УДК 811.111

ВИСВІТЛЕННЯ CLIMATE CRISIS У ГАЗЕТІ «THE GUARDIAN»

Ковтун Вікторія Валентинівна
студентка 6 курсу Факультету романо-германської філології
Київський Столичний Університет імені Бориса Грінченка
vvkovtun.frgf23m@kubg.edu.ua

LEXICAL PATTERNS IN CLIMATE CRISIS REPORTING IN «THE GUARDIAN»

Kovtun Viktoriia Valentynivna
6th year student of the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University
vvkovtun.frgf23m@kubg.edu.ua

The article is devoted to the analysis of lexical patterns used in the coverage of the climate crisis in the materials of the British newspaper «The Guardian», known for its active involvement in environmental issues. The study focuses on how the choice of words, phraseological constructions and semantic structures affect the perception of the problem of climate change by readers, as well as the formation of public opinion about this crisis.

The article carried out a corpus analysis of texts published in «The Guardian» for the period from 2024 to 2025 to identify the dominant lexical units used to describe climate change, its consequences and possible solutions. The results of the study show that «The Guardian» uses a wide range of lexical devices to increase attention to the climate crisis, in particular by dramatizing the consequences and emphasizing the urgency of action. At the same time, the newspaper avoids oversimplification of the problem, offering readers scientifically sound terminology and a balanced approach to presenting both catastrophic scenarios and opportunities for overcoming them. There is also a tendency to use inclusive vocabulary, which emphasizes the global nature of the problem and involves different social groups in the dialogue.

It is concluded that the lexical patterns of «The Guardian» play a key role in shaping the climate discourse, contributing to increasing environmental awareness and motivation for action. The study emphasizes the importance of the media in constructing public perception of the climate crisis.

Key words*: environmental discourse, media, lexical patterns, noun, adjective, verb, corpus linguistics, climate crisis*

Стаття присвячена аналізу лексичних моделей, що використовуються у висвітленні кліматичної кризи в матеріалах британської газети «The Guardian», відомої своєю

активною діяльністю в екологічних питаннях. Дослідження зосереджене на тому, як вибір слів, фразеологічних конструкцій та семантичних структур впливає на сприйняття проблеми зміни клімату читачами, а також на формування громадської думки щодо цієї кризи.

У статті проведено корпусний аналіз текстів, опублікованих у «The Guardian» за період з 2024 по 2025 рік, з метою виявлення домінуючих лексичних одиниць, що використовуються для опису зміни клімату, її наслідків та можливих шляхів вирішення. Результати дослідження показують, що «The Guardian « використовує широкий спектр лексичних засобів для посилення уваги до кліматичної кризи, зокрема шляхом драматизації наслідків та підкреслення необхідності термінових дій. Водночас газета уникає спрощення проблеми, пропонуючи читачам науково обґрунтовану термінологію та збалансований підхід до представлення як катастрофічних сценаріїв, так і можливостей їх подолання. Також спостерігається тенденція до використання інклюзивної лексики, яка підкреслює глобальний характер проблеми та залучає до діалогу різні соціальні групи.

Зроблено висновок, що лексичні моделі «The Guardian» відіграють ключову роль у формуванні кліматичного дискурсу, сприяючи підвищенню екологічної обізнаності та мотивації до дій. У дослідженні підкреслюється важливість ЗМІ у формуванні суспільного сприйняття кліматичної кризи.

Ключові слова: *екологічний дискурс, медіа, лексичні моделі, іменник, прикметник, дієслово, корпусна лінгвістика, криза клімату*

Introduction: The study of lexical patterns associated with the coverage of the environmental crisis in the British press is relevant for several reasons, which include linguistic, social, cultural and political aspects. In today's world, where the problems of climate change, environmental pollution, biodiversity loss and other environmental challenges are gaining global importance, the media play a key role in shaping public opinion, determining policy priorities and mobilizing public activity. The British press, as one of the most influential media sectors in the world, is an important object for analysis, since its lexical patterns reflect not only linguistic trends but also wider ideological, economic and cultural contexts.

The aim of the article: is to investigate lexical patterns in climate crisis reporting in «The Guardian».

