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## PRAGMATICS IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE

**Summary.** The article is devoted to the study of American institutional discourse, in particular, the pragmatics underlying the usage of stylistic expressive means. The article analyzes the existing definitions of institutional discourse, providing the personally suggested approach to the study of the issue under consideration. Institutional discourse is the type of communicative activity that represents speech relations that have evoked in certain social circumstances and presents a meaningful, cognitive, social and pragmatic unity, empowered by the ability of influencing the addressees. Cognitive approach to its study appears to be the most rational one, as it provides the analysis of language units as well as the interpretation of the ties between linguistic components and pragmatics. Linguistic pragmatics is the optimal choice in the study of political statements as it analyzes the macrostructures of political communication from the position of meaningful integrity of the constituent language units and the required effects they produce. The relevance of the study is determined by the lacuna of the unanimous approach to the interpretation of the key notion of institutional discourse and the paucity of studies on the use of figurative expressive language means and their pragmatic power in the institutional discourse of the USA. In their messages political leaders often combine extralinguistic and purely linguistic mean of influencing their audience. The most widespread ones are considered to be the stylistically colored expressions. Their pragmatic potential is fully disclosed only in the context of the utterance. The present study discovered that American political leaders of various ranks use idiomatic expressions with a multiplicity of pragmatic rationale, ranging from inducing the audience to join their efforts, to taking urgent, immediate actions, summoning joint responsibility, reinforcing the government's commitments, punctuating the steadfastness of their position, generating the feeling of Godly protection, the sense of liability and motivation. The study presents the backdrop for the advanced study on stylistic means in institutional discourse.

**Key words:** pragmatics, politics, institutional discourse, expressive language means.

**Problem statement.** Modern world is characterized by a constantly increasing interest in the social constituent of communication, in historical beliefs, ethno-cultural values, anthropological factors and hidden messages implemented in the language. Communication studies have become crucially topical due to the growing necessity of encoding and decoding human activity and social relations in general. Pragmatics is increasingly arising scholars' interest as it focuses on the subject of language communication and identifies it as the way of language interaction and social functioning. It is the essential element of language studies, as it involves the external linguistic factors that determine the choice of ruling conversational strategies and particular language means. As the main concern of pragmatology is the speaker's choice of linguistic methods

for the most effective persuasion means of the interlocutor, scientists are interested in discourse studies. Modern linguistics predominantly determines discourse as the coherent tool, which signifies the power of social, political, cultural, psychological and other influences through which social and political beliefs and practices, ideologies and norms can all be mediated [1].

Politics has become the pivotal world domain, the integral part of our social existence, one of its dominant influential factors. Public interest in policy making and, in particular, in political communication, gains grounds, especially taking into consideration the outstanding events coaxing the global wellbeing, security and safety nowadays. Rapid interest in politics can be correlated with the expansion of information needs, growth of people's political awareness, active social and political position of individuals as participants of world political processes and events. Political language is an exceptionally complex linguistic phenomenon, due to its multifaceted nature there is yet no unified methodology of its studies.

**Literature review.** Institutional discourse is one of the key concepts of modern political linguistics and constitutes a multiplex communicative phenomenon associated with speech as the individual use of the language and dependent on extralinguistic factors [2]. The study of this type of discourse is performed by scholars of diverse disciplines, including political sciences, sociology, psychology, philology, etc., which, in its due course, leads to the lack of the unified perception of this concept.

Issues of institutional discourse have been addressed by van Dijk, P. Bourdieu, S.S. Bulbenyuk, N.I. Andreychuk and others. Political discourse was studied by F.S. Batsevich, N.J. Kondratenko, O.O. Haidulin and others.

Prof. V. Lukyanets identifies the key objectives of institutional discourse: establishment of public consensus, justification of certain political and socio-ideological strategies, introducing the desired into the mass consciousness [3,22]. Its task is to a greater extent conviction of the listener.

The discursive approach to the study of political discourse accentuates its functioning peculiarities (theatricality, etc.), whereas the linguistic-pragmatic approach concentrates on the research of the implied strategies and tactics, underlying its usage [4].

Professor Zoltan Kövecses explored the use of idiomatic expressions conveying cultural values and building the sense of group identity [5]. Charteris-Black studied the usage of stylistic expressive means to deliver emotional and evaluative meanings [6]. I.V. Loseva analyzed the linguistic stylistic features of the political polemics of presidential candidates [7].

