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**SEMANTIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL WORD-COMBINATIONS
IN SPORTS DISCOURSE**

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Abstract

The word aggression takes a positive meaning in the public space and has many positive connotations. In this regard, the fact of increasing the positive connotation in the lexical and semantic field of certain phraseological word-combinations related to sports topics becomes particularly interesting. The purpose of the work is to identify semantic transformations of the phraseological word-combinations "sports aggression" and "sports anger" in sports discourse (based on the research of the linguistic consciousness of the youth audience). The intuitive sense of changing the meaning of phraseological word-combination is confirmed by the conducted linguo-stylistic analysis of media texts and psycholinguistic experiments. Nowadays in Russia, the word aggressor is almost not used, which is due to changes in the socio-cultural situation in the country and the world at the turn of two centuries. The adjective aggressive, on the contrary, is often used, but it has suddenly acquired a positive connotation. It is used in word-combinations, such as aggressive advertising, aggressive music that means proactive, assertive, purposeful, active. The same can be said about naming units of word-combinations related to sports: sports aggression, sports anger. This semantic vector manifests itself in the entire space of linguistic culture. The word aggression in public space is colored in positive shades.

Keywords

Sports media – Sports anger – Synonymic chain – Polysemy – Psycholinguistics

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Introduction

Modern Russian literary language undergoes changes that affect the semantic lexical units and their connotations¹. For example, words, such as *dashing* and *monsters* have acquired a new sense in the public space, meaning *bold, brave, dashing*². Such semantic transformations concern terminology in the field of physical culture and sports, in particular, the words of the synonymic chain, namely, "*sports aggression*" (SAg) and "*sports anger*" (SAn). The use of the words *aggression* and *aggressor* was characteristic, first of all, of the political discourse of the Soviet print media. From the standpoint of international law, *aggression* is "the use of armed force by one state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another state", and "open hostility that causes enmity". It should be noted that the study of the state of SAg/SAn in sports is given great importance in the works of both domestic and foreign authors³. Is it justifiable to use the words SAg/SAn, which initially define the negative concepts of evil, cruelty, and hostility in sports? Ilyin E.P. gives the following definition: "Sports anger is an emotional state of annoyance with a hint of aggression directed either at oneself (as a nuisance because of unsuccessful actions, missteps, wrong decision), or other (sports referee, who unfairly punished athlete; at the audience, screaming insults to the athlete or team; the coach, keeping the athlete on the bench, etc.)"⁴. The author believes that "some athletes deliberately cause anger in themselves towards the opponents who can be even their friends beyond the competition". In emotional terms, the SAn can help the athlete to mobilize and focus.

However, it also happens that it "kind of blinds the athlete – then his behavior and tactics lose flexibility, he begins to act in a template, stubbornly trying to prove his rightness to himself and others by repeating the same actions".

These phraseological word-combinations can be found in mass media, as well as in universal and industry media. Often the phrases SAn and SAg are used in mass media meaning a positive assessment. This is proved by the following headings concerning, for example, football: *Sports anger is always present* (Salakhov, amfr.ru, 13.02.2019); speed skating: *Sports anger and excitement helped Kulizhnikov to set a world record* (Muratov, matchtv.ru, 10.03.2019); *Sports anger or failure? What will go off in the Spartak-Zenit match* (Sportbox.ru, 1.09.2019); hockey: *I felt sporting anger and wanted to win something*

¹ G. Kh. Murtazina; N. G. Boikova; N.Yu. Berdysheva y M. S. Golokova, "Precedentnyj fenomen v sportivnoj toponimike", Theory and Practice of Physical Culture num 9 (2019): 50-52 y K. Lehtisaari y A. Mustajoki, Philosophical and cultural interpretations of Russian modernization (London: Routledge, 2016).

² D. N. Ilyin, Razvitie leksicheskoy semantiki. Processy pozitivacii / negativacii znacheniya slova v russkom yazyke (Rostov-on-Don: Taganrog, Southern Federal University Publishing House, 2018) y O. A. Pankratova. Lingvosemioticheskie harakteristiki sportivnogo diskursa: Ph.D. thesis in philology (Volgograd: Volgograd State University, 2005).

³ S. O. Zakamorny, Formirovanie u studentov fizkul'turnogo vuza kompetencii v profilaktike i korrekcii agressii sportsmenov: Ph.D. thesis in pedagogy (Omsk: Siberian State University of Physical Culture and Sports, 2012); E. P. Ilyin, Psihologiya sporta (St. Petersburg: Piter, 2008); V. N. Smolentseva, Agressiya v sporte: profilaktika i korrekciya agressivnogo povedeniya sportsmenov: monografii (Omsk: Publishing House of the Siberian State University of Physical Culture and Sports, 2015); M. Kavussanu, "Moral behavior in sport: A critical review of the literature", International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology num 1 (2008): 24-138 y K. Lehtisaari y A. Mustajoki. Philosophical and cultural interpretations...

