



UDC 811.113.4 + 81'33

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## **CORPUS ANALYSIS OF THE CO-OCCURRENCE OF THE CONCEPT *HYGGE***

**For citation:** Benko V., Gurova E., Khokhlova M., Krasnova E. Corpus analysis of the co-occurrence of the concept *hygge*. *Scandinavian Philology*, 2023, vol. 21, issue 1, pp. 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2023.102>

The notion that a language worldview is shaped by a system of key concepts as well as ideas and motifs linking them, which are expressed in the meaning of individual lexemes and phrases, has informed a number of studies of culturally specific words and even entire semantic fields. Comparison of different language worldviews has revealed many differences, which at first sight seem insignificant but may hinder successful communication. The concept of *hygge* occupies a special place in the Danish language worldview and has become somewhat of a Danish hallmark. Our study uses corpus data to analyse six co-occurrence patterns of words representing the concept *hygge*, which allows us to explicate the implicit meaning components of the lexemes in question and to identify the most frequent patterns. The material used was the Danish Gigaword Corpus (DAGW), which includes texts collected from the Internet. The corpus covers the Danish language in all its diversity: a variety of genres and types of texts are represented in the corpus (law, social media, subtitles, debates, conversation notes, encyclopaedia articles, fiction, news, etc.). The high frequency of the words representing the concept *hygge* in the corpus texts once again confirms the importance of this concept for Danish culture. The combinational properties of all the models studied show a striking uniformity: all collocations are characterized by positive connotations

and can be categorized into a small set of thematic groups (place, time, atmosphere, hobbies, spending time together and communicating). The above co-occurrence analysis allows us to identify the following set of characteristics of the concept *hygge*: a feeling of peace, tranquillity and security, enjoyment and good mood that comes from being engaged in active pursuits, presence of close, familiar people, a familiar, well-known place, a shared time together.

**Keywords:** Danish, corpus analysis, *hygge*, language worldview, co-occurrence.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The notion that a language worldview is shaped by a system of key concepts as well as ideas and motifs linking them, which are expressed in the meaning of individual lexemes and phrases, has informed a number of studies of culturally specific words and even entire semantic fields [Karasik et al., 2005; Karasik, 2010; Gladkova, 2010]. Comparison of different language worldviews has revealed many differences, which at first sight seem insignificant but may hinder successful communication, since the conceptions that form a world view are often implicitly contained in the meaning of a word [Wierzbicka, 1997]. Understanding the national specificity of the language worldview when studying a foreign language is also complicated by the fact that culturally specific words do not lend themselves well to translation: their corresponding translation equivalents either are absent at all or differ significantly from the original foreign words in terms of the set of meaning components [Zalizniak, Levontina, Shmelev, 2012].

## 2. HYGGE AS A KEY WORD IN DANISH CULTURE

The concept of *hygge* occupies a special place in the Danish language worldview and has become somewhat of a Danish hallmark and even a brand [Hygge: The Danish art of cosiness]. According to R. Jenkins, *hygge* is ranked eleventh among the concepts that young Danes associate with Denmark and Danish identity (28%) [Jenkins, 2014, s. 200]. As far as translation possibilities are concerned, *hygge* certainly behaves as most culturally specific words do. Anyone attempting to translate into Russian (or other languages) words representing the concept *hygge*, in particular the noun *hygge*, the verbs *hygge* and *hygge sig*, and the adjective *hyggelig* and the adverb *hyggeligt*, will encounter difficulties: like any other culturally specific words they are difficult or impossible to translate into other languages.

The *hygge* phenomenon is usually discussed in works by sociologists and anthropologists dealing with the characteristics of Danish culture and society [Hansen, 1980; Schwartz, 1985; Linnet, 2011; Jenkins, 2014; Andersen, 2022]. No small part in the popularisation of *hygge* has been the publication of a number of popular science books around the world, in which the authors try to explain why the Danes are one of the happiest nations in the world and give advice on how to find happiness in life through the ability to enjoy the little things and live in the present [Wiking, 2016; Russell, 2016; Thomsen Brits, 2017; Tourell Söderberg, 2017]. In Russian Scandinavian studies, the concept of *hygge* has been examined as a culturally specific word [Krasnova, 2016], as well as a component in the compound words *hyggeracisme* and *hyggesexisme*, which present significant difficulties for translation due to the culturally specific semantics of their both components [Avakova, 2020]. Of particular note is the work of C. Levisen, in which *hygge* is analysed in terms of semantics and ethnopragmatics [Levisen, 2012, p.80–114]. According to Levisen, “*hygge* is not unique on the level of individual semantic components” [Levisen, 2012, p. 113], since analogous components can be found in similar concepts in other languages (cf. German *Gemütlichkeit*, Dutch *gezelligheid*, Norwegian *kos*, Canadian English *hominess*). However, “taken in its entirety, the *hygge* construal is Danish-specific, it reflects Danish values and has scope over a wide range of social phenomena, including communicative style and interpretations of symbols” [Levisen, 2012, p. 113].

