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DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/apfs.v040.2023.28>*N. Yu. Horbenko*ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3691-9268>*PhD Student at the Political Science Department**Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv***POLITICAL DISCOURSE: DEFINITION, FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS**

Problem statement. Discourse is a polysemantic and controversial term. Despite being studied for almost half a century, it remains relevant due to its interdisciplinary nature and lack of clear definition. This concept is studied by various disciplines such as linguistics, pedagogy, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, sociology, logic, jurisprudence, ethnography, computational linguistics and artificial intelligence, political science, and others.

Discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon with various features related to linguistic product, context, genre, ideology, and according to a broad approach, culture, social community, and historical period. The broad approach to studying discourse in linguistics is explained by its multidisciplinary and synthesis of cognitive and communicative approaches.

The lack of a single approach to the study of discourse and its research methodology confirms that this topic remains relevant.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Classic works in discourse theory include those by M. Foucault, J. Butler, E. Said, E. Laclau, J. Derrida, A. Gramsci and P. Bourdieu. These authors studied discourse and analyzed how it shapes our social reality and affects power structures. In their works, they explored various aspects of discourse, such as its relationship with power, the structure of identity, language issues, and the definition of social norms and values. These authors' works are important for understanding how discourse affects our social reality and are classics in the field of discourse theory.

Among Ukrainian scientists, S. Sokolovska, I. Vilchynska, N. Shevchuk, L. Lukina, and H. Vusyk are studying political discourse, its peculiarities, directions and development prospects. N. Lutianska, M. Kostenko, O. Semotiuk, and P. Makarevych are Ukrainian scientists who study political media discourse, its typological and structural-organizational features, significance, and prospects. Authors emphasize that the study of political media discourse is crucial in modern society, where information is a driving force. Media discourse is the primary form of political discourse, as it influences public opinion and helps shape the conceptual worldview.

The purpose of this article is to study political discourse, examine approaches to its definition,

identify its peculiarities, generalize the functions of political discourse, as well as determine the significance and role of political media discourse.

Presentation of the main content. The theory of political discourse was developed by such scholars as M. Foucault, R. Barthes, J. Habermas, and T. A. van Dijk. Their works on this issue are considered classics. In 1952, Z. Harris first used the term “discourse” as an independent term in his article “Discourse Analysis”. He defined discourse as a sequence of sentences spoken or written by a person or group of people in a certain situation [15, p. 12].

In the 1960s, Michel Foucault used the teachings of Emile Benveniste to develop his own vision of the purpose and goals of discourse analysis. The French school of discourse analysis regards discourse as oral or written language; a complex process or result of linguistic activity, a specific type of expression characteristic of a particular social-political group or epoch.

Roland Barthes, as a proponent of semiotic theory, investigated various types of discourses, such as history, medicine, customs, myths, fashion, advertising, and mass-produced objects. He believed that discourse consists of social signs that have socially significant meanings and mythological content [1, p. 457]. Not only words but also images and objects can convey important semantic meanings.

Jurgen Habermas connected discourse to the theory of social action and the problem of social legitimacy, highlighting communicative action as an ideal communicative model, where free and consensus-oriented communication plays a key role in achieving agreement in the process of dialogue [8, p. 21–22].

For understanding the concept of “discourse”, the research of Teun A. van Dijk is important, who uses both broad and narrow understandings of the term. In the broad sense, discourse is a complex communicative event that takes place between a subject and an object in certain contexts and may include verbal and non-verbal components. In the narrow sense, discourse is defined as a text or conversation that contains only verbal components and is the result of communicative action. Discourse is viewed as a finished product or a product that is in process and can be interpreted by recipients [2].

This approach is complex and multifaceted. T. van Dijk views discourse as a combination of linguistic form, knowledge and action. This allows for the integration of two approaches to defining language: formal and functional. Advocates of the formal approach focus on linguistic units, ignoring social and contextual aspects, while advocates of the broader approach consider discourse in the context of language communication between people. It should be noted that the functional approach focuses on the study of political, social, and economic processes as discursive phenomena that function in a specific context. Discourse is seen as one of the primary forms of institutional functioning.

