COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS OF PHRASEMES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract. This article examines the communicative functions of phrasemes in English and Uzbek political discourse from a comparative perspective. A phraseme is defined as a language unit with a fixed pattern, semantic unity, syntactic indivisibility, compactness and figurative meaning. The communicative function of a phraseme is understood as the type of speech act it performs within an utterance, as distinct from its pragmatic effect on the addressee. Drawing on the functional-semantic classification of A.V. Kunin, the speech-act theory of J. Austin and J. Searle, and the discourse-functional models of E.I. Sheygal and P. Chilton, the article proposes a working typology of five communicative functions of phrasemes and illustrates them with descriptive examples from English and Uzbek political texts. The article concludes with observations on the common and language-specific features of phraseme use in the two political discourses.

Key words: phraseme, communicative function, speech act, political discourse, functional-semantic classification, comparative linguistics.

Introduction

Political discourse is one of the most actively studied areas of contemporary linguistics, since in this type of discourse language serves not only to convey information but also to compete for power, shape public opinion and construct group identity. (Sheygal, 2000) Within this discourse, phrasemes occupy a special place: as

fixed, figurative and compact language units, they allow a speaker to condense a complex idea, an evaluation or an appeal into a memorable form. A phraseme is never a purely decorative element of speech; every time it is used, it performs a definite function in the structure of the utterance.

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that, while the metaphorical and lexical properties of political phrasemes have been studied extensively, their communicative functions — that is, the type of speech act they realize — have rarely been examined systematically, and almost never in a comparative English-Uzbek perspective. The aim of the article is to develop a typology of the communicative functions of phrasemes and to test it on material from English and Uzbek political texts. The following tasks are addressed: to clarify the theoretical notions of phraseme and communicative function; to justify the method of analysis; to describe the communicative functions of phrasemes in English and Uzbek political texts; and to compare the results obtained for the two languages.

1. Theoretical foundations: phraseme and communicative function

The notion of the phraseme has received different interpretations in linguistics. A.V. Kunin defines the phraseological unit as a stable word-combination with a fully or partially transferred meaning, and classifies such units, on a functional-semantic basis, into nominative, nominative-communicative, interjectional and communicative phraseological units, the last group corresponding to sentence-equivalent units such as proverbs and slogans. (Kunin, 1996) I.A. Mel'čuk employs the broader term "phraseme" to cover any multi-word unit whose form or meaning is restricted, including collocations and pragmatically bound formulas (pragmatemes). (Mel'čuk, 1995) In the present study, a phraseme is understood, in a narrower sense, as a language unit with a fixed pattern, semantic unity, syntactic indivisibility, compactness and figurative meaning.

The communicative function of a phraseme is to be distinguished from its pragmatic function. Following speech-act theory, the communicative function answers the question of what kind of speech act the utterance containing the phraseme performs, whereas the pragmatic function concerns the purpose and effect of that act in a concrete communicative situation. (Dobrydneva, 2000) J.L. Austin showed that to say something is, in a definite sense, to do something, thereby laying the foundation for the analysis of utterances as acts rather than mere statements. (Austin, 1962) J.R. Searle further systematized speech acts into types such as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives, each type corresponding to a different illocutionary force. (Searle, 1969) This classification provides a natural basis for describing what a phraseme "does" within an utterance.

E.A. Dobrydneva's model of the communicative-pragmatic paradigm of phraseology is particularly relevant here: the scholar argues that when a speaker includes a phraseological unit in an utterance, three communicative tasks are simultaneously accomplished — the object of the message is named, the message is given informational force, and, through that force, the addressee is influenced. (Dobrydneva, 2000) E.I. Sheygal's semiotic account of political discourse, which treats the struggle for and retention of power as its central goal, and P. Chilton's account of the strategic functions of political language - coercion, resistance/dissimulation, legitimization/delegitimization, and (mis)representation - complement this model by specifying the discourse-level functions that communicative acts serve in the political domain. (Sheygal, 2000; Chilton, 2004)

2. Method

The study combines descriptive analysis, contextual analysis and a comparative method. The communicative function of a phraseme is established in three steps: first, the type of speech act performed by the sentence containing the phraseme is identified; second, the phraseme is classified according to Kunin's functional-semantic types;

third, the phraseme is assigned to one of the five communicative functions proposed below, together with any secondary function it may perform. (Kunin, 1996; Dobrydneva, 2000) The English and Uzbek examples given in the following sections are illustrative rather than exhaustive; a full corpus-based verification of the proposed typology remains a task for further research.

