



Lexical and semantic features of the synonymic series of the key lexeme of the concept of freedom in modern English

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Abstract. The relevance of the study is determined by the increased attention of linguistics to the study of the concept of freedom in the value-semantic system of modern English, its active representation in political, cultural and social discourses, as well as the need for a comprehensive clarification of the semantic organisation and mechanisms of linguistic realisation of this concept, taking into account contextual variability and synonymic relations. The aim of the study was to analyse the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom as a key nominant of the linguistic and cultural concept of the same name. The research methodology included definitional, component, comparative, contextual and corpus analysis, which ensured the selection, description and classification of synonymic units, as well as the identification of their semantic and functional characteristics. The main lexical-semantic groups of synonyms for the lexeme freedom were established, covering political and civil rights, autonomy, freedom from coercion, privileges granted, freedom of choice and freedom of movement. Their dominant semes, typical collocations and stylistic parameters were analysed, which made it possible to clarify the conceptual component of the concept. A partial neutralisation of the semantic differences between freedom and liberty has been established in the political speeches of American presidents, where these lexemes mark fundamental democratic values. An analysis of the use of the lexemes freedom and liberty in speeches

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by American presidents showed that these terms acquired primarily philosophical, democratic and global significance, emphasising their role as fundamental values of the nation. The lexeme liberty was usually associated with constitutional rights, particularly in fixed combinations, emphasising the protection of specific freedoms. At the same time, freedom emphasised the universality and immutability of people's desire for autonomy, contrasting it with bondage and morally negative phenomena. Both lexemes were also used in a global context. Contextual synonyms (rights, opportunity, victory) that expand the semantic structure of the concept in discursive practice were analysed. The practical value of the study lay in the possibility of applying its results by specialists in cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, political linguistics, as well as in the teaching of academic English and the analysis of political discourse

Keywords: linguo-cultural concept; synonymic range; lexical-semantic group; cognitive-discursive analysis; political rhetoric; lexical variability; discursive strategies

Introduction

As one of the key concepts of any linguistic culture, the concept of freedom has repeatedly been the subject of research within the cognitive and linguistic-cultural paradigms. In contemporary linguistic studies, the concept of freedom is considered multidimensionally – as a linguistic, axiological, cognitive and discursive phenomenon. A common feature of these studies is an emphasis on its value-based nature and its significance for national identity, as well as on its semantic diversity. The differences between the approaches of researchers are determined by the chosen research focus, which varies from etymology and symbolism to cognitive models and discursive representation of the concept of freedom.

A. Musolff's (2020) work systematised the mechanisms of conceptualising political concepts through scenarios and oppositions, which stimulated further research into the dynamics of value categories in political discourse. R. Wodak's (2021) study, devoted to the discursive strategies of identity politics and the ideological mechanisms of meaning formation, has significantly expanded the possibilities of critical discourse analysis, particularly with regard to concepts that can take on the characteristics of empty signs. Within the framework of contemporary applied and discourse-oriented

studies, the concept of freedom is analysed as a functionally flexible formation capable of adapting to the communicative tasks of different types of texts. A. Shuhaiev & M. Malchenko (2022) showed that in PR discourse, freedom is objectified through positively marked lexemes and metaphorical models associated with choice, self-realisation and openness of opportunities, performing primarily manipulative and image-building functions, which leads to a pragmatic reorientation and semantic simplification of this concept. In the context of lexicology, the generally accepted position on the dominant element of a synonymic series remains important. Within the concept of freedom, this dominant element is the lexeme of the same name, which sets the main semantic vector in the structure of this concept. Etymologically, freedom comes from the Old English *freodom*, formed from *freo* "free" and the suffix *-dom* meaning "state," which attests to the ancient historical basis of the concept and its stability in the development of the English language system.

D. Sabadash & V. Lukaniuk (2023) analysed the peculiarities of the verbalisation of the concept of democracy in the speeches of world leaders in the context of the war in Ukraine and concluded that Joe Biden and Ursula von der

Leyen's speeches show the highest frequency of use of the lexeme democracy, while Boris Johnson's speeches are dominated by the verbalisers people and country, and Volodymyr Zelensky's speeches are dominated by the verbalisers free, freedom and people. J. Mathias & R.B. Silliman (2022) analysed the interaction between discourse on freedom of speech and hate speech, showing that freedom of speech is not absolute and needs to be balanced with the rights of others and democratic values. R. Soóky (2022) examined the political discourse of one party in Slovakia. The scholar demonstrated how language is used to construct ideas about freedom or lack thereof and how such discursive strategies reinforce ideological influence. In contemporary linguistic research, the study of linguocultural concepts takes into account their three-component structure, which includes conceptual, figurative, and value components. An important stage of the research is the description of the conceptual component of the concept, which is actualised in the direct nomination of the name-concept, as well as in the synonymic series of the key lexeme, the description of which contributes to the establishment of a complete set of conceptual features of the phenomenon under study. Despite a significant number of works devoted to this issue, the question of describing the synonymic series of the key lexeme of the concept of freedom in modern English remains unresolved.

