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**TRANSFORMATIONS OF PSYCHO-VERBAL  
CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORTFANS IN THE CONTEXT OF  
GLOBALIZATION PROCESSES**

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***Abstract***

The article attempts to determine the main psycho-verbal characteristics of fans and sport supporters, manifested in sports discourse on the material of sports chants in Russian and English languages. It describes the characteristics of sports collective behavior and the changes in the behavior of fans of Russian teams that have occurred in recent decades in the context of modern international relations as a result of globalization. The article discusses the problems of sports communication, the degree of its quality impact on the performance of sports activities, suggests the dependence of managing aggressiveness of fans and the level of communication organization of sports subjects. The research material is presented by the football chants of the Spartak sports club and the chants of basketball club of Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company collected during the study. The research material is the chants of various basketball clubs posted on the cheerleader websites. For the first time, a comparison of chants in English and Russian is given. On the basis of linguistic and psychological methods of analysis in the framework of sports discourse, the specificity and distinctive features of Russian and English-language chants are analyzed, their structural and thematic classification is proposed, taking into account linguistic and extra-linguistic characteristics. The role of chants in the development of communication of sportsmen-fans is considered, the classification of chants is given, the correlation of groups of chants with the psycho-verbal behavior of fans and supporters of teams is described, basic targets and differentiation parameters of fans are determined.

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## 1. Introduction

Modern globalization processes covered all the spheres of human activity, but studies of the role of these processes and their mechanisms of influence on humans in certain areas are poorly understood or not described, especially in the context of globalization. Thus, it is impossible not to draw attention to the fact that nowadays sport has become not only a kind of coin to change in international political processes; but also a means of manipulating and interfering in the political structure of individual states or the way to realize their own political ambitions. It is not forgotten how our athletes were not allowed to the Paralympic Games in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, because the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) considered that the Russian Paralympians were part of the state-supported “doping system” and excluded Russia from the competition. The problem of doping in high-profile sports is not the only one. A separate topic is the behavior of fans at mass sporting events. But there is another factor that negatively influences the results of a team - the behavior of fans and supporters, because of which a team may receive punishment in the form of fines, game without spectators, game at different stadiums, and sometimes ban from competitions. The reason here is not only the use of pyrotechnics, a demonstration of offensive behavior, mayhem in stadium, the main thing is a manifestation of racism. Racism in various forms, as a rule, appears as a form of speech practice for fans, due to the fact that many sports exist for spectators and fans. It is connected not only with sports intrigues, contest, but also with personal characteristics of fanatically-minded supporters of sport, such as: the desire to dominate, the tendency to spontaneous and reactive aggression, emotional irritability, which are “aggravated” during a sport event. Fans view the opposing side as “enemies”, rivals who must be defeated, no matter at what price. However, sports game provides, above all, the opportunity to unite and rally people. An illustrative example is the World Football Championship in Russia in 2018 when the whole country watched the beautiful game of the teams, showed sincere emotions, the cohesion of the fans of different teams was demonstrated. All this cannot but affect the emotional state of the athletes themselves, and even the result of the game, because the motivation of the athlete to win depends on the support of the audience.

The success of athletes or teams depends on the well-being of fans, who, in turn, believe that they are helping “their” athletes using various kinds of communicative tactics with their athletes and rival athletes - banners, chants, noise, etc. - inspire “their” and demoralize “strangers”. The presence of spectators increases the effectiveness of the activities of athletes, because the audience belongs to the category of people who are able to assess the results of the activities of athletes. It is not by chance that one of the punishments of teams for the behavior of the fans is a game without spectators. The effect of social facilitation arises as a result of the expectations of athletes of the assessment and, in a certain sense, its fear. Psychological peculiarities of sportsmen are also important here, as Bekhterev (2001) noted, highlighting such categories as socially excitable, socially inhibited and indifferent. It follows that the audience during the competition can not only affect athletes in different ways, arousing and stimulating some of them, slowing down, oppressing others and causing fear in them, not causing any reaction from others. As a result, it significantly affected the outcome of a competition. According to Schelenberg (as cited in Perls, 1969), who observed the behavior of athletes and their reactions to the audience, the “positive” viewer has a favorable effect in all cases and on all athletes, which was confirmed by the results of performances at competitions. At the same time, the impact of the “negative” viewer is quite ambiguous. Thus, it was noted

that an aggressive hostile viewer affects the degree of aggression in the behavior of a visiting team. Aggression can increase, which leads to the increase in the number of violations, or these violations can be viewed as a sign of increased aggression. At the same time, it is impossible not to mention another aspect related to aggression, which may increase among the spectators and fans during a sporting event. Nowadays, the aggressive behavior of fans is a deep psychological problem. This behavior can be regarded as frustration, psychological defense of guarding against trouble and the realization of their achievements.