### 3. CO-OCCURRENCE OF THE CONCEPT *HYGGE*

Our study uses corpus data to analyse the co-occurrence of words representing the concept *hygge*, which allows us to explicate the implicit meaning components of the lexemes in question and to identify the most frequent patterns. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of testing the proposed hypotheses about the co-occurrence of particular linguistic units using corpora of texts. In the last decade, so-called gigacorpora have become available; they number several billion words and allow for a detailed analysis of the distribution of lexemes.

Co-occurrence of a word is an external manifestation of its underlying associative contours [Cherneiko, 1997, p.324], so analysing habitual

frequent word combinations, unconsciously used by speakers, permits making manifest certain semantic components of the word meaning. In this study, co-occurrence in the Danish language is treated broadly: not only as co-occurrence of the words in question with other parts of speech, but also as a combination of two words in the same nomination when a compound word is created.

The material used was the Danish Gigaword Corpus [DAGW], which includes texts collected from the Internet [Derczynski et al., 2021]. Its total volume amounts to around 1 billion words. Its sources include texts from the European Parliament, OPUS, Wikipedia and others. The corpus is representative and covers the Danish language in all its diversity: a variety of genres and types of texts are represented in the corpus (law, social media, subtitles, debates, conversation notes, encyclopedia articles, fiction, religion, news, etc.).

On the basis of the material studied, the following co-occurrence patterns were identified:

- adjective + noun *hygge*;
- compound words with the first component *hygge*;
- compound words with the second component *hygge*;
- adjective *hyggelig* + noun;
- paired combinations *hygge* + noun (joined by the conjunction *og* ‘and’);
- paired combinations *hyggelig* + adjective (joined by the conjunction *og* ‘and’).

Due to the large size of the corpus, we have limited ourselves to those examples in which *hygge* and *hyggelig* co-occur with other lexemes in direct contact, i. e. we have not considered possible word combinations where they are not directly in contact, such as *ægte dansk hygge* ‘authentic Danish hygge’. To assess the significance of word co-occurrences, a statistical apparatus has traditionally been used [Khokhlova, 2018; Khokhlova, Benko, 2020]. Association measures make it possible to identify word combinations that are typically reproduced in speech, although they may not be classified as frequent collocations. Therefore, following [Levisen, 2012], we additionally applied the statistical metric MI [Evert, 2005], which can show the unique nature of word combinations, i. e. when their constituent words occur with each other more often than with any other words.

### 3.1. Adj + *hygge*

The attributes used most frequently with the noun *hygge* are the adjectives *hjemlig* and (its obsolete variant) *hjemmelig* ‘home’ (132 occurrences, 0.11 ipm<sup>1</sup>), *god* ‘good’ (79 occurrences, 0.07 ipm) and *dansk* ‘Danish’ (36 occurrences, 0.03 ipm), which confirms the findings of C. Levisen [Levisen, 2012, p. 90]. As in C. Levisen’s work, the MI metric identifies the obsolete adjective *hjemmelig* as one of the most frequent collocations for this model (MI: 13.93, the overwhelming number of examples with *hjemmelig* occur exactly in combinations with *hygge*), additionally identifying also *intim* ‘intimate’ (MI: 14.18) and *drikbar* ‘fit for drinking’ (MI: 12.64). The adjective *hjemlig* has a wider range of co-occurrences, but it also demonstrates a fairly high MI value (10.76). This also confirms M. Wiking’s findings that “only 27 % of Danes associate *hjemlig* with travel and going out” [Wiking, 2016, p. 35], and 31 % of Danes believe that *hygge* is only found in Denmark [Wiking, 2016, p. 31].

