Abstract. The article is focused on the components of professionalism as a system of knowledge and values which is inherent to a specific professional community. The linguistic material was obtained from a literary work, namely: “The Vogue Factor” novel by K. Clements published in English. The novel is an insider’s description of the fashion industry realia. The goal of the research is to reveal the linguistic means which represent the “old-school” professionalism concept in the novel under study. The system of knowledge on the profession specifics is considered as a concept which comprises several layers containing information on professional requirements, work arrangements, profession characteristics, personal traits, background knowledge, contemporary trends. Thus, the concept is analyzed in terms of Russian and Post-Soviet linguistics. It is understood to be a mental structure containing data on the results of a person’s activities and the accumulated knowledge of the world. The study of the linguistic material makes it possible to reveal lexical means which represent the concept in the English language. Epithets having a positive connotation prevail among these means. The “old-school” epithet is among the key adjectives used in the novel to describe the traditional values, characteristics and work approaches which are highly appreciated. The article touches upon issues of professionalism which specialists from various spheres are concerned about. This paves the way for further interdisciplinary research.

Key words: “professionalism” concept; context; lexeme; epithet; connotation; realia

**Abstract.** The focus of the research is on the components of professionalism as a system of knowledge and values that belong to a certain professional community. The source of the language material was a literary source, in particular, the novel by K. Clements "The Vogue Factor", published in English and representing an insider's description of the realities of the fashion industry. The article is aimed at identifying linguistic means of explicating the concept of "professionalism of old school" in the novel by K. Clements "The Vogue Factor". The system of knowledge about the specifics of the profession is considered a concept consisting of several layers containing information on professional requirements, organization of work, signs of profession, personal characteristics, background knowledge, modern trends. Thus, the concept is analyzed within the framework of modern Russian and post-Soviet linguistics, in particular, as a mental structure containing information on the results of an individual's activity, accumulated knowledge about the world. Analysis of the factual material allowed to identify lexical means of actualizing the studied concept on the English language, including adjectives with primarily positive connotation. One of the key adjectives is the adverb "old-school", used to describe traditional values, characteristics and approaches to work, which, as a rule, receive high evaluation from the surrounding. The work deals with issues of professionalism, touched by specialists from different fields, which opens perspectives for further interdisciplinary studies.

**Key words:** concept of professionalism; context; lexeme; adjective; connotation; realities


**Introduction**

In the age of high-end technologies, countless gadgets and overwhelming information, people tend to waste more time, and professionalism seems somewhat depreciated. The so-called "old-school" representatives are increasingly recalled in various aspects, including music,
pedagogics, sports and many other spheres. Thus, people reveal nostalgic feelings of the past times. To some extent they may be motivated by the desire to turn back time, but basically, people tend to miss the times when quality was profound, and due professionalism enjoyed a thorough respect. The novel under study describes the “golden days” of the fashion industry as seen by an insider. The concept described is of interest both in terms of linguistics and culture.

Main part

The goal of the article is to analyze the linguistic means used by the writer to reflect the “old-school” approach in fashion and journalism. “The Vogue Factor” novel by K. Clements (2013) has been used as a source of linguistic material, as it deals with the real memories and descriptions of persons involved in the fashion industry and journalism.

Materials and methods

Research by M. Albrecht in the sphere of literature studies (1954), E.S. Kubryakova (1996), Yu.S. Stepanov (2007) and Živilė Nemickienė (2011) in the field of concept, as well as works by J. Evetts (2014) and R. Roiphe (2016) analyzing social and professional aspects, makes the theoretical basis of the study.

The concept of professionalism has already been researched into by a Russian scholar, E. Morozov, in respect to a clerical job (Morozov, 2016). Numerous papers have been devoted to issues of professional culture in sociology, pedagogics and other spheres (Maslova, 2016, Maltseva, 2010). In this paper the concept of professionalism is analyzed on the basis of the novel by K. Clements, “The Vogue Factor” (2014), which served as a source of linguistic material.

Continuous sampling method and methods of contextual and semantic analysis have been used in this research.

