

Culturally marked collocations in New Zealand national variety of economic discourse

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of culturally marked collocations in the economic discourse of New Zealand. The study of collocations has gained momentum and become the subject of multiple studies connected with the interest for their formation, combinability, translation and stylistic connotations. However, collocations in the New Zealand economic discourse have hardly been explored before, hence it defines the relevance of this study. The purpose of this research is to identify semantic and cultural peculiarities of collocations in the New Zealand variant of English. The article presents statistic data on the frequency of various conceptual types of collocations in newspaper sections. The frequency of collocations used is determined by the quantitative analysis, while the description of the examples chosen has been given using contextual analysis and descriptive methods. Special attention is paid to the cultural specifics of collocations that reflect history, lifestyle, and traditions of the New Zealanders.

1 Introduction

Native speakers have an intuitive knowledge that some words in their language function in fixed combinations and any change to the lexemes of such collocations or their substitution with other lexemes lead to the feeling of inappropriateness of their use in the mind of native speakers and reveals foreign speech. This fact is the most significant in economic discourse, as in the context of economic globalization and developed trade relations among various countries, the language of business has started to be widely used, which determines the importance of studying collocations as an indispensable element of speech during meetings, business talks, economic conferences and so on.

Every national variant of the English language has its own peculiarities and 'cultural realia', or culture-specific elements, which are predominantly manifested on the lexical level.

The New Zealand variant of the English language poses a primary interest for our study, since New Zealand, while having been historically populated by the Maori people, was also colonized by Great Britain and became a destination for a range of migrants from all over Europe. Thus, all this fusion of peoples and dialects is reflected in the lexicon of the New Zealand variant of the English language. By studying its semantic and functional features we

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can learn about the cultural realia, ways of doing business, and economic terminology that are specific to New Zealanders only, as well as analyze collocations from the perspectives of concepts and frames in order to study their mentality.

To meet the objective the following tasks should be solved:

- 1) to define economic discourse and study its principal characteristics;
- 2) to examine research papers dedicated to the study of collocations in economic discourse;
- 3) to provide a comprehensive description and identify semantic and cultural peculiarities of collocations in the economic discourse of New Zealand using the materials of “NZ Herald” economic magazine.

The theoretical background of the research encompasses a critical analysis of linguistic studies on economic discourse and collocations. The article provides statistical data on the frequencies of different types of collocations pertaining to a certain concept. The frequencies of the use of collocations is determined by the quantitative analysis, while the characteristic of the examples chosen is given using contextual analysis and descriptive methods.

2 Culturally marked collocations in economic discourse

The late 20th century was marked by the intensification of scholarly research of discourse. A considerable contribution to the studies of discourse has been made by such scholars as Z. Harris, V.G. Borbotko, T. van Dijk, V.Z. Demyankov, V.I. Karasik, V.V. Krasnykh, etc. In the course of discourse studies two schools of researchers were formed. Some scholars claim that discourse tends to be associated with a certain context and appropriateness [1,2], while others bring it into correlation with a certain historic period and culture [3,4].

There are two approaches to defining the notion of ‘economic discourse’. According to the first one, economic discourse is a system of texts emerging due to the impact of various factors (extralinguistic, pragmatic, sociocultural and others) and united by one subject [5]. The second approach characterizes economic discourse as a communicative event, an integrative totality of individual communicative acts in the domain of economy. Economic texts are the verbal results of such an activity [6].

The language of economic discourse, as reflected in economic texts, incorporates diverse language means, both lexical and stylistic ones; collocations, economic terms and lexis of different genres with the purpose to produce an impact on the reader and persuade them to perform certain actions.

Collocations enjoy a prominent place in economic discourse, for they are used during business talks and in the mass media characterized by the appeal to mass audiences, accessibility for many people and the spreading of the latest news. This fact rationalizes our choice of New Zealand’s economic magazine “NZ Herald” as the material for our study (<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/>).

There is a multitude of approaches to defining the notion of ‘collocation’, however, in this paper we are going to use the definition offered by J. Sinclair: “Collocation is the joint use of two or more words in a text at small/short distance from one another. As a rule, they are separated by not more than four lexemes [7].

