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## BORIS JOHNSON'S POLITICAL RHETORIC: STYLISTIC FEATURES AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

## ПОЛІТИЧНА РИТОРИКА БОРИСА ДЖОНСОНА: СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ТА ПЕРЕКЛАДАЦЬКІ СТРАТЕГІЇ

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This paper explores the stylistic and rhetorical features of political addresses delivered by English-speaking leaders during the ongoing war in Ukraine, with a focus on the period between 2022 and 2024. It provides a comprehensive overview of scholarly perspectives on stylistics and rhetoric, offering an in-depth examination of the distinctive traits found in political speech, including the linguistic tools used to persuade audiences and the classification of speech genres and types. Special attention is paid to rhetorical strategies designed to evoke emotion, such as the use of metaphors, repetition, rhetorical questions, and appeals to sentiment and how their effectiveness varies depending on contextual, cultural, and audience-specific factors.

Furthermore, the paper highlights differences between American and British political rhetoric, shedding light on how each nation's leaders craft discourse to mobilize global support for Ukraine. The analysis suggests that American politicians tend to employ more emotionally charged language, relying heavily on expressive and rhetorical techniques to convey their viewpoints and shape public opinion. A case study of Boris Johnson's oratorical style is included, showcasing his frequent use of figurative language, persuasive logic, and rhetorical constructions.

Additionally, the article addresses translation-related challenges that arise from cultural and contextual disparities, which can hinder the faithful transmission of intended meanings. The study underscores the importance of precise and effective communication in global political discourse, especially during large-scale international crises like the war in Ukraine, where the implications of language choices are profound.

**Key words:** stylistics, political speech, linguistic expression, rhetoric, metaphor, translation, rhetorical strategy.

У цій статті досліджуються стилістичні та риторичні особливості політичних промов англomовних лідерів у період війни в Україні, з акцентом на 2022–2024 роки. Розглядаються наукові підходи до стилістики та риторики, а також аналізуються характерні риси політичного мовлення, зокрема мовні засоби впливу на аудиторію та типологія й жанри політичних виступів. Особливу увагу приділено риторичним стратегіям, спрямованим на емоційний вплив, таким як метафори, повтори, риторичні запитання та емоційні заклики, а також тому, як їх ефективність залежить від контексту, культури та характеристик цільової аудиторії.

У роботі також порівнюються риторичні особливості американських і британських політичних лідерів, аналізуються їхні підходи до формування політичного дискурсу та впливу на міжнародну підтримку України. Встановлено, що американські представники частіше вдаються до емоційно забарвленої мови, активно використовуючи виразні мовні засоби та риторичні прийоми для донесення своїх позицій і впливу на громадську думку. Як приклад, детально розглядається мовний стиль Бориса Джонсона, зокрема його вживання метафор, аналогій, логічних і риторичних аргументів, а також технік переконання.

Окрему увагу приділено проблемам перекладу таких виступів, особливо труднощам, пов'язаним із культурними та контекстуальними відмінностями, які можуть впливати на точність і ефективність передачі змісту. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю чіткого й точного формулювання міжнародних політичних меседжів у часи глобальних криз, таких як війна в Україні, коли кожне слово має значення та може мати серйозні наслідки.

**Ключові слова:** стилістика, політична промова, мовленнєвий стиль, риторика, метафора, переклад, риторичний прийом.

**Introduction (relevance of the problem).** Political communication in today's world increasingly goes beyond official language and standard rhetorical patterns. It is becoming a tool for emotional influence, self-irony, personal branding, and strategic play with meanings. A special place in this process is occupied by the political rhetoric of Boris Johnson, a British politician who is distinguished by his unconventional speech, combining humour, irony, allusions and improvisation. His public speeches are based on cultural and literary codes, historical parallels, wordplay, and the deliberate use of slang or 'indecently simple' phrases. Although this style is appealing to an English-speaking audience, it poses a serious problem for translators: how to convey not only the content, but also the specifics of communicative intent, irony, cultural subtext, and emotional intonation in translation?

Most traditional strategies for translating political speeches do not take such eccentric cases into account. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate:

- what linguistic and stylistic devices Boris Johnson uses in his rhetoric;
- what makes translating such speeches difficult;
- which translation strategies are most effective in the Ukrainian linguistic and cultural space.

