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**Article**

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## **Framing the environment under the pandemic: The anthropocentric perspective (a case study of British online media)**

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### **Abstract**

At the current stage of civilisation development, there arise many issues that attract both public and media attention. One of them is definitely the climate crisis. In 2020, when the world faced the Covid-19 pandemic, there appeared a new incentive to look at our natural world when factories stopped, air flights were cancelled, and human activity was almost at the bottom level concentrating primarily on the big problem — fighting a disease. The pandemic brought to ecolinguists an unprecedented opportunity to investigate how people perceive the natural world in the broad context of a real emergency. This article presents an attempt to look at British online media outlets, both broadsheets and tabloids, and the way the environmental issues are framed on their pages under the circumstances of the world-scale pandemic. The main goal of the research is to find what frames are rendered in the contemporary media discourse in terms of anthropocentrism. The methodology applied to the samples under scrutiny comprised both general scientific methods like those of analysis and synthesis, as well as those of special interest for linguists — critical discourse analysis, multimedia discourse analysis, and frame analysis. The findings of the article present that no matter how difficult the situation is, people remain conservative in their world perception. However, there is slight optimism as some of the anthropocentric frames clear the way for a new paradigm of human-and-nature relations — ecocentrism.

**Keywords:** anthropocentrism, critical discourse analysis, ecolinguistics, frame theory, media discourse

## 1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that newspapers and magazines are very popular sources of information among the British. This is a typical British culture practice of reading outlets both online and in a classical, printed version. This practice can be called a basic national way of receiving information and shaping opinions upon the issues discussed on the pages of these outlets. One of the problems that is widely covered is undoubtedly the climate crisis.

Environmental issues have been in the focus of the British outlets for several decades already. Nowadays, when surfing the British online press, one can find that there are numerous pages, videos, infographics, and other products of journalist work devoted to the state of our planet's health. So, the broad audience of media product consumers is concerned about ecology.

Nonetheless, Boykoff (2008) argues that a situation like this has not always been a firm tendency. For example, at first, the problems of the environment were placed into weather sections of the main articles like some phenomena of weather-related nature. Then, the number of these materials started to increase due to climate change results that could be seen with the naked eye. Grundmann and Krishnamurthy (2010) hold that the final formation of the environmental sections happened in the 2000s when they split up from weather and started to “live” separately with a whole bulk of materials and correspondents covering ecological issues.

On the one hand, it can be accounted for by the influence and the necessity to cover the above-mentioned political documents and, on the other hand, by the real change in weather patterns. For instance, if we google the query “heatwave UK”, the search engine provides 8,000,000 answers in no time, with many of them dated 2020. On balance, we can see that both direct and indirect factors condition the existence of media hype concerning the environment. But is this attention really true or resulting in real actions to tackle the climate emergency? Have the media changed their framing perspective of the environment due to the Covid-19 pandemic? This article aims to answer these questions, as the main goal is to identify what media frames were being created on the pages of the British online outlets in 2020.

### 1.1. Environmental studies

In recent years, even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, a significant number of scholars have paid attention to environmental problems in the area of ecolinguistics. As this work belongs to the research field of this linguistics branch, we find it to be crucially important to describe briefly the state of the art. For instance, Andrew Goatly's article (Goatly, 2018) was connected with anthropocentrism, analysed from the positions of lexicogrammar. His research focused on degrees of latency in the lexicogrammar soon served as a starting point for the author's individual theoretical and practical analysis (Morozova & Zeniakin, 2021).

Arran Stibbe has also studied these human-and-nature relations through the prism of the *Stories We Live By* (Stibbe, 2015) when analysing frames in the economical discourse. The key work that united many ecolinguists was *The Routledge Handbook of Ecolinguistics* (Fill & Penz, 2018). It is also noteworthy to mention Peter Mühlhäusler and his canonical *Quo Vadis Ecolinguistics?* (2020) text. All these texts formed a corpus of theoretical material on ecolinguistics for the present research.

It is noted overall that numerous researches provide a wide forum for discussing complex interdisciplinary problems through the prism of ecology. Ecolinguistics now works as an umbrella term for many linguistic directions that all have something in common: the interconnection between the ecology and ecosystems we live in and our languages that reflect our attitude towards our planet by forming public opinion via the media.

