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The analysis of media discourse on environmental problems in the Russian English-speaking media

Bachelor thesis

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Prague 2020

Statutory declaration

I hereby declare that I have created the thesis by myself. All sources and literature used have been duly cited. The work was not used to obtain another or the same title.

7 August 2020, Prague

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Ludmila Maria Wladyniak, for her great help and advice with my thesis. I would also like to thank my family for infinite support during my studies, and friends, for being there for me.

ABSTRACT

The topic of environmental issues is widely discussed in Russian media nowadays. The presentation of it influences people's perception. This thesis aims at investigating the features of media discourse about the environment in the English-speaking media present in Russia. The research is based on the articles from three English-speaking Russian website news sources and deploys discourse analysis methodology. It includes an introduction, theoretical framework, methodological part, analytical part, and a conclusion. The study involves description and analysis of features present in the articles about environmental issues in Russian English-speaking news sources.

Keywords: *environmental issues, media discourse analysis, Russia, environment*

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of environmental issues has a variety of aspects related to its discussion. There are different viewpoints on various environmental problems, and there are also factors that influence those viewpoints. One of those factors is the media representation of the topic, as media shapes people's understanding of things happening in the world a lot. Consuming the information that people see, read, or hear from the media sources, they make their own judgments. And undoubtedly, the very same information can be presented differently, and the way of its presentation affects the perception of it (Bell, 1994). That is why the investigation of words used in the articles, pictures shown in the advertisements, and other features of media products may reveal the discourse around the topic.

Media discourse, as related to different spheres of life, seems to me as the one that has many opportunities nowadays, due to the emergence of new means of media. Websites with news, social networks, internet communities, and many other media which emerged in the past several decades offer a wide field for research. Among different types of media, news websites aim to inform people about recent events. Being a source of information, thus, is a feature of this type of media that is crucial to take into consideration. Moreover, it gives responsibility to the news agency, as the way they present information may affect the audience's perception of the issue. Due to that, language features of the articles, such as the terms used, expressions, and others, are crucial to study the discourse around a topic. In my research, I focus on three news websites that have publications about environment-related events and findings.

Environmental issues are discussed from different angles in the media, though the topic is not the most popular. On the news websites that are subject to this research, environment-related articles and reports do not occupy the majority of publications space. Some environmental issues are discussed more often, though, such as global warming. There are different viewpoints on the issues and various ways through which they are presented.

Even though global warming is one of the most broadly discussed issues in the environment-related discourse, this thesis is not centered around articles about it. I investigate the articles about different aspects of the environment, including the ones about the presentation of environment-related events by the media («Don't panic», 2020).

However, the discussion of global warming and its effects is present in the articles I examine, usually with its relation to other spheres of life, such as economics and politics.

The connection of environmental issues with other areas of life is one of the noticeable features of discourse. For instance, in my study, there were connections with science, through references to scientists' words and findings. The notion of these occupied a significant space in several articles. Also, sometimes there was a connection with the political sphere of society, not only in the case of global warming, as told earlier. For example, governmental responses to environmental issues, and reactions to those were described. The attitudes of civil society were also mentioned in one of the articles, showing a contrast between society's and government's opinions.

The thesis consists of several parts. The theoretical part reviews the literature on the subjects connected to the area I am studying and discusses aspects important for my research. It starts with the emergence of environmental topics in the media and then describes the features that are present in the publications. For instance, those are images, specific terms, presence of other people in the articles, and others. Several aspects mentioned in the theoretical section are also present in the analytical part. The methodological part explains the method that I will use in my study: media discourse analysis. Firstly, I discuss it on the basis of the literature background. Then, I state the research problem and the questions that I will be aiming to answer.

I am studying English-speaking media sources, though all three websites that I use in my research have Russian-language versions as well. The references in the articles also lead to Russian sources only. Some of them are written in Russian language as well. Though, when the publications studied contained the references to other articles (as happened in the case with The Moscow Times), those references were usually to the materials from the same news portal.

The study is not aimed at comparison English-language versions of the websites with a Russian-language one, though it might serve as a basis for future research on that topic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Beginning of Environmental Topics

One of the shifts significant for environmental studies was a concept of risk society offered by Ulrich Beck. He defined risks as a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself (Beck, 1992, p. 21). Environmental risks, respectively, are defined by him not as a side-effect of changing industrial society, but as its predominant product. The reason for some risks is activity of humans, and their main feature is the significant extent of humankind's involvement in both producing and mitigating those risks. Thus, the approach offers a viewpoint of people's active participation in the process and the relationship between them and the environment.

The topic of environmental issues and, especially, their risks started to be a topic of interest in news media in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Bell, 1994). It happened since there were certain risks because of the two changes in the environment at that time: depletion of the ozone layer, and global warming (p. 259).

The paper written by Allan Bell deals with the miscommunication between science and environmental risk, and with the presentation of global warming to newsreaders. The informants who participated in this study were using daily media as the source of information.

It starts with the notion of science in the media. One of the most important things here is that the scientists who make discoveries about the environmental issues and present their findings have little control over the journalists who then spread this information in the media. The situations when journalists were misrepresenting the news created conflicts between them and scientists. Moreover, it started to be a tendency among scientists (as well as engineers and physicians) to blame the press (p. 260). Nevertheless, another aspect stated by Bell is the fact that both of the groups have certain similarities. Both scientists and journalists value accuracy highly, but they have different opinions on what is accurate and how the facts need to be verified to have a right to be called objective.

Furthermore, the author makes a distinction between two dimensions of analysis when it goes to media communication. Those two dimensions are misreporting by the media and misunderstanding by the audience (p. 260). Both of the aspects share the feature

that they are often not so easy to recognize. For instance, it is not always possible to acknowledge whether the media was presenting information about environmental issues correctly. Nevertheless, the usage of words in news articles about the topic is observable. Therefore, it can be supposed whether the author of the article wanted to present the information in a neutral sense or wanted to give the content a direction which will influence readers' perception of it. There is sometimes a notion of political authorities' influence, as will be found later in my research. For example, there can be cases when the media receives instructions on how to present the information for the readers to have desired perception results. Such a situation is also present in one of the articles that I have researched.

The second aspect of media communication analysis concerning environmental problems, mentioned by Bell, is a misunderstanding of the audience. There can be handled a set of interviews aiming at acknowledging how people perceived the information to investigate this. But during them, there can arise different problems. For instance, the respondents may exaggerate or downplay the actual situation. There can be a situation that is very common for the face-to-face interviews: the respondent, who does not want to appear uneducated may act like they understand the subject of the questions. There is not much that can be done by the interviewer to prevent this kind of situation.

[The Role of the Interviews](#)

Nevertheless, the interviews are important in another sense. They are often used in the articles or reportages presenting the environmental issues to the readers or watchers. As a source for media, interviews have a significant part: they occupy over half of the sources (Bell, 1994). There can be interviews with scientists who have worked on the problem connected with the environment, for instance. There are several reasons for the fact that these interviews are significant. For example, the words of the scientist provided increase readers' trust in the contents of the article. Also, it can be easier for the person who works with the research of some problem to explain what the problem is, or what findings they have recently had.

Interviews can occupy the whole article, i.e., to be the main content of it. But also, the news' reports often include interviews as parts of them. There can be just a few words said by the scientist, for instance, provided in the article. Many publications I have been observing contained quotes of the scientists, the directors of the forecasting, and research

centers. This feature seems to be quite often and crucial for the topic of environmental news reports.

Rhetoric Figures & Environmental Discourse

There are other issues related to the perception of articles about environmental issues. Allan Bell talks about several of them: overstatement, over-certainty, and confusion (p. 39). Weingart et al. name other problems that arose during the research in Germany. The topic of the study was climate change in the media. Those issues are downplaying and exaggerating risk, sensationalism, “bad” science, inciting public hysteria, and even conspiracy (Weingart et al., 2000, p. 261). The authors of the research also mention exaggeration. Exaggeration makes a story more attractive for the readers. As the example provided in the text says, in Germany, the picture of the half-submerged Cologne cathedral became associated with the threat of climate change. It happened because of the usage of this picture in the publications about this topic. Therefore, such visualization might create a perception of climate change as a force able to influence the state of the stable constructions.

Quite a contrary viewpoint is mentioned by Weingart et al. in the research. There is an opinion that climate change is nothing more than media hype, and the problem created for attractive news reports (p. 262). This point of view does not have much support, though. As my research shows, the mistrust in climate change has significantly reduced throughout time due to its outcomes that are hard to disregard.

People who doubt climate change, though, when publishing their reports, use a language slightly different from the one that the opposers of this viewpoint do (Medimorec & Pennycook, 2015). Authors carried a research that compared two reports, one by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the other by Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), which, respectively, had the opposing view on the situation with climate change. The study shows that the language used in the reports of NIPCC was less conservative, i.e., less cautious and less explicit, comparing to the one of IPCC. Moreover, the language used by NIPCC was more emotional and even aggressive, in a sense. It was also less formal, simpler, and used more concrete words. Therefore, NIPCC expressed more certainty in the information it presented, and the fact of NIPCC being one of the most comprehensive and scientific sources among the skeptical ones also complements the picture of NIPCC being persuasive.

As the authors of the study say, it is not only crucial what is said as related to the discourse but the way how it is said. In the case of NIPCC, the research showed that the politics of the source was more to discredit the opposing perspective rather than emphasizing their opinion only (p. 3).

What and especially how something in a discourse is said applies to the word usage in scientific terms. As Bell claims, there is an issue of the notion of science in the media reports and the understanding of it by people (Bell, 1994). According to his research, there are often cases when people confuse two related topics, such as the greenhouse effect and ozone depletion, for instance (p. 259). Bell states a crucial outcome of the misunderstandings: the way how the audience responds to an issue, i.e., the actions aiming to influence the environmental situation (Bell, 1994, p. 60).

Boykoff also talks about the issue of terms used as related to the terms of climate change and global warming, as there is a distinction between them (Boykoff, 2014, p. 157). While climate change being a term for many climate characteristics changing due to many factors, global warming is one part of it, being an expression for temperature increase. And as the discourses, adds Boykoff, are tied to material realities and social practices, the misuse of those two significantly different terms shapes and changes the perception of the issue (p. 157). Thus, it is an aspect of words used as related to the understanding of the topic, and it seems to be crucial for media research.

Framing

As for the perception of the climate change issue, it is possible to distinguish two main framings (O'Brien et al., 2007). Those emerged from the discourses embedded in institutions, actors, and academic disciplines, as explained by the authors (p. 74). The first framing is a scientific one. It views climate change as a problem of human impacts on the global climate system. Thus, according to this framework, the actions of the people affect the situation. Those actions, respectively, lead to changes in the climate of the planet. Authors explain that society, in this case, has the role of both driving the process and experiencing the consequences of it. Moreover, the harmful outcomes, according to the scientific framework, can be measured and quantified. What is more, they can be reduced, as in the case of greenhouse gas emissions.

The second framework described by O'Brien et al. is the human-security framing (p. 76). In this framing, climate change is a process that affects humans. Humans, in this

case, are affected individually and collectively, so the impact is significant for the societies as well. According to human-security framing, nature and people are the aspects of the same context having mutual relationships. People, though, have available options to end, mitigate, or adapt to risks to their rights. Those rights can be human, environmental, and social. Concerning climate change, they can include an opportunity to understand the processes and impacts of environmental conditions, for instance, or acknowledge the capacities through which people can respond to changing conditions.

Thus, the relationships between people and the environmental situation can have perspectives from slightly different angles. The topic of how people influence on the environment is also present in the media. It is also present in my analysis of the articles. Therefore, the topic of people-environment relationships is a crucial part of media discourse on the environment. The importance of the aspect can be explained by its impact on the readers, as the way of presenting the relationship may the way people perceive it and their opinions and actions as related to the environmental situation.

