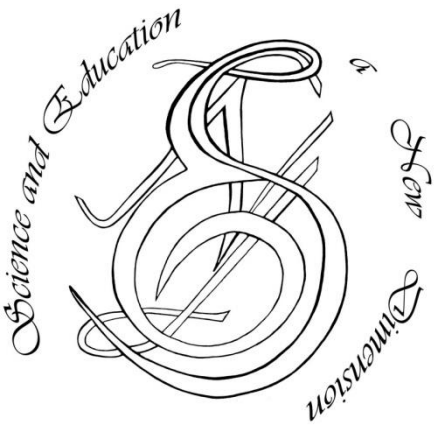
p-ISSN 2308-5258 e-ISSN 2308-1996
Philology, X (77), Issue: 264, 2022 Feb.

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION A NEW DIMENSION

PHILOLOGY



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p-ISSN 2308-5258 **e-ISSN 2308-1996**

X(77), Issue 264, 2022 Feb.

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https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-Ph2022-264X77

Philology

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The journal is published by the support of Society for Cultural and Scientific Progress in Central and Eastern Europe
BUDAPEST, 2015

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THE JOURNAL IS LISTED AND INDEXED IN:

INDEX COPERNICUS: ICV 2014: 70.95; ICV 2015: 80.87; ICV 2016: 73.35; ICV 2018: 90.25; ICV 2019: 89.50; ICV 2020: 94.89

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CROSSREF (DOI prefix:10.31174)

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Linguistics of sports media discourse: metaphors that produce sense of belonging

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Paper received 09.02.22; Accepted for publication 16.02.22.

https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-Ph2022-264X77-09

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of conceptual metaphor SPORT is UNITY OF PEOPLE that contributes to creating the *sense of belonging* among target audience of sports analytical articles. As far as author's position is likely to be emotional, the text of sports articles tends to be very metaphorical, containing reference to UNITY concept that in its turn evokes feeling of belonging. The latter one has been analysed as a triad of interconnected components: *companionship, affiliation,* and *connectedness,* that generate attachment on interpersonal, community and social levels accordingly.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor, companionship, affiliation, connectedness*.

Introduction. Within the paradigm of modern cognitive-semiotic studies as a separate branch of linguistic research, numerous studies have been devoted to a comprehensive analysis of various semiotic means, applied to conceptualize and explicate certain daily life phenomena in the text [10]. It is particularly worth reconstructing fragments of reality as concepts verbalised in printed or digital format with the help of lingual-cognitive mechanisms and operations [2]. Knowing the features of the artistic embodiment of cognitive processes in text, analysing stylistic means of artistic or, more narrowly, poetic language allows to identify emotional and aesthetic influence of such a text on the readership or audience. Taking into account the above-mentioned scientific research, this article is devoted to outlining how the texts of sport media can create the sense of belonging among its target audience.

Literature view. The achievements of cognitive linguistics at the present stage of its development are manifested in a number of developed methods of interpreting the author's emotions and intentions in terms of artistic interpreting of reality, on the one hand. On the other hand, there is the theory of text emotional resonance, which is regarded as an ability to arouse certain feelings and emotions among readers. In particular, we shall mention the following studies, namely the theory of interaction of textual worlds in a semantic text unity (Vorobyova O. P.), research of iconic artistic texts [1, p. 31], methods of constructing mental spaces [2]), provisions of cognitive grammar by R. Langacker [6], etc. However, the most effective way to reveal deep mechanisms of generating special emotional potential of the text is the use methods of reconstruction of conceptual metaphors [5, p. 20], as deeper insight in creating explicit ways of interpreting reality.

The objective of the article is to identify how the conceptual metaphor SPORT is UNITY OF PEOPLE, explicated by linguistic and poetic means in sports analytical articles, creates the sense of belonging among its target audience. Achieving this aim involves solving the following **tasks**: 1) description of sports articles as a separate subgenre of journalistic style texts in sports media discourse; 2) analysis of Abraham Maslow's *need for belonging* in reference to sports media target audience's values and needs; 3) outlining textual implementation of metaphors in sports analytical articles and defining their aesthetic potential.