Theoretical background: Language plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of environmental issues, particularly through the use of metaphors and lexical framing in media. The way environmental crises are articulated can significantly influence audience engagement, either

fostering proactive responses or inducing apathy. This response will explore the impact of lexical patterns in the British press on public interpretation of environmental crises. The media often employs metaphors like «climate war» or «climate catastrophe» which evoke urgency and a call to action, framing the climate crisis as a battle that requires immediate attention. (Neagu, 2023)

The use of language in media narratives about climate change significantly influences public perception and emotional responses. Metaphors such as «climate war» and «climate catastrophe» along with emotionally charged terms like «crisis» and «hope,» shape how individuals engage with the issue. This linguistic framing can either galvanize action or foster apathy, depending on the narrative constructed by the media. Terms like «crisis» and «destruction» evoke strong emotional responses, which can mobilize public sentiment towards action or, conversely, lead to feelings of helplessness (Kang, 2023)

The British press, with its diverse ideological spectrum, plays a significant role in shaping public discourse on environmental issues. Publications like «The Guardian» and «The Daily Telegraph» not only differ in their political leanings but also in how they frame and report on climate activism. Analyzing lexical patterns in their coverage can illuminate the impact of these ideological differences on public perception and understanding of environmental crises. Different newspapers utilize distinct framing strategies, which can influence how environmental issues are perceived by the public. For instance, the framing of climate change has evolved over decades, reflecting broader ideological shifts. (Mateu & Domínguez, 2019)

The study of lexical patterns in environmental discourse reveals significant shifts in how the media frames ecological issues, reflecting broader societal changes and scientific advancements. Over time, terminology has evolved from phrases like «global warming» to more urgent expressions such as «climate crisis,» indicating a heightened awareness of environmental challenges and the necessity for immediate action. (Jabeen, 2024) This evolution can be analyzed through various frameworks, highlighting the media's role in shaping public perception and policy.

The study of lexical patterns in the British press reveals how media discourse adapts to new challenges, such as environmental activism and the influence of youth leaders like Greta Thunberg. This adaptation is evident in the evolving language and framing strategies used to discuss environmental issues. The press, divided along ideological lines, reflects different approaches to these topics, with conservative outlets often focusing on economic aspects and liberal ones on moral imperatives. This dynamic is crucial for understanding the socio-cultural impact of environmental discourse in the UK. The following sections explore these aspects in detail. The UK press has shown significant shifts in climate change discourse from 2003 to 2019, with an initial prevalence of advocacy followed by the inclusion of climate sceptic voices post-2008, and a recent increase in public engagement (Gillings & Dayrell, 2023)

Lexical pattern analysis can reveal how the media contribute to or counteract the polarization of society on environmental issues. This is particularly relevant in the context of disinformation and climate scepticism, which are still present in some segments of the British press. The study can help identify strategies used to persuade audiences, as well as identify potential manipulative techniques.

«The Guardian» is one of the world's leading newspapers to actively cover the climate crisis, using language that reflects the seriousness and urgency of the issue. In 2019, «The Guardian» officially updated its style guide, replacing «*climate change*» with the more urgent «*climate crisis»,* «*climate emergency*» or «*climate breakdown*» and «*global warming*» with «*global heating*». These changes have affected its vocabulary, including the use of terms that emphasize the scale, consequences, and emotional weight of climate issues.

Methods: The study of lexical patterns of environmental crisis in the British press using corpus analysis and discourse analysis provides a multifaceted understanding of how the media shapes public perceptions of environmental issues. Corpus analysis provides a quantitative basis by identifying the frequency and contexts of word use, while discourse analysis reveals the ideological and cultural meanings behind these patterns. The combination of these methods is particularly effective, as it combines the scalability and objectivity of qualitative analysis with the depth of qualitative analysis.
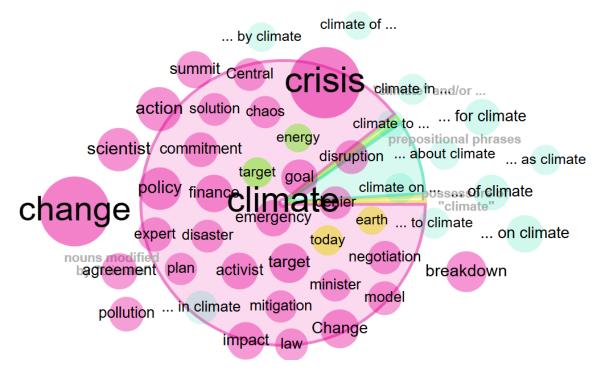
Results and Discussion: «The Guardian» focuses on scientific facts, political debates and the humanitarian consequences of the climate crisis, so nouns like *climate, emissions, people* and *justice* is the basis of the narrative. Nouns such as *flood, heatwave* and *refugee*, evoke strong emotions, which is in keeping with the style of «The Guardian», which seeks to motivate readers to action. Terms as *carbon, temperature* and *emissions* reflect reliance on IPCC reports and other scientific sources that are frequently cited in articles. Nouns *agreement, policy* and *government* reflect the active coverage of international climate negotiations such as the COP.