**The main objectives of the article** are the following:

– analyze the stylistic features of Boris Johnson's political rhetoric and identify effective strategies for translating his speeches into Ukrainian, taking into account cultural, linguistic and pragmatic aspects;

– outline the functions of irony, humour, allusions and wordplay in his speeches;

– analyze the translated fragments of Johnson's speeches into Ukrainian and identify translation difficulties;

– consider the main strategies and techniques used by translators to adapt his speeches;

– offer recommendations for the effective translation of political rhetoric with an individualized style.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The phenomenon of political discourse has emerged as a significant area of inquiry within both academic and journalistic domains. The concept of discourse, particularly in relation to political communication, continues to garner substantial scholarly interest. Contemporary research reflects a growing recognition of the complexity and multidimensional nature of political discourse, as evidenced by an extensive corpus of academic literature addressing both general theoretical frameworks and specific characteristics of political language. Noteworthy contributions to this field have been made by scholars such as I. Butova, G. Vusik, V. Dibrova, M. Didenko, L. Efimova, D. Zhybak, O. Selivanova, among others, whose works provide in-depth analyses and propose various methodological approaches to the study of political discourse.

**Presentation of the main material.** Since 2014, and especially since 2022, when the war in Ukraine entered a new phase of escalation, international political leaders have actively used rhetoric to influence public opinion and support political goals. American and British leaders, as key allies of Ukraine, have significantly influenced international perceptions of the conflict through their public statements.

Political leaders in the US and the UK often resort to rhetorical devices such as appeals to emotion, the use of metaphors, repetitions, parallels and rhetorical questions. For example, metaphors comparing the struggle of the Ukrainian people to light against darkness emphasize the moral aspect of the conflict and call for support for Ukraine [1].

Scientists describe political discourse as a complex of linguistic acts used in political discussions, as well as a system of rules of public policy based on historical traditions and proven over time. On the other hand, political discourse is a multidimensional communicative phenomenon, where text is only one component, and other elements include extralinguistic factors such as cultural context, social attitudes, individual beliefs and goals of the participants in the conversation [1]. Political discourse is not limited to the words of politicians or their public speeches. It also

includes expert commentary and analysis, media reports, research articles in scientific and analytical publications, and more. Together, these materials form a diverse mosaic portrait of contemporary political realities.

But it is important to remember that political discourse is not static. It evolves and adapts, reflecting changes in social norms, cultural values, and historical contexts. The rules of public debate that may be considered acceptable today may change in the future in line with new traditions and collective experiences.

Since most political information comes from speeches by political leaders, and political discourse is a specialized form of communication, it is obvious that when drafting their speeches, politicians pay special attention not only to the content of their speech, focusing on a specific audience, but also use structural-semantic constructions and linguistic coding.

The text of a political speech is developed in accordance with the strict requirements of political protocol and etiquette, which determine the choice of linguistic means used by speakers. English-language political discourse has certain semantic, stylistic and linguistic attributes. In particular, characteristic details in terms of vocabulary include the fairly widespread use of professional political terminology, the repeated use of lofty, artistically coloured words, clichés and stereotypes [2].

From a linguistic perspective, political discourse encompasses the use of neologisms, standard phrases, metaphors and other rhetorical techniques. The cultural characteristics and historical past of each country have a significant impact on the mentality of the population, determining their worldviews and behavioural patterns. The rhetorical component of political discourse not only reflects the linguistic style and personal characteristics of a politician, but also serves as a tool for achieving specific communicative goals. Through the use of various rhetorical techniques, politicians can emphasize certain aspects of their activities, form a positive image in the public eye, or find arguments to support their decisions.

Formal language is often used in English-language political speeches. phrases for greeting, saying farewell and expressing gratitude. For example, at the beginning of a political speech, it is customary to express joy and satisfaction at the meeting and demonstrate a friendly attitude towards the interlocutor, using carefully chosen words to express emotions in a restrained manner: *"I am extremely pleased to meet with you today to discuss these important issues"*. In the middle part of the speech, the main agenda or purpose of the meeting is announced: *"We need to address and deliberate on these critical points during our meeting"*. In the final part of the speech, there is a mutual exchange of words of gratitude, using various etiquette formulas, for example: *"Thank you for your insightful contributions and the constructive dialogue we had today"* [2].