From the perspective of the proponents of the culturological approach, the entire culture is understood as a totality of concepts and relations among them. They interpret the concept as the key unit of culture in the human’s mental world, expressed in the speech via various language means including collocations [8]. This opinion is shared by many scholars, including Yu. Stepanov, G. Slyshkin, W. Levelt, L. Trask, L. Talmy, V. Evans and K. Proust.

Despite a rather abstract nature of the concept, it still is more specific than vague category markers (VCMs), thoroughly studied by E. Malyuga and M. McCarthy. In their paper, the authors point out that these phrases also make up a substantial part of business communication and serve as markers of a linguistic identity. However, they are less easily

attributable to a particular concept, as they constitute such general phrases as (*and*) *stuff* (*like that*), *and so forth* [9].

V. Evans [10] argued that concepts are mediators between words and extralinguistic reality. Only those phenomena may become concepts that are relevant and valuable for a certain culture. As a result, they form a sensory image, which is often expressed through metaphor. These are types of symbols or emblems that specifically point to the text, situation or knowledge that created them. Every concept reflects the most important knowledge about the outside world, while all the insignificant ideas are put aside [11].

3 Findings

Having analyzed 360 examples of collocations taken from the Finance and Market Sector segments of the New Zealand economic magazine NZ Herald, we can conclude that the economic discourse of New Zealand is dominated by the following concepts: nature (48%), road (22%), human (16%) and confrontation (14%). You can see the ratio between abovementioned concepts in the economic discourse of New Zealand on the ring chart (Fig. 1).

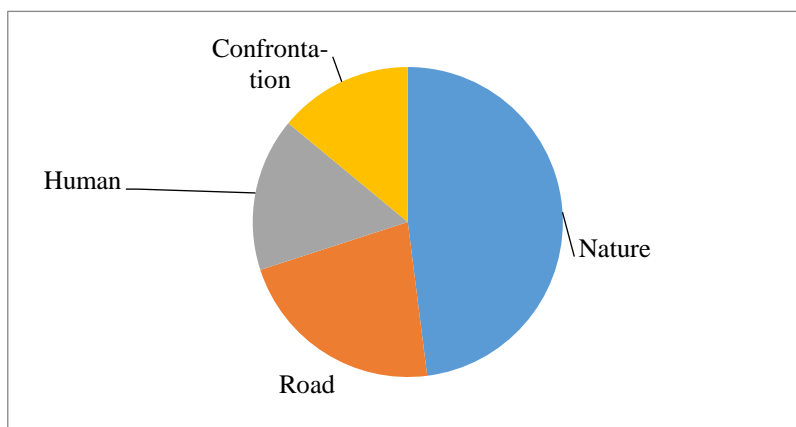


Fig. 1. Cultural concepts of the economic discourse of New Zealand.

3.1 Concept 'Nature', frame 'geographical names'

The concept of nature plays crucial role in the mentality of Maori people, as agriculture is the largest economic sector of New Zealand accounting for almost two-thirds of the exported goods. The most developed areas of agriculture are cattle breeding and crop farming.

*A plan by the federal government and tourism groups to restart Australia's battered travel sector aims to have state border restrictions lifted by December 1 and a **transtasman travel** bubble up and running by November [NZ Herald, 29.09.20]. План федерального правительства и туристических групп по возобновлению ослабевшего туристического сектора Австралии направлен на то, чтобы к 1 декабря были сняты ограничения на въезд в страну, а к ноябрю были запущены **рейсы между Австралией и Новой Зеландией**.*

In the collocation *transtasman travel* (meaning flights/travels between New Zealand and Australia for their citizens), the lexeme *transtasman* is used primarily in New Zealand and Australia to define relations between them. This term originated from the geographical name the Tasman Sea, which is located between New Zealand and Australia. There are many other

collocations that include this lexeme, for instance: *transtasman commerce* – trade relations between the two countries; *transtasman flight* – a flight between Zealand and Australia, *transtasman arrangement* – an agreement between New Zealand and Australia.