## 1.2. Framing

It is not a secret that one of the key ways to form public opinion is to create frames. The research of frames in terms of environmental issues has been covered in various studies conducted by numerous scholars like George Lakoff (2010), Arran Stibbe (2015), Oleksii Zeniakin (2021a, 2021b, 2021c), and others. The framing process itself, and in the media in particular, has been studied by Minsky (1974), Goffman (1974), Gamson and Modigliani (1989), Pan and Kosicki (1993), Morozova (2018), and many others.

According to the definition given by Goffman, a frame is a “schema of interpretation” that “enables individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label” some phenomenon or information (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Lakoff holds that “frames include semantic roles, relationships between roles, and relationships between other frames” (Lakoff, 2010, p. 72). It is obvious that the frame is closely related to the empirical aspect of human life and their cognition: without experience, without taking the appropriate attitude towards phenomena of life, the formation of the frame is impossible.

The history of the frame goes back to the 1970s, when this term was first used by a specialist in artificial intelligence — i.e., Minsky. The researcher defined the frame as “a data-structure to represent a stereotypical situation” (Minsky, 1974, n.p.). Subsequently, the idea of frame was developed by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), who triggered the application of frame theory in various branches of human knowledge.

Lakoff notes that “we cannot avoid framing” (Lakoff, 2010, p. 4). Each of our actions and evaluations of the situation is the result of framing. In other words, there is a certain set of frames that we use constantly and unconsciously, and this set continues to be enriched with new varieties. The question arises as to how this process works. Lakoff (ibid.) states that the possibilities of changing frames are limited.

One of the mechanisms involved in framing is the introduction of a new frame. A special feature of this procedure is the need for a new frame to be linked to an existing one in order to gain support and full understanding in the recipient’s mind. Another mechanism

is frame repetition and propagation, since it takes time to fix a new frame based on an existing frame or frame system. The third mechanism is negation. When we say that something does not exist, there appears some presupposition in the sentence that activates the negated frame.

Since one of the signs of the media space is its multimodality (Makaruk, 2019, pp. 58-61), there are verbal and nonverbal means of framing media discourse. Gamson and Modigliani classify the verbal means of framing used by the actor of the framing process as follows: actualisation of conceptual metaphors, clichés, history lessons from which conclusions are drawn, descriptions, and visual images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 4).

As this work is an analysis of media discourse, the focus of attention is on such a means of framing as a visual image, because it is a component of a news article. For example, a photo from some place is used to achieve the effect of reliability and objectivity, or simply illustrates the phenomenon indicated in the text. Nonetheless, it can be not only the mere illustrating nature of the photograph/picture: when combined with the verbal context, it can render a visual metaphor, visual metonymy, or other visual tropes. A visual metaphor or metonymy illustrates a phenomenon that is verbalised through a language resource (written speech) and supported by the use of another semiotic code — here the visual one. Thus, the study of the framing of environmental media discourse requires consideration of its multimodal nature.

### 1.3. “Bias” in the media discourse

Another important fact is that of a real media nature, for they are quite frequently dubbed as “the mirror of public opinion”. What is more, the Covid-19 pandemic has sufficiently intensified the effects of online information sources as, under strict rules of the quarantine, no other way but the electronic spread of news was possible. So, the importance of what is rendered by the press grows enormously, because when locked at home, one can rely only on the objectivity of the information received. In this case, when talking about the “objectivity” itself, we may encounter what is called “bias” in the media.

Bias itself is prejudice, “an opinion about whether a person, group, or idea is good or bad that influences how you deal with it” (Longman, n.d.). So, this is like a “smokescreen” or “glasses” that do not allow seeing all the colours without mixing them up with your own feelings.

Robert M. Entman in his article on Cascading Activation Model (Entman, 2003) describes a hierarchy of relations among agents of the framing process, the media, and the public that consume the final frame — the product of journalists’ work. In this context, it is just impossible to imagine total objectivity, taking into account that a journalist is a person who may have their own perspective. Thus, the mode of delivery can vary from the “thesis frame” to “contesting frame” when a point of view is argued partially or completely. A journalist may become an opponent or proponent of the idea they cover. That is why the “tone” and the “level of bias” in a single taken article may be of different natures.

