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## POLITICAL DISCOURSE AS INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY AND PROBLEMS OF ITS TRANSLATION

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### Abstract:

The article is devoted to the analysis of political discourse, its genre structure and main subtypes. The functional and stylistic features of materials of political media discourse are reviewed, as well as lexical and stylistic techniques for translating political text's discourse from English into Russian.

**Keywords:** Media, political discourse, political communication, linguoculturology, translation of texts of political discourse

Political discourse in different fields of knowledge.

Socio-political situation of a country and international relations play a significant role in any language development. Now as the world is becoming more and more globalized the vital importance of the world political situation has made politics and political discourse a subject for intensive interdisciplinary researches. (Wodak 1989). The growing academic interest towards political discourse can be regarded as a social request, aimed to study not only the peculiarities of

political thought and actions, but also those linguistic and rhetoric means politicians employ to affect and control public opinion.

In this regard, there is a need to pay special attention to such areas of knowledge as the political discourse of the media (mass media), the linguistic and cultural component of socio-political discourse and the features of the translation of articles on socio-political topics.

Critical review of special researches devoted to the study of political discourse has revealed that it

can be analyzed from at least four viewpoints:

a. from the political point of view on the basis of which conclusions of politological nature are made;

b. from the linguistic viewpoint proper, when the researcher analyses the textual aspect of political discourse considering it as a verbal macrosign in its socio-cultural and political context;

c. from the psychological point of view the aim of which is to reveal and define those strategies that are employed by a politician covertly or overtly in his/her speech to gain political influence upon the addressee;

d. from the individual-hermeneutic viewpoint during which the speaker's personal attitudes towards the target political situation are revealed.

Out of these four, we consider linguistic studies of paramount importance since political thought and actions are inseparable from political speech. Words, actions, and events work together; words interpret events or actions, as well as constitute political facts, while actions in various ways help words gain their political efficacy. The analysis of political discourse (or political rhetoric) should treat discourse as an instrument of doing politics, either in a strategic or constitutive sense. In fact, any political idea or action is born, prepared, realized and controlled with the help of language.

The close relationship between language and politics has always been central to both Western political thought and rhetorical tradition. In the *Politics*, Aristotle famously equated the very possibility of politics with the possession of language: "... man is by nature a political animal" because "man

is the only animal" whom Nature, which "does nothing in vain", "has endowed with the gift of speech" (Aristotle 1943: 1-10).

Indeed, language appears indispensable to the constitution and maintenance of human communities, the working of organizations and institutions, the activities of politicians, and the civic lives of ordinary people. As James Farr indicates,

"Politics, as we know it, would not only be indescribable without language, it would be impossible. Emerging nations could not declare independence, leaders instruct partisans, citizens protest war, or courts sentence criminals. Could we criticize, neither plead, promise, argue, exhort, demand, negotiate, bargain, compromise, counsel, brief, debrief, advice nor consent. To imagine politics without these actions would be to imagine no recognizable politics at all" (Farr 1989: 48).

Paul Bayley (2004), who identifies the activities of a politician, such as seeking consensus, elaborating policy, negotiating and mediating in conflicts, representing interests and opposing the policy of others with fundamental linguistic activities, has made similar statement. Paul Chilton and Christina Schaffner also focus on the reciprocal nature of the relationships between language and politics. On one occasion these scholars note that political activity does not exist without the use of language, while on another occasion they suggest that "it is probably the case that the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we call 'politics' in a broad sense" (Chilton and Schaffner 2002a: vi).

Chilton and Schaffner conclude that this virtual identification of political activity with linguistic activity implies a close alliance of the study of politics with the study of language. The growing research interest towards political discourse has brought the birth of a new trend in linguistics – the trend of so-called “political linguistics”. Such a situation is quite natural as throughout different stages of its development linguistic theory has always demonstrated great interest in the functional studies of the language system in various spheres of real life. Indeed, it would be difficult to identify any sphere of social or institutional life in which language does not play an essential role.

According to Threadgold, “acts of communication are forms of social discourse which maintain and regulate social activities, and define status and power relations. As such they are part of and a metaphor for the social actions and belief systems of a given culture” (Threadgold 1986: 44).

Political discourse intersects with other types of discourse - legal, scientific, mass information, advertising, religious, sports and gaming, household and artistic. Modern language of politics is distinguished by the medium of its existence - the media, and due to the orientation of the political communication to the mass addressee. (Shegail: 386).

Political discourse, like any other, it has a field structure. In the center of it are those genres that maximally reflect the main purpose of political communication - the struggle for power. Genre structure of political discourse is very rich. This is primarily

parliamentary debate, political speech, voting. As part of political discourse there are distinguished such genres as the manifesto, the election platform, personal communication, interviews, political advertising, etc. As a result, the “blurring” of the boundaries of discourse often leads to superposition of the characteristics of different types of discourse in one text. For example, an interview with political scientist elements of mass media, scientific and political discourses are combined. Political and advertising discourse intersect in the genre of political advertising.

