

Various types of lexical innovations in political discourse

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Abstract. The article comprises the analysis of lexical innovations which source of origin lies in the political sphere. Different approaches to definition of such terms as “discourse” and “political discourse” are discussed here and a number of works related to this subject are reviewed. And also structural and semantic analysis of lexical innovations is made. The majority of the lexical formations, investigated within this article, represent compound and abbreviated structures. New lexical formations or neo-lexical units, political ideologems or ideological units with political character, polysemants or polysemantic words and foreign-language borrowings are discussed as the types of lexical innovations in political discourse which influence on the perception of political information.

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Introduction

Continuous development of the vocabulary, which is expressed in the emergence of new words and meanings, is a necessary condition to refer this or that language to the category of “live”. Scientific and technological revolution, development of mass media, social and political changes - all these are directly reflected in the vocabulary of the language and cause evolution of old and emergence of new areas of nomination.

Annually, there are hundreds of new words and their use. These lexical types of new words cover all spheres of modern life, comprehensively enriching vocabulary of a language as a whole. One of spheres, in which nominative processes are characterized by high degree of activity, can be considered as a politics and a political discourse which are of great interest for researches.

This article will analyze the lexical units which have appeared in the English-speaking (mostly American) political discourse over the past 10-12 years. Before turning directly to the analysis, it is necessary to consider such concepts as “discourse” and “political discourse”.

It is more correct to use the term “discourse” as a genetic term uniting all types of use of language. Discourse is a French word that means “movement, circulation”; “conversation, talk”. The term was first used in 1952 by Z. Harris. But the use of the discourse analysis as a discipline belongs rather to the 1970s. At this time works of European school of text linguistics were published (G. van Dijk, J. Petofi, etc.). It is more traditional linguistic subject. The general works, handbooks and manuals had already appeared by 1980 – 1990 (which authors were J. Brown, J. Yule, J. Atkinson, J. Heritage, T. van Dijk, and W. Chafe).

Now we will turn to the characteristics of the investigated political discourse. Political discourse - is “a set of political discourse (social and differential speech practices) of society: discourse of power, discourse of public rhetoric that fix the existing system of social relations or destabilize it [1].

Relatively recently there was an interest to a discourse as the cognitive-semantic phenomenon. Scientists note: “Any communicative action within the spontaneous or organized discourse represents realization of these or those communicative and cognitive structures. Such cognitive structures are the frame-based models containing information of social and cultural character. The frame is considered as one of ways of representation of the stereotypic situation, containing information of different types” [1].

All specified approaches to consideration of the concept “discourse” as noted by S.Yu. Tyurina, are interrelated [2]. Various directions and techniques of the analysis of a discourse explain the existence of a large number of definitions of this concept. Deborah Schiffrin identifies three main approaches to the interpretation of the notion of “discourse”. The first approach defines discourse as “language above the sentence or above the clause”. The second approach claims that “the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use”; “the analysis of discourse, is necessarily, the analysis of language in use”. The third approach emphasizes the interaction of form and function: “discourse as utterances” [3].

In general, as O.G. Revzina highlights, “now in linguistics the idea, put forward by the French culture expert Michel Foucault, of a discourse as sets of all stated and said” [4] is more and more approved.

Before turning to the concept of “political discourse”, it should be noted that people face this phenomenon daily. Interest to a political discourse

show not only professionals such as politicians, political scientists, journalists and as well as the most broad masses of people. Actually, interest to the study of political discourse led to the emergence of the new direction in linguistics - political linguistics. According to A.P. Chudinova, "the study of political linguistics helps to better understand the political processes occurring in the modern world, as well as to see the true meaning of speech of political leaders and their methods used to manipulate the public consciousness" [5].

In linguistic literature, the term "political discourse" is used in two senses - narrow and broad: "In a broad sense it includes those forms of communication, in which at least one of the following components belongs to the sphere of politics: subject, addressee or content of the message. In a narrow sense a political discourse is a kind of the discourse which purpose is the gain, preservation and implementation of the political power" [6].

Teun A. van Dijk claims "...that political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, viz., politicians. Indeed, the vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions both at the local, national and international level. The study of political discourse should not be limited to the structural properties of texts or talk itself, but also include a systematic account of the context and its relations to discursive structures" [7].