3.2 Concept 'Road'

In New Zealand, the concept of 'road' is very relevant, since approximately two centuries ago the indigenous Maori people blended with European migrants, who have covered an enormous distance to get to the island. Hence, this concept is deep-rooted in the culture of the people. This fact is evidenced in New Zealand cinematography, where such films as "The Lord of the Rings" and "Hobbit", where the main characters hit the road in search of adventures, have enjoyed a particular popularity.

US stocks are now on track for their worst week since the Global Financial Crisis [NZ Herald, 28.02.20]. Американские фондовые индексы сейчас приближаются к худшей неделе со времен мирового финансового кризиса.

The collocation *be on track* refers to the 'road' concept and is used to express the imminent global financial crisis.

The government recently extended a travel ban to and from China for another eight days and yesterday Universities New Zealand international programmes committee chair Grant Guilford said time is running out for New Zealand universities to get a special exemption to allow about 6,000 students currently stranded in China to start the first semester here [NZ Herald, 28.02.20]. Недавно правительство продлило запрет на поездки в Китай и из Китая еще на восемь дней, и вчера председатель Комитета по международным программам университетов Новой Зеландии Грант Гилфорд заявил, что время для новозеландских университетов, чтобы получить специальное послабление, позволяющее примерно 6000 студентам, в настоящее время застрявшим в Китае, начать здесь первый семестр истекает.

The collocation *to run out*, expressed through a phrasal verb indicates the fleeting time in the context of various economic events.

3.3 Concept 'Human' concept, Frame 'construction'

"This is a barrier to creating a strong pipeline of diverse directors for New Zealand companies and other organisations and obstructs the recruitment and retention of women on boards," the document said [NZ Herald, 05.09.20]. "Это является препятствием для создания устойчивой цепочки разнообразных директоров для новозеландских компаний и других организаций и также препятствует набору и удержанию женщин в советах директоров", – говорится в документе.

The concept 'human' encompasses all the realia that are directly or indirectly connected to people, their daily routines, activities and everything they have created. In this example, we can see the collocation *strong pipeline*, which has penetrated economic discourse from the construction field. According to the contextual analysis, this collocation is used to communicate the feeling of sustainability and demonstrate that companies with various directors will exist as long as a pipe, which is considered to be a solid part of living premises and serves people for many years.

3.4 Concepts 'Confrontation' and 'human'

The year-on-year price jumps showed how fears of an economic fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic had barely dented housing market confidence, Valocity's James Wilson said [08.10.20]. По словам Джеймса Уилсона из компании Valocity, годовые скачки цен

показали, как опасения касательно экономических последствий от пандемии Covid-19 едва ли отрицательно повлияли на доверие участников рынка жилья.

In this example we can see two concepts – those of confrontation and human. The concept of confrontation is expressed through the lexeme *to dent*, which means *to cause damage/have negative impact*. This lexeme points to the confrontation between the housing market and the ramifications of Covid-19, which could inflict damage on this market. The lexeme *confidence* pertains to the concept ‘human’, as it denotes a personal quality. The author uses the lexeme *confidence* in this context to personify the housing market, endow it with human qualities and draw comparison between the housing market and the people, who are also suffering losses.

4 Conclusion

As we can see, the main concepts in the economic discourse of New Zealand are nature (48%), road (22%), human (16%) and confrontation (14%). All the above mentioned concepts pertain to the basic human characteristics, as New Zealanders, while living in a country with an advanced economy, remain committed to the culture and lifestyle of their ancestors: they cultivate land, breed cattle, practice agriculture and enjoy their leisure time, etc.

Various concepts serve to convey various connotations, emotions and, consequently, make a different impression on the reader. The concept ‘human’ points to the presence of anthropomorphism in the economic discourse, which reflects the dependence of the economy on human actions. The concept ‘confrontation’ reflects the current state of the economy caused by the epidemic of coronavirus, which has affected all the sectors of economy and has led to the economic crisis. The concept ‘road’ in the examples identified expresses the feeling of inevitability of various economic phenomena approaching. Finally, the concept ‘nature’ comprises such connotations as prosperity, destructions, sustainability, etc.

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