

METAPHORICAL VIEW OF SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Key words and phrases: anthropocentrism; conceptualization of the reality; discourse; metaphor; metaphorical model.

Abstract: The article deals with the analysis of metaphorical picture of Russian modern and Soviet socio-political discourse. Basic metaphorical models typical of this kind of discourse in different periods of social development of the country are distinguished and compared.

At the beginning of the 21st century the ideas of globalization reached every corner of the world and changed people's world view. All recent social, economic, political changes in our country and abroad became the reason of the changes in our society and therefore in our language which is the undeniable means of the world perception and cognition.

Studying socio-political discourse we should notice that our choice is explained by the role which this sphere of life plays in the modern society and consequently the socio-political lexicon does through its active usage. Nowadays political events touch every person. Life activity of individuals is conceptualized from positions of some political prospects of the society they live in.

Political pluralism in the society, democratization of the socio-political life, real political struggle of different parties and single candidates during elections at various levels – that's the characteristic of today's situation in the country and in the world on the whole. All these events lead to significant update and enrichment of the socio-political discourse. The main feature of the modern language situation in Russia and is that most of the changes in the language are connected with the changes in the society.

The aim of this article is to study metaphorical picture of Russian socio-political discourse from the point of foreground trends of the modern linguistics, namely anthropocentric approach to the analysis of linguistic phenomena and cognitive and discourse paradigm.

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Studying this type of discourse we should notice that it has changed since the Soviet period (a lot of different linguistic means appeared, of slang words, neologisms, borrowings, colloquial phrases started to be used, lexical strata that are not typical for strictly regulated socio-political discourse became more wide-spread). In our opinion it may point to some changes of the lexicon of this type of discourse towards democratization of the language. To prove this fact we should compare the usage of lexical stylistic devices in the socio-political discourse of modern and Soviet periods.

Among lexical stylistic devices metaphor is one of the most common. Its aim is to revive the narrative, to attract the addressee's attention to some facts, to show the author's personality and to manipulate the addressee through gaining his confidence.

However the role of metaphor is defined not only by making the statement emotional and figurative. It is also means of cognition of the surrounding reality functioning as explanation, explication of meaning by creating an image, thus facilitating the process of perception. Metaphor becomes flexible material as it conceptualizes the person's knowledge of the reality.

With regard to the socio-political discourse, words describing the state authorities and administration are often included in the process of metaphorization. We can find nominations of the governing bodies of both the past and present, both European and Asian, Latin American countries (e.g. *рейхстаг, бундестаг, хунта, Кнессет, Думляндия*). Nominations of Russian realities largely reflect the bureaucratic character of our state (e.g. *шарашикина контора, конторить, адская канцелярия, главбредно*).

The productive system is the nomination of top officials and other government and administrative posts (e.g. *босс, бригадир, генсек, губернатор, император, канцлер, князь, комендант, конторщик, кормчий, король, короновать, султан, фараон, фюрер, царь, цезарь*).

Nominations of law enforcement authorities related to the punitive organs of Nazi Germany opposing the Soviet Union during the Second World War are also quite varied as the source of metaphor (e.g. *гестапо, гестаповец, гестаповка, Бастилия, Бухенвальд, Освенцим*).

In the metaphorical system of spoken language there are lexemes that describe the internal political life of society – class and social structure of society, economic policy, domestic politics, political and ideological trends, national policies, some political realities of a particular period in the development of the state.

Thus metaphor stands today as one of the main means of reflection and evaluation of reality which is associated with anthropocentric nature of metaphor and globalization accompanied by the tendency to metaphorical invest in different types of discourse.

We take interest not only in the study of metaphors in the socio-political discourse, but comparison of their use in this type of discourse of contemporary and Soviet periods. Referring to this problem we can see that the Soviet socio-political discourse is caused by the fact that it has strict regulation of the used lexical and stylistic means according to tough political regime of that time, so we would like to justify or refute the fact that at present there is no censorship in the messages of social and political nature and in order to be closer to people the producer of the discourse refers to the reduced lexical style.