Moreover, in this respect, it is crucial to mention the Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to its postulates, it is the media who choose what topics are covered most frequently or are turned into real “hype”. They might just as well dwarf the situation and place it at the bottom level of public opinion. So, it is a key person, the journalist, who is able to choose what perspective we may obtain when judging this or that issue. That is why it is so important for journalists to champion the proper values of environmentalism when covering the ecological issues as Lakoff (2010) states that values underpin our perception of natural phenomena in a great way.

The “bias-related” issue can become something bigger than the present article, for it can originate from the initial agents of the framing process — be it politicians or ecological activists — whose viewpoints the media cover consequently. We do see the bias in the ecological media discourse as one of the prospects for future theoretical and practical investigations.

#### 1.4. Anthropocentrism

Each frame exists within some methodological paradigm or system of values. Nowadays, like hundreds of years ago, one of the dominant ideologies is anthropocentrism. According to the theological definition, anthropocentrism (from Ancient Greek *ἄνθρωπος* — man — and Latin *centrum* — centre) is the concept according to which a person is the centre and goal of everything that happens in the world; the direction of philosophical and theological teachings that assert the exclusivity of a person as the highest value. An interesting fact is that the foundations of anthropocentrism were formed during the polytheism period (the doctrine of an ordered hierarchy of gods and higher creatures that rule the world) which is partly accounted for by its genesis in the field of ancient Greek philosophy which laid the foundations of critical thinking. However, with the shift to the monotheistic religions where God is interpreted as the only supreme force, the position of anthropocentrism has somewhat weakened, especially in the Middle Ages, when the dominant value system has become theocentrism, in which the main focus is on the fulfilment of God’s laws. In the European society, the pressure of the Catholic Church, which was the main proponent of theocentrism supported by the difficult geopolitical situation, received a sharp and strong response, which was called the Reformation.

The idea of anthropocentrism was developed in the Renaissance with its inherent return to the standards of antiquity, the expansion of human rights, and freedoms beyond religious dogmas. The main principle of the Renaissance was humanism, which is the position of humans as a defining goal and the highest value of society. Full of awareness of its own greatness, the European community began to look for a rational explanation for the phenomena of nature. Such a philosophical and scientific tradition has led to an increase in the level of rationalisation of production, the discovery of new substances and the invention of new methods, but together with a scientific breakthrough, it has imprinted in the minds of the whole enlightened European society that nature is a resource and

mechanism that can be repaired and used to meet human needs, without giving it anything in exchange (McNenny, 2018). The vector of scientific research has narrowed to an integral practical goal which is still relevant today: what application the acquired knowledge will have in the practice of human life. Lakoff (2010) holds that anthropocentrism is one of the reasons for the environmental emergency. We do share his viewpoint, for the results of the research show some proof to this statement.

## 2. Methods and materials

The empirical material of the study comprised articles in British online newspapers *The Guardian* and *Metro* published in 2020. The criterion for selecting sources for creating a corpus of empirical data was the editorial policy and public orientation of the outlets as well as the frequency of requests to the site of outlets confirmed by statistics and popularity amongst readers (YouGov, n.d.).

The first online newspaper is a representative of the so-called “old”, highly intelligent media, focusing on more comprehensive information based on the opinion of recognised experts. *The Guardian* is a British daily newspaper that was founded in 1821. It is one of the most widely read newspapers in the United Kingdom and holds fourth place in the media rankings.

The second outlet is a newspaper with a more liberal editorial policy; such newspapers are called tabloids. On its pages, non-experts can express their own opinion; information can appear as a sensation that does not have sufficient reasons to be reliable, but causes a wide response in society. *Metro* is a popular tabloid in the United Kingdom. However, it is quite young: it was founded in 1999. This tabloid takes the first place, and is the most widely read, which indicates the expediency of referring to it as a source of empirical material because its articles significantly influence public opinion.

We selected newspapers from two opposite “camps” of the British media space for the purpose of unbiased analysis of environmental problems, because this allows us to evaluate the means of framing environmental problems for different groups of readers as objectively as possible, as well as to analyse what frames are common in articles of the Covid-19 pandemic period.

