

Expressive Speech Acts in Political Discourse: An Integrative Approach Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The article aims at analyzing of the contemporary political discourse modality that has acquired specific characteristic features of highly emotional utterances based on deliberate or unintended violation of political etiquette principles recently. The article’s generalized theorizing is illustrated by a sample of case study of invectives in political discourse. This analysis aims at distinguishing “agonal” signs (a deliberate use of invectives in speech) and pragmatic borrowings (inadvertent use of invectives) in their functioning, their pragma-semantic characteristics and discursive markers, which helps us in identification of both types of political discourse linguistic items. This research represents an integrative approach combining the Critical Discourse Analysis, the Political Discourse Semiotics Theory, the Role Theory, the Communication Theory, and others, in order to discover the actual reasons and consequences of these changes in the society in general, and in political discourse in particular.

1. Introduction

The problem of aggravation of the political rhetoric modality has become urgent recently. It is indicative of a transformative process in the political discourse structure, reflecting the general problem of the institutional communicative norms gradual transformation.

The analysis of political discourse rhetoric discovers overabundance of intended and undeliberate invectives and vulgarisms in politicians’ speeches that contradict political etiquette principles of communication. Anyway, the use of aggressive rhetoric has become an integral part of high officials’ communication with each other and the audience.

The purpose of this article is to specify some theoretical background, dealing with the speech acts theory, the theory of communication, pragmatics of speech and others, in order to study and explain the ongoing processes in political discourse structure transformation.

In order to avoid incomprehension and misinterpretation of the analyzed material, it is reasonable to specify the terminology used in this publication.

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One of the key terms of this research is the “expressive speech acts” which is attributed to Searle’s speech act theory. According to Searle, expressive speech acts aim at signifying “the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (Searle, 1976: 1).

The essence of this term has been developed and transformed within the last half a century. The expressive speech acts are often determined now as those “where the speaker expresses *positive* feelings to the addressee, who has done a service to the speaker” (Norrik, 1978: 285. Emphasis added by me: *L.G.*). This specific understanding of Searle’s theory, which is an example of its narrow meaning exploitation in research, has become widespread in linguistic research papers nowadays (Kallen, 2005; Jucker et al., 2008; Jucker, 2009; Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2010; Ronan, 2015, etc.).

The other reason of this theory development by the researchers is that some scholars consider the speech acts classification presented in Searle’s theory rather contradictory, and Searle’s speech act categories is still a subject of a number of scholarly disputes.

Searle proposes five “macro-classes” of illocutionary acts in his theory. The main contradiction of Searle’s generalized classification, which has been pointed to in recent research papers, is that it comprises diverse speech act categories under the title of one generalized term. As for *the expressives*, this category includes utterances with the emotional assessment pragmatic meaning alongside with the utterances with the meaning of behavioral etiquette relationships; as for the emotional assessment, two totally different according to their strategies and perlocutionary expectations categories, such as positive and negative expressives, have fallen into one classification group (Formanovskaya, 1998; Sal’nikova, 2009: 113, etc.).

Formanovskaya proposes the expressive speech acts further subdivision on the bases of the speech acts intensional meaning, which comprises three basic categories. They are: a) *affective speech acts*, b) *ceremonial speech acts*, and c) *invective speech acts*. *Affective speech acts* actualize an individual’s emotional state direct expression in communication. *Ceremonial speech acts* deal with socially conditioned verbal behavior in accordance with socio-institutional norms of goodwill and cooperativity, they are positive and implicitly evaluative. *Invective speech acts* actualize all sort of unparliamentary language, including swearing, invectives, damnation and other opprobrious language (Formanovskaya, 1998, 2002: 42-43).

After Searle’s and Formanovskaya’s theories, the term “expressive speech act” is used here for the description of invective speech acts in their generalized sense. Thus, the term “expressive speech acts” implies here “invective speech acts” and is used in its narrow meaning further.

This research represents the “integrative approach” combining the Critical Discourse Analysis, the Political Discourse Semiotics Theory, the Role Theory, the Communication Theory, and others as the basic parts of the Integrative Theory, aimed to analyze the usage of swearwords in politicians’ rhetoric. It demonstrates one of the possible ways of the political discourse interpreting and provides a theoretical background for the research of political communication phenomenon.

Every represented in the article theory and research methodology is responsible for a certain problem solving: the Critical Discourse Analysis discovers and proves the fact of possible use of swearwords in politicians’ rhetoric and the shift to the lower communicative levels in their speeches. The Role Theory points at the social roles strain and conflict in the politicians’ communication. The Communication theory explains the roles conflicts reasons, indicating to

vulnerable zones of communication and discloses the fact of gender discrimination. The Frame Analysis gives us a clue to the proper interpretation of politicians' speeches by discovering of the frame's alien components serving as the pragmatic markers of deliberate or unintended defamation, etc. They all together give us a sufficient general understanding of political discourse rhetoric aggravation. It demonstrates one of the possible ways of the political discourse interpreting and provides a theoretical background for the research of political communication phenomenon.

