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ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ АСПЕКТ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО ДИСКУРСА (НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ ПРЕДВЫБОРНЫХ РЕЧЕЙ Д. ТРАМПА И К. ХАРРИС)

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Аннотация. Рассматривается эмоциональный аспект речевого воздействия кандидатов в президенты США Д. Трампа и К. Харрис на избирателей на лексическом, синтаксическом и стилистическом уровнях. Актуальность работы обусловлена возрастающим интересом к изучению эмоциональности как эффективного инструмента воздействия на коллективное бессознательное. Показано, что эмоции как одна из форм привычного и интуитивного речевого поведения позволяют судить о личностных качествах коммуниканта, а также глубже понять механизмы речевого воздействия на электорат в предвыборном дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: предвыборный дискурс, речевое воздействие, эмоциональность, эмотивность, электорат.

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PHILOLOGY

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Original article

The emotional aspect of political discourse (based on the material of pre-election speeches by D. Trump and K. Harris)

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Abstract. The article studies the emotional aspect of the speech influence on voters by the US presidential candidates D.Trump and K.Harris on the lexical, syntactical and stylistic levels. The relevance of the study is determined by the growing interest in the study of emotionality as an effective tool of impact on the collective subconsciousness. Emotions being a form of habitual and intuitive verbal behaviour allow to judge about the individual qualities of a communicant and understand the mechanisms of speech influence on the electorate in the pre-election discourse.

Key words: pre-election discourse, speech influence, emotionality, emotivity, electorate.

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Introduction

In the contemporary world of politics, language functions beyond mere information dissemination; it serves as a potent tool of influence. This is especially apparent during election campaigns, where political figures strive for voter allegiance and support. when political leaders compete for voters' support. Electoral discourse encompasses a collection of declarations, speeches, written ma-

terials, and visual elements designed to stir and convince the voting public. This form of communication does more than just express the perspectives of political actors; it actively molds public sentiment and sways voting patterns.

The term "electoral discourse" has a variety of definitions. In one of those it is referred to as a special sphere of communication associated with a specific time and place of the election campaign, serving a specific social sphere – political elections [2, p. 5]. The general goal of this type of discourse is to make voters give their support and eventually votes for a certain candidate.

The genre of pre-election discourse possesses several characteristic features. The basic one is the communicative situation including the addresser (presidential candidate), the addressee (the electorate), communication form (the genre of pre-election discourse), communication channel (oral), the topic (election debate) and the environment (convention meeting or a studio) [3, p. 4].

In today's context of intense political competition, a powerful tool for manipulating public opinion and shaping electoral preferences is the emotional component of electoral speeches. Emotions are phenomena typical of any type of communication with a person's emotional behaviour being specified by psychological and socio-cultural factors. The analysis of emotionality in political discourse from a linguostylistic perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of speech influence and the peculiarities of politicians' individual styles.

The study of emotions has always been the focus of researchers from various fields. In terms of communicative pragmatics, scientists differentiate between "emotivity" and "emotionality". *Emotivity* is considered to be a linguistic phenomenon that expresses a person`s psychological (emotional) conditions by means of special language units, so called emotives. *Emotionality,* in its turn, is viewed as the internal emotional condition of a person, which allows to shape their psychological portrait and judge about their emotional sphere [4, pp. 19–23]. Besides, e*motivity* is a conscious and planned demonstration of emotions having a certain communicative purpose, whereas *emotionality* is related to instinctive, unconscious and unplanned emotions which are a person's psychophysiological requirement [1, p. 37]. Thus, we can refer to emotivity as direct intentions of impacting the audience, with a whole array of emotional tools contributing to swaying the electorate in favour of a particular politician. At the same time, emotionality is connected with indirect aspect of manifesting one`s emotional experiences which we find more relevant for our research. Indirect emotions occur instinctively, spontaneously and automatically which may provide for better understanding of a politician`s speech portrait. From this point of view, emotionality in the pre-election discourse seems more pertinent for the current research.

Emotionality is not limited to words alone; it can be vividly expressed by intonation, facial expressions, speech tempo, as well as the combination of verbal and non-verbal means, which enhance the emotional effect and ensure impact on the voter.

