

Cognition, communication, discourse, 2021, 23: 118-129.

<http://sites.google.com/site/cognitiondiscourse/home>

<https://doi.org/10.26565/2218-2926-2021-23-08>

Received 15.09.2021; revised and accepted 01.12.2021

UDC 659.4:81

POLITICAL DISCOURSE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE ADDRESSEE

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Article citation: Kuznyetsova G. V. (2021). Political discourse from the standpoint of the addressee. *Cognition, communication, discourse*, 23, 118-129. <https://doi.org/10.26565/2218-2926-2021-23-08>

Abstract

This article is an overview of West-European and Asian linguistic discussion of the issue of the addressee as one of the key components of political discourse. It considers the concept of political discourse addressee as well as the issue of speech influence and discourse manipulation since the latter is the most important characteristic of the type of discourse under consideration. To date, actualization of the addressee in political discourse is not sufficiently studied; hence, there is a respective gap in political discourse studies. This conclusion is made upon reviewing modern trends in political discourse research in West-European and Asian linguistics, critical discourse analysis being the major and the most representative of them, with the contribution of political discourse analysis and critical applied linguistics. The overview shows that the linguistic trends listed above have contributed greatly into the study of discourse, in general, and political discourse, in particular. The article also demonstrates the results of the study of political discourse addressee as groups of voters, conducted in papers on communication theory and PR-practices and argues that such approach appears insufficient as it must be augmented by the study of the addressee in terms of cognitive linguistics. This paper concludes that an addressee of political discourse is not in the focus of modern West-European linguistics and thus requires further in-depth analysis, which can be done by applying the communicative-cognitive approach in its multimodal aspect.

Key words: political discourse, addressee of political discourse, discourse component, multimodal approach.

1. Introduction

Among numerous discourse studies of the last decades, political discourse proves to be, probably, one of the most popular and interesting fields for researchers. The major part of these papers, however, are focused on the first and the second fundamental components of political discourse as the object of their study is the addressant, i.e., a statesman or a political figure who is the producent or the author of the discourse, and the political message itself. Some scholars claim that the growing interest to the study of political texts can be explained by the following factors: a) the inside requirements of linguistic theory, which at various times directed its attention to various spheres of the language system functioning; b) politological issues of political thinking and its links with political behavior, and also by the need in development of the methods of analysis of political texts; c) by the social request, the ambition for setting political communication free from manipulating public consciousness (Baranov, 2017, p. 245).

It is important to state that the third fundamental component of political discourse – the

addressee – has not yet acquired deep enough study in linguistics, as well as in other research paradigms, though the need of applying a multimodal approach to discourse study and to the study of political discourse in particular, is well acknowledged nowadays. Generally, in many Ukrainian and foreign papers on the matter the political discourse addressee is considered as an object and a result of manipulative influence, exercised by politicians to achieve the required persuasive effect in a subtle and objective way (Beard, 2020; Chetvertak, 2016, p. 42-43; Kazemian, 2017; Reisigl, 2008; Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2012). However, some authors express their interest towards the addressee of PD. Thus, M. Schroter claims that

... speakers orientate towards imagined addressees and certain aspects are particularly relevant from the speakers' point of view. An analysis of addressee orientation in political speeches aims at reconstructing speakers' conceptualization of possible addressees. The analysis reveals patterns of addressee orientation which suggest that the addressees are framed in terms of epistemic proximity, i.e. presumed nearness (agreement) or distance (disagreement) to the speakers (Schroter, 2014, p. 289).

Notwithstanding a comparative scarcity of opinions supporting the interest towards the study of political discourse addressee, this article aims at the analysis of the situation existing in West-European and Asian discourse linguistics as to the research of the third fundamental component of political discourse, its addressee, on the basis of papers devoted to political discourse studies. The article shares the opinion that a small number of papers on the matter points out the topicality of the issue in question.

2. Method and material

This part of the paper is devoted to the review of contemporary political discourse studies as to the way they cover an issue of the addressee as the discourse participant for which all political discourse manipulations of various kinds are invented.

