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SYNCHRONOUS STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS VOCABULARY IN THE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL DISCOURSE OF THE XXI CENTURY

Summary. *The article examines the role of religious vocabulary in the implementation of communicative strategies and tactics in the American presidential discourse of the 21st century. A synchronic study of the presidential ritual discourse was conducted on the material of the president's farewell speeches; Christmas addresses of the Heads of State to the nation and jubilee / festive speeches dedicated to important dates, awarding of prizes, opening of forums, festivals, exhibitions; the study of orientational presidential discourse was conducted on the material of the annual message of the US president to Congress, interviews, and speeches of presidents on the occasion of various events; the study of the agonal presidential discourse was conducted on the material of presidential election debates and election speeches. The Christmas addresses of American presidents are the most “saturated” with religious vocabulary, while the farewell and anniversary speeches are almost identical in terms of the frequency of use of religious lexical units and are close to the corresponding indicators recorded in the inaugural speeches of American presidents. High indicators of the frequency of the use of religious vocabulary in Christmas addresses can be explained by the actual thematic orientation of these speeches. The strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through two tactics – unity and taking into account the value orientations of the addressee – is most widely used in the ritual genres of the presidential discourse of the 21st century. The strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through three tactics – taking into account the value orientations of the addressee, appealing to emotions and unity, as in the case of ritual genres, is most widely used in the orientational genres of the presidential discourse of the 21st century. However, the campaign strategy and self-defense strategy, which are not fixed in the ritual genres of the 21st century, find their realization in the orientational presidential discourse. We observe the lowest indicators of the frequency of the use of religious vocabulary precisely in the agonal genres of the presidential discourse, which is especially clearly observed in the debates. In our opinion, such a low frequency of use is explained by the spontaneity and unpreparedness of some genres, especially debates.*

Key words: *presidential discourse, genre, strategy, tactics, religious vocabulary.*

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СИНХРОННЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ФУНКЦІОНУВАННЯ РЕЛІГІЙНОЇ ЛЕКСИКИ В АМЕРИКАНСЬКОМУ ПРЕЗИДЕНТСЬКОМУ ДИСКУРСІ XXI СТОЛІТТЯ

Анотація. У статті йдеться про релігійну лексику в текстах промов і виступів американських президентів XXI століття. Її мета – з'ясувати роль релігійної лексики в реалізації комунікативних стратегій і тактик глав американської держави; завдання – окреслити поняття політичного дискурсу та визначити його основні параметри; дослідити реалізацію комунікативних стратегій і тактик у різних жанрах американського президентського дискурсу відповідно до основних комунікативних інтенцій його творців; розглянути роль релігійної лексики в них.

Синхронне дослідження президентського дискурсу проведено на матеріалі трьох його типів: а) ритуального (прощальні промови Президента; різдвяні звернення глави держави до нації; ювілейні / святкові промови з нагоди вручення премій, відкриття форумів, фестивалів, виставок); б) орієнтаційного (щорічні послання Президента США Конгресу; його інтерв'ю та промови з нагоди різних подій); в) агонального (виступи на передвиборчих теледебатах і передвиборчі звернення). З'ясовано, що найбільшою мірою «насичені» релігійною лексикою різдвяні звернення американських президентів, що зумовлено їхньою тематичною спрямованістю, тоді як прощальні та ювілейні промови майже однакові за частотністю вживання релігійних лексем і близькі до показників, які демонструють інавгураційні промови американських президентів. Встановлено, що в ритуальних жанрах президентського дискурсу XXI століття стратегію формування емоційного настрою адресата реалізовано через застосування двох тактик – єднання та врахування ціннісних орієнтирів адресата. В орієнтаційних жанрах президентського дискурсу XXI століття цю стратегію презентують три тактики – врахування ціннісних орієнтирів адресата, звернення до емоцій та єднання. У цьому типі президентського дискурсу реалізовано, окрім того, агітаційну стратегію та стратегію самозахисту, яких не фіксують ритуальні жанри. Найнижчу частотність уживання релігійної лексики демонструють агональні жанри президентського дискурсу, особливо дебати, що слід пояснювати їхньою спонтанністю й непередбачуваністю.

Ключові слова: президентський дискурс, жанр, стратегія, тактика, релігійна лексика.

