

Littérature

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**POLITICAL SYMBOLS IN ELECTION SPEECHES
(CASE-STUDY OF AMERICAN LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL TRADITION)**

The article is devoted to studying the functioning of political symbols in the texts of election speeches of American linguistic and cultural tradition regarding their text-typological role in the analyzed type of text.

Key-words: political discourse, type of text, election speech, (political) symbol

Шевченко О.В. Політична символіка в передвиборчих промовах (на матеріалі американської лінгвокультурної традиції). У статті розглядається специфіка функціонування політичних символів в текстах передвиборчих промов американської лінгвокультурної традиції з огляду на їхню роль у формуванні типологічних ознак аналізованого типу тексту.

Ключові слова: політичний дискурс, тип тексту, передвиборча промова, (політичний) символ

Шевченко О.В. Политическая символика в предвыборных речах (на материале американской лингвокультурной традиции). В статье рассматривается специфика функционирования политических символов в текстах предвыборных речей американской лингвокультурной традиции с учетом их роли в формировании типологических признаков изучаемого типа текста.

Ключевые слова: политический дискурс, тип текста, предвыборная речь, (политический) символ

The formation of anthropocentric paradigm in Linguistics contributed to formation of such branches of Linguistics as Cognitive and Pragmatic Linguistics, Ethnolinguistics, Linguistic and Cultural Studies. Theoretical, practical and methodological attainments of these disciplines are widely reflected in pragmatically oriented discourses, especially in political discourse. Election speech is one of the most pragmatic types of texts within political discourse. Limited time period of its functioning and necessity to win over the maximum number of voters cause the politician to "transform his political objectives into the system of symbols that are understandable on linguistic level" [Юдина 2001, с. 93]. Scientists argue that the higher is the usage of symbols appealing to mass consciousness, the higher is the impact of political speech on the audience [Демецька 2004, с.115]. Regarding the above mentioned it is essential to analyze the functioning of the symbols in the texts of election speeches taking into account their impact on the pragmatic potential of the analyzed type of text.

Analysis of scientific research devoted to pragmatic types of texts within political discourse proves insufficient elaboration of election speeches, especially in terms of the functioning of symbols, which determines the **relevance** of our study.

The **purpose** of the article is to identify the peculiarities of functioning of political symbols in election speeches of American linguistic and cultural tradition.

In research of symbolism in politics, there is a concept of «significant symbol» (the term of George Mead) or otherwise - a meaningful symbol, semantics of which is the same as for the recipient and for the sender, and knowledge of it is acquired through the process of socialization [Denton 1998, p.40]. The existence in the same social / national reality allows the sender of the text to anticipate the reaction of the audience to the use of certain symbols that in all promotes cohesion despite individual and ethnic differences [Denton 1998, p. 39]. Similar understanding of the nature of the political symbol is represented in the work of researchers R. Cobb and Charles Elder, who designed a hierarchical classification of symbols in politics:

1. Symbols of political community that incorporates the core values of the nation;
2. Symbols of political system (regime), which embrace political norms of society;
3. Symbols of formal political roles and institutions;
4. Situational symbols:
 - representing state power;
 - non-state power;

- political issues [Cobb, Elder 1972, p. 82-86].

Taking into account the pragmatic orientation of election speech we analyze the functioning of political symbols in strong textual positions.

In the initial position of election speeches of American linguistic and cultural tradition prevails the group of situational symbols associated with the representatives of the government: «Congressmen», «Mayor», «Lieutenant Governor» and others. Manifestation of this group of symbols is due to the presence of these authorities when the speech is being delivered and generally symbolizes support for a candidate in elections and approval of its program: *“I’ve got a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, give Haley a big round of applause for the great introduction. One of the finest Governors in the country – John Hickenlooper. His outstanding Lieutenant Governor – Joe Garcia. Congressman Jared Polis is here. And the outstanding Secretary of the Interior and your hometown guy, Ken Salazar, is in the house.”* [Obama at Fort Collins, Colorado]. Among the symbols that are not associated with not-state power we can encounter sport clubs, music band, which also reflects the wide-ranging support for Obama: *“It is good to be back, Hampton. Hello, **Phantoms**. How are the **Phantoms** doing here? Oh, it looks like we got some rivalry here with the **Phantoms*** [Obama in Hampton, Virginia].