The novelty of the study is accounted for by its being the first one to bring to light the specificity of framing environmental issues by two British newspapers during the Covid-19 pandemic. The object matter of this research is ecological media discourse presented by online editions of British newspapers, its subject matter being verbal and non-verbal means of framing environmental issues in media discourse.

The research aims to bring to light the models of framing environmental issues in online editions of British newspapers during the Covid-19 pandemic by analysing verbal and non-verbal means of framing. The set of data subject to analysis comprises 105 discourse fragments which contain verbal and/or non-verbal means of framing environmental issues. These discourse fragments have been selected by the method of continuous sampling from

62 articles published in online versions of two British newspapers — *The Guardian* and *Metro* — in 2020.

The general scientific methods of this study are those of deduction and induction, analysis and synthesis, comparison and contrast, which are applied at the stage of empirical material selection. Specific scientific methods used in the study include the method of frame analysis applied in identifying the types of framing environmental issues in British online media discourse. The method of critical discourse analysis is used in order to identify the effects of framing, and the method of multimodal discourse analysis is applied to elicit the role of non-verbal means of framing (the correlation between the verbal and the visual modes).

### 3. Findings

In the texts of environmental articles of the two leading British online newspapers, there were found frames with the anthropocentric orientation. There are four such frames: HUMAN IS AN AGENT, HUMAN IS THE CULPRIT OF THE PANDEMIC, NATURE IS THE SOURCE OF THE PANDEMIC, and NATURE IS A SELF-REGULATING ENTITY. As it can be observed from the names of the frames, there is a slight shift from the HUMAN towards NATURE, implying that the NATURE has undergone some sufficient changes as the HUMAN has done. The understanding of this is more obvious when examining the particular examples.

#### 3.1. HUMAN IS AN AGENT

Openness and explicitness in the British anthropocentric environmental media discourse are actualised through the use of the grammatical construction “possessive pronoun + noun”. An additional tool is the metonymic construction “pronoun + predicate”, where the pronoun metonymically means the whole of humankind.

- (1) *‘Tip of the iceberg’: is our destruction of nature responsible for Covid-19?* (Vidal, 2020, March 18)

In this fragment, the conventional metaphor *tip of the iceberg* is used to describe a difficult situation after which the grammatical construction “possessive pronoun + noun” (*our destruction*) is used where “our” is simultaneously an indication of a person — though not a specific one, but a universal one — and the transfer of responsibility to the entire human community; in other words, not to someone individually, but to everyone at once. The evaluation is negative, because destruction involves destroying something and that is always bad. The image (Figure 1) is a visual presupposition: the text on the photo is as follows: “they are friends, not foods”; that is, such a perspective became possible only if animals were used as food products, otherwise the motivation for creating a photo illustration would not exist. This illustration is independent of the fragment of discourse, since it

contains its verbal part (the use of wild animal meat is considered one of the reasons for the transmission of the virus from animal to human). Therefore, a new type of visual image appears as a means of framing: a visual image with a verbal element.



**Figure 1:** Multimodal presupposition

- (2) *If we are to protect our environment, we need to go further and end the relentless pursuit of economic growth and our culture of mass consumption <...>* (Lucas, 2020, September 16)



**Figure 2:** Dependent multimodal imperative

In the second example offered, two main grammatical constructions “possessive pronoun + noun” are used at once (*our environment*) and the pronoun “we” as a subject (*we are to*



*protect*). By using the verb *protect*, there is a presupposition: why protect something when there is no threat? So, the threat exists, and the way to level it is to perform certain actions that are actualised by the imperatives *go further and end*, which resonates with the visual image in Figure 2: the photo shows a girl with glasses wearing a pink protective mask that reads *act now*, and the entry is made in capital letters which sounds like an imperative. However, although such an image belongs to the previously described category of visual framing tools with a verbal element, it still depends on the discursive context, since without this context, it becomes completely unclear why to act. In other words, only the context controls the content of the image.