The frequency of nouns in «The Guardian» articles on the climate crisis was calculated using the Sketch Engine. To identify the most common nouns used to refer to the climate crisis, key semantic categories that dominate such articles were identified. The nouns were analyzed by frequency of use and their role in conveying the main ideas of the climate crisis. Below are the main semantic groups of nouns that are most frequently found in «The Guardian» articles on the climate crisis.

1. Climate and environment. This category includes nouns that describe the climate system, natural processes and their changes. They are the basis for explaining the problem of the climate crisis.

Climate – the central concept used in phrases like *climate change, climate crisis, climate emergency*. During the study, 2946 instances of this word were recorded. (Picture 1) Some of these

examples are: *«Visits to Japan's only Shinto weather shrine surge as climate crisis bites Amid the hustle and bustle of Tokyo, the Kisho Jinja weather shrine has become a destination for a new and unusual kind of pilgrimage»*, *«Daishin Kontani, a priest and certified weather forecaster at the shrine, says the number of worshippers concerned about the climate crisis and praying for stable weather seems to have increased over the past two to three years»*. (*Climate Crisis | the Guardian*).

Picture 2. The n-gram of *climate* in the corpus

Temperature – is often mentioned in the context of global warming or extreme weather conditions. The study recorded 772 instances of this word. For example: *«Amid spiking temperatures last summer, 340,000 unionized UPS workers made heat a key issue during labor negotiations with their employer», «The latter can lower vehicle floor temperatures by 17F, the company says.»* (*Climate Crisis | the Guardian*).

Emissions. The study recorded 883 instances of this word. This noun is usually used in the form *carbon emissions* or *greenhouse gas emissions*. For example: *«Susana Muhamad, who will be president of the UN biodiversity summit in Cali in October, said that a singular focus on cutting carbon emissions while failing to restore and protect natural ecosystems would be «dangerous for humanity» and risk societal collapse « and «The report's authors stress that the most urgent action government can take is reducing greenhouse gas emissions».* (*Climate Crisis | the Guardian*).

Carbon. This noun is used in terms of *carbon dioxide (CO2), carbon footprint, carbon neutrality*. During the study, 173 cases of this word were recorded. For example: *«It's a creative way to connect tourists to the place they're in, but it all underlines how hard it is to truly mitigate your carbon footprint as a tourist: cycling through Copenhagen won't make a lot of difference if you arrived there by plane», «The state must establish strong political constraints forcing the fossil fuel*

industry to reduce its carbon footprint and pay for the damage already caused.» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

2. Natural phenomena and disasters. These nouns describe the effects of the climate crisis, which are often the focus of reporting.

Heat. This noun is a general term for describing nature and its state. During the study, 15 instances of this word were recorded. For example: *«I'm seriously willing to try almost anything to mitigate heat issues,» he said.»*, *«Pacic, who is also a union steward, says these lengths help him to avert heat exhaustion, but the sweltering summer temperatures still take a toll.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Storm. The study recorded 256 instances of this word. This noun is used in the context of hurricanes or tropical storms. For example: *«This school in the district of Calliaqua is one of 20 on the country's mainland, St Vincent, which were converted into shelters for those displaced by Hurricane Beryl, the category 4 storm which tore through the region in early July with winds of up to 120mph (193km/h)»*, *« But many in the shelters remain trapped in the horror of the storm , reliving those hours of terror.»*, *«Before the storm , islanders had depended on rainwater harvested from galvanised steel roofs, but most of them were damaged in the storm, and most storage tanks were blown away, said Marion Isaacs, a community leader and president of the grassroots collective.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Flood. This noun is used to describe disasters caused by climate change. The study recorded 244 instances of this word. For example: *«Within the last three years, the country has been hit by devastating floods , landslides, wildfires, record-breaking heatwaves and the collapse of a glacier in the Dolomites which killed 11 hikers.»*, *«Loss and damage The impact of the climate crisis on poor countries is increasingly apparent in the form of devastating floods , long-running droughts and fiercer storms.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Wildfire. The study found 480 instances of this word. This noun is often mentioned in articles about Australia, California, or Europe. For example: *«In the past month, it said more than half of the wildfires in the north of had been extinguished or brought under control»*, *«The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is active wildfires in Canada, and the cumulative area burned.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

3. Policies, agreements, and actions. This group includes nouns related to international efforts, politics, and activism.

Agreement. This noun is most often used in the context of the Paris Agreement. The study recorded 355 instances of this word. For example: *«John Cashion, a UPS mechanic in Texas's Fort Worth area, said he thinks UPS prepared for its agreement to purchase air conditioned vans ahead of time – by buying more vehicles ahead of negotiations.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian). .