This paper, like many pieces of research on this kind of discourse (for instance, Cap & Okulska, 2013; Lin, 2014; Shevchenko et al., 2021; Street, 2019 and others), shares the view of political discourse formulated by P. Chilton. The scholar defined political discourse as the use of language to do the business of politics, and it includes persuasive rhetoric, the use of implied meanings, the use of euphemisms, the exclusion of references to undesirable realities, the use of language to rouse political emotions, and the like (Chilton, 2002, p. 4; Chilton, 2008, p. 226). Other works on the issue support a much broader understanding of political discourse, according to which this discourse includes the activities of all organizations, bodies and individuals which deal with political socialization, not only governments, parliaments, political parties and related mass media, but trade unions, business associations, educational institutions, internet blogs, etc. (Bayley, 2004; Bayley, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 2000; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Jenks, 2021; Machin and van Leeuwen 2016; Partington, 2002; Pennycook, 2010;).

As for the notion of a political discourse addressee, our understanding is based on the idea of a text and discourse listener/reader/ recipient, collective or individual, who is a subject of manipulative influence on the side of a political discourse addressant. We accept a broad understanding of manipulation, according to which it is a speech influence considered as to its purposefulness and motivational predetermination (Issers, 2008, p. 21). This broad interpretation of speech influence presumes a change in the addressee's state of consciousness, a modification of his/her belief structure, and also the recipient's feedback in the shape of an action or the absence of an action as a response to a speech impetus (Shkitska, 2012, p. 24). And according to Zirka, manipulation (interpreted broadly) is a peculiar way of programming of thoughts, moods and psychological state of various social layers with the purpose of changing their behavior in a desirable line; it is an art of managing recipients' behavior with the help of a purposeful influence

on social psychology, consciousness and human instincts (Zirka, 2004, p. 87; Jenks, 2021). Manipulation in political discourse, and the manipulative character of journalistic work, closely connected with political elite interests and concerns, has been repeatedly analyzed and argued (Faiz Sathi Abdullah, 2014; Cottle, 2009; Kranert, 2018; Machin and van Leeuwen, 2016; Street 2019).

In fact, not each case of speech influence can and should be treated as manipulation. Drawing on Veretenkina's study (2004), the following factors should be considered: a) manipulative intention; b) communication being focused on obtaining one-sided psychological or financial gain; c) an addressant treats an addressee as if the latter must be cheated or misled; d) the manipulator's orientation on the addressee's addictions or weak points (Veretenkina, 2004, p. 60-61). Given the nature of communication in the political discourse, it comprises all the listed features of manipulative communication and proves that manipulation is, probably, its prime characteristic.

In light of the definitions presented, this article aims to make a review of the present state in the study of a political discourse addressee as one of the basic components of this discourse kind.

3. Political discourse addressee in critical discourse analysis (CDA)

One of widely developed linguistic trends that addresses issues of political discourse is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has a history of about three decades. Within this time, CDA's disciplinary status has been well established through research journals and the influential work of key researchers associated with CDA: van Dijk who is generally recognized to be the founder of CDA, Fairclough, Wodak (who claimed that their linguistic ideas were based on and largely inspired by T. van Dijk), and van Leeuwen. With reference to the works of other scholars (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard 1996; Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 271-280), van Dijk introduced the highlights of CDA as follows:

- a) CDA addresses social problems;
- b) Power relations are discursive;
- c) Discourse constitutes society and culture;
- d) Discourse does ideological work;
- e) Discourse is historical;
- f) The link between text and society is mediated;
- g) Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory;
- h) Discourse is a form of social action (van Dijk 2004).