Thus, the mutual communication of athletes and fans and the athletes of “their” teams and their rivals require special study, description and development of approaches to regulate communicative tactics of both types of communication, primarily from a psycholinguistic point of view, for the subsequent development of psychological methods of work in such an important activity of modern times as the psychology of sports.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Nowadays, sports psychology puts a complex of theoretical and empirical studies, the subject of which are psychological practices aimed at people for whom regular involvement in any form of physical activity is less as a functional load or sports activity from recreational physical education to professional sports, and more as the way of life. As practice shows, nowadays little attention is paid to the study of the psychological characteristics of the interaction of two - the most significant - subjects of sports competition: fans and athletes. Minor studies in this direction indicate that the current form of communication of these subjects may be verbal and non-verbal.

Both those and other forms may have an impact on athletes to some extent, however, the ways of their perception will be different, including the fact that at the time of the “performance” in a sporting event, an athlete may not perceive some non-verbal forms of appeal of fans to him, while the verbalized appeal will be perceived by the majority of athletes regardless of the degree of immersion in competition process (unless it is an athlete participating in the Paralympic Games and its limited health is not associated with diminished hearing). The difference in the degree of influence of verbalized appeals will depend here on the degree of social excitability of a single athlete. The subjects of a sporting event can be considered as the creators of a special communication space (club symbols, sporting fashion, chants, joint leisure and a special atmosphere of Internet communication), including sports discourse, where fans play a significant role along with sports fans. A special mood during the competition arises as a result of their activity aimed at support of opposing athletes and teams: emotionally saturated and supported by expressive utterances, designed mainly in the form of chants, the discourse space affects all subjects of the discourse. Considering the significance of the use of energetic chants of fans from the point of view of psychological science, we can conclude that they are aimed at the support of the participants of the competition, and their goal is to encourage and revitalize the sporting event. They exert a psychological influence on the players of the team, thereby inspiring them with confidence in their abilities, increasing the will to go to the desired result - to victory. Through the background sound of the fans in a stadium, it is possible for athletes to mentally tune in to the game. On the other hand, chants can suppress the winning spirit of opponent.

The texts of chants as an integral element of the ritualized action of sports competition have a specific purpose - they should be loudly uttered by the chorus by fans in situations and places of mass

presence of like-minded fellows and opponents. According to the authors the analysis of sports chants from the standpoint of psycholinguistic research and social psychology can significantly enrich the direction of psychology, like the psychology of sports. In the context of the research problem, it is necessary to analyze the resource content of chants from the point of view of their psycho-semantic, structural, stylistic and psychological content that can affect both athletes participating in their team and athletes of a rival team during a competition, to reveal the degree of effectiveness of chants on fans of opposing teams.

### **3. Research Questions**

Sports activity in modern society is a social form of motor activity, which is aimed at the improvement of physical and mental development of an athlete in accordance with its goals and motivation (Ilyin, 2008). Every sport performance is almost always accompanied by a spectator reaction, which can be given not only by fans (Kochetova & Kuznecov, 2013).

As it is already mentioned above, viewers who support an athlete or his rivals, verbally expressing their attitude to what is happening at the competition can significantly affect the outcome of the competition and the results of an athlete or a team. Thus, probably, the negative impact of the opponent fans can negatively affect the inexperienced athlete, who as a result performs worse due to unplanned over-excitement than in situations where the pressure from the audience does not have such a high degree of courage and does not cause a negative reaction with his parties. At the same time, a more experienced participant responds to a lesser extent to the impact of the environment and in a similar competitive situation, he retains self-control. It is necessary to note that regardless of the experience of participation in competitions, the type of social excitability described by Bekhterev (2001) (socially excitable, socially inhibited and indifferent), is not so much his experience as his readiness for perception of verbalized forms of influence on athletes by fans.

