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DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF RUSSIAN PRESIDENTS' INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The president's inaugural speech is one of the most important genres of political discourse. This genre was initiated and developed in the United States. In accordance with the traditional rhetoric, it is a speech of praise delivered at a celebration. In the Russian political discourse, the inaugural speech is a relatively new genre. Inaugurations of the presidents have taken place merely a few times in the history of the country. The television presentation of the first president of Russia, B.N. Yeltsin in 1996 was without the qualities of a classical inaugural speech. Typical inaugural speeches were delivered by President V.V. Putin (2000, 2004 and 2012) and D.A. Medvedev (2008).

E. Ivanian notes the high rituality of the genre: "The inaugural speech is not just a text, but a core of a theatrical political show rich in content, accompanying assuming office by a new president, a kind of a festival of American statehood" (*Инаугурационные речи...* 2001: 10). The purpose of this speech is always unifying of the nation and underscoring the role of traditional values, which should be cultivated in the future. G.G. Pochepsev underscores that the inaugural speeches of American presidents always include the semantic realizations of 4 categories of symbols: national (the form of the authority, the state, common homeland etc.), historical references (great past, ancestors etc.), fundamental concepts (God, the constitution, freedom, etc.), facts and expectations (present well-being, faith in the future, etc.) (Почепцов 2001: 383). A.T. Tamzina, analyzing the evolution of this genre in the USA, came to the conclusion that the structure of inaugural speeches multiply the model of the first speech of T. Jefferson. The president called his opponents to reconcile and per-

sueded the citizens to support not a particular political party but the republican political principles. This model was maintained until the end of the 19th century. It was not until W. Wilson that the genre took a new direction. His speech first included the verbalization of particular expectations of the people and the declaration of their implementation (Тамзина 2001: 37).

K.K. Campbell and K.H. Jamieson underscore that the speech is the most important element of the inaugural ceremony of the new president, and determine the characteristics of this discursive genre: emphasizing the traditional values important for a particular people, focusing attention on the presence with the reference to the past and the future, presenting the listeners as a homogeneous people with simultaneous accentuating all the factors cementing the community (Campbell, Jamieson 1985: 398). The inaugural speech does not usually contain information surprising or new to the listeners. R. Joslyn defines inaugural speeches as "riskless rhetoric". It is difficult to find in them controversial opinions evoking objections or debate. They are expected to evoke positive emotions and focus attention on the speaker. The unique quality of the genre is the fact that the inaugural speech is not only an act of speech but also a political act, since it is simultaneously an act of the formal assuming office by the president (Joslyn 1986: 316).

The research material for this analysis consists of the inaugural speeches of Presidents V.V. Putin (2000, 2004 and 2012) and D.A. Medvedev (2008). The speeches are of different lengths: 2000: 661 words, 2004: 585 words, 2008: 548 words, 2012: 463 words. They all have a structure classical for this genre, including an introduction, the main body and the conclusion, divided into parts interconnected by topic and function.

A traditional element of the introduction to every official speech of the president is greetings. In all speeches under analysis the new president greets the listeners with the phrase: "Esteemed citizens of Russia, dear friends!". What draws attention is calling the listeners friends, which is probably a device to emotionally approach them and give a good impression. Simultaneously, the president employs the adjective "esteemed" in order to underscore his respect for the voters.

A part of the introduction should also be the speaker's declaration of understanding the responsibilities of the president of the state. It is important to note that this part occurs in V.V. Putin's speeches only ("I understand that **I have taken on a great responsibility**" – 2000; "Now

I would like to stress the main idea of the Oath and say: **the President's obligations** to look after the state and faithfully serve the people **will henceforward be sacred for me and will be above all else as before**" – 2004; "As I take office as President of the Russian Federation, **I am aware of my great responsibility** before our country" – 2012). An element of the introduction is also thanks to the voters who had supported him. It is not only the expression of respect for the voters but also the realization of the integrational function of the genre. This part occurs only in two first speeches of V.V. Putin ("Today **I would also like to thank my supporters**, everybody who voted for me in this election" – 2000; "Today **I would like to thank all those who placed such great trust in me by electing me** to the post of head of Russian state" – 2004). In the speech of 2000, V.V. Putin also addressed to his opponents – the only such an element in all the speeches ("I am also addressing the people who voted for other candidates").

