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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31499/2415-8828.2.2022.268656>Antonina Semeniuk* , Liubov Prystupa** 

LEXICO-STYLISTIC AND STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY'S POLITICAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

The defiant Russia's aggression upon Ukraine changed the world order and made countries choose between good and evil, stand aside or act, focus peoples' attention on human rights and values important for everyone. All these inevitably encourage linguists and researchers of related disciplines to transfer their investigations into the arena of political communication, where of statesmen play a primary role in influencing the minds of the masses. In this regard, the address of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to Congress as a material for analysis is definitely relevant.

The purpose of the study is to consider the structure of the political speech itself and the linguistic means of the speaker's communicative intent realization which lies in providing comprehensive assistance to Ukraine, defending the basic human values. The use of structural-semantic analysis made it possible to distinguish three blocks in Volodymyr Zelensky's address: introductory, informative, and conclusion, as well as to reveal their characteristic features. An appeal to the mass addressee, taking into account such factors as position, gender and nationality as official forms of address and nonofficial *Friends!*, contribute to setting up a warm atmosphere. The informative block is presented by five subtopics, each of which serves as an independent element of the political address. An expression of gratitude to Joe Biden and American people for their strong support for Ukraine, reinforced by the demonstration of a video with episodes of the war, is found in the conclusion, which is an effective method of influencing the audience.

The elements of discourse analysis made it possible to highlight positive images of America as a defender, Ukraine as a fighter, and negative Russia as an aggressor and analyze the linguistic means that form them. An effective means of influencing is reference to important historical events for the USA and the words of Martin Luther King, which mark the common aspirations of American and Ukrainian people. Russia's trampling upon basic human rights and values, such as democracy, independence, freedom, peace are key points in Volodymyr Zelensky's speech. Joe Biden is considered the leader of the nation, the leader of the world and the leader of peace, that mark President of high reputation.

The successful implementation of the communicative intent by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is evidenced not only by the greeting of his speech with loud applause, but also the USA's strong support and real assistance to Ukraine in the war against Russia.

Keywords: political speech, introductory block, informative block, conclusion, image, basic values, mass addressee.

Семенюк Антоніна, Приступа Любов. Лексико-стилістичні та структурні риси політичного звернення Володимира Зеленського до Конгресу.

Зухвала агресія з боку Росії проти України змінила світовий порядок та примусила країни обирати між добром і злом, стояти осторонь чи діяти, загострила увагу на важливих для кожного цінностях. Усе це неминуче спонукає мовознавців ті дослідників суміжних дисциплін перенести свою увагу в царину політичної комунікації, де промови лідерів провідних держав відіграють першочергову роль у здійсненні впливу на свідомості мас. У цьому аспекті вибір звернення Президента України Володимира Зеленського до Конгресу матеріалом для аналізу є безумовно актуальним.

Метою дослідження є розгляд структури самої політичної промови та мовних засобів, що сприяють реалізації комунікативної мети мовця, яка полягає у спонуканні аудиторії до надання всебічної допомоги Україні в захисті та відстоюванні базових людських прав та цінностей. Застосування структурно-семантичного аналізу дало змогу виокремити три блоки у зверненні Володимира Зеленського: інтродуктивного, інформативного та заключної частини і виявити їх характерні риси. Зокрема, для інтродуктивного блоку особливістю є звернення до масового

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адресата з урахуванням посадових, гендерних і національних характеристик як офіційного звертання та неофіційного *Friends!*, що сприяє налаштуванню на теплу атмосферу. Інформативний блок реалізують п'ять підтем, кожна з яких є самостійним елементом політичної промови. На висловлення подяки Джо Байдену та американському народу за потужну підтримку України, підсилене демонстрацією відео з епізодами війни, натрапляємо в заключному блоці, що є дієвим прийомом впливу на аудиторію.

Елементи дискурсивного аналізу уможливили визначення позитивних образів Америки-захисниці, України-борця, негативного росії-агресора та виокремлення мовних засобів, що формують їх. Дієвим засобом впливу є апеляція до важливих для США історичних подій та слів Мартіна Лютера Кінга, що маркують спільність прагнень американського та українського народів. Попирання росією базових людських прав і цінностей, таких як демократія, незалежність, свобода, мир, є ключовими у промові Президента України Володимира Зеленського. Джо Байдену вважають лідером нації, лідером світу і лідером у забезпеченні миру, що є найвищою оцінкою політичного діяча. Про успішну реалізацію комунікативної мети Президентом України Володимиром Зеленським свідчить не лише вітання його промови голосними оплесками, але й потужна підтримка та реальна допомога США Україні в боротьбі з росією-агресором.

