THE USAGE OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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The topic represents great importance to linguistics due to a shortage of studies on political discourse. Political discourse is a public speech associated with the sphere of political communication. One of the genres of this type of speech is a political speech. Political speech is an articulated text of publicistic style that highlights political problems. It can have either purely informative or agitational character. The purpose of political discourse is to influence the public consciousness and struggle for power.

Currently the analysis of political discourse is of importance to linguistics. The term “discourse” has many interpretations. For example, F. Batsevych [1, 138] identifies discourse as a set of speech and thought related actions of communicants which are bound to cognition, comprehension and representation of the world by the speaker to a listener (recipient). But it has to be emphasized, that discourse as a special language subsystem has its own specific functions, thesaurus and communicative impact. When discovering a political discourse it is necessary to take into account some extralinguistic aspects, as communication conditions and situation, target audience etc. Regarding the selection of material for language studies in political linguistics, its sources include core, periphery and marginal zone.

There are several stylistic devices often used in political speeches such as metaphors, parallelisms and anaphors; and also some lexical means as borrowings, neologisms, clichés. The most common in political speeches is a metaphor. A metaphor is a kind of trope, the main feature of which is transferring properties of one object to another based on their similarity. This feature enhances imagery and expressiveness of speech. Examples of metaphors: “We can lead this country in a direction of hope”, “seared in the flames of withering injustice”, “a beautiful symphony of brotherhood”. Also politicians tend to combine several stylistic means which enhance the communicative effect on the audience.

Another stylistic means that provide political speech with additional expressiveness is allusion. Allusion is a reference to the historical, mythological or well-known facts. Basically allusion is used in belle letter style, but also we may find it in political speech. O. Yemets [2, 138] brings the attention to an allusion in the speech of Martin Luther King to the declaration of liberation from slavery, signed by Abraham Lincoln 100 years ago: “But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free”. Obama draws a parallel between extremists and nuclear weapons, putting emphasize on their destructive power and the threat they pose to society: “When a new flu infects one human being, all are at risk. When one nation pursues a nuclear weapon, the risk of nuclear attack rises for all nations. When violent extremists operate in one stretch of mountains, people are endangered across an ocean. And when innocents in Bosnia and Darfur are slaughtered, that is a stain on our collective conscience “. Effective means of influence is opposition, specifically: categorial opposition “good” – “evil”. K. Repina [3] points out that politicians in their speeches appeal to religion, folklore, etc., and turn to the physiological side of existence, which
manifests itself in opposition to corporal and spiritual, higher and lower, and so on. In confirmation of this view we cite Barack Obama using a parallelism to emphasize the positive and negative aspects of TV and the Internet and trade: “The Internet and television can bring knowledge and information, but also offensive sexuality and mindless violence. Trade can bring new wealth and opportunities, but also huge disruptions and changing communities”.

Information acquisition may have both intellectual and emotional character. Hence politicians have to be able to reason their case in a cohesive way and also to bring recipient’s emotions. Using specific stylistic devices politician can either influence recipient’s political opinion or evoke corresponding emotions. It is fair to say that the more vivid the speech is, the more memorable it becomes.

References:

