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INTEGRITY STRATEGY AND ITS LINGUISITIC EXPRESSION IN PUBLIC SPEECHES OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

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Abstract

Although much attention has been attached to the role of strategies and tactics in understanding the nature of political communication, the methodology and the metalanguage of this approach have not received all the attention they deserve. Having chosen integrity strategy as an object of analyses, the author considers its realization in terms of the three-level method, which proved to be effective in establishing the interrelationship between the global purport of the text and linguistic means of its expression. The paper presents the results of comparative analysis of public speeches of the two American presidents, B. Obama and D. Trump. The author argues that on the semantic level integrity strategy is mainly realized by means of stylistically neutral nouns related to the basic American cultural values. The metasemiotic content (a positive image of the United States as a superior country) is created by a limited number of stereotyped rhetorical devices, the most typical of which is based on semantic proximity of speech units. The content and the expression plane of these units serve to create the meta-meta-message which consists in the idea of America's political dominance. The author reveals invariable and variable features in the speeches of the two politicians and comes to the conclusion that in his attempt to ensure integrity of American citizens, D.Trump, apart from the tactics of inspiration and uniting, makes extensive use of accusation and critics of political opponents, which is mainly achieved through the rhetorical device of synonymic condensation.

Keywords: Political communication, strategies, tactics, comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

The extensive studies of political discourse, which are in progress at present, have already yielded interesting results in the sphere of communicative practices aimed at producing an impact, with an emphasis on "language of power" or "discourse of power" as an object of linguistic analyses. Among the numerous methods elaborated in order to discover linguistic mechanisms of manipulation and influence, of special interest is the approach according to which political discourse is described in terms of strategies and tactics employed to ensure communicative influence on public opinion and consciousness. Although much has been written and said on the subject, and numerous papers discuss ideological, ontological and axiological aspects of communicative strategies in the sphere of politics, the all-important problem of the methodology of research can hardly be considered developed.

2. Problem Statement

Much has been done to develop methodology of discursive analysis in the sphere of politics, and to discover the interrelationship between linguistic and extra linguistic factors in implementing communicative strategies, viewed as general ways of achieving the goal of communication through certain types of speech acts organization, or tactics (Kashkin, 2016). The general tendency in strategic approach to political communication is that of contrastive study as the background against which common and specific features of politicians' speech behavior are discovered (Minajeva, 2019). The most frequent object of analyses in this respect is undoubtedly political discourse of the USA (Mamaiko, 2016; Shapilova, 2018; Sukhanov, 2019; Volkova & Panchenko; 2016, and others).

In spite of the fact that these concepts nowadays are firmly rooted in the metalanguage of political linguistics, and much attention has been attached to the role of strategies and tactics in understanding the nature of political communication, as well as in strengthening political consciousness, as a theoretical proposition, the methodology and the metalanguage of this aspect of study have not received the attention they deserve. First, there is a need for a sound linguistic taxonomy: linguists have not arrived so far at a more or less systematic description of the entities arrived at in the course of strategy-based description of the language of politics. The taxons of this particular object vary from the dichotomies reflecting the two basic language functions - those of informing and impact - to the attitudinal manners, i.e. downplay vs. intensification (Skulimovskaya, 2017). There is a great difference between the inventories offered to by students of strategies and tactics of political discourse. Terminology used to nominate concepts is not always consistent in distinguishing between strategies, tactics, and techniques. Thus, for example, the term 'discreditation' refers both to tactics used as a means of agonistic strategy (Levenkova, 2011) and to a strategy implemented in mockery, insult or taunt – the notions which belong to techniques rather than tactics (Khramchenko & Khlopotunov, 2017).

