Problem statement and its connection with important scientific tasks. The lexical set of English verbs denoting debate comprises 40 language units. Similar to contrasted Ukrainian lexemes, English language units have also been subdivided into three groups: verbs with the highest degree of polysemy, verbs with the middle degree of polysemy, and monosemantic ones.

The urgency of the research is to study lexical semantics of the verbs denoting debate in English.

The aim of the article is to identify common and distinctive semantic and monosemantic characteristics of the language units denoting debate in English language understudy.

The first group of words denoting debate in English is represented by 5 lexical units possessing 8–6 meanings (to oppose, to argue, to fence, to struggle, to dispute).

The first in this group is the lexeme to oppose which possesses 8 meanings characterizing it as a verb indicating the process of opposing someone as an antagonist: ‘to set as an opponent or adversary’, ‘to be in opposition’. The meaning of resistance is clearly obvious in the seme ‘to act against or furnish resistance to; combat’ which correlates this lexeme with the verb to dispute. The two verbs are also semantically close in the semes indicating opposition ‘to set against, esp. for comparison or contrast’ and ‘to set (something) opposite something else, or to set (two things) so as to be opposite one another’. The word to oppose also indicates the state of unfriendliness, enmity, and animosity – ‘to be hostile or adverse to, as in opinion’ as well as preventing, inhibiting and baffling – ‘to hinder or obstruct’. The analyzed lexeme reveals its semantics in the set phrase as opposed to defined as follows: ‘as contrasted with’.

The language unit to argue is semantically close to the word to dispute in its meaning ‘to participate in a formal debate’. The distinctive positive lexical feature of the analyzed verb is its ability to indicate discussing and clarifying the issue – ‘to state the reasons for or against’ and explaining, indicating – ‘to maintain in reasoning’; ‘to show; indicate’. The indication to convincing and presenting support is obvious in the meaning ‘to persuade or compel by reasoning’. In addition, the lexeme to argue is capable of forming set phrases revealing its semantics of debate: argue around and around – ‘to argue (about something) in a circuitous, indirect fashion, without an end or satisfactory result’, argue back – ‘to respond angrily or rudely at an inappropriate or unwelcome time’, argue out – ‘to discuss opposing views, with the goal of resolving a dispute’, argue the toss – ‘to dispute something’, arguing for the sake of arguing – ‘continuing a disagreement solely out of obstinacy’, can’t argue with that – ‘a phrase used when one cannot or does not want to dispute what another person has said or suggested’.

The following semantics meanings: ‘to engage in skilful or witty debate, repartee, etc.’ and ‘to evade a question or argument, esp. by quibbling over minor points’ semantically refer the lexeme to fence to the semantic space of debate and unites it with the word to argue. The studied word is also used in the following positive meanings: ‘to construct a fence on or around (a piece of land, etc.)’, ‘to close (in) or separate (off) with or as if with a fence’.

1 Oxford Learner’s Dictionary. URL: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/ (date 30.03.2021) [in English].

Актуальні питання суспільних наук та історії медицини, Спільній українсько-румунський науковий журнал. (АПСНИМ), 2021, № 1(29), P. 57-60
The negative meanings of the lexeme include: ‘to fight using swords or fists’, ‘to receive stolen property’. The meaning of arguing and competing is characteristic to the verb to struggle – ‘to compete or argue with somebody/something, especially in order to get something’. Other meanings of the lexeme describe it as a verb of fighting, wresting: ‘to fight against somebody/something in order to prevent a bad situation or result’, ‘to fight somebody or try to get away from them’. The analyzed word also denotes striving and attempting – ‘to try very hard to do something when it is difficult or when there are a lot of problems’ and toil – ‘to move somewhere or do something with difficulty’. The lexical unit also reveals its semantics in the set phrase to struggle against someone or something – ‘to strive or battle against someone or something’.2

The word to dispute possesses six meanings which describe it as the verb of arguing, debating ‘to engage in argument or debate’, ‘to argue or debate about’, ‘to argue against’, ‘call in question’, quarreling ‘to argue vehemently; quarrel’, ‘to quarrel or fight about; contest’ and opposing ‘to strive against; oppose’. Thus, the verb is semantically close to all lexemes with the highest level of polysynonymy – to oppose, to argue, to fence, to struggle. In addition, the investigated language unit has the ability to form phrases: dispute something with someone – ‘to argue with someone about something, such as an amount of money’. The second group of lexemes denoting debate in English contains 26 verbs possessing 5-2 meanings and it represents the largest group in our investigation. It is composed of such lexical units as: to debate, to wrangle, to disagree, to clash, to discuss, to contend, to contradict, to withstand, to contest, to question, to quarrel, to collide, to bandy, to resist, to defy, to fend, to bicker, to agitate, to counter, to believe, to confute, to dissent, to controvert, to quibble, to thwart, to brawl.