It is reasonable to specify the other two key terms of the research, such as "agonal signs" and "pragmatic borrowings" that are closely connected to the interlocutors' aggressive communicative behavior.

Politicians' verbal aggression, as well as aggressive behavior of people in general, has been the subject matter of many research works recently. The obtained results are quite confusing: two dichotomies in Buss's model (Buss, 1961), which were widely accepted on a theoretical level, do not cover the whole spectrum of problems in people's interaction, and his categories of *physical* versus *verbal*, and *direct* versus *indirect aggression* unite completely different phenomena under the titles of these wide and indistinct categories (Björkqvist, 1992). In the wake of theoretical background changes in humanities within the last twenty years, this theory needs further development and more exact classification for the analysis of verbal aggression and political discourse aggressive rhetoric, which has become an integral part of political leaders' communication recently.

The latest research results suggest many new approaches, which try to find out the essence of politicians' verbal aggressive behavior (Cairns, 2000; Berkowitz, 2001; Shcherbinina, 2006; etc.). The political discourse semiotic theory by Sheigal is one of such research methods, which provides subdivision of aggressive rhetoric into *agonal signs* versus *pragmatic borrowings* according to the principle of *deliberation / inadvertence* of the use of invectives and vulgarisms in spontaneous speech (Sheigal, 2000).

The intended use of invectives in politicians' speeches is considered *agonal signs* of political rhetoric. They tend to appear in politicians' speeches quite often as a strategical tool of the opponent's overthrow or downgrading. Practically, aggressiveness of political rhetoric, bordering on outrage and insult, can take the form of many types of aggressive behavioral patterns, including the use of profanity, invectives, or vulgarisms as their integral constituting elements.

Meanwhile, the requirements of diplomatic etiquette in negotiations and speeches do not allow profanity or swear words, the political discourse is replete with instances of derogatory remarks and abusive comments, including vulgarisms and invectives.

These completely different communicative categories need thorough investigation in order to find any logical validation of the existing discrepancy between the prescribed communicative norms of the political discourse and the actual political rhetoric practice in everyday life.

2. Materials and Methods

The multimodal character of a human being as a research subject supposes a study of its integrative model of an individual's social activities including the whole variety of his / her reactions and responses to the external and internal stimuli. The research of an individual's speech involves investigation of all aspects of a human being's communicative behavior, considering its social, psychical, psychophysiological, neuropsychological and other aspects, which influence the processes of perceiving of somebody's speech, thinking over, interpretation, cognition, and verbalization.

Thus, we need a sophisticated pattern of a particular theoretical framework for this complex objective. The integrative method of research supposes the appliance of a certain combination of approaches used in related areas in order to provide an in-depth study of their common matter for scientific inquiry. It has the potential to play a greater role in thorough research of a multimodal nature of a human being in communicative space, particularly, “a politician’s individual speech”.

Theoretical approaches and theories used within the integrative method for the analysis of insulting political discourse comprise the Critical Discourse Analysis Approach (Van Dijk, 1977; 1992), the Political Discourse Semiotics Theory (Sheigal, 2000; Baranov, 1991), the external Observer’s assessment approach (related to the Communication Theory) (Apresyan, 1995; Jackendoff, 1997; Gurevich, 2009; 2021), the Role Theory (Merton, 1957), the Lexical Comparison Approach (Jackendoff, 1983), and others.

The case analysis study is based on the materials of mass media discourse, scientific journals articles, video fragments of politicians’ speeches and other social media sources.

3. Findings

I have specified several basic problem areas in the recent political discourse, dealt with its stylistic aggravation and shift to the level of colloquial speech. The article analyzes the following problematic issues:

1. A new type of political communication that is “a political theater” mode have been substituting a regular political protocol communication model in the recent years.

The political discourse has drastically changed recently due to some objective and subjective reasons. The researchers are registering the appearance of a new type of political communication that is called “a political theater” (Aydarova, 2016). This communication model differs from a regular political protocol communication model. Remaining a communicative tool for political communication, the political theater model comprises additional features of a theatrical show, where the politicians tend to play their “political leaders’ roles,” and their communication with the audience turns out a sort of performance. Thus, we can observe a certain shift in the communicative type modes that need a thorough investigation.

2. The use of invectives, profanity and colloquialisms by politicians is becoming widespread in political discourse nowadays.

3. The majority of people is forgiving to the low-style political rhetoric and perceive it as a “fixture in life”.

The analysis of the recent political discourse demonstrates that many politicians permit abusive rhetoric and vulgarity in a direct communication, and the audience readily accept it as a part of a stage show. The people do not judge them too harshly for invectives and a colloquial style speech. They do not perceive seriously semi-truth and lies in the politicians’ speeches. This is another shift in psychical perception of political communication by public that also needs to be further researched.

