table 1) shows that it is impossible to detect metaphorical expressions by the abovementioned methods without ‘manual intervention’.

Table 1. Candidates for collocations (the GRAC corpus).

	The number of combinations	The number of candidates	T-score	MI	MI3	log like-li-hood	min. sensi-tivity	log-Dice	MI.log_f
великий	550	405305	22.436	4.5292	22.735	2412.5	0.0013	5.3859	28.587
			42	3	81	4605	6	3	32
тяжкий	120	22828	10.831	6.4829	20.296	842.32	0.0046	6.3402	31.090
			98	7	75	581	7	7	95
новий	116	241141	9.4545	3.0330	16.749	284.53	0.0004	3.8323	14.443
			4	6	02	659	8	4	94
страшний	111	35500	10.337	5.7334	19.322	665.22	0.0031	5.8931	27.053
			63	8	31	927	3	0	41
найбіль-ший	83	43587	8.8292	5.0180	17.768	416.90	0.0019	5.2946	22.233
			7	2	10	955	0	8	94
людський	82	93804	8.4466	3.8947	16.609	290.05	0.0008	4.4908	17.210
			1	8	89	971	7	2	43
невеликий	74	37600	8.3454	5.0656	17.484	376.41	0.0019	5.2594	21.870
			5	0	51	601	7	7	67
справжній	72	86237	7.8880	3.8285	16.168	248.49	0.0008	4.3975	16.426
			1	0	35	723	3	6	02
головний	54	106388	6.4976	3.1105	14.620	137.46	0.0005	3.7437	12.464
			4	0	28	685	1	1	83
гірка	34	4919	5.7813	6.8779	17.052	257.03	0.0013	5.1851	24.453
гіркий			7	1	83	729	2	8	35
гірший	33	10752	5.6345	5.7066	15.795	196.46	0.0012	4.8905	20.123
			7	7	46	919	8	7	78
чорний	20	114615	2.9659	1.5700	10.213	17.011	0.0001	2.2235	4.7801
			7	9	94	93	7	9	6

In addition, the results of the AT reveal reactions related to the descriptive possessive frame: *чия* (*whose*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *своя* (*own*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *моя* (*mine*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *мене* (*me*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *його* (*his*) (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58).

The responses given below are of high frequency: *смерть* (*death*) (f 5.15, m 8.11, total 6.43), *смерть, втрата* (*death, loss*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *смерть, важка хвороба* (*death, serious illness*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *незворотна втрата здоров'я* (*irreversible health loss*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58). They are referred to the definitive type (it can be considered that the respondents have responded using the concepts that for them are examples of *біда* (*misery*), such as "*біда – це ...*" (*misery is...*)). The definitive reactions also include: *хвороба* (*illness*) (f 4.12, m 6.76, total 5.26), *тяжка хвороба* (*severe disease*) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58), *проблема* (*problem*) (f 1.03, m 2.70, total 1.75), *проблеми* (*problems*) (f 0.00, m 2.70, total 1.17), *життєва*

проблема (life problems) (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *війна (war)* (f 1.03, m 1.35, total 1.17), *становище (situation)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *сесія (session)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *провалля (failure)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *пожежа (fire)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *наряд (duty)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *корупція (corruption)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *загроза (threat)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *забагато вдало розташованих дебілів (too many well-placed jerks)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *життя (life)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *гроза (thunderstorm)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *голод (hunger)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *аварія (accident)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58), etc.

A number of responses to the stimulus *біда (misery)* belong to the scenario frame (they are also sometimes referred to as syntagmatic type reactions), such reactions are the activation of corresponding phraseological units in respondents' memory: *не приходить одна (does not come alone)* (f 2.06, m 6.76, total 4.09); *не ходить одна (does not walk alone)* (f 3.09, m 0.00, total 1.75); *сама не ходить (does not walk alone)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *приходить не одна (does not come alone)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *прийшла (came)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *прийде (will come)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *не приходить сама (does not come alone)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *не одна (not alone)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58). In this case, we observe the personification of *біда (misery)* (the metaphorical model БІДА – ЦЕ ІСТОТА (MISERY IS A HUMAN BEING)). Similarly, *навчить (will teach)* (f 5.15, m 0.00, total 2.92); *навчить як на світі жити (will teach how to live in the world)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *навчає (teaches)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *хай не торкнеться (may not touch)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58); *та й годі (and nothing can be done)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58).

Moreover, we included in the scenario frame the reactions related to the experience of the subject of misery in a number of states: *сум (sadness)* (f 1.03, m 2.70, total 1.75); *тривога (anxiety)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *журба (mourning)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *жах (horror)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58); *жаль (pity)* (f 1.03, m 0.00, total 0.58). It should be noted that predominantly women responded to the stimulus *біда (misery)* in this way.