The research of the media discourse, however, is thought to be as mainly following the path of any other type of media and communication research (Hansen, 1991, p. 443). Due to that, the author states, the approach contained the weaknesses typical for its type. One of those weaknesses Hansen stated to be the lack of dynamic interaction discussion as related to the spheres of discourse. Those spheres, for instance, can include media coverage, public opinion, political decision-making, and others. Also, the author adds, in the researches of the environmental discourse topic, there is a lack of recognition of a broader cultural context of environment definitions. Hansen suggests an investigation of the role of mass media in the development and the elaboration of environmental issues. He argues that the framework should be constructivist (p. 444). He explains the choice by saying as follows: the constructivist approach abandons the linearity of problem development, which is the weakness in the discourse research. Also, the author says that the constructivist approach recognizes the importance of cultural resonances in the privileging of some issues over others.

Media

The role of the media as related to the people's awareness of the environmental situation, though, is not clear. As Hansen argues, the previous researches, such as one done by Funkhouser (1973), revealed the matches between general public opinion about the

environment and media coverage on the topic of environmental issues. Funkhouser, though, doubts the straight correlation between those two aspects, supposing that it might be an indicator of people's engagement in indirect content analysis instead. Thus, the match found in his research could have been a sign of people's general awareness of what is an issue for public concern by the media (p. 445). This supposition had support in a more recent study by Lowe and Rudig in 1986, Hansen says (p. 445).

Whether the supposition of Funkhouser can be applied to the current situation with the discourse or not, it nevertheless points at the impact media has on the people who consume the information presented in the sources. The media might as well provide the people with data about the current environmental situation to the extent that people would not perceive the event as significant as related to their lives. The importance of media impact on the shaping of people's attitudes has confirmation in other studies. For many people, the media sources serve as a primary source of information. Hansen refers to the studies done in the 1970s and 1980s, though, the importance had not decreased since then (p. 445). Though, the notion of what is media have slightly changed with the emergence of more diverse means of media sources. Nowadays, as will be discussed in the analytical part of my paper, the trust in the information presented on the television decreased, though, the independent news portals are still trusted. Thus, the media impact is still at its place as related to influencing the perception of different events and issues in society.

Hansen mentions one of the issues of the researches about media influence on the people. It is that in many cases, those researches do not go further than showing which events have a priority in the media. There is a lack of describing complex ways of people's interpretations of the environmental issues covered in the media, for instance. Nevertheless, the media has a significant part in the presentation of the environment-related topic as a social problem, as states Hansen, referring to the article by Schoenfeld et al. (1979). According to other studies, this way of presentation gained its results partly because the authorities were present in the coverages, such as the quotes and comments from the scientists, ministers, and other people. As I have already stated earlier, this notion of authority is crucial regarding environmental issues and is present in my study as well.

Other researchers also emphasize the topic of media influence on the people as related to environmental-related news. For instance, Boykoff states that public discourse of climate change, apart from being a story on this topic only, is a part of a broader one that also has contextual political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural factors (Boykoff, 2014, p. 157). Moreover, the author refers to the words of journalist Chris

Mooney, who said that media coverages have consequences to the people. As told in Mooney's example provided by Boykoff, the decrease in Americans' scientific understanding of global warming happened partly due to the media reports which were telling about "global warming 'pause'" (p. 158).

Images

Another crucial thing as related to the media presentation of the environmental topic is the notion of images in the articles, advertisements, and other media products. In his later article Hansen examines the collection of images from the Getty portal, where the pictures are widely taken from for various purposes, including the media reports. He is applying Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis for this study (Hansen & Machin, 2008).

As the articles, advertisements, and reports are primarily visual (and to a less extent audial) thing, pictures used may shape perception significantly. The authors of the study emphasize that examining the images is just as important as investigating the lexical and grammatical choices of the authors of media reports. The same way the texts can convey meanings and ideologies apart from those they are saying directly, the visual parts can express opinions and promote particular interests. The research of Hansen and Machin is the study of the images from Getty, a global portal. Another reason for choosing Getty for the research is the "Green collection" of the photographs from Getty released in 2008. Those images immediately appeared in the news and promotional media (p. 778).

In the study, there is also a reference to two rather exceptional studies on environmental coverage by the media. They dealt with a visual aspect. According to their findings, the visualization of climate change often contained decontextualization and aestheticization of physical settings. The pictures were usually taken from a significant distance and appeared aesthetically pleasing due to their wilderness and naturalness (pp. 778-779). Therefore, the presentations of climate change-related topics involved a notion of being aesthetic, which has a conflict with the environmental issue being far from a positive thing.

Of course, it is crucial to keep in mind that some of the things cannot be pictured, as related to the climate change topic. Hansen and Machin also point at this, saying that many environmental issues are impossible to be presented accurately, such as the thinning of the ozone layer or the climate change in general (p. 779).

The pictures used in the study were usually of high technical quality and had a pleasing visual appearance. They have a little correlation with the notion of the problem, though, as they depict a calm and distant visualization. The people who are sometimes present on those pictured are types, not individuals. Regarding the topic of environment-related pictures, those people interact with plants while also being photographed as office workers, couples having leisure time. Many of the people are women and children, thus, according to Gettyimages, symbolizing nurturing, and the future (p. 786).

As the authors conclude, from the Getty images, there can be seen a message of the environment being beautiful and tender, of people's need to look for union with it, and general associations of this relationship as being positive (p. 792). Thus, the actual image of the environmental situation is not there. Instead, there is a decontextualized and symbolical appearance of nature being green and peaceful. In the articles that I was examining, though, the notion of images had a slight difference from the all-positive perspective that was present in this research. Though, the distant photographs appeared in my study as well.

[Norms and Values of Journalism](#)

The perspective of the articles I have been examining, however, was not only positive — instead, it looked quite pragmatic in most of the cases. In some of the publications, there was not any presence of the journalist's opinion on the situation he or she describes, though, in other cases, the attitude of the journalist was visible through the language used, for instance. The important point about those expressions is the notion of journalistic norms, argues Maxwell Boykoff. As the author says, referring to previous researches, over the last century, there have been a significant number of examples of how journalistic norms and values influenced story narrative (Boykoff, 2011, p. 99). Nevertheless, he adds, fewer of those examinations included the discussion of media portrayal of climate science, policy, and politics. Boykoff also quotes Michael Getler, ombudsman at The Washington Post, on saying that the audience can feel the biased opinion if it is present in a news report. Therefore, the journalist's viewpoint about the situation described by him or her can influence the perception of the reader.

Those norms and values of journalism, Boykoff describes, influence several things: what are climate stories, the content of them, and who speaks for climate and how. One of those norms is the norm of personalization. Here, as Boykoff explains it, referring to the

words of W. Lance Bennett, personalization is a tendency to downplay a more global picture as related to society, economics, and politics (p. 101). So, there is a notion of personal-and-story relationship, rather than focusing on a broader situation.

Another issue Boykoff mentions is the aspect of the media attitude as related to the environmental event being recent (p. 105). As he says, referring to other studies, while there are no new events in the field, the environmental topic often goes out of view.

Moreover, he adds, there is an issue of the news being interesting for them to have a place in the news publication. This feature is observable in my research as well. The notion of some short reports among more diverse ones was often. Though, when there was something new emerging, news sources had several more detailed publications about the event, as happened in the instance of permafrost thawing issue described in the analytical part of my paper.

Anabela Carvalho discusses the reconstruction of scientific claims in the media. As Boykoff relates those changes in news presenting to the journalistic norms, Carvalho also points at the role of ideology in this case. Similarly, as well, she mentions the part of politics in the sense of media reporting about climate change (Carvalho, 2007).

When scientific findings or reports are in the news, they are not simple reflections, Carvalho says (p. 223). The news coverage that the readers see on the website of the news portal or the television, for instance, is a result of several operations. During them, there is a discussion about whether the issue will be in the news. Also, there is a discussion about the highlight that will be, and who will speak about that. Then, she adds, there is an aspect of text being edited and checked. The decision about whether the event should be in the media sphere is usually based on the interest and social impact of a topic, and economic considerations. Thus, according to the words of Carvalho, the whole process starting from the event and resulting in its appearance in the media sphere includes several steps through which the focus of the topic can be slightly or significantly changed. Like the other researchers in the area, Carvalho says that media has a significant part in the production and transformation of meanings (p. 224).

Science-related suppositions and findings often have presentations with the words expressing certainty of the information. Carvalho provides several examples of how English-speaking media build the image of certainty as related to environmental news reports, thus, increasing the trust of the audience. This image of trustworthiness took place in my research as well, as described in one of the following parts of the thesis.

As Carvalho argues in the concluding part of her research, the ideology is present in all kinds of journalistic genres, from news reports to opinion articles (p. 237). This presence takes its place in the interpretations of facts, for instance. Also, it is present in the people speaking for the environmental issues, such as scientists, and experts, whose words represent confidence in the information presented. Moreover, ideology is present as related to the goals of those news reports, and the actions of individuals and government included in them.

As can be seen from several examples, including the ones from my research, the topic of environmental issues presentation in the media usually involves two other spheres: science and politics. The connection among those fields is at various levels. It starts from the reference to authorities' words in the article to constructing the whole report based on an interview with a scientist. The presence of some person to whom the article refers to serves an important function. It increases the trust of the readers in the content of the material presented in a news source.

Moreover, the trustworthiness can cause an expectation that the person of authority will tell what to do, i.e., provide possible solutions to the problem he or she describes. This model of perception is being referred by Weingart et al. as naive and described:

This rationalist-instrumental model of communication can be depicted as follows: scientific research helps to discover an environmental problem; it identifies options for the problem's potential solution; scientists inform politicians of these findings; and, as political decision making can always be expected to suffer from some inertia or be distorted by interests that run counter to environmental concerns, scientists can also try to create public awareness to foment political pressure.
(Weingart et al., 2000, p. 262)

Therefore, as had been said, the presence of science and politics is present. In the ideal model, all the spheres properly inform the public and provide people with a solution to the problem. Moreover, as the authors add, in the case when the information does not lead to any action, the problem is considered to be as related to misrepresentation by one of these spheres, i.e., scientific findings, policymaking, etc.

Nevertheless, according to some researches in the area, there can be a problem as related to actions towards climate change. Geiger and Swim argue that the changes have limits because of the lack of people's willingness to accept, support, and actively participate in various spheres of life (Geiger & Swim, 2016, p. 2). When it comes to the topic of climate change, those spheres include economic, sociocultural, and political, as all of them have an impact on the environment-related changes. Also, the authors add that communication between people is crucial to address to make the changes. Its importance is due to the possible outcomes of communication: increase of public understanding of the problem, community engagement, and development of consensus (p. 2). Though according to the researches about the situation in America and Great Britain Geiger and Swim refer to, the engagement in the conversations is rather uncommon: a quarter of the American public report regularly discusses climate change. As the authors suggest, in the topic of climate change, there exists a socially constructed silence. The silence is made by the social dynamics, as they are barriers to the discussion. Many people, they add, misperceive the extent to which the others are informed about the situation. Also, they misperceive the number of people sharing their opinion about the environmental situation. Therefore, the authors find it crucial to build more communication basis to address and change the current state of the environment.

The communication and impact of the media as related to the environment had been a subject of several studies. Hansen, in his article, emphasizes that a significant part of what people know and learn about the environment they know from the media, considering the broad definition of this word (Hansen, 2011, p. 8). Moreover, this acquired information about the environment, he adds, includes not only the environmental issues and people's beliefs concerning it. It also includes ways of how both individuals and societies view, perceive, value, and relate to the environment (p. 8).

