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Political Linguistics: Public Speech of American and Kazakh Politicians

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Abstract

The relevance of the problems of ideology, patriotism, and national identity, the manipulation of consciousness is gaining a new reflection in the conceptual picture of the world and society. This scientific article is devoted to the study of concepts in the public speeches of American and Kazakh politicians. The issues of political linguistics are becoming an increasingly relevant research object for many linguists. The purpose of the scientific article is to identify and consider methods of language representation and implementation of the system of concepts in the speeches of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the president of the United States of America. Using content analysis, we identified a system of concepts in the president's inaugural speech. An analysis of the concepts of the political picture of the world revealed and understood the target orientation of speech influences, the motives, and the true meaning of the statements of political figures, shedding light on the nature and essence of political processes.

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1. Introduction

Modern linguistics, which is based on a cognitive-discursive approach to the object of research, is witnessing a growing interest in the discursive features of the language. This is manifested in the identification of various types of discourse, among which political discourse occupies an important place (Hager & Hilbig, 2020). This is explained by the fact that the specificity of politics, unlike numerous other spheres of human activity, lies in its predominantly discursive nature. One of the varieties of discourse is political discourse. It has a set of system-forming features, among which experts distinguish the purpose of communication, participants of communication, the method of communication (chosen strategies and tactics) (Degani, 2018; Markowitz & Slovic, 2020; Scotto Di Carlo, 2020).

The definitions of political discourse are diverse. Researchers interpret it as a kind of ideological discourse, the main purpose of which is the struggle for power; a kind of communication, which aims to gain and retain political power; a set of certain actions aimed at distributing power and economic resources in a country; a semiosphere of communicative practices considered in real and potential aspects; and activities aimed at developing, maintaining, and changing relations of dominance and subordination in society. Therewith, the concepts “politician” and “power” are referred to as the basic concepts of political discourse (Zheltukhina et al., 2018). Admittedly, the influence on the interlocutor, including, on a global scale, on the masses, the shaping of public opinion, and a certain attitude of the people towards the political situation can be called a distinctive feature and the main task of both politics and political discourse (Alemi et al., 2018). The key concept in both politics and political discourse was the struggle for power, as many researchers note (Gornostaeva, 2018; Grigoriev, 2017).

The presidential discourse, considered on the example of the president’s speeches, is interpreted as institutional, as “communication within the given framework of status-role relations” (Platonova, 2015, p. 84). On the one hand, the participants of the presidential discourse are the president and his team, on

the other hand, these participants are citizens of the republic. The purpose of the presidential discourse is to perform the duties assigned to the president by the constitution, as well as to discuss a wide scope of issues not only political but also economic, diplomatic, military, educational, and social. The inaugural speech of the president relates to the epideictic rhetoric, which, according to Aristotle, is a eulogy on a solemn occasion, relating to the present time, using an exalted style, resorting to amplification and exaggeration (Platonova, 2015).

The purpose of this study is to identify and consider the ways of language representation and implementation of the system of concepts in the inaugural speech of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and the president of the United States of America, Barack Obama.

2. Theoretical Framework

Kubryakova (2004) believes that discourse can be defined as a form of using language in real (current) time (online), which reflects a certain type of social activity of a person, is created for the purpose of constructing a special world (or its image) with the help of its detailed language description and is generally part of the communication process between people, described, like every act of communication, by its conditions and with the goals it is consistent with; notably, the types of such activity themselves are historically preconditioned and directly related to the level of development of society and its culture. Discursive activity has a clearly expressed specialized nature, i.e., it cannot be described without indicating “the environment of its manifestation – everyday, scientific, professional (with all its varieties), etc. in other words, the discourse is conducted within a special social context” (Kubryakova, 2004, p. 31). In his famous work, Shcherba (2004) prophetically and visionarily pointed out that language phenomena themselves should be considered as a special material, as a means of conducting speech activity, and finally, as elements of the language system. Therewith, speech activity proceeds, in his opinion, not otherwise than in social conditions, and its purpose is a special appeal. Arutyunova’s (1999) excellent definition of discourse has maintained this tradition as well.

She stated that the discourse is speech immersed in life.

