

## BREXIT: COMMUNICATIVE CONFRONTATIONS CREATING NEW REALIA AND JARGON

Sushkevych Olha Valentynivna,  
*PhD,*  
*Associate Professor at the Department*  
*of English Language and Methodology*  
*Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University*  
*olha.sushkevych@gmail.com*  
*orcid.org/0000-0002-7878-949X*

The article deals with Brexit realia, which are associated with Brexit Day. The paper reveals the prerequisites of the departure of the Commonwealth from the EU as the background for new conceptual phenomena in the language and minds. We exemplify contextual realization of new Brexit Lexicon depending on the communicative stakeholders of the process.

**The purpose of the paper** lies in defining and analyzing new realia, their contextual realizations and related jargon, which sprang into existence in the first month after Brexit Day (before the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK).

**The tasks of the paper** are to establish the prerequisites of Brexit realia, identify their communicative stakeholders and their impact on the contextual realization of new realia and jargon related to Brexit Day.

**The main research methods** included data retrieval to identify new Brexit realia in the mass media; discourse analytic method to study a wide context of new Brexit realia verbalization; contextual analysis to trace jargon variations of the realia.

**The results of the research** show that Brexit Lexicon was enriched with several new realia, which are the evidence of the authorities' attempts to improve different spheres of life and clarify the relationships with Brussels. Due to the principle of language economy previously used realia and jargon enriched their denotative meanings and contextual realization. It was established that general public has little idea and understanding of Brexit realia. That is the reason why authoritative dictionaries, mass media, and official organizations summarized these lexical items in the form of small glossaries. There turned to be two opposing camps, which dramatically reflect euro optimistic or pessimistic scenarios of further relations with Europe.

**Conclusions** reveal that Brexit Day realia and related jargon which verbalize the change of the UK status in the EU, attempts to improve life of the Commonwealth. The contextual realization of realia largely depends on the point of view of communicative stakeholders and their interpretations addressed to the public as well as politicians.

**Key words:** Brexit Day, Deal, Brexicon, integrated realia, communicative stakeholders, verbalization, wide context.

## БРЕКСІТ: НОВІ РЕАЛІЇ ТА ЖАРГОН НА ПЕРЕТИНІ КОМУНІКАТИВНИХ КОНФРОНТАЦІЙ

Сушкевич Ольга Валентинівна,  
*кандидат філологічних наук,*  
*доцент кафедри англійської мови та методики її навчання*  
*Уманського державного педагогічного університету*  
*імені Павла Тичини*  
*olha.sushkevych@gmail.com*  
*orcid.org/0000-0002-7878-949X*

У статті йдеться про реалії Брексіту, які пов'язані з днем Брексіту. Розкриваються передумови виникнення нових концептуальних явищ у мові та свідомості громадян. Ми демонструємо контекстуальну реалізацію нового Брексікону, на який впливають комунікативні стейкхолдери.

**Мета статті** полягає у визначенні та аналізі нових реалій та пов'язаного з ними жаргону у контекстуальній реалізації, які виникли у перший місяць після дня Брексіту (до спалаху COVID-19 у Великобританії).

**Завдання статті** – встановити передумови реалій Брексіту, визначити комунікативних стейкхолдерів та їх вплив на контекстуальну реалізацію нових реалій та жаргону, пов'язаних із днем Брексіту.

**Основні методи дослідження** включають: аналіз даних для виявлення нових реалій Брексіту у засобах масової інформації; аналітичний дискурс-аналіз для вивчення широкого контексту вербалізації нових реалій Брексіту; контекстуальний аналіз для визначення різноманіття жаргону в межах вербалізації окремих реалій.

**Результати дослідження** показують, що лексикон Брексіту був збагачений кількома новими реаліями, що є свідченням спроб влади покращити різні сфери життя та визначити подальші стосунки з Брюсселем після проголошення дня Брексіту. Завдяки принципу мовної економії раніше використовувані реалії та жаргон збагатили своє денотативне значення та контекстуальну реалізацію. Було встановлено, що широка громадськість має недостатнє уявлення й розуміння про реалії Брексіту. Саме тому авторитетні словники, засоби масової інформації та офіційні організації узагальнили ці лексичні одиниці у вигляді невеликих глосаріїв. Сформувався два табори, які різко протилежно відображають єврооптимістичні або песимістичні сценарії розгортання подальших відносин із континентальною Європою.