Media, to a large extent, defines the environment, Hansen says. The crucial aspect here is the emergence of the public press and the fact that environmental issues started to be a part of the discussion in the public sphere. This, Hansen argues, brings the environment-related topic to the area where it is visible for civil society and political attention. Also, it allows people to address their claims, arguments, and opinions and to have feedback.

There had been a change concerning the perspective of perceiving environmental issues throughout the time. As previously the connection between politics and the environment was based on expert and scientific evidence, with the notion of economic

development, now it is more influenced by the presentation and perception of environmental issues by the public (p. 8). Thus, the importance of media communication and interpersonal communication had increased significantly. Therefore, its discussion is more relevant nowadays. With the variety of media sources that exist nowadays and the notion of different life spheres as politics, economics, culture, and others in the discussion of the environmental topic, it becomes more complex, and researchers can look at it from different angles.

In my research, I focus on the perspective on written content, i.e., articles on the topic of environmental issues. The publications contain pictures, but I give the primary focus to the language and the opinions expressed in the articles.

METHODOLOGICAL PART

Methodological Background for the Research

To research the topic of environmental issues as presented in the media, I will conduct media discourse analysis. Media discourse, by the definition of Anne O'Keeffe, refers to interactions through a broadcast platform, whether spoken or written, in which the discourse orients to a non-present reader, listener, or viewer (O'Keeffe, 2011, p. 441). Nevertheless, as she argues, consumers often cannot respond to the producers of the discourse. But this situation is changing due to the emergence and developments of new media technologies. I base my research on one of the most recently emerged media: Internet news sources that have publications, i.e., news reports and articles related to the topic of environmental issues. One of the advantages of this focus is the availability of information, as access to news articles from the online media sources is free. Easy access is one of the reasons for the popularity of news websites, combined with the emergence of new technologies. Nowadays, it is more convenient for people to have the news on their smartphones than to buy a newspaper, for instance.

Probably due to its popularity among the people, most news websites offer easy ways to find the news on the topic that interests the person. The ones that I used in my research often had the tags as *environment*, so the search for the articles related to this topic was also quite convenient. Moreover, when there was a recent event that happened or the issue was discussed several times, as in the case of climate change or permafrost thawing, news websites often had more specific tags such as *climate change* or *permafrost*, respectively. Therefore, the organization of the material has a way that makes it easier to be accepted by the readers.

By the words of O'Keeffe, the discourse, whether written or spoken, is oriented to the readership of the audience. Thus, in a sense, media discourse is a form of communication and interaction, but at the same time public, manufactured, and on-record (p. 441). The interaction, though, involves the presence of two roles, which are the producer and the consumer. Also, there are other figures in the whole process of making and distributing news, for instance, such as authorities. The presence of additional roles depends on the topic of media research. Those characteristics of media discourse are crucial for understanding and researching it.

As for the producer, though, O'Keeffe (2006) refers to Tang and John (1999) and names three roles that a writer moves between: societal, discourse, and genre (p. 62). Those the author attributes to the topic of media discourse to understand its dynamics. Thus, the societal role involves a person being a member of his or her family, being of the nationality, etc. This role(s) influences the way the person writes and perceives the information. Another one is the discourse role that is present only within the discourse community. For instance, it is a profession that person has. The third role is genre role, and that is the identity given in a particular genre. In the media discourse context, it is, for instance, a manager of a discourse (p. 63).

As for the content that the writer makes, there is another advantage of the news report for the readers. Mark Tremayne (2005) mentions the external links which lead to the sources of the information presented. Also, they can lead to some additional information about the subject of the article. In my research, the links, both external and internal, occurred as well. As my research bases on the publications about environmental issues, the links led to other materials on the same subject, which described some aspects of the topic with more details. Sometimes the links led to the external sources which had additional information about the topic. This way, the article may contain the findings from different sources, therefore, to combine it and to present in a form that would be more understandable for the readers. It is true, for instance, in the cases when the article uses the information from the sources which use more scientific language, i.e., with the usage of specific terms that may cause misunderstandings. News articles in my study, however, lacked the notion of those terms.

The analysis of media content is generally qualitative, and one of the main dimensions the research can go is language analysis. O'Keeffe refers to the words of Biber et al. (1999), who identify the language of newspapers as one of the four major registers in the English language, along with spoken conversation, academic writing, and fiction (p. 442). Some linguistic studies of news reports go to the direction of differentiating the language used in the media from other language types in other sources. Those types can differ among various media sources as well, though. For example, the language used in the advertisements is different from the one used in the articles, and there are also differences among several articles' languages.

Greg Philo (2007) refers to John Fiske in his article while talking about discourse as the language or a system of representation that has developed socially to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings, which serve the interests of a section of society (p.

176). The discourse, importantly, can be linked to power and social interests. From those links, several perspectives of the subject presented can emerge. Also, there is a certain amount of ideology when it comes to discourse effects. Philo refers to the quote of Norman Fairclough in which he says that the ideologies arising as a result of the discourse are representations of aspects of the world. They can be present to contribute to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination, and exploitation (p. 176). Ideologies, thus, have a crucial meaning concerning social relationships, the activity of societal groups, and their interests. The structures of those groups can be visible from the language of the media discourse around those groups. The language, however, is not only the words but also the linguistic structures, means of expression, word constructions, etc. Also, the arguments present in the media texts, such as articles, can point to the opinions standing behind. Comparisons, metaphors, quotes, and other language aspects serve a function of expression as well.

When it comes to text analysis, though, Norman Fairclough (1992) distinguishes two main dimensions: linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis. He also argues that discourse analysis can include the systematic use of both approaches and that the detailed textual analysis can add to a variety of current approaches to discourse analysis (p. 194). As Fairclough states, there have been the papers examining the coding system of the textual sample, while the others focused on the content of the texts, not on their form. He, though, offers an approach that would simultaneously use both analyses. The explanation of the combination usage lies in the claim that the contents are always necessarily realized in forms. Also, they entail different forms and vice versa (p. 194).

Teun Adrianus Van Dijk (1988), like Norman Fairclough in the example above, in his book describes an approach that divides discourse into levels; though, he emphasizes that it should not involve only one level. One of those levels is linguistic grammars, that is, systems of rules and categories for the abstract analysis of sounds, word, and sentence forms. Another one involves the meanings of the words (p. 10). Using this approach, the researcher obtains a phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic description of sentences. In the case of news reports, however, the focus should be on the preferred or typical grammatical structures that characterize language, as the author argues. Therefore, the context in which the structures are present is crucial in the analysis.

As Van Dijk also writes, news reports often contain a sense of formality, long, complex sentences, and many normalizations. Some of the forms, he adds, are rare in other types of discourses apart from news reports. For instance, the fronting of information that

is important seems to be a general property of news reports in the press. This property is usually called relevance structuring (pp. 10-11).

Grammatical analysis, however, often reveals the perspective of a journalist or newspaper. Word order, relational functions, the use of active or passive roles are the textual features that have a reason to be present in the material. The change in those features, respectively, may as well change the meaning of the information significantly and to affect the perception of the reader. The order of sentences is also crucial, as it may show the cause-effect relationship of the presented information.

Moreover, news discourse analysis, Van Dijk states, as the analysis of other texts, should take into account shared meanings, knowledge of the language, of the world, and beliefs (Van Dijk, 1988, p. 9). Also, he adds, the structures of news reports can be understood only through the prism of them being the result of the cognitive and social processes of discourse and meaning production of journalists. And again, the contexts, which are cognitive, social, or political, need to be taken into consideration.

This information coherence rule also shows that discourse semantics is not autonomous in the sense that we only have to know the lexical meanings of words and their combinations. We also need knowledge of the world, and, hence, a cognitive and social analysis of what people in a given culture know, and how they use such knowledge in the interpretation of discourse in general and the establishment of coherence in particular. (p. 12)

Therefore, the discourse analysis of news reports may go beyond the investigation of words and structures used. The discourse always involves communication and interaction, which, respectively, contain meanings, attitudes, and opinions of the people who participate in them.

As for participators, though, there are several groups of people. One of them is journalists who work with the information that will be presented in the media directly. According to Philo (2007), the first issue to consider in studying production processes is the professional ideology of journalists and the institutions which they represent (p. 181). The practices and principles that underlie the material may influence it significantly. Also, whether people trust the news sources partly depends on the credibility and reputation of

the source. How the source shapes the information, though, also depends on the subject of the material. As states Philo, there can be cases when the news reports become almost one-dimensional, without an offer of an alternative view on the issue.

Another crucial point about news sources is their reliance on external sources, their organization, and logistics of news gathering and market pressures (p. 182). The institutions present in the process of news formation, such as politics, non-governmental organizations, corporations, etc. may be willing to promote their interests in the reports. Also, they can control what the media publishes about the event connected to them. Journalists, respectively, are dependent on the magazine or channel they work at, which may not allow them to express their position to the extent they could want to. As adds Philo, they also depend on the access granted to them, which is especially crucial in the sense of news about war or conflicts, where only a few journalists, if any, can be allowed. All those features of news sources affect the information in them; therefore, they need to be taken into consideration while studying news materials.

The ideology, however, also exists regarding language specifically. Sally Johnson and Tommaso M. Millani (2009) discuss the notion of language ideology. It occupied more space in the studies of the topic in the context of social processes, as the authors claim (p. 3). They also argue about the media as follows, referring to Blommaert, 1999, and Johnson, 2001:

[...] the media, constrained or pressed by particular economic and political imperatives, open up discursive spaces [...], thereby giving a public voice to a variety of social actors who compete with each other in staking various claims regarding what counts as legitimate knowledge in the domain of language. (p. 5)

Moreover, public voices, as authors say later in the book, are being chosen and 'styled' in the media. And in that sense, to a large extent, all media producers have the potential to re-scale social, cultural, and symbolic capital (p. 6). Though, of course, media sources themselves are being shaped by cultural and political circumstances when they present the information. The media, thus, both are being controlled and controls. Its position is one of the features crucial to understand while doing media research.

Another feature related to media and language mentioned by Johnson and Millani (2009) is linguistic skills. There can arise a question of what those linguistic skills are and who is determining them. The authors refer to Bourdieu (1982) saying, that how we define what counts as legitimate language, as an authoritative performance of linguistic competence, and who we perceive as a legitimate speaker — all of those are the ways of constructing social boundaries (p. 277). Therefore, the ideological debates as related to language can occur anywhere with a notion of category constructions with boundaries. Due to the presence of ideology, as Pedro Santander Molina argues in his work, it is crucial to start with the event, not from the text (p. 196). Here, it means the subject of the article, for instance.

The way of making the material, however, depends on many factors. For instance, the relationship between media and the state is crucial in this sense. There can be an influence on the source, therefore affecting the content that it presents. The notion of independent media and the way they position themselves and their material is should also be taken into consideration. As my research will show, the independent news sources have certain features that differentiate it from others.

One of the issues that can arise during the media discourse analysis is due to it containing the interaction between people. This problem is the possibility of systematic distortion during communication. The issue is also present in other types of discourse analyses (Molina, 2009, p. 195). Moreover, if we consider the notions of power, class, and social structures, the situation becomes more complex. Therefore, the aspect of language in media communication is correlated with the aspect of society, and the relationship between them is crucial for doing media research.

Research Problem & Objectives

News websites as a source of information for the research are quite recent. Russian English-speaking media, moreover, is a specific type of media. As will be seen in my study, the authors of many articles are Russian-speaking people. The information, however, is presented for English-speaking readers. To whom the publications are, need to be taken into consideration if the research would go further, for instance, to the comparison of the same events presented on the same websites, but in Russian.

My study of Russian English-speaking media only, however, is focused on the presentation of the events only for English-speaking audiences. It, however, contains

several features. To start with, media discourse around the environment is complex and relates to other spheres. Therefore, it is crucial to define which subjects are present in this discourse.

