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**SENSE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONCEPT «POWER» IN  
THE NEW CITY MEDIA DISCOURSE**

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*Abstract*

The author of the article refers to such a new and acute scientific paradigm as the axiology of journalism, the main task of which is the value analyses of mass media text. The author describes how the ideas about the government changed in the new environment, especially in the new city media. As it has been mentioned above, the new course, axiology of journalism, is used for that, which, in its turn, uses the methods of linguoconceptology, particularly we speak about concepts. To conduct the conceptological analyses, we first build the usual or common-language model of the concept with the help of main Russian dictionaries, which is later compared with the discursive one. The revealed senses are rated in accordance with the field method of concept organization (following the method of S.G. Vorkachev), because this method helps more vividly educe the most acute meanings. The discursive analysis was conducted on the materials of Internet edition The Village as the brightest representative of the new city media. The total was 181 materials and 432 sense concepts. As the result, the author draws the conclusion that ideas about government in the discourse of the new city media came through a strong transformation: if in the usual model the meanings found are neutral or do not have any special sense colour even being connected with the ideology or a religious aspect, the front of the discursive model contains the meanings with negative connotation.

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## **1. Introduction**

At present we may see how theorists and experts of journalism pay more attention to the problem of values in media texts. This tendency is connected with the fact that the expected realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, described in the works of historians, politologists, linguists, philosophers, culturologists and scientists from other scientific spheres, did not coincide with the results received: in scientific literature the 21<sup>st</sup> century is often described quite rose-coloured as the opposition to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Nowadays in works of scientists, studying the value component of the contemporary world in all its revelations, we often hear the thesis that the today's society is in the state of crisis, and in this connection we may say that there is another stage of the so-called "reevaluation", which could not but influenced the social and scientific processes. For example, as we have mentioned above, we mean the value or axiological analysis of the mass media texts. Along with it there is a new course, seeking separateness as a scientific paradigm – the axiology of journalism, whose main field of activity is the study of value potential of mass media.

At the same time the habitual genres and formats of journalism change, and new types of media appear. One of these types is the new city media which focus on the city and city environment in all its revelations, also their mission is to prevent the leave of the so-called "creative class" and the formation of the positive city image among the population and guests, and the content of such media does not suppose the criminal news, reprints of press-releases and social political articles on a divert topic: only something concerning the city and its population is important.

We may say that the new city media contain two components: the city image and the concentration of initiative citizens, i.e. their purposes concern the spiritual growth of citizens, the improvement of living space both in practical sense and in the sphere of culture in all its directions. We may say that in a certain sense the new city media submit urban culture, city mentality, not general, but concrete city reality, because in its nature the city media are local. That is why we think it acute and interesting to consider the city media in the axiological aspect; in particular we take an interest in how such editions represent the image of power?

## **2. Problem Statement**

At present the works, studying the new city media and axiology of journalism, mostly refer to either theoretical aspects or the methodological apparatus development. That is why we think it is acute to consider the new city media in the value-sense aspect.

Developing the written above thesis on the variety of new city media content, ignoring the habitual media agenda if it does not directly influence a certain city, we think it necessary to consider how in such editions the authors transmit the interactions between society and government?

## **3. Research Questions**

Here we take a thorough consideration of aspects of the new city media and axiology of journalism, which serve the field for scientific study.

### **3.1 New city media: definition and specific**

New city media, as we have already written above, it is a specific environment and mass media type. They appeared not so long ago, and the researchers are still waiting to make a complete study of them.

Vlasova (2018) notices that this type of media was formed on the basis of city blogs, Internet journals as the factor of union of local communities and as the factor of self-organization of city citizens. Also, the researcher notices that the genre variety of such editions will also possess its specific: the author's column, "creative portrait", historical review, essay, walks, sketches etc. Here we can see many original projects from journalists and city activists who open the daily city life. Besides that, Vlasova (2018) notices, that new city media are primarily focused on a human being, are anthropocentric, and there are common people, city dwellers in the focus of attention. In some degree, new city media are the new stage of development of regional and district mass media.

Ilyina (2018), developing the thesis about the union of local societies through new city media, supposes that they construct the city identity, which the researcher watches through the prism of the discourse-analyses. Thus, by the example of Ekaterinburg and Ekaterinburg Internet journal *It's my city* we distinguish several levels of identity: from geography to culture, creates "the symbolic map" of the city. Besides, the author writes that in each edition there is a number of concept-characteristics of the city.