3. Communicative functions of phrasemes in English political discourse

In English political discourse, the nominative-descriptive function is realized when a phraseme names a complex political situation or process in a compact, figurative form rather than through a literal description. According to Chaykina's study of English-language political media texts, the majority of the phraseological units analyzed were related to the conceptual domains of "movement" and "journey," which are frequently used to describe the pace or stagnation of a political process. (Chaykina, 2012)

The directive-appellative function is performed by phrasemes that function as calls to action, most typically in slogans and campaign rhetoric; such units correspond to Kunin's class of communicative phraseological units and to Searle's directive speech acts. (Kunin, 1996; Searle, 1969) The expressive-evaluative function is realized by phrasemes that convey the speaker's emotional attitude toward an event or a political opponent; Chaykina notes that during election campaigns the proportion of phraseological units based on the "war" and "sport" conceptual metaphors increases noticeably, which intensifies the expressive force of such evaluations. (Chaykina, 2012)

The commissive function, though less frequent, is performed by fixed formulas expressing promise or guarantee, corresponding to Searle's commissive speech acts. (Searle, 1969) Finally, the text-organizing (compositional) function is performed by phrasemes placed in the strong positions of a text — headlines, opening and closing passages — where they create a compositional frame for the whole text; Chaykina's

data confirm that phrasemes are disproportionately concentrated in such strong textual positions. (Chaykina, 2012)

4. Communicative functions of phrasemes in Uzbek political discourse

In Uzbek political discourse the same five communicative functions can, in principle, be identified, although the linguistic means realizing them are shaped by the specific rhetorical and cultural tradition of Uzbek public speech. The nominative-descriptive function may be expected to rely, alongside universal conceptual domains such as movement, on domains connected with family, community life and agrarian experience, which are characteristic of Central Asian rhetorical tradition; this, however, remains a working hypothesis to be confirmed on corpus material.

The directive-appellative function in Uzbek political rhetoric is traditionally reinforced by proverb-like, sentence-equivalent communicative units, which corresponds directly to Kunin's category of communicative phraseological units and strengthens the persuasive authority of the speaker's appeal. (Kunin, 1996) The expressive-evaluative function may draw on collective and kinship-related imagery (for instance, expressions built around the notion of a single family or community), reflecting the value placed on unity and solidarity in Uzbek political culture; this hypothesis, again, awaits empirical testing.

The commissive function in Uzbek political discourse is often realized through formulaic expressions invoking responsibility before the people or the state, while the text-organizing function, as in English, is expected to be concentrated in the strong positions of political texts and speeches, a pattern consistent with Chaykina's findings for English-language material and plausibly extendable, with appropriate caution, to Uzbek material. (Chaykina, 2012)

5. Comparative discussion

Before turning to the general comparison, it is useful to note that the five communicative functions are not mutually exclusive in actual discourse: a single

phraseme often performs a primary function together with one or more secondary functions, and the boundary between the nominative-descriptive and the expressive-evaluative function in particular tends to be gradient rather than discrete, since naming a political situation in figurative terms almost inevitably carries some evaluative colouring. (Teliya, 1996) This observation applies equally to the English and the Uzbek material discussed above and should be kept in mind when the typology is applied to authentic corpus data rather than to isolated illustrative examples.

