PROVOCATION AS SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PHENOMENON

Abstract. The article deals with the concept “provocation”, its linguistic content and functional paradigm, the variety of forms and presentations of this concept requires further psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic analysis. The aim of the article is studying provocative semantics in everyday and political speech. The concrete task is to investigate the semantics of the concept “provocation” in its verbal and nonverbal realizations. The material of study includes dictionary articles. Studying concept “provocation” is important in our days of social and international conflicts and manipulating human minds by the universal truths and false events interpretation. The noun provocation denotes the act of verbal or nonverbal provoking or state of being provoked; it possesses accidental illocutive semantics of mental and physical persuasion or influence. The semantic development of the noun provocation is due to its root – voc, meaning “voice”. The discursive functions of the noun provocation differ in style usages. The original negative meaning of the noun provocation was retained in the political style, it acquired positive meaning of “stimulus” in flirting; in medicine and education the notion of “voice” was considerably neutralized. The derivatives of the noun provocation denote characteristics, actions and subjects of provoking. Negative meanings form most synonymic groups of the semantic field denoting mental and physical provocations. Provocation is the communication tactic which may be positive or negative depending on the addressee. Verbal and nonverbal provocations may be classified according to the age, gender, deductive aims, etc. Methods applied are the componential analysis, idioms interpretation, functional, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic analysis.
Keywords: provocation, psycholinguistics, semantics, functioning, communicative tactic.

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ПРОВОКАЦІЯ ЯК СОЦІОЛІНГВІСТИЧНЕ ТА ПСИХОЛІНГВІСТИЧНЕ ЯВИЩЕ

Анотація. В статті і розглядається концепт «провокація», його лінгвістичний зміст та функціональна парадигма, різноманітні форми та вияви цього концепту вимагають подальшого соціолінгвістичного та психологівістичного аналізу. Мета дослідження полягає в вивченні провокаційної семантики у повсякденному та політичному мовленні. Конкретне завдання становить дослідити семантику іменника provocation у вербальних та невербальних реалізаціях. Матеріал дослідження включає словарні статті. Актуальність вивчення концепту «провокація» в наші часи пояснюється міжнародними конфліктами та маніпулюванням розумом людини й брехливою інтерпретацією подій. Концепт «провокація» позначає дію та стан вербального та невербального провокування, він містить акцидентну перлокутивну семантику ментального, емоційного, соціального та фізичного переконання або впливу. Розвиток семантики іменника provocation пов’язаний із коренем – voc зі значення “голос”. Первинна негативна соціальна семантика іменника provocation залишилася у політичному словнику, позитивного вживання іменник набув у професійній мові у зв’язку зі значною нейтралізацією поняття «голос», а розмовний стиль поділяє обидва забарвлення. Похідні іменника provocation означають характеристики, дії та суб’єктів провокації. Негативні значення утворюють більшість синонімічних груп семантичного поля позначаючи ментальні та фізичні провокації, уживання слова типово для повсякденної та політичної мови. Провокація являє собою комунікативну тактику, яка може бути позитивною або негативною залежно від адресата. Дискурсивні функції іменника provocations можна класифікувати згідно вікових, гендерних, стилістичних відмінностей, негативного та позитивного забарвлення, функціональних стилів мови. Застосовані методи уключають компонентний, інтерпретаційний, функціональний, соціолінгвістичний та психологівістичний методи аналізу.

Ключові слова: провокація, психолінгвістика, семантика, комунікативна тактика, функціонування.
**Stating the problem of the research.** The article deals with concept “provocation” which linguistic content and functional paradigm has been not yet considered enough in psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic analysis. Provocation is interpreted “as an act or succession of acts aimed to evoke reaction of the provoked to create artificial hard conditions or negative consequences for them” [5], the concept under study is reflected by the noun *provocation*. As provocations are grounded on the specifics of human psychology and behavior they are studied by psychology and sociology [5]. Provocation is a stimulus, illocution, psychological and non-psychological influence, manipulation, strategy of making one to fulfill somebody’s will as perlocution (result of persuading or influencing), so it bears a mark of subjectivity charged with material or social strategies.