The *aim* of the research is to study the linguostylistic means of expressing emotionality in the electoral speeches of the two candidates running for presidency in the campaign of 2024, namely Donald Trump and Kamala Harris.

The material of the research presents the scripts and video footage of the pre-election speeches and televised debates of the two candidates on the air in 2024.

Discussion

The conducted research allows to specify the main linguistic features of conveying emotionality of the two candidates running for presidency in the United States in 2024, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. The analysis was carried out according to three aspects: lexical, syntactic, and stylistic levels.

The speech style of D. Trump is distinctive due to his individual emotional tone and persuasive tactics. In order to appeal to the electorate, his speeches are full of emotional impact which enhances a feeling of national unity and conveys a sense of intimacy with the audience. It is proved by the predominance of the so-called inclusive "we" in his addressing the audience. Even when Trump recollects the moment of the attempted assassination in Pennsylvania, he emphasizes that it was the nation that was under attack, not just him alone:

“My hand was covered with blood. Just absolutely blood all over the place. I immediately knew it was very serious. That ***we were under attack****.” [6].*

On the lexical level, D. Trump uses simple, direct, yet emotionally resonant language to capture the attention of a broad audience and evoke feelings of trust and hope. Let us consider the following examples:

“But in less than four years, our opponents have turned incredible success into unparalleled ***tragedy*** *and failure. It’s been a* ***tremendous failure.*** *We will* ***restore peace****,* ***stability*** *and* ***harmony*** *all throughout the world. Together, we will launch a new era of* ***safety****,* ***prosperity*** *and* ***freedom*** *for citizens of every race.” [7].*

In these examples, D. Trump resorts to criticizing uncertainty and chaos brought about by the current administration of Democrats, on the one hand, and to promising restoration, security and victory, on the other hand.

The following example illustrates the use of lexical repetition as an expressive means characteristic of Donald Trump's electoral rhetoric.

"We lose jobs. We lose revenue and they gain everything and wipe out our businesses, wipe out our people." [7].

The repetition of the lexemes *lose* and *wipe out* enhances the emotional coloring of the statement and focuses attention on escalating the negative characteristics of Democrats.

One notable lexical characteristic of Donald Trump's speech is the use of newly coined words (neologisms) that serve both rhetorical and ideological purposes.

"They were serious ***Trumpsters****, I want to tell you. They were serious* ***Trumpsters*** *and still are." [7].*

The neologism *Trumpsters* is used to refer to Trump`s ardent supporters, especially those who actively align themselves with his political agenda and rhetoric.

Besides, Trump's speech abounds in substandard vocabulary:

“I am not a braggart" [7].

“All over the world we were respected, and then he comes in, and we’re now laughed at, we’re like ***a bunch of stupid people*** *".[6].*

The phrases "*braggart," "a bunch of stupid people*" give the speech informality, create an effect of live communication, and bring Trump closer to the audience.

The syntactic level of conveying emotionality by Trump is characterized by:

"No matter what obstacle comes our way, ***we will not*** *break.* ***We will not*** *bend.* ***We will not*** *back down."* (parallelism); *[7].*

*"****What she says is*** *an absolute lie."* (emphatic constructions); *[7].*

"So tonight, I ask you a very simple question: ***How can the Democrat Party ask to lead our country when it spends so much time tearing down our country?"*** (rhetorical questions); *[7].*

“Never heard anything like it.” (ellipsis); *[6].*

"She's a disaster. I built the economy. She ruined it." (short, declarative phrases). *[7].*

On the stylistic level, D. Trump’s emotionality is achieved through the use of the following means:

"Today, our cities are ***flooded*** *with illegal aliens." [5]."****America is the torch*** *that enlightens the entire world."* (metaphor); *[5].*

*"****Nothing will*** *sway us.* ***Nothing will*** *slow us."* (anaphora); *[7].*

"I could stop wars ***with just a telephone call****."* (hyperbole); *[7].*

"She's going to my philosophy now. In fact, I was going to send her a MAGA hat." (irony); *[5].*