One of my aims is to investigate the features of news articles. For instance, one of those features is a language aspect, i.e., the expressions that conveyed through the means of language. Also, my goal is to research the way of presentation of the environmental issues with politics, society, economics, and other spheres that would be present in those articles. Thus, the question here would be how the authors speak of environmental problems as related to other life spheres.

Through my research, I would like to find the answers to the following research questions:

1. Is the information in the articles presented neutrally or the author's viewpoint is visible?
2. Are there scientific terms or complicated structures that may distort the perception of the content?
3. To which other life spheres (economics, politics, etc.) are the links made in the publications?

[Research Design & Sampling](#)

The study contains an analysis of ten news articles from three Russian English-speaking media sources: The Moscow Times, TASS, and Meduza. The publications are not about one particular issue. Nevertheless, the problem of climate change and permafrost thawing are being discussed most often in the articles. There were no strict time limits, as well. The majority of the publications took place in 2020, and two of them are from the second half of 2019. I have used more recent articles to have research results that are more valuable to nowadays. The publications' crucial feature was the amount of information they contained, i.e., very brief reports did not occupy much space in the research. Though, few examples of small publications were included with a purpose to have a more complex picture of media discourse around the environment. I analyze and describe the abovementioned features of the articles.

Ethics of the Research

The articles which I used in my research are from the free access news websites. All materials were cited with the name(s) of the author(s). The articles which did not have the author(s) stated were referred to with using the titles. The dates of the articles' releases or the last updates are also given. For some of the news reports, there is an exact time of the publication. It can be found in the References section. Full links to all the news materials, with the name(s) of the author(s), dates, and titles, are provided in the References as well. The materials researched in the study were used for educational purposes only and were not distributed any further.

ANALYTICAL PART

Analyzed Media

To investigate the way of presentation of environmental issues in the Russian English-speaking media, I use media sources with desired features. There are not so many Russian media that have their websites in English and post the news about environmental topics. In my research, there is three news portals' material: TASS, The Moscow Times, and Meduza. They have different approaches as well as various principles, and it influences the way they present news about climate change.

The Moscow Times

The news portal from which the majority of my researched articles came is The Moscow Times. One of the crucial aspects of this news portal is the way it positions itself. When the person goes to the website of The Moscow Times, he/she is being shown the notification window with the text with the following title:

INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM ISN'T DEAD. YOU CAN HELP KEEP IT ALIVE.

(The Moscow Times)

The window consists of three paragraphs telling about the features of the Moscow Times. The first one goes as follows:

As the only remaining independent, English-language news source reporting from Russia, The Moscow Times plays a critical role in connecting Russia to the world.

(Retrieved from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com>)

Thus, in the first sentence, it is emphasized that The Moscow Times is the only English-language source about the Russian news that is independent, which is likely to play a part

in the topic of its importance. The willingness of the person to support the source can increase in that case, considering the skepticism of the people in Russia towards 'governmental' news sources. Then, there are supporting arguments for the importance of The Moscow Times:

Editorial decisions are made entirely by journalists in our newsroom, who adhere to the highest ethical standards. We fearlessly cover issues that are often considered off-limits or taboo in Russia, from domestic violence and LGBT issues to the climate crisis and a secretive nuclear blast that exposed unknowing doctors to radiation. (Retrieved from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com>)

In this part of the text, there are several means of expression. They stand for the position of the journalists from this news source. The notion of highest ethical standards and the fearlessly covered issues that are considered tabooed creates the impression of the portal being independent, but professional and telling about the things that do not have a broad discussion in the other media sources. Nowadays, informing the people about the things going on, presenting the events neutrally and honestly is considered to be very important for society. Moreover, being an independent news source increases the trust of the people, as generally, they do not believe the news sources. As shows the research that was done by Levada-center, the analytics center, during the past ten years, the trust of people in TV news decreased from 79% to 54%; more than half of the people think that the news reports about the economic situation in Russia have distorted presentation (Volkov & Goncharov, 2019). The majority of the people who still trust the news are people more than 35 years old. Thus, younger people of nowadays' generation, in general, do not consider the news materials as a reliable information source. Therefore, the image of the news source being independent and sincere is a crucial part of the story.

The fact that also needs to be taken into consideration is that according to the same research, the second popular and trusted news source is social media and the internet (34% and 32%, respectively). What is more, the independent news sources occupy quite the same level of trust — 35%. Independent media here is the media which regularly publish the viewpoints different from the official ones, as stated by Levada-center.

So, the percentage of the people who believe in the news is decreasing, though, the independent media, social media, and the internet are still trusted significantly, especially among people under 35 years old. However, independent news sources may run into problems, for instance, financial ones, therefore needing readers' support. The window that I am currently describing, in its last paragraph in a way represents this aspect:

Please consider making a one-time donation — or better still a recurring donation — to The Moscow Times to help us continue producing vital, high-quality journalism about the world's largest country. (Retrieved from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com>)

Here, there is one more expression of this source being very important in what it is doing. Readers can see it from the words used to describe journalism of The Moscow Times: 'vital', 'high-quality'. Also, the detail that the author(s) say(s) 'the world's largest country' instead of saying Russia contributes to the same notion of the importance of this news source.

The visual appearance of the window is no less crucial in this case. Itself, the window is quite large, yellow, and occupies half of the webpage in any case: viewed on the full screen in the browser or on a smaller one. Therefore, it catches more attention. In the text of the window which aims at persuading people to donate for the source, there are several means of expression to achieve the goal: emphasizing the notion of being independent; coverage of the news not so widely presented in the other sources; the aspect of The Moscow Times being English-language independent news source about the events in Russia; being 'fearless', 'vital', and 'high-quality'. All those details contribute to the image of importance and, in a way, uniqueness of The Moscow Times. Though, the window can be closed, choosing the "maybe later" option (another one is "contribute today"). Nevertheless, it will be showing each time after the entrance to the website of The Moscow Times.

Articles analyzed: The Moscow Times

The first article from The Moscow Times that I was analyzing was updated on the 9th of March 2020 for the last time and written by journalist Daniel Kozin. Its title is ‘Is Russia Finally Waking Up to Climate Change?’ (Kozin, 2020).

From the very name of the article, the tone of the language used is visible. It is not neutral, but on the contrary, the question in the title of the text emphasizes skepticism and a few hope. The next sentence, written right after the name of the article, adds some explanation for the mistrust expressed in the title. This following part says:

Russia is the world’s fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases but has so far failed to adopt meaningful reduction targets. (Kozin, 2020)

Thus, there is an aspect necessary for the topic: Russia is the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. And then, it is stated that the country does not have success adopting reduction targets. This way, the information presented gives the impression that despite the danger of the greenhouse effect that may influence the situation in the world, Russia does not have the proper solution that could help to improve the situation.

In the article, there is a photograph. The caption of the photo says:

Norilsk, one of Russia's most polluted cities. Andrey Gordeev / TASS



Figure 1. Retrieved from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/03/04/is-russia-finally-waking-up-to-climate-change-a69517>

Thus, it is a photo from another large news portal — TASS, and the fact that Norilsk is one of the most polluted cities in Russia provided in the caption emphasizes the importance. On the foreground of the photo, there are the roofs of the buildings. They stay in darkness and, therefore, not so clearly seen. And on the background, there are three tall chimneys with the thick smoke coming from them. The sky is in the orange color specter. The sun is of a similar color, drowning in one of the smokes. These colors and, possibly, edit of the photo create an impression of the fire, which is, in a way, symbolic in the case of global warming. Thus, the photo looks like a reference to the temperature that is increasing during the latest years. The city pictured is dark and is not so visible, but the 'burning' sun and the sky immediately catch the attention, as well as huge smoke. As the article proceeds, the author writes:

Even skeptics can no longer ignore the effects of climate change in Russia. (Kozin, 2020)

Therefore, the author emphasizes that even the people who are quite skeptical about the issue of climate change now cannot put away the effects. So, we can suppose that the problem had become significantly visible, and even this group of people now admit its importance.

Furthermore, the author proceeds with describing which problems specifically are present nowadays. The narration goes this way:

First, there's the weather. Last year was the hottest on record; the ice in the Arctic is melting at a dramatic pace, as is the permafrost; while forest fires and flash floods have ravaged swathes of Siberia, and methane is spewing from a massive fountain in the eastern Siberian Sea. (Kozin, 2020)

Thus, there are several things connected to the weather changes due to climate change mentioned here. The words underlined in the text have hyperlinks to other articles by The Moscow Times. Both the number of problems mentioned and the links to other articles create an impression that the issue of weather changes is getting very dangerous. The language here is quite neutral, but those two factors mentioned above are likely to speak for themselves and not need any support from emphasizing the danger through the usage of metaphors or other language aspects.

The article also shows an issue related to the actions of the government. The economy of Russia is, to a large extent, dependent on fossil fuel exports, and that is why, as stated by the author, the country does not do so much to reduce global warming. The author puts it using the expression "this comes as no surprise" (Kozin, 2020). Therefore, the lack of activity aimed at improving the situation has an explanation in this paragraph, and the following one, "Here's an overview of Russia's approach", (Kozin, 2020) leads to the next section of the text, named "Emissions". Here, there is detailed information about the number of emissions provided. There are percentages given: the Russian one as related to all global emissions; Russian per capita emissions; and Russian emissions as related to other countries (China, European Union, and the United States). The seriousness of the situation described has factual support there. For instance, it is obvious enough that the notion of Russia that is the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases is likely to be dangerous even in the world scope. This information also has a graphic presentation with

the title "Top 6 GHG Emitting Countries". On the graphic, there is the amount of Mtons for each country, with the order as follows: China, USA, India, Russia, Japan, and Germany. The date, however, is from 2015, as stated in the caption under the graphic. There is also a source of data provided: Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research. Even though the China level is about six times bigger than the Russian one, the graphic looks convincing enough due to Russia being there at first. Moreover, the details about the per capita emissions are even more crucial:

Moreover, its per capita emissions are among the highest in the world — 53% higher than China and 79% higher than the EU, though 25% lower than the U.S. (Kozin, 2020)

Again, there is a comparison with China, though in a reverse manner. In this case, the level of Russia is a lot higher, as well as compared with the EU. Thus, those comparisons aim to support the notion that the issue than Russia makes should not be underestimated.

The last sentence of the article expresses the hope of the author. It is that the awareness, understanding, and admitting the problem by the people may change the situation:

Slowly but surely, Russia is beginning to realize that climate change is not a distant threat, but something that is happening right now. (Kozin. 2020)

So far, the article I have been examining shown several sides of the story as related to the issue of climate change. For instance, there are two types of language in it: a slightly skeptical and, in a way, critical, and the neutral one, when it came to be describing the facts and attitudes of different people. The opinions, however, are provided both from the people of the government and from civil society. There are also scientific measures and predictions in the text. The approach of the news portal, thus, seems responsible. It does not only criticize the things that have been happening, done, or not done by the government. There are the facts provided as well, and they have representations through the graphics, scales, and other visual forms for them to be more understandable for the readers.

In the later parts of the next, there is the response of the authorities and civil society. Overall, in "the government response", there are reactions from the government. It is done both by saying the names of the people from the government and without them, only using the word 'government'. There also contradictions of those reactions with the supporting arguments provided. In general, this part of the text is more or less neutral in the sense of the language. In other ones, though, criticism and skepticism can be seen. Partly, this kind of reaction can be attributed to the inconsistency of the words by different people. Those are usually in the form of quotes.