The main body of all the speeches is the presentation by the president assuming office his vision of the country's future and tasks to implement. The presidents turn first towards the past by means of referring to the previous president ("The first President of Russia, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, recalled this today, as he leaves the Kremlin, with words that many will remember" – Putin, 2000; "I give my sincere thanks to **President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin** for the unfailing personal support I have always received from him" – Miedviediev, 2008; "I think that much credit here is due to **Dmitry Medvedev**" – Putin, 2012).

They simultaneously underscore the importance of the predecessors' accomplishments or their own, in the case of the second term ("The construction of a democratic state is far from complete, but **many things have been achieved**" – Putin, 2000; "Over these last eight years we **have laid a solid foundation for long-term construction, for free and stable development in the decades to come**" – Medvedev, 2008). First, he assures the citizens that he will continue the policies of his predecessor ("He repeated today in this hall: Take care of Russia. This is precisely **what I see as the primary responsibility of the President**" – Putin, 2000; "It is for this reason that I consider it my greatest duty **to continue to develop civil and economic freedom**" – Medvedev, 2008) or his own policies in the case of the second term ("As before, I consider that the help and backing of the citizens of Russia constitute the primary and most reliable support for the President's work" – Putin, 2004). Next, the newly elected presi-

dents present the aims which face the state during their term in office. They all concentrate on economic development, the citizens' prosperity, assuring social welfare, the stable position of Russia in the international arena, the development of democracy, access to education, security. It is important to note that the tasks for the state have been touched upon, in all the speeches, in a very general manner, in the form of slogans ("we want our Russia to be a **free, prosperous, strong and civilized country**" – Putin, 2000; "We will make every effort to ensure that all people in Russia have access to **good education** and **social and medical assistance**, and that all people have lives **free from want**" – Putin, 2004; "**A mature and effective legal system** is an essential condition for **economic and social development, supporting entrepreneurship** and **fighting corruption**" – Medvedev, 2008; "the life of our future generations and our prospects as a country and nation depend on us today and on our real achievements in building a **new economy** and developing **modern living standards**, on our efforts to **look after our people** and **support our families**" – Putin, 2012). None of the speakers suggested particular solutions which would result in those effects. In the end the presidents persuade the listeners that the planned aims are possible to achieve ("**We have all the opportunities we need** to achieve the goals we have set" – Putin, 2004; "**We will achieve** our goals. **We will achieve** success **for sure**. **I believe** in the strength of our common goals and ideals" – Putin, 2012).

In the final part the presidents also call for the unity of the people ("I consider it to be my sacred duty **to unify the people of Russia**, to rally citizens around clear aims and tasks" – Putin, 2000). In certain speeches they emphasize simultaneously, that the aims may be achieved exclusively due to a cooperation with the citizens ("We will achieve our goals if we **remain united and stand together**" – Putin, 2012). Even though in their speeches the presidents pass from the past to the future, certain conclusions contain another reference to tradition and history ("We all are **the inheritors of Russia and its thousand years of history**" – Putin, 2004). All the inaugural speeches are concluded with the standard formula showing gratitude for the listeners' attention: "Thank you!".

The speeches under analysis realize all fundamental functions of its genre, described by E.I. Sheigal: integrational, inspirational, declaratory and performative (Шейгал 2000: 69).

The most important function of this genre in the integrational function. The goal of the speech is to unite the people. This function is re-

alized in all the parts of the speeches in two basic topoi. One is the topos of mutual commitments (Патюкова 2008: 76). The presidents assure that they take the responsibility for the fate of the country; however, they underscore: "I also expect **to get help** in this patriotic effort **from the citizens**" (Putin, 2000); "Russia's success and prosperity **cannot and should not depend on one single person** or one political party, or political force alone. **We need a broad base** for developing democracy in our country and for continuing the transformations we have begun" (Putin, 2004).

The other topos realizing the integrational function is the topos of the unity of the nation (Патюкова 2008: 76). The uniting of the people is presented as a necessary condition of a successful solution of problems facing the country ("I consider it to be my sacred duty **to unify the people of Russia, to rally citizens around clear aims and tasks**, and to remember every day and every minute that **we have one Motherland, one people and one future**" – Putin, 2000; "I believe in the strength of **our common goals and ideals, our people's united efforts**" – Putin, 2012). The integrational function is realized in the presidents' speeches also with different lexical means, such as the pronouns "we" and "our", the adjectives "common" and "united", the adverb "together", the nouns denoting collectivities, such as "citizens", "people", "nation", "friends", "society".

