



Article

The Role of Speech Genres in Leadership Political Discourse

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Abstract: This article examines the role and functional significance of speech genres in leadership political discourse. The study focuses on how political leaders employ different speech genres, including speeches, public addresses, interviews, statements, debates, appeals, and ceremonial discourse, to communicate political ideas, influence public opinion, construct social identities, and establish interaction with different audiences. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between speech genre, communicative intention, rhetorical strategy, and sociopolitical context. The analysis demonstrates that speech genres serve not only as structural forms of political communication but also as important instruments for persuasion, legitimization, mobilization, and the construction of leadership authority. The study also highlights the importance of linguistic, pragmatic, and stylistic features in determining the effectiveness of political discourse. The findings suggest that the appropriate selection and adaptation of speech genres enables political leaders to respond effectively to changing communicative situations and audience expectations. Thus, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of political discourse as a dynamic communicative phenomenon in which genre choice plays a central role in shaping meaning, influence, and public perception.

Keywords: political speech, leader's speech, speech genres, classification, primary forms, secondary forms

1. Introduction

The concept of "speech genre" is a key theoretical notion in pragmalinguistics. V.V. Vinogradov identified the study of genre characteristics as one of the primary tasks of stylistics as early as the 1930s. However, due to changing communication conditions, there is still no consensus on what constitutes a genre. The difficulty of distinguishing genres is further compounded by their constant interaction and susceptibility to communicative-pragmatic factors. When attempting to delineate the specific genre characteristics of political discourse, it is crucial to establish a theoretical basis for the concept of "speech genre," which is viewed as a "typical communicative situation in the speaker's communicative activity, characterized by a specific set of situational elements and the tasks to be resolved within that context." As a genre, political discourse manifests itself as a unit of speech situated within a conventional communicative context (specifically, socio-political practice).[1]

2. Materials and Methods

The concept of "speech genre" is interpreted in various ways within linguistic traditions. Its status is grounded in the teachings of M.M. Bakhtin, who defined speech genres as "relatively stable types of thematic, compositional, and stylistic utterances" used in specific spheres of human activity [2]. According to this theory, communication "takes place only through specific speech genres; that is, all our utterances possess specific, relatively stable, and typical forms that constitute a coherent whole." "Even in the freest and most natural conversation, we adapt our speech to specific genre forms" [3]. In this regard, M.M. Bakhtin's views on theme, style, and composition differ from traditional linguistic perspectives—his approach is "pragmatic." Its pragmatic nature lies in the fact that a speech genre is a typical form of individual speech style; it embodies an expression to which style is directly linked and through which the author's individuality is manifested. Style does not exist within the language itself but rather in concrete utterances—in specific speech—situated within the context of a particular situation.

M.Y. Fedosyuk puts forward the idea that the scope of the term "speech genre" is not limited solely to conversational speech. The researcher rightly considers speech genres to be "stable thematic, compositional, and stylistic types of texts, rather than of words" [4].

Among the pressing issues in contemporary genre studies, researchers highlight the following:

- 1) parameterizing genre forms and establishing systematic relationships between parameters;
- 2) creating classifications and a multifaceted typology of genres;
- 3) clarifying fundamental contradictions within the system of genre-related terminology;
- 4) formulating genre-related concepts within the framework of general linguistic concepts;
- 5) studying genre forms from a historical perspective [5].

Another important characteristic of speech genres is their functional connection to various types of human activity. Each such sphere possesses a whole repertoire of speech genres that evolves alongside the development of that sphere. "The richness and diversity of speech genres are indisputable, given the inexhaustible possibilities of human activity; for every sphere of activity, there exists a complete repertoire of speech genres that grows and becomes more complex as the sphere itself develops" [6]. Researchers have also noted the immense diversity of speech genres (everyday conversation, jokes, speeches, reports, newspaper editorials, etc.).

According to M.M. Bakhtin, the criterion for distinguishing between primary and secondary genres is the degree of simplicity or complexity: "Primary genres are formed in the context of simple, direct verbal communication (everyday conversational exchanges, personal letters). Secondary (complex) genres—such as novels, plays, scientific studies, major journalistic genres, and the like—emerge within more complex and relatively highly developed cultural communication (primarily written), spanning artistic, scientific, and socio-political spheres." This distinction between primary and secondary genres aligns with the genesis of human communication. However, when applied to the functioning of political discourse, one observes the reverse: the core of political discourse consists of institutional communication genres—speeches, statements, debates, negotiations, decrees, constitutions, party platforms, slogans, and so forth—while everyday communication genres within the political realm may function as secondary to them [7].

Secondary genres of political discourse can be defined as "conversations about politics"; they are reactive in nature, expressing responses to actions taken by politicians. The realm of secondary political discourse encompasses genres such as analytical articles, interviews, memoirs, anecdotes, and caricatures; however, due to their specific characteristics in relation to political discourse, they are not examined separately in this study.