Policy. This noun is used to describe government or international strategies. The study recorded 286 instances of this word. For example: *«And if an employee shows signs of heat related illness, our policy is to immediately seek medical attention,» Mayer said.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Action. This noun is used in phrases such as *climate action* or calls for change. The study found 270 instances of this word. For example: *«And we take corrective action when we become aware that a policy is not being followed.», «Unless we get on top of climate change, unless we start getting coordinated action to adapting to climate impacts in the alpine, we're going to see some negative impacts,»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Government. This noun is often mentioned in the context of responsibility or inaction. During the study, 240 instances of this word were recorded. For example: *«Governments must prioritize renewable energy to combat the crisis»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Activism. This noun is associated with environmental movements such as Extinction Rebellion or Greta Thunberg's speeches in the analyzed articles. The study recorded 224 instances of this word. For example: *«But a parliament officially accusing the institution of 'undue judicial activism ' sends a different, problematic message.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

4. Social and humanitarian impacts. These nouns reflect the impact of the climate crisis on people and society, which is an important focus of «The Guardian» because of their focus on climate justice.

People. A general term for those affected by climate change. The study recorded 954 instances of this word being used. For example: *«I think a lot of people read about the contract last summer and now they think UPS drivers have AC,»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Community. This noun is used for local groups that are affected by climate change. The study recorded 38 instances of this word. For example: *«Indigenous communities are on the frontline of the climate crisis»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Justice. This noun is used in the phrase *climate justice*. The study recorded 15 instances of this word. For example: *«which reference or relate in any way to climate change, 'greenhouse gas' [sic] emissions, racial equity, gender identity, 'diversity, equity and inclusion' goals, environmental justice or the Justice40 initiative»*(Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Health. This noun is used in articles related to the impact of climate change on physical and mental health. The study recorded 8 instances of this word. For example: *«But the , published in the Lancet Public Health , found that the death toll would respond slowly to warming weather and may even rise through people growing older and more vulnerable to dangerous temperatures.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

5. Energy and industry. The nouns in this group reflect the causes of the climate crisis and ways to solve it.

Energy. This noun is used in the context of *renewable energy* or *fossil fuel*. During the study, 30 instances of this word were recorded. For example: «*The Act 1.5 festival is enacting the recommendations of the report, and will address the key emissions areas of transport, food, energy and waste.*». (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Fuel. This noun is most often used in the term *fossil fuel*. During the study, 19 instances of this word were recorded. For example: *«Dozens of have been reported at the site – where millions of battery cells are also produced – including leaks or spills of diesel fuel , paint and aluminium.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Industry. This noun is used to describe sectors that cause emissions. The study recorded 17 instances of this word. For example: *«Massive Attack castigate music industry over climate inaction: 'We don't need to talk.»*, *«am Beaver, policy lead at Protect Our Winters, said alpine communities and industries needed more government support to adapt and become less reliant on shrinking snowfields.»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

The frequency of verbs in «The Guardian» articles on the climate crisis was calculated using the Sketch Engine. Based on corpus studies, several categories of verbs can be identified that dominate such texts.

1. Action verbs (dynamic verbs). These verbs indicate specific actions that people, governments, organizations or activists take. They are often used in the active or passive voice to emphasize responsibility or initiative.

Reduce. One of the most common verbs in climate articles, as it is related to reducing emissions, energy consumption or waste. During the study, 269 instances of this word were recorded: *«Governments must reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 to meet Paris Agreement targets»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Act. Used to call for action or describe initiatives. During the study, 110 instances of this word were recorded: *«We need to act urgently to prevent catastrophic climate change»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian). The verb has a strong imperative tone, which matches the tone of «The Guardian» regarding urgency.

Cut. Similar to reduction, but has a more abrupt, decisive tone. During the study, 49 instances of this word were recorded: *«The UK plans to cut fossil fuel subsidies to meet net-zero goals»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Adapt. Reflects actions aimed at adapting to the effects of climate change. During the study, 46 instances of this word were recorded. *«Coastal cities are adapting to rising sea levels with new infrastructure»* (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Mitigate. Used in the context of reducing the impact of climate change. During the study, 31 instances of this word were recorded. «*Reforestation projects help mitigate the effects of global warming*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

2. Verbs describing processes (dynamic verbs). These verbs describe natural or anthropogenic processes related to the climate crisis and are often used in continuous tenses to emphasize duration.

Rise. Used to describe an increase in temperature, sea level, or emissions. During the study, 48 instances of this word were recorded: «*Global temperatures are rising at an unprecedented rate*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian). This is a key verb to describe the main manifestation of the climate crisis.