Currently, there is no single definition of the concept of discourse, but the majority of researchers understand it in a broad sense. This approach has become the basis for most scientific research on this topic. In general, discourse can be defined as a complex communicative event that includes extralinguistic factors and cannot exist without social, political, and cultural context. Interdisciplinarity is a characteristic of modern discourse analysis.

Political discourse reflects the interaction between individuals, society, and the state, which influences the recipients' perception of the world. Taking into account the various approaches to defining discourse, the following characteristics can be identified: communicativeness; the presence of political actors; concentration on important social and political issues; and a high level of language culture, which allows for achieving agreement through reasoned expression, discussion, and coordination of different views [9, p.220]. Since discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon that includes the addressee and the addressee, context and situation, it depends on the goal set by political actors, political culture, and the professional level of political actors.

According to E. Coseriu, language itself has political implications. Language that serves as a sign of solidarity with the rest of society can be an important tool for establishing political restraint, economic or social discrimination [5, p. 35].

Political discourse has its own characteristics, including the use of specific vocabulary, structure, and discourse realization. The main goal of political discourse is to persuade people of the correctness of certain actions or evaluations, rather than simply describing events. To achieve this goal, political discourse must stimulate the recipient to take certain actions [3, p. 127].

The effectiveness of political discourse is determined by how well its symbols correspond to the mass consciousness and values of the recipients [5, p. 37]. However, persuasion does not always look like logical argumentation, as politicians can use various linguistic devices.

To successfully influence the audience, interesting references must be created, interpreted appropriately, and reach the irrational perception of information and change the recipient's behavioral stereotype. In democratic political discourse, it is important to adhere to informativeness, rationality, clarity, logical argumentation and dialogicity [7, p. 39].

The functions of political discourse, like the concept itself, are a subject of discussion. By summarizing different approaches, four main functions can be distinguished: instrumental, informational, persuasive, and prognostic.

The instrumental function of political discourse refers to its use as a tool of political power. This function comprises seven elements: social control, legitimization of power, reproduction of power, social orientation, social solidarity and differentiation, agonistic and actional functions. Their influence includes control over public opinion; justification of decisions regarding the distribution of power and resources; creating support for those in power; shaping perceptions of political reality in society; promoting integration or separation of different social groups; activating and coordinating social conflicts, expressing disagreement and protest against the actions of those in power; and implementing policy through mobilizing and "narcotizing" the population [12, p. 50-51].

The informational function of political discourse is necessary to fulfill the instrumental function. It is ensured through the interaction between the media and political actors. Most citizens form their perceptions of the political situation based on information they receive from the media, rather than their own direct experience in politics, since most of them do not engage in politics directly [10, p. 214]. The dissemination of information about the political sphere helps citizens to be informed and form their perceptions of political reality.

Political discourse includes three directions of implementing the informational function: dissemination of information, setting the agenda, and projection into the future and past [14, p. 198]. They form the information field of political discourse.

Political discourse is also defined as institutional communication that uses professionally-oriented signs, has its own lexicon, phraseology and paremiology [12, p. 60]. The next function of political discourse is persuasive, which involves influencing the addressee. Political discourse has a strong impact on shaping people's thoughts and beliefs. The function of persuasion is most pronounced in political speeches, parliamentary debates, party programs, and propaganda materials, where it is important not only to provide information but also to convince listeners, evoke certain intentions and trust in oneself, exert emotional and intellectual influence on society's thoughts about certain phenomena or events, call for action,

and shape the necessary thoughts and values for convincing the public.

The predictive function of political discourse is based on the analysis of past events and experience, which can predict the trends in the future development of political processes. This function guarantees the preservation and reproduction of power relations in forms that correspond to a specific type of power. Political discourse provides a connection between the past, present, and future, shapes relationships in society, and determines the dynamics of political processes.

Thus, political discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon mediated by certain sociocultural customs, whose purpose is to achieve political goals. The main features of political discourse include a comprehensive reflection of the interaction between human beings and society, a focus on public consciousness, subjective correlation with participants, concentration on the future, polemicality, mediated nature of the political experience of the majority of citizens, fideistic features, theatricality and the use of formal means.

Political discourse is a complex expression of all interactions between individuals and society, which depends on the level of societal development and reflects the discourse of power and its policies. It also plays an important role in shaping social interests, and mass communication is a key element in implementing political communication strategies.

