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WAYS OF REPRESENTATION OF STABILITY IN PRE-ELECTION DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This article analyzes features of pre-election communication as a type of political discourse. Specificity of verbalization of the concept "stability" in speeches of a presidential candidate L.Kh. Tibilov was described. This study was carried out within the theory of discourse. It is devoted to the analysis of pre-election discourse as one of the genres of political communication, in which basic concepts of the political picture of the world of native speakers are implemented. The research is based on discursive, conceptual and cultural linguistic approaches. The article uses such methods as content analysis, linguistic pragmatic analysis, elements of cognitive analysis, interpretative analysis, and stylistic analysis. Identification and description of one of the basic concepts of pre-election discourse marking personal contribution of a politician to the development of the country is based on dominant communication strategies and tactics of self-presentation forming the political discourse. The main ideology of the Tibilov's election campaign was identified. *Stability* in the country which has experienced a lot of political upheavals and natural disasters was a key ideologeme of his speeches. It was established that important characteristics of the political image of Tibilov are reflected in the minds of native speakers as an image of an "older" wise politician. The image is formed using the strategy of positive self-presentation. The speeches delivered by Tibilov demonstrate that the discourse of an experienced politician reflects aspirations of the Ossetian people, corresponds to expectations of the electorate.

Keywords: Pre-election discourse; stability; communication strategies; self-presentation.

1. Introduction

Within the geopolitical situation that has developed over the past decades, political discourse including re-election speeches, is of particular interest.

The relevance of this research is due to the prospect for studying the pre-election discourse of the young state in order to systematize data on the methods and techniques of language impact on public consciousness in the new era. The work helps identify features of the formation of speech behavior of politicians in South Ossetia and actualizes universal and ethno-specific methods for influencing the consciousness of the electorate.

2. Problem Statement

The research object is pre-election discourse. The material used for the studies is recorded speeches by L.Kh. Tibilov. They are used for analysis of genres of institutional and semi-institutional discourses of a government representative, identification and description of intentions of the South Ossetian political discourses. The sample includes texts united by a theme – election campaigns and propaganda. The materials are posted on the official website of the President of the ROS and in the media

3. Research Questions

The research subject is conceptual dominants of the pre-election political discourse of L.Kh. Tibilov, in particular, the basic concept of his political speeches.

4. Purpose of the Study

The article is aimed at studying specificity of verbalization of the concept "stability" in the South Ossetian election discourse accounting for ideas aimed at the implementation of individual political interests.

5. Research Methods

This study was carried out within the theory of discourse. It is devoted to the analysis of electoral discourse as one of the genres of political communication.

The work is based on discursive, conceptual and cultural linguistic approaches.

The article uses the following research methods: content analysis, linguistic and pragmatic analysis, elements of cognitive analysis, interpretive analysis, stylistic analysis.

6. Findings

Political discourse studies as an interdisciplinary direction are based on achievements of linguistic political science and political linguistics which arose at the interface of linguistics and political science. The development of linguistic politics is carried out in close connection with communicative and cognitive linguistics, pragmalinguistics, paralinguistics.

There are various definitions of the concept "discourse" and its varieties (Arutyunova, 1990; Sedov, 1999; Karasik, 2000; Dijk, 2002), in particular, political discourse.

Dijk (2002) defines political discourse as a class of genres limited to the social sphere, namely politics. Discourse is considered political only when it accompanies a political setting.

Political discourse is also defined as a set of speech acts used in political communication, public policy rules sanctified by tradition and proven by experience (Baranov & Kazakevich, 1991).

Discourse is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, a system of elements. There is a broad approach to the concept "political discourse". Political discourse is a system of speech acts that are used in political discussions, as well as public policy rules sanctified by tradition and verified by experience (Baranov & Kazakevich, 1991; Chudinov, 2007).

Political discourse has been studied for a short period. This is due to increased interest of linguistics in communicative pragmatics whose focus is linguistic and paralinguistic means that reveal personal, intentional (needs, motives and goals) and situational aspects of the utterance (Karasik, 2000).

Political discourse is institutional communication which differs from personal one as communicants use the system of professionally directed or oriented signs, have special vocabulary, phraseology and paremiology (Tameryan et al., 2018a, 2018b; Volskaya et al., 2018).

Sheygal (2004) says that political discourse has two dimensions: real and virtual. The real dimension is current speech activities in a certain social space. It incorporates speeches studied in direct connection with linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic factors. The virtual dimension is a semiotic space including non-verbal and verbal signs.

Pre-election communication is a complex discursive formation whose institutional, ritual and rhetorical features manifest themselves in the context of an election campaign.

The study takes into account basic theoretical and methodological provisions of the discourse theory developed by foreign (Tarde, 1969; Stubbs, 1983; Dijk, 2002; Thompson, 1995; Sériot, 1999; Strauss, 2014; Tantucci, 2016) and Russian linguists (Karasik, 2004; Olyanich, 2004; Sheygal, 2004; Chudinov, 2007; Krasilnikova, 2014; Tameryan et al., 2018a, 2018b; Zheltukhina, Busygina, Merkulova, Zyubina, & Buzinova, 2018).