The responses which belong to the scenario frame related to the actions of the subject are not frequent: *допоможи (to help)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58), *допомога (help)* (f 0.00, m 1.35, total 0.58). Such reactions were received only from male respondents.

The index of mutual associative relation of concepts and sub-concepts is an important indicator (see Table 2), which is calculated by the ratio of the number of identical reactions to the total number of reactions received [18]. For comparison, the associative relations between the concepts of ENVY and GREED were analyzed. Figure 4 visualizes the associative distance between the investigated stimuli that verbalize the concepts of БІДА (MISERY), ЗАЗДРИСТЬ (ENVY), ЖАДІБНІСТЬ (GREED).

The index of mutual associative relation between derivatives БІДА (MISERY) and БІДУВАТИ (BE MISERABLE) is 0.040. The common reactions are: *лихо (disaster)* (8), *погано (badly)* (4), *сім'я (family)* (2).

Table 2. The index of mutual associative relation of the concepts and sub-concepts

Concepts/ stimuli	біда	біду- вати	бідна як	бідний як	горе	зздріс ть	зздри ти	зздріс на як	зздрі- сний як	жа ді бн іст ь
біда	0									
біду- вати	0.040	0								
бідна як	0.0657	0.0353	0							
бідний як	0	0.1181	0.573	0						
горе	0.4425	0.0407	0.0422	0.0088	0					
зздрі- сть	0.1392	0.0592	0.0647	0.0222	0.0182	0				
зздрі- рити	0.08	0.1242	0.0063	0.0154	0.1615	0.2140	0			
зздрі- рісна як	0.0067	0.0263	0.1918	0.1204	0.0101	0.1245	0.2601	0		
зздрі- рісний як	0	0.0102	0.2163	0.2491	0.021	0.1027	0.0441	0.3739	0	
жадіб- ність	0.1648	0.0667	0.0157	0.0615	0.0994	0.2901	0.2662	0.1206	0.0478	0

To compare, for ЗАЗДРІСТЬ (ENVY) and ЗАЗДРИТИ (BE ENVIOUS) it is 0.2140. The index of mutual associative relation between *бідна як* (*miserable as (f)*) and *бідний як* (*miserable as (m)*) is 0.573. The most frequent common reactions of the respondents are *церковна миша* (*the church mouse*) (68); *миша* (*mouse*) (68), *бомж* (*tramp*) (27), *жебрак* (*beggar*) (11), *кінь* (*horse*) (7), *церковна миш* (*church mouse*) (6), *собака* (*dog*) (6), *Україна* (*Ukraine*) (4). To compare, for ЗАЗДРІСНА ЯК (ENVIOUS AS (f)) and ЗАЗДРІСНИЙ ЯК (ENVIOUS AS (m)) it is 0.3740. And, for БІДА (MISERY) and ГОРЕ (GRIEF) the index of mutual associative relation is 0.4425. The most frequent common response to the stimulus *горе* (*grief*) is *біда* (*misery*) (32), and conversely the most frequent response to the stimulus *горе* (*grief*) is *біда* (*misery*) (25); common reactions are (presented in decreasing order of absolute frequency) – *смерть* (*death*) (22), *лихо* (*disaster*) (17), *сум* (*sadness*) (11), *нещастя* (*misery*) (8), *погано* (*badly*) (5), *радість* (*joy*) (4), *втрата* (*loss*) (4), *щастя* (*happiness*) (3), *війна* (*war*) (3), *пожежа* (*fire*) (2), *не біда* (*no trouble*) (2), *в Україні* (*in Ukraine*) (2), *велика* (*great*) (2), *жах* (*horror*) (2), *журба* (*grief*) (2), *лишенько* (*disaster*) (2), *навчає* (*teaches*) (2). To compare, for ЗАЗДІСТЬ (ENVY) and ЖАДІБНІСТЬ (GREED) it is 0.2901. Table 3 presents the descriptive indices of mutual associative relation of the concepts (IMAR) in descending order.

