Political subculture as a specific cultural phenomenon

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Abstraact: The article is devoted to the analysis of political subculture as a specific cultural phenomenon based on the material of substandard vocabulary. Slang is considered to be an integral part of any developed language and it emerges as an inevitable consequence of codification of a national language. Being the most dynamic layer of a lexico-semantic system of a language, slang updates very quickly; therefore, it represents basic concepts in a concentrated form, that is, the linguistic ground, which checks many other new elements of a language. In their turn, they may become standard literary language. Each political subculture is considered to possess conscious viewpoints but at the same time it should have special relations which will reinforce assessment and attitudes towards political phenomena and assist in bringing together the participants of this movement more closely. The article underlines that the analysis of substandard English political vocabulary contributes to the understanding of typical and specific peculiarities of their people by a language personality, and as a result of a description of cultural interpretation of a figurative basis of the slang units conceptual values of these peoples based on their mentality and the typical traits of an ethnos can be singled out.

Keywords: political communication; political subculture; substandard vocabulary; manipulation; metaphor; evaluation.

Introduction

Since the middle of the 20th century, political communication has attracted the close attention of linguistic researchers. Political communication is understood as "any communication intended to influence the distribution and use of power in society, especially if these messages originate from official government institutions" [1].

Language and society are in mutual relations, therefore the vocabulary not only reflects changes in the life of society, but also to a certain extent predetermines them: "words and stable phrases that reflect and capture diverse phenomena in people's minds can, under certain conditions, affect native speakers, speaking as stimulants that cause rather predictable reactions, that is, they model the thinking and actions of members of an ethnosocium – the object of language manipulations " [2].

Some cultural formations reflect social or demographic characteristics of its development. Within various societies, groups, specific cultural phenomena are born. They are fixed in the special features of the behavior of people, consciousness, language. With respect to subcultural phenomena, a characteristic of a particular mentality arises as a specific mood of certain groups.

Political power and political subculture

In connection with the development of society, the role of social control or culture and its influence on a person increases. This means that a certain audience will become aware of the event only when it becomes an element of the real world, otherwise it will remain unnoticed and will not be able to have any influence on the further development of society.

Man inevitably interacts with society and is influenced by it. All these interactions are controlled by the power of the state. The most important type of power is political power characterized by social domination, the leading role in society, the leadership of social groups.

Each political subculture has conscious points of view, however, in addition, it is characterized by a number of unformed relations which strengthen the assessments and attitudes towards political phenomena and allow us to bring the participants of this movement closer together.

As R. Blakar notes, the choice of words and expressions in ideological and political texts is the most important instrument of power allowing to influence the understanding of the recipient and structure the "reality" in question [3]. Opportunities in the language to manipulate the mind and exercise social power are most clearly manifested in the sphere of nomination.

Slang is the most important of the substandard vocabulary layers. According to V.A. Salyaev, "…slang is a special lexical and phraseological layer that includes words and expressions that were once the domain of a limited sphere of use, but later turned into common use, where they underwent semantic and expressive-stylistic processing" [4].

Political slang is "a heavily slanted set of terms, some of which pass into general use and become popular slang instead of terms used only by the politically astute. One type of terminology common in political campaigns – especially presidential campaigns – is that of categories for voters. While it may be simplistic to imagine that soccer moms share opinions on most issues, in recent years political campaigners and the media have created labels for an increasing number of these groups" [5].

The Slang of American Political Subculture: analysis
The election campaign in political subculture

The material of the slang vocabulary of American subcultures shows that in addition to the politicians' nominations described in detail in the article "Evaluative nominations of politicians (based on Russian and English substandard vocabulary)" [6], the actions of potential candidates are highlighted, methods and ways of influencing the electorate are described as well as units indicating the actions of the electorate itself.

The beginning of the election campaign, its initial stage is called the "ugly season" – *the early stages of a political campaign, when multiple candidates from a single party may fight for a nomination or for popular support*. The negative connotation of the word *ugly – very unpleasant –* in combination with the lexeme *season* emphasizes the idea that potential candidates will do everything possible to be nominated by their party.

This is further confirmed by two synonymous units – *beauty contest* и *cattle show*: *beauty contest – an appearance by multiple, competing candidates for one office; cattle show (derog.) – a campaign event where multiple candidates for a single office appear together*.

If the first of the analyzed units has a clearly ironic tint – "beauty contest", the second one – "cattle show" – is pejorative and has a mark *derogatory – showing that you have a bad opinion of something or someone, usually in an insulting way*.

In order to gain a sufficient number of votes, candidates have to travel a lot while conducting their election campaign. The lexeme *to stump* means *to travel around campaigning personally in many localities.* In the meaning of the verb *to stump – to speak to people to persuade them to vote for you or your party –* there is a seme *to convince* that emphasizes the importance of speech influence on the electorate.

Another type of election campaign is the appearance of a candidate in rural areas: *barnstorm – to make a rapid series of brief campaign appearances in rural areas*. This unit, which is clearly ironic, is formed by analogy with the word *brainstorm*.

If the candidate makes a mistake, he can return to his home state and seek support there: *fence mending – for a politician, visiting one's home ground to shore up support after doing something unpopular*.

The electorate, their actions and moods in political subculture

When the effectiveness and polemics of a political text is evaluated, it's necessary to establish which language means reinforce this effectiveness.

As the material shows, the leading language tool for performing this function is the metaphor.