Speaking about the political language, which is a primary tool of manipulation in the political environment, V.Z. Demyankov gives a number of criteria to distinguish it from others:

- "political vocabulary" is terminological, if being exact not "purely political" linguistic signs are not always used the same as in usual language;
- specific structure of discourse is sometimes the result of very peculiar speech techniques;
- realization of discourse both its written and sound perception is also specific [8].

Thus, a brief review of scientific literature on the researched issues allows to draw the following conclusion: the generally accepted definition of political discourse does not exist today, but according to V.A. Maslova, "we can consider it as a verbal communication in a certain social and psychological context, in which the sender and recipient are allocated with certain social roles according to their participation in political life, which is the subject of communication" [6].

Main body

The majority of the lexical formations, investigated within this subject, represent compound and abbreviated structures. In this article we considered the following types of lexical innovations

in a political discourse which influence on the perception of information:

- 1) new lexical formations or neo-lexical units;
- 2) political ideologems or ideological units with political character;
- 3) polysemants or polysemantic words;
- 4) foreign-language borrowings.

New lexical formations or neo-lexical units are a new phenomenon in the language that emerged in the language in the later period of its development. Let us dwell on some of the most interesting new lexical formations providing if necessary the corresponding comments and explanations.

Baracknophobia, n. — a contamination of two words: a proper noun "Obama" and a noun "arachnophobia". It means negative feelings about U. S. presidential candidate Barack Obama, particularly those based on racism or unfounded rumors. [8]:

Obama claims, "The only person who would probably be prepared to be our President on Day 1 would be Bill Clinton — not Hillary Clinton. "But wait... isn't Bill on her team? That answer will not cure Baracknophobia. — Josh Greenman, Hil makes Illinois in Chicago and Rudy rouses the right wing, Daily News (New York), June 29, 2007.

Genopolitics, n. — a contamination of two words: "genetics" and "politics". It means the study of the genetic basis of political actions and attitudes. [9]:

The two didn't realize it at the time, but they would soon reinvent themselves and help found the new field of genopolitics. To do that, they had to learn genetics and brain anatomy, forge ties with neuroscientists and molecular biologists, and do battle against skeptical colleagues. — Richard Monastersky, "The Chronicle of Higher Education", October 3, 2008.

Palintologist, n. — a compound word formed with the help of a proper name "Sarah Palin" and a noun "paleontologist". It is a person who studies or is fascinated by former Alaska governor Sarah Palin. [9]:

Remember back in the 1990s when Hillary Clinton described herself as the Rorschach test for how people felt about the women's movement? Palin has become the latest test for shifting common ground and fault lines between sisterhood and sibling rivalry. It's been like this since the Palintologists discovered her in Alaska and put her on the national ticket of the Grand Old (Boy) Party. — Ellen Goodman, "Lipstick on a rogue," The Boston Globe, November 20, 2009.

Vote mob, n. — a compound word, formed by analogy to "flash mob". It is a crowd, organized via social networks, that gathers to encourage young people to vote in an upcoming election. [9]:

A new mob is arising in Canada, and this one should be heartily encouraged. It's the "vote mob»

movement that in recent days has been spreading to universities across the country, including McGill in Montreal, and consists of young people urging their peers to get out and vote in the coming federal election. — “An admirable push to get out the youth vote”, Montreal Gazette, April 16, 2011.

Micro-donor, n. — a person who donates a small amount of money to a political campaign or other cause. [9]:

Meanwhile in Chicago, Obama’s elite high-end fund-raisers, his National Finance Committee, met Thursday for strategy sessions. Obama has developed an army of micro-donors during his campaign. — Lynn Sweet, “Obama passes on public money”, Chicago Sun Times, June 20, 2008.

The percentage of lexical units formed by other means of word-formation is relatively insignificant. Here are a few examples.

Birther, n. — a person who believes that U. S. president Barack Obama was not born in the United States, and is therefore ineligible to be president. [9]:

Some Republicans have shifted their strategy against the health care bill from fighting over the details to questioning the very constitutionality of mandatory health insurance. And a few have sympathized with the so-called birthers, who continue to challenge Obama’s citizenship and legitimacy as president despite all evidence to the contrary. — Susan Milligan, “Obama domestic agenda largely a one-party effort”, The Boston Globe, November 17, 2009.

Deather, n. — a person who believes that U.S. health care reform will lead to more deaths, particularly among the elderly. [9]:

First came the “birthers”. Now, as President Obama makes a final push for health care reform, we have the deathers. — Christopher Beam, “Scaring Grandma,” Slate, July 28, 2009.

