

POETICS OF ENGLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE: TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

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INTRODUCTION

Attention to contemporary political discourse, the considerable strengthening of the role of politics and politicians in modern world, which is now on the verge of a radical redistribution of the political influence and hence the political map of the world, and a close cooperation between political structures and mass media, led to the emergence and a quite rapid development of some new branches of knowledge or disciplines, such as political science, conflictology, imageology, etc. They deal with scientific analysis of political activity and politicians' behavior. A powerful surge of interest in the study of political discourse caused the emergence of a new branch in linguistics – political linguistics which deals with interrelation of language and politics in the realm of political discourse.

In a broad sense, political discourse is a type of institutional discourse that includes various speech acts in the public sphere of politics in combination with extralinguistic social and cultural factors (clear rules for conducting socio-political activities, subjects of political communication, typical political views or ideological positions) to obtain and maintain political power.

Today's political discourse fully reflects language picture of the world and contemporary linguistic consciousness of any modern society. In the framework of political performance, the politician's political thinking, his communicative actions and linguistic peculiarities of his speech texts are in close interactions. Moreover, there is a direct relationship between the role, the place of the country in the international arena and the linguistic behavior of those officials who represent it. That's why, a systematic and deep study of stylistic features of different texts of political discourse through the prism of poetics is quite urgent and actual. Besides, it is particularly important due to the growing scientific interest to stylistically marked heterogeneous and diverse political textual mainstream, which is associated with excessive politicization of the modern world in general,

charismatic and free behavior of politicians, as well as violation of definite stylistic canons of form and content of political texts.

A great variety of approaches, concepts and definitions of political discourse, without any doubt, testify to its interdisciplinary nature and raise questions about its epistemological status in modern humanitarianism. Indeed, most scholars engaged in general political discourse analysis are both linguists and discourse analysts (Chilton, 1985, 1988; Geis, 1987; Wilson, 1990; Wodak & Menz, 1990). However, when we try to trace the already worked out specific discursive approaches in political linguistics, we can come to the conclusion that this is one of the few areas that has so far been little studied from the point of view of poetic nature of political texts. Most often we come across scientific investigations of political communication and rhetoric (Bitzer, 1981; Chaffee 1975; Graber 1981; Swanson & Nimmo 1990), or discursive-analytical studies (Gamson 1992; Thompson 1987d). In the USA, we can find many researches in the field of presidential rhetoric (Campbell & Jamieson 1990; Hart 1984; Snyder & Higgins 1990; Stuckey 1989; Thompson 1987e; Windt 1983, 1990).

The goal of the research is to reveal the poetic specificity of the texts of the political discourse from translation perspective. Following this goal, it is necessary to solve the following tasks: to clarify the notion of “political discourse” and highlight the main features of different texts of the discourse in question; to determine the use of stylistic means and devices in texts of political discourse of Joe Biden and Boris Johnson at different language levels and translation strategies of revealing it; to single out typical lexical, semantic and syntactic stylistic means in political texts of these politicians and trace their pragmatic functions.

In political linguistics, there are broad and narrow interpretations of the notion of political discourse. In a broad sense, political discourse is any language formation, the subject, addressee or content which belongs to the sphere of politics; speech acts in a certain paralinguistic context – political activity, views and beliefs, including its negative manifestations (avoidance of political activity, lack of political beliefs); discursive practices that identify the participants of political discourse as such or form a specific topic of political communication.

A somewhat narrower interpretation of political discourse is offered, in particular, by the Dutch linguist T. van Dijk. He believes that political discourse is primarily a type of text of a corresponding genre, limited to a specific sphere of functioning, namely politics. In other words, any

discourse is political when it accompanies a political act in a political setting¹.

In modern discursive studies, political discourse is considered from different perspective, depending on the aspect of research: as an object of linguistic and cultural study², as a kind of ideological discourse, and as a manifestation of political communication³.

Using a field approach to analyzing the structure of political discourse, E.I. Sheigal reveals its intersection with other types of discourses, such as: legal, scientific, media, pedagogical, advertising, religious, household, artistic, sports and game, and military. The researcher also identifies structural features of political discourse texts, such as: 1) institutionality, 2) informativeness, 3) semantic uncertainty, 4) phantomity, 5) esotericism, 6) distancing, and 7) authoritarianism⁴.

Thus, in the context of our research, we understand political discourse as a certain institutional communication that has a specific system of professionally oriented signs, that is, its linguistic specificity.