These are followed by the adjectives *dejlig* ‘beautiful’, *social* ‘social’, *almindelig* ‘common’, *fælles* ‘common’, *rolig* ‘calm’, *gensidig* ‘mutual’. The above co-occurrence models indicate that *hygge* is associated with a habitual, familiar place (*hjemlig*), characterised by positive connotations (*god*, *dejlig*, *rolig*) and associated with cultural attitudes and social interactions that are customary in Danish society (*dansk*, *social*, *fælles*, *gensidig*).

### 3.2. First part + *hygge*

A more nuanced picture is demonstrated by compound words which have as their first component an attributive element and as their second component the word *hygge*. The most frequent in the sample was the compound word *julehygge* (its first component means ‘Christmas’) with 724 occurrences (0.60 ipm), which is not an unexpected result. According to M. Wiking’s data, among the concepts that Danes associate with *hygge*, Christmas ranks fourth after hot drinks, candles and the fireplace [Wiking, 2016, p. 86]. The second and fourth most frequent compound words are those with the first component denoting a place in which *hygge* can be experienced — *sofahygge* (the first component is ‘sofa’, 212 occurrences, 0.18 ipm) and *hjemmehygge* (the first component is ‘home’,

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<sup>1</sup> Here and below the frequency of occurrences is given in units of ipm.

80 occurrences, 0.07 ipm). In third place is the compound word *familihygge* (the first component is ‘family’, 182 entries, 0.15 ipm), which is also hardly coincidental, since *hygge* implies communication or joint activities with close, familiar people [Levisen, 2012, p. 91–92; Krasnova, 2016, p. 546]. Analysis of the twenty most frequent compound words with a second component *hygge* makes it possible to identify three thematic groups, depending on their first component:

- nouns denoting a place where *hygge* can be experienced (*sofa* ‘sofa’, *hjem* ‘house’, *have* ‘garden’, *køkken* ‘kitchen’);
- nouns denoting people with whom you can experience *hygge* (*familie* ‘family’, *tøs* ‘girl’, *veninde* ‘friend’);
- nouns denoting a time period when *hygge* can be experienced (*aften* ‘evening’, *vinter* ‘winter’, *sommer* ‘summer’, *efterår* ‘autumn’, *morgen* ‘morning’, *søndag* ‘Sunday’, *fredag* ‘Friday’, *eftermiddag* ‘afternoon’).

Interestingly, according to the data cited by C. Levisen (based on two google.dk searches in February 2008 and September 2010), for the “day of the week + *hygge*” model, the compound noun *fredagshygge* (its first component means ‘Friday’) leads by a large margin [Levisen, 2012, p. 89]. In our sample, the composites *søndagshygge* (its first component means ‘Sunday’, 34 occurrences, 0.03 ipm) and *fredagshygge* (31 occurrences, 0.03 ipm) are found to be equally frequent.

The rather high frequency of the compound words *hestehygge* (its first component means ‘horse’, 43 occurrences, 0.04 ipm) and *staldhygge* (its first component means ‘stable’, 34 occurrences, 0.03 ipm) seems to be related to the popularity of recreational horse riding in Denmark. According to the Great Danish Encyclopaedia, there were 70,500 members in 400 clubs in 2016 and, together with unregistered amateurs, the number of Danes who enjoy horseback riding is more than 100,000 [Hestesport]. Furthermore, according to M. Wiking, pets are ranked sixteenth among the twenty concepts that Danes associate with *hygge* [Wiking, 2016, p. 86].

In this study, *læsehygge* was found to be in the last twentieth place among the twenty most frequent compound words with a second component *hygge*. Its only first component in the verb form (‘to read’, 17 occurrences, 0.01 ipm) characterises one of the activities contributing to the *hygge* atmosphere. According to M. Wiking, books are ranked tenth among *hygge*-related associations [Wiking, 2016, p. 86].