Researchers note that different scholars often have a somewhat different understanding of CDA with slightly different theoretical or methodological preferences (Lin, 2014; Zappettini, 2020). However, the cornerstone of this representative branch of contemporary linguistics is the interest towards different forms of social inequality, domination, and subordination that are being produced and reproduced through language and discourse. Particularly, CDA takes and supports the opinion that language should be treated as a boundary entity (both linguistic and social), as it is, in fact, an ideological and social construct, which is born of activities of political, nationalist, or colonial, segregating agendas (Pennycook, 2010). Summarizing the strategies of CDA succinctly, Carta and Wodak argue that all approaches in CDS draw on specific epistemologies and theories and are oriented towards investigating both theoretically and methodologically complex social phenomena (Carta & Wodak, 2015, p. 15). This idea is expressed clearly and point bank to contradict the view of some researchers who interpret CDA as a toolkit for linguistic and socio-linguistic analysis of discourse (Guzzini, 2005). In some papers on political discourse problems, CDA is understood as both a theory of discourse and a method for analyzing it (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 16; Haig, 2009) or constellation of theories and methods to work with discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). To this end, van Dijk claims that CDA is not a method of critical discourse analysis, as this direction of discourse study did not and does not have a single method, but comprises as many methods and research paradigms as are needed to fulfill the research goals expressed in CDA highlights (van Dijk, 1988). Supporting this point of view, van Leeuwen (2006, p. 234) emphasizes

that

“critical discourse analysts engage not only with a range of discourse analytical paradigms, but also with critical social theory. In more recent work social theory may even dominate over discourse analysis.”

The key CDA research was conducted by van Dijk, in which the author uses both linguistic and social-psychological approaches to analyze racial discourses of the White ruling elites in all parts of the world, from Europe to South Africa and New Zealand (van Dijk, 2005; Wodak & van Dijk, 2000), thus exercising the principle of multimodality in the research. Analysts observe that besides deconstructing the categories of race and racist representations, CDA researchers have also worked on uncovering the stereotypical representations of different social and cultural groups, using diverse methodologies, and in a variety of domains (Lin, 2014). With such a broad scale of socially oriented aspects, there is little wonder that the number of CDA papers is huge and the presentation of this direction's authors is geographically and nationally various. Van Dijk (2004) observes that the studies of political discourse in English are internationally best known because of the social and informational role of the English language, besides, much work was done in German, Spanish, and French which contributed into further development of CDA. According to van Dijk, in linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse studies, political discourse received attention as an object of multimodal applied studies (van Dijk, 2004).

However, the authors working in the CDA direction, focus their efforts on political messages and political figures, the latter having received special terminological names: 'political actors' (Bossetta et al. 2017; Filardo-Llamas & Boyd, 2018; Kranert, 2018; Zappettini, 2020), 'public actors' (Carta, 2013; Balabanova & Trandafoiu, 2020), 'actors' (Glynos et al., 2009), 'political agents' (Wieczorek, 2013), 'political representatives' (Karlsson & Åström, 2017), 'collective and individual agents' (Schroder, 2012), though at times these terms sound ironical, like 'national and institutional actors' (Carta & Wodak, 2015), while the addressee, to whom these messages are directed, is left on the sidewalk, away from their research attention. For instance, out of sixty-six research pieces in a four-volume edition of "Critical Discourse Analysis" (2013), published by SAGE with Wodak as an editor, none concerned a hearer, or listener, in other words, an addressee of political discourse (Wodak, 2013).

Given that CDA is a multimodal interdisciplinary direction of discourse studies, its links with linguistic disciplines are well-established and represent a bulk of the given approach. However, the introduction of cognitive linguistics into CDA deserves a special insight, from the standpoint of the study of political discourse addressee. Specialists claim that this introduction was pioneered by van Dijk and Wodak (McKenna, 2004) with their works devoted to the linkage of CDA and the linguistic study of cognition (van Dijk, 1995; van Dijk 2002; Wodak, 1996; Wodak, 2006) and considerably developed by P. Chilton and other CDA representatives (Chilton, 1996; Chilton, 2005; Hart, 2007; Hart, 2010; Hart, 2015; Musolff, 2011; O'Halloran, 2003; Santa Ana, 2002). Wodak (2006) argues that the ideas of cognitive linguistics may serve as a much required foundation, capable of arranging and blending sociological, cognitive and linguistic categories (mediation) in papers on discourse-analytical studies of text comprehension and comprehensibility, which are focused largely on issues of mediation, using different cognitive models to explain processes of understanding and text comprehension (Wodak, 2006). The scholar suggests viewing text production and text comprehension as recursive processes where constant feedback to mental models in episodic and long-time memories takes place as well as the updating of such models.

