

Multimodality Factor in Political Discourse

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Political discourse as an object of linguistic research is currently attracting attention which results in a great many of studies. Usually the notion can be interpreted in narrow and broad understanding, the latter running as follows: political discourse is such type of discourse in which minimum one sphere – the subject, the addressee or the message content – is related to politics as the sphere of activity, including also the process and the result of message/text generation and anticipation and extra linguistic factors affecting its generation and anticipation [2]. However, this interpretation of the term is rather often argued as being too broad and involving a too great number of political genres [7, c. 6], thus the subject matter may be seen as such that accommodates apparently diverse practices.

As the result of various papers on features and characteristics of political discourse (PD) and its components, there have recently appeared notices on multimodality of this discourse type, and the given characteristics has received a study mostly concerning the starting constituent – a political figure in question. The interest to this starting constituent is so high in linguistics [6] that some researchers note: the study of political discourse in a linguistic approach is being transformed into a linguistic study of a political personality, the latter being considered a cognitive and discourse phenomenon [5, c. 1]. Such issues as orator skills, the choice of topics and language means, body language and gestures, a specially created image which includes elements of appearance, voice qualities and speaking techniques are but a few issues associated with multimodality factor when studying a politician [2; 8].

The next constituent of political discourse, the message/text together with the process of its generation, is known to possess multimodal characteristics, and multimodality of the message often if not always overlaps the multimodality means of the starting constituent (i.e., a political figure) thus strengthening the manipulative effect of both discourse constituents [1, c. 27-28]. It is very important to stress that

both the first component of PD (addressant, i.e. a political figure doing the speaking) and the second one (his message) widely use one and the same means to reach and influence the addressee; and this means is the media. At present, the role of media in PD is so great that researchers rightfully speak of mediatized politics [11; 12] and PD in the media is for most people the only way in which they ever encounter politics [9]. So, these opinions demonstrate quite convincingly that the media is a multimedia factor where the addressant and the message strongly overlap and interpenetrate. The other multimedia factors shared by the mentioned PD components are rather beyond the sphere of linguistics, as these are various visual and speaking characteristics the addressant and his charisma (in case of oral performance), which sometimes are of more noticeable effect to the public (a mass addressee) than the content of a politician's speech [3, c. 205; 4, c. 305, 317; 10, c. 105]. However, the discourse characteristics of the message constituent are not studied to the full yet leaving a vast field for further discourse research.

The multimodality qualities of the third PD constituent, an addressee together with the result of its anticipation of the message, has not received a profound study yet. It is in this area that many questions arise and require answers. Researchers agree that the addressee of a PD is a mass addressee or a plural addressee [10, c. 211; 11] who undergoes persuasive influence of the first and the second components of PD. And being the object of persuasion (and of manipulation which is often a possibility), this plural addressee also shares PD multimodal factors such as the contents of the message (linguistic), visual and sound characteristics of the politician, like his/her smile, attractiveness, voice timbre, etc. (non-linguistic) and perhaps a number of others which constitute an interesting field of investigation. An impressive link between a linguistic and a linguocultural aspects of multimodality can be the study of intended 'content catch' use which is based on accepted and popularly shared stereotypical notions, applied and exploited by political figures in their speeches on various occasions, which received in the theory of communication the name of so-called anchors [4, c. 328] the impact which also deal with the sphere of

neurolinguistic programming. This aspect is hardly investigated at all, and thus presents a matter of serious linguistic concern.

Hence, speaking of political discourse as a linguocultural phenomenon it is quite possible to mark its specific multimodality which can be seen as a many-layer set of characteristics which overlap, interact and possibly reinforce one another creating with its means a complicated unity which functions to impress, to persuade, to effect and to manipulate.

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