In the field of political discourse translation, the main task is to achieve the same reaction in the foreign audience as in the original one. The task is complicated by the fact that discourse often has culturally determined features. The translator must deeply understand the original context in order to find the most adequate linguistic equivalents. Cultural realities, stylistic features of individual politicians and unique linguistic expressions present additional difficulties in the translation process. Political texts are often characterized by a lack of strict logical sequence. In political speeches, the emphasis is often placed on commentary rather than pure information, and arguments are aimed more at an emotional than a logical response [3]. Taking these features into account, several methods can be identified for translating political speeches:

- literary translation, which adheres to the original from beginning to end, allowing only minor corrections, such as the removal of articles or changes to lexical elements without losing the basic structure;
- combined translation, which combines different methods. Among these methods, the use of transformational methods in the translation of political speeches deserves special attention.

Boris Johnson's oratory skills play a key role in his success in political debates and on the political stage, thanks to his impressive lexical variety of speeches. Boris Johnson is known for his ability to skilfully use the lexical resources of language. His speeches are characterized by the use of precise and at the same time figurative expressions, carefully chosen to suit the mood of the audience, as well as professional terminology that emphasizes his professionalism. His unique ability to manipulate different levels of language, including the use of slang, professional vocabulary and colloquial language, makes his speech accessible to a wide audience, while maintaining intellectual depth and significance. He easily switches from complex academic terms to simpler everyday expressions, creating a dynamic and diverse linguistic image of the speaker [3].

It should be emphasized that during public speeches, the former Prime Minister deliberately limits the use of emotionally expressive vocabulary, focusing instead on words with neutral connotations. In his speeches, one can often hear words such as *begin, use, clear, be, saving, different, way, work, day, continue*, which do not have any pronounced emotional or evaluative connotations. This feature of his speech not only contributes to the impression of naturalness and directness of his persuasive speech, but also plays an important role in building trust in his statements. The use of neutral vocabulary allows the prime minister to avoid the potential perception of his words as overly colourful or emotionally charged, which could raise doubts about the objectivity or truthfulness of his statements. The use of such vocabulary contributes to the understanding of his speech by a wide audience, ensuring clarity and accuracy in the transmission of information and ideas.

Boris Johnson has an excellent feel for language and understands how to effectively influence the political audience and steer it in the necessary political direction. This comes easily to him thanks to his unique stylistic manner. Incidentally, the public does not always keep up with his neologisms, metaphors, or comparisons and is genuinely surprised by his style of speech and the variety of vocabulary he uses. He often uses epithets in his speeches. Epithets are used to give a special emotional colouring to the object or phenomenon being described. When discussing the war in Ukraine, Johnson uses contrasting epithets to describe Ukraine and Russia, thereby demonstrating his position regarding the parties involved. In speeches about the political situation in Ukraine and its participation in the war, we often encounter positive epithets such as: *crucial moment* (вирішальний момент), *your wonderful country* (ваша прекрасна країна), *lovely streets* (милі вулиці), *indomitable populations* (незламні народи), *the greatest feat of arms of the 21st century* (найбільший військовий подвиг 21 століття). When talking about Russia, the politician uses epithets with negative connotations, such as: *extremely vulnerable* (надзвичайно вразливий), *terrible mistake* (жахлива помилка), *brute force* (груба сила), *gigantic error* (величезна помилка), *Putin's historic folly* (історична дурість путіна). In this way, epithets are used to form positive and negative impressions of the subjects of conversation in the listener's mind, thereby achieving the goal of Boris Johnson's speeches, who unquestionably supports Ukraine.

Along with epithets, a common stylistic device used by politicians is metaphor, which is the use of a word or phrase in a figurative sense, based on the principles of similarity, analogy or comparison, and this adds ambiguity to the language [4]. Below are several examples of metaphors in Boris Johnson's speeches: "*And so I say to the people of Russia, whose president has just authorized a tidal wave of violence against a fellow Slavic people...*", "*And if the months ahead are grim, and the flame of freedom burns low I know that it will blaze bright again in Ukraine*", "*The so-called irresistible force of Putin's war machine has broken on the immovable object of Ukrainian patriotism and love of country*". Another example of metaphorical expression is the use of zoological metaphors in the following example: "*How can you negotiate with a crocodile when it has your leg in its jaws, that is the difficulty that Ukrainians face*".