The aim of the study was to analyse the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom in modern English as the nominant of the linguistic and cultural concept of freedom. The main objectives of the study were to carry out a definitional analysis of the lexemes included in the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom, followed by the identification of their common and distinctive semantic features between the selected lexical-semantic groups. In addition, an important task of the study was to conduct a contextual analysis of the functioning of these units in speeches and public appearances by

American presidents over the past five years, namely 2020-2025, in order to establish the frequency of their use, determine the main collocation patterns, and establish semantic differences between individual synonyms in the spectrum of contextual meaning.

Materials and Methods

The subject of the study was lexical units selected from English-language thesauruses (Kipfer, 2022; Macmillan thesaurus, n.d.; Collins English thesaurus, n.d.) that formed a synonymic series for the lexeme freedom. This series included both core synonyms (liberty, independence, autonomy, self-determination, sovereignty) and units representing peripheral meanings, in particular those related to liberation (liberation, emancipation, release, discharge), granted rights or privileges (franchise, immunity, exemption, privilege), expanded opportunities for action (latitude, scope, room, leeway) and physical or functional freedom (freedom of movement, ease, facility). Refining the list made it possible to assess the representativeness of the sample and structure the semantic parameters of the series under study.

The work used an integrated approach to the analysis of the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom in modern English, combining the use of tools of lexical semantics, corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis. At the first stage of the study, data from lexicographic sources necessary for the analysis of the definitions of the key lexeme freedom and lexical units included in its synonymic series were selected using the complete sampling method. Methods of definitional and component analysis were used to identify the core (archisemes) and peripheral (differential semes) meanings of lexemes included in the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom. The use of these methods is due to the need to identify the main lexical-semantic groups that contain a set of features reflecting the conceptual component of the concept of freedom in modern English. The

method of cognitive-discursive analysis served as a tool for describing the contextual meaning of the lexeme freedom and its synonymic series in the speeches of American presidents over the past five years. The contextual analysis of the nominative freedom through discursive practices is appropriate and methodologically justified, as it reveals the comprehensiveness of understanding and perception of the concept of freedom by native speakers of English. This method served as a tool for identifying the contextual meanings of the lexeme freedom as the dominant synonymic series and describing the semantic potential of other lexemes in this synonymic series, which made it possible to identify common and distinctive features between the selected lexical-semantic groups and to determine the differences in usage between individual synonyms in the spectrum of contextual meaning.

Corpus research methods were used in the study. The English Web 2020 corpus was used to search for corpus synonyms for the lexeme freedom in English. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (n.d.) is hosted in the Sketch Engine corpus manager. Using the Thesaurus tool, a list of synonyms that can be included in the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom was obtained. The frequency and collocation patterns of lexical units in the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom in speeches and public addresses by American presidents were measured using the Voyant Tools (n.d.) web platform. In particular, it was found that the lexemes “freedom” and “liberty” are interchangeable synonyms used to denote the fundamental values of the American political and social system and denote the end result – a state where people are free and independent.

The lexicographic basis of the study was formed by the following sources: Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus (2013), Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.), Merriam-Webster (n.d.), Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.) and B.A. Kipfer (2022). The use of different

types of dictionaries was necessitated by the need for a comprehensive analysis of the definitions, etymology and ideographic connections of the lexeme freedom. The main body of the material consisted of texts of political speeches and public addresses by American presidents, selected by means of a comprehensive sample from the online archive of The American Presidency Project (n.d.) for the period 2020-2025. The research also includes speeches and public addresses (spoken addresses and remarks) by American presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump, selected by means of a complete sample from the online archive of the American Presidency Project for the last five years (The American Presidency Project, n.d.), which made it possible to study the use of the lexeme freedom in contemporary institutional discourse and to trace the realisation of its semantic potential in real communicative conditions. The research sequence included the formation of a research corpus, lexicographic analysis, semantic classification of units, corpus processing of the material, and generalisation of the observations obtained.