Medial position of election speeches of American linguistic and cultural tradition is marked by frequent usage of all types of political symbols. One of the major group of symbols is constituted by symbols of political community, aimed at consolidating the audience on the basis of shared values: *“That’s the reason why people continue to want to come here from all around the world – because they have this sense of America as an example for the rest of the world of **freedom and opportunity and democracy** – not something that’s bought by a bunch of wealthy individuals just writing \$10 million checks; not opportunity that’s just restricted to the few, but opportunity to the many”* [Obama in Roanoke, Virginia].

Symbols of formal political roles and institutions are mainly revealed by such concepts as "the President", "the (Oval) Office", "the Senate". American researchers of political discourse emphasize strong potential of symbols like “President” and “Office”: "The office is our symbol of justice, freedom, equality, continuity, and national grandeur. The presidency is itself a significant symbol, comprised of many levels and elements. The institution reflects the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the public that have already been established through socialization "[Lincoln 1989, p. 214]. Barack Obama appeals to these symbols from the third person, when enumerating the qualities that the President should possess, stressing at the same time his own compliance with them: *“So we’ve got the tools to make sure that we are living up to this country’s promise – a country where you can make it if you try, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what faith you are, no matter what race you are, no matter what your last name is, here in America you can make it. That’s what we have the opportunity to make sure continues for the next generation. That’s what we’re fighting for. That’s the choice in this election. That’s why I’m running for a second term as **President** of the United States of America”* [Obama in Marshalltown, Iowa].

Situational symbols referring to people from the state government and NGOs are underrepresented due to the nomination of other types of symbols relevant for the medial position. The dominant group of situational symbols for the medial position are those, associated with political issues. Usage of this group of symbols tends to those areas of the text, which cover key aspects of proposed reforms in the sphere of domestic and foreign policy: *“Their latest approach is to try to challenge me on **Medicare**. Now, let’s just think about this for a second – Governor Romney wants to turn **Medicare** into a voucher system. Congressman Ryan wants to turn **Medicare** into a voucher system. I, on the other hand, have strengthened **Medicare**. We made reforms that extended the life of the program, saved millions of seniors with **Medicare** hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs; we’re closing the doughnut hole. The only changes to benefits that we made was to make the benefits better by making sure that **Medicare** now covers new preventive services like cancer screenings and wellness visits for free”* [Obama in Rochester, New Hampshire]. The most frequent situational symbols representing political issues include such concepts as "child credit", "home ownership", "health insurance", "Social Security", "Medicare".

The final position of election speeches of American linguistic and cultural tradition is invariably marked by symbols of political community: *“liberty”, “equity”, “ownership”, “opportunity”*,

“freedom”, “peace”, “family and faith”, “security”, “prosperity”: “But no matter where they worked, no matter how times were tough, they always had faith that there was something different about this country; that in this country, you have some God-given rights: a life in **liberty** and the pursuit of **happiness**, and a belief that all of us are **equal** – (applause) – and that we're not guaranteed success, but we're guaranteed the right to work hard for success” [Obama in Roanoke, Virginia].”

By going so the speaker achieves the goal of uniting the audience on the basis of shared values and upholds the necessity of his reelection as a politician who shares the same values: “And so when I look out at this crowd, you inspire me. And I have to tell you that the privilege of being your President is something that I thank God for every single day. I said to you back in 2008 when I was running, I'm not a perfect man – you can ask Michelle about that. And I told you I wouldn't be a perfect President. But what I did say to you was that I'd always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood, and that I would wake up every single morning thinking about you and fighting as hard as I knew how to make your life a little bit better” [Obama in Roanoke, Virginia].

Complex linguistic and cultural analysis of political symbols in American election speeches allows us to come to the following **conclusions**: the initial position of election speeches represents vast majority of situational group of symbols that relate to state authorities and non-state authorities. This approach allows the speaker to show the audience that he is supported by the respected people of the state and this helps to establish rapport with the audience for successful continuation of the speech. Medial position of election speeches bears mainly informative function and represents key points of political programme of the speaker. Thus, the major groups of political symbols are symbols of political community, political roles and institutional and situational symbols representing political issues. Final position of election speech is aimed at consolidating the audience on the basis of the same values and same vision for the future and therefore symbols of political community appear to be the major group.

The **perspectives** of scientific research in this field may be viewed in studying functioning of political symbols in other texts of political discourse.

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