Among the strategies which have not yet been generally recognized is integrity strategy. The importance of this strategy in American political discourse can hardly be overestimated. According to Levenkova (2011), this strategy is registered in about 36 % of speech acts of American political leaders. This is accounted for by the traditions rooted in the history of the United States, the role mass communication plays in uniting millions of people of various national and ethnic origins under the idea of

integrity, and inspiring them to form American identity. Levenkova in her study of public speeches of R. Reagan., G.H. Bush, and B. Obama analyses integrity strategy in terms of intertextuality and comes to the conclusion that references to Founding Fathers and other leading figures of American political culture play a great role in the propaganda of basic national values and in the necessity of integrity through the tactics of inspiration and uniting, accompanied by phatic function. In the light of what has been expounded, the need for systemic analysis of integrity strategy in the course of the evolution of American political discourse is obvious. In this respect, the problem of methodology which may reveal constitutive features of integrity strategy as a unity of discursive intention and its linguistic expression, and their role in achieving political effect is of particular importance.

3.   Research Questions

The objectives of this research consist in the following: to identify and to describe the basic linguistic means of implementing integrity strategy in public speeches of US presidents Barak Obama and Donald Trump (2010-2018); to reveal invariant and variable characteristics of language and speech units the two presidents use in speech acts aimed at uniting and inspiring citizens of the country.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The research is aimed at providing a systemic description of linguistic means political leaders of the USA use while exploiting integrity strategy as a communicative practice of political dominance.

5.   Research Methods

The empirical study is based on the methodology of three-level analyses of texts elaborated along the lines of linguo-poetic approach to discourse and presupposing the hierarchy of the semantic, the metasemiotic, and the meta-metasemiotic levels of analysis. Being first applied to belles-lettres, it was aimed at discovering the relationship between the language of a literary text and the literary message (global content, meta-meta-content), in other words, what the author wants to convey to the readers, with due attention to the 'vertical context' of a literary work and its place among other works of literature (Zadornova, 1984).

Further studies proved that this approach may help discover the global purport of texts, belonging to functional styles which seem to be opposite to fiction, but are similar to it in the language function (that of producing impact). In advertisements as a genre of mass communication, the meta-meta content consists in creating the image of the product/ service or the company and, in contrast with fiction, is not of aesthetic, but of ethic-ideological nature (Morozov, 2012).

The general tendencies in studying language means in political discourse in terms of strategies are concentrating either on the topical and structural organization of discourse or the key lexical units of utterances related to a particular strategy. Proceeding from the assumption that functional characteristics of discourse are revealed, first and foremost, in the syntagmatic organization of a text (Dobrosklonskaja, 2010), we choose polylexemic units, or a linear collocation of language ultimate units (the syntagm, the word-combination), as an object of analysis. The very essence of the word combination which distinguishes

it from words, on the one hand, and sentences and supra-phrasal unities, on the other, requires a methodology of description based on the unity of syntactic-morphological (colligational) and lexical-phraseological (collocational) properties.

6. Findings

The analysis has proved that most of the syntagms (93%) which serve as a means of realizing the strategy under consideration in public speeches of the two presidents, are complex nominative units. On the semantic level, these structures are characterized by the fact that most of them include lexical units which nominate the basic American values, such as *freedom, liberty, democracy, independence, sovereignty, justice,* and often appear to function as contextual synonyms of words related to the idea of the power of America and its superiority over other nations *(power, strength, dignity, prosperity, leadership)*. In B. Obama's public speeches the most representative lexical group is that nominating the concepts of freedom (41 %) and power (29 %), while in D.Trump's speeches the most frequently used words express the ideas of justice (20%) and prosperity (20 %). Metasemiotic effect is achieved by means of combining these lexical units with words which are similar in meaning and connotation, the use of political metaphor, and syntactical-rhythmical parallelism of connotative syntagms.