Research methodology. The conceptual metaphor theory as well as the methodology of its identification was profoundly explained in the book "Metaphors We Live By" by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson back in 1980 [5]. Since then it has been further expanded by numerous researchers of multiple languages and literary genres. However, the gist of the theory remains original: conceptual metaphors serve to explain complex or/and abstract ideas in simple terms within the process of so-called mapping. The conceptual metaphor interacts with the target and source concepts or domains [10]. The target concept / domain, understood with the help of metaphor, is a conceptual referent. The source concept / domain compared to it is a conceptual correlate. The referent and the correlate must belong to different conceptual spaces, i.e. they must be diluted in thought. When comparing a referent with a correlate, cross-mapping takes place: certain characteristics of the correlate are projected onto certain characteristics of the referent. Metaphorical mapping is charged with entailments or inferences, in other words those components of the correlative domain that do not directly appear in the metaphor can be derived from it.

In our study we take into account conceptual metaphor theory as a cognitive linguistic instrument of identifying sense of belonging (according to Maslow's pyramid of needs), which is explicitly and implicitly verbalized in sport analytical articles. We believe that the conceptual metaphor SPORT is UNITY OF PEOPLE, traditionally contains source domain of SPORT as a profound social and physical activity arranged according to rigid rules for a certain group of people. The latter turns to be a target domain of UNITY OF PEOPLE as a community, social group that exists as far as its participants/member follow set rules and patterns of behaviour. In this context cross-mapping takes place when the world of sport intersects with the principles of human society existence, the focus then is shifted to the concept of UNION, further specified as *sense of belonging*, namely companionship, affiliation, and connectedness.

Results and Discussion. Regarding sports analytical article, it is referred as to a journalistic text in the intersection of informational and artistic-journalistic subgenres of journalism [9]. It is a part of printed and online publications, in which a professional athlete or an experienced sports journalist provides detailed analysis, determines the peculiar features of a particular sporting event or phenomenon, as well as presents their vision of the described situation. Unlike informative articles, which are objective in terms of chronology of events and neutral in style of writing, ana-

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lytical articles focus on current socially significant phenomena in the field of sports, and may contain emotional and evaluative components: several points of views, explanations of causes and possible consequences of sport events, generalizations, conclusions, etc.

The study of the genre specifics of sports analytical articles proves that the subject matter and material of such texts are selected very thoroughly for the purpose of detailed and in-depth analysis of the described phenomenon [3, p. 61]. The presentation of the material meets the interests and reflects the cultural values of the target audience. However, it also serves the author's goal of finding an answer to a topical question, so the article usually contains not only comprehensive coverage of views and citations of experts, but also the author's conclusions. The author's position is mostly emotional, thus, the text itself tends to be very metaphorical, containing numerous stylistic and aesthetic means of expressing author's viewpoint.

The conceptual metaphor SPORT is UNITY OF PEOPLE is revealed in sports analytical articles via Maslow's *sense of belonging*. It is a third-ranked need that goes after physiological needs and a safety need. It presupposes the necessity of people to be part of a group (family, company, society, etc.) in order to avoid feeing of loneliness and alienation [7, p. 338]. It may also be regarded as the feeling of acceptance and/or inclusion to a certain group as a member with authentic self-identity, leading to security and support.

In sports media discourse *sense of belonging* shall be analyzed as a hierarchical system of three interconnected components: *companionship*, *affiliation*, and *connectedness* [7, p. 339]. Each of them evoke UNITY domain of the analysed conceptual metaphor on three levels of person's social engagement: feeling of *companionship* corresponds to interpersonal communication of athletes, coaches, sports fans, officials and other representatives of sports world; *affiliation* is relevant to being a part of community (sports team, federation, organizing committee, etc.) as well as attaching oneself to a particular place or location; *connectedness* is the feeling of belonging to general social level, i.e. being a part of society, having and expressing patriotic feelings to the country an athlete represents on competitions.

In particular, *companionship* in sports sphere applies to relationships among athletes, team-mates and coaches, which means frequently spending time together, thus, sharing similar interests and values, working in a team to achieve a joint goal. A person called companion is usually a mate or even a friend that accompanies their partner; this implies that not only a lot of time is spent together, but also that there is a particular need to be together, which in its turn creates *sense of belonging* to each other. The benefits of the latter include general feeling of well-being, social satisfaction, reduction of loneliness and increase of pleasure.