The realization of the inspirational function is connected with the glorification by the president of traditional values cherished by the people and the inspiration of the citizens for great acts. The presidents awaken hope in the listeners for a bright future, assert the rightness of the policies they have chosen and assure that they will continue the work of their predecessor (whose activity they assess as positive). This function is realized in the main body and in the conclusion of the speeches, by means of three topoi. One of them is the topos of basing on the past (Патюкова 2008: 76). The presidents assure: "We all are **the inheritors of Russia and its thousand years of history**" (Putin, 2004); "Russia has **a great past**" (Putin, 2012). This topos is also realized through reference to the person of the previous president. The speakers thank their predecessors, underscoring their achievements for the country. The other topos characteristic of the inspirational function is the topos of renewal (Патюкова 2008: 76). The speakers assert that due to their policies the country will be modernized ("Russia is becoming **a modern democratic state**" – Putin, 2000; "The world has seen **a Russia risen anew**" – Putin, 2012).

The final topos realizing the function is the topos of the greatness of the nation (Патюкова 2008: 76). The presidents stress the accomplishments of the nation and the importance of the state on the international arena ("**a great, powerful and mighty state**" – Putin, 2000; "**a leader and centre of gravity for the whole of Eurasia**" – Putin, 2012). The greatness of the nation is emphasized through its qualities: "prosperous", "strong", "great", "powerful", "mighty", "free", "civilized", "huge", "successful".

The declaratory function (the declaration of principles the new president will follow during his term in office) is realized through the topos of duty and the topos of work (Патюкова 2008: 76–77). The presidents assuming office assert: "**the President's obligations** to look after the state and faithfully serve the people **will henceforward be sacred for me and will be above all else**" (Putin, 2004); "**My duty now is to serve our people** every day and every hour, and do everything possible to give them a better life, success and confidence in the future, in the name of the continued rise and prosperity of our beloved homeland" (Medvedev, 2008). The speakers declare also that they will persistently work for the good of the country and the citizens ("**I will work** actively, openly and honestly" – Putin, 2004; "**We will work** with faith in our hearts" – Putin, 2012). The presidents' declarations are, however, of quite a general nature; they do not contain promises referring to any concrete actions they will take.

E.I. Sheigal, analyzing the American presidents' inaugural speeches, underscores the importance of yet another topos serving to realize the declaratory function: the topos of burning problems (Шейгал 2002: 210). The presidents emphasized that they saw and understood the problems which concern society, and simultaneously demonstrated the conviction that they will manage to solve them. It is worth noting that in the inaugural speeches of the Russian presidents this element actually does not occur. In contrast to the American presidents' speeches, which name the particular problems the inhabitants of the US face, both V.V. Putin and D.A. Medvedev reduce it to mentioning that the road to the present state was difficult and there are still a great number of things to do ("**We still have much, very much, to do**" – Putin, 2004; "**I am fully aware of just how much still needs to be done**" – Medvedev, 2008).

The performative function of the inaugural speech results from the fact that its delivery is simultaneously a formal act of assuming the most important office in the country. The citizens expect the new president to assure them of his ability to be the symbolic leader of the state

and also declare the understanding of his liability and acknowledgment of the limits imposed on the executive branch of power (Campbell, Jamieson 1985: 400). The characteristic topoi of this function are (Патюкова 2008: 77):

– the topos of assuming office (the speaker declares that he takes upon himself the burden of being the leader of the state and that he will be responsible therefor: “I understand that **I have taken on a great responsibility**” – Putin, 2000; “I am very conscious of **the weight of responsibility** that will fall upon my shoulders” – Medvedev, 2008; “As I take office as President of the Russian Federation, I am aware of **my great responsibility** before our country” – Putin, 2012);

– the topos of the rule of law (the new president declares that he will unconditionally obey the law of the state, that he is aware of the constitutional limits and that he will not abuse the power: “We will work with faith in our hearts and **sincere and pure intention**” – Putin, 2012; “I have just sworn the presidential oath [...] and its very first lines pledge **respect and protection of human rights and freedoms**” – Medvedev, 2008; “I place particular importance on **the fundamental role of the law**” – Medvedev, 2008);

– the topos of the worthy leader (the speaker persuades the listeners that he has appropriate predispositions to manage the state and successfully lead the nation towards a better future: “we **can change** our life for the better” – Putin, 2000; “We **have faith in our potential**, we **have faith in our ability** to truly reform and transform the country” – Putin, 2000; “**I want to assure** all of our citizens today that I will spare no effort in my work as President” – Medvedev, 2008).