**Висновки** показують, що реалії дня Брексіту та пов'язаний із ними жаргон відображають зміну статусу Великобританії в ЄС, намагання покращити життя Співдружності. Контекстуальна реалізація реалій залежить від точки зору комунікативних стейкхолдерів та їх інтерпретацій, адресованих як до громадськості, так і політиків.

**Ключові слова:** день Брексіту, Угода, Брексікон, інтегровані реалії, комунікативні стейкхолдери, вербалізація, широкий контекст.

## 1. Introduction

Brexit as a complex social, economic, political and cultural phenomenon of modern times deserves special attention in regard to its pragmatic influence on British and non-British societies. It rises a new era not only in the internal and external affairs but also presupposes the change of beliefs and values, points of view and regulations, ways of life resulting in what ordinary citizens as well as politicians of Great Britain and other countries say and believe about their lives after Brexit. Being quite a lasting process between 2010 and 2020s, it has predetermined the emergence of the so-called Brexit lexicon (realia and jargon terminology as well as collocations, set expressions, and idioms etc.) to verbalize the process itself, its participants, objects, people's feelings and the consequences.

**Problem statement.** Controversial points of view on Brexit develop new realia, which are the prerequisites of new jargon terms and their contextual variations. These conceptual items have not been studied with the instruments of pragmatic linguistics taking into account their complex economic, social, political and cultural background and potential.

**Analysis of the related studies and recent publications.** Generally speaking, the correlation between reality and its lingual representation – spoken or written – became the focal point of studies for philosophers and linguists starting from Aristotel, H. Hegel, H. Steinthal, M. Heidegger, H. Gadamer, A. von Humboldt, F. de Saussure, A. Potebnia to N. Chomsky, M. Bakhtin, R. Kolshansky, V. Rudnev, O. Chernobrov, O. Ahmanova, G. Tomahin and others.

The linguist, philosopher, political publicist N. Chomsky regards lingual reality as a cognitive, psychic and verbal reflection of the surrounding world/relative reality by a homo loquens (Chomsky, 2014).

The philosopher, linguist, and culturologist V. Rudnev addresses the linguistic dimension of reality as one of the possible options to develop relatively objective reality. Human lingual reality is quite selective while verbalizing necessary and essential elements of the surrounding social, economic, political, cultural or natural reality. For instance, some animal's footprints could be understood only by the connoisseurs (Rudnev, 2000).

O. Chernobrov associates lingual realia with a definite social, national, political group of people sharing common background knowledge, which means understanding more than saying. The researcher differentiates between "proper" and "alien" information (Chernobrov, 2005). A person can gain "proper" background information if he or she belongs to some group. At the same time, the "alien" one is shared among members of another group and it is not understandable for other nationalities until they study it intentionally.

In our paper we follow the definition of realia provided by O. Ahmanova: realia are "extra-linguistic factors such as state system, history and culture of some nation, language contacts of the native speakers, and other factors regarded from their verbalization in a specific language" (translation – ours) (Ahmanova, 2004: 381).

G. Tomahin also shares the above-mentioned idea. He highlights the difference between realia and other words and expressions meaning that realia deeply connect three components: some phenomenon they denote with some national group in some historic period (Tomahin, 1997: 14).

Realia are key phenomena to understand linguistic reality of a definite country, nation or culture as well as their relative subjective or objective reality (Tkachuk, 2017; Skybytska, 2014; Avdeenko, 2014).

**The purpose of our paper** lies in defining and analyzing new realia, their contextual realizations and related jargon, which sprang into existence in the first month after Brexit Day (before the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK).

**The tasks of our paper** are to establish the prerequisites of Brexit realia, identify their communicative stakeholders and their impact on the contextual realization of new realia and jargon after Brexit Day.

### 2. New realia and Brexit prerequisites

Fundamental changes in British and European societies could be hardly regarded as those only bringing new vocabulary and developing semantic meanings. It is a much wider process with the reference to integrated economic, political, social, lingual, and cultural phenomena, which we can define as realia. Thus, in our paper, we regard lingual realia in correlation with social, economic, political and cultural ones. The first represents the latter in terms of verbalized background knowledge and information. For instance, *Brexit* and *Brexit deal* are realia raising new lexical items and developing new or additional semantic meanings.