Idioms, phrases, quotations and proverbs play an important role in Boris Johnson's political speeches. He often uses paraphrased well-known sayings, like "*Everyone is human. People make mistakes*" instead of "*to err is human*". We can see one more example of this stylistic device in the



following sentence: *“Whoever has ears will hear; whoever has eyes will see that Ukraine will fight and defend itself”*.

The use of comparisons as an important rhetorical device is widespread in the art of public speaking. This stylistic technique, which is found in almost all political speeches, allows ideas to be highlighted by showing similarities or differences between different subjects or concepts, giving arguments depth and vividness. Comparisons help to make the formal and business style of political speeches more understandable and appealing to the audience. They not only enrich the language with images, but also allow speakers to build stronger and more convincing arguments, attracting the attention of listeners and emotionally influencing them: *“It is about right versus wrong. It is about good versus evil. And that is why Ukraine must win”* [4].

Boris Johnson often resorts to jokes to attract public attention: *“Peppa Pig World is very much my kind of place”*. In his farewell speech to Parliament, Boris Johnson called on his successor to stay closer to the Americans and stand up for Ukrainians. He ended his speech with the famous phrase from the film Terminator, *“Hasta la vista, baby.”*

The translation of political speeches often presents significant challenges in conveying the intended meaning of the source text with precision. These challenges primarily stem from linguistic discrepancies, as well as cultural and contextual divergences between the source and target languages. To minimize semantic loss and maintain translational adequacy, professionals employ a range of transformation strategies. Such strategies may involve adaptation, restructuring, or contextual reinterpretation of the original message, tailored to the communicative norms and expectations of the target audience. Skilled translators, drawing on their expertise and linguistic intuition, are capable of producing target texts that preserve the core meaning and rhetorical intent of the original, while avoiding rigid, word-for-word renderings.

Translation of Boris Johnson's speeches into Ukrainian requires special attention to conveying his lively and emotional style. The metaphors and images used by Johnson must be adapted in such a way as to preserve their emotional and rhetorical effect. Translators should be careful when conveying complex images and metaphors so that they do not lose their power and relevance in the context of the Ukrainian language.

**Conclusions.** Thus, an analysis of the stylistics and rhetoric of English-language political speeches by American and British leaders during the war in Ukraine demonstrates the importance of rhetorical techniques in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support. The effectiveness of language is often measured by the emotional resonance it evokes in the audience. A speech can be considered effective if it elicits a response in the form of strong emotions, empathy, support or action. Politicians actively use linguistic devices such as metaphors, rhetorical questions and repetitions to attract public attention and enhance the emotional resonance of their speeches. The effectiveness of these tools is underlined by their ability to shape and reinforce political messages during a crisis.

Boris Johnson is known for his emotional, metaphorical and dynamic style. His speeches often contain vivid metaphors and rhetorical questions that help to mobilize emotional support and emphasize the moral weight of the struggle. He uses colourful and vivid rhetoric that helps to create emotional momentum. During the research, it was found that the stylistic techniques used by Johnson in his speeches are key elements of his oratory skills, allowing him to emphasize his political and ideological positions. The translation must preserve this dynamism and emotional charge in order to effectively convey his message.

The translation of English-language political speeches entails a range of distinctive challenges arising from the interplay of journalistic, academic, and occasionally literary stylistic features that are inherent to such texts. A translator must not only render the intended message with precision but also select translation strategies that remain relevant amid the ongoing evolution of language and shifting socio-political contexts. This task represents a nuanced and creative endeavor, requiring more than

the identification of lexical equivalents – it demands the ability to locate appropriate substitutes that align with both linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

A crucial aspect of achieving an effective translation lies in the translator's capacity to adapt the content in a manner that aligns with the grammatical, cultural, and stylistic conventions of the target language, while still preserving the author's original intent and communicative objectives. The research has revealed that the stylistic devices employed by Boris Johnson in his political addresses constitute a central component of his rhetorical effectiveness, enabling him to assert and reinforce his political and ideological perspectives.

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