Results and Discussion

An important stage of the study is the description of the conceptual component, which is actualised both in the direct nomination of the name-concept and in the synonymic series of the key lexeme. The analysis of synonyms, associative fields and contextual uses allows to establish a complete set of conceptual features of the phenomenon under study, its cognitive and cultural significance. This emphasises that linguistic designation not only records knowledge about the world, but also shapes ideas about the social, historical and ethical priorities of a particular community. It has been proven that synonyms are grouped into a synonymic series around a dominant, which is the carrier of the basic meaning common to all lexical units of the entire synonymic series. The dominant of the synonymic series of the concept of freedom

is the lexeme freedom, which nominates this concept in modern English. The word freedom comes from the Old English *freodom*, which is derived from *freo* – “free” and the suffix *dom* “state, quality, condition”. That is, in its original meaning, freedom meant “the state of being free”. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.), the lexeme freedom has a long etymological and semantic history, reflecting its gradual development within the English language system. The dictionary records not only the date of the first appearance of this word, but also the successive changes in its meanings in different historical periods. In Old English, freedom was used mainly in the following meanings: 1) the state or fact of being free from servitude, constraint, inhibition, etc. 2) the state or fact of not being subject to despotic or autocratic control, or to a foreign power; civil liberty; independence. The dictionary also records the (figurative) meaning of the lexeme: Liberation from the bondage or dominating influence of sin, spiritual servitude, worldly ties, etc. In the 1860s, the lexeme freedom began to be used in the meaning “Exemption or release from the obligations of a contractual agreement; spec. release from a marriage, divorce”.

The lexeme freedom is often defined through the use of the synonymous unit liberty. To understand how close these synonyms are in terms of semantic load, it is necessary to consider the etymology of the lexeme liberty. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.), the noun liberty appeared in the English language at the end of the 14th century with the meaning “free choice, freedom to act according to one’s own desires”, as well as “freedom from the slavery of sin”. The lexeme comes from the Old French *liberte* (“freedom, will”), attested in the 14th century (modern French *liberté*), which, in turn, originates from the Latin *libertatem* (nom. *libertas*) – “civil and political freedom; the state of a free person; absence of restrictions; permission”. The root *liber* – “free” – is common to a number of lexemes,

in particular liberal, and indicates the primary semantic component of “freedom” as the antithesis of subjugation or dependence. The primary use referred primarily to an individual, while the extension of the meaning to the community level, in the context of “freedom from arbitrary, despotic or autocratic power”, was recorded at the end of the 15th century. At the same time, the dictionary material emphasises the difference between the French and English conceptualisation of freedom: in the French tradition, liberty is primarily associated with political equality, while in the English tradition it is associated with personal autonomy and individual independence.

According to the Oxford English (n.d.), the historical development of the lexeme freedom was accompanied by the emergence of a number of branch meanings that reflected social, legal and cultural changes in the English-speaking world. The dictionary notes that the nautical meaning of “leave” has been recorded since 1758, while the semantic line of “unrestricted action or expression”, attested in the 1550s, became the basis for the formation of the idiom to take liberties – “to exceed the limits of what is permitted, to go beyond the bounds of decency” (1620s). Another meaning – “privileges granted” (14th century) – contributed to the establishment of legal and administrative semantics, which denoted “private land on which special privileges apply” (mid-15th century). In the 18th century, this semantic line developed into the meaning of administrative territories with their own jurisdictional rights in Britain and the United States, as reflected, in particular, in the toponym North Liberties of Philadelphia. The lexeme also formed a number of cultural and symbolic derivatives, including liberty-cap (1803) and liberty-pole (1775), which represented the idea of freedom during the American Revolution (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Similar semantic phenomena are noted in Old French *libertés* – “local rights, laws, taxes”, which indicates a historical

layering of meanings related to legal status and civil guarantees. That is, conceptually, liberty and freedom have similar Proto-Indo-European meanings: “to be free, not subject to or dependent on”. However, these lexemes are not interchangeable and require contextual clarification of their use.

As a result of the definitional and component analysis of the lexeme freedom and lexical units included in its synonymic series, seven lexical-semantic groups (LSG) were identified, each of which reflects different aspects of the concept of freedom in modern English. Each LSG was formed by identifying core (archisemes) and peripheral (differential semes) characteristics, determining their semantic features, typical collocations, syntactic realisation and stylistic characteristics. The lexeme freedom is a polysemous lexical component of English, covering a semantic field ranging from state/legal rights to physical liberation and psychological feelings of freedom. LSG 1 includes synonymous units that correlate with freedom according to the dominant seme “political right” and covers the spectrum of political and legal principles of a person to act in accordance with their legal rights and political freedoms. This LSG covers such lexemes as liberty, franchise immunity, and exemption. All these units denote the right of an individual or community to act freely without legislative or political coercion, often institutionalised in the form of constitutional norms or declarations. Typical collocations are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, constitutional freedoms, and civil liberties. Such phrases are mainly used in constructions such as freedom of + N and have formal legal, academic or political connotations (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus, n.d.).