In general, it is not easy to predict the level of spectator influence on the mental state and activity of an athlete, since his reaction to the presence of spectators depends on a complex of causes and conditions, including gender and personality traits, performance experience in competitions, etc. The scope of sports communication, quality and the effectiveness of sports activities are directly related to the level of organization of communication of all its subjects, not only in the competitive process, but in the training and in the “extra-competitive” period (during free personal time of athletes). During the competitive period, communication is usually carried out through chants - short rhymed texts that relate to subjects of sports discourse and sports psychology. In sports psychology, chants are studied insufficiently from the linguistic and psychological points of view. A chant is an element capable of mobile influencing the participants of a sporting event, while defending the dignity of an athlete or team to whose address it is directed, and their right to lead. The current state of sports communication indicates that sports chants are firmly rooted in the structure of sports communication and the structure of sports discourse. A sport event which has a competitive character indicates the need to study sports chants within a sports discourse from a psycholinguistic point of view.

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

Taking into account the role of a spectator in the outcome and the results sports mass event, it is impossible to ignore the forms of manifestation of presence by a spectator, his behavioral models, which are based on the desire to influence athletes of his team and rival team (Earnhardt & Haridakis, 2009). The means, methods and tools of impact can have both a planned and the opposite of the planned result.

This article attempts to link the chants based on their structural and stylistic characteristics and psychosemantic fullness with the psychological orientation of a personality of sport fans, to identify types of fans according to the degree of aggressiveness based on the psycholinguistic analysis. According to the authors for sports psychology, it will be useful to understand the motivational component of a chant, to identify its components from the standpoint of psychosemantics and targets contained in the vocabulary and syntactic structures of chants.

The study of the discourse situation, the reflection of the spectators of sports events and participants in similar events suggest that fans and supporters are two different categories of spectators. Supporters at the stadium want to get a boost of energy and pleasure, and then to emotionally discuss what they see in sports jargon, tele-supporters who prefer to watch football at home comforts are also emotional. Fans behave like an aggressive crowd; in general, they can probably be attributed to sports hooligans.

The purpose of this article is to study the psycho-semantic and lexico-stylistic features of chants of sports fans using the example of Russian and English languages, and to identify the psychological orientation of a personality of a sport fans and a sport supporters, determining the indicators of fans and supporters according to the degree of aggressiveness of speech behavior based on psycholinguistic analysis.

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

Since the problem of psycho-semantic and structural-stylistic analysis of sport chants of the identification of the aggressiveness of sport fans and supporters is insufficiently studied, the methodological basis of the work consists of linguistic studies on stylistic, lexical, phonetic and structural analysis of the language system, improving harmony and beauty of speech, the characteristics of discursive and communicative practices of such scholars as D.E. Rosenthal, A.B. Zilbert, D.N. Fateev, E.G. Malyshev (Fateev, 2012), as well as such researchers as E.P. Ilyin, A.G. Tonevitsky, A.E. Taras and others (Ilyin, 2008). working in the field of psychophysiology, clinical psychology and pedagogy

In this article, the empirical methods of data collection were used: the survey, the method of content analysis, the lexical, structural, stylistic analysis, the method of continuous sampling, the methods of observation and analogy, the generalization, the expert evaluation. The majority of Russian-language chants (chants of fans of UMMC basketball club) were collected during the club games at home (Yekaterinburg), which allowed not only collecting a fairly extensive array of text material, but also tracking the reaction of the audience and players in the conditions of the communicative act of a while competing.

The research material consisted of 100 chants and 19 songs in Russian of eight football and basketball teams and 100 chants in English of different teams (only 1 song was included in the sample, as fans prefer to communicate with athletes through chants (Ekaterina Glebova, a graduate of Ural Federal University of 2017 participated in the collection and primary processing of chants).

## 6. Findings

The analysis and classification of sport chants based on linguistic approaches are suggested by Fateev (2012) on the basis of the genre of football chants, but since the subject of the article falls into the category of insufficiently studied topics, especially from a psychological point of view, the study attempts to develop a more universal classification of sport chants, regardless of sport, from the standpoint of structural and thematic, lexico-stylistic and psycho-semantic characteristics, which can allow offering a typology of fans and supporters.

