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## METAPHORICAL IMAGES OF GOVERNMENT IN RUSSIAN MEDIA TEXTS

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### *Abstract*

The article deals with the peculiarities of the influence of metaphors on the formation of the image of Russian authorities in domestic print media. The article focuses on the specifics of the impact of linguistic and cultural factors and their importance in the process of forming the image of power in the newspaper and journalistic discourse. The texts of *Zavtra*, *Izvestia*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, and *Pravda* newspapers of the 1990s were selected for analysis. The choice of newspapers is conditioned by their popularity among readers, while the choice of time period is connected with the active development of independent media in Russia. The article considers the metaphors that contribute to the formation of the image of power in the texts of newspapers, analyzes their impact on the creation of negative and positive features of the image. The object of the research is the image of power on the pages of Russian print media of the 1990s. The subject of the research is the semantics of metaphors influencing the formation of the image of the Russian authorities. As a result of this research, six key metaphors have been identified that help to create the image of power in media texts. It was concluded that it is necessary to focus on the semantics of metaphors in order to use them more accurately and regulate the literary and manipulative components of the newspaper's language.

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**Keywords:** Image, image of power, metaphor, media text, media.



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## 1. Introduction

The image of power is currently one of the most relevant and popular topics in the texts of the mass media, since power is usually a key element of social organization, without which the existence of one or another society is unlikely to be possible, and the mass media contribute significantly, if not to a greater extent, to the formation and popularization of the image of power, which to a greater or lesser extent meets the expectations of both society and the representatives of power, since it is a phenomenon of mass consciousness. Researchers emphasize: "The history of the press is closely intertwined with the history of the country. In other words, the work of the press is determined by the specific state of society and the state, their needs" (Bendersky & Khmylev, 2006, p. 37).

The image of power in the media as a phenomenon of human culture and ways of its representation is considered by scientists as an ideological concept (Rossman 2005), part of the socio-political discourse (Zueva & Shkileva, 2013), a way of expressing the political culture of society (Romanovich, 2010). One of the means of influencing the image of power is "the evaluation of new images, which are of particular practical importance, since the impact on the mass consciousness, the formation of a system of values of native speakers – one of the main goals of modern media" (Ratsiburskaya, 2019, p. 280).

As noted by Romanovich (2010), the image of power is a "system of perceptions of power in society, including the concept of its essence, functions, structure, as well as expectations of the authorities of certain socio-political actions" (p. 169). This image in the media is constructed through the use of various methods of political propaganda, manipulation, PR and advertising to justify ideological or state ideas. Mass media take into account the fact that the society analyzes, evaluates and reacts to various socio-political phenomena, following its culture, established rules and norms of behavior, in connection with which Zueva and Shkileva (2013) note that this image here is constructed purposefully:

*By its very nature, the image of power is discursive, i.e. it is a coherent, to some extent well-founded linguistic (public opinion, evaluative judgments and even political jokes) expression of social and political feelings, thoughts and values, and by its origin it is an involuntary product of the epoch and an arbitrary (meaningful and purposeful) result of the ideological impact on the mass consciousness. (p. 17)*

## 2. Problem Statement

The image of power is connected with "ideas of good and truth, solidarity and unity, love and peace, which have a transcendent rather than practical basis" (Romanovich, 2010, p. 171). Representation of the image of power in the media is characterized by clipping, its linguistic expression is promoted by such cognitive structures as stereotype and frame, because in the media they act as media constructs of imagery in the mass consciousness. Due to the mutual influence of the media, authorities and society, the images of political leaders in media texts represent linguistic and cultural phenomena, filled with traditional features and expressed through various language means.

Researchers argue that "the image of power in the language of Russian print media in the 1990s had specific characteristics" (Lonskaya, 2017, p. 114).

### **3. Research Questions**

According to a number of researchers, print media "have always had a great impact on human consciousness and perception of one or another information", and their breadth and diversity of linguistic means of expression, addressing the pressing social and political problems of society, is associated with the need to strengthen the effectiveness of media texts on the minds of recipients (Strelchuk & Lonskaia, 2018). Thus, expressive and emotional shades, namely, metaphors, according to Khamatkhanova (2007), act as a means of "figurative speech concretization, as an opportunity to assess different facts, as a means of sharpening the attention on any given moment" (p. 130).

Metaphor is "a type of path that consists of a hidden likening and figurative approximation of words on the basis of their transportable meanings; the transfer of properties of one object or phenomenon to another on the basis of a feature common or similar to both compared terms" (Hackiewicz, 2007, p. 19). It is based on the desire of the author of the text to compare different objects or phenomena, to give them a similarity in a number of ways, e.g. in terms of colour, shape, volume, purpose, position in space and time, origin, nature of actions and states, commonalities of impressions from objects of different nature, etc.

Metaphors in media texts perform nominal, visual, and cognitive functions and express positive and negative assessments. Bessarabova (1985) notes that the metaphor is characterized by a number of features, including semantic two-dimensional (imagery), "a sign of distraction, a sign of expressiveness, syntactic sign, morphological sign" (p. 44).

