

The lexeme *Samodyerzhets* 'autocrat' and its morphological derivatives in Russian

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Abstract

The article is devoted to one of the most important concepts of Russian language picture of the world, associated with the birth of power in Russia. The depths of meanings are studied which are directly related to the relationship of rulers and society with the use of comprehensive, distributive and component analysis, the ideographic description of context and the quantitative method. In order to describe the polysemy development and disintegration process of the studied words the etymological, historical, explanatory and phraseological dictionaries were used. The performed study showed a clear correlation between social processes and a lexeme tendency to polysemy. First of all, the lexeme is characterized by the utmost polysemy during the periods when it was not penetrated into the officially-business sphere of the language (until the XVI-th century an autocrat is "an independent person", "an individual", "a powerful man", "an owner") or lost its social function (during the XX-th century the word "autocrat" is used to characterize a despotic and an authoritarian behavior of the Soviet leaders and, later, businessmen and oligarchs). Secondly, the definition of the title depends on foreign and domestic policy of a state: during the Golden Horde period, the word ceased to be used, during the reign of Ivan III the title demonstrated a ruler's sovereignty, then during the reign of Ivan IV the title was used to designate the absolute power within a state, since 18-th century the meaning of the word narrowed significantly and was removed from the language usage. In the 20-th century it returned to different language areas with a negative connotation. Using the dictionary material the derivational nest of the word autocrat was developed. The following dependence was determined: since the beginning of the 20-th century derivatives start to take part in the process of semantic derivation, similar to those which were described during the analysis of the lexeme autocrat. These studies may be used in the teaching of cultural linguistics, Russian and Old Russian literature, the journalistic linguistics, as well as in the preparation of cognitive, associative, nesting explanatory Russian dictionaries (current and historical ones).

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Keywords

Derivation, Frequency, Political discourse, Semantics, Titles