It is also important to consider the phonostylistic structure of the politician's speech. Phonostylistics is a separate field of linguistics since it has its individual subject of research, theoretical foundations that treat phonostylistic units and their functions, its unique approaches to the research material. Numerous studies of Kazakh researchers investigate the issues of speech construction and specifically phonostylistics (Bizhkenova, 2015; Sarsikeeva et al., 2020). The specific features of the rhythmic structure of public speeches of German politicians were investigated using methods of experimental phonetic research, namely informative, auditory, and electroacoustic analyses. The results of the analysis of political speeches by native speakers, as well as phonetic auditors, allowed evaluating the perceptual features of the rhythm and identify the role of this component of intonation in the rhetoric of public speech (Cabrejas-Peñuelas, 2020). The perceptual features of political speeches were investigated by comparing the rhythmic and intonation design of speeches delivered by German politicians and the same texts read by native German speakers who have experience of speaking to a large audience but are not politicians.

3. Methodology

The study is conducted by comparing and contrasting the speeches of two presidents, in particular, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Barack Obama. Comparative, content, and discursive analysis methods were used, including generalization and evaluation of the results. The theoretical part, which discusses the theoretical aspects of the art of rhetoric and linguistic management in political speeches, is based on the analytical and applied works of scientists in this field. The practical part analyses the rhetorical strategies of the two presidents. This also applies to the comparison of the linguistic inventory of the presidents. The speeches of politicians were considered based on the following criteria and components: a sentence comprises words that express a complete thought. This is the basic unit of thought in any communication. Spoken and written languages comprise sentences. There are two main types of sentences; free

and periodic sentences. A free sentence is a sentence where the main idea is stated at the beginning; even if the statement is grammatically complete, it is followed by one or more explanatory sentences or phrases. A periodic sentence – this type of sentence retains the main idea at the end. The sentence is not grammatically complete until the end of the sentence (Bizhkenova, 2015; Zeng et al., 2020).

Parallelism is the use of repetition of a pattern in a literary text for a certain stylistic effect. A passive expression is the use of words in the past tense to indicate the duration of action. Cohesion is a linguistic phenomenon that explains the structure or organization of discourse in relation to a message. It is a binding force that integrates fragments of utterances. Coherence is the arrangement of sentences in a logical order. A figure of speech is an expression used figuratively rather than literally. This gives the word a deeper meaning. A metaphor is a comparison of two dissimilar things that have something in common. A simile is an express comparison of two dissimilar things. However, these two dissimilar subjects have something in common. It is this common feature that is emphasized by the use of similarity or “as... as...”. Hyperbole is an exaggeration when the speaker excessively overstates what they are saying. Metonymy is the use of a word to refer to something else with which it has become closely related. Personification gives an inanimate object human quality. A connotation is an additional meaning that a word acquires due to a different environment wherein the word was used in the past. Archaism is the use of old and middle English words that are no longer used in general terms today, for example, “thereto”, “thou”. Cliches are phrases or ideas that have been used so frequently that they no longer have any special meaning and are not interesting. One of the ways of stylistic analysis is to take a text and analyze it at various levels of language organization – phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic (Degani, 2018; Gornostaeva, 2018; Cabrejas-Peñuelas, 2020).

Texts from the speeches by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (Tokayev, 2019) and by Barack Obama (2009; 2010; 2013a; 2013b) were used as material. Since the discourse in this study is

interpreted as a complex communicative phenomenon reflecting a considerable number of extralinguistic circumstances and is a way of ordering reality, the study will attempt to identify the specific features of the mental space inherent in the speaker as a representative of a certain type of political discourse through the analysis of the language means used.