Usually, analyzing political leaders speeches within the framework of political linguistics, scientists describe speech behavior of a politician, study rhetorical strategies of his political activity, and reconstruct his linguistic personality, which hide behind his text. But the poetic approach to the study of such texts involves the identification of stylistically marked elements of the language (political vocabulary, highly specialized terms, words characteristic to a definite functional language style, neologisms, phraseological units, stylistic means and devices, word combinations) and their emotional components of the content (special connotations and associations) from the point of view of their relationship with the corresponding systems of values of the target audience.

Besides, in the language of political texts we often find various expressive means and stylistic devices, images and symbols, based on definite cultural peculiarities, but their correct understanding or interpretation is determined by the common collective consciousness.

¹ Dijk, van T. A. (1996). Discourse, power and access. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds) *Texts and Practices. Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*: 84-104. London: Routledge.

² Шейгал Е. И. Семиотика политического дискурса. М. : ИТДК «Гнозис», 2004. 326 с.

³ Kondratenko N. V. Strategies and Tactics of Communication in Parliamentary Discourse. *Research Journal Studies about Languages*, 36. Kaunas University of Technology, 2020. P. 17-29.

⁴ Шейгал Е. И. Семиотика политического дискурса. М. : ИТДК «Гнозис», 2004. 326 с.

Therefore, a politician should be able to “hit the right chord” in this collective consciousness, his statements must fit into the “universe” of thoughts and assessments, into all the multiple inner worlds of his addressees, “consumers” of his political discourse.

Any discourse in general, and political discourse in particular, by its nature, is aimed at the appropriate suggestion, and therefore it is necessary for a politician in his speeches to take into account the system of views of a potential interpreter to modify the intentions, thoughts and motivation of actions of his political audience. It is because of these changes of ideological principles that unexpected “transitions” from one political belief to radically another can sometimes occur in the political program, which are quite contrary to the expectations of the speaker.

It is possible to return or change certain instructions of the addressee in the desired direction by successfully combining the appropriate stylistic means and devices, and by placing the desired statement in a strong position in the political text. It is worth emphasizing that only by creating in the addressee a feeling of voluntary acceptance of someone else’s opinion, interest, relevance, truth and satisfaction, the politician will be able to succeed in this suggestion.

According to E.I. Sheigal, in political communication, the most important function is instrumental, when a politician focuses on achieving a certain communicative influence on the addressee with the help of his special choice of appropriate linguistic means.

Stylistic peculiarities of political discourse

The semantic space of texts of political discourse includes three types of signs: specialized verbal (political terms, anthroponyms), specialized non-verbal (political symbols and signs) and non-specialized, which were not originally oriented to this sphere of communication, but as a result of stable functioning in it acquired appropriate content. A key feature of modern political discourse, despite its theatricality, is that politicians often try to veil their real pragmatic/political goals, using such stylistic devices as nominalization, ellipsis, metaphorization, metonymization, special intonation, and other ways of influencing the consciousness of the electorate and opponents. For example, the grammatical form of a verb (active or passive) can be politically significant, as it not only has a certain influence on the perception of cause-and-effect relationships by the recipient of the message but also leads to a rethinking of the situation regarding who exactly is the main actor in the described situation.

It is amazing how the choice of the sequence of words in enumeration can affect the understanding of the situation presented by the politician. Thus, by changing the word order in a sentence (this stylistic device is called inversion), you can also change the stylistic effect of this stylistic device in general. In addition, the appropriate order of words in enumeration affects memorization.

As the poetic analysis of the illustrative material basis showed, texts of political discourse of recent years are characterized by a wide use of words and phrases with evaluative semantics, stylistically marked vocabulary, as well as slang, and sometimes even invectives. This can be explained by the fact that strict stylistic regulation, which determined a strict observance of relevant stylistic norms (language, speech, genre, ethical, compositional, and others) has remained in the past. For example, a wide range of syntactic stylistic devices also has a corresponding manipulative potential and therefore are actively used in political texts under analysis. Among them we distinguish: exclamatory sentences, various types of inversion, rhetorical questions, and syntactic parallelism.

Usually, the political speeches of British and American politicians are known for powerful vocabulary and creative use of expressive means which are appropriate for political discourse in general. At the same time, individual poetics of such texts can lead to successful political results. For example, the stylistic device of repetition helps the audience to focus on the main point and is a good example of “soft” imposition: *Lynching was a pure terror to enforce the lie that **not everyone, not everyone, belongs in America, not everyone is created equal***⁵.

*We created 365,000 **new manufacturing jobs** in America just last year. The best year for U.S. **manufacturing jobs** in nearly 30 years. Good-paying **jobs**. **Jobs** you can raise a family on. **Jobs** that can't be outsourced.*

*...But **we have** to gather the information. **We have** to continue to provide Ukraine with the weapons they need to continue to fight, and **we have** to get all the details to have a war crimes trial*⁶.