Metaphor in the context of the political discourse of the print media contributes to the discovery of imagery through simple and complex manipulation techniques, and as one of the most important means of conceptualizing, categorizing and evaluating political reality, it shapes the image of power in media texts. According to Kleshchina (2017), "a metaphorical image is a dynamic, nationally specific, cultural-linguistic education that reflects the ideas of native speakers of the language about the person, subject, phenomenon or concept, which is based on the transfer of the language form on the associative similarity of the properties of denominations" (p. 35).

Thus, the metaphorical image of power plays a metaphorical role in the media-textsmanipulative function, since it refers to the traditional ideas of the recipients about the language and culture of their country, actualizes in the minds of readers the necessary in the media representations and opinions about the representatives of power by means of concretization, expressiveness and associativity.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the most common metaphorical topics that contribute to the image of Russian power in the print media.

## 5. Research Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis for the study was provided by Goncharova (2012), Zueva and Shkileva (2013), Kleshchina (2017), Pronin (1984), Khamatkhanova (2007), etc., devoted to the study of expressive means of journalism, imagery in the media and specific features of the image of the authorities in Russia.

The following methods were used in the course of the study: observation, descriptive-comparative method, elements of statistical method of data processing and method of contextual analysis.

## 6. Findings

The theoretical and methodological basis for the study was provided by Goncharova (2012), Zueva and Shkileva (2013), Kleshchina (2017), Pronin (1984), Khamatkhanova (2007), etc., devoted to the study of expressive means of journalism, imagery in the media and specific features of the image of the authorities in Russia.

The following methods were used in the course of the study: observation, descriptive-comparative method, elements of statistical method of data processing and method of contextual analysis.

The analysis of newspaper texts revealed six main groups of metaphorical themes that help to implement the image of power in the print media. These groups actualize the traditional ideas of the Russian linguo-culture bearers about politics, society, human self-realization, philosophy.

1. Metaphors on the topic of the Soviet past: "*the fathers of the people felt*", "President Clinton sends his *emissary*, the Deputy Minister of Finance, to Moscow", "Viktor Stepanovich, or rather those *who bet on him*", "the provision of sums of money in support of the Yeltsin *regime*", "the polling station *of the Secretary General*";

2. Metaphors on the topic of nature: "the banks, in order to avoid their insolvency, have already *stumbled into a pack*", "having been born *in the bowels* of the President's Office", "of course, he understands that as a political *fruit* he has already *overripe*", "Alexander Lebed flew to the Kremlin *on the wings* of the success *achieved* on June 16", "it is necessary to try to unite democratic forces around *fruits*", of course";

3. Metaphors on medicine: "How can the *agony* of the regime end?", "he made a dagger visit to a person who falls into the *absences* of the BN", "surrounded by Yeltsin, "very afraid of the second round" and preparing a new anti-constitutional *hysteria*", "the *sick*, destroyed, who is in the *semi-comafe* of Yeltsin", "We are dealing *with another attack of clinical mania of the speaker's greatness*", "*swelling* of power structures", "the government had no *immunity* against the law", "Boris Yeltsin's 22-minute ultimatum sharply raised *the temperature* of Russians", "and at the same time the *stillborn* SSG", "as a result of the *rapid "birth"* of the CIS appeared", "The preservation of a single economic space permeated by *thousands of living blood vessels* and nerves was proved to be unbiased. In fact, it is a single economic *organism*, and any, even the slightest *rupture* in it threatens not only with trouble", "Russia *suffers* too";

4. Metaphors on the topic of theatre and circus: "The audience is waiting for a funny *performance* in which Yavlinsky will force himself to beg, while *behind the scenes*...", "let's try to understand this

*theater of the absurd*", "Anti-crisis program – another *trick* of the government", "to start formation of assault units *under the guise* of police assistance teams";

5. Metaphors on the topic of military battle: "*not an easy fight, but a hard battle died out* the first round of elections", "*with a weapon in his hands* Boris Yeltsin won the *battle*", "which caused Yeltsin's *dismissal* from office";

6. Metaphors on the topic of sports: "Alexander Lebed started another *round* of negotiations", "a dozen and a half candidates *have already stopped at a low start*."

The represented metaphors show that the image of the Russian authorities on the pages of the Russian print media of the 1990s may contain positive and negative connotations, which contributes to the formation of a certain positive or negative attitude of recipients towards the authorities.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the metaphorical image of the Russian authorities in domestic media texts allowed us to find out the following:

- The metaphor is a key component of media texts, as it contributes to the creation of emotionally colored images in the media, which attracts the attention of recipients;
- Metaphors in the media perform the so-called, imaginative, cognitive, and manipulative functions and reflect positive and negative assessments of certain objects, subjects, and events;
- The most popular topics for metaphors in media texts are those that are known and understandable to any carrier of Russian linguistic culture, namely, the USSR, war, nature, medicine, sports, theater / circus;
- The metaphorical image of Russian power in Russian media texts is formed under the influence of typical Russian cultural codes, which are unconsciously assimilated by newspaper readers, which allows publications to construct the image of power they need in society consciousness.

As a possible perspective for the study, it is worth noting that the Russian media of the 1990s, characterized by frequent ignorance of linguistic, cultural and social norms, represent a significant basis for studying the development of the language of the Russian media, which has had a significant impact on the formation of imagery in the media of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

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