Active studies of institutional discourse are quite dynamic and enhance the research base, however, there is a scarcity of research on the use of figurative expressive language means and their pragmatic power in the institutional discourse, in spite

of their pervasiveness in political messages. This is principally remarkable considering the magnitude of political rhetoric in influencing the audience. The present article attends to this issue by considering the pragmatic potential of expressive means in American institutional discourse. We are deeply engrossed in the pragmatics of political texts, deciphering the hidden meanings, motifs, purposes and functions of linguistic means employed.

Thus, the aim of the article is to explore pragmatic power of figurative expressive means in American institutional discourse.

**Results and discussions.** Institutional discourse is viewed as the organization of meanings, interpretations, evaluations and strategies. It is the means of communication in routine circumstances or, on the contrary, embodiment of artificial intentionally constructed reality. Institutional discourse serves as the major platform not only for reflecting topical social issues and changes, but also for consolidating pragmatic potential that the figures of speech possess being actively used by discourse parties.

Thus, cognitive approach to its study appears to be the most rational one, as it provides the analysis of language units as well as the interpretation of the ties between language units and pragmatics. In the institutional discourse linguistic means become the tool of transferring subsequent pragmatic messages.

The article presents the qualitative study of expressive means used in the institutional discourse of the USA. The study promulgated that American political leaders of various ranks are entitled to use a wide range of idiomatic expressions with an array of pragmatic purposes, ranging from communicating intricate messages to inducing the audience to join their efforts, to take actions, to summon joint responsibility, to reinforce the government's commitments, to punctuate the steadfastness of their position, to galvanize exertion, to generate the feeling of Godly protection, the sense of liability and motivation, etc.

President Biden in his Remarks at the 2023 Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate uses numerous examples of idiomatic expressions, including "to step up ambitions", "to stand together to meet great challenges", "to bridge the gap", "to turn the pledge into progress", "the time to act is narrowing", "to be within our reach", "to be at the moment of peril", etc.

The idiomatic expression "to step up ambitions" in the statement: *"We have to step up our ambitions. We're going to have to stand together to meet great challenges. And we're going to – we will preserve our planet in the future"* [8] is used to emphasize the profound significance of joining efforts, to induce the audience not to waste even a minute and to mutually protect the environment, to urge the political leaders of the world to fight for the present ecological future as well as the future of generations to come.

The phrase "to bridge the gap" ("to connect two things or to make the difference between them smaller") [9] in the utterance *"That's what today is all about committing together and candidly discussing how we can bridge the gap between our pledge to limit warming to 1.5 degrees and our policies"* [8] is employed by the President to underscore the enhanced and reinforced commitment of the USA and all the major economies to enact the strategic plan of reconciling all the discrepancies on the path to the implementation of the treaty on climate change. Its overarching goal is to hold "the increase in the global average temperatures to well below 2 degrees C. and to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C." [10]. Thus, the pragmatic force of the expression is to punctuate the steadfastness of American position and encourage

the other countries to immediate actions, summoning for responsibility and joint duty.

The idiom "to be within smb's reach" in the sentence *"Look, together, you know, we-we can keep the goal of limiting warming to just no more than 1.5 degrees. It's within our reach if we make progress on the four key things that we have to discuss today: decarbonization, decarbonizing energy; ending deforestation; reducing non-carbon greenhouse gas emissions"* [8] is applied by the President to accentuate the existing possibility of achieving the assigned objectives, with the obvious demand of recommitment to ambitions and previously arranged plans. The pragmatic function underlying the expression is to urge and motivate the listeners to take actions as well as to assure them in the peremptory achievement of mutual goals.

The expression "to stand with somebody" in the context *"Across our country, we've stood with the CEOs of major car manufacturers and the workers who will build our clean transportation future. And they're all in. They understand as clearly as I do that this is an – an enormous opportunity"* [8] is used to show the paramount support of US government of all business initiatives, aimed at reducing emissions, implementing environmentally friendly programmes, investing into advanced clean technologies. The pragmatic value of the utterance is to signal the listeners that the White House is committed to provide assistance and succor the industry, to raise the feeling of assurance, assertiveness and confidence in their actions.

In the sentence *"The time to act is narrowing. Together, we have to make it clear that forests are more valuable conserved than cleared"* [8] Joe Biden employs the metaphor "time is narrowing" to create the sense urgency and vital necessity of immediate actions. This is a powerful tool to prod the audience to enforce measures as there will never be a better moment to tackle the issue on call than now. The pragmatics of the metaphor lies in sending an impelling message recognizing that we are at the edge of environmental crisis and should galvanize our exertion and take immediate crucial actions.