Then, after the section of the government response, there is a section named "Responses from civil society", which, in a way, leaves behind the political discourse of the problem and provides the opinion of ordinary people. In this part of the text, the phrase "the biggest threat to humanity" emphasizes the extent of dangerousness to which people perceive climate change. This opinion stands on the contrary to the one discussed earlier, in the section of the government response. Therefore, despite the doubts of people of the government, people think that there is their fault in climate change. Also, this discussion of the opinion of the people connects the topic of environmental issues with politics. Moreover, it, of course, emphasizes the perception of the climate change problem by the people.

Though, some parts of the text are non-neutral regarding language. It can be told from the slightly skeptical language used by the author, for instance, in the beginning, that he does not think there were enough actions to improve the situation. For example, the usage of words as "finally" (in the title and in the text itself as well), "no surprise" and others. It also attributes to The Moscow Times positioning itself as the independent news source, therefore having an ability and wish to criticize the governmental deeds, such as the one described at the beginning of the text (being reluctant to reduce the effects of global warming due to economic conditions). Though, when it comes to describing the facts, as already mentioned above, the author describes them without pointing to them as right or wrong. The governmental response section, for instance, does not contain such criticism as it was at the beginning of the text, where there was a description of a similar topic. Though, there are contradictions as related to the plan of the president pointed out there. The links provided in this section support the arguments of the author and prove the credibility of the contradictions. The very feature that the author describes those discrepancies contributes to the image of The Moscow Times as being independent and

writing the things that do not have a broad discussion in the media. For instance, the possible contradictions in the words of the people who are related to the government.

Another feature of the article, which is also dual, is the aspect that there are both positive and negative consequences of climate change described there. Usually, the issue of global warming is presented in a negative sense only. This negative approach took place in discussing both the causes and consequences of climate change. In this article, however, it is said that the government plan also contains the list of possibly exploited benefits that arose from the situation with global warming. There is also an example provided: "increased access along the Northern Sea Route due to melting ice and more space for agriculture and livestock".

Also, the article contains a lot of links to other publications and sources. Because of them, the neutrality and acceptance of different points of view are visible. For instance, there are not only articles by The Moscow Times used to support the words of the author or to complement the information. Moreover, the people who want to do more research on the ongoing situation can follow the links and find more material ready to investigate. There are articles from other news sources as well. However, they are not always written in the English language, but in Russian (one of the external articles is from news portal Vedomosti, which does not have an English version), which could create the problem for an English-speaking person.

The authorities concerning the environmental issues are being criticized in the media also for their reactions to the events. Such an example took place in another material from The Moscow Times. "Russia's Burning! Climate Change Is to Blame" is an article written by Leonid Bershidsky and released on the 11th of August 2019 (Bershidsky, 2019). The very title of the publication sets the tone for the whole text. The annotation below the title says:

Summer wildfires are nothing new in Siberia, but bigger environmental changes are afoot. (Bershidsky, 2019)

Then, there is a picture. On it, there is a forest with trees and ground burning. The fire and smoke occupy most of the territory shown in the photograph.



Figure 2. Retrieved from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/08/11/russias-burning-climate-change-is-to-blame-a66802>

The first few sentences of the article confirm the expectations of the quite skeptical tone of it. The author refers to Siberian fires as “hardly unusual” but also claims that the case of 2019 is “a bigger worry than normal”. He explains it by saying that the clouds of smoke from the fires came to big cities in the Asian part of Russia. Moreover, the author says that the reaction of authorities had been “clumsy” and adds, that the attention from the Russian and global media is welcome as related to the problem, though the alarmism is not necessary. Then, there is a claim that Russia needs to start planning for the climate change that begins to transform Russia’s big forests, and added, that more fires are not the only change.

The author of the article emphasizes the number of forests in Russia. Also, he says how much of the forest area burned out in 2019. Furthermore, he expresses that there is a need to address the problem. The author mentions that the responsibility for the forests is now on the provincial authorities, but they lack the resources to put out the fire. Nevertheless, as related to the economic part of the issue, it is stated that:

Russians see the vast forests as a key part of national wealth, even though forestry only accounts for about 1% of the country’s economic output. (Bershidsky, 2019)

So here, it is visible that the devastation of forests would not cause a significant problem to the economy. Of course, there are other aspects of the problem of forest fires, such as the living place of animals destroyed, lack of plants and trees which are necessary for the atmosphere, and others. The author points at the fact that it is still a reason to worry, as the territory of burned-out forests increased by two thirds in the last ten years compared with the previous decade.

One of the reasons for such shift author names to be climate change. He claims it to be almost certainly. Moreover, due to a warmer climate, the increasing number of trees burning is not the only consequence. The very structure of the wood will change to a less dense and less valuable one, thus reducing the profit from it. What is more, the structure change leads to the trees having less ability to absorb carbon dioxide out of the air, the author says. This change will lead to negative consequences to the eco-system.

The authorities are not so much concerned about the situation with the forests, as the author points:

The Russian government traditionally has treated the woods as something that has always been there and will never go away or change. The country's unpopulated territory takes up a lot of space on the map, but officials aren't too concerned about it. (Bershidsky, 2019)

There, the author expresses that the situation with forests is not taken as one of great importance. Moreover, the territory where people do not live also does not receive much attention. Then, the author says that when people start to get worried about the situation, the authorities signal that they care too, but do not do much to influence the situation. Also, the forestry strategy of 2018 does not mention climate change and its effect on Russian woods, according to the article. In the last sentence of the text, the author expresses slight hope that the smoke over Siberian cities will draw more attention to the ongoing problem.

To sum up, in the article, the author talks about the situation with the forest fires and describes how authorities respond to it. Also, he argues about the situation as related to climate change and mentions the consequences of the issue. The article contains the means

of expression that show a slight skepticism of the author. He proves the danger of the problem by providing the facts. Another crucial part of the story is the lack of response.

As related to the consequences of climate change, though, The Moscow Times has an article that took place several months later. It mostly relies on the words of climate change expert and provides a pragmatic viewpoint on the situation. The publication is titled "Russia's Leading Climate Change Expert Gives Sober Prognosis" and is from the set related to the climate change topic (Kozin, 2020). Its author is the journalist from The Moscow Times, Daniel Kozin, and the last update took place on the 4th of April 2020.

The text under the title of the article introduces the topic of the article:

Russia is set to experience huge temperature increases and extreme weather events, but there will also be opportunities. (Kozin, 2020)

Thus, at the moment, Russia has only started to face the consequences of climate change, such as the changes in the temperature and other weather events. And as told by the author, he believes that it is not all: the situation will proceed and therefore offer more opportunities. The word used is slightly skeptical if a way that opportunity is usually positive, and a chance given to a person. Nevertheless, climate change effects are not likely to be considered as something positive.

The first paragraph of the article provides the words of the top climate scientist of Russia, Dr. Vladimir Kattsov. Throughout the whole article, there are his quotes. In the ones given firstly, he mentions several important aspects related to Russia experiencing the consequences of climate change. In the next ones, there is the position of Kattsov. It is crucial to understand since it shows why his words are trustworthy. Also, it explains why the article contains many quotes of them, and why they have the presentations as matters of fact. A small paragraph telling about that goes as follows:

The government has tasked the Voeikov Observatory, which Kattsov heads, with forecasting the effects of climate change across Russia. Kattsov is also a regular contributor to government policy papers on climate change and the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (Kozin, 2020)

Here, several things mentioned are the means of expression to show the credibility of the words of Kattsov. For instance, the fact that he is the head of Voeikov Observatory creates the impression that he is aware of the things Observatory does and which findings it gains. Also, the notion of governmental interference complements the image of the Observatory as being a trustworthy and credible source of information about climate change.

Then Kattsov says that according to the data of the Observatory, extreme weather events in Russia increased. It has been happening, according to the words of Kattsov, since he first joined the field in the 1980s. And once again, the reliability of the Observatory is expressed in the next quotes provided in the article:

“Our initial understandings of how climate change would play out have received more and more confirmation over the years,” Kattsov said.

“We now have sufficient basis to say that the projections we made all those years ago are being confirmed.” (Kozin, 2020)

So, Kattsov says that the work done by the Observatory gave the results which were confirmed. Thus, the reliability of the data is supported.

The next part of the article is titled “How has Russia’s climate already changed?”, thus, providing the information about the current state. The author mentions the predictions once again there but from the other side of the story. As already said, the overall situation that the scientists predicted is damaging to the country. The aspect of the variability of the temperature nowadays that, on the contrary, is hard to predict, is also dangerous. Moreover, both the predictable and unpredictable cases nevertheless cause harmful events, referred to as catastrophes in the paragraph above. The usage of this word underlines the danger that lies in these consequences of climate change.

The article expresses the lack of under- and overestimation of the problem of climate change. In the next quote, Kattsov says a similar thing:

“Science can’t say that a particular weather event, like the heat wave of 2010 or the abnormally warm winter of 2019, is a concrete manifestation of global warming or climate change,” he explained. (Kozin, 2020)

So here, Kattsov says that not all the weather changes that look like climate change effects are caused by it. In the next part of the quote, there is an explanation of how climate change can be seen:

“Climate change can only be seen in changes in weather statistics — when the number of extreme and dangerous weather events changes significantly in any particular direction.” (Kozin, 2020)

Thus, in those two quotes, the crucial point has been made. The issue of climate change cannot be seen from only one side, summarizing that only climate change causes the weather events that include temperature rises in themselves. The statistics need to be more complex and to require a significant amount of time and direction, as told in the article. Therefore, there is a rationalistic point of view expressed in this part of the text.

Then, there are two contrary consequences of climate change described. The first one tells about the ones connected to water: floods, downpours, melting snow. Kattsov says that those outcomes are likely to appear in Siberia and the Far East. The next sentence provides the information that the reverse case is possible, meaning the fire (referring to the words of Kattsov): dry spells and temperature increases, which will cause forest fires and droughts. Thus, the article shows that the consequences can be various from one cause: climate change, and both of the opposites: water and fire can create danger for the people of all regions.

The following part of the text describes another outcome of the issue: melting permafrost. Its seriousness is being supported several times through means of expression in this paragraph. The variety of areas that will be experiencing permafrost melting consequences is crucial to mention in this regard, for instance. Another factor is the concentrations of methane and carbon trapped in the permafrost. Their release will exacerbate global warming, thus, making the predicted picture of the temperature events even worse.

One of the next paragraphs, though, makes quite a contrary statement, compared with the ones above. It is telling about the positive aspect of the whole situation. Moreover, this discussion once again contains the words of Kattsov. So, according to his viewpoint, the new climate might give the country some new opportunities. Most of them mentioned are connected to the economy of the country: increased maritime trade, accessibility to Arctic resources. Also, there will be more favorable conditions for agriculture.

Thus, in this article, the description of the climate change issues as related to Russia is given. Moreover, there is some prognosis for the situation to the country, which is not so positive in this regard. Nevertheless, the crucial aspect here was in one of the quotes of Kattsov, whose words took place throughout the whole article. He said that the fact of increasing awareness of the situation among the people is an important step. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of staying calm and not panicking about the ongoing situation.

Another aspect concerning the article is how the author points at the global perspective of the problem of climate change. He mainly speaks about the situation in terms of Russia. Nevertheless, the article described different areas of life and different territories of the country that are likely to get affected by climate change. This way, it is shown that the problem of climate change will have its consequences for all the people and a lot of the areas of life. It will also have the particular different effects on the various territories of the country.

As in the article by The Moscow Times written by the same journalist, this one mentions not only the negative aspects of climate change. Instead, it also discusses which possible positive consequences may occur because of the situation. Nevertheless, in the article, climate change is not presented as a good thing, as the negative impact of it still occupies most of the discussion. The positive aspects are involved in the description, but like the ones that should be taken into consideration. Also, it is crucial to remember that some of the consequences of climate change here presented as the ones that we cannot avoid at that point. Thus, it may be helpful for the people to know that there are things that can play a good part in some other aspects of life, such as economics, in the circumstances when the problem itself cannot be changed that much.