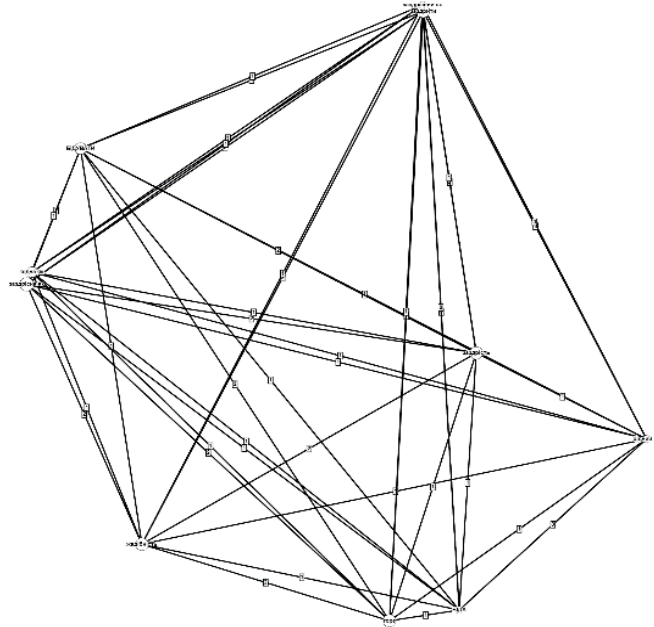


Fig. 4. Associative distance between the concepts of БІДА (MISERY), ЗАЗДРІСТЬ (ENVY), ЖАДІБНІСТЬ (GREED)

Table 3. The indices of mutual associative relation of the concepts

The concept of БІДА (MISERY)	IMAR	The concept of БІДУВАТИ (MISERABLE)	IMAR	The concept of БІДНИЙ ЯК (MISERABLE AS (f))	IMAR e	The concept of БІДНИЙ ЯК (MISERABLE AS (m))	IMAR
горе	0.4425	зздрити	0.1242	бідний як	0.573	бідна як	0.573
жадібність	0.1648	бідний як	0.1181	зздрісний як	0.2163	зздрісний як	0.2491
зздрість	0.1392	жадібність	0.0667	зздрісна як	0.1918	зздрісна як	0.1204
зздрити	0.08	зздрість	0.0592	біда	0.0657	бідувати	0.1181
бідна як	0.0657	горе	0.0407	зздрість	0.0647	жадібність	0.0615
бідувати	0.040	біда	0.040	горе	0.0422	зздрість	0.0222
зздрісна як	0,0067	бідна як	0,0353	бідувати	0,0353	зздрити	0,0154
бідний як	0	зздрісна як	0.0263	жадібність	0.0157	горе	0.0088
зздрісний як	0	зздрісний як	0.0102	зздрити	0.0063	біда	0

Contrastive analysis of collocations and the frequency of metaphorization of word combinations in the text corpora (in particular the GRAC corpus) allowed us, first, to identify associative statistical patterns of their modeling by means of the latest quantitative, cognitive and ethnosemiotic methods; second, to describe the taxonomy of the frames (descriptive, scripted, axiological, parametric, possessive, etc.); and, third, applying Mutual Information score, etc. to find out the ranges of intersection, gradations, oppositions (synonymous and antonymic paradigmatic correlates), areas of relative and absolute frequency, typicality, uniqueness, usability, casualness, gender markedness of the responses to the stimulus БІДА (MISERY).

By establishing the index of mutual attraction and repulsion of the associations within the common AVN (adjacent conceptual domains where we observe the 'reciprocity and derivability of concepts' / and or sub-concepts), the most frequent (absolute) reactions have been presented in ascending and descending order by gender and axiological characteristics. Conclusions have been made based on the statistical typological analysis of comparative phrases, phraseological, socio - and emotionally evaluative responses, mostly semiotically and epigrammatically marked, connected with the vital and family values (LIFE-DEATH, HAPPY, HAPPYNESS, HEALTH, FAMILY, COUNTRY), anthropomorphic metaphors (the metaphorical model БІДА (MISERY) is A HUMAN BEING), stereotypical and prescriptive associations. The in-depth qualitative analysis in terms of interframe merging (the reconstruction of syntagmatic connections with action predicates) made it possible to establish the following areas of respondents' conceptualization: threat, danger, natural disaster, technogenic catastrophe and other destructive forces. This, in turn, made it possible to visualize the associative distance between the stimulus words. It has been revealed that the responses of female respondents, naturally, were closer connected with various fragments of negative experience and internal state of the person, her worries, unlike male reactions, which are mostly reactions related to the concept of COOPERATION (assistance, support in difficult situations).

The conducted associative test (which provides the obtained associative reactions on the basis of weight, relevance of each vertex) gives grounds to argue that higher IMAR is typical of the concepts represented by words belonging to one part of speech or synonyms and it is the lowest in case of derivative responses of respondents, as in БІДА (MISERY) and БІДУВАТИ (BE MISERABLE).

The methodology of determining the semantic distance between words based on the Word2Vec Models allowed us to observe the peculiar isomorphism of adjoining frames and their conceptual correlation within the stimuli БІДА (MISERY) and ГОPE (GRIEF) taking into account the qualitative-quantitative correlation with typical reactions to the stimulus ЗАЗДРІСТЬ (ENVY) and its synonyms – ЖАДІВНІСТЬ (GREED), ХТИВІСТЬ (LUST), РЕВНИВІСТЬ (JEALOUSY), etc.

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