Ключові слова: політична промова, інтродуктивний блок, інформативний блок, заключний блок, образ, базові цінності, масовий адресат.

Political communication has attracted a scientists' great attention from various fields of scientific knowledge, including linguistics. The specificity of politics, unlike other spheres of human activity, lies in its predominantly discursive character: many political actions are speech actions in their nature. The study of the statesmen's political speeches as a type of political communication has always been in the focus of investigation and urgent due to the periodic change of power representatives. Thus, in the field of Ukrainian scientific activity political speech was considered within the framework of linguistic rhetoric. In particular, in his study L. Matsko [Мацько 1999, p. 3–16] defines it as a pre-prepared acute political speech with positive or negative assessments, justification, specific facts, with outlined plans, the perspective of political changes.

Ya. Hnezdilova [Гнезділова 2003, p. 359] came to the conclusion that the official speech of a politician is thought out, where syntactic constructions and lexical units are selected specifically to enhance the impulsive perception of the speech in order to win the addressee's favor, make him perceive, adopt and share the desired for the addressee emotional state.

N. Steblyna [Стеблина 2019, p. 85–95] conducts a comparative analysis of the political speeches of Ukrainian presidents using a formalized analysis in order to determine the parameters of political texts fluctuation depending on the power change.

In monograph L. Nahorna [Нагорна 2015, p. 380] analyzes the connection between politics and language through the prism of political metaphors, language regulation of communicative interaction in the process of political linguistics formation along with such related fields as ethno-political science, linguistic and cultural science, and sociolinguistics.

L. Klymanska [Климанська 2007] focuses her attention on the types of socio-communicative technologies for the political space modeling, in particular, the focus falls on resonant communicative technologies in the Ukrainian political space.

Y. Krapuva, D. Krikun [Крапива & Крікун 2019, p. 42–45] in the course of political communication analyzing found out that the specifics of this phenomenon can be investigated through the matrix of certain characteristics, among which the properties of the subject and the addressee; method of implementation; monologic and dialogic types of speech comparison; functional load; the amount of information and the purpose of the statement are considered.

The works of foreign scientists who analyze political communication in various ways and on the border with other fields of study are significant. Thus, a German researcher D. Griswelle [Griswelle 2000] believes that a political speech is a phenomenon that occurs, first of all, as a certain communication in which the speaker informs something, and a certain number of people who are opposite to him, perceive him and his speech, showing unity at the same time.

The levels of political communication deployment are in the scope of R. Perlof's scientific interest [Perlof 2014, p. 240]. Here belong: the micro level, at which potential voters are influenced, and the macro level, which is characterized by the formation of public opinion, national interests, institutional changes and political activity, are observed.

For researchers L. Powell and J. Cowart [Powell & Cowart 2016], political communication appears to be both a simple and complex phenomenon, because, on the one hand, it focuses on a specific topic, and on the other hand, on a mass audience and covers various disciplines. Their research is based on both the academic field and the field of professional activity.

The **relevance** of our research is determined by the increased attention of the world's community to issues of international politics in order to strengthen its geopolitical positions and gain influence on the international political arena. This attracts attention to political speech as an important and integral component of any government representative's political activity.

The **purpose** of our study is lexical-semantic and structural analysis of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's political address to the Members of Congress, which involves solving specific tasks:

- to define the structure of the presidential political speech;
- to determine lexical and stylistic means of influencing the minds of the audience;
- characterize the images of America, Ukraine, and Russia formation by means of language units.

Following L. Shevchenko, D. Derhach, D. Syzonov [Шевченко, Дергач & Сизонов 2014, p. 80] we consider the term *political communication* as a linguistic activity aimed at the promotion of certain ideas, emotional influence on the citizens of the country, their encouraging to political actions, for the development of a coherent social position, adoption and justification of socio-political decisions in conditions of views plurality.

The main function of political communication is the struggle for political power based on the use of communicative resources: political communication is aimed at direct or indirect influence on the distribution of power (through elections, appointments, creation of public opinion, etc.) and its use (adopting laws, issuing decrees, resolutions).

Political discourse as a way of communication mediated by a certain socio-cultural tradition correlates with a wide sphere of society's consciousness and reflects the relationship between political thinking and political behavior, politics and language, which acts as a driving tool in political speeches.

It is this type of discourse that reflects the socio-political existence of the country, contains a part of its culture, and marks nationally specific and cultural values. Language functioning in the political sphere is a powerful means of a politician's idea realizing. With the help of addresses and speeches the leaders of states represent their positions and ideas, further plans and prospects for their implementation.

If we take into account political language, it is interpreted as a set of verbal structures that are used in the field of politics and influence the formation and evolution of the individuals' political consciousness, their participation in political processes; as a set of discursive practices that form the sphere of political communication.