LSG 2 includes lexemes that contain the common archiseme “absence of physical or social restrictions”. These include synonyms such as liberation, emancipation, release, and

discharge. The common semantic features of these synonyms give reason to characterise freedom as a state of liberation from coercion, imprisonment or oppression. Collocations such as release from captivity, regain their freedom, emancipation from slavery demonstrate the connection between the lexical units of this group and the historical and social context, in particular the theme of slavery, which can be traced in the etymology of the lexeme freedom. In syntactic terms, characteristic combinations are to gain/regain freedom, freedom from + N. Stylistically, the group can be either neutral or historically and politically marked (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus, n.d.). LSG 3 includes lexemes that have the archiseme “autonomy” or “independence”. These are lexemes such as: independence, autonomy, self-determination, self-government, sovereignty. Their common semantic feature is the right of a person to make their own decisions without any external control or influence from the state. Examples of typical collocations are: political independence, national sovereignty, university autonomy, self-government. Such units function as nouns described by the adjectives political, national, institutional and are characteristic of formal political and academic style (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus, n.d.). In this dimension, freedom also acts as a right of choice: free will, autonomy (as personal freedom). The semantics of these lexemes reflect freedom as the ability to act according to one’s own choice. Typical collocations in this dimension are: freedom of the will, moral responsibility, choice. Characteristic syntactic constructions are: “freedom of will” or combinations with to have freedom to.... In this regard, the relevant contexts are philosophical, theological, and academic styles (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

LSG 4 groups synonymous units under the archiseme “granted rights or privileges” and includes such lexemes as franchise, immunity, exemption, privilege, freedom of the city. These lexemes express the idea of officially granted freedom or exemption from certain obligations. The most common collocations are freedom of the city, diplomatic immunity, and apply for an exemption. They are realised in the constructions freedom of + NP or be given the freedom of + place. Stylistically, this group is associated with the official legal and ceremonial sphere (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). LSG 5 is grouped on the basis of the archiseme “possibility of action or range of choice”. In this respect, the lexeme freedom functions in the meaning of freedom to do something. This LSG includes such lexemes as: latitude, scope, room, leeway. The semantic load of these lexemes allows to characterise freedom as the right to make decisions independently, to make choices for one’s own benefit. These characteristics are revealed in such collocations: freedom to do something, give considerable latitude, scope for creativity, room for manoeuvre. Typical syntactic constructions are formed as follows: freedom to + V or freedom of + N (movement, choice). This group is used mainly in a neutral administrative, educational or creative context (Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus, n.d.; Macmillan thesaurus, n.d.).

LSG 6 Contains synonyms that have a stylistic or informal connotation, expressing the meaning of openness, ease or violation of social norms (freedom in the sense of frankness, licence, boldness, ease). In this group, freedom can mean both a lack of restraint (speak with freedom) and excessive freedom that turns into impunity (freedom may degenerate into licence). Syntactically, constructions with the verbs speak, act + with/from freedom are used. The stylistic range varies from colloquial to journalistic (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). LSG 7 combines lexemes containing the archiseme “freedom of movement” and includes the

lexemes freedom of movement, ease, facility. Its semantics describe the physical ability to move or use something without restrictions, as evidenced by the examples freedom of movement, freedom to move, and tracksuits designed to give freedom of movement. Typical syntactic structures are freedom of movement and give someone the freedom to + V. Stylistically, this group is neutral, used mainly in everyday, technical and descriptive contexts (Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus, n.d.).

In contemporary linguistic studies of synonymy, there is considerable interest in shifting the focus of attention from the usual research plan to contextual and discursive analysis. The concept of freedom is one of the most ideologically charged concepts in philosophical and socio-political discourse, so its ontological essence is determined in the context of the specific discourse in which it functions. Using the Sketch Engine corpus research tool and the Thesaurus corpus research function, a list of words was compiled with an indication of their frequency and similarity rating, and a visualisation of contextually similar words was created in the form of a cloud (Fig. 1).

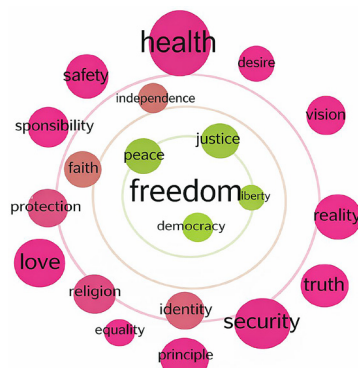


Figure 1. Visualisation of the thesaurus for the word freedom

Source: created by the authors

In the word cloud, the core is represented by the lemma of the given word freedom, and the lexemes grouped around it are words

that belong to the same semantic field or have a similar context of use. The frequency of use of a word affects its location in such a cloud. The higher the frequency, the closer the word is to the centre of the cloud. The results of the study showed that the closest to the centre of the cloud are direct synonyms and key political associates liberty and democracy, which demonstrate the high interchangeability of the lexemes freedom and liberty and indicate that freedom is a function of democratic influence and a necessary component for the existence of freedom. In the inner circle around the lexeme freedom are the key conceptual values justice and peace, which are not direct lexical synonyms but are integral components of the political context. The use of the lexeme justice indicates that in English, freedom is associated with justice, and the use of the lexeme peace indicates that freedom is either a condition or a result of peace. The largest bubbles on the outer circle visualise the dominant associations of freedom, and their size indicates a significant frequency of collocations or a high degree of

association. These are concepts such as health security and love. This indicates such contextual features of freedom as “freedom of choice in the field of health”, freedom as “national or personal security”, and love of freedom as one of the basic human emotions. The outer circle contains conceptual units that define the boundaries and conditions of freedom, namely: responsibility, protection, safety, religion, faith, and independence. They are functional synonyms or conditions for freedom, and also emphasise the religious component (religious freedom) as a dimension of freedom.