The most important characteristic of political discourse is a cultural specificity. The political discourse of the media, being the subject of interest of linguoculturology, is momentary cut of linguistic and cultural state of society. Media texts are full culturally significant information; they record and reflect both general and specific features of functioning national languages and cultures. That is why the identification and description of culturally significant components of media speech is today one of the most important research tasks.

Linguistic specificity of political discourse is realized in semantics, syntactic, pragmatics of linguistic signs filling the text, which together constitutes the cultural marking of the media discourse (Dobrosklonskaiya, 264). Moreover, the category of cultural specificity is represented by a set of units of cultural context related to all four of its levels: denotative, connotative, associative and metaphorical (Ivanova, 20). The linguistic basis of these categories is

words for realities and artifacts, words and phrases with culturally specific connotations, lexical units with strong associative connections.

### **The definition of political discourse**

Defining the Concept of Political Discourse as an interdisciplinary one, it can be defined as a language of mass media or other institutions that is generally used in social and political spheres of communication. Christ'l de Landtsheer (1998: 35) finds such definition of political discourse, for instance, in "The Political Rhetoric of a United Europe". We give preference to a narrow, Van Dijkean (1998; 2002) interpretation of political discourse according to which it is defined as a politically restricted genre that has its own thesaurus and specific functions. Political discourse is a discourse of a politician and if we view it within the professional framework, it can be considered as an institutional form of discourse. This means that only those discourses can be qualified as political which take place in such institutional situations where the speaker expresses his/her opinion as a politician (e.g. government sessions, parliamentary discussions, election campaigns, political debates, etc.).

### **Translation of political discourse**

The translation of political discourse has a number functional and stylistic features that are directly dependent from the characteristics of the political discourse itself. Of the general language functions, the most relevant for political discourse is function of influence on the addressee. The theory of translation at the present stage of its development draws attention

to the relationship of translation and sociolinguistic factors.

The recipient invariably perceives the translation text through the prism of his national culture and, accordingly, some substantial aspects of the utterance will be a priori not understood or misinterpreted. There are several key characteristics of socio-political discourse. Media as a separate functional style. Firstly, it's highly standardized, expressed in the use of journalistic clichés, stamps, lexicalized metaphors, which allows you to create the effect of impartiality of the author: call for actions – призыв, к действию; officially comment on – дать официальное заявление; a statement issued by – в заявлении, опубликованном; in the midst of political campaign – в разгар политической кампании; the agency reported that – в сообщении агентства говорится.

Many cliches of English-language political media discourse have sustained equivalents in Russian, adopted in the translation, they should be followed: to proceed from the assumption that... – исходя из того, что...; restricted information – информация для служебного пользования/секретная информация.

It should be noted that the main stylistic principle of language organization in journalism is the combination of standard and expression. The political language and discourse of the United States is characterized by expressiveness, emphasized by the abundance of stylistic means: *From the House to the Senate, a demon lurks, luring the country's leaders to twist and mangle words into grotesque*

*amalgamations.* – Заседающие в конгрессе политические лидеры страны, поддавшись соблазну, коверкают слова, создавая порой нелепые, лишённые смысла фразы.

However, such expressions are less characteristic in Russian language; therefore, in the process of translation the most commonly used technique is reducing imagery. Translation of metaphorical expressions from English to Russian, usually also accompanied by a decrease in imagery in the target language compared to the text the original. *John McCain's admission to the Weekly Standard's Steve Hayes... that he would consider the possibility of choosing a pro-choice running mate is rightly seen as a trial balloon to gauge reaction among conservative base voters to such a move.* – Заявление Джона Маккейна о том, что он готов рассмотреть возможность избрания в качестве кандидата на пост вице-президента политика – сторонника легализации аборт, которое он сделал в интервью корреспонденту Weekly Standard's Стиву Хейзу, стоит воспринимать скорее как попытку прозондировать почву с целью оценить реакцию консервативно настроенных избирателей на подобный ход.

Over the past decade, Russian-language media have been actively increasing the number of unmotivated borrowings in the Russian language, and you can find on the pages of Russian newspapers options for transmitting the realities of the political discourse of the media, such as *prochoice* and *prolife*.