Thus, the standard argumentation for a wide range of English audience is ensured by the frequent use of lexical repetitions and synonyms that convey the meaning of the sequence, duration or repetition of actions, and clarification of the reported information. In general, they create the

⁵ The Guardian URL <https://www.theguardian.com/international>

⁶ Twitter Joe Biden URL <https://twitter.com/joebiden>

integrity of political speeches and perform a rhythm-forming function, which is especially important for political speeches texts.

The provided poetic analysis of political texts under consideration proved, that neologisms, metaphorical comparisons, personifications, metaphors, epithets, hyperboles, dysphemisms, and sometimes euphemisms prevail in English political discourse texts. Let's consider some of them. For example: *...while one could be sympathetic to ordinary Russians, the way Mr Putin was leading Russia was "utterly catastrophic" and his invasion of Ukraine was "inhuman and barbaric"*.

Here, the use of exergasia (the use of phrases with synonymous semantic features ("*inhuman and barbaric*" – "*негуманный і варварський*") in combination with negatively colored epithet "*catastrophic*" to describe Russian invasion of Ukraine increases emotional tension of this political text and gives it special stylistic coloring.

Politicians often resort to metaphors because it is an extremely powerful stylistic device that bears an enormous emotional charge and simultaneously uncovers the most essential features of any text.

Understanding metaphors still is a challenge for linguists, psychologists and translation studies scholars. As George Lakoff claims "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature".

Different types of metaphors can overlap and be confused that is why it is important to differentiate at least the most vivid sides of each of them. Stylistically metaphors influence the text in such a way that it becomes challenging both for the reader and translator. Besides, metaphor is an outstanding device which shows the author's thoughts and his way of thinking. In other words, metaphor is an important stylistic tool that allows us, on the one hand, to implement convictions of political texts and, on the other, their manipulative influence. For example: *How can you negotiate with a crocodile when it has your leg in its jaws, that is the difficulty that Ukrainians face*⁷.

The metaphor "*negotiate with a crocodile*" implies personification: under the aggressive image of "crocodile" the president of Russia is meant. It is quite obvious, that any negotiations with him are dangerous and fruitless, especially when it (a crocodile) "*has your leg in its jaws*". This zoometaphor is rather powerful and, in our opinion, conveys the military

⁷ Twitter Boris Johnson URL <https://twitter.com/borisjohnson>

and political situation in Ukraine quite successfully. It emphasizes the futility of any negotiations with the aggressor (it is impossible to negotiate with someone who wants to kill you).

Let us analyze the poetic influence of a metaphorical comparison in the following sentences: *The Ukrainians have **the courage of a lion**. President Zelenskyy has given **the roar of that lion**. The UK stands unwaveringly with the people of Ukraine. Glory to Ukraine*⁸.

Here, the former Prime Minister of Great Britain metaphorically compares the bravery of Ukrainians to the bravery of a lion, thus expressing his deep respect for Ukrainians. The lion traditionally symbolizes the king of beasts, who is not afraid of anything. This stylistic device also indicates the polysemanticization of zoonyms in texts of political discourse. In the next sentence the phraseological unit “*to roar like a lion*” emphasizes the political power of President Zelenskyy as the leader of a strong and free people all over the world.

*I will do everything in my power **to starve Putin’s war machine**. We are stepping up our sanctions and military support, as well as bolstering our humanitarian support package to help those in need on the ground*⁹.

Here the politician Boris Johnson uses metonymy to show his negative attitude towards the war in Ukraine: he emphasizes that while Russia wants half of the world to starve and suffer from famine by blocking grain transportation from Ukrainian ports of Odesa and Mykolaiv, the civilized world will starve his military machine by applying new economic sanctions and providing constant military support for Ukraine.

In contemporary political texts, we often find stylistic enumerations with gradation effect that do not overload them, but on the contrary, create the opposite effect. For example, a phrase “it’s an amazing country” is accompanied by the gradation of stylistically strong epithets *an inexcusable war, an absolutely inexcusable and unnecessary war* that modify the noun “war”, the Russia-Ukraine war. All of them serve as a syntactic device of structuring the entire text, a powerful tool of political persuasion and influence on the audience: “*Over the last few hours I’ve been able to see quite a lot of your beautiful country and **it’s an amazing country**. I’ve also seen the tragic effects of the war, **an inexcusable war, an absolutely inexcusable and unnecessary war**”.*

While analyzing political texts of political speeches in particular we cannot but notice the frequent use of polysyndeton, due to which such texts

⁸ Twitter Boris Johnson URL <https://twitter.com/borisjohnson>

⁹ Twitter Boris Johnson URL <https://twitter.com/borisjohnson>

acquire a special harmony, clarity and persuasion. Tim Ryan, Democrat: *We cannot let Vladimir Putin gain one inch of soil in Ukraine. You can't reward violence.*

The use of idioms and proverbs are also of great importance, as in the following example: *When Pope John Paul brought that message in 1979, the Soviet Union ruled with an iron fist behind an Iron Curtain*¹⁰.