The specificity of political discourse lies in its direction towards implementing policies and achieving political goals. Therefore, it is very important to shape the thoughts, values, and evaluations that are necessary for those who construct discourse within society [3, p. 128]. This is often done by appealing to people's emotions rather than their reason, using authorities, traditions, historical examples, and cultural norms. Political discourse is often accompanied by emotional expressions. Since it covers all spheres of political life in society, political discourse can be a dangerous tool of influence.

Political discourse has not only a substantive but also an essential meaning, as it reflects not only reality but also a certain group or groups of people. Different communication participants are reflected differently in the discourse: communicative forms generate their content. Political discourse depends on who is speaking and who is listening, the communicative intentions of the speaker, and the results of the influence on the addressee. The conversational discourse consists of five stages: establishing linguistic contact, introducing the topic, confirming the topic, changing topics and roles, and completing the communicative act [11, p. 429].

The peculiarity of political discourse is that it is directed towards the future context, which cannot be easily and immediately refuted.

Political discourse involves active use of polemics, which can manifest in an attempt to negatively influence a political opponent and convince the public of the advantages of one's own values and views. This can lead to various interpretations among supporters of different perspectives of terms such as "democracy", "freedom", "equality" and so on.

Most people obtain their political experience through group or mass communication, and therefore reality is perceived indirectly through communicative intermediaries and their informational products. This information is interpreted as a plausible picture of the world that reflects reality, but with a mediated point of view.

Fideistic features are linked to the previous feature [3, p. 128], which is the mediated political experience of most people through group or mass communication. In political discourse, an irrational approach to persuasion is often used, based on appeals to emotions and the subconscious rather than reason and logical thinking.

Theatricality of political discourse consists in the fact that the people act as spectators, and not just as direct addressees, and perceive political events as a show intended for them [13]. The presence of the spectators-addressees consciously or unconsciously affects the communicative behavior of politicians, their strategy, and language choices, as they always remember their audience and seek to evoke an emotional reaction from viewers and gain recognition.

In considering political discourse in a broad sense, including both institutional and non-institutional forms of communication, it can be classified according to genre characteristics. The main genres in political discourse are those that best correspond to its purpose – the struggle for power. In peripheral genres, the function of the struggle for power intersects with the functions of other types of discourse in one text. Six types of political discourse are distinguished:

- Institutional political discourse, which includes parliamentary debates, pre-election campaigning, and official speeches;
- Media political discourse, which includes analytical articles, stories, blogs, and reports disseminated through the press, radio, television, and the internet;
- Official business political discourse (texts for government officials);
- Texts created by citizens (letters, appeals to politicians, government agencies, and the mass media);
- Artistic works dedicated to politics (political detective stories, poetry, memoirs);
- Texts of scientific works, the object of research of which is the political sphere [4, p. 474–475].

Studying media political discourse has become very important in modern society where information is a driving force. Media discourse is the main type of political discourse, as it influences public opinion and helps shape the conceptual picture of the world [6, p. 139].

Today, political communication is not limited to the simple use of mass media as a means of transmitting information. Media have actually become the main environment for its existence [9, p. 220]. A special role in political discourse belongs to media discourse, which acts as the main channel and environment for political communication. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a tendency for the role of media discourse in political discourse to grow, and for media and political fields to merge.

Media discourse transforms politics into a symbolic and ideological construct, thanks to its ability to virtualize political reality. This virtual image becomes part of the symbolic field of politics and affects the political consciousness of society. Often, the media reality transmitted through mass media is more attractive to citizens than the reality of their empirical political experience.

Conclusions. Political discourse is a polysemous and controversial term. Interdisciplinarity is a characteristic of modern discourse analysis. Discourse is defined as a complex communicative event that includes extralinguistic factors and cannot exist without social, political, and cultural context. In the political and social context, discourse is considered a social dialogue that takes place through social institutions between individuals, groups, and organizations, as well as institutions that participate in the dialogue. Thus, the main feature of political discourse is that it is an expression of the whole complex of relationships between people, society, and the state, and therefore influences the formation of recipients' worldview.