The article is written quite neutrally in the sense that we can not tell which attitude the author has. Mainly referring to the words of Kattsov, the author puts more emphasis on the opinion of the scientist and the discoveries. In all, the article bases on the facts and the calm attitudes towards them. Though the information mentioned is not optimistic in the

prognosis, the article ends with a slightly positive viewpoint by Kattsov, saying he believes people are acting in the right direction as related to the situation.

Thus, the articles above present different sides of the environmental discourse. In them, the skepticism and critique took place. We can see it from the names of the publications, for instance. Also, it is visible through the means of expression in the text of the articles. Nevertheless, the materials do not contain over-dramatization of the problem or a big emphasis on being critical. Instead, the viewpoint expressed complements the picture of the issue and the reaction of people to it. Overall, the articles were pragmatic, especially in the case of the last one. It several times emphasized the importance of not overestimating the problem and the unnecessaryness of panic.

The information presented was usually complemented by the researches. Also, there were the words of other people who are working in the field connected to the environment. Other aspects, such as the pictures and graphs, give more understanding to the readers.

Though, the issues presented in the articles above were quite diverse. But when it comes to the discussion of environment-related topics, there can also happen a case that the news portal presents one particular issue several times. For instance, it can be discussed by several journalists from different angles or adding new details or events as related to the topic. One example of such an issue is the one about permafrost thaw. It provoked the writings many times in the media. The discussion took place due to the actuality, complexity, and variety of aspects and outcomes of the topic. In the next part of the work, I will discuss the presentation of the permafrost thawing topic in The Moscow Times portal and the news portal TASS.

“Russian Cities at Risk as Climate Change Accelerates Permafrost Thaw — Report” is an article from the news portal The Moscow Times released on the 3rd of October 2019. Before the text starts, there is a picture of the land. In the foreground, there is water, with a layer of snow in the middle. Then, there is green grass in the background. There is also a thin layer of soil between snow and grass. Thus, there are several conditions of the land shown close to each other.

The article is rather short and, in general, serves a function of the report, as said in its title. It describes the risks of permafrost thawing, explaining why it is dangerous for the country. Thus, the author(s) tell that according to expectations, the process of permafrost thawing can trigger a “feedback loop” of carbon emissions. They will cause a concentration of

greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, as told in the article with reference to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report. Then, there is an explanation of why the problem is crucial for Russia:

More than 50% of Russia's territory is located in the planet's frozen cryosphere. The country is the world's fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases and was the biggest emitter not to have agreed to the 2015 Paris climate accords. ("Russian Cities at Risk as Climate Change Accelerates Permafrost Thaw — Report", 2019)

Therefore, the impact of the country on the problem is visible from the words given above. Also, there is an explanation that the consequences of permafrost thawing will be harmful to half of the territory of Russia, thus showing the importance of the problem. As told later in the article also with reference to IPCC words, the report predicts that 70% of surface-level permafrost can thaw by the year of 2100 if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and, this way, "shift the world's "permafrost border" increasingly northward".

If the conditions are better, though, the situation still will be harmful, as stated with reference to report:

Even if global warming is limited to well below 2°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, around 25% of the near-surface permafrost will thaw, the report added. ("Russian Cities at Risk as Climate Change Accelerates Permafrost Thaw — Report", 2019)

Therefore, in any case, the situation will cause harmful outcomes, as predicted.

The problem is likely to influence people, as stated. The article tells that 4 million people living in the Arctic regions are dependent on the cryosphere. Some of the people have already planned some relocation and adapted their traveling and hunting activities to the situation. The most endangered region is Siberia, the reference to the report claims.

Thus, the article is an example of a brief report that describes a problem and explains why it is a problem. The language used in the article is neutral. It does not point to the events as to disaster, even though the consequences of the problem are harmful. So, the

danger has an emphasis here. The picture in the beginning also does not create an impression of anything catastrophic in the text. The words of the experts presented in the article complement the report. Also, they increase trust in the information from the article.

The next article by The Moscow Times, however, centers around one of the outcomes of permafrost thawing, not on the issue overall. The article is called “Russia’s Thawing Permafrost May Cost Economy \$2.3Bln a Year”, released on the 18th of October 2019. The author Yuliya Fedorinova and Olga Tanas had written it for Bloomberg, the website that provides information about the finances for the professional participants of the financial market.

The article covers the aspect of climate change and melting permafrost as related to the economic side of the story. The articles by The Moscow Times above already discussed this aspect. Though, this one centers on this topic.

The small annotation under the title says that the Russian infrastructure of oil and gas is not ready for the rising temperatures and melting ice. Thus, the authors of the article outline the issue that they are going to discuss. It is the harm that the melting permafrost does for economics.

The article starts with a claim that Russia plans to give more attention to the permafrost area as related to climate change. In the second sentence, the authors explain the importance of this aspect. They do it by telling that the permanently frozen area is covering more than half of Russia, thus, as written in the same sentence, its thawing will put the buildings, pipelines, and other infrastructure at the possible risk of damage. Therefore, the attention mentioned in the first sentence is a needed action in this regard.

In the next sentence, the authors talk about the level of danger. They write that the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. Combined with the facts from the previous articles on the same topic of The Moscow Times, where there was information that the country is warming quite fast, this creates an impression of an even more dangerous situation. The fact that the Arctic is warming quicker than the other world is named a big problem in the article.

Then, the authors tell about the particular numbers of the losses that are likely to occur due to Arctic warming. Though, the range of the amounts is quite significant: from 50 to 150 billion Russian rubles (\$2.3 billion) a year. Authors give those numbers with reference to

the words of Alexander Krutikov, deputy minister for the Far East and Arctic development. In the next paragraph, the authors provide the direct quote of him as related to the issue:

“This problem needs to be addressed, because the amount of damage will grow every year,” Krutikov said in an interview. “The scale is very serious. The pipes explode, the piles collapse.” (Fedorinova & Tanas, 2019)

Through several means of expression, in this quote, it is shown that the situation is dangerous, and there is a need to consider it. For instance, the authors tell that the amount of damage will increase every year. Thus, the consequences are likely to be even more significant than they are now. Then, there are the words “explode” and “collapse” as related to the pipes and piles, respectively. That creates the impression that the harm that will happen will be sudden and destroying for the infrastructure. Thus, it is not possible to gradually avoid it.

The words of Krutikov is another sign of the fact that people are getting more aware of the current situation with climate change, as written in the next sentence of the article. Also, then, it is told about another reaction of the ruling person — about the president of Russia Vladimir Putin. As written in the paragraph, he had questioned the assertion that global warming had happened exclusively to human activity. Though still, he ratified the 2015 Paris climate accord in 2019 and said that Russia must perform some actions to try to reduce the impact of global warming. So, despite the uncertainty about the contribution of people to climate change, the need for changing the situation is undoubted.

Then, the authors tell about the organization of the places of oil and gas extraction. First of all, the authors express that the rising temperature is a reason to worry about the oil and gas companies:

The permafrost area accounts for 15% of Russia’s oil and 80% of its gas operations. It is also home to miners including Norilsk Nickel (Nornickel), the biggest refined nickel and palladium producer. (Fedorinova & Tanas, 2019)

So, the facts mentioned complement the fact that it is needed to take care of those areas to proceed with the extracting oil and gas. Those matters, then, are crucial for the Russian economy. The actions towards improving the situation with the areas took place, as written in the next sentence, though, with not so much of a success: the constructions for the stability of piles are slowly getting less stable, as the ground warms and gets softer. Therefore, as written in the article, there are signs that problems are increasing.

Thus, new actions took place to adapt to the situation. In the next paragraph, the authors write that according to the words of Nornickel, there are new buildings now. They have fewer floors and weigh less than the traditional ones. Though, there is no information about whether this action had helped with stabilizing the situation.

The next paragraph starts with quite a pessimistic prognosis, telling that the issue may get much worse. In this paragraph, there are many numbers given:

The issue may get much worse. By 2050, warming may affect about a fifth of structures and infrastructure across the permafrost area, costing some \$84 billion, according to research published in February by scientists including Dmitry Streletskiy, a professor at George Washington University. That would be equal to about 7.5% of Russia's gross domestic product. More than half of residential real estate, worth about \$53 billion, might be also damaged. (Fedorinova & Tanas, 2019)

Thus, through numbers, the seriousness of the problem is being addressed. The amounts are given in dollars, not in Russian rubles, for the English-speaking people who have different currency to understand the problem better, as the dollars are globally used, contrary to rubles. Also, the authors give the percentage of GDP, complementing the picture of the permafrost causing significant danger to the economics of Russia.

In the next sentence, however, the actions done are discussed. First of all, there is the information that the companies are already planning ahead. Thus, one of the gas producers is designing new infrastructure to cope with warming in the future. Also, there are new technologies emerged that help to keep the ground frozen. Therefore, they may improve the situation with the buildings getting unstable due to the softening of the soil. Also, the authors write that this company is looking at keeping natural gas lines away from

the permafrost. The plan is to do it by the gravity-based platforms that people used in offshore production. So, several things concerning the situation have already taken place. More of them authors discuss in the next paragraph: the watch over the foundation stability, monitoring ground temperatures, and supervision of the permafrost.

The last paragraph again gives a quote of Krutikov:

“Studying the permafrost is one of the most unfairly forgotten tasks and priorities of the state, Krutikov said. “As the ministry responsible for the development of the Arctic, we cannot ignore this topic, because it directly affects economic development.” (Fedorinova & Tanas, 2019)

Thus, here it is stated that the permafrost research is the thing that experiences abandonment. Though it should not be, as reflected by the author of the quote, because this climate change aspect has a significant impact on the economic development of the country. Therefore, studying the permafrost should be one of the priorities of the state to stabilize and improve the situation, as expresses here.

The article I have been researching points to the economic part of the climate change issue. Also, it talks about the actions that oil and gas companies did to adapt and to improve the situation. Moreover, in the article, the emphasis on the numbers is done, providing the information in more widely-used currency — dollars. It creates a more detailed picture of the financial impact that the permafrost has. The article also gives the words of the people who work in the companies of gas and oil extracting. It creates an impression of the reliability of the data because those people know the issue from the inside. In all, the article offers a detailed description of one of the aspects of climate change, i.e., permafrost, as related to the economics of Russia.

[TASS](#)

The next article is from the news portal TASS, released on the 7th of February 2020. Its title is "Scientists forecast submarine permafrost thawing, methane emissions". In the article, there is a discussion of several aspects of the topic of environmental problems. Unlike the previous publication that was telling primarily about one detail of the problem, economical, here, there are several possible outcomes of permafrost thawing presented.

Though, the crucial feature of the article is that it focuses on the forecasting of those outcomes. Also, there is a discussion of the actions that have been done by scientists to investigate the problem.

The article starts with an introduction to the topic. It consists of one sentence that contains all the information that is necessary to understand the content of the text. So, it tells that the scientists from one of the Russian institutes of oceanology had success when applying a new method of studying the degradation of submarine permafrost. They have done it through analyzing seismic activities in the ocean. The introduction is short and thick enough: it provides a clear explanation, and, though contains many words, is not wordy and complicated.