Statement of the problem and justification of the relevance of its consideration. The study of the functioning of religious vocabulary in the American presidential discourse is relevant, first of all, because it can have a great impact on public opinion and the formation of political views. The use of religious terms and symbols can provide important information about the president's values and priorities, as well as create an emotional connection with the audience. Studying the functioning of religious vocabulary in the presidential discourse can reveal the dynamics of changes in the use of religious terms and symbols during different periods of history. This can help to understand how political leaders

use religious vocabulary to support their political goals and influence the public.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Institutional discourse, that is, discourse determined by the types of social institutions formed in society, is characterized by a number of linguistically relevant features, the most important of which are the purpose of communication, the representative communicative function of its participants, and fixed typical circumstances of communication (Chetaykina, 2018).

One of the types of institutional discourse is political discourse, which is a reflection of the socio-political life of the country, contains

elements of its culture, as well as features of the national character, reflects general and national-specific cultural values, and aims to gain and maintain political power. The main functions of political discourse are the assertion of political power, persuasion, interpretation and manipulation. Additional functions include informative, motivational, emotional and aesthetic. The clash of different points of view, the need to defend one's position determine the use of various communicative strategies and tactics in political discourse (Charteris-Black, 2005; Cross, 1983).

Regarding the genre space of the presidential discourse as a type of political discourse, we note that it is determined by the general political system of the country, the historical and political traditions of the institution of the presidency, and the socio-cultural conditions for the existence of political discourse. A synchronic study of the presidential ritual discourse was conducted on the material of the president's farewell speeches (Farewell Address); Christmas addresses of the Heads of State to the nation (Christmas speech) and jubilee / festive speeches dedicated to important dates, awarding of prizes, opening of forums, festivals, exhibitions (Jubilee / Anniversary speech, Speech / Remarks on the occasion of ...); the study of orientational presidential discourse was conducted on the material of the annual message of the US president to Congress (State of the Union Address), interviews (Presidential Briefing), and speeches of presidents on the occasion of various events (Speeches on different occasions); the study of the agonal presidential discourse was conducted on the material of presidential election debates and election speeches (American Rhetoric; USA-Presidents. Info).

The main aim of this investigation is to clarify the role of religious vocabulary in the implementation of communicative strategies and tactics of heads of state in the American presidential discourse of the 21st century. The set goal determined the solution of the following **tasks**: 1) to outline the concept of political discourse and determine its main parameters; 2) to investigate the implementation of communicative strategies and tactics in the three main genres of the American presidential discourse in accordance with the main communicative

intentions of the speakers; 3) to consider the role of religious vocabulary in the implementation of communicative strategies and tactics of the authors of the presidential discourse.

Presentation of the main research material. Quantitative analysis of the sample showed that the Christmas addresses of American presidents are the most "saturated" with religious vocabulary, while the farewell and anniversary speeches are almost the same in terms of the frequency of use of religious lexical units and are close to the corresponding indicators recorded in the inaugural speeches of American presidents. High indicators of the frequency of the use of religious vocabulary in Christmas addresses can be explained by the actual thematic focus of these speeches. All selected units are divided into three groups: general religious vocabulary, Biblical idioms, direct quotations from the Bible.

The following lexical units predominate among the general religious vocabulary identified in the process of analyzing the researched speeches: God (26 cases of use), Creator (5), Lord (4), Savior (2). As you can see, these are synonymous nominations for the designation of God, which had a high frequency of use in inaugural speeches as well.

The conducted analysis recorded certain features of the use of these lexical units in various genres of ritual discourse. So, in all the considered Christmas addresses of American presidents, there is an indication that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of the Savior, for example: "*For Christians, this is a Holy season – the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (Trump, 2017).

Such repetition of seemingly well-known facts, in our opinion, emphasizes the ritualistic nature of this genre variety of presidential discourse. Yes, without exception, all Christmas appeals contain an allusion to the well-known Biblical story about the birth of Christ, starting with the indication of the date – 2,000 years ago: "*For 2,000 years, Christmas has proclaimed a message of hope: the patient hope of men and women across centuries who listened to the words of prophets and lived in joyful expectation; the hope of Mary, who welcomed God's plan with great faith; and the hope of wise men, who set out on a long journey guided only by a slender promise traced in the stars*" (Bush, 2004).

As we can see from the above excerpt, President Bush uses parallel constructions and anaphoric repetition, which creates a rhythmic effect and emphasizes the main thesis of the speaker: Christmas gives people hope. We also note that in this passage we record the use of the biblical anthroponym Mary, which is determined by the context of the performance.