President Biden's Remarks in his Address to the Canadian Parliament include abundant examples of pragmatically charged stylistic devices, for instance: "to anchor economic region", "to seize future", "to reverberate aspirations", "to be the stronghold of liberty", "to be the safeguard of freedoms", "to be laser-focused", "to trickle down from top down to the kitchen table", "to have someone's back", etc.

In the statement *"Through more than a century of that historic endeavor, Canada and the United States have had each other's backs. In war and in peace, we have been the stronghold of liberty. A safeguard for the fundamental freedoms that give us our – our lives – literally give our lives meaning"* [11] the speaker uses the idiom "to have someone's back" (to be ready to protect and defend someone) [9] to underpin the historically strong, favourable, brotherly ties of the two countries, sharing common set of principles, core of ethics and morals, standpoints and international policy standards. Special accent is laid on the entire support countries provide each other with.

The speaker accentuates the fundamental position of the two countries as the guarantees of world stability, guarding the preservation of all the basic rights and freedoms by using the following expressions: "to be the stronghold of liberty" and "to be the safeguard of freedom".

The speeches of the other representatives of American political elite are abundant in pragmatically colored idiomatic expressions. Kamala D. Harris, the Vice President of the United States of America, employs quite a plentiful number of stylistic devices in her speeches, for example, in the Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Finance Event, held in March 2023, Kamala Harris uses the following expressions "spirit behind the strength of", "what will history say", "to connect the dots", "to be gamechanger", "to be on the ground", "to be on the track to ensure future good", etc.

In the context of the message, *"You know, I often say that I think that is the spirit behind the strength of our country and, for so many of us, our families: the ability to see what can be, unburdened by what has been, and then to pursue and achieve that"* [12] the metaphor "the spirit is behind the strength of the country" raises the listener's awareness of the vital importance of the fundamental principles for all Americans in the pursue of their identification, as well as for the development as the nation of patriots, sharing the faith in the critical importance of liberty, freedom, justice and equality; ready to live the life of service to their community, their country, the future common good of their people. The pragmatic task of the phrase is to generate the apprehension of Godly protection of the country and its citizens in whatever righteous deeds they make.

The idiom "what will history say" in the sentence *"And so, I think about this moment in time in the context of all of us being in these positions at this particular and unique moment in time. And then, what becomes our duty? And what will history say? And what would our children say about what we did at this moment, as we occupied these positions of leadership?"* [12] is used to convince the audience to work in the pursuit of their common aims, to work on stability and a sense of prospective continuum, to show their devotion to the country by fighting for the implementation of national idea, values and beliefs, in the name of their children, future generations of proud citizens of the USA. The pragmatic concept of the idiom is the sense of accountability and liability as well as motivation in the recipients.

By exploiting the expression "to connect the dots", in the statement *"So, let's connect the dots. We came in and said we're going to get this broadband issue done. We have gone through a pandemic. We have shown telemedicine can work. And we have now a heightened need for mental healthcare in our country"* [12], the Vice President claims that the authorities are committed to their objectives to settle the stated matter, to fulfill their ambitious plans of implementing telemedicine, providing high-speed Internet access to all senior citizens, to finish what they, as the government, have started. The pragmatic potential of the abovementioned phrase is to assure the listeners that the leadership of the country always keeps their promises and is constantly working on the progress for the dignity and wellbeing of American people.

Vice President's Remarks and President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea During a visit to NASA Goddard Space Flight Center contain a wide range of phraseological units including "in face of aggression and provocation", "to stand for international order", "to be a linchpin of security and prosperity", "transparent environment", "to guide humanity forward", "to meet the threat", etc.

The idiom "to be a linchpin" ("the most important member of a group or part of a system, that holds together the other members or parts or makes it possible for them to operate as intended") [13] in the utterance *"This year, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the alliance between the United States of America and South*

*Korea, which has been a linchpin of security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and around the world"* [14], is used to mark the crucial importance of collaboration between the two countries in the upholding of international rules and norms in the region, it conveys the pragmatic function of assuring that their political partnership serves as the cohesive source of support and stability and must be pursued. By using this powerful linguistic tool, Kamala Harris conveys the sense of determination to continue cooperation, emphasizes the significance of teamwork and resolute position of the USA committed to follow the joint action plan.