The next paragraph of the text tells about the danger that connected to the permafrost. This part follows the logical sequence, starting from the description of what is happening with the submarine permafrost outside the Russian East Arctic seas: its temperature is 8-10 degrees higher than the terrestrial permafrost temperature. Then, there is a statement that because the temperature is now higher, the methane that stayed dissolved in the atmosphere starts emitting. The next sentence emphasizes that the emission of methane is dangerous, and the force of the emissions registered is significant and only growing. It is visible through the language used that it is not clear which forces exactly those emissions have, nevertheless they are only increasing:

The big emissions of anomalous force or even of mega force have been registered in the Russian Arctic seas and the force is only growing. ("Scientists forecast submarine permafrost thawing, methane emissions", 2020)

Therefore, despite the moderate uncertainty, it is clearly stated that the methane emissions of a significant force are growing. From this statement, it can be supposed that this growth is dangerous because a certain amount of methane can be harmful to the environment. Then, the next sentence confirms it, saying that the increase in the amount of methane can change the cycle of methane's circulation in the Earth's atmosphere. The change, in turn, may increase the greenhouse effect. The greenhouse effect phenomenon is quite well-known in society, partly since it is the issue that the media discusses widely. It is also crucial for the whole planet, which is also a reason for its discussion. This way, the article,

while telling about the permafrost, includes another part of the media discussion of the environment.

The following paragraph of the article provides a quote from a press service of the Institute of Oceanology. The quote tells that the experts have tested self-popup bottom stations in the Arctic Ocean for the first time. Because of this new means of researching this area, the scientists could register many earthquakes and the localities of methane. Those, in order, helped to see how much the submarine permafrost is degrading. So, this part of the text explains the actions done to see what exactly is happening in the Arctic Ocean. Also, it tells how the scientists achieved the results that had explanations earlier in the article.

The next part, in a way, repeats the quote: it explains the technology employing which scientists have done their findings. Thus, in this paragraph, there is a statement that the technology aimed at observing the ocean's seismic activity, and for that purpose, there were self-popup bottom stations. Though, new information took place here as well, adding some details to the facts already explained before. So, the author(s) say that the bottom stations were installed 80 and 320 meters deep in autumn 2019. Also, the stations may remain on the bottom for up to 2 years and stay 6 kilometers deep. The last detail, according to the article, was also provided by the specialists.

The words of the scientists, and from the Institute of Oceanology press center are a crucial part of the text. The author(s) of the publication mostly bases the article on the words of the scientists from this institute. The part which does not contain the reference to the quotes of scientists is the second paragraph, but it still gives the scientific observations of what is happening in Russian Arctic seas.

The whole article is in a neutral language. There is no name of the author provided, and the reader cannot tell from the text, who is the person who has written it, his or her personality, or opinion about the situation. There are the facts presented, which lack the means of expression, such as metaphors, for instance. Though, it is not a professionally scientific text, which is also a similarity with the previously researched article. There are no specific terms that can distort the perception of the average reader. Moreover, there are the suppositions of the scientists provided in the text:

This phenomenon may change the cycle of methane's circulation in the Earth's atmosphere and may increase the greenhouse effect. ("Scientists forecast submarine permafrost thawing, methane emissions", 2020)

These suppositions are expressed in the word "may" that is used two times in this sentence. Therefore, there is no certainty in the effect of the emissions yet, but the author(s) state that these effects may occur and influence the situation of circulation of methane in the atmosphere and increase the greenhouse effect. Both of these two possible effects are harmful to the environment. Moreover, they are dangerous for the Earth, and the people, thus this sentence may seem like a kind of warning about the situation that may occur.

The next article by TASS is an example of a brief explanation of the situation, without going into many details. The author of the text states the main subject: warming in the Arctic, and the effect it may have, that is, difficulties with navigation. "Warming in Arctic will entail ice situations, hazardous for navigation — expert" is the title of the article released on the 2nd of March 2020.

After stating the main subject, the author proceeds with providing the words of the Director of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute, Alexander Makarov. The quote of the Director is also brief, and some words were taken out of it. Nevertheless, the quotes provided give a short explanation of what was happening in Arctic seas such as Laptev and what differed the situation of 2020 from the previous ones: the quicker ice formation. Then, Makarov says about the consequences of this difference: formations of icebergs and glaciers and concludes saying that scientists should carefully watch this process to keep the navigation in the Arctic safe. Therefore, the quote provided follows the logical sequence: it gives an explanation of why the 2020 situation in the Arctic is crucial, which effect it will have, and what people can do to prevent harmful consequences.

The last paragraph of the article provides a controversy of the estimates of the ice level in the Arctic. The first sentence of it gives words of Makarov through indirect quotations. As he argues, according to the recordings of 2007, 2012 and 2019, the ice cover has been shrinking. Nevertheless, as told in the next sentence, those measurements may be not so representative, because they were handled in September when the ice level is lower. And as for the other months, the ice cover only grows, and the speed of its formation increases. Thus, the last paragraph gives a kind of conclusion, expressing that

even though the measurements showed one result, it nevertheless was different, and the problem of the ice growth is still present in the Arctic.

In general, the article provides a brief overview of the situation. It does not have a detailed description of what exactly is happening in the Arctic. Nevertheless, the information given is clear. The problem and the comments provided are understandable due to the logical sequence. Therefore, this article is probably for the average readers who do not have a deep scientific understanding of the problem of warming.

The article has a very neutral language. Itself, it lacks the name of the author, as in the case of previous TASS article. And neither from the information about the publication nor from its language one cannot guess it. The danger of the quicker ice formation is not presented dramatically, for instance. The language of the article also lacks the words that would show the worriedness or sadness of the writer. Thus, the language used does not represent the information given in the sense that it would change the perception of the reader. More or less, the article provides the facts and supports them with a quote from the Director of Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute Alexander Makarov. Moreover, there are no specific terms that may have distorted the perception of the average reader, who would not understand them and therefore take the information incorrectly.

The tone of the article is also neutral in the last paragraph. It provides two sides of the story, referring to the words of the Director of the Institute.

“On the one hand, the scientist explained, the ice cover in the Arctic seas has been shrinking, as recorded in 2007, 2012 and 2019. On the other hand, the results were recorded in summer (in September), whose 2.5-3 months account for the highest temperatures in the region, whereas over the remaining months the ice cover only grows, and the speed of its formation is only increasing. (“Warming in Arctic will entail ice situations, hazardous for navigation — expert”)

Thus, this part of the article presents both sides of a case and emphasizes it, using the expression “on the one hand... on the other hand”.

[The Moscow Times \(again\)](#)

Keeping in mind the aspects of two previous TASS articles, the next one by The Moscow Times offers a slightly different viewpoint. The actions by the scientists discussed in the first TASS article and the temperature rises told about in the second are present in The Moscow Times article too, though, from a slightly different angle.

“Arctic Likely to See Ice-Free Summers Despite Climate Action, Study Says” is an article by The Moscow Times released on the 22nd of April 2020. The very title already offers a point of view that despite the actions of the people, the temperature rises will persist. The article starts with a picture of a polar bear in the snows. There is also some melted snow in the middle of the photograph. The caption under the image says:

Climate change has reduced sea ice coverage in the Arctic Ocean in recent decades, with 2019 tying with 2012 for having the second-lowest ice cover in recorded history. (“Arctic Likely to See Ice-Free Summers Despite Climate Action, Study Says”, 2020)

So here, the outline of the article is presented, showing on which topic it would be. In the next sentence, there is the prediction of future changes: even if current levels of CO₂ emissions experience a significant cut, the summertime ice in the Arctic will diminish by 2050. Therefore, the situation is supposed to be worse in less than 30 years. This fact complements the picture of the importance of the problem. The article also mentions that in the 2019 summer, ice in the Arctic waters of Russia disappeared. Thus, the problem has already emerged.

There is the supposition that the Arctic will be ice-free to 2050 several times in the article. For instance, there are the words of the author of the latest study on the topic provided. He says that the Arctic Ocean will become nearly ice-free by 2050, according to the most simulations. Also, there is the information that the previous research of the issue predicted the same outcome.

The article expresses the inability of people to escape such a harmful outcome once again. According to the words of Dirk Notz, the study’s lead author, if global warming will be below 2°C, Arctic sea ice will nevertheless disappear in the abovementioned amount of time.

Another consequence is described, with reference to the words of the co-author of the study Ed Blockley:

“A winter ice-free event would be catastrophic, for some wildlife species [like polar bears] for example, that live and hunt around sea ice,” he was quoted as saying. (“Arctic Likely to See Ice-Free Summers Despite Climate Action, Study Says”, 2020)

Thus, the outcome of the situation will influence the living species in the Arctic. The harshness of it is emphasized here by the word "catastrophic".

The next paragraph also mentions the importance of oil and gas to the Russian economy. Also, it is told that the country slowly takes steps to reduce the carbon emissions, and, according to the governmental plan, there are 29 outlines of measures that are supposed to reduce the damage and take advantage of opportunities that happened because of climate change.

Thus, the article is quite brief but covers the topic of warming in the Arctic with some details, though. Despite being a quite neutral report of what is likely to be happening in the future as related to temperature and ice melting, respectively, it is expressed why it is dangerous for different spheres of life. Also, it is mentioned that even though the consequences will occur in any case, there is still a plan of the Russian government that points at reducing the outcomes of the problem.

[TASS \(again\)](#)

The next article, unlike the previous ones, directly points at the actions of the people as related to the problem of permafrost thawing. It can be seen from the title already: “Minister: Russia will restore permafrost monitoring system”. It is an article from the news portal TASS, released on the 10th of June 2020. As already been discussed with the case of other TASS articles, this is a brief overview of the situation stated in the title: restoration of the permafrost monitoring system. The topic of permafrost thawing, as can be seen from the articles from other news portals, including TASS, is one of the themes discussed for quite a long time. This popularity may be because permafrost thawing has many harmful consequences for the environment, people, and many others. Some of them are global, for

instance, the emission of methane stored in the permafrost. When melt, it goes to the atmosphere, increases the greenhouse effect.

Another issue that had a discussion around in June 2020 is the spill of fuel in Norilsk. There is a mention of this event in the annotation under the title of the article:

The recent spill of fuel in Norilsk may be explained by thawing of the permafrost and consequent subsidence of a pad under the fuel tank (“Minister: Russia will restore permafrost monitoring system”, 2020)

Thus here, there is a link between those two events made. And also, the possibility of fuel spill as the outcome of permafrost thawing is a harmful consequence of the latter. There were mentions of this consequence in the articles as well.

The article starts by saying that there is a plan for the restoration of the system. It aims to monitor the permafrost conditions and to forecast its degradation. The article refers to the words of the minister of the Ministry for Development of the Far East and the Arctic. According to him, the draft of the system is due to the end of the year.

Though, there is a thing already mentioned in the article by the news portal The Moscow Times covering the issue of permafrost. It is, the constructions of such buildings depend on the situation of permafrost. In this article, this fact also takes place. The condition of buildings already standing depends on the permafrost as well, as when it is thawing, it can endanger the stability of buildings. In the article, there is a statement that the possible consequence of thawing is the subsidence of a pad under a fuel tank, which, respectively, could have caused the spill.

Then, there is a quote of the minister provided, who mentions the Soviet system that was made to monitor soil changes, collapsed in the 1990s, and did not experience recovery until then. The system that is going to be nowadays, he adds, will be made using modern technologies. He also said that it would be cheaper and more reasonable to restore the system than to face accidents. Thus here, from the information given in quotes, it can be seen that it has been about 30 years since the territory had the monitoring system. Due to the nowadays event in Norilsk, though, there is already a discussion of the project.

In the following part of the text, there is an explanation of which actions are necessary for the work. It is explained in the format of three steps with a construction "first of all ... secondly ... finally", thus making it more understandable for the readers. In the last paragraph, there is another quote of the minister explaining why it is needed to build this system. So, there is a statement that, according to the experts, losses of every year range between 50 and 150 billion rubles. It is from 732 million to 2.2 billion dollars. So, the information about the amounts is given in more widely used currency, dollars, therefore making it more understandable for people from different countries. Though, the minister adds that those numbers are rough estimations, and their task is to make the calculations more precise. The finishing sentence of the quote and the article is that the cryo-geology specialists will offer different algorithms for different objects, such as houses, roads, pipelines, etc.