Hart (2006) convincingly advocates that the introduction of cognitive linguistic practices into the study of political discourse is natural, logical, and highly productive, as the study of cognitive operations observed in factual realizations of political discourse show how certain meanings, images, and values are created in the discursive worlds of listeners and readers, thus exercising intentional influence and

governing the development of ideology of the audience (Hart, 2006). The case studies of such processes, first of all, concerned metaphors functioning in political discourse and used conceptual metaphor theory (Chilton, 1996; Santa Ana, 2002; Koller, 2004; Maalej, 2007; Musolff, 2011; Musolff, 2017; Musolff, 2019). The productivity of the given approach is well-acknowledged.

Besides, Hart also highlights the use of the theory of blending for the study of discourse, and of political discourse in particular:

Blending networks and discourse space ontologies are inherently social since they are grounded in discourse, which according to the tenets of CDA is always socially situated. Furthermore, recalling that social cognition is defined as “the system of mental representations and processes of group members” (van Dijk 1995: 18), we may characterise entrenched spaces and networks of spaces as social cognitions in one particular form. Entrenched conceptual blending networks and discourse space ontologies are precisely mental representations and processes of group members (Hart, 2015, p.123).

I would like to point out the importance of this approach for the study of the political discourse addressee as a collective addressee, as the usage of the blending theory can allow the research of a perception process and the process of idea acceptance and sharing by a collective addressee. Until now, such attempts have not been made.

In recent decades, other approaches to political discourse analysis appeared, for instance, critical applied linguistics (CAL) and political discourse analysis (PDA) (Chilton, 2004; Dunmire, 2012, etc.), as well as combinations of these frameworks (Kazemian & Hashem, 2017). Lin notes that all these kinds of analyses share much in common, with CAL focusing more on social inequalities arising from language ideologies and legitimated ideological language policies and language education practices (Lin, 2014). It is also worth mentioning that multimodal analysis is widely employed by researchers working both in CDA, PDA, and CAL.

Because of the fact that all these kinds of analysis are focused on ‘main political actors’, i.e., on the addressant of political discourse and their messages, analyzed largely from the point of view of social studies, an addressee receives very little attention at all. In some pieces of research, one can see fragmentary mentioning of the political discourse addressee, or just some cursory observations (for instance, Haig, 2009; Wodak, 2016), if required by the context. It should be noted that research papers with special interest on political discourse addressee are few. Thus, Blackledge (2005) in Chapter 6 of his book referred to ‘ordinary people’ claiming that many pieces of information devoted to political events use the technique of recontextualization while presenting the feedback of political discourse recipients; with this a more authoritative speaker/author can make use of other voices in a way which suits the speaker’s own political direction and skews the likely interpretation on the part of the hearer or reader. The author claims that at the same time some opinions of ‘ordinary people’ are deleted altogether and thus remain unknown (Blackledge, 2005, pp.155-156). Though his study does not introduce any analysis of ‘ordinary’ people issue, it attracts attention by putting the feedback of the recipients into the focus of the research.

Coffin and O’Halloran show how the appraisal technique, created by the usage of specially chosen semantics of the lexicon in the article under analysis can direct the target readership in the direction chosen by the author. Therefore, while practically demonstrating the linguistic ways of manipulating the target readers, the authors do not suggest deeper specification of the recipients, as this was not their purpose; in their research, a target recipient was a part of socio-political-economic context (Coffin & O’Halloran, 2012). A more noticeable concern for the role of the addressee can be seen in the book “Clusivity: A New Approach to Association and Dissociation in Political Discourse” (Wieczorek, 2013), as the author herself argues in the ‘Introduction’ that the focus of the study is essentially on the relationship between the speaker (the political figure) and the addressees. However, this research, too, concentrates on the role of the speaker, the one “who may assign

inclusive or exclusive statuses to discourse entities and thus construct actors' identities in discursive representation of reality" (Wieczorek, 2013, p. xii).