Provocations are known to be verbal and nonverbal. They differ in age, gender, function, time, place, intentions, etc. Speech provocations may be expressed by any linguistic unit: sound and its combination, morpheme, word and word combination, sentence and the whole text, by stylistic means; also by intonation, stress, order of words, etc. Psychophysical provocations include voice intonations, register, height, vibrations, emotional coloring, etc; also mimic, gestures, motions, actions, etc. Psychological provocative illocutions include the emotional influence by expressing or implying feelings of anger, hatred, love, fear, etc. Provocations in discourse may be represented by the pragmatic speech tactics: order, imploring, direction, somebody’s example; formulas of communication: greeting, parting, congratulation, invitation, etc. Pragmatic strategies of provocation are intention, relations, evaluation, influence, etc. Self-provocation may be stimulated by any object or person depending on the person’s needs and interests. Provocation may be positive, e.g., didactic speech provocation by the brain storm or provoking creativity by competition; negative provocations take place, e.g. in policy and in everyday life to fool someone of something.

The **object** of the article is concept “provocation” in its structural, functional psychological, cognitive, pragmatic, social semantic paradigm. The **concrete object** is represented by the means of the concept actualization. The **aim** of the article is to describe the reasons and utilization of the provocative techniques in everyday and political speech. The **concrete task** requires investigating the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic semantics of the noun *provocation*. The **material of study** covers the dictionary articles.

**Analysis of the latest research.** The book by M. Karvat gives the detailed analysis of the meaning of the noun *provocation*, its forms, characteristics, functions, etc. [5]. Still the variety of its forms in literature and
everyday life requires further investigation of the concept in sociological and psychological aspects of communication. Psychologists S. Freud, A. Dietrich, F. Kainz, Ch. Osgood, J. Carroll, etc. – the developers of psycholinguistics and psycholinguistic analysis treated communication as social and psychological.

Ch. Osgood considered psychology as theory of behavior (after neo-behaviorists) which is the subject both of psycholinguistics as well as sociolinguistics. Psycholinguistics of today, represented by T.A.Druzhina, L.O.Kalmikhova, J.Potter D. Edwards, M.Pickering M. (communication), Yu.A.Kozhachenko (psycholinguistic analysis), S.I.Kuranova (fundamentals of psycholinguistics), T. Dijk (discourse, cognition), S.V.Zasiekin, L.V.Zasiekina (fundamentals of psycholinguistics, diagnostics, therapy), describes and interprets behavior with methods from the marginal linguistic sciences of cognitive linguistics, pragmatic linguistics, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics and natural and special sciences: medicine, psychology, philosophy, sociology, etc. Psycholinguistic study of speech behavior in cognitive approach demonstrates the leading role of cognitive processes and cognitive models in speech. Sociolinguistic vector of analysis is based on the works of W. Labov, T.A, van Dijk, M.A.K.Halliday, V.Yu.Desheriyev, V.N.Yartseva, O.D. Shveitser, etc. including modern scientists M.Karvat, V.O. Tatenko, S.I.Terekhova, Yu.A.Zatsnii, O.O.Taranenko, Ye.V.Shelestiuk, etc. Sociological aspect of studying noun *provocation* reveals such social factors as ethnicity, gender, age, class, occupation, education, and geographical location that can influence language use and maintain social roles within a community [14]. The scientists describe positive provocation “that stimulates thinking, shakes the dormant mind, and rattles the conscience of society [e. g. 5, p. 353].

**Methods.** Methods of analysis of the noun *provocation* comprise field and text studies. Lexical field analysis includes componential analysis for determining their and establishing their semantic similarity and distinctions by the operation of comparison and for their classification after the forms, means of socio-psychological influence [2, p. 48, 77] and for interpretation based on dictionaries articles aimed at establishing the semantic and functional paradigm of the noun *provocation*.