"For her incredible service to our nation and its children, I want to thank our magnificent ***First Lady****."* (metonymy); *[7].*

"Let us also take a moment to show our ***profound*** *appreciation for a man* ***of deep faith*** *and* ***steadfast conviction*** *– Vice President Mike Pence."* (epithet); *[7].*

"Americans have ***steel in their spines, grit in their souls, and fire in their hearts****."* (gradation); *[7].*

"Our opponents do not see America as the ***most free, just, and exceptional*** *nation on earth. Instead, they see a* ***wicked*** *nation that must be* ***punished*** *for its sins."* (antithesis). *[7].*

While addressing the audience, D. Trump makes use of a wide range of non-verbal means of conveying emotions, the most frequent of which are wagging his finger warningly at the opponent, raising his eyebrows, frowning and eventually raising a clenched fist as he did at an air-open campaign on 13 July, 2024 in Pennsylvania after an assassination attempt. These emotional non-verbal means contribute to shaping a confident and aggressive personal portrait of the politician under research.

When it comes to Kamala Harris's rhetoric style, it is marked by a strong degree of emotional expression, credibility, value-based orientation and frequent use of speech devices. Her style blends formal political discourse with elements of colloquial language register. Unlike her opponent, she often resorts to her own personality and background experience as a vivid example of a good leader for the nation.

On the lexical level, Harris uses lexemes with a pronounced negative connotation, grouped into synonymous series directed against the political opponent (*unserious, chaos, calamity)*. These words form a semantic field of *collapse* and *threat* creating in the audience an image not just of an incompetent leader, but of a destructive force:

*"In many ways, Donald Trump is an **unserious** man." [5].*

*"Consider not only the **chaos** and **calamity** when he was in office." [5].*

Lexical repetition is actively realized in the form of anaphora (repetition of initial words), symploce, and tautological intensifications.

*"I have **a plan**. **A plan** for small businesses. **A plan** for families. **A plan** for America." [5].*

Emotional speech influence on the electorate is also exerted by Harris on the syntactic level:

*"We have to **believe in** ourselves. **Believe in** our country."* (parcellation) *"...if we stand **idly** by our entire nation will pay the price for generations to come."* (complex constructions); *[8].*

“And that’s the fight we are in right now — a fight for America’s future.” (emphatic constructions). *[8].*

On the stylistic level, Harris`s emotionality is reinforced by the following stylistic devices:

*And, in fact, I was the **tie-breaking vote** on the Inflation Reduction Act”* (metaphor); *[5].*

*"**To do** what is hard. **To do** what is good. **To unite**. **To believe** in ourselves. Believe in our country."* (parallelism); *[5].*

*"And what is important is that there is a president who actually brings values and a perspective that is about **lifting people up** and **not beating people down** and name-calling."* (antithesis); *[8].*

*"Stories of women **miscarrying** in a parking lot, **developing** sepsis, **losing the ability** to ever again have children <...>"* (euphemisms); *[8].*

"...let us write the next great chapter in the most extraordinary story ever told." (hyperbole) *[8].*

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of emotionality in the electoral discourse of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris shows that Donald Trump expresses his emotionality through an aggressive and provocative style of speech, which clearly divides the audience into supporters and opponents. His speeches are rich in expressive vocabulary, metaphors, hyperboles, and repetitions that enhance the emotional effect and help create the image of a decisive, self-confident leader capable of "saving" the country from crises and threats.

Unlike D. Trump, Kamala Harris expresses emotionality by appealing to such universal values as justice, equality, dignity, as well as by referring to her personal life experience. Her speech relies on empathetic statements and is marked by a moderate, controlled expression. Harris's style contributes to establishing trusting and respectful relationships with the audience, which is reinforced by her calm yet persuasive tone. She practically does not use non-verbal means of emotionality, either through mimics and intonation or through body language.

The conducted research proves that differences in emotional expression are not merely a matter of style but rather reflect profound differences in the model of political interaction with the audience. In one case – influence is exerted through pressure and expression, in the other – through participation and empathy.

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