Brexit realia bring new jargon, namely, terms which correlate with realia but do not always fully coincide with them, e. g. *Brexit* is both a reality and term; *Brexiticon* (Brexit lexicon) is a jargon term to denote a Brexit glossary rather than a reality.

Let us start from identifying the initial reality and term *Brexit* that entered the English language in 2012 as a result of blending: *British* (or *Britain*) and *exit Brexit* = British + *exit*. It became quickly used for "the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2019). *Brexit* was formed after the previous pattern of *Grexit*, namely when the European club faced the Greek economic crises in 2009.

To understand crucial changes in European society, which led to new integrated realia, it is necessary to clarify the prerequisites of Brexit, namely:

- not following national priorities in economics due to directives and restrictions of the EU (e.g. deep military crisis in British services (low modernization and financial support, poor technical condition as a member state of NATO within the EU);
- a range of social and economic problems in each country of the EU;
- "compensating" function of the locomotive countries, namely, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and the frugal four (the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Denmark) in the EU among 28 members of the European club;
- the high share of British financial "solidarity support" (quotas) in the EU budget;
- immigration and refugee crisis resulting from European tolerant attitude to EU and non-EU migrating individuals.

The above-mentioned points are in the basis of the newly sprang into existence integrated realia, which reflect the attempts to improve the situation in some spheres of the UK’s national economy after the Brexit Day.

On having analyzed 25 Online Dictionaries, 245 news on Brexit, 50 politologists’ pages, and 12 video lessons on Brexit lexicon we conclude that general public has a vague idea about Brexit realia and jargon, and even vaguer idea about their contextual realization, and variations. Such notions as *Article 50*, *WTO rules*, *Divorce Bill*, *settled status* and many others are hardly understandable for people who are not deep in the matters. On the one hand, that is the reason why some online resources try to summarize Brexit lexicon and define the lexical items, e.g. “Oxford Learner’s Dictionary”, “BBC Brexit lexicon”, “Glossary of Brexit terms” in Wikipedia, etc. On the other hand, social networks and services have launched a question – answer format for frequently searched realia, and terms. For instance, BBC news tries to satisfy visitors’ inquiries in the following way:

“*Confused by all the Brexit jargon in the news? Here’s a glossary to demystify commonly used EU-related terms*” (BBC News, 2020).

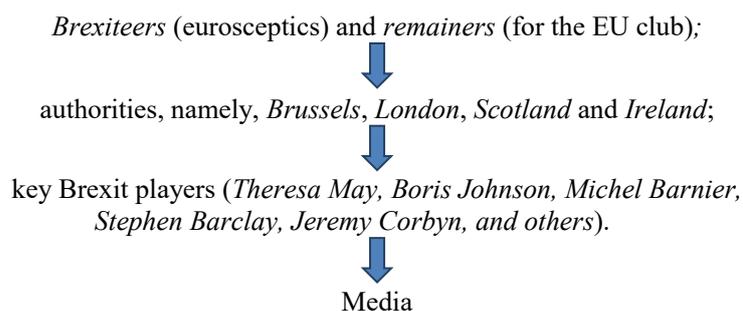
### 3. Contextual realization of Brexit realia and jargon

The scope of Brexit realia and jargon enriches gradually with the new stages and events in this process. There were 32 jargon terms according to “Oxford Learner’s Dictionary” in January 2020 and “Brexit Glossary” published by the House of Commons on December 17, 2019. Still, the emergence and development of Brexit lexicon are currently happening in various contextual variations. For instance, there was an initial reality to denote the trading, migration and ecological rules and standards between the UK and the EU after Brexit, so-called, *deal*. Still, the discussions being quite hard, involving all the key players, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was ready to exit the EU in terms of “*deal or no deal*” (The Guardian, 18.10.2019). That means the Commonwealth leaves the European Club whether with an agreement or without it. Thus, before January 31, 2020 (Brexit Day) we can come across the term *trade deal* only, which means free market between the EU and the UK but no other regulations imposed from Brussels. On February 3, 2020, during the Brexit talks in Brussels, British authorities identify it as a *post-Brexit trade deal*. That very day Michel Barnier, European chief Brexit negotiator, defines it as “*a highly ambitious trade deal*” with the reference to the prescriptions that “*the UK should do firstly, ..., secondly, ... and thirdly, ...*” (BBC, 03.02.2020).