The question of the functions of political discourse also raises debates. However, by summarizing various approaches to their definition, four main functions can be distinguished: instrumental, informational, persuasive and prognostic.

Considering the types of political discourse, it is worth emphasizing that political media discourse plays an increasingly important role today. With the development of the information political environment, the governing potential of media discourse significantly increases. It is a governing resource that operates in the media-communicative political environment and is engaged in the production of virtual political products.

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Summary

Horbenko N. Yu. Political discourse: definition, features and functions. – Article.

The article focuses on the political discourse, which, despite being the subject of study for many sciences, lacks a single approach to definition. The paper examines two approaches to defining discourse: narrow and broad. The broad approach is the basis for most contemporary research on political discourse. The article proposes a definition of discourse as a complex communicative event that includes extralinguistic factors and cannot occur outside social, political, and cultural contexts. Political discourse is an expression of the entire complex of relationships between a person, society and the state, and thus influences the formation of the recipients' picture of the world. Since political discourse is a complex

communicative phenomenon that involves both the addresser and addressee, context and situation, factors that may affect it are identified, such as the goal set by political actors, political culture and the professional level of politicians.

The article states that the specificity of political discourse lies in its orientation towards policy implementation and achieving political goals. Thus, based on the definition and functions of political discourse, the main features of political discourse are identified. Among the most important characteristics of political discourse are a comprehensive reflection of the interaction between the individual and society, orientation towards public consciousness, subjective correlation with the participants, focus on the future, polemics, mediated nature of political experience of the majority of citizens, fideistic features, theatricality and the use of formal means.

Special attention is paid to media political discourse. Today, this type of political discourse plays a very important role in modern society, as it influences public opinion and helps to shape the conceptual worldview.

Key words: political discourse, political communication, political power, politics, language.

Анотація

Горбенко Н. Ю. Політичний дискурс: сутність, особливості та функції. – Стаття.

Стаття присвячена дослідженню політичного дискурсу, який попри те, що є об'єктом дослідження багатьох наук, не має єдиного підходу до визначення. У статті розглядається два підходи до визначення дискурсу: вузький та широкий. Зазначається, що саме широкий підхід ліг в основу більшості сучасних досліджень, присвячених політичному дискурсу. Запропоноване власне визначення дискурсу, що тлумачить його як складну комунікативну подію, яка включає в себе екстралінгвістичні фактори та не може відбуватись поза соціальним, політичним і культурним контекстами. Політичний дискурс є

вираженням усього комплексу взаємовідносин між людиною, суспільством і державою, а отже, впливає на формування картини світу реципієнтів. Оскільки політичний дискурс є складним комунікативним явищем, яке включає адресата та адресанта, контекст та ситуацію, виділяються такі фактори, що можуть на нього впливати: мета, яку ставлять політичні актори; політичної культура та професійний рівень політичних діячів.

Ефективність політичного дискурсу залежить від того, наскільки його символи відповідають масовій свідомості та цінностям адресатів. Наголошується на тому, що переконання не завжди мають форму логічної аргументації, адже часто політики використовують різні мовні прийоми. Зазначається, що логічність і раціональність аргументації, а також діалогічність – надзвичайно важливі для демократичного політичного дискурсу.

Узагальнено функції політичного дискурсу та виділено чотири основні функції інструментальну, інформаційну, персуазивну та прогностичну. Зазначається, що специфікою політичного дискурсу є спрямованість на здійснення політики та досягнення політичних цілей. Таким чином, базуючись на визначенні та функціях політичного дискурсу, виділено основні риси політичного дискурсу. Серед найважливіших особливостей політичного дискурсу називають комплексне відображення взаємодії між людиною та суспільством, спрямованість на громадську свідомість, суб'єктна співвідносність з учасниками, зосередженість на майбутньому, полемічність, опосередкований характер політичного досвіду більшості громадян, фідейстичність, театральність та використання формальних засобів.

Окрему увагу приділено медійному політичному дискурсу. Сьогодні саме цей вид політичного дискурсу відіграє дуже важливу роль в сучасному суспільстві, оскільки впливає на громадську думку та допомагає формувати концептуальну картину світу.

Ключові слова: політичний дискурс, політична комунікація, політична влада, політика, мова.