The most common stylistic device is that of juxtaposition of semantically allied words. It finds its expression in two-member constructions, generally known as 'synonymic collocations', a device which is firmly rooted in the English language, and since the Middle English period has been known as one of the typical features of rhetoric. The metasemiotic effect achieved by 'pair synonyms' is accounted for by semantic proximity combined with a special accentual and syllabic structure which follows rhythmic patterns corresponding to the main types of classical Latin cadence (planus, tardus, and velox). There is practically no difference in the speeches of the two presidents, as far as synonymic collocations are concerned. The appear with equal regularity, and are similar in the choice of lexical items, as well as the ways the word combinations are introduced into the structure of the utterance are similar. Thus, for example, in Obama's speech of 19.05.2011 the phrase *"freedom and dignity"* appears in the context of the victory in Civil War which extended to enslaved people. D. Trump (25. 09. 2018) uses the same phrase in relation to individuality as one of the basic American cultural values.

In the speeches of both presidents pair synonyms are used to emphasize the strength of America (our own **strength** and **resilience**; prevail by being **strong** and **smart** - B. Obama; a **strong** and **prosperous** America; The United States has great **strength** and **patience** - D. J. Trump), as well as its role in ensuring values of democracy in the world: extended **freedom** and **dignity** to those who were enslaved (B. Obama), America has been among the greatest forces for **peace** and **justice** in the history of the world (D. J. Trump). The difference between the two speakers consists in frequent use by D. Trump of pair synonyms with negative connotation to emphasize the greatness of America against the background of other nations' ideology and actions. The United States are described as a nation which opposes to '"**hate** and **evil**" in all its ugly forms [D. J. Trump, 28. 02. 2017]; as well as organization which "spread **violence** and **evil**" **in the world** [D. J. Trump, 19.12.2017]; regimes eith a failed ideology resulting in "**poverty** and **misery**" of people [D. J. Trump, 19. 09. 2017].

In contrast with D. Trump, B. Obama makes extensive use of substantial word-combinations of N + prep. + N structure:

So, this steady stream of hardworking and talented people has made America **the engine of global economy** and **a beacon of hope around the world** [B. Obama, 1.07.2010];

For nearly seven decades, the United States has been **the anchor of global security** [B. Obama, 10.09.2013].

The metasemiotic content of such syntagms depends, first and foremost, on metaphor. When referred to political opponents, prepositional phrases are usually realized as a repetition of compositional units, identical in the structure and the character of emotional-expressive-evaluative overtones**:** *the relentless tyranny of governments and the raw power of the dictator* [19.05.2011], *the path of murder and the mass arrests of its citizens»* [19.05.2011].

For D. Trump the most typical way of creating metasemiotic content by means of syntagmatic organization of utterances is synonymic condensation, by which we mean constructions with semantically allied homogeneous parts, in which words are attracted to add conviction and force to the statements, to make for more prosodic prominence of the 'thing meant'. By stringing on words which, in most cases, do not satisfy the definition of synonyms, a speaker condenses a certain, common for the words semantic feature, which is realized on the metasemiotic level by means of timber prosody. Each of the components in a series is made prosodically more prominent that the previous one, which results in the effect of 'climax'.

It is through synonymic condensation that metasemiotic content in D. Trump's speeches is enhances by metaphoric use of words:

Each American generation passes the torch of **truth, liberty and justice** - **in an unbroken chain** all the way down to the present. That torch is now in our hands. And **we** will use it **to light up** the world [28. 02. 2017].

The United States of America is seen as being" among the greatest forces for good in the history of the world, and the greatest **defenders of sovereignty, security, and prosperity** for all" [19. 09. 2017]. Synonymic condensation in his speeches is observed in a variety of structural forms, including predicative use of attributes in syntactically identical sentences:

The American people are **generous**. You are **determined**, you are **brave**, you are **strong**, and you are **wise** [19.12.2017];

In America, **the people govern**, **the people rule**, and the **people** are **sovereign** [19. 09. 2017].

The effect of climax is achieved by condensation of descriptive adjectives nominating the positive features of Americans as a nation, and in this context the attributes demonstrate meaning equivalence on the metasemiotic level:

Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And yes, together we will make America great again» [28. 02. 2017].