Still, new realia are the recalling of the old ones. So, according to the Guardian: “*The new Brexit deal is essentially the old Brexit deal with a new chapter on the protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland and a few key tweaks to the political declaration*” (The Guardian, 17.10.2019). Here we can trace the references to the so-called *the Good Friday agreement* which set “...the common travel area and other rights contained in *Theresa May’s withdrawal agreement of 2018*” (The Guardian, 17.10.2019). The latter meant the smooth transition from the European club but all three improved and more palatable versions of the deal were rejected by the parliament. That is how *May’s agreement* became *Withdrawal Agreement* leading to her resigning from the office in June, 2019.

### 4. Communicative stakeholders of Brexit

Thus, it is obvious that new Brexit realia are a spectrum of jargon with contextual realization, which reflects points of view and priorities of different parties involved. It means high-speed transformations touch all the stakeholders of Brexit, namely:



The correlation of all the stakeholders is so dramatic that it results in emotionally exaggerated contextual variations of Brexit: *Brexit drama*, *Brexit revolution* (The Guardian; BBC, January – February 2020).

Communicative controversy embraces all the stakeholders of Brexit and identifies the way they perceive, reflect and verbalize it. For instance, *Brexit Day* arose pluralism of ideas expressed and registered in the BBC news:

*Boris Johnson*: “Real national renewal and change” (Jan. 31, 2020).

*Brussels*: “Old friends and new beginnings”, “subtle solitude” (about Britain after Brexit) (Feb. 1, 2020).

*BBC*: “UK officially departs EU”. “The UK is no longer a part of the club”. “It is no longer in the room”. “The start of the new era of relations with the EU” (Jan. 31, 2020)

In London, ordinary people expressed their ideas in different ways on January 31, 2020.

*Brexiters*: “... a cause for celebration”; “... being free from EU constraints: ... we can make our own laws”; “We’re out!” (BBC, 2020).

*Remainers*: “Independence for Scotland!”; “There will be more concessions”; “Much more distant economically from the EU” etc. (BBC, 2020).

## 5. New realia after Brexit Day

In the UK and Brussels immediately after Brexit Day new realia verbalize solid changes in all spheres of life (political, social, economic, cultural, etc.), although the transition period to agree upon further relationships is expected up to the end of 2020.

One of the fundamental changes touches the UK status in the UE. The formulations for British diplomatic services in Brussels have been changed lowering down the flag of the Commonwealth:

From “*UK Mission to the European Union*” to “*UK representation to the EU Brussels*”.

What does “**mission**” mean and how different is it from “**representation**”?

According to “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English” “UK **Mission** to the European Union” could be regarded in several meanings: 2. an important **job** that someone has been given to do, especially when they are sent to another place; 4. the **purpose** or the most important aim of an organization; 5. a group of important people who are sent by their **government** to another country to discuss something or collect information = delegation (LDCE, 2018: 1115).

Correspondently, **representation** means: 1. when you have someone **to speak**, vote, or make decisions for you; 3. the act of representing someone or something (LDCE, 2018:1856).

So, “UK representation to the EU Brussels” is reduced to officially **speaking** for the interests of the Commonwealth instead of **doing a job with an important purpose from the British government** in the European Union.

Another new reality after the Brexit Day – *Brexit disclaimer* – touches the cooperation in education, research, culture, and sports done through the European Commission, more specifically, the Erasmus+ programme. After the Brexit Day, the official site of the Commission developed a page devoted to Brexit disclaimer with the following content:

“*How will Brexit impact the Erasmus+ programme?*”

*The Withdrawal Agreement foresees that the UK will continue to participate in the current 2014–2020 EU programmes, including Erasmus+, as if the UK was an EU Member State until the closure of the programmes. This means that UK beneficiaries can continue to take part in grants awarded under the current MFF until their end date, even if it is after 2020.*

*The possible participation of the UK in future programmes after 2020 will depend on the outcome of the overall negotiations on the future relationship between the two parties”* (Erasmus+, February 11, 2020).