### 3.3. *Hyggelig* + Noun

The most frequent co-occurrences of the adjective *hyggelig* with a noun are nouns denoting a time period: *dag* ‘day’ (1312 occurrences, 1.10 ipm), *aften* ‘evening’ (926 occurrences, 0.77 ipm) and place: *sted* ‘place’ (756 occurrences, 0.63 ipm). Among the twenty most frequent nouns that co-occur with the adjective *hyggelig*, the following thematic groups can be identified:

- nouns denoting a time period (*dag* ‘day’, *aften* ‘evening’, *weekend* ‘weekend’, *time* ‘hour’, *stund* ‘moment’, *eftermiddag* ‘afternoon’);
- nouns denoting a place (*sted* ‘place’, *by* ‘town’, *stald* ‘stable’, *restaurant* ‘restaurant’);
- environment, atmosphere (*stemning* ‘mood’, *atmosfære* ‘atmosphere’, *omgivelse* ‘surroundings, environment’);
- spending time together (*tur* ‘walk, trip’, *middag* ‘dinner’);
- conversation, communication (*snak* ‘conversation’, *samvær* ‘communication’, *tråd* ‘thread, forum discussion thread’);
- an object that evokes or contributes to *hygge* (*ting* ‘thing’, *billede* ‘photograph’).

In accordance with MI, the following significant collocations were identified: *langturssamvær* ‘communication during a long trip’ (MI: 14.47, all examples with this noun in the corpus are for the co-occurrences with *hyggelig*), *haveforum* ‘gardening festival’ (MI: 14.15), *juletorv* ‘Christmas fair’ (MI: 14.09), *læsehjørne* ‘reading corner’ (MI: 13.94), *generationsdag* ‘meeting day with the older generation’ (MI: 13.92), *funpark* ‘fun park’ (MI: 13.66), *infoaften* ‘(literally) information evening, i. e. open house’ (MI: 12.97), *picnictur* ‘picnic trip’ (MI: 12.88), *maleworkshop* ‘drawing workshop’ (MI: 12.88), *afslutningstur* ‘trip before the end of the school year or boarding school’ (MI: 12.66), *spisekrog* ‘kitchen corner’ (MI: 12.41), *træsommerhus* ‘wooden summer house’ (MI: 11.97), *hjemmeaften* ‘evening at home’ (MI: 11.95). The above nouns denote place, time, socialising and spending time together, thus belonging to the thematic groups that have been identified above; so MI also confirms the existence of the above-described co-occurrence preferences. The analysis suggests that *hygge* for Danes is something tangible, existing in time and space and filled with a pleasant atmosphere and joint activities with other people, which confirms C. Levisen’s observation that *hygge* is a concept of “people in places” [Levisen, 2012, p. 91].

### 3.4. Hygge + second part

The group of compound nouns with the first component *hygge* mainly corresponds to combinations of the adjective *hyggelig* with a noun: *hyggelig snak* = *hyggesnak* (the second component is ‘conversation’) (1047 occurrences, 0.87 ipm), *hyggelig stund* = *hyggestund* (the second component is ‘moment’) (463 occurrences, 0.39 ipm). However, in some cases there is an extension of the meaning of the whole compound word: *hyggeonkel* is no longer *hyggelig onkel* ‘nice uncle’, but ‘(an elderly) person with whom it is pleasant to spend time’, *hyggepianist* is a pianist in a bar or restaurant, that is, the compound words refer to people who contribute to *hygge*. Interestingly, in the Danish dictionary [Ordbog over det danske sprog], which reflects the state of the language from 1700 to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, *hyggeonkel* has the meaning ‘a person who entertains customers in a restaurant’, which reflects an extension of the meaning of this compound noun.

Of particular note is the compound noun *hyggehest* (its second component means ‘horse’), which has the highest frequency (1598 occurrences, 1.33 ipm) and denotes a recreational riding horse, not a horse for equestrian sport. The nouns similarly formed are *hyggeridning* (its second component means ‘riding’), *hyggerytter* (its second component means ‘rider’) and a number of others. The analysis of the twenty most frequent compound nouns with the first component *hygge* allows four thematic groups of second components to be identified:

- nouns denoting activities characteristic of *hygge* (*snak* ‘conversation’, *tur* ‘walk, ride’);
- nouns denoting a period of time (*stund* ‘moment’, *aften* ‘evening’, *dag* ‘day’, *tid* ‘time’);
- nouns belonging to the semantic field ‘riding’ (*hest* ‘horse’, *ridning* ‘riding’, *pony* ‘pony’, *dressur* ‘training’, *spring* ‘jump’);
- nouns denoting a pet or a small child, with the meaning ‘cute, cuddly’ (‘sweetie’): *hyggehund* (the second component means ‘dog’), *hyggetroll* (the second component means ‘troll’, figuratively ‘nice, charming person’), *hyggedyr* (the second component means ‘animal’), *hyggefis* (the second component means ‘tomfoolery’). Interestingly, the presence of this group of nouns indirectly confirms C. Levisen’s observation that *hygge* is associated with the physical sensation of warmth [Levisen, 2012, p. 93], as all of these nouns were used in contexts characterized by the desire for tactile contact and affection.