A study of speeches and public addresses by American Presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump, selected by a complete sampling method from the online data archive of the American Presidency Project for 2020-2025 (The American Presidency Project, n.d.) showed that the lexemes “freedom” and “liberty” are used as interchangeable synonyms to denote the fundamental values of the American political and social system. Their usage varies in the range from 0.0000 to 0.00035 (Y-axis) (Fig. 2).

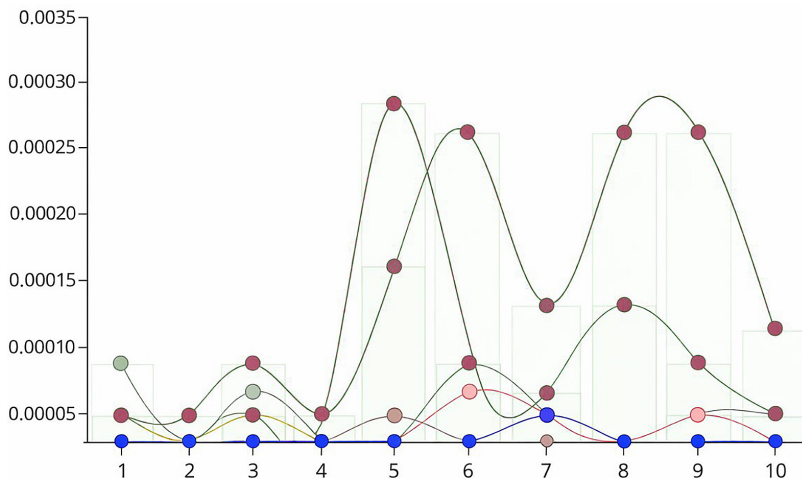


Figure 2. Frequency of use of lexemes denoting the concept of FREEDOM in the studied corpus

Source: created by the authors

Based on materials obtained from The American Presidency Project (n.d.), which includes speeches by Donald Trump and Joe Biden,

an analysis was conducted of key lexemes and phrases that function as contextual synonyms for the concept of freedom. The study revealed

how different politicians implement the concept in discourse, highlighting both direct nominations (liberty, independence) and associative and metaphorical expressions that reveal the moral, democratic and global aspects of freedom. This approach ensured the systematisation of the semantic nuances of the lexeme freedom and its synonyms in contemporary US political discourse and made it possible to recreate the cultural and cognitive picture of the concept within the communicative practices of these politicians.

Analysing the differences in the use of the dominant lexemes freedom and liberty in the speeches of American presidents, it was concluded that in the speeches of President Joe Biden (American Presidency Project, n.d.), the lexemes freedom and liberty appear in more philosophical, democratic and global contexts, emphasising their role as cornerstones of the nation. Fundamental idea (Liberty): “Liberty”

is the central concept on which the nation is based: as part of the fundamental inalienable rights: “the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. “Liberty” is almost exclusively used in a combination that denotes specific constitutional protection: “religious liberty will be lost”, “defend the right to life, religious liberty, free speech”. The lexemes freedom and liberty are also used in moral and global contexts. Freedom emphasises the universality and timelessness of the human pursuit of freedom, underscoring its status as a fundamental value (“humankind’s unending search for freedom”) (American Presidency Project, n.d.) Liberty is used to describe the international role of the United States as a “beacon of liberty, democracy, and justice around the world”. In addition, freedom is contrasted with morally negative phenomena, such as captivity, emphasising the value of choice and autonomy (Table 1).

Table 1. Use of the lexemes freedom and liberty in Joe Biden’s public speeches

Synonymic unit	Number of occurrences (N)	Percentage, %	Typical context
freedom	19	51.4	Global, universal struggle against autocracy
liberty	17	45.9	Constitutional foundations, the “soul of America”, historical heritage, religious freedom
liberation	1	2.7	The process of gaining freedom
TOTAL	37	100.0	

Source: created by the authors based on *The American Presidency Project* (n.d.)

In Donald Trump’s speeches, the emphasis is placed on the threat of losing such values as freedom and liberty as a result of the actions of political opponents. The political threat is presented as follows: freedom

is used in connection with a warning about political consequences: Democrats would allegedly turn America into “Venezuela without jobs, without welfare, without rights, without freedom” (Table 2).