Increase. Similar to rise, but more often used for quantitative indicators. During the study, 42 instances of this word were recorded.: «*Carbon dioxide levels have increased by 50% since the industrial revolution*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Worsen. Describes negative changes in climate conditions or their consequences. During the study, 36 instances of this word were recorded: «*Extreme weather events are worsening due to climate change*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Threaten. Used to emphasize the danger of climate change. During the study, 25 instances of this word were recorded: «*Rising sea levels threaten millions of people in low-lying areas*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

3. State verbs (stative verbs). Stative verbs describe a state, feeling, or perception related to the climate crisis. They are less commonly used in long tenses, but are important for conveying the seriousness of a situation.

Be. The most versatile verb, used to describe facts, states, or characteristics. During the study, 114 instances of this word were recorded: «*Climate change is the defining challenge of our time*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian). It is the basis for building complex constructions, especially in the passive voice (*is caused, is driven*).

Seem. Used to express uncertainty or subjective perception. During the study, 34 instances of this word were recorded: «*The impacts of climate change seem more severe than predicted*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Know. Occurs in the context of scientific facts or public awareness. During the study, 28 instances of this word were recorded: «*Scientists know that human activity drives global warming*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

4. Modal verbs. Modal verbs are often used to express necessity, possibility, or probability, which is typical of analytical and exhortative texts about climate.

Must. Emphasizes the need for action. During the study, 69 instances of this word were recorded: «*We must transition to renewable energy to avoid disaster*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Can. Indicates possibilities or potential. During the study, 57 instances of this word were recorded: «*Solar power can provide a sustainable solution for energy needs*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Should. Used for recommendations. During the study, 48 instances of this word were recorded: «*Governments should invest in green technologies*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

5. Causal verbs. These verbs explain why climate change is occurring or its consequences.

Cause. Indicates the causes of climate change. During the study, 174 instances of this word were recorded: «*Burning fossil fuels causes a significant rise in greenhouse gases*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Drive. Similar to cause, but with an emphasis on the driving force. During the study, 143 instances of this word were recorded: «*Deforestation drives biodiversity loss and climate change*» (Climate Crisis | the Guardian).

Conclusions: «The Guardian» is a newspaper that actively covers the climate crisis, focusing on scientific, political, social and environmental aspects. Articles on the topic typically include scientific terms (e.g. climatology and ecology), political and economic concepts (regulation, agreements, emissions), social and humanitarian terms (population impacts, climate justice), and descriptions of natural phenomena and disasters.

The most common nouns in «The Guardian» articles on the climate crisis fall into five main categories: climate and environment (climate, emissions, carbon), natural phenomena (heatwave, flood, drought), policy and action (agreement, policy, action), social consequences (people, community, justice), and energy and industry (energy, fuel, technology). These terms reflect the newspaper's integrated approach to covering the climate crisis, combining science, politics and humanitarian aspects.

The most common adjectives in «The Guardian» articles on the climate crisis – urgent, catastrophic, extreme, unprecedented, devastating, dire and existential – reflect the newspaper's strategy of emphasising the urgency, scale and human consequences of the problem. These words not only convey scientific accuracy but also evoke an emotional response, prompting action.

The most common verbs in «The Guardian» articles on the climate crisis can be divided into several groups: actions: reduce, act, cut, adapt, mitigate, which reflect initiatives and calls; processes: rise, increase, worsen, threaten, which describe changes in nature; states: be, seem, know, which record facts or perceptions; modals: must, can, should, which express necessity or possibility; causality: cause, drive, contribute, which explain relationships.

REFERENCES:

1.   Neagu, M. (2023). CLIMATE CRISIS: ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR THROUGH WORDS? SWS International Scientific Conference on Arts and Humanities. https://doi.org/10.35603/sws.iscah.2023/fs11.19

2.   Kang, H. (2023). A study on the use of vocabulary on climate change and development of climate crisis discourse. Korean Language and Literature, 125, 35–58. https://doi.org/10.21793/koreall.2023.125.35

3.   Mateu, A., & Domínguez, M. (2019). The green battle in the media: A framing analysis of environmental press coverage. Communication & Society, 32(4), 275–290. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.32.4.275-290

4.   Jabeen, I. (2024). The Portrayal of Environmental Concerns: An Ecolinguistic Analysis of Media Discourse. World Journal of English Language, 14(5), 13. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n5p13

5.   Gillings, M., & Dayrell, C. (2023). Climate change in the UK press: Examining discourse fluctuation over time. Applied Linguistics, 45(1), 111–133. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amad007

6.   Climate crisis | The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-crisis