As the other TASS articles, this one is rather neutral in its sense and offers a brief overview of the situation. The information is presented in an understandable form, thus, making it available for the readers, as there are no specific terms that might have caused misunderstandings. Also, there are quotes from the people who work directly with the issue, thus, making the information appear more credible.

As can be seen from the examples of articles above, there are different approaches to presenting the problem of permafrost thawing to the readers. It is also a similarity of this section with a previous one about other aspects of the environmental topic discussion. Those differences in the presentation, again, can be explained by various factors, which include the ones from the side of the problem itself, i.e., the complexity of the topic, the variety of outcomes, the issues concerning it. There is also a side of the news portal, though. Some articles offer a brief explanation of what is happening, other focus on the outcomes, or one of them. There are the ones that describe the actions of the people. Despite the variety of approaches, there is a feature that is the same for many of the articles. It is the notion of people who are working with the issue directly or indirectly. Those can be scientists, ministers from the research institutes, experts, and others. The quotes provided by them create an impression of the information being more credible. It happened in the case of other aspects of environmental discussion as well.

The information presented does not contain the words that could create misconceptions, i.e., specific terms. Therefore, the articles are understandable for the people not familiar with a problem. Also, there are often the numbers given: the amounts of money that endangered due to the situation, the temperature degrees, the years by which

the state will probably change, etc. The numbers also complement the picture and provide a bit more understanding of the problem.

As for the language in the articles related to permafrost thawing, it had been neutral in general. Many publications lacked the name of the author, and the opinion he or she has on the issue was not visible. The critique of some presented problems did not happen, as in the case of the other issues' discussion. Sometimes, though, the means of expression were used to emphasize some parts of the problem. It happened in the case of emphasizing importance or dangerousness, for instance. The overestimation, though, did not seem to occur in this case, and, overall, the presentation of the permafrost thawing issue seemed to be quite pragmatic.

Meduza

A slightly skeptical language and quite an unusual aspect of discourse were present in the article from another news source. The publication from the independent news portal Meduza released on the 28th of February 2020. It is assigned to the section *stories* and has the following title: "Don't panic [written in bold] Why the Russian news media started reporting major gas explosions as adorable, harmless ‘pops’" (Kovalev et al., 2020). There are the authors of the article stated at the bottom of the page: Alexey Kovalev with assistance from Tatyana Lysova, Andrey Pertsev, and Maxim Solopov; translation by Kevin Rothrock. The title sets the tone of the article, that is, quite skeptical, by using the phrase “adorable, harmless ‘pops’”. After the title, there is a photo of a panel house with destroyed porches on the eighth and ninth floor.



And also, as the caption says, this happened due to a gas explosion. However, it was referred to as "gas pop" in news reports. So, the language used by other news sources goes under criticism here. The authors say that those 'pops' were too dangerous for life and property to refer to them like this. As told in the article, the aim of using this language was the reduction of panic of the readers. Thus, the word 'explosion' was replaced by 'pop'. The author of the article points at this as "absurd", because the same news sources used the photographs of the ruins and wrote stories about died or injured people while using the milder word. Nevertheless, as stated in the article, Russian media used the word 'explosion' when it came to other countries: for instance, when they were talking about the gas explosion in Kazakhstan. As for the Russian case, however, the media simultaneously stated to use the word 'pop', and the author of the article provides a graph of the usage of "gas explosion" and "gas pop" in headlines of Russian news, which graphically presents the switch from one to another.

Then, the authors explain the difference between those two terms is. According to it, the 'pop', as a term, refers to the explosions that do not lead to significant destruction. Thus, the usage of this word is likely to be incorrect in some of the situations described earlier, as the damage caused by a gas explosion "is visible with the naked eye", as the author writes. There are several examples of the incorrect usage of 'pop' mentioned in the article. They have the same supposition that the explanation of this usage is the unwillingness to cause a panic of the readers.

The usage of this word becomes even more strange when it comes to describing an explosion when one knows the context in which it occurred from Russian-language reports (for instance, the version of the same article in Meduza, 2020). Thus, the word 'pop' in this article is a translation of the Russian word "хлопок" which usually means "clap". Therefore, it is not a word that is appropriate to use when the sound is far louder than the sound of hands clap, and the impact of it is also a lot more significant.

The case of the word 'pop' is, however, not the only example on the topic of purposely using a milder expression when describing a situation in the media. In the article, there are two other examples mentioned:

Sources told Meduza that the rising use of “gas pop” in news coverage is neither an accident nor the result of bureaucratic jargon slipping unnoticed from official press releases into media reports. Like other examples of government newspeak — such as “saturation” (podtoplenie) instead of flooding and “combustion” (vozgoranie) instead of fire — the term “gas pop” is part of the Russian presidential administration’s information policy. (Kovalev et al., 2020)

Therefore, the article points critically at the language that has been used by the other media sources when it came to descriptions of the harmful situation, connected with gas, water, and fire. The authors of the article also provide explanations for the usage of such a vocabulary. These are reducing panic and negativity in the reports. According to the text, in the news, there is an emphasis on positive events. Also, there is an underestimation of the negative ones. Meduza, referring to the sources close to the government, says that when the person reads the article about some 'combustion', for instance, it means that everything is "already in flames". All those usages of words go under coordination and consultations with the people who stand for the Russian public relations and communications. Therefore, the article points to the notion of this "reduction of negativity" as being certainly done on purpose. Nevertheless, the authors say that some of the sources refuse that they have instructed the media to write “pop” instead of “explosion”. In all, though, most of the "sources" and pieces of evidence that Meduza has in the article, still point at the notion of conscious usage of milder words.

This example, therefore, is one of the misrepresentations of the news connected to environmental diseases by the media. Here, the explanation is the willingness to reduce negativity and give a better impression to the reader. Nevertheless, the events that took place, such as explosions, do not become less harmful due to such a presentation. The explosions, floods, and fires still cause damage to the lives of people and the environment around them. Due to the lack of proper description, there can be more people perceiving those events as not a big problem because that is how they are referred to in the media. By the words of the former correspondent for one of the leading news agencies of Russia provided in the article, he did not receive any specific instructions on which words to use. "It's just how it's done. It's customary", – he claims.

CONCLUSIONS

The research aimed to investigate the features of the environment-related articles from three Russian English-speaking news websites. The study contained the analysis of the presentation of the environmental issues in the sense of language, relation to other spheres of life, and the presence of people in the environmental discourse field.

Due to the complexity of the topic, the theoretical part of the thesis involved the discussion of several points related to it, basing on the readings review. The first section deals with the emergence of environmental-related topics in the media and the main dimensions of media discourse in that sphere. Then, other parts of media discourse around the environment were discussed, such as the presence of interviews in the articles, usage of scientific terms, and the notion of images. Those were important to understand which aspects should be taken into consideration while analyzing the publications. Also, there was a discussion of the role of media as related to environmental problems, and the features of journalism, which are crucial as I was studying articles written by journalists.

During the research, I analyzed ten articles from three Russian English-speaking news websites. Though the news sources are different, and the publications vary as related to their topics, several features were similar among them.

First of all, TASS articles and the one by Meduza did not have the name of the author. Nevertheless, there was a significant difference between those two portals' approaches. TASS publications were generally neutral and also had rather brief reports, without going into many details about the events. They also lacked skepticism that Meduza had in the text, including its title, and the topics differed as well. TASS, thus, described the events in the environmental sphere, while Meduza talked about the aspect regarding word usage in the news reports about the environment-related topics.

Therefore, Meduza, in my research, had a standpoint of being quite critical and talking about other news reports, not about the events only. This aspect of word usage is not discussed often in news sources regarding the environment. In my research, this was the only article that had a perspective of discussing other reports.

The Moscow Times also had slight skepticism and criticism in some of the publications. It is visible from one of the titles ("Is Russia Finally Waking Up to Climate Change?"), for instance, and in the expressions used in the articles themselves. Also, one

of the publications expressed quite a pragmatic viewpoint, mentioning positive consequences of climate change and emphasizing that the panic about the situation is not necessary.

There was a feature that all three news websites shared. This feature is the presence of other people in them. Firstly, all three TASS articles had references to other people in the very beginning: the titles. So, the titles contained the following people: “scientists”; “expert”; “minister”, respectively, in three titles. Those three share a feature of being the authority in some sense related to the environment. Scientists and their findings are likely to be trusted because they work directly with the issue. “Expert” is a word that is not tied to any particular occupation, though it expresses a person’s understanding of the problem. Minister is also considered to be the state authority regarding various spheres of public life. Thus, the reference to the words of the minister is likely to increase the trust in information told.

The Moscow Times also had references to other people’s words. Those were again scientists and experts, and politicians as well (referred to as “government”). Moreover, one of the articles by The Moscow Times referred to the opinions of civil society. The author provided this after the position of the government. In that article, it was quite a contrast shown between those two viewpoints.

The references in the articles were usually in the form of direct quotations. Sometimes there were only several words provided, and there was also the case when the person cited is one of the central figures of the article, on whose opinion the content of the article centers. It was a case of one of The Moscow Times’s article.

Meduza had a reference to the statements of the former correspondent of one of the news agencies. The article did not have the name of the person, but the words provided supported one of the claims the author(s) makes.

Therefore, the presence of other people’s words and opinions occupied a significant space in the news publications. Bell discussed the importance of the interviews as a source for media (Bell, 1994), and, thus, their role is still present.

Another aspect of the articles is the notion of images in them. To sum it up, all three news websites’ articles contained pictures, except for TASS. Not all the publications by The Moscow Times, however, had images, though, in some of them, they were present. Comparing the pictures from The Moscow Times and the one from Meduza, a significant

difference takes place. The images from The Moscow Times were distant and aesthetically pleasant, the feature also found in the research about Getty images (Hansen & Machin, 2008). Though, the image provided in the Meduza article showed a panel house with destroyed floors. All of the pictures, though, are tied to some dangerous event described in the text: global warming, forest fires, and gas explosions, respectively. The image from Meduza, however, looks more realistic and less pleasing if compared to the picture of smoke from the chimneys and burning trees from The Moscow Times.

There is another thing that is present in all the articles, however. It is the connection of environment-related topics to other life spheres such as economics, politics, civil society, and science. Those connections, for instance, are made by referring to the words of people from those areas. Also, by the results of researches in those areas and by describing how the environmental issues affect those spheres. For instance, they may lead to economic losses, as said in one of the articles examined. The governmental reaction to environmental problems may also influence the situation with them. Moreover, it may change the perception of the issues by the people.

The connection with science is also present, of course, but not only because the research of the environmental situation is scientific. Also, the articles often contained a reference to the statements of scientists and experts. For instance, one of the texts by The Moscow Times mostly based on the words of a climate scientist.

Thus, the notion of environmental issues as related to other aspects of life was present in most of the articles examined. This finding seems to be one of the most crucial in the understanding of this discourse. The connection of environmental issues to the other spheres of life and the effects both from the people to the environment and vice versa are the aspects that place the topic of environmental problems to a significant extent of importance. Those features are also crucial to understand the situation with the environment and its media presentation. As the media shapes the understanding of an issue a lot, it seems to me that the connections with other spheres of life that are present in the articles are a good sign. As one of the publications asked it in the title: is Russia finally waking up to climate change? For me, the question will have a positive response only when there would be a visible shift in people's activities towards the environmental situation, with those efforts aimed at either maintaining the current state or improving it. However, the topic of actions of the people towards environmental issues is an idea for another research.

As for my study, though, the presentation of the topic in the articles formed a complex picture with neutrally stating the facts and describing researches; and expressing the opinions which are often in a sense critical. Both of the elements: “factual” and “emotional”, as we may refer to them, look as valuable and irreplaceable components of an objective picture of environmental issues in Russia.

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