The comparison of the two languages suggests that the inventory of communicative functions performed by phrasemes in political discourse is largely universal, since it derives from the general nature of political discourse as a struggle for and legitimation of power, a feature common to both English and Uzbek political communication. (Sheygal, 2000) At the same time, the linguistic means by which these functions are realized, and their relative frequency, appear to differ: English political discourse relies heavily on the conceptual domains of movement, journey, war and sport, (Chaykina, 2012) whereas Uzbek political discourse may show a stronger reliance on communicative, sentence-equivalent units (proverbs, set formulas) and on collective and kinship-based imagery. These observations are preliminary and require confirmation through systematic corpus analysis.

6. Practical criteria for identifying communicative functions

Distinguishing the five communicative functions in practice requires several supporting criteria. First, a syntactic-positional criterion is applied: the syntactic role performed by the phraseme within the sentence (subject, predicate, modifier, or an independent sentence-equivalent unit) indirectly indicates its communicative type in Kunin's classification and thus provides the first step in identifying its function. (Kunin, 1996) Second, a lexical-semantic criterion is used: the presence of evaluative or intensifying components within the phraseme points toward an expressive-evaluative or a delegitimizing use. (Teliya, 1996)

Third, a contextual-situational criterion is of particular importance, since, as Dobrydneva observes, the evaluative charge and the function of one and the same phraseme may differ radically depending on context, a phenomenon she describes as evaluative enantiosemy. (Dobrydneva, 2000) Consequently, the analyst must rely not on the "neutral" dictionary meaning of a phraseme but on its function within the concrete text. Fourth, a discourse-strategic criterion allows the analyst to distinguish the integrative from the legitimizing function by determining which pole of van Dijk's "ideological square" the phraseme serves and which of Wodak's discursive strategies - nomination, predication, argumentation - it instantiates. (van Dijk, 1998; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001)

Fifth, a genre criterion is essential, since the functional distribution of phrasemes may vary considerably across genres such as parliamentary debate, official speech, press interview and campaign slogan. Baranov and Kazakevich's study of parliamentary debate shows that argumentative and polemical phrasemes are particularly prominent in this genre, (Baranov & Kazakevich, 1991) while Popova's study of the interview genre confirms that phrasemes based on allusion and emotional evaluation are characteristic of that genre in particular. (Popova, 1995) The function of a phraseme should therefore be established not in isolation but together with its genre and situational context.

7. Limitations and directions for further research

The analysis presented in this article is illustrative in nature and is intended to substantiate the proposed typology rather than to provide statistically verified frequencies. To establish the reliability of the typology, further work should include the compilation of a genre- and period-matched corpus of English and Uzbek political texts, the systematic annotation of all phrasemes in the corpus according to the five criteria outlined above, and independent coding by at least two analysts, with inter-coder agreement measured by an appropriate statistical coefficient such as Cohen's

kappa. As Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen note, such a procedure is a necessary safeguard against subjectivity in cross-linguistic phraseological comparison. (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2005)

In addition, A. Musolff's theory of metaphor scenarios offer a promising extension of the present typology: many political phrasemes do not merely express a single evaluation or appeal but compress an entire scenario - a sequence of events with implied participants and outcomes - which explains why a single phraseme may simultaneously perform more than one communicative function. (Musolff, 2016) Similarly, Z. Kövecses's account of the cultural variation of metaphor provides a systematic basis for explaining differences in the source domains exploited by English and Uzbek phrasemes. (Kövecses, 2005) These directions will be developed further in subsequent, corpus-based stages of the research.

Conclusion

The article has proposed a theoretically grounded typology of five communicative functions of phrasemes in political discourse — nominative-descriptive, directive-appellative, expressive-evaluative, commissive and text-organizing — built on the synthesis of Kunin's functional-semantic classification, Austin and Searle's speech-act theory, Dobrydneva's communicative-pragmatic model, and Sheygal's and Chilton's accounts of the functions of political discourse. The illustrative analysis of English and Uzbek political texts indicates that while the general inventory of communicative functions is shared by the two discourses, the specific means of their realization are shaped by language-specific rhetorical traditions. Further research should verify these preliminary conclusions on the basis of a comparable, quantitatively balanced corpus of English and Uzbek political texts.

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