4. Results and Discussion

The lack of originality in the message inevitably switches the focus of attention of the communication participants to its other components: it is not so much the content of the utterance that is important, but the very fact of its utterance (O'Grady, 2017). This is the most important and unique feature of the inaugural speech as a genre: it is not just a speech action, but a political action. The delivery of the inaugural speech is at the same time an act of the formal introduction of the new president into office. Cliches are considered as the use of standard constructions and models of communicative behavior in situations (Morska, 2019). An example is an appeal to the audience. Depending on the status of the interlocutors, a cliché address is used: *Dear President! Dear compatriots!, Dear fellow citizens!, Dear community!*

President of the Republic Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, implementing the strategy of theatricality through the use of information tactics, begins his speech by expressing gratitude to the Elbasy and the people of Kazakhstan: *Dear President! Dear compatriots! First of all, I would like to thank all the people of Kazakhstan for their trust and support! The speaker presents his opinion to the audience that the election campaign was honest and transparent. These elections were, in fact, democratic. At the polling station, there was a real opportunity to compete openly* (Tokayev, 2019).

The inspirational function is to inspire the nation for the upcoming great deeds and the glorification of traditional values. The new president should inspire the audience with hope for a better future, faith in the success of his activities, and confirm that he is a continuation of the tradition of his predecessors: *Elections are a race where only the opinions of the participants can win.*

Indeed, a fair opinion. In this very important political competition, the wisdom of our people has won. Therefore, this victory is the victory of our people! Together as a country and a people, we have determined the future development of Kazakhstan. The opinion of every citizen who voted for the bright future of Kazakhstan on June 9 is very important for us! After all, peace, solidarity, and unity of our people are our main values. It is the common duty of all of us to preserve this value (Tokayev, 2019).

Next, in the sentence *Together as a country and a people, we have determined the future development of Kazakhstan. The opinion of every citizen who voted for the bright future of Kazakhstan on June 9 is very important for us! After all, peace, solidarity, and unity of our people are our main values. It is the common duty of all of us to preserve this value* (Tokayev, 2019 – the speaker, moving on to the implementation of the tactics of cooperation, demonstrating unity with the listeners, using the We-inclusive technique and, reinforcing this with lexical means (We as a single nation), representing the idea of compatibility, introducing the listener into his personal zone, focuses his attention on the idea of community, solidarity and (... the unity of the nation., which are our common value).

Therefore, as a president, I want to say to our people: My main goal is to protect the interests of every citizen of our country. My goal is to ensure the unity of society and protect the rights of every citizen (Tokayev, 2019). Using the possessive pronoun (My goal) indicates that he undertakes as the president to protect the interests of everyone. When implementing the tactic of implicit self-presentation, the speaker positions himself as an active, strong personality, thus creating the effect of a bright, compelling personality.

In the next sentence, *I will not allow anybody to divide us according to political views and principles! In my work, I will definitely consider the valuable suggestions and initiatives of various political and public figures* (Tokayev, 2019) – a pronoun is used for the name of the subject of the action, indicating an indefinite referent, which allows the speaker to refrain from a particular nomination. The speaker does not name particular figures whose proposals and

initiatives will be considered in his future work. Next, the president uses the tactic of a promise: *I will defend the national interests of Kazakhstan always and everywhere. I will support Kazakh entrepreneurs, attract and protect investments, stimulate business activity, and develop a broad middle class* (Tokayev, 2019).

We work openly and fairly. The most important task for us is to serve honestly in accordance with the law (Tokayev, 2019). The change of the singular verb form to the plural form indicates the desire of the politician to be objective: the addressee speaks not only on his own behalf. Objectivity as a characteristic of his speech is now necessary for the speaker because he must create the conditions necessary for the implementation of the tactics of the promise, so he needs people to believe. *We have only one Motherland! Our destiny is one! We all work together for the bright future of our people! Not to promise, but to do!* (Tokayev, 2019) – a construction of this kind is described as a motto, which is an inherent feature in the genre of the inaugural speech. Furthermore, the speaker uses the following phrases in his statement *for a bright future; the government is obliged to hear people's requests, solve problems in the local communities, regularly report to citizens* (Tokayev, 2019), which indicate the realities that are positively assessed by society.