Table 2. Use of the lexemes freedom and liberty in Donald Trump’s public speeches

Synonymic unit	Number of occurrences (N)	Percentage, %	Typical context
freedom	14	58.3	The struggle to save the nation
liberty	10	41.7	Individual/religious rights that will be lost
liberation	0	0.0	-
TOTAL	24	100.0	

Source: created by the authors based on *The American Presidency Project* (n.d.)

In the political speeches of contemporary American leaders, the lexeme freedom and its contextual synonyms are used in various semantic and communicative contexts. The lexeme liberty is the most direct synonym for freedom, but it has specific contextual nuances: in Joe Biden's speeches, it appears in classic constitutional formulations such as "the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", where it reflects the fundamental rights of citizens; In Donald Trump's speeches, liberty is often combined with a religious context (religious liberty), denoting freedom protected from state interference. In the speeches of American presidents, the following contextual synonyms of the lexeme freedom are used: rights, opportunity, and victory. The use of the term contextual synonyms is due to the fact that the lexemes rights, opportunity, and victory in the analysed speeches of American presidents are not only associatively related to the concept of freedom, but also perform its functional semantic replacement in a specific discursive context. In the relevant fragments of political discourse, these lexemes represent separate semantic components of the concept of freedom (legal, socio-pragmatic, ideological), actualising the same value meanings and pragmatic functions as the dominant lexeme freedom. Thus, within a specific context, they perform a synonymous function at the level of discursive meaning, and not just an associative connection, since they can replace freedom without a significant loss of semantic load in the communicative structure of the utterance. The lexeme rights functions as the legal embodiment of freedom, defining the limits and guarantees of its realisation. In Joe Biden's speeches, it is interpreted as a means of ensuring personal autonomy and freedom of choice, particularly in the context of reproductive rights ("different approaches in different States to this issue... confuse people about their rights") (American Presidency Project, n.d.). Donald Trump mentions the right to life, religious freedom and freedom of speech

in this series, emphasising specific forms of socio-legal realisation of freedom.

The lexeme opportunity acts as an economic and social reflection of freedom, emphasising positive freedom – the ability to act, develop and achieve goals. In Biden's speeches, this lexeme is combined with liberty in the phrase "the idea of liberty and opportunity for all", while Donald Trump uses it in antithesis to economic instability, which limits the freedom to prosper. The lexeme victory acts as a synonym for achieving freedom through struggle. In his speech at Arlington Cemetery, Biden notes: "...where liberty was tested and liberty prevailed", where victory emphasises the restoration of freedom. Contextual synonyms for the concept of freedom can also be represented by antonyms that denote a state of restriction of freedom. For example, Biden uses the phrase "the moral contest between captivity and freedom" (American Presidency Project, n.d.), where captivity is the opposite of freedom, and Trump refers to political concepts (socialism, communism, Marxism) that are associated with the absence of freedom in his rhetoric. Thus, the analysis of contextual synonyms demonstrates the multidimensionality of the concept of freedom in the political discourse of contemporary American leaders, which includes legal, moral, economic, and historical aspects of its implementation. The results obtained in the study made it possible to consider the concept of freedom as a multidimensional cognitive-semantic formation, structured through a system of lexical-semantic groups that reflected the legal, political, philosophical, social, and discursive dimensions of freedom. This approach was consistent with trends in contemporary cognitive linguistics, within which concepts were interpreted not as static units, but as dynamic semantic structures actualised in different types of discourse.

An analysis of the results of research on the works of foreign scholars from 2020 to 2025 led to the conclusion that the proposed classification

of lexical-semantic groups of synonyms for freedom was methodologically sound and consistent with current trends in global cognitive and discursive linguistics. Unlike a number of previous works, which focused mainly on individual aspects of freedom, the study demonstrated the integration of lexicographic, semantic and corpus approaches. A review of scientific works devoted to the concept of freedom reveals a variety of approaches to its interpretation and analysis, which is due to the interdisciplinary status of this concept. Within linguistic research, there has been a gradual transition from describing individual semantic meanings and dictionary definitions to a comprehensive understanding of freedom as a structured concept integrated into linguistic and cultural consciousness. Contemporary studies increasingly combine cognitive, discursive and corpus methods, which allows to identify the dynamics of meanings, pragmatic shifts and axiological components of the lexeme freedom in different types of texts. This research context provides a basis for a systematic analysis of previous scientific developments and the identification of those aspects of the semantic organisation of the concept that require further clarification.