The language units to debate, to wrangle, to disagree, to clash and to discuss are characterized by 5 meanings. The verbs to debate and to wrangle share the meaning of being involved in argument ‘to engage in argument or discussion’. At the same time the words to debate and to clash coincide in the meaning ‘to dispute or disagree about’. The meaning ‘to argue or discuss (a question, issue, or the like), as in an assembly’ semantically unites the verbs to debate and to discuss. The distinctive features of the word to debate are ‘to participate in a formal debate’ and ‘to engage in formal argumentation with’, ‘to deliberate; consider’. In addition to above-mentioned features, the analyzed verb forms a phrase that allows to deeper disclose its semantics: debate on something – ‘to hold a long and disciplined discussion on a particular subject’.3

The word to wrangle is characterized mainly by negative semantics defined as ‘to argue or dispute, esp. in a noisy or angry manner’, ‘to argue or dispute’, ‘to obtain, often by badgering or scheming; wrangle’ containing the indications of altercation, sharp disagreement and bickering. The only positive sense of the analyzed verb denotes tending the cattle – ‘to tend or round up (cattle, horses, or other livestock)’. Moreover, the semantics of debate is revealed in the set phrase denoting squabbling: wrangle for an ass’s shadow – ‘to argue over trivial matters’.4

The semantics of conflicting actions is the common feature of the language units to disagree and to clash. The main meaning of the verb to disagree is ‘to dissent in opinion (from another person) or dispute (about an idea, fact, etc.)’ which reveals its semantics of holding different opinions. In addition to the meaning of conflict, the analyzed language unit denotes the failure to correspond to something. The negative meaning of being not suitable or satisfactory is revealed in the sense ‘to be unacceptable (to) or unfavourable (for); be incompatible (with)’. The word is also characterized by its individual semantic feature ‘to be opposed (to) in principle’. The analyzed lexeme discloses its semantics in the set expression agree to disagree – ‘of two parties, to mutually accept that they simply do not (and will not) share the same view on a particular issue, in the interest of moving past the issue or avoiding further confrontation’ which is used to denote the way of resolving a conflict.

The language unit to clash is mostly characterized by negative semantics revealed in its two meanings: ‘to conflict; disagree’, ‘to engage in a physical conflict or contest (often fol. by with)’. The physical actions performed with a certain sound effect are expressed in the meanings ‘to strike or collide with a loud, harsh, usu. metallic noise’ and ‘to strike with a loud, harsh, usu. metallic noise’. The negative quality of the color is disclosed in the meaning ‘of juxtaposed colors to be offensive to the eye’.

The word to discuss is characterized by positive semantics denoting the process of considering, deliberating: ‘to speak with another or others about; talk over’, ‘to examine or consider (a subject) in speech or writing’. The process of human communication is expressed in the meaning ‘to speak with another or others about something’. The lexeme also has specific lexical meaning of considering something in speaking or in the written form: ‘to examine or consider a subject in speech or writing’. The positive semantic meaning ‘to come to an agreement as a result of a discussion’ indicates the way of overcoming various conflicts and concuring.

Eleven lexemes to contend, to contradict, to withstand, to contest, to question, to quarrel, to collide, to bandy, to resist, to defy and to fend (4 meanings) are characterized by both common and distinctive features. The verbs to contend, to contest and to defy are united by their common semantics denoting fight and struggle against smb. or smth.

The ability to form phrases is the characteristic feature of the language units to contend, to contradict, to withstand, to contest, to question, to quarrel, to collide and to bandy. Contend against someone or something – ‘to fight or compete against someone or something’ and contend with a problem – ‘to put up with a difficulty; to struggle with the problems caused by someone or something’; be no contest – ‘used to say that one side in a competition is so much stronger or better than the other that it is sure to win easily’; to call in or into question – ‘to dispute; challenge’ and ‘to cast doubt upon; question’; to quarrel out – ‘to engage in a dispute or argument over some issue’; to quarrel with (smth.) – ‘to disagree with, argue against, or complain about something’; bandy words (with smb.) – ‘to argue with somebody or speak rudely to them’; to collide with someone or something – ‘to crash with or bump into someone or something’.4

The distinctive feature of the lexeme to contend is its ability to be used in negative and positive meanings: ‘to struggle in rivalry, battle, etc.; vie’ and ‘to argue earnestly;

2 Ibidem.
3 Ibidem.
4 Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English for advanced learners, 6th Edition. URL: www.ldoceonline.com (date: 14.04.2021) [in English].
The lexical unit to contradict is characterized only by negative semantics which unites it with the language units to 
withstand, to defy and to resist in the sense indicating the 
process of opposing someone: ‘to assert the contrary or 
oppose; to set (something) opposite something else, or to set (two things) so as to be opposite one another’.