Next, the president uses a presentation tactic in his speech – presenting someone in an attractive way. *To tell the truth, in this election, our citizens voted in favor of the strategic direction of the president! Nursultan Nazarbayev has created a world-recognized model of development. The blue flag of Kazakhstan was hoisted all over the world. These days I receive a lot of requests from our citizens. They all have one thing in common: to preserve the path and strategy of the president and to further strengthen it. In fact, it is legitimate for people to make such a request. Because modern-day developed Kazakhstan is, first and foremost, the president's great achievement. **The president is a great founder of the Kazakh state. He is a global statesman.** This is how it is written in the history of the world. It is our common duty to always respect the great work of the president for our people and the world*

community (Tokayev, 2019). When implementing this tactic, the speaker makes a direct indication of the positive qualities of the subject of speech; therefore, language means are used that explicitly express the positive psychological orientation of the speaker, in particular, the lexemes *support, world-famous, founder of the state, at the global level, great achievement, great work*.

The speaker offers to continue the ideas of President Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev ... *Therefore, the state program "Digital Kazakhstan" approved by the president must be implemented* (Tokayev, 2019). The president's speech uses many references to the previous leader of Kazakhstan, which also indicates the continuity of generations. "...Names form a system, in fact, they are part of a broader system of forms of address and reference forms, which also includes combinations of full names, surnames with titles, just titles, etc." (Vezhbitskaya, 1996, p. 109), for example, in this text, forms of address with a title Elbasy (the president) – as the leader of the nation.

The nation is praised by listing its admirable features: *In this very important political competition, the wisdom of our people has won. Therefore, this victory is the victory of our people! Together as a country and a people, we have determined the future development of Kazakhstan* (Tokayev, 2019). An indirect expression of the praise of a strong nation is, in particular, a demonstration of the determination to defend at any cost the most important in the hierarchy of national values – freedom and human capital: *For our citizens to live, work, educate their children, rejoice and be proud of the achievements of our people, we will continue the policy of human capital development. First of all, what should we do in this direction? What is the main concern of the people today?* (Tokayev, 2019). In the given example, the authors of this study pay attention to the strategy of forecasting and informing with elements of manipulation, implemented by means of rhetorical questions to the nation.

Thus, evidently, the glorification of national virtues is inextricably linked with the assertion of national values, while constantly emphasizing not the need to develop new values, but, on the contrary, the idea of

adherence to traditional values and the need to preserve them: *Our citizens are very concerned about the development of a dialogue between the authorities and society. Such a dialogue should be based on the recognition of the pluralism of opinions. Different opinions, but a united nation. This is the main reference point. Therefore, I decided to establish a National Council of Public Trust. The Council will include representatives of the entire society, including young people. The first meeting of the National Council of Public Trust will be held in August this year. The authorities are obliged to fulfill their promises to the people. This is its main mission. This is the only way to strengthen the unity of the nation and stability in the country. Therefore, a substantive Plan for the implementation of my election Platform will be developed. The best ideas and proposals from the people will be reflected in this document* (Tokayev, 2019).

The tactic of implicit self-presentation is the presentation of oneself in an attractive, favorable light by the speaker expressed indirectly, inconspicuously referring to the object of positive evaluation. *Our formula of state power: a strong, plenipotent President – influential, capable Parliament – a Government accountable to the people. It is precisely such a political system that most fully meets the needs of our state in complex geopolitical realities, contributes to the implementation of the strategic tasks facing us* (Tokayev, 2019). The tactic of implicit self-presentation is also reflected in the following examples: ***Only decent, educated people should come to the public administration system based on meritocracy. There can be no other principle of personnel selection. In general, we will have to increase the responsibility of the authorities to the people. Special attention will be paid to the development of civil society*** (Tokayev, 2019).

In this example, the strategy of influencing the addressee's axiological system is implemented through the tactics of considering the addressee's value orientations and ideals: *decent, educated people, the responsibility of the authorities to the people, the development of civil society*. Thus, the president informs, inspires, convinces, and encourages the listener to act. The use of elevating strategies

solves the problem of optimizing the perception of a politician by the addressee-observer. Therefore, when implementing this strategy, the speaker must showcase strength, confidence, self-sufficiency, competence. Therefore, he focuses on praising himself and his supporters, building a positive mental space.