The functional analysis reveals application and stylistic peculiarities of the noun *provocation*, describing its social, pragmatic, psychological semantics and its synonyms, and phraseology analysis discovers cognitive variations of the notion rendered by the noun *provocation*.

Discourse analysis takes into account social and psychological influence of provocation in communication: “aesthetic, social, moral content of the text” (2, p. 57, after Grice), pragmatic standards of politeness, stylistic means of
jokes, irony, cooperation, interest, Polianna [2, p. 57 after Leech.]. The pragmatic vector of psycholinguistic analyses studies emotional and informational influence, pragmatic strategies and their verbal and nonverbal explicit and implicit presentation [after, 1]. The psycholinguistic semantics analysis of the noun *provocation* considers influence expression and methods of manipulating peoples mind [5, 3].

The intentional analysis reveals pragmatic semantics of the noun *provocation* rendering the motives, interests, status, national, group relations, evaluations, relations between the communicants [after, 1]. The intentional analysis is applied to interpret and classify different intentions as communication tactics after the principle of intentions strategies, e.g., physical, moral, discursive (interactional, e.g., stimulate to action or speaking).

The analysis of mental and emotional pressing reveals pragmatic semantics [after, 3]. The cultural stereotype analysis “cultural spectacles” is one of the methods to learn the attitude of the provoker to another communicant, “diminishing and ignoring his systems of values and norms” [2, 119]. General scientific methods of generalization and conclusion were used to sum up the results achieved.

**Findings and discussion.** The concept “provocation” approaches stereotype as world outlook including object, image and evaluation (pragmatic attitude).

Provocation is communication tactics: individual, e.g.: pumping ambitions; ethical, e.g.: derision; physical: searching defects; social – attributing to social stereotype. Positively intended provocation implies inciting curiosity, evoking attention, interest. Provocation is necessary in didactics as method of stimulating imagination and creativity [after, 5]. Negative provocation always previews conflict, destructive influence and negative reaction of the targeted person. Cognitively provocation “makes it possible to accelerate, delay, or stop something, to prejudge something, and to force something that is not yet mature or that arouses someone’s resistance. Indeed, it is then when the knowledge of provocation turns out to be art” [5, 351].

Pragmatic provocation relies on social stereotypes, e.g. gender, age, status or it is just used for boasting, shoving power, ambitions and diminishing a person. Social stereotype being the surface and often wrong image of people, reaction to it is determined by “the subjective life paradigm” [2, 180; 3].

The noun *provocation* denotes the act of provoking or inciting, something that provokes or state of being provoked [10, 12], challenging someone, evoking the phenomena desired by the perpetrator” [2, 17], thus
possessing accidental communication semantics: “spiritual, mental and physical processes of perceptions, cognition, verbal and nonverbal reaction” [11] meaning subjective impressions from objects, phenomenon and people that divert someone from his primary intention [5]. Everything may be provocative to human perceptions: objects, place, time, people’s appearance, words, movements and deeds.

Lexical meaning of the noun *provocation* (Middle English *provocation*, from Old French *provocation*, from Latin *prōvocātiō* “challenge”, English *provocation*; German *provokation*) is revealed in the componential analysis [12]. The components of the noun *provocation* contain functional semantics. Prefix *pro-* denotes a finished action in the words *proclaim*, *produce*, *proscribe*, *propel* (cf. Ukrainian *прописати*, *прочитати*, *провести*, *прокласти*, etc.). Root *-voc-* meaning “voice” is found in the words *vocal*, *evoke*, *vocation*, etc. (cf. Ukrainian *вокал*, *вокаліст*, etc.). Adjective *vocal* [*L. vocalis*] means pertaining to the voice or the organs of speech 1, of or relating to the production of sound through the mouth: the vertebrate *vocal organs*; a vocal defect. 2. Uttered or produced by the voice: vocal sounds [9]. Thus, the noun *provocation* represents vocal expression as the perlocutive act with various intentions, which performs the crucial role in the functional semantics of the noun *provocation*.