Results and discussion

This paper deals with the study of the “old-school professionalism” concept as explicated in the novel by K. Clements. Thus, a work of literature is analyzed as a source of information about facts of life, people’s characteristics and professional realia. The role of literature in describing reality raises no doubts. M. Albrecht in his work “Literature reflects society” speaks of “relation of literature and society” as a fact repeatedly mentioned by numerous authors, including Plato, Fearing and so on (Plato), (Fearing, 1947). At one time or another literature has been thought to reflect economics, family relationships, climate and landscapes, attitudes, morals, races, social classes, political events, wars, religion and many other more detailed aspects of environment and social life (Albrecht).

The issues analyzed in this paper go beyond contemporary linguistics, as they concern both values, characteristics, professional requirements, trends, realia and the means of language used to explicate these components. The concept of professionalism has been studied by scholars involved in various fields of research, including sociology, HR and so on. Julia Evetts in her work “The Concept of Professionalism: Professional Work, Professional Practice and Learning” analyzes professionalism as a concept in terms of sociology, training and organizing the work process, speaking about the realia changes and shifts in the “professionalism” concept components (Evetts, 2014). William E. Moore provides research findings concerning professional roles and rules (1970), while a study made by a Russian sociologist, A. Angelovsky, specifies several components of professionalism (Angelovsky, 2010). Rebecca Roiphe focuses on the decline in professionalism typical of the contemporary society (Roiphe, 2016).

Professionalism is considered herein as a concept. The latter is described by E.S. Kubryakova as “a multi-dimensional speculative construct reflecting the world cognition process, results of human activity,
human experience and knowledge of the world, which stores information about it”, (Kubryakova, 1996).

Contemporary European authors, among them Živilė Nemickienė, treat concept as a mental structure that represents the knowledge of an individual about a particular segment of the world. Being a part of the world picture, the concept reflects the orientation of values of both the individual person and the entire linguistic community (Nemickienė, 2011). This paper focuses on the “old-school professionalism” concept containing information on the professional details of the fashion industry.

Živilė Nemickienė explains that “the concept is related to the verbal means of expression” (Nemickienė, 2011). Yu. S. Stepanov envisions concept as a structure consisting of various strata, which are the results of cultural life of different epochs (Stepanov, 2007). The study of the linguistic material, namely, the contexts from the novel by K. Clements, has revealed several information strata which can describe various aspects of the “old-school” professionalism. These include data referring to the personal and professional characteristics of people, their values, work approaches, professional requirements, range of their interests and background knowledge. The writer also compares the “old-school” representatives with the young generation and speaks on the trends and realia of professional life today.

In the first place, any professional community should be regarded as a team of people sharing opinions, values and experience. In the novel under study, the author refers to the professional community of the past times described as a “league”:

_The Vogue women in those years were in a league of their own (K. Clements, 2013)._  

Using the word “league” implies that members of the professional community enjoyed a high status. This fact is confirmed by Julia Evetts in her research of the “professionalism: concept: “professionalism, therefore, requires those working as professionals to be worthy of that trust, to put clients first, to maintain confidentiality and not use their knowledge for fraudulent purposes. In return for professionalism in client relations, some professionals are rewarded with authority, privileged rewards and high status (Evetts, 2014: 32).

Another component of the “professionalism” concept revealed during the study of the novel is the effect of the profession on people’s environment. As the context enables us to conclude, commitment to work implied that the older generations actually lived in what they did. Their job was closely connected with their lifestyles. This may be proved by an example from the novel:

_Their style was not just related to fashion, or which designer was hot or not. They lived and breathed Vogue, their taste extending through to their homes, their art, their dinner parties, their holidays (K. Clements, 2013)._  

The above context actually represents the profession “aura” transferred into real life, involvement of the social environment. Environment matters in shaping any kind of tastes and preferences, which is confirmed by numerous psychologic research. So, one of the most powerful influences of the environment on the person is “that it is the cultural environment that determines what a person in that culture is” (Bickard, 1992). The personality development process “depends on the individual’s belonging to a specific environment” (Leontyev, 1975: 105). Speaking about different art spheres, music and the musicians’ lifestyles could not but influence the taste of their contemporaries. This fact is mentioned by the author in the novel:

_Our fashion sense was also strongly influenced by many of the international bands that were touring (K. Clements, 2013)._
The novel provides sufficient information on the specific professional community of fashion designers and journalists of the “old-school” generation and their environment. Abundance of famous bands and rock musicians mentioned adds to the effect. Moreover, the author has had the opportunity to describe some personal characteristics of the people concerned, as she is actually familiar with these people. Lexemes like “vibrant”, “intelligent”, “impeccable”, “infinite taste”, “a true gentleman” give the reader a sufficient image of a typical professional of the good old days. Let us suggest a few examples to illustrate these characteristics:

I had been transported to a world of infinite taste, mentored by women who were neither snobbish nor judgmental. They were warm, intelligent and wickedly funny (K. Clements, 2013).