Though Nigmatullina (2018) thinks that the agenda of new city media is hybrid, because it combines the local newsmakers, which are incorporated in the agenda of federal media, or publish the materials with locationally independent topics, and the fact, that the materials of such editions can get into federal line, testifies that the city media are focused on the support of the quality audience, though they cannot always stay noticeable against the wider scale and audience.

### **3.2 Axiology of journalism: the definition and the methods**

The second scientific paradigm, studied by us, is the axiology of journalism. This direction appeared not so long ago, so we may say that the next step for researchers is to develop its full theoretic methodological apparatus.

The founder of this course is Sidorov (2011). In 2009 the collection of works "Axiology of journalism: experience of new discipline building", edited by him, in which the scientists tried to systematize all the knowledge about this course at the moment.

At the same time Sidorov (2011) marks that the notion of axiology of journalism must be specified because otherwise it "will be accepted in the context of idealistic ethic postulates, stating the rules and norms of journalistic activity, which may be consciously joint or may not be joint (what is done by a great number of professional journalists without any consideration)".

Merinov (2017) distinguishes several directions in the axiology of journalism: general theoretical (development of theoretical methodological apparatus), value-regulative (development of rules and norms of ethic for journalists), media criticism and journalistic education (correspondence/non-correspondence to professional and ethical standards), axiological media linguistic (study of lexical and stylistic aspects of journalistic texts), discursive approach (here they study mostly political media texts), economic and axiological aspect (influence/interaction of economic system and informational society), historic ideological approach (study of world view concepts), social axiological (influence of media on the value

component of society). Also, the researcher tells that the most perspective, in his opinion, approach is the cultural and historical one, because it may help to study the role of media in the formation of identity and transmission/retransmission of values in mass media texts.

Developing the above thesis, Miloslavskaya (2018) believes that today the axiology of journalism may become a new method to study the questions and problems of various media practices, because there are no other ways to study the media reality in rapidly changing society.

In this article, as we have mentioned above, we shall consider the relation between the city and the state presented in the materials of new city media: are these notions synonymous or on the contrary, the antique idea of cities-states is not acute now and the city/state are in the same opposition as, for example, state/people/country?

We should notice that in this article we shall look at the state through the prism of the power image in the country, because historically the state is accepted through power, moreover, we suppose that in new city media this notion will be transformed and the political connotation would disappear, and the place of this semantic group will be occupied by senses, similar in meaning, but not linked directly with political institutes. The analysis will be conducted through the axiology of journalism with the help of linguoconceptual approaches.

So, in our article we are planning to consider the following questions:

- How is the image of power represented in the naïve world view? Can we say that this question has a long history in our culture?
- Can we say that new city media as unique phenomenon in the Russian urban culture influence the transformation of such notion as power?
- Will the notion of power correlate to the ideas about the state and other political institutes, or this notion in our country has a broader interpretation and understanding? What specific does this notion bear in the Russian culture?

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

The purpose of our study is to find the value-sense components of the concept “power” in new city media by the example of the Internet edition The Village.

#### **5. Research Methods**

To achieve the above-mentioned purpose, we need to address such a scientific direction as linguoconceptology, whose methods are used by researchers working within the axiology of journalism.

The main methodological tool of linguoconceptology is the concept, which is defined by Vorkachev (2010) as “the combination of significant signs of an object, submerged into culture and language” (p. 27), because the concept is strongly linked with the language and culture, so we may say that the concept possesses the value component and corresponds the basic postulates of the axiology of journalism.

For the research of the sense content of the concept it is necessary to reproduce its usual and common-language model, i.e. to understand how the concept functions in the naïve world view, for that

we shall use the method of dictionary definitions: to restore the common-language model of the concept using the main Russian dictionaries. The model will be compared to the discursive model of the edition *The Village*. In the course of this comparison we shall have an opportunity to watch how the senses of the concept are transformed (if transformed at all).

Also for better understanding and reflection of rating of the transmitted senses of the concept we focused on the field principle of the content organization: the conceptual field is built with multiple various senses, which, in a greater or lower degree, correspond with the name of the concept, so the researchers distinguish the nuclear (or basic) zone, the near core zone and the periphery. The obligatory presence of all the zones/fields is not a necessary condition, because their absence depends upon the very transmitted senses and the frequency of their appearance (Antropova, 2016, p. 24).