The word to bicker is characterized by the individual 
semantics and has the negative meaning ‘to engage in peevish argument; wrangle’. This meaning is also enhanced by the set 
phrase bicker about (something) – ‘to argue or squabble with someone about something’. In addition, the studied language 
unit is also used in the positive meanings ‘to run or flow 
rapidly’ and ‘to flicker; glitter’ denoting various parameters of 
physical phenomena. The meaning of opposition is 
characteristic to the lexeme to counter which is defined as ‘to 
move or act in opposition to; oppose’. The senses of responding 
in retaliation ‘to offer in response’ and ‘to meet or return (a 
blow) by another blow’ also describe the verb under study. The 
lexeme to belle is used in the meaning of contradicting and 
misrepresenting the information ‘to show to be false; 
contradict’; ‘to give a false impression of; misrepresent’. The 
negative meaning of deceiving also describes the studied verb 
‘to be false to or disappoint’.

The language units to agitate and to confute share the 
semantics ‘to participate in a formal debate’. The verb 
to agitate expresses disturbing and troubling someone used in the 
meanings ‘to cause to move with violence or sudden force’ and 
‘to upset; disturb’. The language unit under study is also used 
in the positive meaning ‘to arouse interest in (a cause, for 
example) by use of the written or spoken word; discuss or 
debate’. The verb to confute possesses the meanings indicating 
disproving and refuting ‘to prove to be false, invalid, or 
defective; disprove’; ‘to prove (a person) to be wrong by 
argument or proof’. The language unit also denotes the process of 
confusing ‘to bring to naught; confound’.

Five lexemes to dissent, to controvert, to quibble, to 
thwart and to brawl have two meanings.

The verb to dissent possesses its specific semantics 
denoting disaccording ‘to differ in sentiment or opinion, esp. 
from the majority (often fol. by from)’ as well as rebuffing ‘to 
reject the doctrines or authority of an established church’. The 
language units to controvert, to quibble and to thwart 
coincide in the meaning of ‘to oppose; to set (smth.) opposite 
something else, or to set (two things) so as to be opposite one 
other’ indicating oppose, resist and objection.

However, they also have their specific semantic features. Thus, the language unit to controvert also denotes refuting and 
denying ‘to deny, refute, or oppose (some argument or 
opinion)’ while the verb to thwart is characterized by the 
semantics of preventing and frustrating ‘to oppose successfully 
or prevent; frustrate’. The lexeme to quibble expresses 
disagreement over minor issues ‘to argue or complain about 
trivial matters; bicker, carp, or cavil’. The meaning of eluding 
from direct answers also characterizes the studied word ‘to use 
evasive or ambiguous language; equivocate’. In addition, the 
language unit to quibble is used in the set expression quibble 
over (something) with (someone) – ‘to argue, dispute, or 
contend with someone over or about something, especially that 
which is trivial or petty’.

The verb to brawl has negative connotation denoting 
fighting ‘to fight or quarrel angrily and noisily; wrangle’. It is 
also characterized by the positive semantics denoting physical 
parameters of sound ‘to make a hubbub or roaring noise, as 
water flowing over a rocky bed’. The language unit to thwart 
indicates movement ‘to be or move across’.

The vocabulary denoting debate in the English language

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5 Ibidem.
6 Ibidem.
The data of the table prove that the verbs with the middle degree of polysemy comprise the largest group in the research sample making up 65% of all selected English language units. The group of monosemantic lexemes denoting debate is represented by 22.5% of lexemes while the group of verbs with the highest degree of polysemy is the least represented one and comprises 12.5% of the total sample.

**Conclusion.** Individual characteristics of the verbs denoting debate in English include:

a) different semantic composition of the analyzed lexemes in the contrasted languages;

b) overwhelming the negative meanings in the English language.

c) different ratio of lexemes according to the degree of polysemy.

The relation of the lexical and semantic composition of the comparable words is represented by a matrix in which the lexical semantics of the studied verbs is revealed, their relations and the place in the language system, etc.

### Table 1.1. Lexical stock of the language units denoting debate in English

| №   | Group of verbs                        | Quantity | Percentage |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| 1    | Verbs with the highest degree of polysemy | 5        | 12.5%      |
| 2    | Verbs with the middle degree of polysemy | 26       | 65%        |
| 3    | Monosemantic verbs                    | 9        | 22.5%      |
|      | Total                                 | 40       | 100%       |

The research has shown that each word is individual, but at the same time 6 monosemantic lexemes are interrelated in their meanings, forming the chain of direct and indirect connections.

The results of the analysis of the verbs denoting debate in English are represented in Table 3.2 manifesting the quantitative ratio and percentage of the singled out groups of verbs.