

THE RHETORICAL DEVICES OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyze some specific rhetorical devices in political discourse, the importance of being aware of political ideology, the importance of rhetorical devices in political activities.

Keywords: rhetorical devices, speech influence, political language, allusion, metaphors, metonymies, linguistic manipulation.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the widespread use of the cognitive approach to the analysis of political communication, rhetorical heuristics are still in demand in modern scientific discourse devoted to speech influence in political communication. The focus of this area is to analyze the system of political arguments, strategies and tactics of speech influence, develop a methodology for rhetorical analysis and build theoretical models of argumentation, and study the practical implementation of the "PA-FOS — logos — ethos" triad in political communication. Leading research in this area is published in the journals "Political Communication" and "American Communication Journal". The Central place in rhetorical research is occupied by rhetorical criticism (rhetorical criticism). Initially, the main subject of rhetorical research was the ability to make public speeches convincingly and effectively. However, this area of analysis (often referred to as "public address", i.e. "public speaking) subsequently, she expanded her subject. Public address now includes research on rhetoric on television, radio, movies, and even analysis of persuasiveness in interpersonal communication. Rhetorical theory and" public address "dominated political rhetoric until the" ideological turn " associated with the emergence of rhetorical criticism occurred. Allusion as a rhetorical device of political discourse.

METHODOLOGY

Not surprisingly, the language applied in the political domain is rich in the use of phraseological allusions. According to the Latvian linguist Naciscione¹⁷, 'phraseological allusion is an implicit mental reference to the image of a phraseological unit which is represented in discourse by one or more explicit image-bearing

components hinting at the image'. One of the most widely used images employed in the corpus of The Baltic Times relate to the Iraq war. We can read about 'weapons of mass destruction', 'weapons of mass affection'. Similarly, the name of a dramatic event in history carries a full allusive force of the event itself. For example, we can read about the series of the so-called Colour Revolutions: the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Velvet Revolution in Check Republic. It has to be admitted that to understand the political discourse itself, the language user has to have both the political background, which enables him/her to comprehend the situational context of utterance and a high-level command of the foreign language: the use of allusion presupposes the knowledge of the fact, or the awareness of the contextual situation. As a rule, no indication of the source is offered to the listener or to the speaker. From the linguistic perspective, allusion exhibits certain important semantic peculiarities: the primary meaning of the word or phrase often serves as a vessel into which the new meaning is assigned to; thus, it results in a kind of interplay between two meanings. It is generally accepted that the essential function of allusion is to give indirect reference to a historical, literary, mythological fact or to the fact important for a certain community or for a specified segment of society. The Times (2006) often uses allusions in its headlines, for example, Pie in the sky for teachers; or Pie in the sky for nurses (September 7: 2, November, 13: 12). On a practical level, most people in Britain know the refrain of the song: You will get pie in the sky when you die. In this case, the use of the part of the refrain likely implies that teachers and nurses had been given nothing but promises by the political parties or authorities. However, linguistically speaking, the allusion pie in the sky implies a new meaning, i.e. nothing but promises. It seems that through the frequency of repetition this allusion has entered into the word stock of the English language and functions as a figurative synonym. For example, The Baltic Times (2006) states that 'three musketeers, the three Baltic Prime Ministers Ansip, Kalvitis and Brazauskas agree that nuclear power is the one answer to the region's concern (April 20-26: 2). The above-presented statement relating to Three Musketeers by A. Dumas creates the image that the three Prime Ministers of the Baltic States function as if being one friendly, supportive and brave team. Beyond words, visual images can cluster around particular political personalities, thus acquiring allusive resonance. In the case of allusions, the contextual resonance matters more than an individual who has been the author of the words/phrases. Therefore, it can be asserted that the phraseological allusion being widely used in political rhetoric serves as an implicit mental reference to the image of a phraseological unit being represented in a political discourse by one or more image bearing components.

RESULTS

Moreover, phraseological allusions occupy a significant role in political rhetoric because they:

- use the image to appeal to the imagination
- create figurative language, which extends the literal language
- contribute to presenting successful images being backed up by utterances/statements often left unspoken, but which the listener or reader can immediately process.

Metonymy as a rhetorical device of political discourse. Metonymy is considered to be a rhetorical device that is based on some kind of association connecting two concepts, which these meanings represent. It has to be admitted that metonymy being a means of building up imagery focuses on concrete objects, which are used in a generalized meaning. Naciscione states that 'the explicit image-bearing components of the phraseological units have a metonymic function in discourse' (ibid.). Thus, it can be presupposed that metonymy as a rhetorical device applied in political discourse 'secures sustained associative vision which enables the reader or listener to see beyond the words' (ibid). In other words, metonymy is the replacement of an expression by a factually related term or notion, and it can bear the semantic connection of a causal, spatial, or temporal nature. There are known several types of the replacement of an expression by a factually related notion:

- author/work substitution, e.g. to read Halliday
- product/material substitution, e.g. to wear leather
- place/resident, e.g. to visit The White House