*Brexit disclaimer* within the Erasmus+ programme states the possibility and intention to cooperate with the UK. Still, the possibility to pursue does not go in line with the dictionary’s definition:

*disclaimer* “a statement that you are not responsible for or involved with something, or that you do not know about it – used especially in advertising or legal agreements” (LDCE, 2018: 356).

Moreover, National Erasmus+ offices suggest choosing other possible partners rather than in the UK.

Realization of Brexit principles in February 2020 arose another integrated reality – *the UK points-based immigration system* – a necessary step towards regulation and reduction of migration flows to the UK. According to the policy statement published on Wednesday, 19 February 2020, to get a visa, applicants must gain so-called *points*, namely, 70 points in the following categories:

- get a job from an “approved employer” at an “appropriate skill level” (25 points);
- speak English (25 points);
- earn at least £25,600.

“The candidates can gain extra points for having better qualifications (10 points for a relevant PhD; or 20 points for a PhD in science, technology, engineering or maths) or an offer of a job in which the UK has a shortage (20 points), even if they don’t earn as much money” (BBC, 19.02.2020).

Thus, *the UK points-based immigration system* will allow highly qualified professionals to contribute to the national economy and reduce the number of unqualified ones. That quite changes the understanding of a migrant who should be *valuable* – “*high-value*” migrants.

The new immigration system being a controversial issue in British society and politics predetermined quite opposite views revealed by authorities. For instance, on February 19, 2020 Priti Patel, UK Home Secretary, expressed her ideas in the following way, “This is **the first time in decades** the government has been able to take back control over, run its own migration system after we’ve left the European Union... We will get migration numbers down... It is important what skills you can bring to UK. **Success is to get vibrant economy supported by high skills** from individuals coming to our country on the points-based system that can contribute to our economy” (Time, 19.02.2020).

Priti Patel dynamically employing tense forms from Present Perfect to Future Indefinite highlights the results and prospects of UK departure from the EU, namely, the control over the situation and the numbers of migration reduced. The keyword *success* refers to both the new immigration system and potentially vibrant economy supported with highly qualified skills of migrants.

At the same time, Diane Abbott, Shadow Home Secretary, Labour Party, is quite critical about the system, “<...> Talking about immigrants as if they were a problem is not the kind of **leadership** the government ought to offer. We want a *fair system*” (Time, 19.02.2020).

As we have already mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the immigration crisis was one of the reasons for the UK to leave the EU. This very problem was one among the first issues being addressed by the government first hand. Still, Diane Abbott born to a migrants’ family represents the interests of humiliated migrants. In this respect, *leadership* means valuing all people despite their professional achievements offering a fare system.

## 6. Conclusions

In comparison with other lexical items, realia are deeply connected with some nation or country in a definite period. Correspondently, Brexit realia and related jargon have been entering not only the language but also the minds of people

through relatively objective reality, everyday life of the UK and the EU. Brexit realia are characterized by their integrated character predetermined by a many prerequisites – historical, social, economic, and cultural. For general public, such a complex background makes them vague and hard for understanding. Thus, their contextual realization largely depends on the point of view of communicative stakeholders and their interpretations.

The following research can focus on the pragmatic and functional peculiarities of Brexit realia over the whole Brexit period. Still, nowadays in terms of the outbreak of Covid-19 in Europe starting from March 2020, European *exit* realia can be on the way due to a range of communicative, political, and economic confrontations.