Turning to the question of metaphor in the modern socio-political discourse we want to emphasize that under the prevailing recent trends metaphorical situation of the discourse is analyzed by isolation of metaphorical models.

In this type of discourse we can find the following metaphorical models.

1. Social and political life is a theater, game, circus and politicians are actors. This metaphorical model actualizes the meaning of “unreal” life, the game designed for the viewer, the insincerity of the characters during the political performance: *«Нынешний советник президента Барака Обамы, один из ведущих стратегов американской внешней политики Збигнев Бжезинский вновь вышел на политическую сцену»* [1].

2. Social and political life is the criminal world and political leaders are criminal leaders, “godfathers”: *«Юрий Лужков уже крестный отец крымского криминала?»* [2]. The metaphor *godfather* connects political figures with the criminal world where the godfather is a dominant figure.

3. Social and political life is the Bible or mythology and social and political figures are supernatural (usually evil) creatures (idols, demons, fallen angels, zombies): *«Перестройка оказалась **Голгофой**, системным развалом существующего политико-экономического устройства страны»* [3]. The word *Голгофа* has roots in the Bible and means the place where Jesus Christ was crucified and tormented. In this fragment of the discourse “perestroika” is metaphorically compared to the painful process of reforms in the Soviet Union.

4. Social and political life is illness: *«Все глубже увязает Европа в кризисе, который оказался не просто тяжёлой болезнью, а натуральной **чумой**. Все большие политических лидеров понимают: им не сносить «головы» и придется ответить самой дорогой ценой перед преданным населением – собственной властью. Пал премьер Греции, в досрочную отставку уходит премьер Италии, свергнут парламент Испании, Латвии, Венгрии, трещит Румыния и Ирландия, Польша и Франция...»* [4]. In this case the participant of the discourse immediately introduces other communicants in the area of the problem describing a complex crisis situation faced by European countries. The metaphor *чума* carries information about the deplorable situation of these countries. Later in the deployment of the discourse situation there again appears the motive of illness and death.

5. Social and political life is animal life and public and political figures are animals (bears, wolves, lions, crocodiles, sheep, etc.): *«Поскольку в этой статье в качестве одного из примеров отечественных депутатов взят депутат нынешней и прошлой Госдумы от Брянска Василий Иванович Шандыбин, то должен сказать, что название статьи **«брянский волк»** не совсем удачное. Во-первых, внешне Шандыбин – мужик значительно крупнее средних, и посему ему бы больше подходила кличка **«медведь»**. Но, с одной стороны, у нас на политической арене **медведя** уже обгадило возникшее внезапно, как **саранча**, стадо шойгаков, а с другой – **медведь**, по точному замечанию Е. Шнуровского, легко соглашается **на задних лапах ходить и танцевать под дудочку**. Волка же, чтобы заставить выступать в цирке, нужно переродить в **собаку**...»* [5]. In this article the officials are compared with animals, namely bears, wolves, locusts, a dog. The modeling potential of the sphere-source “Animal World” is widely used in the socio-political discourse to form in the recipient’s mind a negative image of

an official or a political opponent. At the same time the reality itself gives rise to metaphorical representation of the policy by the negative zoomorphic images.

6. Social and political life is death and the leaders are political corpses: «В то время, когда наша экономика **задыхается, умирают** целые отрасли, ЦБ инвестирует экономику других стран» [6]. This passage shows the under-funding of important industrial sectors of the Russian economy and the flow of funds abroad causing a negative effect.

7. Social and political life is sports, a game, sweepstakes and public and political figures are players, sportsmen: «Как говорят все обозреватели, речь Ромни, признавшего свое поражение была **классной**. Это означает в переводе на общедоступный язык **хорошую мину при плохой игре**» [7]. The expression *плохая игра* implies such an action on the field that does not lead to any result. In this fragment of discourse the metaphor *плохая игра* means an unsuccessful election campaign of Romney.

8. Social and political life is war: «Россию в случае ратификации Киото ждет настоящий экономический **освенцизм**» [8]. The word *Освенцизм* is the name of the concentration camp in Poland that symbolizes cruelty, slavery. Creation of concentration camps was typical of the Second World War. In this case the metaphor of *освенцизм* is associated with the crisis which could threaten the country.