The abundance of epithets enables the reader to shape a detailed image of the professionals described.

Karin proved to be a wonderful mentor and colleague. She was elegant and attractive, expensively dressed and wildly materialistic on the outside, but underneath she was witty and generous and quite self-deprecating (K. Clements, 2013).

More lexemes with positive connotation may be found in the following examples.

After my office visit, I was taken to lunch at the uptown Cipriani by Rebecca McGreevy, Lauder’s senior vice president of PR, an impeccable Southern woman in her sixties who was charm personified (K. Clements, 2013).

Lexemes “impeccable” and “charm personified” add to the positive image built by the author.

The high tea arrived, and I helped Mrs. Lauder to arrange some tiny scones with jam and cream on her plate. She was rather frail, certainly, but vibrant (K. Clements, 2013).

All these contexts shape a positive image of the past generation of professionals, in the first place due to their personal characteristics and charisma. Besides, the contexts below contain the epithet “old school”, providing examples that the younger generation should try to follow:

Bernie, as he was known, was a true gentleman, with his shock of white hair and mellifluous voice. He had old-school charm (K. Clements, 2013).

He is a dream to interview: extremely engaged, engaging and old-school polite (K. Clements, 2013).

Once we were dining and she had just stepped off a plane from Los Angeles, looking like a genuine old-school movie star in head-to-toe Calvin Klein (K. Clements, 2013).

As the following example suggests, impeccable manners and good taste are accompanied with positive personal traits:

But I also tried my hardest to fit the layouts, and I was very proud when one day the impeccably mannered art assistant Eric Matthews came to my desk and awarded me The Golden Scalpel Award for Exactitude (K. Clements, 2013).

Another value of the professional community described by K. Clements is team spirit, which is explicited in the following context with the lexemes “team” and “camaraderie”:

With such a varied, smart and opinionated group of people working in one office on tight deadlines, it was natural that things could sometimes be fraught, but the camaraderie among the team was strong and supportive (K. Clements, 2013).

The novel also reveals an important idea of the author, and that is: real professionalism cannot be driven by any mercenary motives.

If you wanted to be rich, it was best not to work at Vogue (K. Clements, 2013).
A truly professional motive is described by the author directly: “wanting to do a great job”:

I like to hope that career success comes from wanting to do a great job, not just making shortsighted decisions in order to keep your job (K. Clements, 2013).

The insight into the profession actually dispels some stereotypes about fashion industry. For instance, those involved in this sphere are frequently considered shallow. Public opinion and mass media tend to describe them as people who only care for good looks. In fact, this stereotype is mentioned and instantly dispelled by the author of the novel under study:

At the core of these stereotypes is a tired belief that all women in fashion are shallow, lazy, pea-brained and self-serving. And yes, there are some. But from what I have observed they never last the distance. It's a very, very tough business (K. Clements, 2013).

Another context supports the idea that fashion industry is a serious sphere, “a tough business”:

Naturally, like everything at Vogue, this move was not taken lightly (K. Clements, 2013).

Some of the descriptions in the novel enable us to see the diligence and hard work that professionals apply each time they work on a new project.

An editor or journalist has to go the extra distance and work out a new angle, a new spin, and in some cases push back and say no, let's think of something else. It is what the reader deserves (K. Clements, 2013).

The above context reveals a specific work approach pursued by the specialists in the sphere concerned. It involves new perspectives, “new angles”, constant development, and it is reader-oriented, which actually implies respect for the reader or the customer.

Speaking about the professional environment, the following example contains an indirect mentioning that work in always in full swing:

I noticed that the fashion stockroom needed tidying. Note to any future interns reading this book: fashion stockrooms always need tidying (K. Clements, 2013).