### 3.5. *Hygge* og noun

*Hygge* is often used in paired combinations, with the second component clarifying the meaning of the concept *hygge*, creating a kind of synonymic extension of the meaning, making it more transparent. The most frequent paired nouns are *afslapning* ‘relaxation’ (57 occurrences, 0.05 ipm) and *samvær* ‘communication’ (36 occurrences, 0.03 ipm). The thematic groups of words that have been identified in such paired combinations are generally the same as the thematic groups identified for the model “*hyggelig* + noun” and the models for compound nouns:

- spending time together (*gaver* ‘gifts’, *mad* ‘food’);
- conversation, communication (*samvær* ‘communication’, *fællesskab* ‘togetherness’, *snak* ‘conversation’, *selskab* ‘community’);
- atmosphere (*afslapning* ‘relaxation’, *stemning* ‘mood’, *ro* ‘calm’, *glæde* ‘joy’, *kærlighed* ‘love’, *varme* ‘warmth’);
- hobbies, interests (*ridning* ‘riding’, *træning* ‘practicing’, *dressur* ‘training’, *skovturhest* ‘a horse for riding in the woods’, *striik* ‘knitting’).

In addition, the nouns *leg* ‘game’, *sjov* ‘fun’ and *fest* ‘holiday, party’ have high frequency of occurrence. Thus, these paired combinations make manifest the important meaning components of the concept *hygge*, which were not identified at the previous stages of the analysis: play and fun.

In accordance with MI, the following nouns were identified as belonging to the model in question: *plasken* ‘splashing (in water)’ (MI: 16.62), *hjemlighed* ‘homeliness’ (14.70), *samværd* ‘communication’ (MI: 13.26), *afslapning* ‘relaxation’ (MI: 13.07), *velsmag* ‘pleasant taste’ (MI: 12.64), *julefred* ‘Christmas calm’ (MI: 12.50), *nus* ‘affection’ (MI: 11.62), *trækture* ‘horse riding accompanied by an instructor’ (MI: 11.60), *spas* ‘joke’ (MI: 11.36), *skovturshest* ‘horse for riding in the woods’ (MI: 10.83), *skovtur* ‘walk in the woods’ (MI: 10.81), *intimitet* ‘intimacy, closeness’ (MI: 10.72), *afveksling* ‘variety’ (MI: 10.67), *turridning* ‘horse riding trip’ (MI: 10.64). The nouns identified in accordance with MI can also be categorised into the above-mentioned groups, which confirms the co-occurrence preferences for the model in question.

### 3.6. *Hyggelig* og adj

The pairing of the adjective *hyggelig* with other adjectives also helps to clarify the nuances of the meaning of the concept *hygge*. The most frequent adjective in this model is a homonym of the noun *sjov* ‘cheerful’

(242 occurrences, 0.20 ipm). Other adjectives also have positive connotations and can be categorized into the following groups:

- adjectives with a general positive evaluation (*god* 'good', *dejlig* 'lovely', *rar* 'pleasant', *fin* 'lovely', *sød* 'nice', *fed* 'cool');
- adjectives with the meaning of being protected and at peace (*afslappet* 'not feeling tense, at ease', *rolig* 'calm', *tryk* 'safe, secure, reliable', *hjemlig* 'home-like');
- adjectives describing an object by its appearance or character (*flot* 'beautiful, luxurious', *smuk* 'beautiful', *charmerende* 'charming');
- adjectives that describe a special atmosphere (*romantisk* 'romantic').

The top twenty most frequent adjectives in this model also include *varm* 'warm' and *lækker* 'tasty'. Thus the main themes for this model are fun, security, peace, warmth, excitement, aesthetic and taste pleasure.