The metaphor of war is often used in the description of some struggle for political power: «Происходящее на политической кухне власти свидетельствует: правящий режим будет **защищаться** всеми доступными способами. В идеологической **войне** с КПРФ он не оставит попыток **разрушить** ее, размыть ее идейное единство» [9].

9. Social and political life is a living organism that can be born, grow up and grow old, get and lose weight, while social and political figures are parts of a living body (head, heart, hand, eyes, etc.): «Во-первых, нефтяные и газовые доходы России пока ещё дают возможность власти «делиться» с населением. Сегодня цена барреля – вокруг 100 баксов, а не 10, как в «лихие девяностые». Власть **жиреет**, но и народ **не громыхает скелетами**. Уровень бедности медленно, но снижается. Особенно на фоне той бедности, в которой страна жила почти весь XX век. Знаменитая русская телогрейка ушла в прошлое. Белый хлеб с маслом перестал считаться лакомством для пролетарского стола» [10]. In this fragment of discourse the phrase *жиреет и не громыхает скелетами* metaphorically expresses the wealth of authorities and population of the country. Positive overall picture emerges, however presented metaphors contain the negative connotation.

10. Social and political life is literature and social and political figures are literary characters: «Особенно забавно было слушать главу «Газпромнефти» Богданчикова, такового **Остана Бендера**, который рассказывал на днях журналистам про свои нефтегазовые **Нью-Васюки**» [11]. In this context we can notice the analogy between the head of an oil and gas company S. Bogdanchikov and Ostap Bender, the hero of “12 chairs” by Ilf and Petrov. The real person gains the qualities inherent in the nature of the literary hero, i.e. ambition, “Napoleon's plans”, the desire to get rich at the expense of others and without any effort. Creating such metaphors the producer of the discourse tries

to impress the recipient, to form his attitude to this situation (in this case, ironic).

The irony is also evident in the metaphor *нефтегазовые Нью-Васюки*. Described by Ilf and Petrov town New Vasuyki is famous for that is where Ostap Bender gave a session of the “simultaneous” game and was going to create the World Chess capital. In our context actualizing this metaphor the author tries to show the incompetence and arrogance of Bogdanchikov’s plans.

11. Social and political life is a machine: *«Сколько губернаторов правили на Тамбовщине за всю ее историю, и как долго им приходилось быть у руля»* [12]. The metaphor *у руля* involves the use of one of main devices of a machine – steering wheel as means of control of the whole machine and in our case as a control mechanism of the region.

The object of comparison of social and political life can serve a variety of means of transport: *«БРИК больше не локомотив мировой экономики. Мотор заглох. <...> Китай, Индия и Бразилия, исправно работавшие «локомотивами» в 2009–2010 годах, нынче могут не вытянуть глобальный экономический рост. <...> Но сейчас двигатель “на пределе”»* [13].

In this passage one can observe the metaphor *локомотив* denoting BRICS (BRICS – a group of five developing countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) that have an engine that could “die” or “work at the limit”.

12. Social and political life is plant life: *«Теперь эти политологи чешут репу и рассуждают о новой кадровой политике Кремля»* [14]. The expression *чешут репу* means stimulating the thought process. In this case a head is compared with a turnip implicitly expressing the absence of any ideas about the situation and giving negative connotation.

13. Social and political life is a house, a building: *«Давая свидетельские показания в Коммерческом суде в Лондоне по иску Бориса Березовского, Роман Абрамович заявил, что бежавший из России олигарх в середине 1990-х годов был ему нужен в качестве политической крыши»* [15]. In this passage the word *крыша* implicitly includes the meaning of cover, protection of various businessmen, commercial organizations (i.e. Roman Abramovich) from attacks of state controlling bodies or criminal gangs.

Thus in the mentioned metaphorical models the socio-political life is shown in different ways and reflect various areas of knowledge: the backstage world or games, the criminal or unreal world, the world of animals or plants, while social and political figures are described as typical representatives of this world. Of course all the provided examples reflect not all metaphorical models that can be found in this type of discourse. We have just taken the most productive ones.