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. The usual model of the concept “power”

We shall reconstruct the common-language model of the concept using the Russian dictionaries. The core zone will be defined with the name of the concept; this is the notion component, which is restored with the help of dictionaries. Thus, we have the following results:

- 1) the right and opportunity to command somebody/something (Kuznetsov, 2002).
- 2) “the right, strength and will”, “character of authorities”, “command, rule” (Ozhegov, 2016).
- 3) “the right to rule the state, political command”, “organs of governmental management”, “the right to command, to rule (Ozhegov, 2016).

It appears that the core field of the concept “power” includes the senses, connected with “right” and “opportunity” to master the control over somebody, including the state authority, or this concept is understood as the synonym of state, i.e. in the language world view the authoritative right is possessed by the government, not a single individual. Moreover, the power is sometimes understood as the general group of individuals, taking over the rest.

The near core zone of the concept is presented with the signifying component of the concept, which is restored with the Russian etymological, associative, semantic, word-building dictionaries. The signifying component will reflect the evolution of the form of this lexeme, concept, also the signifying component shows the place, occupied by this lexical unit in the language (Pochueva, 2017, p. 47).

The word-building dictionary of Tikhonov (2014) notices that the lexeme “power” reflects quite a poor word-building nest: it builds only four adjectives, five nouns, two verbs and one adverb. In our opinion, this is connected with the fact that this word does not correlate with the traditional Russian mentality, i.e. it did not function within the wide masses, it belonged to quite a narrow circle of bearers, probably belonging to the royal court or academic circle, educated people in general, and was changed with a simple and clear synonym in colloquial speech.

The Russian etymological dictionary mentions that the lexeme “power” (*vlast* – in Russian) comes from the common Slavic “*volost*”, which in its turn comes from *volda*; the word “power” (*vlast*) comes from here (Fasmer, 2008). We shall pay attention to the fact that the etymological dictionary by Semyonov (2003) describes the lexeme “authority”, which is translated from Latin as “influence, power”, and “imperium”, which is translated from Polish as “power, rule, state”, i.e. we may say that the lexeme

“power” in the Russian culture has a long history and its evolution, though it lacks a wide word-building nest.

The associative dictionary produces the following reactions on the stimulus “power” (the number of reactions is in brackets, the total is 103):

- “Soviet” (27);
- “money” (3);
- “people” (3)
- “strength” (3);
- “cruelty” (2);
- “having” (2);
- “government” (2);
- “darkness” (1);
- “Alexander the Great” (1);
- “administration” (1) etc. (Karaulov, 1996).

The first reaction gives the reference to the Soviet regime, which is explained with the fact that the associative experiment of Karaulov took place in the 1990s when people were the Soviet citizens not long ago, but we do notice that we speak about the state or the state organs. The following reactions may testify that the society was in the process of political and social changes.

Studying the near core zone of the concept “power” we may say that in general it will not go against the core zone: the sense clusters are preserved, though they start possessing the new semantic tones, i.e.: “cruelty”, “empire”, “totalitarianism”.

We shall pass over to the analysis of the periphery zone of the concept “power”. The periphery is always restored with the metaphor dictionaries, proverb dictionaries, epithet dictionaries – this is the imagery component of the concept, which fixes the sensuous perceptions and presentations of a concept (Pochueva, 2017).

The Russian epithet dictionary describes the lexeme “power” with the following metaphorical senses:

- Connected with political institutes: “state”, “high”, “legislative”, “executive” etc.;
- Ideological sphere: “democratic”, “bourgeois”, “noble”, “autocratic”, “authoritative”, “of workers and peasants” etc.;
- Existential sphere: “creative”, “holy”, “mysterious”, “severe” etc.

The proverb dictionary by V.I. Dal has three sense blocks with the lexeme “power”:

- “God-faith” – 3 (“You walk under God and His power” etc.);
- “freedom-captivity” – 1 (“Sails and tackles are not in our power”);
- “punishment-mercy” – 1 (“Mercy over sin as water over fire (i.e. having power). (Gorbachevich & Khablo, 2004).

It appears that the periphery is presented with various metaphors: from political to existential, connected with religion and folk superstitions about destiny and justice.

Analyzing the usual model of the concept “power” we may draw the following conclusions: first, the concept is connected with the state and the bearer of high power, or the state ruler, but going away

from the core the concept obtains either ideologically coloured meaning, connected mostly with totalitarianism and tyranny (the near core zone), or existential religious motives (periphery).