Within the framework of the structural-thematic classification, the authors identified two groups of characteristics - linguistic and extralinguistic. The first group (linguistic) includes three subgroups of characteristics - similar to other genres of folklore (Fateev, 2012) by size and by target. The first group includes short chants intended for quick pronunciation without chained continuation. The chants of the fans of opposing team are the stimulus for them, the target is a certain person (team, player, fans, judge, etc.), expression and realism of expression is obligatory. The second group is the chants of different sizes from the shortest (from two lines of text, where one or two words are repeated throughout the chants) to longer (more than four lines). The third group is the chants of different genres such as: *chastushka* (this genre was not identified in English), song, *sadyushka* (sadistic rhyme), riddle, motto: chants- *chastushkas* (a) and chants-riddles (b), motto; for ethical reasons the authors do not give examples of *sadyushkas* here: A) “Fox, go ahead! Tear all rivals! The club is our favorite; our fans are always with you!” (Sports chants of the UMMC BC); B) “Who said that we lose? Who said we won't score? We begin the attack; we will break off everyone on the field. We will roll out the protection, take away your points so that everyone knows - We are from Yekat and we are invincible!”; “Who rocks the house? Tigers rock the house. They rock it all the way down!”; B) “And the battle begins again! And the heart is anxious in the chest! We will always be ahead! We will always be ahead!”; “J-U-M-PS-K-Y! Jump sky high!”.

The second group of characteristics (extralinguistic) describes the manner of the performance and the target. The most frequent categories are singled out by the manner of performance - “Sound” category (chants can be performed with music or claps or drums, while during the match one and the chants can be performed in different manners), “text” category (pronounced as a roll or in chorus, but not every chant can be performed as roll calls, unlike choral chants, where it is enough for all those who perform to know its text, for example, the roll call: “Who will win all in the Euroleague? – U-M-M-C! Premiere all? - U-M-M-C! Why is it so anxious in your chest?” U-M-M-C! Who is again ahead? - U-M-M-C!”; “Let's G - let's G, Let's O - let's O, Let's go mighty (team's name), Let's Go!”), A “dramatized” category of chants (performed by cheerleaders during the dance, and by fans of a particular team.

According to the target, it is possible to distinguish chants-support and chants-opposition, as well as chants-descriptions and chants-provocations as a form of presentation of the two types of chants determined in this research. Chanting support is the largest array in the sample in both Russian (a) and English (b) languages: A) “Our Candice is a top-class player, she rolls Rivals into meat! She combines all, pass and throw, you will see!”; B) “Genie, genie, grant my wish. Let me hear that ball go swish!”.

However, there are few of support chants addressed to an individual player in English compared to the support chants in Russian. In English sample there were no chants in support of a club; none of the samples found chants in support of a coach or a judge of any team. Approximately the same ratio of chants

in support of fans of this or that team was found in both English and Russian samples. Among the category of chants-opposition, addressed to a club, both in Russian (a) and English (b) predominate: A) “Let someone has a dream, That Dynamo is a champion! Well, we saw in a dream: Our Spartak is on a pedestal! ”; B) “They'vegotourball! Wewantitback! Chanting descriptions are characterized by the fact that they describe the action or quality of a team and express support or point to the opposition: “Like a swallow in the sky, like a lighthouse in the sea, In Russian football - Spartak Moscow! ”; “Standingontheline, Lookingmightyfine. Come on braves, now's that time. Sink that ball Braves, Sink it!”.

The main feature of provocations chants is a challenge; it is found less often in English chants texts than in Russian texts: “Fear Europe, Fear the enemy, Moscow Spartak!” (Football chants; we're mad, we're mad, we really, really bad. You can't touch this. We're better than you, because we're up by two!” In general, discredit by fans and fans of “foreign” fans through labels that undermine their image and authority, as shown by the research, is one of the main tools of speech aggression, as indicated in the work of Belutin (2012). At the same time, in these works, understanding of insults is not given; therefore, it is not entirely clear how to distinguish signs of a speech act of insult from signs of communication of imaginary phenomenon (feigned) impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996).

The fan songs are homogeneous in their functional orientation and usually rely on contrasting evaluation signs, on the means of representing the concepts of “conflict”, “war” and “peace” and imported from the business, religious and theatrical stage discourses of the concepts “economy”, “religion”, “Theater” and others. (Belutin, 2012).

The lexico-stylistic analysis of chants showed that both fans and supporters use practically the whole range of lexical and stylistic methods of enhancing expression and emotiveness in the texts of the genre under study, which affects the emotional state not only of contesting participants, but also of the audience. According to the authors of chants among the means aimed at discrediting opponents (players of the opposing team or its fans), the most frequent and probably effective are taboo words and expressions, insults. It is also necessary to indicate the presence of the communicative phenomenon of feigned, or imaginary, impoliteness, the reaction to which can be diverse, including negative.