We suppose that the reception of transcription in this case does not allow

revealing the meaning of these concepts, and the lexical units themselves look alien and too exotic in Russian discourse. Pro-choice is a world-famous social and political movement that arose immediately after the supreme US court repeals abortion ban in most states. It is opposed to the pro-life movement - “in defense of life” (“for life”). The issue of translating these realities remains controversial. In our opinion, the most correct translation option is descriptive: *a pro-choice running mate – кандидат в вице-президенты – сторонник легализации абортов.*

US party names are often very figurative in nature, and adequate translation of such vocabulary is impossible without the presence of translator background knowledge of the American party system. For example, in American articles Election media there is a phrase *Blue Dogs*. That fact, that both words are capitalized, should lead the translator to the idea that this is not just a political nickname or ironic comparison with dogs, but the name of the institution or public organization. In November 1994, in response to the Republican electoral success of moderate and conservative Democrats in House of Representatives USA united, calling themselves “Blue Dog Democrats”. They chose a blue dog as a mascot, obviously hinting at an old joke that Southerner will vote for the Democrats, even if the Democratic candidate will be the Yellow Dog. The “yellow dog” turned into blue, since blue is a traditional color of Democrats. The preferred translation option in this case is descriptive translation with semantic development, accompanied by

a decrease in imagery: *Blue Dogs* – *партия консервативных южан*. Name of these parties appear more and more on the pages of American socio-political publications, and in the Russian-language media we can see them translated as: "*Партия синих псов*" or "*Демократы синей собаки*". In this case, translation commentary is required, as the average Russian speaking reader is not familiar with the US party system and a similar translation without explanations may cause misunderstanding.

The following example can illustrate the difficulties in translating neologisms, inherent in political discourse: *Conservatives are panning the president's performance. «This is another hype-and-blame trick from a president who thinks turning the economy around and solving our unemployment problem is everyone else's job but his own»*. – *Консерваторы критикуют работу президента. «Это очередной пример политики очковтирательства, проводимой президентом Обамой, который считает, что управлять экономикой страны и решать проблемы безработицы должен кто угодно, но только не он сам»*.

By "hype-and-blame" neologism representatives of the Republican Party led by M. Romney, one of the main rivals B. Obama in the 2012 presidential election criticized Obama and his policies at the White House. This is the reference to the famous slogan "Hope and Change", which became the keynote of the Obama presidential campaign in 2008. The token "очковтирательство" is a slang that imposes significant restrictions on its

use in Russian. However, the language of the Russian press in most cases allows the use of slang words even swearing vocabulary, so the proposed variant will be appropriate in the translation. In addition, the phrase "hype-and-blame" also refers to colloquial style; respectively given translation allows you to preserve the original style and creates the necessary communicative effect.

One of the important features of media texts is conveying the message and making impacts on the readers. Although the main function of mass communication is considered to be the information transfer, this transfer is rarely completely neutral, i.e., completely free from elements of influence to the audience. In most cases, information is accompanied by a direct or veiled expression of assessment, linguistic means and speech techniques that prompt the audience to a certain reaction to information, by means of drawing attention to information or to a point of view expressed in the message. The study of the functional and stylistic features of political discourse helps to translate while maintaining the necessary communicative effect, which is, of course, the primary task of the translator.



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## ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЙ ДИСКУРС КАК МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ И ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЕГО ПЕРЕВОДА

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**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена анализу политического дискурса, его жанровой структуры и основных подтипов. Рассмотрены функциональные и стилистические особенности материалов политического медиа-дискурса, а также лексические и стилистические приемы перевода дискурса политического текста с английского на русский.

**Ключевые слова:** СМИ, политический дискурс, политическое общение, лингвокультурология, перевод текстов политического дискурса

## САЯСАТТЫҚ ТӘСІЛДІЛІК ӘДЕБИЕТТІК ОҚЫТУ ЖӘНЕ ОНЫҢ АУДАРЫМЫНЫҢ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

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**Андатпа:** Мақала саяси дискурсты, оның жанрлық құрылымын және негізгі түрлерін талдауға арналған. Саяси медиа дискурсы материалдарының функционалды және стилистикалық ерекшеліктері, сондай-ақ саяси мәтін дискурсын ағылшын тілінен орыс тіліне аударудың лексикалық және стилистикалық әдістері қарастырылды.

**Түйін сөздер:** БАҚ, саяси дискурс, саяси коммуникация, лингвокультурология, саяси дискурстың мәтіндерін аудару

АБЫЛАЙ ХАН АТЫНДАҒЫ  
ҚАЗАҚ ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ҚАТЫНАСТАР ЖӘНЕ ӘЛЕМ ТІЛДЕРІ  
УНИВЕРСИТЕТІ  
ҚАЗАҚСТАН АУДАРМАШЫЛАРЫ ҚОРЫ

**ОРТАЛЫҚ-АЗИЯ  
АУДАРМА ІСІ ЖУРНАЛЫ**

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**ЦЕНТРАЛЬНО-АЗИАТСКИЙ ЖУРНАЛ  
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