⁴ E. P. Ilyin, Psihologiya sporta...7

with *Salavat* (Soshnikov, sport24.ru, 24.09.2019); skiing: *When the flag and anthem were discarded, I felt a sports anger* (Chervotkin, Soviet Sport, 27.02.2018), *There is a sports anger, I want to win medals in Pyeongchang* (Vylegzhan, skisport.ru, 23.05.2017); football: *I liked the sports anger of my team* (Carrera, news.sportbox.ru, 13.10.2017); *Sports anger is good* (Klopp, sport-express.ru, 05.03.2016); *Sports anger was always inherent in Kerzhakov* (Radimov, Sport-Express, 30.07.2016); *Sports anger is the best doping* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 178, 10.08.2016).

Linguistic analysis of the above headings has led to the conclusion that the word-combination semantics of *SAn* is shifted to an emotional-value chain of a different order. To confirm (or refute) this thesis, the authors conducted an experiment aimed at evaluating the perception of the *SAn* phraseological word-combination in the youth audience.

Methods

The research conducted at Lesgaft National State University allowed determining the semantic field of the *SAn* phraseological word-combination. A survey was conducted within the framework of the discipline "The Russian language and speech culture" among full-time students studying in the specialty of "Physical culture" (49.03.01). The survey was attended by 180 people from different training majors, namely, boxing, kickboxing, taekwondo, athletics, dance sports, and figure skating.

Results and discussion

The results of the survey are shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The students were asked to evaluate the possibility of using the concept of *SAn* in public discourse as neutral, acceptable, positive, unacceptable, and negative.

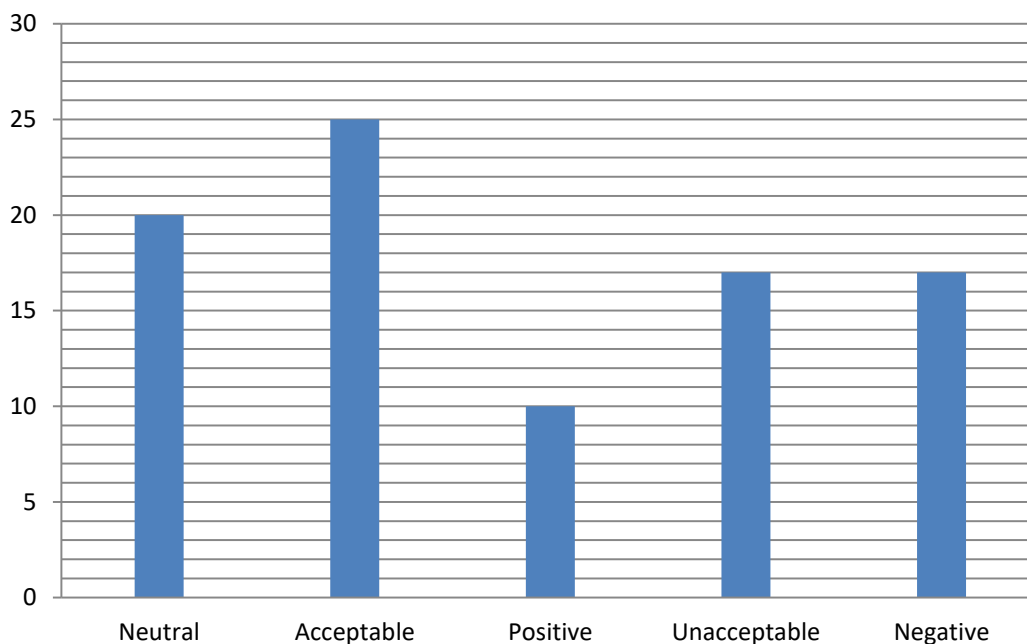


Figure 1
Results of a survey of students trained in boxing, kickboxing, and taekwondo

