



Интертекстуальность в политическом дискурсе Демократической партии США в XXI в.

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Intertextuality in the Political Discourse of the US Democratic Party in the 21st Century

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Аннотация

В статье рассмотрена реализация интертекстуальности в публичных выступлениях современных политиков от Демократической партии США. Выявляются основные группы источников и выполняемые интертекстуальными включениями коммуникативные функции. Предлагаются выводы о том, что интертекстуальность маркирует индивидуальный стиль оратора и характеризует дискурс политической партии в целом.

Abstract

The paper looks into the way intertextuality is used by contemporary politicians from the US Democratic Party. The main groups of text sources and communicative functions of intertextual inclusions are identified. This paper also presents findings related to the

speakers' individual styles and the discourse of the party as a whole.

Ключевые

интертекстуальность, интертекстуальные публичное, Демократическая партия.

слова:

включения, выступление,

Keywords: intertextuality, intertextual inclusions, public speech, Democratic Party

(1) Intertextuality is a phenomenon which has been widely analysed in linguistics, philosophy, and literary studies. After the Bulgarian-French philosopher and literary critic Julia Kristeva coined the term in the 1960s by basing it on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics and Bakhtin's dialogism, the term has gained momentum. Intertextuality has been attached special importance in linguistics, where it has been given a narrower or a



broader meaning by different researchers. The paper is concerned with the linguistic interpretation of intertextuality as a speech tool frequently used by many modern politicians. The study particularly focuses on the US Democratic Party in the early 21st century. Intertextuality is viewed as the formal presence of one text in another one in the form of marked quotes, allusions, and indirect speech [Попова, 2007]. Thus, we apply a narrower and a more specific approach to interpreting intertextuality as part of our study.

(2) Political discourse is widely studied both abroad [Lauritzen, Fisker] and in Russia. There are also several studies carried out in Russia in the domain of intertextuality use by contemporary politicians. According to Yelena Levenkova, “foreign” texts in the political discourse can fall into several groups: 1) politicians; 2) ordinary public; 3) politicians from other countries; 6) mass media; 7) religious texts; 8) self-quotes. However, not all of the sources are equally represented in both British and American discourse [Левенкова, 2008]. As we will see below, other groups and subgroups can be identified in the American political discourse.

(2) The paper was based on an intertextuality research covering the speeches delivered by the leaders of the US Democratic Party from 2008 to 2016. Politicians whose speeches were analysed include Barack Obama (40 speeches), Hillary Clinton (35 speeches), Joe Biden (15 speeches), and John Kerry (15 speeches). Transcripts of the oral speeches available on official websites were used. By analysing the material, we were able to identify several groups of intertextual sources: 1) politicians; 2) historical documents; 3) public figures and average Americans; 4) literature; 5) mass culture; 6) mottos and slogans; 7) proverbs, sayings, and jokes. Some of the

groups can be further divided into a number of subgroups.

(3) The group “Politicians” falls into three subgroups: 1) US presidents and the founding fathers; 2) current politicians; 3) self-quotes. The subgroup “US Presidents and the Founding Fathers” includes speeches delivered by former presidents or the founding fathers, which are very popular among modern politicians. The most quoted ones are Franklin D. Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and Ronald Reagan. The subgroup “Current Politicians” is formed by quotations from the speeches by current politicians coming from different parties. Republicans and Democrats are widely represented, though Republicans to a much greater extent. The third subgroup consists of quotations from the speaker’s previous presentations.

(4) The group “Historical Documents” includes frequent references to the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is also among the historical documents quoted by politicians from the Democratic Party.

(5) The group “public figures and average Americans” can be split into the following subgroups: 1) human rights activists; 2) family and friends; 3) general public (average Americans). The first subgroup is mainly constituted by human rights activists fighting against ethnic, gender or other kinds of discrimination, among them Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malala Yousafzai in the first place. The second subgroup reveals differences among the speakers: Barack Obama often quotes his wife, while Hillary Clinton refers to her mother, and Joe Biden quotes his father more frequently. The third subgroup reflects a common trend in the Democratic discourse: politicians tend to quote ordinary Americans as an illustration to some point, mostly their spoken words or letters. In this case a



person can be explicitly named or quoted anonymously.

(6) “Literature” is mostly represented by 1) classical literature and 2) religious texts. It is notable that no quotes from widely known classical authors were found. The few authors quoted include the 19th-century American poet Emma Lazarus and Irish poets such as William Butler Yeats and Seamus Heaney (quoted by Joe Biden because of his family background). Religious texts are represented by passages from the Bible and texts from gospel music, which overlaps with mass culture.

(7) The “Mass culture” group mainly consists of quotes from 1) mass media; 2) films and TV series; 3) songs. While newspapers are mostly quoted for the sake of statistics or for information purposes, songs (e.g. *Yesterday* by The Beatles) and films/TV series (e.g. *Mad Men*) usually reveal current trends in mass culture since they are carefully chosen to be understood by the audience.

(8) “Mottos and slogans” can include commercial ones (like “Just do it” quoted by Barack Obama at Nike Headquarters) or political ones (Obama’s “Yes We Can” presidential campaign slogan).

(9) “Proverbs, sayings, and jokes” are not very popular among Democratic politicians and are used very rarely.

(10) All the quotes are used to serve a specific purpose, which can differ depending on the type of a source text. For instance, former US presidents and the founding fathers are mostly quoted as authoritative sources in order to appeal to common American values and highlight historical continuity. It is important that presidents from either party are equally represented, which is different in the case of quotations of contemporary politicians, when Republicans are mostly cited. In this case, intertextuality becomes an antagonistic tool, serving to mock political rivals. Human rights activists

and historical documents are also quoted in order to appeal to common human values and underline the importance of solidarity and equality. Family members and friends, films and TV series, song lyrics, and jokes are usually mentioned to “break the ice” with the audience and create a more personal and positive atmosphere. Individual Americans are mostly cited to build a bridge with the public and show the way policy is implemented and affects life of ordinary people. Examples mostly include young veterans, gay people or women with many children who struggle for their living.

(11) Political and historical documents make up the largest proportion of quotes in the public discourse of the Democratic Party. Such sources usually serve to instill patriotism, trust, sense of equality, and justice into people’s minds.

(12) References to TV series and films and a lack of any mention of classical literature show that the Democratic discourse is mainly targeted at the modern public, including the youth.

(13) It is possible to identify certain individual features in the speakers’ discourse: e.g. Barack Obama prefers to create a more positive and personal atmosphere by introducing jokes and vivid examples from the life of ordinary people; Hillary Clinton is notable for appealing to human rights issues and, in particular, the sense of justice and humanity by quoting human rights activists, while Joe Biden tends to highlight his family background by making references to Irish poets.

(14) Among the common features of the use of intertextuality in the Democratic public discourse one can name references to common history, culture, and traditions, aggressive and antagonistic quotes of Republican speakers, and the use of self-quotes.



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