The phrase "transparent environment" in the sentence *"We are also grateful for South Korea's signing of the Artemis Accords, which will help create a safe and transparent environment for the civil use of space"* [14] means the stable political situation, promoting security and safety in the region and the whole world. It is a clear message to the strategic partner that their work is highly esteemed and considered pertinent. Thus, the pragmatic function of the statement is to communicate the perception of solidity and steadiness desideratum.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) employs copious cases of idioms' usage in his statements, for example "to curse the darkness and to light the candle", "to bind oneself to limitations", "to give a particular shout out", "to take a step towards equality", "to reach the breaking point", "bottom line working families", etc.

In his Remarks at a Press Conference Following Historic Senate Vote to Advance Resolution on Equal Rights Amendment, Leader Schumer uses the Chinese proverb, containing the idioms "to curse the darkness and to light the candles for the future" in the utterance *"So, we are here today but we are not sad. We are exultant. We are not here to curse the darkness. We are lighting candles for the future. When you fight and you are right, you win. When you fight and you are right, you win. When you fight and you are right, you win. And we will win."* [15] to urge the listeners to address the situation with positive attitude, responsibility and belief in their bright future. As even small steps no matter how minor they might seem (which may later on turn into giant leaps) are better than idle complaints that do not improve the situation. The pragmatic function of this idiom is to create the sense of responsibility, motivate to actions, stress the significance of the momentum.

In his address, Chuck Schumer uses the expression "to rule the day" ("to have widespread dominance over thinking or behavior") [13] in the sentence *"Remember, the Constitution doesn't impose this barrier – and by keeping it in place, we're needlessly obeying skewed rules set by politicians long ago, whose views ought not to rule the day"* [15] to identify that obstacles imposed by previous generations of politicians should not be kept in place. The new democratic society is not obliged to needlessly obey the outdated rules and regulations. Their dominance is no more effective and is considered to be toxic for the society.

**Conclusion.** The research has disclosed the pragmatic potential of idiomatic expressions in contemporary American institutional discourse. The study implies that political language is rich in expressive means, helping the leaders of the minds to communicate the desired message and produce the wanted resonance with the addressees, inducing the audience to join efforts, to take actions, to summon joint responsibility, to reinforce commitments, to punctuate the steadfastness of their position, to generate the feeling of Godly protection, the sense of liability and motivation. The



research provides the background for the advanced study on stylistic means in institutional discourse, guiding to further linguistic conclusions and highlights the indispensable function of the abovementioned linguistic figures in policy makers' language.

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#### Решетар О. В. Прагматика американського інституційного дискурсу

**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена дослідженню американського інституційного дискурсу, зокрема прагматики, що лежить в основі використання стилістичних експресивних мовних засобів. У статті аналізуються існуючі дефініції інституційного дискурсу та пропонується власний підхід до дослідження проблематики розвідки. Інституційний дискурс - це вид комунікативної діяльності, що репрезентує мовленнєві відносини, що виникли в певних соціальних обставинах, та представляє собою змістовну, когнітивну та соціально-прагматичну єдність, здатну впливати на адресата. Когнітивний підхід до його вивчення видається найбільш раціональним, оскільки передбачає як аналіз мовних одиниць, так і інтерпретацію зв'язків між мовними компонентами та прагматикою висловлювання. Лінгвістична прагматика є оптимальним вибором у дослідженні політичних промов, оскільки вона аналізує макроструктури політичної комунікації з позиції змістової цінності складових мовних одиниць та бажаних ефектів їх застосування. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена відсутністю однотайного підходу до тлумачення ключового поняття інституційного дискурсу та нечисленністю досліджень прагматичної складової використання образно-експресивних мовних засобів в інституційному дискурсі США. У своїх промовх політичні лідери часто поєднують екстралінгвістичні та суто лінгвістичні засоби впливу на свою аудиторію. Найпоширенішими вважаються стилістично забарвлені мовні засоби. Їх прагматичний потенціал повною мірою розкривається лише в контексті висловлювання. Дослідження виявило, що американські політичні лідери різного рангу використовують ідіоматичні вирази з численними прагматичними цілями: спонукати аудиторію об'єднати зусилля, вжити термінових рішучих заходів, запевнити у беззаперечному досягненні визначених цілей, закликати до спільної відповідальності, зазначити непохитність своєї позиції, створити враження Божого захисту, викликати відчуття відповідальності та мотивації. Дане дослідження може слугувати фундаментом для подальшого поглибленого вивчення стилістичних засобів в інституційному дискурсі.

**Ключові слова:** прагматика, політика, інституційний дискурс, стилістичні експресивні мовні засоби.