Vital concepts the president's inaugural speech implements the pragmatic effect of persuasion and the individual's belief in a full and productive life organized for the people through the power represented by the president. Social concepts are associated with the awareness of society of the opinions of social equality, justice, and countering any kind of discrimination. Social concepts constitute an essential element of the state system of social regulation of the behavior of a person, a social group, and society en masse. The social concept is a factor of motivation of the life and activity of the people: *First of all, citizens want justice everywhere. From social policy, it requires government agencies to provide fair services to the population* (Tokayev, 2019).

National-cultural concepts in the inauguration discourse focus on the mechanism of preserving the integrity of the state with original national culture and are verbalized by mentioning the first president: *... Therefore, the state program "Digital Kazakhstan" approved by Elbasy must be implemented* (Tokayev, 2019). Moral and ethical concepts in the president's inaugural address are considered as moral imperatives. In pragmatic terms, when appealing to moral and ethical concepts, the president, wishing to invoke a certain mindset in the people and lead them in the right direction, focuses on the observance of human rights and anti-corruption actions that hinder the development of the state in general: *The judiciary is the guarantor of the rule of law. Therefore, it is a great task for judges to meet the highest professional and moral standards. It is necessary to tighten the system of evaluation and selection of judges and candidates for this position. Judgment must be the last resort of justice. The main task of the law enforcement system is to gain the trust of the people. Corruption is a disease that hinders the development of the state. This is a phenomenon that threatens mutual trust in*

society and the security of our country in general. We are systematically working against corruption (Tokayev, 2019).

Economic concepts in the president's inaugural speech. The president expresses his concern about the country's economy, analyzes the current economic situation, and predicts future models of economic development by informing and forecasting, presenting common goals: *The process of political transformation of society will continue. The political superstructure must correspond to deep economic transformations; otherwise, there may be a slowdown in reforms. The world experience speaks convincingly about this* (Tokayev, 2019).

Environmental concepts in the inaugural discourse are becoming significant and topical in the political dimension. The ecology of the country is considered as a global issue. The problem of drinking water in Kazakhstan requires an immediate solution at the highest political level: *The current state of the environment is a matter of public concern. Therefore, the country needs a unified environmental policy. It is necessary to adopt a new Environmental Code, which will give impetus to the environmental protection system. The next topical issue is water supply. Clean drinking water should be in every home, in every family* (Tokayev, 2019).

Evidently, one of the greatest linguistic tools of political persuasion is a metaphor. It is generally believed that US President Barack Obama makes emotional speeches full of stylistic techniques (Abdi & Basarati, 2018). Furthermore, by translating ideas into metaphors, the president presents himself as a strong leader responsible for his country. Thus, Barack Obama masterfully uses metaphorical phrases to attract people's attention. The volume of Obama's speeches is enormous. However, speeches make people want to listen because they create a situation where people feel themselves in the presence of a great political leader (Zeng et al., 2020).

That's where peace begins – not just in the plans of leaders, but in the hearts of people – this stylistic device supports the president's desire that people around the world live peacefully and ensure freedom around the world. He metaphorically asserts that the

values of freedom, heritage, and principles depend on the inner values of people. *We carry all that history in our hearts* (Obama, 2010) – in his speech in Jerusalem, Obama uses metaphors to strengthen the main arguments about security and peace. He demonstrates his friendship and deep understanding of the dilemmas of the Israeli people. Moreover, despite the faith and religion, the president figuratively encourages people to love their neighbors, sisters, and brothers, inspires them to think about the values of the nation. *Of course, those values are at the heart not just of the Christian faith; but of all faiths. From Judaism to Islam, Hinduism to Sikhism, there echoes a powerful call to serve our brothers and sisters. To keep in our hearts deep and abiding compassion for all. And to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves* (Obama, 2013b) – according to the president, our world is changing every minute. In this regard, he reasonably points out that the authorities need to think about changing educational standards and methods. He sharply criticizes educational systems, various policies, and procedures of institutions and draws attention to the importance of interaction between students and staff.