Quite often, as in the case of inaugural speeches, the mention of the Lord occurs in the context of the blessing of the American people by God, as in the following example: *“This Christmas, may we give thanks for the blessings God has granted to our Nation and in each of our lives. May the joy of the holidays renew our commitment to working together for a future of peace, opportunity, and hope”* (Bush, 2002).

Here we observe the implementation of the strategy of shaping the emotional mood of the addressee through the tactics of unity, as the president calls on his fellow citizens to work together to achieve a peaceful future with opportunities and hope.

Direct quotations from the Holy Scriptures are recorded in jubilee speeches. So, for example, in a speech in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Marches from Selma to Montgomery, President Obama quotes the Epistle to the Romans of the apostle Paul: *“We gather here to celebrate them. We gather here to honor the courage of ordinary Americans willing to endure billy clubs and the chastening rod; tear gas and the trampling hoof; men and women who despite the gush of blood and splintered bone would stay true to their North Star and keep marching towards justice. They did as Scripture instructed: **“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”** And in the days to come, they went back again and again”* (Obama, 2015).

Thus, President Obama emphasizes the commitment of the participants of those events to Christian values and their observance. Thus, the strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through the tactics of taking into account his value orientations is realized.

In the orientation version of the presidential discourse, the level of use of religious vocabulary is somewhat reduced. This can be explained by the fact that some varieties of this discourse are not prepared, in contrast to inaugural and celebratory speeches. Let us consider the

peculiarities of the functioning of the general religious vocabulary in these speeches. The Address to Congress is the annual message of the President of the United States of America to Congress, in which he presents his assessment of the situation in the country and describes future legislative initiatives. Traditionally, he outlines the administration's achievements in the previous year and also announces plans for the coming year. That is why, despite the traditionality of this speech, researchers attribute it to the orientation variety of the presidential discourse, and not to the ritual one. It is in this type of orientational presidential discourse that the lowest frequency of religious vocabulary is recorded, which, in our opinion, can be explained by the pragmatic orientation of this type of speech.

Among the general religious vocabulary in the orientation genres of the presidential discourse, the most frequent lexical unit is God, which is used in the following contexts: in 2002, for example, in his Address to Congress, President Bush mentioned the tragedy of September 11, 2001 and emphasized that Americans are one a people, despite all kinds of differences (racial, etc.), who together experience grief and face challenges, and who have realized that God is always there, especially in difficult times: *“Beyond all differences of race or creed, we are one country, mourning together and facing danger together. Deep in the American character, there is honor, and it is stronger than cynicism. Many have discovered again that even in tragedy, especially in tragedy, **God is near**”* (Bush, 2002). In this case, the strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through the tactics of taking into account his value orientations is implemented.

First of all, it should be noted the rather low frequency of using Biblicalisms in the analyzed speeches and interviews. Moreover, some cases of the use of Biblicalisms are quite curious and caused the appearance of numerous publications in the press. So, for example, in one of the interviews, President Trump was asked about the role of the Bible in his life and his favorite saying from the Holy Scriptures, which influenced the formation of his personality: *“In the interview on news radio WHAM-1180 in Rochester, New York, host Bob Lonsberry asked Mr. Trump whether there was “a favorite Bible verse or Bible story*

that has informed your thinking or your character through life, sir?" (Trump, 2018). In response, President Trump initially rather evasively noted that there are many such expressions, however, then he nevertheless gave an example of biblicalism "an eye for an eye": *"Well, I think many. I mean, when we get into the Bible, I think many, so many. And some people, look, **an eye for an eye**, you can almost say that. That's not a particularly nice thing. But you know, if you look at what's happening to our country, I mean, when you see what's going on with our country, how people are taking advantage of us ... we have to be firm and have to be very strong. And we can learn a lot from the Bible, that I can tell you"* (Trump, 2018). He immediately caught on and called this principle literally "not particularly pleasant", but explained that it is necessary, taking into account what events are happening in the country, how America is used in their interests by other countries. That is why Americans need to be strong and steadfast, and not to forgive unfriendly actions towards the country as a whole and respond accordingly.

In this case, we record the implementation of the self-defense strategy through justification tactics. Trump justifies his rather tough position with the challenges facing his country.