## 6.2. The discursive model of the concept “power”

To build the discursive model we analyzed the volume of texts of the Internet edition The Village for 2017-2019: the total is 181, which contain 432 contexts with the lexeme “power” and its derivatives.

The core zone of the concept is presented with the following senses (the number of contexts with a meaning is in brackets):

1. Power – a faceless group of individuals, governing a country/a region, preventing citizens from living well or the synonym of state – 191

*And if in autumn of 2017 after the appearance of the album “NoLove” which gained “VKontakte”, Dremine said that he treats the **power** well and thanked Putin for “ruining the West”, in February of the following year he seriously told the British journal Dazed about the high level of poverty in the country (Simakova, 2018).*

2. Power is the political sovereignty – 126

*The candidate of history, the head of the international council of the Association of researchers of the Russian society tries to explain how to evaluate the revolution of 1917 in the destiny of Russia, what lessons the **power** must learn from the Soviet history and how to explain the restoration of the Stalin monuments (Tatarnikova, 2017).*

We see that the nuclear zone of the discursive model of the concept “power” has the significant sense transformations: the zone is abandoned by the meanings which are not directly connected with the political institutes and processes, but there appears a new meaning with negative semantic, showing that the power may become the source of problems and sorrows for the citizens, and those who rule the state are not identified by the citizens as people, for them they are a sort of an organization, ruling the country and protecting their own interests.

The near core zone:

1. Power is the same as authority, strength, influence – 85

*The porno actress Sasha Grey acts as the escort girl with no problem, sliding through the rich rooms, cars and **power** owners, just because she does it well (“The escort girl”), (Makosta, 2017).*

2. Power is a part of the headline, slogan, reflecting certain idea – 32

*One of the loudest political processes of the last years came to its end – the case of the initiative group for the referendum “**For responsible power**” (Levchenko, 2017).*

3. Power is a general idea about the law and the repressive apparatus – 18

*I have known these two junkyard owners for a long time – Maxim Konopko and Alexey Voloshin. We were connected till I was arrested. They were in this unpleasant situation only because of the regional **power** pressure (Rukov, 2018).*

The near core zone of the concept “power” has very strong sense transformations: first, many meanings from the core zone of the usual model come here (“the right to command, rule”, “to reign”, “strength” etc.), second, such a neutral meaning as “part of a headline or a slogan” is added here, third, it preserves the above described semantic of the near core zone of the usual model, connected with

totalitarianism and monarchy, in the discursive model it is expressed in “the repressive apparatus and the idea of law”.

The periphery zone:

1. Power is the purpose which is to be reached with all means, the symbol of success -8

*The plot is taken from the series “Office”: the hatred by everyone director of a computer company – coward, escaping confrontations and unpopular decisions – has **the power** for many years because he invented a fictitious boss (Tayozhnaya, 2018).*

2. Power is everything connected with reputation risks – 3

*The director Yuri Bykov announced his leave from the cinema because of the accusations on cooperation with **power** (Bondarenko, 2017).*

3. Power is the same as self-control – 1

*Suicide and inappropriate romance, old child-parent conflict, loneliness and catatonia accompany them through their walk to themselves and peace: each of them tries to gain **power** over their lives and to confront the course (Nilov, 2018).*

The periphery zone of the discursive model, as of the usual model, demonstrates the “objectivized” senses. Directly connected with the human activity and reflection, but here we see the significant changes: the common-language model has more meanings with existential religious or philosophical idea, but the discursive model completely lacks the religious philosophical component and obtains the senses connected with reputation, prestige and self-discipline.

## 7. Conclusion

In general, we may say that the discursive model of the concept “power” saw the dramatic changes: the concept was more neutral in the usual model, but in the discourse it obtained more negatively coloured senses, which transfer the idea about the opposition of power and country, or use context antonyms of the notion country/power/state and city, or this is the eternal conflict, the opposition of person and state.

Probably, such a significant transformation of the concept senses happened due to the fact that new city media is a specific type of mass media in its format and tasks, especially understanding that these media are hyperlocal, i.e. locked in a narrow space and focused on a small audience. Moreover, their environment of functioning (city space) creates a new course of life, dictates a new urban culture, which changed greatly too. The new city media is a platform for experiments and unique projects, the place where active and creative people meet, which also supports the rethinking of habitual ideas and postulates.

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