These conclusions are also supported by the collocations with positive connotations which have been identified by means of the MI measure: *stemningsfuld* 'full of sentiment' (MI: 12.65), *stemningsfyldt* 'atmospheric' (MI: 12.62), *lærerig* 'instructive' (MI: 12.59), *veltilrettelagt* 'well-organised' (MI: 12.02), *hjertervarm* 'cordial' (MI: 11.87), *familievenlig* 'family-friendly' (MI: 11.10), *indbydende* 'attractive, appetising' (MI: 11.07), *fredfyldt* 'peaceful' (MI: 10.76), *idyllisk* 'idyllic' (MI: 10.75), *livsbekræftende* 'life-affirming' (MI: 10.74), *familier* 'family-friendly' (MI: 10.69), *forføjelig* 'cheerful' (MI: 10.61), *hjemlig* 'home-like' (MI: 10.54), *selskabelig* 'sociable' (MI: 10.51), *forventningsfuld* 'full of expectations' (MI: 10.50), *rustik* 'rural' (MI: 10.38), *uforglemmelig* 'unforgettable' (MI: 10.32).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The high frequency of the words representing the concept *hygge* in the corpus texts once again confirms the importance of this concept for Danish culture. The combinational properties of all the six models studied show a striking uniformity: all collocations are characterised by positive connotations and can be categorized into a small set of thematic groups (place, time, atmosphere, hobbies, spending time together and communicating). The above co-occurrence analysis allows us to identify the following set of characteristics of the concept *hygge*:

- 1) a feeling of peace, tranquillity and security;
- 2) enjoyment and good mood that comes from being engaged in active pursuits;

- 3) presence of close, familiar people;
- 4) a familiar, well-known place;
- 5) a shared time together, which primarily involves socialising, but also sharing meals, playing games, walking, travelling, etc.

The first two characteristics are fundamental — there is no *hygge* atmosphere if there is disharmony, arguments, tension or haste. The presence of familiar people and interaction with them is an important part of the concept, although *hygge* can also be experienced alone, reading books or knitting, or in the company of a pet. A familiar, well-known place is also important, however, a feeling of ‘home’ can also arise in a new place while travelling or walking, the main thing is to feel relaxed and enjoy socialising, hobbies or other active pursuits at that particular moment in time.

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## **КОРПУСНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ СОЧЕТАЕМОСТИ КОНЦЕПТА *HYGGE***

**Для цитирования:** *Benko V., Gurova E., Khokhlova M., Krasnova E. Corpus analysis of the co-occurrence of the concept *hygge* // Скандинавская филология. 2023. Т. 21. Вып 1. С. 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2023.102>*

Представление о том, что языковая картина мира формируется системой ключевых концептов и связывающих их идей и мотивов, эксплицируемых в значении отдельных лексем и выражений, легло в основу целого ряда исследований культурно-специфичных слов и даже целых семантических полей. Сопоставление различных языковых картин выявило множество отличий, которые на первый взгляд кажутся несущественными, но могут препятствовать успешной коммуникации. В датской языковой картине мира особое место занимает понятие *hygge*, ставшее своего рода визитной карточкой Дании. В настоящем исследовании на материале корпусных данных анализируются шесть моделей сочетаемости, представляющих концепт *hygge*, что позволяет эксплицировать неявные компоненты значения изучаемых лексем и определить наиболее частотные модели. В качестве материала использовался корпус датского языка Danish Gigaword Corpus (DAGW), который включает в себя тексты, собранные из Интернета. Корпус охватывает датский язык во всем его многообразии, в нем представлены разнообразные жанры и типы текстов (юриспруденция, социальные медиа, субтитры, дебаты, записи разговоров, статьи из энциклопедий, художественная литература, новости и др.). Высокая частотность слов, представляющих концепт *hygge*, в текстах корпуса еще раз подтверждает значимость данного понятия для датской культуры. Сочетаемостные свойства исследуемых моделей обнаруживают поразительное единообразие: все коллокации характеризуются положительной окраской и могут быть отнесены к небольшому набору тематических групп (место, время, атмосфера, хобби, совместное времяпрепровождение и общение). Проведенный анализ позволил представить следующий набор признаков концепта *hygge*: ощущение безмятежности, спокойствия и защищенности; удовольствие и хорошее настроение, получаемые от активной деятельности; присутствие близких, знакомых людей; привычное, хорошо знакомое место; совместное времяпрепровождение.

**Ключевые слова:** датский язык, корпусный анализ, *hygge*, языковая картина мира, сочетаемость.

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Received: December 21, 2022

Accepted: January 10, 2023