Now we should consider metaphors of the Soviet socio-political discourse. The original source of the language of the Soviet period is official performances. Peculiarities of the functioning of the Soviet vocabulary are largely determined by regulation of the government.

Having analyzed several fragments of lead articles of the newspaper “Pravda” we found the following metaphorical models.

1. Social and political life is a family: *«Все братские народы нашей страны с чувством национальной гордости оглядывают великие преобразования, которые они осуществили под руководством партии Ленина–Сталина, в составе СССР, опираясь на сталинскую дружбу народов»* [16]. Metaphor of family was relevant throughout all the Soviet period which gave rise to the idea of highly organized and united society, thereby strengthening the strict hierarchical structure. Political leaders were “fathers”, and the rest members of the party were “sons”.

2. Social and political life is a building: *«Выполнение плана 1931 г. – это завершение построения фундамента социалистической экономики СССР, это – новое мощное усиление базы нашей обороны»* [17]. The metaphor of building was also inherent in the socio-political discourse of the Soviet period. The activation and its widespread use are associated with the ideology of K. Marx and F. Engels who represented the society as a building and talked about it in terms of construction.

3. Social and political life is a machine, a mechanism: *«Государство есть машина в руках господствующего класса для подавления сопротивления своих классовых противников. В этом отношении диктатура пролетариата ничем по существу не отличается от диктатуры всякого другого класса, ибо пролетарское государство является машиной для подавления буржуазии»* [18]. Mechanistic metaphor was very strong in the Soviet period. People were compared with the elements of an integral mechanism, each of which had a particular task which ensured high productivity. The metaphor of machine / mechanism shows the intention to create an ideal state in which all the parts are working properly. The main thing here is to show the functionality and good organization of the country's life.

4. Social and political life is war: *«Февральская революция дала в руки Октября главное оружие – организация власти в лице возрожденных Советов, Февраль – это первый опыт наглядного демократизма, политического воспитания масс на практике, приобретенный в сложнейших условиях двоевластия»* [19, p. 2, 3]. Military metaphor was very productive in the Russian language of the Soviet period and like in the modern discourse it actually meant the struggle for political power.

5. Social and political life is a living organism: *«Экономика – это сложный и динамичный организм, развитие которого само по себе постоянно рождает новые проблемы»* [20, p. 3]. In the Soviet socio-political discourse some individual sectors of the economy are often compared to the human body that shows their complexity, consistency, correlation. This metaphor allows the recipient to visualize the government activities by relating it to himself.

Thus the analysis of the Soviet socio-political discourse has shown that its lexical structure also includes metaphors but in a smaller amount and more reserved. Metaphors of this period express the basic ideas of the Soviet totalitarian regime. The language of the socio-political discourse of that time is filled with pompous epithets extolling the power and changes in the country, the style is strictly officious not allowing any deviation to the “right” or “left” and it is not aimed at keeping pace with the common people. The main goal is praising the regime and the real or only imagined achievements in a particular field.

This indicates that in comparison with the Soviet socio-political discourse the modern discourse is not strictly regulated and allows to use those lexical and stylistic means that are clear and “close” to people. The producers of the modern discourse turn to the means that are kept in the treasures of “the great Russian language” ignoring the fact that it is traditionally the official type of discourse which requires a specific set of lexical and stylistic means.

In today's socio-political discourse we can find the same basic conceptual metaphors of war, building, machine and living organism as in the Soviet discourse that indicates the similarity of the social situation in the country in different periods of time, the continuity of the contemporary socio-political discourse, as well as the stability of metaphorical models.

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Метафорический взгляд на общественно-политический дискурс

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Ключевые слова и фразы: антропоцентризм; дискурс; концептуализация действительности; метафора; метафорическая модель.

Аннотация: Проведен анализ метафорической картины русского общественно-политического дискурса современного и советского периодов. Выделены основные метафорические модели, характерные для данного типа дискурса в разные периоды общественного развития страны, и проведено их сравнение.

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