An integral component of professionalism is striving for perfection. In the context below it is described with the following lexemes: “to be obsessed”, “every tiny detail”:

Fashion editors feel devastated when their shoots are rejected because they have obsessed over every tiny detail to get to the end result (K. Clements, 2013).

An insider’s description of the professional life, among other, reveals major difficulties of the industry. These include the need to balance art and “client expectations”, “commerce and creativity”:

In promotions, you also learned to manage client expectations, while trying to maintain artistic integrity. It was an invaluable introduction to magazine politics and the inevitable dance between commerce and creativity (K. Clements, 2013).

Thus, another component of the professionalism concept described in the novel includes professional requirements, for example, the need to polish skills, artistic integrity and so on. This is true for any sphere where a person may be involved. Rebecca Roiphe in her work “The Decline of Professionalism” describes requirements that lawyers must comply with:

“Professionals do have a unique education, approaches and experience” (Roiphe, 2016: 680). Calling these components “unique”, she actually falls in line with K. Clements’s idea to call the professional community “a league”, emphasizing that one must meet a very high standard to join it.

According to A. Angelovsky, a profession includes several components: “a prolonged (not a short-term) activity in some field, specific education and skills, specific professional conduct both at work and beyond, forming a professional interest
which is exercised via professional associations and requirements (professional ethics and customs are often formed on the basis of the above component), and striving to achieve a special status” (Angelovsky, 2010: 308).

J. Evetts mentions division of labour as an integral part of professionalism saying that “professionalism in occupations and professions implies the importance of trust in economic relations in modern societies with an advanced division of labour” (Evetts, 32).

Wilbert E. Moore describes “two primary bases for specialization with a profession” including “the substantive field of knowledge that the specialist professes to command” and “the technique of production or application of the knowledge over which the specialist claims mastery” (Moore, 1970: 141).

The fact that there is specialization within fashion industry is described by K. Clements:

Models can have particular attributes that they specialize in – hand models, foot models, models who can smile (K. Clements, 2013).

Job specialization is a sign of profession, in contrast to amateur activity. Moreover, the process of professional training consists of several stages, one of them is apprenticeship. This stage in the author’s career is illustrated with the following context:

I kept quiet for many months, just soaking it all in (K. Clements, 2013).

It is common knowledge that learning is a life-long process. So, the need to acquire background knowledge is unquestionable. The context illustrating this fact reveals a thorough approach of the professionals to every project they did:

If the shoot was to be in Africa, we were encouraged to read Isak Dinesen, Marrakech, Paul Bowles. One Hemingway novel suggestion I remember for a particular shoot was A Moveable Feast. I ate up all the literary references (K. Clements, 2013).

The author describes this experience using some exaggerations, including the verb “to eat up” instead of “to read”, which shows her great interest in the process. Enthusiastic attitude is also crucial, as well as motivation and competence:

The fashion editors literally wrote philosophies about what they were going to shoot, and why (K. Clements, 2013).

Speaking about background knowledge, a wide range of interests typical of the magazine in question is described:

June’s Vogue had always been very arts focused, with a major amount of excellent editorial devoted to theater, books, film, dance and opera (K. Clements, 2013).

Representatives of various spheres today mention a lack of the above characteristics and a general decline in professionalism. Rebecca Roiphe speaks about the “intellectual and cultural shift” in the late XXth century which is connected with such decline (Roiphe, 2016: 650).

In contrast to the popular idea that everything can easily be done with a click of a computer mouse, real professional approach implies a thorough preparation:

Back then, we used to iron everything to death. Now the art directors just take out every flaw in a photograph in post-production (K. Clements, 2013).

The choice of lexemes in the context below shows how much effort is taken by professionals. Instead of the neutral “work” lexeme, the author uses the verb “labor”:

I think witty copy on a fashion page is a must. I’ve always labored over them (K. Clements, 2013).