### 3.2. HUMAN IS THE CULPRIT OF THE PANDEMIC

The assumption about the connection of human activity with a pandemic or possible future epidemics of similar origin has become somehow stereotypical:

- (3) *But a number of researchers today think that it is actually humanity's destruction of biodiversity that creates the conditions for new viruses and diseases such as Covid-19 <...> The resulting transmission of disease from wildlife to humans, she says, is now "a hidden cost of human economic development <...>* (Vidal, 2020, March 18)

In the example given above, the connection between a person who is directly nominated as a creator of actions to destroy biodiversity and becomes a subject is indicated in phrases like *humanity's destruction of biodiversity* and *creates the conditions for new viruses and diseases such as Covid-19* which serves as the predicate of the sentence. The evaluation of human activity is negative and is manifested by the word *destruction*. In addition, the guilt of humanity, namely the pursuit of economic well-being, is supported by the metaphor from the economic discourse *a hidden cost* which also reinforces the negative assessment of the situation, revealing the binary opposition of the concepts of known/hidden, which in axiological terms is identical to the opposition of good/bad.

- (4) *He adds: 'It's the ultimate petri-dish, you're creating the perfect conditions for the spread of diseases.'* <...> (Jones, Hockaday & Mills, 2020, December 02)

This article illustrates the use of the cliché (*petri-dish*) in the sense of “a platform for the growth of something” as well as the involvement of an indefinite personal, universal pronoun *you*, which has metonymical meaning. The predicate is rendered through the present progressive tense with an emphasis on the procedural nature of the action — *you're creating the perfect conditions for the spread of diseases*. In other words, here the author uses an indefinite personal agent of environmental discourse, and the causal relationship is seen in a negative evaluation of universal actions that pose a potential biological threat to people.

### 3.3. NATURE IS THE SOURCE OF THE PANDEMIC

- (5) *Loss of habitat brings animals that carry diseases closer to humans. <...> them spreading new infections by coming into closer contact with humans. So scientists fear cutting them down could cause 'feedback loops' <...> every hectare that is cleared risks a new pandemic. 'Intensive farming and agricultural expansion into wild areas is creating a petri dish for new viruses to emerge.'* (Jones, 2020, May 18)



**Figure 3:** Visual metaphor of activity Process 1-Process 2-Process 3-Result

The nominalised object in the presented fragment *loss of habitat* acts as the subject which has the predicate *brings* while the object presents an unmotivated assumption that animals are carriers of diseases. As we can see, there is a stereotypical idea of the self-regulating nature of processes that are in progress in the environment, because, according to the author, this *loss of habitat* leads to the fact that animals that can be sources of infections approach human homes. The stereotypical nature of such a message is also confirmed by the mechanism of repetition of this frame (according to Lakoff) in the next sentence: *by coming into closer contact with humans*. Further, there is already a grammatical construction “nominalised subject + predicate”, where the subject is *cutting them down*, and the predicate *could cause 'feedback loops'*. This expression *feedback loops* is put in quotation marks, since this is a technical term. That is, the application of a conceptual metaphor with the transfer of the concept of communication from the domain of technology to the domain of the environment is demonstrated here. The following fragment explicitly indicates that deforestation can lead to new pandemics: the noun *hectare* is used as a subject, but its main anthropocentric colouring is in the passive voice with the agent of action obscured as if hectares were cleared by themselves — *every hectare that is cleared risks a new pandemic*. Another

fragment where the application of the conventional metaphor is updated is the last one in the example under study with the phrase *a petri dish* (a term of medical discourse) which is reinforced by the use of the present continuous tense to denote the urgency and modernity of a situation where *intensive farming and agricultural expansion into wild areas is creating a petri dish for new viruses to emerge*. Once again, the researcher faces a situation when the agent of an action, its creator, is transferred to nature. The metaphor of activity is interesting, because it resonates directly with the text of the article and which is shown in Figure 3. On the right side, there are two photos of the result of deforestation; on the left side, there is one photo that is bigger than the other ones showing burning trees; and in the lower right corner, below the middle of the illustration, a certain type of viral infection is shown. In other words, with the close connection of the discursive environment, it becomes clear that deforestation and burning of forests cause the emergence of viruses that are the products of these activities. Interestingly, this image is partly dependent on the discursive context, because the main content can become clear, and the context, delving into the discourse, leads to details. This way of creating an illustration is built into a logical algorithm: the photo consists of several large fragments, and a smaller fragment is concentrated in the middle or bottom, illustrating the result of activities performed on large images.