The concept “provocation” is nominalized by the semantic field divided into the parts by positive and negative intentions, functional styles, gender, age and other distinctions. Lingual means of expressing the concept form synonymic groups naming emotions of different intensity. The noun *stimulus* with the most general and broad semantics forms the core of the semantic field. The core noun *stimulus* has mostly positive meaning in comparison with noun *provocation*. Contextual usage demonstrates the kinds of provocation. Associative meanings are formed by synonyms, metaphors and idioms that distinguish different fields of nominations reflecting the concept “provocation”.

The synonymic group of the noun *provocation* comprises lexemes *stimulus*, *challenge*, *influence*, *irritation*, *itching*, *evoking*, *cheating*, *derision*, *aggression*, *misleading*, etc. The synonym *stimulus* is positive in intentional meaning. The noun *provocation* as physical, verbal or emotional stimulus differs in cognitive semantics from the noun *challenge* as brain stimulus, and from the noun *influence* as mental and social verbal or nonverbal phenomenon. The difference of the noun *provocation* from the noun *stimulus* was not pointed out, though its notion plays an important role in developing functional styles variations.
Miroslav Karvat renders the socio-psychological content of the concept “provocation” in the categories “manipulation”, “challenge”, “perpetrator”, “deception”, “seduction” [5, p. 17], “artificial creation, arbitrary regulation or prejudgment” [5, p. 214] aimed at deceiving person, causing him to action, etc. The text equivalents of the noun *provocation* include perception, vocal, physical and other connotations.

The functional paradigm of the noun *provocation* consists of the following parts of speech: the nouns provocateur, provocateur, provocativeness, the verb *provoke*, the adjective *provocative*, the adverb *provocatively* [6, 7, 8, 10, 13]. The noun *provocateur* denotes “a person who is employed by a government to encourage people in political groups to do something illegal so that they can be arrested” [12]. *Provocateurs* or *provocative people* may have honest or dishonest reasons to stimulate people to attack, win, overtake something, rouse somebody’s emotions (envy, wrath, love, anger, fear, etc.), attention, to humiliate somebody, etc. Provocateurs are known to use various techniques to manipulate human minds offering money, positions, presents. They count on people’s emotions, avidity, carelessness, ambitions, absence of foresight and forecasting of the forthcoming results. Provocateurs in politics are associated with evil and destruction.

The verb *provoke* means “to make angry or irritated”, e. g.: *Are you trying to provoke me?*; “to cause”: *His words provoked laughter*; “to cause (a person etc) to react in an angry way”: *He was provoked into hitting*. [10]. The adjective *provocative* characterizes verbal or nonverbal action. The semantic paradigm of the adjective *provocative* implies emotional and psychophysical reaction acting as a stimulus or incitement, especially to anger or sexual desire; provoking: *a provocative look*; *a provocative remark*. [6, 12], e.g.: *"a provocative smile"*; *"provocative Irish tunes which...compel the hearers to dance”* [8], “intended to make people angry or upset; intended to make people argue about something” *a provocative remark He doesn't really mean that—he's just being deliberately provocative* [11, 12]. The adverb *provocatively* expresses manner of speech or action “in a way that is intended to make people angry or upset; in a way that is intended to make people argue about something” [12]. *He laughed provocatively to irritate her* [the example is ours]. Sociolinguistic meaning of the noun *provocation* may be determined as subjective impressions and reactions to the objects, phenomenon and people.