Apart from the above components of the professionalism concept described in the novel by K. Clements, there is an adjective – “old-school” – that refers the reader to the past generation directly. The “old-school” lexeme is widely used in various contexts today. Thus, Merriam-Webster’s dictionary describes this lexeme as “1: adhering to
traditional policies or practices an old-school coach; 2: characteristic or evocative of an earlier or original style, manner, or form” (Merriam-Webster). Macmillan Dictionary interprets “old-schools” as “traditional or typical of the early style of something” (Macmillan Dictionary). According to Urban Dictionary, “old-school” is “anything that is from an earlier era and looked upon with high regard or respect”, it “can be used to refer to music, clothing, language, or anything really”, “anything that refers to a previous generation of a subject/idea/object/etc. Typically, they are highly regarded and sometimes the very thing that started it all” (Urban Dictionary).

Throughout the novel the author refers to the “old-school” lexeme as an epithet used to describe the advantages of the older generation. Examples from the novel under study prove that it has a positive connotation, as it is used in combination with the adjectives “marvelous” and “fabulous”:

*These were the initial drawings, which he would later work on and perfect to produce the final images. It felt rather old-school and marvelous (K. Clements, 2013).*

So, “old-school” appears to be among basic notions to describe the advantages of the older generation:

*Clearly I got over it, but Jerry Hall is certainly one-of-a-kind, old-school fabulous (K. Clements, 2013).*

All the components of the “old-school” professionalism concept described by K. Clements are described as positive, including competence, striving for perfection, having team spirit. The very fact of choosing the “old-school” epithet shows the author’s respect for the past times. Reference to the past is also given in the example below, and the epithets - “impeccable”, “the best” – illustrate the author’s positive attitude or even admiration for those decades:

*Fortunately, we made it back to the boat, and the shoot—with Sarah looking impeccable in fifties style fashion, with stuck-back hair and bright-red lipstick—was one of her best ever for Vogue (K. Clements, 2013).*

The fifties-style seems to be an example to follow for the author. It is mentioned both directly, as in the first example below, and indirectly, due to the name of the famous actress of the decade, as in the second one:

*It was this fifties-Fellini vibe I was channelling when I started at Vogue (K. Clements, 2013).*

*The pictures were gorgeous, the model resonating with a vintage glamour not unlike that of Marlene Dietrich (K. Clements, 2013).*

Apart from the “old-school” epithet, the author uses the lexeme “vintage” and a direct indication of the time in history in order to refer to past decades.

Since all of the previous contexts contain the idea that past generations used to be highly professional, the meaning of the “old-school” epithet becomes almost equal to the meaning of “good”, “proficient” and so on. The use of epithets with a positive connotation: “grand”, “flamboyant” and comparing the designer products with works of art add to this impression:

*If I was asked what the ultimate moment might be in the world of Paris high fashion, I would suggest that Christian Lacroix couture shows came very, very close. They were such an old-world, feminine experience, always held in grand ballrooms with the prerequisite spindly-gold chairs. His sense of fabrics, of clashing and combining color, of texture and pattern, was extraordinary; each exit a work of art with a flamboyant nod to history and costume (K. Clements, 2013).*

Continuing to dispel the stereotype of shallowness, the author touches upon the need to respect traditional values. These
values are described with the lexemes “integrity”, “honest”, “intelligent”:

Despite all the changes I see in the industry I think that now, more than ever, it is important that your work has integrity. The mediums have changed and will change again, but honest, intelligent content is still key (K. Clements, 2013).

The old-school generation of professionals is repeatedly compared with the younger generation throughout the novel. The former has set an example to follow, a standard for the younger generation to sustain:

The great couturiers and their ateliers set a standard that is so remarkable (K. Clements, 2013).

A detailed comparison of the old-school and the younger generation may be found in the context below:

These women knew what they were talking about. They had intrinsic good taste but they also possessed cultural references. They knew the history of a designer, and why a particular show was a standout, or a disappointment. They could articulate the reason because they had the knowledge and the language to do so. So much amateur fashion commentary today is subjective: “Oh, I loved the green dress, I’d wear that. The shoes are amazing!” (K. Clements, 2013).

The author focuses on the broad-mindedness of the old generation, while the low degree of competence in the young ones is rendered by means of such attributes as “amateur” and “so-called”. Besides, the conclusion is not made based on the linguistic indicators only. Description of the ability of the professionals “to articulate the reason”, “to have the knowledge and the language to do something” refers to a certain degree of education and proficiency.