I. Holubovska (2004) characterised the concept of freedom through the prism of national and cultural meanings, emphasising its value-based nature and role in shaping the identity of language speakers. The researcher emphasised the symbolic and axiological dimensions of freedom, which determine its special status in the linguistic consciousness of Ukrainians. The researcher concluded that the concept of freedom is a value constant that shapes the cultural identity of language speakers. Ukrainian linguist V. Zhaivoronok (2006) applied a comprehensive approach to the analysis of linguistic units of the concept of freedom through the prism of etymological, cultural and symbolic approaches. The linguist considered freedom not only as a linguistic or philosophical concept, but as a cultural

archetype deeply rooted in the worldview of Ukrainians. The author noted that in traditional culture, freedom is associated with naturalness, will, earth, movement, life – that is, with spheres that reflect the harmony between man and the world and represent the value centre of the Ukrainian mentality, combining individual and collective identity. Exploring the concepts of will, freedom, dignity, law, and struggle in the context of Ukrainian linguistic culture, V. Kononenko (2008) also emphasised their value and worldview interconnection. The scholar concluded that these concepts form the mental and semantic core of Ukrainian national consciousness, as they express the ideals of independence, justice, and self-respect. According to the author, the concept of freedom in the linguistic picture of the world cannot be considered in isolation, as it is closely linked to the concept of will as a spiritual and moral category, as well as to dignity and rights as social manifestations of freedom.

Further development of research on the concept of freedom demonstrates the expansion of the thematic and methodological framework of its analysis. In particular, T. Pechonchyk (2009) focused on studying the concept of freedom of speech in contemporary Ukrainian mass media discourse. The researcher analysed the mechanisms of its verbalisation, identifying the key lexical and semantic means of representing freedom of speech, and traced the ideological and axiological guidelines that determine the functioning of this concept in media texts. The author argues that freedom of speech appears not only as a legal category, but also as a discursive construct closely linked to political, social and cultural factors. T.A. van Dijk (2006) investigated how political ideologies are formed and maintained through discourse. The author analysed how language not only reflects political views but also actively constructs social realities, influencing people's perceptions of events and behaviour. The study showed that politicians and the media use

linguistic strategies to legitimise power, create “us” and “them” and reinforce existing social structures. The conclusions indicated that discourse has always been an instrument of ideological influence rather than a neutral description of reality. N. Nagy (2016) analysed freedom of speech, considering it as a social, legal and cultural phenomenon. The author examined how different societies defined the limits of freedom of speech and what factors restricted or protected it. The study showed that freedom of speech has always been conditional, contextual and dependent on political and legal structures. The researcher concluded that the concept of freedom of speech cannot be considered an absolute value: its implementation is always intertwined with social norms, power interests and historical circumstances.

Ukrainian researcher N. Yesypenko (2010) described the concept of freedom as a culturally conditioned mental construct that reflects the values, mentality and historical experience of the English people. The author concluded that the concept of freedom has a complex multi-level structure that changes depending on the cultural context and era, and is represented through a series of cognitive segments, such as independence, carefreeness, freedom of movement, free life, etc. In modern English, this concept is closely linked to the national mentality of the English, their love of freedom, individualism and desire for personal dignity. In artistic discourse, according to S. Lushchii (2024), freedom acquires existential and ideological content, being interpreted in the prose of Ukrainian writers of the diaspora through the prism of historical trauma, loss of homeland and search for identity, which gives it the features of moral choice and spiritual self-affirmation. The political dimension of the concept of freedom is revealed in the study by M. Pylynskyi (2024), where freedom in the poetic texts of Pavlo Vyshebababa appears as a category of civic responsibility, resistance and struggle, closely linked to the national identity

and military experience of modern Ukraine. A generalisation of these approaches shows that the semantic structure of the concept of freedom is significantly modified depending on the discursive context, actualising various value, pragmatic and emotional-expressive components. A comparative linguocultural approach is also presented in the study by R. Karakevych & O. Radchenko (2025), which differentiates between the concepts of will and freedom in Ukrainian and German linguocultures, revealing the specifics of their value dominants, semantic accents, and culturally conditioned models of conceptualising freedom.

N. Fairclough (2013) developed a methodology of critical discourse analysis aimed at systematically investigating how language constructs power, ideology and social relations. The author examined various texts and discursive practices, demonstrating that language analysis allowed the hidden mechanisms of social control and ideological influence to be revealed. The study showed that discourse has never been neutral, but rather an instrument for shaping social reality, and that critical analysis helped to understand the relationship between language, power and culture. I. Orazbekova (2025) conducted a cross-cultural associative study of the concepts of “education”, “freedom” and “happiness”, involving participants from different cultural contexts. The author analysed the associations that these concepts evoked in people and compared them across countries. The study showed that cultural contexts significantly influenced how people perceived freedom, education and happiness, and that these concepts had different value and emotional connotations. The author concluded that there were no universal ideas about these key social values and that their perception was deeply rooted in cultural traditions and social practices. The concept of freedom is actively researched in the field of political discourse, where it is realised through historical narratives, political slogans, literary motifs,

religious concepts, legal texts and folkloric images. It is embedded in the collective memory of society, reflecting the historical experience of the struggle for independence, human dignity and social rights. T. Nikishyna (2016) studied the linguistic means of verbalising the concept of freedom in Ukrainian, French and English linguocultures. The researcher noted the complex semantic structure of the lexemes that verbalise this concept and the diversity of its discursive realisations (political, philosophical, artistic discourses).