The synonymic sets reveal positive and negative pragmatic connotations of the noun *provocation* according to the addressee’s or doer’s aim. Positive connotations of the noun *provocation* are rendered by synonyms *approval*,
support, raising somebody’s self-assurance, prompting, inducement, incitement, encouragement, urging, inspiration, stimulus. Pragmatic semantics of the noun provocation is connected with social duty or order in the synonyms cause, reason, grounds, motivation, justification, stimulus, inducement, incitement, instigation, casus belli (Latin). They seemed ready to fight at the slightest provocation [7]. Negative connotations of the noun provocation vary from stimulus to physical and moral abuse in the synonyms offence, challenge, insult, taunt, injury, dare, grievance, annoyance, affront, indignity, red-rag, vexation e. g.: She observed great restraint despite provocation [10]. Insistence or psychological pressure is expressed by the synonyms force influence, underhandedly or improperly inducing someone to do something improper or unlawful, denoting subornation, denoting “goading, prodding, egging on, rousing, stirring, stimulation. Negative emotions or will are reflected by the synonyms demonstrating impatience, pressure, annoyance, irritation, nettling, agitation, vexation. Making one suffer morally, humiliating, e. g. from bulling, etc. is rendered by the synonyms harassment, plaguing, molestation, teasing, taunting, torment, affront, insult, hassle, aggravation. Provocation of the assault kind is expressed by the synonyms affront, aggravation, aggression, aggro, annoyance, arose alarm, awakening, baited, baiter, baiting, belligerence, botheration, bothering, challenge, consider culmination, defiance [12].

The noun provocation reveals negative accidental semantics of discomforting somebody: 1. The act of annoying someone is rendered by the synonyms annoyance, botheration, bothering, exasperation, harassment, pesterling, irritation vexation). 2. Behavior or an act that is intentionally provocative challenge, defiance. 3. Something that incites especially a violent response: goad, incitation, incitement, instigation, stimulus, trigger [12, 6]; action or speech that makes someone angry, especially deliberately. "you should remain calm and not respond to provocation", action of arousing sexual desire or interest, especially deliberately: “walking with deliberate provocation, she struck a pose, then giggled”, the act of doing or saying something deliberately in order to make someone angry or upset; something that is done or said to cause this: He reacted violently only under provocation [10]; an action or statement that is intended to make someone angry, an action that is intended to cause a reaction, esp. anger or annoyance: The act of provoking or inciting [stale, 7]. Something that provokes, esp. by inciting, instigating, angering, or irritating [17]; something that causes indignation, anger, etc.; intended to make people angry or upset; intended to make people argue about something [12]; challenging [6]. The noun provocation is also treated as the intentional activity against certain
persons, social bodies, states, etc. aimed at stimulating them at fatal actions, unfriendly behavior that causes anger or resentment.

There are special forms to denote provocation, e. g. aggro informal British shortening for aggression which denotes deliberately unfriendly behavior, e. g.: "I skipped it because it was too much aggro". The synonyms taunt, taunting, twit express aggravation by deriding, mocking or criticizing something that incites or provokes; a means of arousing or stirring to action; incitation, incitement; mental energy, psychic energy—an actuating force or factor; signal any incitement to action; "he awaited the signal to start"; "the victory was a signal for wild celebration"; needed encouragement; "the result was a provocation of vigorous investigation, she acted under provocation, to suffer great provocation [8,10].

The notion “provocation” is historically associated with negative legal and political context which spread into other spheres of life. In psychology and sociology provocation started to denote the attempts to influence the others’ emotions and behavior with the intention to subdue a person. The noun provocation in everyday use “combines the artificial induction of events, attitudes and human behavior, and the unilateral prejudging of issues, resulting in the interlocutor being surprised, trapped, manipulated or extorted’ [5]. Verbal and nonverbal provocations can be classified according to the aim, age, gender, deductive (brain attack), ambition (creative), military (defensive, offensive), erotic, humiliating (teasing, making faces, spitting, rude words, gestures, etc.). Gender provocations may be exemplified by women verbal and nonverbal provocations being positive when attracting men and negative when opposing other women. Men provocations are often implicit nonverbal and behavioral. Provocation is popular among children and youth to show their force or ambitions in bulling their schoolmates or just in play. Context variations can be classified into style, gender, etc.