The president's speeches are abundant in adjectives with positive connotation, the most frequent of which are *strong* and *great*, and nouns which are the result of the lexical-phraseological category of "doer / action": *the greatest defenders, the world's largest giver.* The conceptual 'we're-number-one' stereotype finds its expression in numerous attributive word combinations with adjectives in the superlative form:

The United States of America has been among the greatest forces for good in the history of the world, and **the greatest defenders of sovereignty, security, and prosperity** for all [19. 09. 2017].

The United States is **the world's largest giver** in the world…[25. 09. 2018].

We have become **the largest energy producer** anywhere on the face of the Earth [25. 09. 2018].

Being used as reference to the American people, such phrases contrast with those which are meant to accuse opponents. Thus, for example, in his speech of December 12, 2017, the president speaks of American people as "*the true source of **American greatness***", *people who are **generous, determined, brave, strong, and wise**, who have been "been among the greatest forces for **peace and justice** in the history of the world", who have **great military** and face "those who spread **violence and evil** around the globe". At the same time he accuses the opposite political party of having lost sight of **America's destiny and** belief in **American greatness**, **having undercut** and **shortchanged** them in uniform with **inadequate resources, unstable funding,** and **unclear** missions emphasizing the role of Americans in liberating **captive nations**, transforming **former enemies** into **the best of friends**, lifting entire regions of the planet from **poverty** to **prosperity***.

Particularly important is the fact that condensation of lexical and syntactic means of creating an extremely positive image of the United States is always accompanied by constructions in which semantically allied words are used to negatively assess other countries. For example, in the speech of September 19, 2017, the fragments from which are cited above, D. Trump accuses North Korea of being responsible for "***the imprisonment, torture, killing, and oppression***" of millions of people, and the Iranian government for having turned the country into a rogue, economically depleted state which exports "***violence, bloodshed, and chaos***". Being accompanied by the extensive use of deixis as the expression plane of the 'we / they' opposition, condensation of words with negative connotation results in the impact which is normally described in terms of the tactics typical of the strategy and makes the general tone of speech acts aggressive.

Thus, at the semantic level integrity strategy in discourse of American presidents is realized by means of stylistically neutral nouns related to the values of democracy, justice, strength and prosperity, as well as descriptive adjectives nominating the qualities which ensure these values. The metasemiotic content (a positive image of the United States as a superior country) is created by a limited number of stereotyped rhetorical devices, the most typical of which is based on semantic proximity of syntagms as compositional units of the utterance. A greater degree of synonymic condensation, achieved by lexical and syntactic means, in D. Trump's speech results in a manner, which is much more aggressive as compared to the former president.

The empirical research of the two presidents' public speeches revealed invariant and variable features of linguistic means implementing integrity strategy as the crucial strategy used to produce impact in American political discourse.

The methodology of three-level analyses with special emphasis on the syntagmatic aspect of discourse proved to be productive in establishing the interrelationship between the metasemiotic use of language units and the metameta content of speech acts aimed at realization of the idea of the US political dominance.

7. Conclusion

One of the conclusions that may be drawn from the analysis is that that communicative tactics can hardly be subject to pigeon-holing in the sense that there can hardly be one-to one correspondence between the strategies and concrete ways of their implementation.

Further research of linguistic means of implementing integrity strategy may help gain a better insight into the all-important problem of interrelationship between the two factors that determine the invariable and variable features of the strategy under consideration: individual characteristics of the speaker and evolution of political communication due to certain extra-linguistic factors. Moreover, they may contribute to understanding the unity of the universal (political communication as a whole), the general (national political discourse), and the peculiar (political speech of an individual).

Studies in this direction are relevant not only to political linguistics and sociolinguistics, but also for linguo-didactics. As far as pragmatics is concerned, it is important that students majoring in the fields of public relations, journalism, country studies, etc. could identify strategies and tactics in political discourse, understand and evaluate the meta-meta-message of political speech through analyses of the way the content and the expression of a language unit form a communicative strategy aimed at producing an impact on the target audience.

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