Metaphor can be used "as a tool of description and explanation in any sphere: in psychotherapeutic conversations and conversations between airline pilots, in ritual dances and in a programming language, in artistic education and in quantum mechanics. Metaphor, no matter where we meet it, always enriches the understanding of human actions, knowledge and language" [7].

Metaphor is an excellent means of influencing the addressee of speech. The image in the text causes an emotional and evaluative reaction in itself. Aesthetically shaped information has the potential for suggestibility, as it appeals to a person's emotions and affects his behavior.

When a metaphor is used "in order to delineate the framework of a political problem or event in some way, it is likely to draw attention to those aspects of the topic that can favorably affect a particular group. As a result, the choice of metaphors used to convey political information can have a powerful effect on the audience" [8].

The description of the electorate, their actions and moods are represented by the following units:

Bubba factor (derog.) – the impact of blue-collar, white, Southern males on a given political issue;

clothespin vote – a vote made by citizens who see the candidate they're voting for as the least repugnant of a set of bad choices;

persuadables – potential voters who are not committed to any party or candidate and who may potentially be persuaded to support a different candidate at any time;

politico – a person involved in politics or who spends a lot of time discussing politics;

protest vote – a vote for a third-party candidate that stems not from enthusiasm for the candidate but from dissatisfaction with both the major parties;

sheeple (derog.) – any easily manipulated group of citizens;

straw poll – a simulated vote in which citizens are polled to predict the outcome of an election, or to gauge support for a political figure or initiative;

tactical voting – voting for other reasons than to express a personal preference for the selected candidate.

In the nomination of the electorate a unit can be singled out: *persuadables – potential voters who are not committed to any party or candidate and who may potentially be persuaded to support a different candidate at any time*.

The seme *convince*, which has already been mentioned, is found in this unit.

A similar lack of integrity in their political beliefs is also expressed in the unit *sheeple (derog.) – any easily manipulated group of citizens*. This unit is formed as a hybrid word: sheep + people. The element of manipulation is clearly visible in this unit.

There is a term in politics – the Bubba factor – a term used to explain the common man and the American political slang has such a unit like *bubba factor (derog.) – the impact of blue-collar, white, Southern males on a given political issue*. The dictionary mark *derogatory* explains the dismissive attitude to this situation.

On the other hand, there are people who are involved in political communication and spend a lot of time discussing political events: *politico – a person involved in politics or who spends a lot of time discussing politics*.

Excessive persuasion and influence can lead to the fact that voters often give their vote to a completely unfamiliar candidate because they are dissatisfied with the candidates of the two leading parties, or try to choose "the least of the two evils":

clothespin vote – a vote made by citizens who see the candidate they're voting for as the least repugnant of a set of bad choices;

protest vote – a vote for a thirdparty candidate that stems not from enthusiasm for the candidate but from dissatisfaction with both the major parties;

tactical voting – voting for other reasons than to express a personal preference for the selected candidate.

Very often a "fake vote" occurs, as a result of which it is possible to predict the results of a vote or to assess the political possibilities of a particular political figure: *straw poll – a simulated vote in which citizens are polled to predict the outcome of an election, or to gauge support for a political figure or initiative.*

Methods and ways of influencing the electorate using political slang

Language is "an instrument of social authority, since any use of language implies an effect. Therefore, one cannot be neutral" [9]. Means of speech influence contribute to the transfer of a version of social reality by the addressee, which "is taken on trust by the addressee due to insufficient personal experience and authoritative status of the source of information" [10].

Increasingly, the mass consciousness becomes the object of speech influence which is distinguished by the social typicality of the components forming it and social recognition. To effectively manage the mass consciousness, you need to find the most powerful methods of speech influence carried out using the rich repertoire of tools at the verbal and non-verbal levels.

Among the slang units denoting methods and ways of influencing the electorate, there are, first of all, lexemes that describe the manipulative actions of politicians

back channel – a hidden or off-the-beaten-path approach to addressing a political problem;

hatchet job (derog) – a carefully engineered attack that greatly damages the popularity or credibility of a political candidate;

push poll – an activity that masquerades as a survey but is really intended to give survey-takers biased information about political candidates through slanted questions.

Among the semes pointing to the "hidden", manipulative nature of the actions, are the following: *hidden – difficult to find); off-the-beaten-path – in or to a place that is not close to the places where people usually go; ; to engineer – to arrange for something to happen, especially in a useful and skillful way; to masquerade – to pretend to be someone or something that you are not; biased – preferring one person, thing, or idea to another in a way that is unfair.*

Bias and falsification is reflected in such slang units as *gerrymander (derog) – to change the boundaries of voting districts so as to skew conditions in favor of a particular political party or group* and *kidnapping – changing voting district boundaries so that a politician's residence is moved outside his or her district.*

Changing the boundaries of electoral districts to obtain more favorable conditions for a particular candidate or a political party is not an example of an honest political struggle: in the analyzed examples there are numerous semes with negative evaluations: *to change boundaries, to skew, in favor of, gerrymander, kidnapping*.

Conclusion

The diverse connections of political culture with various social and political processes predetermine its complex structure and organization. Various internal structures of political culture reflect the technology of forming political behavior of subjects, the stages of the formation of a cultural whole (ie, the political culture of a particular country, region), the presence of various political subcultures, etc.

Language is a tool used to influence public consciousness and induce masses to act. It allows politicians to achieve their goals if they are properly named. In the rapidly changing modern information world, changes are taking place that require their verbalization to be understood, since the human mind is able to perceive better only what is named.

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