Verbal communication is the most effective and versatile tool of influence. Wodak (1997) believes that language does not have power, it receives power only when it is used by people who have power. On the other hand, language provides the speaker with means for excersing power (Sheygal, 2004; Chernyavskaya, 2006).

At the pre-election stage, speech behavior is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon (Gavrilova, 2004; 2011; Alysheva, 2012; Tameryan et al., 2018a, 2018b). The anthropocentric approach to the study of language makes it possible to consider language phenomena in close connection with the person, his sociocultural realities, and historical and political situation, cognitive perceptions and pragmatic intentions. This article analyzes political discourse of Tibilov during the election campaign.

In South Ossetia, Presidential elections were held five times. The elections held in 2011 took place against a very complex domestic political background which made it necessary to hold elections again in March 2012. The next elections were held in 2017 (Dzhioev, 2017).

In 2015-2016, Tibilov repeatedly confirmed his participation in the 2017 elections. The analysis of materials of meetings and interviews identified communication strategies and tactics that confirm his readiness to take part in the 2017 presidential election campaign.

Election campaigns covered by the media are modern realities. Since the main goal of the election campaign is to obtain and retain power, the intention of electoral political communication is to attract the largest number of supporters from among the potential electorate.

The former president of the Republic of South Ossetia, being the main actor of South Ossetian political communication, was a potential participant of the 2017 election campaign that began in South Ossetia.

General trends of political speeches delivered by this candidate took shape against the emotionally neutral background and were implemented by stingy language means due to his longstanding work for the CSS and government structures.

The emphasis was put on political stability supported by economic stability.

Repetition was aimed at creating a political image of the head of the Republic who can ensure peace and economic progress:

*Наши **приоритеты – экономика и стабильность**. Причем **стабильность** сильно зависит от экономики;*

*До выборов еще достаточно времени. Главная задача – **сохранить стабильность*** (Chesnakov, 2016):

*Нужно сохранить консолидацию, **стабильность**, продолжать укреплять государство, строить **экономику*** (Kommersant Vlast, 2016).

In the fragment below, Tibilov uses the strategy of positive self-presentation, since he believes that he is the main guarantor of economic and political stability of the Republic. He uses the first-person singular possessive pronoun *моя* implying the idea of leadership. However, realizing that it is the people who will decide the fate of the election campaign, the politician appeals to the electorate:

*Конституция позволяет **мне** идти на второй срок;*

*<…> **народ** именно сейчас должен оценить, что удалось действующему президенту;*

*Если **народ** скажет, что ему удалось многое, то не исключаю, что пойду на второй срок*. (Tskhovrebova, 2016);

*Государственный университет у нас пока на сегодняшний день единственный в республике, и возьму **под личный контроль** строительство комплекса* (Tibilov, 2015).

Using the third-person, the politician positions himself as a president: *действующему **президенту**; **ему** удалось многое; **президент** работоспособен*. The strategy of self-presentation manifests itself through the tactics of unbiased assessment. He emphasizes the legitimate constitutional right to run for a second term. However, the priority areas are the will of the people and assessment of his activities in the presidential capacity.

*Это все достигнуто благодаря **вам**, мои дорогие сограждане!*

*Я искренне рад, что мне выпало в этот ответственный период работать вместе **с вами**;*

***Я горжусь вами**;*

*Уверен, что в предстоящем году всех **нас** ждут еще большие успехи и достижения* (Tibilov, 2015).

The strategy of self-presentation is implemented through manipulative programming of the people.

*Сегодня **наше** правительство занимается решением проблем района. **Наша** задача – дать понять людям, живущим в районе, что республика - признанная независимая свободная страна* (Tibilov, 2016).

Let us give more examples of the self-presentation and cooperative strategies. There are a lot of uses of *я* and *мы* pronouns:

Меня радует качественно построенный Национальный музей, Государственный киноконцертный зал «Чермен», школы в Квайсе и Хетагурово, детский сад в селе Дменис, школа и Дом культуры в селе Корнис, построена дорога в Ленингорский район, строятся школа и рынок в поселке Ленингорск… (Tibilov, 2015).

Совместно с Правительством мы решили создать кадровый резерв, который составляет около 545 молодых людей, окончивших учебу в российских ВУЗах (Tibilov, 2015).

These fragments demonstrate that the main strategic maneuver that precedes the pre-election debate is presentation of his own contribution to the young region, stability and prosperity ensured by his team.

7. Conclusion

It was established that important political processes that characterize the development of South Ossetia, formation and rooting of its statehood, contributed to the fact that in the speeches delivered by Tibilov as a head of South Ossetia and as a presidential candidate, stability of a region that had experienced many political upheavals and natural disasters was a dominant concept. The ways of concept verbalization in the pre-election discourse are a set of communicative strategies, including the self-presentation cooperative ones.

Analysis of the material showed that important characteristics of the political image of Tibilov are reflected in the minds of native speakers perceiving his discourse. Aspirations of the Ossetian people were reflected in the discourse of the experienced politician. The main communicative strategy of his pre-election discourse is self-presentation which combines elements of the *I*-and *we*-discourses. It is necessary to emphasize that an integral part of the political image of Tibilov is an image of the "older" experienced politician who can ensure peace, order and stability. This image is implemented through positive self-presentation. This image met expectations of the electorate and contributed to an effective election campaign.

Acknowledgments

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