In view of this, the present inquiry has observed numerous instances in political discourse when the place of some institution is used not only for the institution itself or for its staff but also for referring to its policy, e.g. The Pentagon, Wall Street, Downing Street, Saeima (i.e. the Parliament of Latvia), the Kremlin and so forth. All in all, metonymy is considered to be a widely used rhetorical device in political discourse, which explains its constant application in politically related texts: Latvia responded to the incident by expelling a Belarusian diplomat (The Baltic Times, August 31-September 6: 4); Russia has signed the document in 1941 but has never ratified it (The Times, June 8-14: 6); Estonia agreed to a certain set of rules when it signed the accession treaty (The Baltic Times, November, 16- 22: 2). Echoes from the history are made more explicit when a particular linguistic formula is followed. For example, it is generally known that no building has contributed more to the language of politics than the Watergate building in Washington: the building housing the Democratic Party was broken into by the supporters of the Republican president Nixon,

which resulted in a political crisis in the USA and was followed by the resignation and disgrace of the president Richard Nixon. Since then, the suffix –gate has become a linguistic formula used to create the notion referring to a particular (usually political) scandal. Thus, we speak about Watergate, we are aware of Camillgate (a scandal over the Prince of Wales’ relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles), Zippergate, Monicagate (a scandal referring to the alleged behaviour of Bill Clinton), Jurmalgate in Latvia (a scandal showing the presence of corruption in the elections of a Mayer in Latvia). It goes without saying that some of the coinages with the suffix –gate will be short-lived, but the existence of –gate as a productive linguistic element used to refer to a particular political, social situation has been established. Since 1972 when the Watergate scandal has come into light, the suffix -gate has been applied with an increasing frequency to describe all sorts of scandals not only in English speaking countries but also in non-English speaking countries (e.g. in Latvia), where the English language has started to function as the lingua franca to establish and/or facilitate mass communication.

DISCUSSION

In sum, metonymy as a rhetorical device used by political discourse facilitates the perception of the political images and expresses their meaning in a more concentrated manner. The underlying idea of an image is understood by readers/listeners as it is brought to their minds by the context itself.

Metaphor as a rhetorical device of political discourse

According to Kittay¹⁹, ‘metaphor is a trope in which one thing is spoken of as if it were some other thing, and it is an ubiquitous feature of natural language’. Further, the scholar claims that ‘ability to understand metaphors and to use them is characteristic of mature linguistic competence’ (ibid). In view of this, no understanding of political discourse is complete without an adequate account of metaphor, which explains the reasons why metaphors underlie primarily linguistic utterances, produced by speakers of the English language and processed by listeners. Referring to the study of political discourse, it has to be noted that when dealing with metaphors as linguistic phenomena, the English language users/learners are expected to know/study:

- how metaphors are used in communication
- what is intended to be understood is different from what is literally said

It is generally accepted that rules governing literal language involve syntactic, semantic and pragmatic conventions. Figurative utterances, e.g. metaphor, generally obey syntactic rules, sometimes flout semantic rules and most often violate pragmatic principles; thus, metaphors are characteristically identifiable by the form of the

semantic and pragmatic violation. Many theories are known to deal with the study of metaphor as a rhetorical device:

- the Interaction Theory²⁰ proposes the conceptual role of metaphor and stresses its cognitive role to language and thought)

- Hesse's Theory supports the idea that metaphors function as 'systematic analogies with a strong affinity to scientific models'²¹)

- the Experientialist Theory²² stress the importance of the systematic coherence of metaphor and its role 'in grounding the human conceptual system in lived experience', 19 Kittay, Eva.

Taking into account the above-stated, the language users of political discourse are to be aware of both the proper way of interpreting the metaphoric utterances and of finding the distinctive meaning for the metaphor in addition to its literal meaning. Recent work on political discourse done by Buraja²⁴ that aimed at investigating metaphors used in political discourse discovered that there are a vast number of common source domains of metaphors used in political rhetoric:

- military domain, e.g. Lithuania's State Security Department came under attack last week after detaining a journalist for procuring and intending to publish state secrets (The Baltic Times, September 14-20: 1); Suddenly, Germans, too, are beginning to feel that they have become a target (The Times, August 21-26: 4)

- theatre domain, e.g. An astonishing performance, one that will attract much attention in both Brussels and Moscow (The Baltic Times, April 13-19: 23); There is already a fierce behind-the-scenes battle to host the EIT (The Times, October 20: 4)

- sport domain, e.g. Ilves, the second finalist in the presidential race was selected by a working group of leading parliamentary parties (The Baltic Times, August 3-9: 1); Even Hillary Clinton, the likely frontrunner to be the Democrat's choice in 2008 has begun tilting towards the anti-war sentiment in the party (The Times, August 5: 37)

The discussion and analysis of metaphors employed by political discourse have indicated so far that a great deal of day-to-day language is used in metaphorical meaning. Seemingly, metaphors structure the way we think about politics, and they might affect our perception of the world. Often, as we can judge from the examples offered, metaphorical language thinly masks a particular political situation, ideology or mindset. Thus, for example, in case the country is worried about the flood of immigrants, it is reasonable to presume that the situation with immigrants is disastrous, in fact. All things considered, metaphors in political discourse create linguistic images that are based on a relationship of similarity between two objects or concepts. In other words, metaphors referring to a great deal of source domains characterizing the political discourse are based on the same or similar semantic features where

denotational transfer occurs. The research outcomes of the present inquiry show that the area of investigation is very broad: from the description of the linguistic approaches used for influencing an audience's thoughts and emotions to analyzing the rhetorical devices applied to create a persuasive and manipulative political discourse.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above stated, we can come to the following conclusions:

1. The linguistic manipulation can be considered as an influential instrument of political rhetoric because political discourse is primarily focused on persuading people to take specified political actions.

2. Language plays a significant ideological role because it is an instrument by means of which the manipulative intents of politicians become apparent.

3. Language applied in political discourse uses a broad range of rhetorical devices at the phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and textual levels.

4. In present time societies, politics basically dominates in the mass media, which leads to creating new types of linguistic manipulation, e.g.: modified forms of press conferences and press statements, updated texts in slogans, a wide application of catch phrases, common usage of both rhetorical devices: for example, phrasal allusions, metonymy and metaphor, and connotative meanings of the words, a powerful combination of language and visual imagery to convince the potential electorate.

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