SUV Democrat, n. — a politician (particularly one who is a member of the U.S. Democratic Party) who talks about energy conservation but who owns and drives a fuel-inefficient sport utility vehicle. [9]:

Not to her great credit, U. S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein owns a gas-guzzling SUV, even though she believes in global warming and doesn’t want to drill in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In fact, last year the Los Angeles Times reported that she owned three SUVs. Which makes her your perfect SUV Democrat. — Debra J. Saunders, “Close SUV Loophole”, The San Francisco Chronicle, May 10, 2001.

The carried-out analysis showed that the political discourse is the most important source of enlargement of the vocabulary of the English language and as this situation will hardly change in the near

future, further researches in the field seem to us perspective.

The next type is *ideologems or ideological units*. Ideologeme represents components of any ideology. Ideologeme as a cognitive-pragmatic tool of ideology is a very effective means of influence on mass consciousness. As influence is, as a rule, aimed at feelings and emotions so ideologems easily “penetrate into the soul” of the audience and as a consequence are remembered and further associated with a certain model of conduct and course of action.

We will consider some common ideological characteristics of American political discourse such as “constitution”, “freedom”, and some others.

The ideologeme “constitution” in a modern political discourse can be considered as a kind of mythologeme (mythological language unit), i.e. the concept bearing a certain image, being characterized by globalism, universality, not being criticized or reconsidered. In other words, the ideologeme “constitution” is used as the idea fixed in time on which all political system is based. It is interesting how modern American politicians use this ideologeme. Here are corresponding statements of George W. Bush: *We have one country, one Constitution, and one future that binds us* [10]. In this statement the ideologeme “constitution” appears as the universal political idea uniting the nation. From the perspective of cognitive and pragmatic impact, such technique is very effective, as in the minds of people will certainly arise the idea of unity, solidarity, brotherhood, harmony, etc., which necessarily affects the attitude towards the political speaker.

In the following statement the ideologeme “constitution” serves as a shield against possible criticisms of political opponents: *As President and Commander-in-Chief, I have the constitutional responsibility and the constitutional authority to protect our country* [11]. There are also other political ideologems (President, Commander-in-Chief, responsibility, authority), used to justify some political actions.

Another modern politician, President Obama shows a bit different approach to the use of the ideologeme “constitution”: *Our Constitution — a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice* [12]. The cognitive and pragmatic aim of this statement is obviously focused on achievement of a definite purpose, exactly uniting people by appealing to traditional values. In this example the ideologeme “constitution” is used as hyperonym in relation to other ideologems (equality, law, liberty, justice), nominated by the corresponding values.

Another fairly common ideologeme in a political discourse is “freedom”. It is one of the most universal and comprehensive ideologems. It is actively used by representatives of various political groups and organizations, and it conveys a variety of images. For example, in following statement of George W. Bush “freedom” acts as the value which America bears to all other world. It is represented for politician as a “mission” both of all American people, and his: *We will continue to spread freedom and liberty, and we will prevail* [13]. The supreme mission, according to George W. Bush, is to bring freedom given by God to all mankind: *...freedom isn't America's gift to the world, freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world* [14].

In this sense the ideologeme “freedom” is used as a kind of military term: *freedom is on the march, the hard work of defending their freedom, sacrifices for our freedom* [13].

H. Clinton uses this ideologeme a bit differently. In her understanding freedom is an inalienable right of every human being. This ideological interpretation of “freedom” is also quite typical for American political discourse, as it appeals to the traditional values of Western society: *Beginning in 1947, delegates from six continents devoted themselves to drafting a declaration that would enshrine the fundamental rights and freedoms of people everywhere* [14]. In this presentation some other statements that support this ideological interpretation are featured, for example: *And let us keep in mind that our commitments to protect the freedom of religion...; Universal human rights include freedom of expression and freedom of belief* [14].

Thus, the analysis of public speeches of the contemporary American politicians undoubtedly demonstrates that the American political discourse is saturated with the ideological concepts, ideologems which are willingly used by representatives of different political directions. Political ideologems such as “freedom”, “constitution”, etc., are crucial for the contemporary American political discourse that determines their illocutionary force and a high frequency of use.

A Polysemant or polysemantic word is a word that has more than one meaning. V.V. Vinogradov notes that “the nominative meaning of words, which are directed at objects, phenomena, actions of quality of reality, are easily distinguished in the system of meaning expressed by the vocabulary of a language. Nominative meaning of a word is a support and socially perceived base of all its other meanings and use” [15].