Political language can include, first of all, the language of public speeches, parliamentary language or the so-called the language of parliamentary debates, the language of political propaganda and political advertising in both oral and written forms, the language of various programs on political topics, political news blocks on radio and television, columns devoted to political events in the press, articles on political topics, etc.

The political speech of Volodymyr Zelensky to the Members of Congress [Zelensky 2022] is the material for our investigation. While analyzing our attention was drawn to the structure of his speech, which greatly influences the effectiveness of appealing to the audience and contributes to obtaining the desired result. Three main blocks of the speech can be distinguished: introductory, informative and conclusion, of which the first and last ones are smaller compared to the second part as Ukrainian President clearly, consistently and logically conveys his main idea, emphasizing it with vivid arguments and relevant examples in it.

The main intent of his political speech is persuasion of the audience, the speaker takes into account cognitive, social, professional characteristics of listeners, education, gender, age, and regional variations. The introductory block of Zelensky's speech opens with both official *Mrs. Speaker, Members of Congress, Ladies and Gentlemen, Americans!* and non-official *Friends!*, considers such factors as social position, gender, nationality appealing to the mass addressee, that immediately sets a positive tone, shortens the distance between the speaker and the audience, and marks a respectful and friendly attitude.

In his address to Congress, Ukrainian President appeals three times to the people of America, calling them friends, which shows not only affection, warm relationships and unconditional connection between Americans and Ukrainians, demonstrating a clear political position of Ukrainian people, but also draws attention to important information. In addition to this, the emphasis falls on the reference to the country, city and people of Ukraine, on whose behalf he has the honor to greet all those present, which is expressed with the lexeme *proud*: *I am proud to greet you from Ukraine, from our capital – Kyiv.*

The speaker immediately proceeds to describing the terrible situation the capital turned out to be, clearly naming the aggressor: *From a city that is **under missile and air strikes by Russian troops***. Repetition of the phrasal verb *give up*, adjective *the worst*, and phrase *brave and freedom-loving people* emphasize the courage and indomitability of *Kyiv residents*. To express bravery of the other cities and towns in Ukraine, the speaker uses comparison: *But it **does not give up**. And it didn't even think to **give up** for a single minute! **Just as dozens of other cities and communities in our country, which found themselves in the worst war since World War II.***

In syntactic parallelism the pronoun *we* in relation to both Ukrainian and American people indicates a common desire and significantly shortens the distance between the speaker and the target audience, for example: ***We have to stop this. We must prevent such things, We have already become part of the anti-war coalition. We in Ukraine want the same for ourselves. We offer the United States to impose sanctions against all politicians.***

As for the analysis of the informative block, it is possible to distinguish five subtopics, which are meaningfully complete elements. The first one is the recognition of the fact that Russia is a terrorist country that does not observe basic human values and violates them, which in the speech is expressed with an adjective of negative connotation and repetition: *It (Russia) went on a **brutal offensive** against our **values**. **Basic human values**.*

In the next subtopic, we can differentiate the appeal to similar facts in the history of both countries: the USA and Ukraine, with reference to events, places and dates symbolic for American nation, such as *the national memorial in Rushmore, Pearl Harbor, the events of December 7, 1941 and September 11, 2001*. They are monuments to the struggle of American people for independence. Ukraine's struggle for independence is described by means of comparison in convergence with anaphoric repetition: ***Just like yours**, ordinary people of America. **Just like those of everyone** in the United States*. Use of nationally specific realities is a characteristic feature of political speeches, which are used to awaken certain emotions and associations.

The third subtopic is based on the idea of unity, creation of new coalitions and alliances for the sake of ensuring peace. Anaphoric repetition of a generalizing pronoun *we* as a marker of a common need, key lexical units and phrases represent this approach to peace making: ***We need new alliances**. **And we offer them**. **We offer to create an association** – U-24. **United for peace**. **A union of responsible states that have the strength and conscience to stop conflicts***. President's point of view, which coincides with the aspirations of the Ukrainian people, is represented by the introductory phrases: ***If such an alliance**, the U-24, had already been formed, **I believe it would have saved thousands of lives**. **In our country**, many other countries that need peace so crucially, that suffered inhuman destruction*.

The fourth subtopic – «to close» the sky over Ukraine. The request for help, creation of a no-fly zone over Ukraine to save civilians and response to Russia's terrorist actions are rather clear: ***To establish a no-fly zone over Ukraine is to save people**. **Humanitarian no-fly zone**. **Conditions under which Russia will no longer be able to terrorize our peaceful cities every day and night***.