In sports analytical articles they may be reflected in derivative metaphors. For example, in description of boxing events metaphor "*to have someone in your corner*" means support or help to an athlete, usually by somebody close to him (a coach or an assistant) between rounds. Another metaphor "*sparring partner*" also refers to a person/a boxer that spars or fights with another one in order to develop the latter's skills, to practise some techniques and develop some fighting strategies. When used in sports articles these expressions make up the feeling of *companionship* with the help of implicit reference to the concept of UNITY, which presupposes assistance, support and help in the world of sport. This concept then turns into the conceptual metaphor SPORT is UNITY OF PEOPLE, as in this sphere it seems that people are truly engaged in each other, interested in meeting their needs and facilitating their requirements. It creates *sense of belonging* among readership, as when reading sports analytical articles that have an impression that sport sphere is an integral community where members know and support each other's needs.

Affiliation is the second level of satisfying *belonging need*, as it corresponds to community level of involvement [8, p. 78]. In this case we are speaking about being a part of a sports team, federation, organizing committee, etc., as well as attaching oneself to a particular place or location. It is especially important in adolescence, the period of athletes' greatest involvement in sport and group activities (according to David McClelland). Thus, aligning oneself in particular association athletes are likely to enhance self-esteem, reduce stress and anxiety, feel being the member of bigger community. Having a strong bond with their teammates presupposes positive interpersonal relationships as well as approval from them, it pushes towards the sense of leadership and achievement along with satisfaction of being the part of the unity.

This sense is conveyed to the readers of sports analytical articles by means of metaphors, whose source or target domain refers to team spirit, support, leadership and power. When it comes to baseball, the metaphor "*to step up to the place*" is used to indicate taking responsibility to perform for athlete's team. It contains metonymic reference to moving in certain location as well as another metaphor "*covering all bases*", which means taking precautions for any threat. In football "*game plan*" metaphor explicitly focuses on objectives and strategy of the match, however, implicitly presupposes cooperation of all team-mates. These and many more sport metaphors produce the *sense of belonging* among sports readership, when contain reference to actions usually conducted by supportive team members. Thus, when seeing such clues in the text they are also likely to feel part of this community or social group.

Finally, *connectedness* as the highest level of meeting *belonging need*, aims at pursuing deeper relations within a society, forming a subjective awareness of being its socially notable and significant member. In fact, athletes strive to achieve high sportive results, seeking for public recognition of their skills and talents; therefore, satisfying their need of people's approval and appraisal [8, p. 90]. In the context of modern sport multiculturalism, it is also important to mention the issue of patriotism, as pride of being the citizen of a particular country and representing it in the international sport arena. Highly competitive nature of sport, on the one hand, and unpredictable/vague chances for victory require, on the other hand, may explain why athletes seek for their confidence and moral support from their fans of their native country.

The feeling of *connectedness* is especially highlighted in sports analytical articles via metaphors whose source domain refers to home. For instance, "home victory" indicates winning football match at team's local stadium;

"*home court/field advantage*" in tennis shows having advantage over the opponent due to being familiar with the local venue; "*home stretch*" metaphor in horse riding refers to the final phase of covering the track. In all the above-mentioned cases metaphors create the image of home not only straightforwardly as a familiar location, but also evoke deeper sense of home as motherland, the place where players are always welcomed and supported. Without doubt, with the help of implicit reference to the concept of UNITY these metaphors involve readers of sports articles in the world of sport as a part of national culture.

Conclusion. Taking the conducted analysis into account it is worth stating that the conceptual metaphor SPORT is UNITY OF PEOPLE is represented in sports analytical articles with the help of derivative metaphors, which evoke sense of belonging. It occurs on three consecutive levels: interpersonal, when the feeling of *companionship* is created by means of metaphoric description of close relations; community, when the feeling of *affiliation* is produced because of metaphoric reference to certain location or association; social, when the feeling of *connectedness* is evoked by patriotic spirit hidden deep in sport metaphors with "home" component. All together they contribute to establishing general *sense of belonging* among readers of sports analytical articles that might feel an inevitable part of sport community when reading such texts.

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