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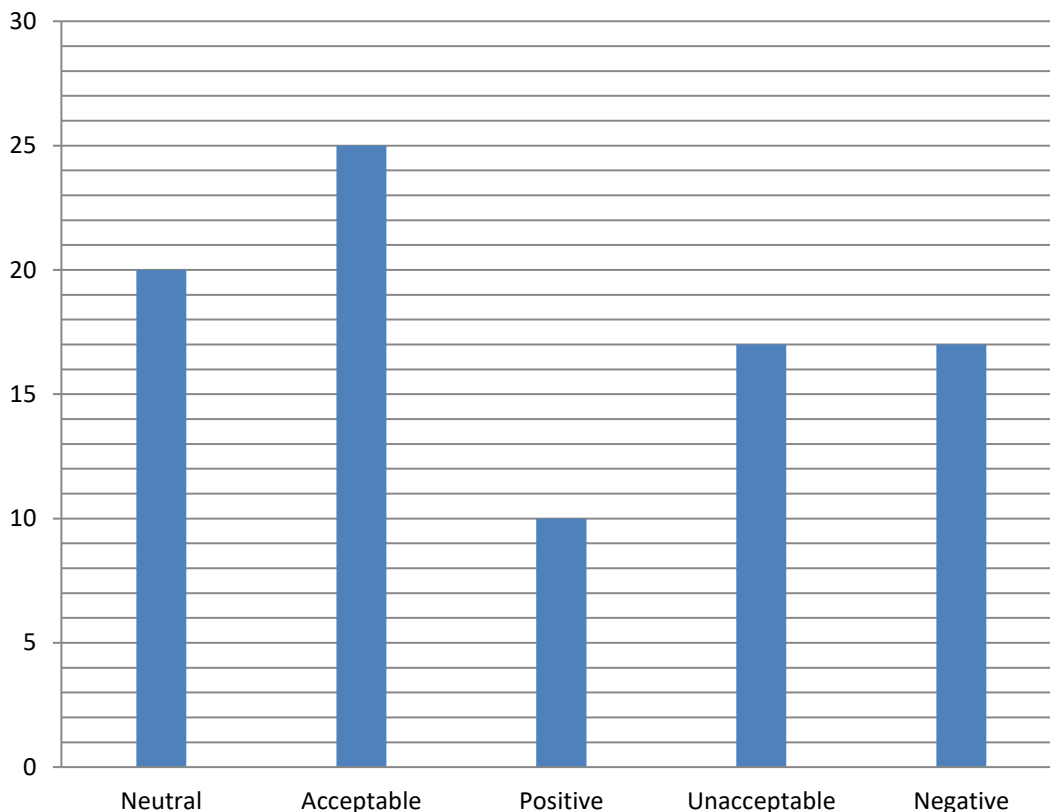


Figure 2

Results of a survey of students trained in athletics, sports dancing, and figure skating

They demonstrate the difference in the perception of the *SAn* concept between those who are trained in boxing, kickboxing, and taekwondo, and those who are trained in athletics, sports dancing, and figure skating.

The study has shown that the majority of students comprehend the categories of *SAn* and *SAg* as a necessary component of the competitive process. About half of the respondents correlate these stable word-combinations with the negative emotions of the athlete about their failures, while negative emotions can be directed either at themselves, or at the opponent, or the sport's referees.

All respondents reported that they encountered these categories when training during training camps and in the mass media in the context of commentary on sports competitions.

On the question of the admissibility of verbal aggression among sports commentators and journalists, students' opinions were divided depending on the kind of sport that was being commented on.

At that, students understand that journalists use verbal aggression intentionally to sharpen certain moments in competitions and to maintain the interest of the audience.

Answers to the question "How do you understand the meaning of the phrase of *sports anger*?" allowed forming two main synonymic chains with opposite connotations.

Positive connotation: *excitement, battle, struggle, indignation, will, charge, courage, motivation, attitude, overcoming, rape, self-criticism, strength, concentration, perseverance, competition, aspiration, battle, firmness, confidence, stubbornness, perseverance, excessive effort, emotional peak, energy peak, energy, and the coldness of mind.*

Negative connotation: *aggression, rage, hostility, angriness, annoyance, anger, revenge, discontent, resentment, hatred, intolerance, failure, resentment, despair, bitterness, hindrance, unsuccess, irritation, ferocity, and fury.*

The final question of the questionnaire (whether the use of the SAn concept in public speech is neutral, acceptable, positive, unacceptable, or negative?) has shown full acceptance of this phrase as normal, acceptable in the media space, and even as means to add the necessary expressiveness to the text.

Conclusion

Linguistic and stylistic analysis of media texts and a survey of students of the Lesgaft National State University has led to the conclusion that the phraseological word-combination of *sports anger*, which initially had the semantics of a negative assessment, is undergoing semantic transformations in the media space and sports discourse in general. Frequent use of this phraseological word-combination in the discourse of athletes has led to the predominance of positive connotation in its lexical meaning. In this process, a large role is played by mass communication media, which help to retain the positive value for the *sports anger as stable* word-combination.

Thus, socio-cultural changes in society are directly reflected in the language of mass media and have significant impact on the change in the lexical norm of the modern Russian literary language.

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