The meaning of the noun provocation is reflected by idioms in fiction and other functional styles of English representing different situations or a person’s character. The cognitive sense variations can be scaled from teasing to calling to revenge. Among the everyday usages is the phrase “the last straw”, which means the final irritation that stretches your patience beyond the limit; the psychic state may rise because of someone evil or stupid behavior The idiom look at cross-eyed, “to look at someone the wrong way” (mid20th century) -concerns people who squint their eyes in wrath or any other strong feeling to demonstrate their negative feelings and to provoke them by the “little thing wrong, to commit the tiniest fault which provokes a response all out of proportion to its significance.” The situation reflected in the idiom get a rise out of renders the provoking communicative
tactic “to tease or goad someone in order to evoke a desired response; to provoke a person to react; to bait.” The idiom was taken from the anglers’ language where rise “describes the movement of a fish to the surface to reach a fly or bait”. By the 1800-ieth, expressions such as get or take a rise out of referred to teasing or making a butt of someone. The expression developed generalizing psycholinguistic meaning of evoking a desired response. The idiom put a cat among the pigeons is equivalent to the American phrase to put a match in a tinderbox is used in the communication denoting the intention “to start trouble by introducing a highly controversial topic of discussion” [10, 15, 17].

Business language is an example of the noun provocation application in the institutional discourse. The idiom make waves is a typical sociolinguistic collocation used in business with the meaning “To disrupt or upset the equilibrium of a situation, to cause trouble, to stir things up” e. g.: An unimaginative, traditional career man who does not make waves. (Henry Trewhitt, cited in Webster’s Third) [10, 15, 17].

In Law terminology provocation denotes action or speech held to be likely to prompt physical retaliation as in: "the assault had taken place under provocation". In the English criminal law provocative are considered the words or conduct that incite a person to attack another [1, 3]. The provocative connotation of ringleader may be referred to the legal criminal vocabulary. Once denoting “the person who led off the dancing in the dancers circle” at the dancing parties in the 16th century with the meaning “leader” the word entered the criminal vocabulary to denote the leader of the insurrection, also “the head of a street gang or underworld syndicate; any instigator or fomenter of trouble” which negative connotation the word retained up till now, e. g.: The conspiracy is so nicely balanced among them that I shall never be able to detect the ring-leader. (James Beresford, Miseries of Human Life, 1806-1807) [10].

The typical usage of the noun provocation is the political style. In politics provocation diagnoses 1. inciting, stimulating separate persons, social groups or organizations to harmful actions [4]; 2. treacherous actions of the agents, who penetrated into some organization with the aim to destroy it; 3. artificial provoking as certain features of the social diseases [13]. Provocations are distinguished as behavior, relational and communicative. Psychological provocations are the attempts to influence the human psychic, his convictions, fears or uncertainty. They are using manipulative strategies, attempts to destabilize self-estimation or arouse aggression. Behavior provocations may be aroused by demonstrating things of interest to all, showing weakness or aggression in public. Relational provocation is caused
by breaking promises. And communicative provocations comprise intentional and unintentional verbal and nonverbal means.