The analysis of fan chants and songs indicates the involvement of audience while observing the emotional and aggressive actions of athletes, as a result of which fans and supporters in the chants and songs provide an outlet for their emotions and aggressive impulses. It, in turn, can affect the decrease in the aggressiveness of fans. However, it is impossible to exclude a different model of behavior when a spectator of a competitive event, watching aggressive actions, including himself becomes more aggressive, which can lead to the increase in aggressiveness as personality traits (Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2002). According to the authors both statements are true, and on this basis it is possible to divide the groups of observers into fans and supporters. In this case, the second category of spectators to a greater degree in the level of aggressiveness and control of their emotions should be categorized as fans, and they usually differ in championships and matches — aggression during the match and after it. It is necessary to note that the link between aggressiveness as a personality trait and fanaticism is found among fans that identify themselves with the “favorite” team, which is explained by the specifics of sport fans as a phenomenon. For a fan, the content of consent does not matter, the result is important for him, i.e. fan experiences satisfaction only in case of victory of “his” team, defeat of the team enrages a fan, hence aggression,

mayhem on the streets, etc. Most of “club” fans are confident of their involvement in the success of a team, satisfying personal ambitions, increasing self-esteem. They attribute the achievements of team to themselves. Identifying themselves as a team, fans have an overwhelming desire to play for them and for their sake, condemning the invited players playing for the money; almost half of the fans consider themselves and another category of players to be patriots.

Thus, there are many varieties of chants. All of them are emotionally colored in different way. Since this emotional state is transmitted to one person by another, in psychological practice this is called infection, i.e. chain reaction. The chants which are stronger in emotional charge are more effective. Voice support contributes to the fact that a team will try to play and win. Chants with music and singing maintain a pleasant atmosphere for players. Joint “shouting” for a game, the passions in the stadiums - all this brings people together.

## **7. Conclusion**

It is impossible to predict reliably the degree of influence of spectators and their methods of communication with athletes by chants on the mental state and activity of an athlete, as well as it is difficult to predict how the spectators can influence changes in their neuromuscular reactions. The same can be said about the importance of the audience for an athlete and his reaction to the behavior and actions of fans or supporters. Based on the theory of Bekhterev (2001), athletes with a high rate of personal anxiety can detect more pronounced disruption in activity than low anxious athletes. The goal-setting also influences an athlete, aspiring to high achievements usually reacts positively to the approval and support of the audience and shows better results in such conditions.

Nowadays aggression and antisocial behavior of fans today are one of the most serious psychological and social problems (Jones et al., 2002). In the second half of the twentieth century, aggression was rude and not typical for USSR fans, for example, football players, who were distinguished by their love of peace and respect for each other, for football players and football referees. Aggression, including speech, as a systemic phenomenon could be observed among European fans, the greatest aggression among which was fans in the UK. In the last decade, as a result of numerous socially oriented actions of European clubs, fans began to show more respect in relation to each other, to players and referees, while Russian fans not only show a high degree of aggression, but even its growth. It is confirmed by sport chants of Russian fans and supporters of foreign basketball clubs gathered during the research.

In sports communication, both parties participate in its development and influence each other, respectively, the reaction of the audience will depend on personality characteristics of a competitor. The collective behavior of fans and supporters can not be unified (Tilly, 1983), since a large number of variables are involved here, including the political culture of society, the tactics of leaders, the content of situation, etc. Extrapolating the research of McPhail and Miller (1973) on collective sport behavior, it can be argued that a fan or a supporter, as a person in a crowd, interacts in small groups with colleagues, like-minded fellows and friends and is not an anonymous individual who has lost control of himself. The feeling of belonging to a collective or a crowd gives an individual a sense of strength and rightness, confidence and impunity.

Under the influence of the inspiring action of a crowd the unconscious of an individual and aggressiveness become important which provokes actions that a single rational person cannot commit. An aggravating factor during a sporting competition is speech influence, texts containing markers expressed by various kinds of lexical and stylistic means of influencing the emotional sphere of a person, combined with non-verbal aspects. In addition, a crowd of fans is a well-organized group of active fans with their leaders. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the aggressive behavior of fans is not spontaneous. On the contrary, it is planned, right up to battles with fans of other teams. The study of the communicative behavior of sport fans and supporters by analyzing such forms of manifestation as chants, identifying the mechanisms of their impact and developing techniques for working with athletes in regulating their reactions to the audience speech behavior is necessary for understanding the stress that arises in sport discourse space and effective modeling of social processes that can be a form of chaos control, including in the field of youth subculture.

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