Barack Obama's opponent in the 2012 election, Republican Mitt Romney, during the debate used religious vocabulary (nominative unit Creator) in an allusion to the US Declaration of Independence, thus appealing to the fundamental foundations of American society: God-given rights, freedom and the pursuit of happiness: *"The role of government – look behind us: the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence... we are endowed by our **Creator** with our rights – I believe we must maintain our commitment to religious tolerance and freedom in this country. That statement also says that we are endowed by our **Creator** with the right to pursue happiness as we choose. I interpret that as, one, making sure that those people who are less fortunate and can't care for themselves are cared by – by one another"* (Romney, 2012).

As in the case of orientational genres of the presidential discourse, we record a small number of uses of Biblical idioms in the studied agonal texts compared to general religious vocabulary and direct quotations of the Holy Scriptures. Some

of the themes of one of Hillary Clinton's speeches resonate with the above words of Barack Obama during his election campaign, namely that any Christian has a constant conversation with higher forces about his vocation: *"I am a Christian... I think that any of us who are Christian have a constant conversation in our own heads about what we are called to do and how we are asked to do it, and I think it is absolutely appropriate for people to have very strong convictions and also, though, to discuss those with other people of faith... My study of the Bible, my many conversations with people of faith, has led me to believe the most important commandment is **to love the Lord with all your might and to love your neighbour as yourself**, and that is what I think we are commanded by Christ to do, and there is so much more in the Bible about taking care of the poor, visiting the prisoners, taking in the stranger, creating opportunities for others to be lifted up, to find faith themselves that I think there are many different ways of exercising your faith."* (H. Clinton, 2016).

Developing this thesis, Clinton notes that her independent study of the Bible and conversations with religious people helped her decide on the most important commandment – to love God and one's neighbor. It is in caring for others that Hilary Clinton sees the purpose of a true Christian. Distinguished biblicism is transformative and found in the Bible. In our opinion, Hilary Clinton also borrowed the thesis that this principle is the most important commandment from the Gospel (*There is no commandment greater than these*). In this case, the strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through the tactics of taking into account his value orientations is implemented.

Among the interesting examples of the use of religious vocabulary in the agonal variety of presidential discourse, consider the quote by Donald Trump in his campaign speech at Liberty University (Virginia). Addressing the students of this university, Trump quoted lines from the Apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, *Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. The obvious intention of the then presidential candidate was to play off the name of the university (Liberty University) and create a certain emotional mood of the audience, but he misread the title of the message, which caused an ambiguous reaction:

“Then, he turned to quote Scripture. “Two Corinthians, 3:17” Mr. Trump said. The many students in attendance on Monday chuckled, as the standard reference to that chapter of Scripture is “Second Corinthians”. But Mr. Trump was undeterred. “That’s the whole ballgame. ‘Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,’” he said, quoting the Bible. “And here there is liberty” (American Rhetoric).

According to the intention of the speaker, the strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through the tactics of addressing his emotions was to be implemented here. This case once again emphasizes that the use of religious vocabulary, especially biblical idioms and quotations from the Holy Scriptures, are prepared elements of the presidential discourse.

Conclusions. The Christmas addresses of American presidents are the most “saturated” with religious vocabulary, while the farewell and anniversary speeches are almost identical in terms of the frequency of use of religious lexical units and are close to the corresponding indicators recorded in the inaugural speeches of American presidents. High indicators of the frequency of the use of religious vocabulary in Christmas addresses can be explained by the actual thematic orientation of these speeches. The strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee through two tactics – unity and taking into account the value orientations of the addressee – is most

widely used in the ritual genres of the presidential discourse of the 21st century.

The strategy of forming the emotional mood of the addressee (almost 60% of all analyzed cases) is most widely used in the orientational genres of the presidential discourse of the 21st century through three tactics – taking into account the value orientations of the addressee, appealing to emotions and unity, as in the case of ritual genres. However, the campaign strategy and self-defense strategy, which are not fixed in the ritual genres of the 21st century, find their realization in the orientational presidential discourse.

If we compare the obtained quantitative data, we observe the lowest indicators of the frequency of the use of religious vocabulary precisely in the agonal genres of the presidential discourse, which is especially clearly observed in the debates. In our opinion, such a low frequency of use is explained by the spontaneity and unpreparedness of some genres, especially debates. Among the strategies that were not found in the ritual and orientational types of discourse, we note the strategy of discrediting and attack, which is quite typical for election campaigns, which is reflected even in the use of religious vocabulary.

The perspective of further research can be seen in the comparison of the features of the functioning of the religious vocabulary in the American and British political discourses.

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