The reality seems catastrophic: features like “good taste”, “cultural references”, the ability to “articulate the reason”, the “knowledge”, “the language” all seem to have disappeared. The professional world has been displaced by amateurs. The same idea is contained in the following context:

A lot of so-called experts are merely airing fatuous personal opinions (K. Clements, 2013).

Another example concerning the interests of the new generation, or rather, a lack of such interests, reveals they do not have any background knowledge:

I feel sad when I hear young girls today —especially teenagers—saying, “I love Givenchy and Balenciaga,” and you know it’s unlikely they have ever read a book about the original designer (K. Clements, 2013).

As linguistic concept is aimed at explicating the reality by means of language, it cannot fail to reflect contemporary social, political or economic issues. The need to strike a balance between fashion requirements and healthcare is a pressing issue these days. This problem is also mentioned by K. Clements when she describes the new reality of fashion backstage.

If you look back at the heady days of the supermodels in the late eighties and early nineties, beauties such as Cindy Crawford, Eva Herzigová and Claudia Schiffer look positively curvaceous compared to the sylphs of today (K. Clements, 2013).

The above phrase compares the previous generation of fashion models to the contemporary one. The miniature size of the latter is denoted with the noun “sylph”.

Dangers of following the fashion trends unreasonably are described below:

The top casting directors are demanding that they be thinner and thinner. I’ve got about four girls in the hospital (K. Clements, 2013).

Apart from the health and social issue, the writer mentions the job requirements and professional environment changing, with more obstacles for the working people:
In today’s environment, there is so much more working against the journalist who is trying to do a good job (K. Clements, 2013).

The contexts enable us to see that the financial aspect has penetrated in all spheres of life, including art:

It is impossible to explain to someone who is fixated on reducing costs that the international shows deliver inspiration and expertise, giving an editor a sense of context, history and insider knowledge (K. Clements, 2013).

Thus, the contexts in the novel under study effectively reveal the differences between the “old-school” professional communities and contemporary ones. By means of a linguistic concept, the writer provides direct and indirect characteristics of the “professionalism” features. She touches upon pressing issues and drawbacks of today’s realia and implicitly calls the readers to keep up the high standards set by the old generation. Language is only a means to render this appeal, but if used precisely, it can be effective enough to pass on the “old-school” wisdom and values to be sustained and respected.

Conclusion

A comprehensive study of the “professionalism” concept in works by various scholars and the analysis of the contexts from the novel by K. Clements describing old-school professionals enables specific conclusions to be made. First, the knowledge of the “old-school” professional communities, their lifestyles, work patterns and values may be represented in a concept. A concept is understood as a mental structure containing knowledge of a specific sphere of life. This structure is made up of various strata, which reflect information on personal characteristics, professional values, motives, work approaches, environment involvement, dedication, background knowledge and readiness to learn, team spirit, trends and challenges. A study of the linguistic means representing this concept enables to conclude that old-school professionals are perceived as competent specialists possessing positive personal traits. Professions are considered to be unique, and professionals should enjoy a high status. Professional standards and requirements must be complied with. Involvement in professional activity cannot fail to produce a certain effect on other life spheres, thus making a person’s environment an integral part of the “professionalism” concept. Problems of the profession may not be excluded from the concept structure either. In respect to the “professionalism” concept, they include the need to survive in the market conditions and balancing between art and commerce. The author repeatedly compares generations, contemporary realia and trends of today and mentions the amateur approach typical of today.

Among the linguistic means used to verbalize these concept elements are epithets, mainly having a positive connotation when they refer to the past generation, as well as nouns, for example, those describing professional and human values. The metaphoric use of some verbs adds to the expressiveness and makes the description of the author’s professional experience more vivid. Apart from lexical means, the author explicates the old-school professionalism concept on the syntactic level, when it is not a separate lexeme that makes the reader imagine the situation or a characteristic, but a whole context describing the actual situation in the industry or in the world. Grammatically, the Past Simple Tense prevails in such contexts, which draws the reader’s attention towards the past generations and their experience.

The problems addressed in the novel may be of interest to many researchers in various spheres, as they include the values shift, the correlation between amateur and professional, the commerce and profession balance, new trends, new generation mentality, and previous experience which
may soon be lost. These issues require a joint study of linguists, psychologists, HR specialists, and thus opens perspectives for further research.

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