### 3.4. NATURE IS A SELF-REGULATING ENTITY

The content of self-regulation is manifested in the independent execution and control of processes by a certain object like, for instance, in the following fragment:

- (6) *While no one wants the shutdown to continue, scientists said a pause in fishing could result in <...>* (Carrington, 2020, March 18)

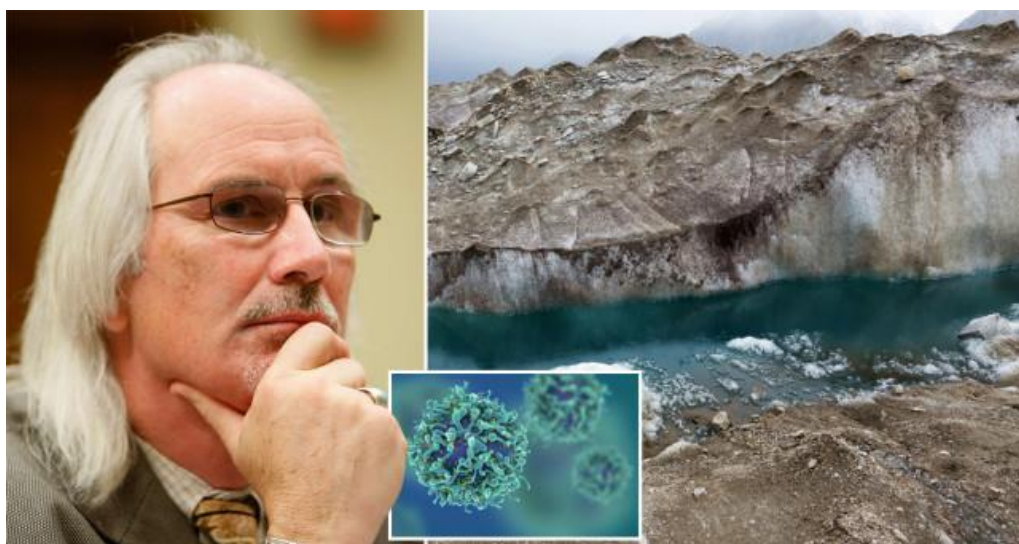
This example uses the expression *a pause in fishing* which indicates the independent nature of the phenomenon, because it is not detailed who exactly is engaged in fishing. The understanding of this is more obvious if we consider this expression in its immediate discursive context, where it serves as a subject and has the predicate *could result in*. This formulation blurs the essence of fishing as an action performed by a person, because the meaning makes it clear that this fishing can do something; that is, the phenomenon becomes the agent of action. This subject rendered by the expression *a pause in fishing* resonates with the visual image in Figure 4, where fishing vessels represent an entire fishing community that has stopped its activities due to quarantine. This illustration, although it becomes metonymic with the context, does not leave it without it; that is, it is partially free from discursive connections, since when the recipient looks at it, a part of the information becomes clear, and the context and details can only be interpreted together with the text.



**Figure 4:** Visual metonymy

Another example of the importance of colour and the complex nature of photo illustration is the image below and the fragment of discourse that resonates with it:

- (7) *A world expert on diseases is warning that frozen ‘ancient microbes’ are a danger to humanity, as rising temperatures thaw the Arctic <...>* (Jones, 2020, May 07)



**Figure 5:** Visual metaphor of the process Point of View-Phenomenon-Result

In this example, all three elements have a corresponding image among the three illustrations in Figure 5. The first image on the left is a portrait of *a world expert*, the second on the right side is the melting of Arctic ice and snow (*rising temperatures*), and the third small one in the middle at the bottom is the corresponding *ancient microbes*. Based on the idea of a fragment of the article, it becomes clear that some scientists predict (point of view) that