Here the idiomatic expressions “*ruled with an iron fist*” and «*behind an Iron Curtain*» quite adequately convey the essence of the authoritarian political power of the former Soviet Union.

In political speeches, we can also observe standard phraseological combinations that are frequently used in political discourse, which enhance the effect of positive feedback and are aimed at their easy recognition by the audience. They ensure the contact-establishing function of texts of political discourse in general.

Translating strategies in rendering English texts of political discourse

Translating political statements is a not an easy task. After all, every day new terms appear in the English language and there is a need to study them. In order to translate political texts (or convey its main idea) correctly, one should be aware of the terminology in various fields, and of the political one in particular.

Translation of political texts also requires knowledge of the customs and traditions of the country and the people they are connected with. It is necessary to be able not only to translate the text (its semantic meaning) but also to convey the essence in the contextual meaning. The literal translation of political statements or word-for-word translation often has a poor effect.

Ya. Retsker defines the notion of transformation as a technique of logical thinking, with the help of which the translator interprets the meaning of units in the context of the target language. He singles out two translation transformations: grammatical (replacement of parts of speech or sentence members) and lexical transformations (concretization, generalization, differentiation of meanings, antonymic translation, compensation, semantic development and integral transformation).

In modern translation theory there are many approaches for different divisions of translation transformations. They are mostly divided into:

¹⁰ The Guardian URL <https://www.theguardian.com/international>

lexical, lexical-semantic, grammatical and lexical-grammatical transformations.

Lexical transformations have a meaningful and formal relationship between lexical units in the source text and in the translated text. The following techniques can be attributed to transformations such as: transliteration, calculation and transcription.

Transliteration and transcription are ways of conveying information while preserving the content by borrowing vocabulary and literal translation. These terms are similar in meaning because both contain borrowing of foreign words. Transcription is also the borrowing of words by preserving the word form of the language. For example: “*We passed the landmark American Rescue Plan, which not only helped us get **COVID-19** under control and our economy back on track but got millions more people insured under the Affordable Care Act*¹¹.”

*Ми прийняли знаковий американський план порятунку, який не тільки допоміг нам взяти під контроль **КОВІД-19** і повернути нашу економіку в правильне русло, але й застрахував мільйони людей відповідно до Закону про доступне лікування.*

Here we can see the transcription of the English word “COVID-19” into Ukrainian “КОВІД-19”, so we did not lose the content of the sentence.

Let’s consider another example: “*The Kremlin wants to portray NATO enlargement as an imperial project aimed at destabilizing Russia. Nothing is further from the truth. NATO is a defensive alliance. It has never sought the demise of Russia*”. *Кремль хоче зобразити розширення НАТО як імперський проект, спрямований на дестабілізацію Росії. Немає нічого далі від істини. НАТО – це оборонний союз. Вона ніколи не прагнула загибелі Росії.* Here we also see transliteration by letters.

Tracing is slightly different from transliteration. It does not repeat every letter as in transcription. Here is an example: “*There’s a brain drain – leaving Russia. Shutting down independent news*”¹². *Вже виїхало двісті тисяч людей. Це витік мізків – виїжджати з Росії. Затикання незалежних новин.*

In this example, we can see a phrase “*a brain drain*” which is transliterated as “*витік мізків*”. In this case the political language of texts under analysis requires clarity, and in the translation as well, because not every person can understand such transliteration.

¹¹ BBC News URL<https://www.bbc.com/news>

¹² BBC News URL<https://www.bbc.com/news>

In most translational transformations, we can also trace concretization and generalization, which refer to lexical-semantic transformations. Generalization is the translation of a short foreign meaning into a longer one, for a better understanding of the text. Concretization is, on the contrary, the explanation of a broad meaning into a narrower one. For example: “...it was because they wanted to be free **to do things differently**, for this country to be able **to do things differently and run itself**” ... *...це було тому, що вони хотіли бути вільними, робити речі по-іншому, щоб ця країна могла жити по-іншому і бути сама собою (сама собою керувати)...*In this example, we see generalization and the textual fragment is translated not as briefly as presented in the original.