#### Bibliography:

1. Chomsky N. Language Design, 2004. URL: <https://cutt.ly/iyD1O8D> (Last accessed: 04.04.2020).
2. Руднев В.П. Прочь от реальности: Исследования по философии текста. Москва : Аграф, 2000. 432 с.
3. Чернобров А.А. Теория имени и культурный «менталитет». Москва : Порталус, 2005. URL: <https://portalus.ru/modules/philosophy/> (Last accessed: 16. 02.2020).
4. Ахманова О.С. Словарь лингвистических терминов. 2-е изд., стер. Москва : УРСС, 2004. 571 с.
5. Томахин Г.Д. Реалии в языке и культуре. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 1997. № 3. С. 13–18.
6. Tkachuk T.I. Realia types and strategies of their translation in frames of cultural translation. *Науковий вісник Міжнародного гуманітарного університету. Сер.: Філологія*. 2017. № 30. Том 2. С. 105–107.
7. Скибицька Н.В. Лінгвокультурні реалії як ключ до розуміння текстів документальних відеофільмів (на матеріалі документального серіалу Бі-Бі-Сі “Seven Ages of Britain”). *Мовні і концептуальні картини світу*. 2014. Вип. 47 (2). С. 319–327.
8. Авдєєнко Т. Лінгвокультурологічні особливості англійських мовних реалій. *Науковий журнал*. 2014. № 1. С. 5–9.
9. Oxford Learner’s Dictionary. URL: <https://cutt.ly/iyD1SqR> (Last accessed: 10.02.2020).
10. BBC News. Brexit: Jargon-busting guide to the key terms. URL: <https://cutt.ly/xyD1DfO> (Last accessed: 16.02.2020).
11. The Guardian. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/> (Last accessed: 18.10.2019).
12. LDCE: Longman dictionary of contemporary English. 6th edition, London : Pearson Longman, 2018. 2162 p.
13. Time. URL: <https://time.com/> (Last accessed: 19.02.2020).
14. Erasmus+. URL: <https://cutt.ly/GyD1FVO> (Last accessed: 11.02.2020).

#### References:

1. Chomsky, N. (2014). Language Design. Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/iyD1O8D> (Last accessed: 04.04.2020).
2. Rudnev, V.P. (2000). Proch’ ot real’nosti: Issledovaniya po filosofii teksta [Away from reality: Studies on the philosophy of the text]. Moskva: Agraf. 432 p. [in Russian].
3. Chernobrov, A.A. (2005). Teoriya imeni i kul’turnyy “mentalitet” [Name Theory and Cultural “Mentality”]. Moskva: Portalus. Retrieved from: <https://portalus.ru/modules/philosophy/> (Last accessed: 16.02.2020) [in Russian].
4. Akhmanova, O.S. (2004). Slovar’ lingvisticheskikh terminov [Dictionary of linguistic terms]. 2-ye izd., ster. Moskva: URSS, 571 p. [in Russian].
5. Tomakhin, G.D. (1997). Realii v yazyke i kul’ture [Realia in language and culture]. Inostrannyye yazyki v shkole. No. 3, Pp. 13–18 [in Russian].
6. Tkachuk, T.I. (2017). Realia types and strategies of their translation in frames of cultural translation. *Naukoviy visnik Mizhnarodnogo humanitarnogo universitetu. Ser.: Filologiya*. No. 30. Tom 2. Pp.105–107.
7. Skybyts’ka, N.V. Lihvokul’turni realiyi yak klyuch do rozuminnya tekstiv dokumental’nykh videofil’miv (na materialy dokumental’noho serialu Bi-Bi-Si “Seven Ages of Britain”) [Linguo-cultural realia as a key to understanding the texts of documentaries (on the material of the BBC documentary series “Seven Ages of Britain”)]. *Movni i kontseptual’ni kartyny svitu*. 2014. Vyp. 47 (2). Pp. 319–327 [in Ukrainian].
8. Avdyeyenko, T. Lihvokul’turolohichni osoblyvosti anhliys’kykh movnykh realiy [Linguocultural features of English linguistic realia]. *Naukovyy zhurnal*. No. 1, 2014. Pp. 5–9 [in Ukrainian].
9. Oxford Learner’s Dictionary. Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/iyD1SqR> (Last accessed: 10.02.2020).
10. BBC News. Brexit: Jargon-busting guide to the key terms. Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/xyD1DfO> (Last accessed: 16.02.2020).
11. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/> (Last accessed: 18.10.2019).
12. LDCE: Longman dictionary of contemporary English. 6th edition, London: Pearson Longman, 2018. 2162 p.
13. Time. Retrieved from: <https://time.com/> (Last accessed: 19.02.2020).
14. Erasmus+. Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/GyD1FVO> (Last accessed: 11.02.2020).

Стаття надійшла до редакції 13.04.2020  
The article was received April 13, 2020