In a speech dedicated to the activities of Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama also uses strong figures of speech: *So all along that education pipeline, too many people – too many of our young talented people – are slipping through the cracks. It's not only heartbreaking for those students; it's a loss for our economy and our country* (Obama, 2009). In his eulogy, President Obama metaphorically describes Mandela's charismatic personality and his powerful influence on people. Furthermore, Obama praises Mandela's ideas about how to fight for equality and justice, how to defend freedom, and that, despite our differences, people can create a more beautiful place to live. He draws the audience's attention to Mandela's ability to be skillful and righteous for everyone. *He changed laws, but he also changed hearts. Let us search for his largeness of spirit somewhere inside of ourselves. And when the night grows dark, when injustice weighs heavy on our hearts, when our best-laid plans seem beyond our reach, let us think of Madiba and the words that brought him comfort within the four walls of his cell* (Obama, 2013a) – in this speech, the

president figuratively compares work with the core of foreign policy. He appreciates the outstanding role of the State Department employees for their tireless work. *No one – no single step can change overnight what lies in the hearts and minds of millions.* In his speeches on the economic situation, the president compares crises with anxiety and the source of a sleepless night. He is trying to convince and reassure people that there is a way out of the recession and to strengthen the country. *You are the backbone of American foreign policy – especially those of you who are serving far away from home during the holidays* (Obama, 2010) – in his speech at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the president passionately tries to convince people to contemplate changing themselves inside. Barack Obama points out that empathy is the core of humanity. People should not ignore what is happening to others and should not remain indifferent to cruelty.

In his political speeches, President Barack Obama takes personification for granted as an important aspect of a rhetorical strategy. The president uses a stylistic device to express serious concern about the country and emphasize the importance of national unity. Moreover, by appealing to the emotions of the public, he inspires people with confidence that the nation is strong enough to fight against any difficulties (Katre, 2019). Thus, Barack Obama uses personification when the phenomenon is associated with human actions. Sometimes the president uses a type of personification when an object is personified and depicted with human emotions. Furthermore, he represents not only America but also other countries.

5. Concluding Remarks

In the inaugural speech of President Tokayev, the continuity of national ideals and values is traced, including the oath of the president; the promise of the president to perform his duties with dignity; the statement of the principles of national policy, ideological understanding of pressing issues. The central concepts of the inaugural discourse are “Power”, “People” and “President”. Power is the ability, right, and opportunity to decisively influence the activities and commands of people through will, authority, law, violence; the people are the only source of state power; the president is

a symbol and guarantor of the unity of the people and state power, combining the first two concepts into a single whole. It is this trinity that forms the foundation of the inaugural discourse. The presidential inaugural rhetoric is impossible in the absence of one of the three above-mentioned concepts.

The president’s inaugural speech contains multi-layered concepts of the inaugural discourse, which, given the continuity of the main concepts of political culture, include concepts that encode knowledge about cultures, socio-political, ideological, and other values essential for the political picture of the world. These concepts were identified based on the data of the content analysis and comparison of the words of the president’s inaugural speeches. Thus, at the lexical level, the following keywords are observed: *xaliq* – people; *elbası* – president, leader of the nation; *bilik* – power, government; democracy; *adamgerşilik* – morality, *ädildik* – justice, pluralism; *qundılıq* – value; *bay-qwattı* – welfare; *jemqorlıq* – corruption; ecology; economy; *birlik* – unity; *bolaşaq* – future; *Otan* – homeland; *tağdır* – fate; *turaqtılıq* – stability; *jahandanw* – globalization; *senim* – trust, most of which are socially significant words. Words allow understanding and revealing the features of the speaker’s worldview. The semantic structure of a word contains information about the value system of a certain historical epoch, and values that are relevant for a particular society become concepts that are verbalized in the speech by words.

In the speeches of both presidents, a considerable number of figures of speech are used, which strengthen the emotional message and emphasize the interest of politicians in the topic of the statement. Both presidents use tactical manipulation of rhetoric to achieve their goals, but Obama uses more stylistic means in his speeches than Tokayev. The analysis revealed that metaphors are the most noticeable stylistic device in the speeches of presidents. It is obvious that presidents use metaphorical language in their speeches because metaphors have a huge impact on people and help them gain votes. Obama appeals to the audience’s consciousness when he emphasizes the economic and educational problems in the country, and Tokayev attracts

people with an emotional side, showcasing national unity.

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