as a result of the melting of Arctic glaciers and snow reserves (phenomenon), *frozen microbes* (in the meaning “isolated”) may return (result). Interestingly, this picture has the common algorithm of photo grouping (c.f. Figure 3). From a purely linguistic point of view, the wording used to describe the melting process of the Arctic region is noteworthy — *as rising temperatures thaw the Arctic*. There is an anthropocentric nominalisation of the phenomenon with its sentential transformation into a subject where the agent of the action — the human whose actions triggered the melting process — is not mentioned. In addition, the metaphor of colour is interesting: melting is accompanied by mixing the soil with melting products (water), which turns these components into a grey mass. From the negative interpretation of this process, the following colour symbolism follows: the existence of a conventional opposition of colours white/black, denoting the corresponding axiological opposition good/bad. And the “grey” here is a transitional stage, that is, the previous “white” era has passed, and global melting carries a “grey threat” of the microbes generated by it.

#### 4. Discussion

The frames found provide wide room for discussion as the anthropocentrism is still the dominant paradigm and system of values when we talk about the coverage of environmental issues in the contemporary British media. Humans still believe that processes that happen in nature are triggered themselves, for no human impact can condition these changes. This anthropocentric perspective is rendered verbally in the media.

Nonetheless, there are two frames that can serve as an indicator that such a situation is about to change:

- a) The presence of explicit and open frame HUMAN IS AN AGENT with negative evaluation when human is blamed for the sufficient shifts in the natural patterns.
- b) The presence of frame NATURE IS A SELF-REGULATING ENTITY when there is a slight shift to natural agentivity.

The negative evaluation renders one of the stereotypical viewpoints that humans are completely responsible for what is going on in the environment. That is good too, as the absence of such an evaluation can result in what Lakoff names “hypocognition” — the absence of adequate frames to describe the stereotypical situation.

On the contrary, natural agentivity is mostly rendered through nominalisation. However, this agentivity can clear the way for the frame when nature is the agent of action, presenting a perspective where nature can act, and these steps are to be taken into account by humans. We see the prospects for further investigation in this direction right in the potential determining the ecocentric frames and comparison, both qualitative and quantitative, of the corresponding frames and means of their formation.

These frames provide two wide clusters into which they can be divided: purely nature-

related frames like HUMAN IS AN AGENT and NATURE IS A SELF-REGULATING ENTITY, and pandemic-related frames HUMAN IS THE CULPRIT OF THE PANDEMIC and NATURE IS THE SOURCE OF THE PANDEMIC.

The pandemic becomes the new trigger of framing as no previously-known diseases led to such circumstances as we are observing now. Thus, a wide range of environmental issues were somehow connected with the pandemic. This situation enhances the topicality of the current research and presents the high level of timeliness of the potential researches to follow.

## 5. Conclusion

Environmental problems have sufficient coverage in the modern online media of the UK which indicates a significant interest of society in protecting the environment, finding ways to solve its problems, and analysing the causes of their appearance. Such descriptions and attempts to find the root cause of problems are rendered in the form of specific problem frames which were investigated in this article. The focus of articles on environmental problems acquired a new colour in 2020, as due to the large-scale spread of coronavirus disease, the Covid-19 pandemic has become a new “prism” through which environmental problems are considered. The main methodological paradigm in the British environmental media discourse is anthropocentrism which manifests itself in a number of frames like HUMAN IS AN AGENT, HUMAN IS THE CULPRIT OF THE PANDEMIC, NATURE IS THE SOURCE OF THE PANDEMIC, and NATURE IS A SELF-REGULATING ENTITY.

When covering environmental issues, British newspapers widely used metaphors of various origins (conventional, original, etc.), as well as presuppositions as the main mechanisms for creating implicit meanings. Grammatical constructions are common to express the agentivity of various nature (e.g., anthropogenic).

Multimodal framing tools include graphic images that can be completely dependent on the discursive environment, because they do not acquire significant meaning outside of it; partially dependent, since they carry comprehensive visual information, and some of the information can be perceived without verbalisation; and completely independent. In this case, images can serve as part of a frame, or become a separate frame, provided that they are independent of discursive connections. An algorithm for constructing visual images is highlighted where each component is simultaneously a correlate of the verbal frame element, as well as a system for producing a visual frame of the process, when at least three elements are present in the image, where two are larger than the third and indicate the components of the process, and the third small image is the result of their integration.

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