The omission is important in translation, which helps us to specify the context. It arises due to the impossibility of literal translation of some terms, for example: “*I think that if Putin were to engage in anything like that the consequences would be **very, very severe***. Я думаю, що якщо Путін задіє щось подібне, наслідки будуть **дуже тяжкими**.” In this sentence the omission is used to avoid repetition and tautology. If we do not translate this expression literally, we will still understand how severe these consequences can be when reading.

Grammatical transformations in translation are no less important. Rearranging words in a sentence, adding and subtracting words, changing the structure of a sentence, changing time, parts of speech, etc. are all grammatical transformations. One of effective kinds of transformation is adaptation – used to adapt some cultural information to the culture of the target language. For example: “**Chag Sameach** to Jews here in the UK and across the globe gathering around **the Seder table** this evening. Wherever you are making **matzah** and whoever you are breaking it with, I hope this **Passover** brings you joy and renewed hope”¹³. **Гарних вихідних** євреям у Великобританії та по всьому світу, які збираються сьогодні ввечері за **святковим** столом. Де б ви не готували **мацу** і з ким би **не ламали її**, я сподіваюся, що ця **Пасха** принесе вам радість і оновлену надію.

In this example, we come across the omission of the greeting phrase **Chag Sameach** and the replacement of the word “Seder” with “святковий”, which quite obviously has lessened the cultural information about the Jewish celebration of Passover in general. It can be explained by the fact that an ordinary reader is not aware of the phrase “Seder table”, except those who belong to the Jewish religion. “Seder table” is a

¹³ Kyiv Post newspaper URL<https://www.kyivpost.com/>

ceremonial dinner at the table on the occasion of Passover in Jewish religious tradition, according to which a special bread *matzah* is divided among all the members of the family. So in this sentence, “Seder table” we can translated as “святковий стіл”, which has essentially close meaning. Here we can also see the importance of contextual cultural information for general understanding and translation of the sentence.

In political discourse, definitions and explanations of different cultural phenomena often need to be translated, so without knowledge of foreign cultures, one can misinterpret the main idea of the text, or do not translate it at all.

In translation, we often use the addition of certain words or their replacement, as in the example: “*I welcome his principled determination to end dependence on Russian energy. How we respond to Russia’s invasion will define the international order for years to come. We cannot let Putin’s crimes go unpunished*”¹⁴. Я вітаю його принципову рішучість **покласти край** залежності від російської енергетики. Те, як ми реагуємо на вторгнення Росії, визначатиме міжнародний порядок на наступні роки. Ми не можемо залишити злочини Путіна безкарними. Here the transliteration of the verb «to end» to «put an end», proves how this word combination should be translated to achieve the melodiousness of the Ukrainian language.

CONCLUSION

So to sum it up the research has proved that it is extremely important to translate political statements in political texts in contemporary political discourse correctly and study deeply their essential features. In this study we see the complexity of the issue and peculiarities of translation transformations used that can make the translation better.

The poetic analysis of texts of the political discourse made it possible to single out the most typical stylistic means and devices, which were analyzed at several linguistic levels: lexical (political terms, neologisms, phraseological units), lexical-semantic (metaphors, epithets, metonymies, enumeration, gradation) and syntactic (different types of repetition, polysyndeton). Due to their stylistic effect they make political texts acquire emotionality, semantic accuracy, stylistic imagery, and syntactic coherence, and they are quoted and widely discussed. The wide use of stylistic means and devices in texts of contemporary political discourse is an effective communicative strategy that contributes to the achievement

¹⁴ Aljazeera news URL <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

of a definite political goal. We consider the study of manipulative communicative strategies and tactics used in modern political discourse as a perspective for further research.

SUMMARY

The research is focused on poetic peculiarities of English texts functioning in modern political discourse and their effective translation strategies. It has been worked out that poetic analysis of English political texts made it possible to elicit the most typical stylistic means and devices, that have been described at different language levels: lexical, semantic and syntactic. It is proved that a considerable impact on the target audience could be made by the author's sustained extended metaphors, creative similes, personification, metonymy, associated epithets, lexical repetitions and synonyms. It has been determined that simple syntactic patterns, availability and argumentation for a wide range of English-speaking audience are kept by different kinds of repetitions and synonyms which generate the sequence, duration, and multiplicity of actions, adding new facts to the already presented information. In the research the author proved that their convergence and interaction create a certain pragmatic influence of political texts on their audience and a definite rhythm, which is extremely important for such types of texts. The article also highlights some translation strategies which can be used while rendering specific social and cultural aspects of English political texts.

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