3. Results and Discussion

The primary function of political discourse is to exert influence, with the provision of information playing a subordinate role [8]. In our view, political discourse is characterized by the following functions: informational (expressing ideas, presenting specific data); emotive (conveying the speaker's emotional state and attitude toward the phenomenon in question); expressive (intentionally influencing the recipient's emotional sphere); illocutionary (conveying requests, commands, etc.); argumentative (persuading the listener, engaging in argumentation); interpersonal (expressing an attitude toward the interlocutor and self-presentation); and discursive (the ability to organize discourse in a way that facilitates the realization of the aforementioned goals). To fulfill these functions, the politician-speaker employs both linguistic and extralinguistic means (such as facial expressions, gestures, etc.). We are primarily interested in linguistic means of expression. These encompass a variety of emotional-expressive, stylistic, and rhetorical devices. Such expressive means serve as indicators that govern the pragmatics shaping the direction of the communicative interaction.[9]

The genre types of political discourse highlighted by E. I. Sheigal in her study of the functional structure of the semiotic space of political discourse merit particular attention; she reduced the content of political communication at the functional level to a triad—"orientation-integration-agonality"—thereby distinguishing three types of signs within the semiotic space of political discourse: signs of orientation, integration, and agonality.[10]

Based on functional meanings and the nature of the primary intent, E.I. Sheygal proposes distinguishing the following types of political discourse:

- 1) speeches belonging to ceremonial/epideictic genres—such as opening speeches, anniversary addresses, New Year greetings, and traditional radio addresses—where the phatic function of integration predominates;
- 2) speeches of an informational-prescriptive nature—such as policy speeches, addresses by the head of state regarding the national situation, and reporting speeches—which serve an orientational function;
- 3) speeches in election campaigns, parliamentary addresses, and televised debates—which function as "agonal" genres characterized by a distinct emotional tone [11].

In our view, this classification aligns perfectly with the objectives of our research.

In an information society, the image of an active leader in the public eye is shaped not only by actual actions and initiatives but, to a greater extent, through words and speeches [12]. It is important to emphasize the distinctive characteristics of the genres of a head of state's political rhetoric. First, one must note the status-related nature of the head of state's speech behavior; this is linked to high social status, as citizens recognize the head of state's authority to fulfill organizational, ideological, and managerial roles. The speech of a top political leader is characterized by both publicity and formality. A politician's speech is invariably intended for a collective or mass audience, as it is accessible to the general public—published in newspapers, broadcast on television news, and so forth. Consequently, the leader's speech exhibits the hallmarks of public address:

- 1) it is monologic (delivered by a single individual to a specific audience);
- 2) it is more structured than spontaneous speech;
- 3) it employs various methods to influence the audience [13].

When viewing political discourse as a genre possessing significant pragmatic potential, we proceed from V. E. Goldin's premise that any text—including a political one—is constituted by genre [14]. Distinguishing between the genre markers and types of discourse can be achieved by considering the pragmatic characteristics of communication as well as the intrinsic qualities of political texts—specifically their lexical and stylistic features and the criteria determining a given discourse's alignment with a specific genre type. Classifying political discourse genres based on the primary intent and the nature of the subject matter appears to us the most justified approach, as the selection of mechanisms of influence and the use of appropriate linguistic tools depend primarily on the criteria that shape the genre.

According to prominent scholars of political rhetoric, the "congratulatory speech" fully embodies all the characteristics of epideictic oratory; it serves as a crucial component of a ceremonial celebration, uniting an understanding of the nation's past and future within the context of the present, praising the elements that bind the community together, employing an elegant literary style and techniques of amplification, and emphasizing—often in heightened terms—facts already known to the audience [15]. This implies the absence of any polemical arguments that might provoke objection. The lack of novel information inevitably shifts the participants' attention to other aspects of the communication: the very act of speaking takes precedence over the content of the message itself. This constitutes the most significant and distinctive feature of "congratulatory speeches" as a genre—distinguishing them from standard anniversary speeches—in that a "festive congratulatory speech" is not merely a speech act, but a political act as well.

The public speaking activities of heads of local government bodies—regional governors (*hokims*)—represent an area that has not yet been sufficiently studied within the linguistics of Uzbek political discourse. Unlike speeches delivered at the presidential level, the discourse of governors manifests in two fundamentally different functional-pragmatic modes: on the one hand, they deliver formal political speeches concerning socio-economic programs and reports (at regional council sessions or national-level meetings); on the other, they regularly issue holiday greetings—short, ritualistic texts of an epideictic (laudatory) nature.

Although these two genres—socio-political discourse and holiday greetings—originate from the same institutional actor (an official), they possess fundamentally different communicative purposes, styles, and linguistic means. Consequently, a comparative analysis of them not only reveals the distinctive characteristics of local administrative discourse practices but also provides valuable insight into the genre-based "flexibility" of institutional discourse as a whole.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, political speech—as a form of public address delivered by a speaker—represents a communication process, a type of social action, and political action itself. Its functional distinctiveness lies in its ability to influence both rational and subconscious perception. When attempting to delineate the specific characteristics of political speech genres, it is crucial to establish a theoretical basis for the concept of a "speech genre," which is viewed as a "typical communicative situation within a speaker's communicative activity, characterized by a specific set of situational elements and the tasks to be resolved in that context." As a genre, political speech manifests as a unit of discourse situated within a conventional communicative setting (specifically, socio-political practice).

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