For example, the polysemantic verb *sell* has a direct meaning *to sell*, but in the context “*the European Commission president, yesterday reiterated*

Brussel's call for Britain to surrender its national veto in key policy areas, undercutting his own and Labour's latest attempts to sell more pro-European message to the British electorate. (Gray Duncan. Prodi repeats call for veto surrender. The Scotsman Now 7, 2000)” it stands for *to propagandize the pro-European messages to electorate.*

It is not for the UN to lecture Britain on how best to run its affairs in such matters (to make a comment to the Great Britain) (UN “concerned” by the British’s record on racism. The Birmingham Post, August, 23, 2000). Direct meaning of the polysemant *to lecture* means *to give or to conduct a lecture*, and the derivative meaning is *to make a comment.*

Direct nominative meaning of a noun *grip* is a capture. In the context of “*Labour's grip on power in the Capital has been slashed to a majority of just one ... it gains the meaning of control of the Labour party* (Brain Ferguson, Cardownie puts blame on Labour “lurch to right”. Evening News (London), Oct 25, 2005)”.

Democrats believe their rivals could face a bitter power struggle... (Allen Mills Democrats start search for ‘a Blair’ to win 2008. Sunday Times, Nov 7, 2004). Here it holds the meaning of the fierce struggle for power.

The word can transfer information of different degree of generality: relevant meaning of the word is characterized by the minimum degree of generality, whereas virtual meaning of the word is characterized by the maximum degree of generality.

Flexibility of a word meaning in designation of changing reality is confirmed by the fact that the analysis revealed a significant amount of contextual meaning of polysemants of political character. Dictionary meaning expresses the most generalized essence of a concept and can't display all diversity inherent in this phenomenon. Polysemantic words influence on the mass consciousness.

The symbolic nature of language allows to speak about cognitive and pragmatic aspect of political discourse as a set of processes and products of speech activity in the sphere of mass communication in all its richness and complexity of their interactions [16].

Borrowing as linguistic signs, which operates the political discourse, is a fixation, storage and reproduction of information about the surrounding reality. Every linguistic sign is treated as an act of understanding of the subject information due to human perception. Often in political discourse it represents a way of assessment and act of a particular impact on the recipient of relevant information, i.e. on the reader.

Author’s modality is expressed in using Russian borrowings in the following ways:

excessively positively, negatively or dismissive attitude to events in the form of irony. For example:

All is quiet on the eastern front, so why is Gorby spoiling the party? (The Guardian, 28 October 2010, p. 26). Here *Gorby* (*Gorbach*), which is formed from *Gorbachev*, who besides “spoiling the party” during universal peace in the eastern front, is used dismissively.

Influencing function of borrowings is shown in manipulation the consciousness of the reader and creating stereotypes. For example:

He cannot revisit the country of his youth, the «monstrous Soviet era», because it no longer exists except in memory (The Guardian, 2 October 2010, p. 12).

The borrowing “*Soviet era*” evokes in the reader's mind the image of the Soviet Union, and the definition of “the monstrous Soviet era, because it no longer exists except in memory” confirms unwillingness of the hero to return home and creates the same perception in the reader’s mind.

It should be noted that the borrowing can transfer not only appropriate object of reality, but it can also express way of thinking or mentality of linguo-cultural community from which this language unit is borrowed.

Conclusion

Thus, we came to the conclusion that the carried-out analysis showed that the political discourse is one of the most important source of enlargement of the vocabulary which is renewed by new lexical formations (neo-lexical units), political ideologems (ideological units of political character), polysemants (polysemantic word) and foreign-language borrowings. New lexical formations or neo-lexical units display social and political changes happening around us, thus these words are up-to-date. Political ideologems or ideological units of political character are considered as a cognitive-pragmatic tool of ideology, which have the strong influence on mass consciousness. Polysemants or polysemantic words can transfer information of different degree of generality according to context. A foreign-language borrowing is considered as an act of understanding of the subject information due to human perception.

In political communication language is necessary for informing, persuasion, carrying out a certain manipulative strategy. Reflecting promptly changing political realities, vocabulary of a political

discourse is dynamically developing and it is of interest for the linguistic researches. Lexical types of innovation represent an important component of the political discourse which is a complex communicative phenomenon that includes the entire set of the extra-linguistic factors accompanying the process of communication: the social context that gives an idea about participants of communication and their characteristics; features of production, distribution and perception of information, cultural-ideological background, etc.

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