4. Addressee of political discourse in other research paradigms

Closer attention to the addressee of political discourse underpins a number of papers on communication theory and PR practices with the use of modern high-tech media means (Karlsson and Åström 2017; Bossetta et al., 2017; Stopfner, 2021). One of the authors' (Karlsson & Åström, 2017) concerns is the degree of influence of definite political actions verbalized in the internet texts (namely, blogs) on citizens and the degree of importance of interactive communication between political figures (addressant) and Internet-users (addressee). Its chief characteristic is the development of interpersonal relationships where the identities of others matter. Still, the paper focuses on the characteristics of politicians, but not on their interlocutors.

In the paper dedicated to the analysis of the results of the Brexit elections and the prior Facebook publications (Bossetta et al., 2017), the addressee of the political discourse is a subject of political influence, and the researchers are interested in their activity in the Facebook comments on the issue. Other characteristics of this addressee remain outside the researchers' scope. Stopfner (Stopfner, 2021) investigates the Tweeter communication between Donald Trump and Boris Johnson, supported by their like-minded fans, as political rivals with opposed views, concerning social strategies. The author suggests pragma-rhetoric analysis of online communication of these two political clusters, and the analyses combine both a pragmatic and a rhetorical approaches in an attempt to exploit synergies that may lead "to a rhetorical perspectivisation of pragmatic analysis and to a pragmatic systematization of rhetorical practice" (Ilie, 2018, p. 92). The researcher introduces the notion of a 'speaker collective' as groups of online supporters of the politicians in question, naming among them in-groups and out-groups, by-standers and general audience. However, there is no specification of these collective online interlocutors, as the author's target was pragmatic and rhetoric speech tactics of the political figures.

Specification of political discourse addressees is undertaken when they are treated purely as potential or real voters, and the criteria of stratification may vary. Thus, one of the sites devoted to elections in the USA presented the following demographic features: race and ethnic belonging, age, marital status, and education (United States Elections Project), while another source introduced nine voter groups, called political in-groups. According to the data of the Pew Research Center, there exist four conservative groups in the US (Faith and Flag Conservatives, Committed Conservatives, the Populist Right, and the Ambivalent Right), four left voters groups (the Progressive Left, Establishment Liberals, the Democratic Mainstays, and the Outsider Left), and Stressed Sideliners who position themselves in the middle (Chinni, 2021). Interestingly, the analysis of General 2019 Elections in Britain provides no specification of voter groups, presenting only the voting results of all parties in question as well as age and general ethnic characteristics of the voters. The document contains a two-page reference to a voter survey (*Voter Turnout Demographics*, 2020), in which the following voter characteristics were pointed out: age and gender, ethnicity, social class, housing tenure, qualifications, and previous voting patterns (Briefing Paper, 2020). This brief overview shows that, firstly, the attempts of stratification of addressee-participants of the political discourse are fully grounded on the people's activity in the elections process, secondly, there is no universally developed approach to voter division and stratification, and thirdly, such stratifications have national specifics.

5. Conclusions

The review on contemporary political discourse studies shows that this kind of discourse is widely studied in many countries of the world, the main approach being a multimodal one, with a broad use of techniques of critical discourse analysis (CDA), critical applied linguistics (CAL) and political discourse analysis (PDA). These studies result in deeper and better understanding of the political discourse phenomenon in the aspects of linguistics, social studies and psychology.

Notwithstanding numerous convincing gains of political discourse studies, the addressee phenomenon in political discourse has lacked a due observation yet (Kuznyetsova, 2021). This present survey, however brief, demonstrates the necessity and importance to put it into the research focus. It also proves that the usage of statistic factors for clustering addressees and their possible stratification does not seem productive, as it embraces few characteristic features of addressee groups. In future, enlarging these issues with others, based on application of cognitive linguistics methodology (Bondarenko, 2020), is a challenge worth taking.

Finally, the observations made in this study may have broader linguistic and social implications that go beyond critical discourse analysis. I maintain that the use of a communicative-cognitive approach to the study of the political discourse addressee, included into a multimodal research paradigm, will provide a reliable foundation for further linguistic analysis.