Conclusions

The lexeme freedom forms a multidimensional synonymic series that includes legal/political meanings, meanings related to liberation, autonomy, privileges granted, as well as utilitarian meanings (freedom of movement, ability to act). The identified lexical-semantic groups of synonyms, their semantic features, and typical collocations allow to highlight the main conceptual features of the concept of freedom, such as: political right; freedom of choice; autonomy; academic freedom; exemption from duties, granting immunity, privileges; freedom of movement, relocation. The lexeme freedom is a polysemous lexical component of English, covering a semantic field ranging from state/legal rights to physical liberation and the psychological feeling of being free. Analysis of the synonymic series allows to identify the core meanings and peripheral semantic variations, which is important for linguistic research, translation and teaching academic vocabulary.

An analysis of the functioning of synonyms included in the synonymic series of the lexeme freedom showed that the most frequent in speeches and spoken addresses of American presidents is the dominant lexeme of the

synonymic series freedom, which functions alongside the lexeme liberty, which, when realised in different communicative planes, express the main characteristics of freedom as a key concept of American linguistic culture. A discursive analysis of the speeches of American presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump showed that freedom and liberty, although close in their basic meaning, perform different pragmatic and ideological functions. In Biden's speeches, the lexeme freedom mostly emphasises civil rights, social values and community interests, reflecting the pragmatic frame of democratic solidarity. Liberty in his discourse has a more formal, political and legal context related to individual freedoms and constitutional guarantees. In Trump's speeches, freedom is often used as a symbol of the struggle against external control and state restrictions, while liberty emphasises the rhetorical aspect of individual autonomy and economic freedom. These differences demonstrate that the semantic core of the concept of freedom is realised through various discursive and pragmatic modules that reinforce the speaker's ideological attitudes. In the perspective of further research, it would be useful to analyse the synonymic range of the lexeme freedom in the discursive practices of American, British and Ukrainian politicians and to consider the contextual differences in their use of the word in political discourse.

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Лексико-семантичні особливості синонімічного ряду ключової лексики концепту freedom у сучасній англійській мові

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Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена посиленою увагою лінгвістики до вивчення концепту freedom у ціннісно-семантичній системі сучасної англійської мови, його активною репрезентацією в політичному, культурному та соціальному дискурсах, а також необхідністю комплексного уточнення семантичної організації й механізмів мовної реалізації цього концепту з урахуванням контекстуальної варіативності та синонімічних зв'язків. Метою дослідження був аналіз синонімічного ряду лексики freedom як ключового номінанта однойменного лінгвокультурного концепту. Методологія дослідження охоплювала дефініційний, компонентний, порівняльний, контекстуальний та корпусний аналіз, що забезпечило добір, опис і класифікацію синонімічних одиниць, а також виявлення їх семантичних і функціональних характеристик. Встановлено основні лексико-семантичні групи синонімів лексики freedom, що охоплюють політичні й громадянські права, автономію, звільнення від примусу, надані привілеї, свободу вибору та свободу руху. Проаналізовано їхні домінуючі семи, типові колокації та стильові параметри, що дозволило уточнити поняттєвий складник концепту. Встановлено часткову нейтралізацію семантичних відмінностей між freedom і liberty у політичних промовах американських президентів, де ці лексики маркують засадничі демократичні цінності. Аналіз використання лексем freedom та liberty у промовах американських президентів показав, що ці терміни набували насамперед філософського, демократичного та глобального значення, підкреслюючи їхню роль як фундаментальних цінностей нації. Лексема liberty зазвичай пов'язувалася з конституційними правами, зокрема усталених поєднаннях, акцентуючи на захисті конкретних свобод. Водночас freedom підкреслювала універсальність і незмінність прагнення людей до автономії, протиставляючись неволі та морально негативним явищам. Обидві лексики також використовувалися у глобальному контексті. Проаналізовано контекстуальні синоніми (rights, opportunity, victory) що розширюють смислову структуру концепту в дискурсивній практиці. Практична цінність дослідження полягала у можливості застосування його результатів фахівцями з когнітивної лінгвістики, лінгвокультурології, політичної лінгвістики, а також у навчанні академічної англійської мови та аналізі політичного дискурсу

Ключові слова: лінгвокультурний концепт; синонімія; лексико-семантичний клас; когнітивно-дискурсивний аналіз; політична риторика; лексична варіативність; дискурсивні стратегії