The inaugural speech of the president assuming office is undoubtedly one of the most important genres of political discourse. In Russian circumstances it is a relatively new genre, yet important for the political stage. The research material included the speeches of the years 2000–2012. The tradition of delivering inaugural speeches is connected with the US history and that is where the requirements referring to their structure have been formed.

The speeches of the Russian presidents are constructed in accordance with the classic rules of the genre. The characteristic elements of all the speeches are: thanks to the voters, reference to the predecessor, positive assessment of his activity and achievements, reference to the rich tradition of the country and traditional values important for the people, the outline

of tasks for the future, assertion that the aims are possible to achieve. The inaugural speech is a unique instrument of creating a positive image of the state and the president. The speaker's job is to affect the citizens' emotions and convincing them that the country is in good hands and they will experience a bright future. The influence on the listeners is reached through reference to notions such as the homeland, tradition, unity of the people, security, prosperity. However, it is worth noting that the Russian presidents clearly avoid the subjects which may spoil the vision of a strong and successful county: defining the problems the state and its citizens struggle. The presidents determine their aims and declare that they will be achieved. However, the declarations are very general; they also lack an outline of concrete methods of the implementation of the tasks assumed.

The speeches under analysis are of a ceremonious and solemn character. The speakers refer to the periods from the past to the future: refer to the history uniting the nation and the tradition as a fundament, and then outline the image of development and success in the future. The objective of this device is to affect the listeners' consciousness, persuading them of the accuracy of the presented direction (as well as that his election was a right choice). The speech is also to be an inspiration for action: the presidents emphasize that to be successful it is required that all the citizens work together and commit themselves. In order to convince the listeners, the presidents do not use any particular statistics or logical arguments. They base their speeches on emotions; therefore it is so important to make contact with the listeners, appealing to the unity of the people and referring to patriotism and tradition.

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Summary

The political discourse is a complex linguistic phenomenon which attracts attention of many scientists from different fields, which shows its interdisciplinary character. The inaugural speech of president elect is one of the most important genres of political discourse. The tradition of this genre was formed many years ago in the United States of America. It is a relatively new for Russia, but a very important genre of Russian political discourse. Thanks to intention of the speech (unification of nation), its emotional saturation, conformity of its content and citizens' expectations the inaugural speech is an effective instrument of political activity. The material for the research was Russian Presidents' speeches (president Putin: 2000, 2004, 2012, President Medvedev: 2008). This work is devoted to the analysis of their features: a composition, a subject-matter, lexical features, functions of the speech and their realization.

Key words: political discourse, president, Russia

CECHY MÓW INAUGURACYJNYCH PREZYDENTÓW ROSYJSKICH

Streszczenie

Dyskurs polityczny to złożone zjawisko językowe, które przyciąga uwagę wielu badaczy z różnych dziedzin, co świadczy o jego interdyscyplinarności. Mowa inauguracyjna prezydenta elekta jest jednym z najważniejszych gatunków tego typu dyskursu. Jego tradycja wywodzi się ze Stanów Zjednoczonych. Jest to stosunkowo nowy dla Rosji, ale bardzo ważny gatunek rosyjskiego dyskursu politycznego. Dzięki intencji przemówienia (zjednoczenia narodu), jego nasyceniu emocjonalnemu, zgodności jego treści i oczekiwań obywateli, mowa inauguracyjna jest skutecznym instrumentem aktywności politycznej. Materiałem do badań były przemówienia prezydentów Rosji (prezydent Putin: 2000, 2004, 2012, prezydent Miedwiediew: 2008). Praca poświęcona jest analizie ich kompozycji, treści, cech leksykalnych, funkcji i ich realizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: dyskurs polityczny, prezydent, Rosja