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ПОЛІТИЧНИЙ ДИСКУРС В АСПЕКТІ АДРЕСАТА

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Анотація

Стаття презентує стан вивчення адресата політичного дискурсу як одного з базових компонентів дискурсу, у мовознавстві Західної Європи та Азії. Вона містить трактування поняття про реципієнта

політичного дискурсу, а також ідеї мовленнєвого впливу та маніпуляції в дискурсі, оскільки маніпулювання є найважливішою характеристикою досліджуваного виду дискурсу. Основна думка розвідки полягає в тому, що адресат політичного дискурсу не здобув донині достатнього вивчення, і цей факт розглядається як прогалина у дослідженні дискурсу. Цей висновок зроблений на основі огляду сучасних напрямків у вивченні політичного дискурсу західноєвропейськими та азійськими мовознавцями; серед них найбільш плідним й репрезентативним напрямком є критично-дискурсивний аналіз, з вагомим внеском політико-дискурсивного аналізу та прикладної критичної лінгвістики. Огляд показує, що дані дослідницькі напрямки зробили значний внесок у розвиток загальної дискурсології, зокрема, у розвиток вивчення політичного дискурсу, розвинувши мультимодальний підхід до об'єкту дослідження, використання якого принесло вагомий результат в теорії дискурсу та мультимодальності як наукової парадигми. У статті також показуються результати дослідження адресату політичного дискурсу як груп виборців, виконаного у роботах з теорії комунікації та PR-практик, та стверджується, що такий підхід недостатній без вивчення адресату з позиції когнітивної лінгвістики. Це дослідження також включає огляд незначної кількості робіт, присвячених вивченню реципієнта дискурсу. Стаття доходить висновку про те, що адресат політичного дискурсу наразі знаходиться поза фокусом уваги західноєвропейської лінгвістики, й тому потребує більш детального вивчення, яке може бути виконане з залученням комунікативно-когнітивного підходу до мультимодальної парадигми його дослідження.

Ключові слова: політичний дискурс, адресат/реципієнт політичного дискурсу, компонент дискурсу, дослідження дискурсу, мультимодальний підхід.

ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЙ ДИСКУРС В АСПЕКТЕ АДРЕСАТА

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Аннотация

Статья представляет состояние изучения адресата политического дискурса как одного из базовых компонентов дискурса, в языкознании Западной Европы и Азии. Она включает трактовку понятия о реципиенте политического дискурса, а также понятия о языковом воздействии и манипуляции в дискурсе, поскольку манипулирование является важнейшей характеристикой изучаемого вида дискурса. Основная мысль исследования состоит в том, что адресат политического дискурса не получил на данный момент достаточно глубокого изучения; данный факт рассматривается как пробел в дискурсологии. Данный вывод сделан на основании обзора современных направлений в изучении политического дискурса учеными Западной Европы и Азии; среди них наиболее плодотворным и репрезентативным является критико-дискурсивный анализ, с весомым вкладом политико-дискурсивного анализа и прикладной критической лингвистики. Обзор показывает, что названные исследовательские направления внесли значительный вклад в изучение политического дискурса, обеспечив развитие мультимодального подхода к объекту исследования, что принесло весомые результаты в теории дискурса и мультимодальности как научной парадигмы. В статье также демонстрируются результаты исследования адресата политического дискурса как группы избирателей, проведенного в работах по теории коммуникации и PR-практике, и утверждается, что такой подход представляется недостаточным без изучения адресата с точки зрения когнитивной лингвистики. Данное исследование также включает обзор незначительного количества работ, посвященных изучению реципиента дискурса. В статье делается вывод о том, что адресат политического дискурса в настоящее время находится вне фокуса внимания западноевропейских лингвистов, и потому заслуживает более детального изучения, которое может быть выполнено при условии привлечения коммуникативно-когнитивного подхода в мультимодальную парадигму его исследования.

Ключевые слова: политический дискурс, адресат/реципиент политического дискурса, компонент дискурса, исследование дискурса, мультимодальный подход.