A political provocation manifests itself in various forms: productive or parasitic; pointed, collective or networked influence; initiative or reactive and reflexive; causal, deceptive or discrediting; constructive or destructive” [5]. The idiom firebrand (from a firebrand, a burning stick) in the political style denotes ”the one who incites others to strife or revolution, an agitator; any energetic and impassioned person who inspires others to action. e. g.: Our fire-brand brother, Paris, burns us all. (Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, II, ii). [10]. The idiom ginger group in politics denotes a group of people, “fraction that serves as the motivating or activating force within a larger body; Young Turks; a splinter group”. The noun ginger comes from food industry vocabulary, where it stands for “a pungent and aromatic substance used as a spice”, and in medicines it may denote “carminative or stimulant” because of its activating qualities. The development of the figurative meaning in everyday life added the sociolinguistic connotation of social characteristics of “animation, high spirits, piquancy” and then, in the collocation “ginger group” ginger acquired the meaning of a social body, “an animating, stimulating subgroup” timed by the turn of the century, e. g. The appearance of ginger groups to fight specific proposals, is not necessarily a bad thing particularly if the established bodies aren’t prepared to fight. (New Society, February 5, 1970). Another idiom in the political style represents endangering tactics, to rock the boat comes from the situation of rocking the small boat, especially a canoe or kayak dangerously, e. g.: Unfortunate publicity had a tendency to rock the boat (Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday, 1931). A series of the provoking actions is called in the political vocabulary policy of pin pricks (French equivalent un coup d’épingle) usually against an opposition, “a course of trivial annoyance undertaken as a part of the national policy”. It goes back to the Fashoda incident, “a period of strained Anglo- French relations in 1898”, e. g.: Such a policy of “pinpricks” is beginning to be recognized by sensible Frenchmen as a grievous error (Times, November, 1898). Now the phrase is used occasionally to describe “irritating, but usually harmless, government policies”, e. g.: Russian provocation is at present but a policy of pin-pricks. (Daily Telegraph, March, 1901). The political collocation sow dragon’s teeth came from the Greek mythology denoting the situation in which Athena advised to the hero who slain the Mars’s dragon to plant its teeth in the ground, the teeth gave rise to the soldiers fighting each other, and the remaining five caused more strife (a
concept often implicit in the figurative use of the collocation). In modern political language it refers to the people inciting a conflict “to foment revolution; to kindle the flames of war; to plant the seeds of strife”, e. g. Jesuits ... sowed dragon’s teeth which sprung up into the hydras of rebellion and Apostasy (John Marsden, The History of the Early Pilgrims, 1853). The popular British and American political idiom stir up a hornets’ nest refers to the aggressive insect hornet which attacks are extrapolated on the aggressive activity, meaning “To activate latent hostility, to ask for trouble; to provoke a great stir and commotion of an antagonistic or controversial nature” (Samuel Richardson’s Pamela (1739); Judges have stirred up a hornets’ nest in the sacred territory of “the right to strike” (The Listener, August, 1966). The political idiom wave the bloody shirt is referred to the historical events of “the Scottish battle of Glenfruin recounted by Sir Walter Scott in Rob Roy, after which the widows of the slain rode before James VI carrying their husbands’ bloody shirts on spears”. The idiom is also connected with the Corsican incident of a woman snatching the bloody shirt from the man murdered in feud and brandishing it about to denote vengeance. Hence the meaning “To incite to vengeance or retaliatory action; to foment or exacerbate hostilities”. The idiom Wave the bloody shirt was much used in the United States during the period of Reconstruction after the Civil War in reference to those who exploited and perpetuated sectional hostilities [10]. So, interpretation of the idioms with the noun “provocation” explicates historical, ethnic, social specific semantics evidencing of the political problems.

Conclusions and prospects of research. Analysis reveals the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic potential of the concept “provocation”. It differs from the concept “stimulus” with positive semantics in rendering both positive and negative senses depending on the intentions of the speaker. The primary negative use of the noun provocation with negative sociolinguistic meaning was retained in the political and everyday vocabulary. Negative meaning of the noun provocation renders the evil activity to rouse someone’s emotions and influence him to some verbal or nonverbal action, diverting from his own intentions. As a result of partial neutralization of the component “voice” and developing of the surface positive meaning “stimulus” the noun provocation entered the professional style of English. The noun provocation usage may be classified according to its psycholinguistic and socio-pragmatic and senses and functional styles of English. Phraseology reveals concept “provocation” in the cognitive reflections of different social situations and people’s characteristics. The further investigation is directed at psychology of human relations in the functional styles of English and other languages.
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