And the fifth subtopic – gratitude to the United States on behalf of Ukraine, especially for the personal role of US President Joe Biden in providing strong support to Ukraine: ***I am grateful to President Biden for his personal involvement, for his sincere commitment to the defense of Ukraine and democracy around the world***.

In conclusion for a stronger impact on the mass addressee with a call to boldly confront the aggressor and act, rather than wait, Volodymyr Zelensky used a video shown on the screen, which accurately and vividly conveys the events taking place in Ukraine. A further positive aspect is emphasis on the importance of peace for the whole world, and assertion that Joe Biden is *the leader of the nation=the leader of the world = the leader of Peace*. Furthermore, in his speech, Ukrainian President appeals to the words of Martin Luther King, known and respected throughout America and around the world (*I have a dream, I have a need*), that proves common aspirations of both Ukrainian and American people.

Metaphorical statements and phraseological units are important elements in any political speech. The following stable expressions, bright, apt, expressive, and understandable to everyone are preferable for Ukrainian President's address: *fall victim to something, a source of death, the darkest time for our country, for the whole Europe, the Russian military machine flooded with our blood*. Such phraseological units form the focus of the statement around which information is centered.

Volodymyr Zelensky clearly portrays the following images of the three countries: Ukraine (the Ukrainian people)-fighter, America (the American people)-defender, and russia-agressor. The image of Ukraine is formed by adjectives that depict Ukrainian people as brave and freedom-loving who fight for democracy, independence, freedom, peace.

The speaker also notes that Ukrainians are forced to give their best daughters and sons to the sacred struggle not only for their own land, but also for the values of Europe, the whole world and for the sake of everyone's future during this brutal full-scale invasion of russia: *They sacrifice the best children – sons and daughters to stop the full-scale Russian invasion. Today the Ukrainian people are defending not only Ukraine, we are fighting for the values of Europe and the world, sacrificing our lives in the name of the Future.*

The image of America is shaped by Americans – strong people who have a similar history to Ukrainian, and who then and now contribute their share to the struggle for freedom and independence of Ukraine, Europe and the whole planet, which is true: *today the American people are helping not just Ukraine, but Europe and the world to keep the planet alive, to keep justice in history.* Volodymyr Zelensky also uses such phrases as *in your great history and overwhelming support*, which in its turn emphasize the majestic image of America and, with the help of anaphoric repetition, expresses gratitude for how much America and its people have done for Ukraine and the whole world: *Ukraine is grateful to the United States for its overwhelming support. For all that your state and your people have already done for our freedom. For weapons and ammunition, for training and funding, for leadership in the free world, which helps put pressure on the aggressor economically.*

The image of russia is the image of a terrorist country that destroys not only land, towns and cities, but also violates basic human rights and values: *Russia has attacked more than just our land and our cities. It went on a brutal offensive against our values. Basic human values. It threw tanks and planes against our freedom. Against our right to live freely in our country, choosing our own future. Against our desire for happiness. Against our national dreams.* The usage of verbs *to terrorize, to attack, to kill, to destroy*; nouns *terror, death, bombs, aggressor, Russian military machine, invasion, war, disaster, destruction*; adjectives *offensive countless, man-made, inhuman, brutal* depict an extremely negative, inhumane image of russia.

Condemnation of the aggressor's actions is presented by a number of expressions, with the help of which Volodymyr Zelensky appeals precisely to the emotions and feelings of people who, more than obviously, are not at all indifferent to what will happen to Ukraine and its citizens: *Russian troops have already fired nearly a thousand missiles at Ukraine. Countless bombs. They use drones to kill more precisely. This is a terror Europe has not seen for 80 years!*

To sum up, our research shows the importance of political speeches analysis, as it shows the powerful influence of words on the audience, especially in case of the war. A vivid example is Ukrainian President's speech to Congress, which, thanks to a clear structure and appropriate means of different levels of language, ensures the realization of the communicative intent which lies in convincing listeners of the truthfulness of the information provided and encouraging them to take decisive actions.

Using nouns, adjectives, the generalization (pronoun *we*), repetitions of various kinds, comparison, reliance on the words by Martin Luther King, a video demonstration of horrors of the war in Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky achieves his goal – to convince Americans, led by Joe Biden, that Ukrainian people stand for a peaceful

future of the whole world and need help in this. Such basic values as democracy, independence, freedom, and peace, which Russia tramples on, come to the fore in both Ukrainian and American societies, and are key notions in shaping the images of the three countries in the world arena. In his address Ukrainian President not only supports the above-mentioned values, but also calls to defend them together, which the whole civilized world agrees with.

We see a perspective in the further analysis of the political speeches of today's leading politicians, taking into account various sociolinguistic factors, which will enable an in-depth and multifaceted analysis of techniques and linguistic means to influence the target audience.

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