Added to everything else, the political science and social sciences experts are highly concerned about the overall political discourse aggravation, which tends to lead to a false political rhetoric interpretation. Sometimes it is less than fully conceivable, if the politician expresses aggressiveness in his / her speech as a part of his political program’s essence, or he inadvertently shifts to the colloquial style rhetoric under the pressure of negative emotions, as an individual. Proper interpretation of the essence of a politician’s communicative behavior

will give clue to understanding whether the used in the politician's speech invectives are "agonal signs" (deliberately used profanity) or "pragmatic borrowings" (inadvertently used invectives). This phenomenon needs a thorough investigation.

I have found out that the speaker's deliberate or inadvertent use of invectives in his / her speech can be determined by specific individual pragmatic speech markers. The example of these markers that help us analyze politicians' utterances is presented in the case study below.

The article considers these problems in terms of an integrative approach, targeted at answering a series of key questions of the research. The specificity of the integrative research methodology is in an integration of different humanitarian disciplines giving clue to the combined problematic issues understanding.

4. The Integrative Approach Methods Perspectives

The necessity of an integrative theory development can be explained by the fact that "taken alone, any of the sociological perspectives may present a single-sided, distorted picture of society and human behavior. Although each provides a unique framework for studying society, none is complete by itself." All existing approaches clarify "some aspects of society and human behavior," sometimes they "complement each other, sometimes they contradict each other." When integrated only, they can give us "the opportunity to gain the fullest possible sociological understanding" (An Integrated Perspective in Sociology, 2022).

The actual reason of it is a human being's multimodality, i.e. all social, cultural, psychical, institutional and other aspects, which should be taken into consideration in any sociological research. An integrative research subject needs the same integrative study methodology. The integrative approach in sociology developed in the late 20th century has resulted in a paradigmatic shift in sociology (Elias, 2001). It aims at covering all aspects of a human being's communicative behavioral patterns in order to provide an in-depth analysis of any social phenomenon concerning human communication.

4.1. The Political Discourse Semiotics Theoretical Approach

An aggressive political discourse can have a form of so-termed *expressive speech acts*, which are characterized by the dominance of emotionally estimative means over knowledge-based ones. They are described as speech acts based on the deliberate following anti-etiquette principles. *Expressive speech acts* often consist of invective neologisms to shape *autonomous nominative codes*, a part of a specific political sociolect. The example of such neologisms can be *demonocrats* (instead of *democrats*), *judah-communists* (the communists – betrayers), *duhw-mock-racy* (democracy) etc. (Kokorina, 1996; Sheigal, 2005; Burch, 2021). Every political movement, party, or a leader uses autonomous political sociolect, which includes a set of keywords, ideologemes, specific speech genres, strategies and tactics. This limited set of specific means of collective consciousness manipulation addresses the needs of their ideological orientation (Baranov, 1991).

The strategic basis of semiotic space in political discourse is so-termed a semiotic triad "integration-orientation-aggression (agonality)". This triad is projected onto another semiotic opposition "us-them" or, in other terms, "in-group" and "out-group" polarizing (Tajfel, 1971), which is considered to be a cultural constant, prevailing in political discourse (Stepanov, 1997). This semiotic triad can be represented by three functional types of the signs specifically oriented to political institutions and institutional roles. These can be politicians names associated with such political values as *democracy*, *order*, *human rights*

etc. These markers are termed “*transposed signs*”, which help to express political groups’ identities and to polarize from everyone who belongs to out-group society (Sheigal, 2000).

Anyway, this identity can be expressed as well as by positive signs, and by the markers of “alienness” which finally become specified *aggressiveness signs* in the politicians’ speeches. This negative political rhetoric can be verbalized by specific lexical items: 1) political invectives, 2) non-political pejoratives, 3) ethnonyms, 4) anthroponyms, 5) political terms with negative connotations, etc. (Ibid.).

All of the abovementioned categories of words can be attributed to *agonal signs* or deliberate aggressive discourse, which is specially designed for suppressing political opponents and winning debates or negotiation. In other words, pejorative rhetoric can become a strategical tool of political communication.

On the other hand, people can use invectives inadvertently under the pressure of emotion charged circumstances, which is determined by psycholinguists as a shift from literary language to the lower level of colloquial speech and vulgarisms, termed by Sheigal as *pragmatic borrowings*.

Thus, invectives can potentially appear in both categories of political rhetoric samples. This biased situation provokes a set of reasonable questions: Can we then state that the low style vocabulary has become an integral part of political discourse communicative pattern? Are we observing the process of vocabulary boundaries dissolving, when the vocabulary classification according to stylistic peculiarities of words is becoming not important for different communicative styles? Let us consider this aspect from a communicative theoretical base perspective.

4.2. The Communicative Theory Perspective

The analysis of the political discourse structure from the communicative pattern perspective gives us clue to understanding the ways, how invectives can appear in government official’s speeches, which leads to violation of diplomatic etiquette norms.

There are at least three basic criteria of political discourse structure, which influence the scenario of any political negotiation, debate or address to public. The numerous investigated samples of pejorative political speeches demonstrate, that the possibility of institutional communicative norms violation appears in the areas, which I notionally named “vulnerable zones of communication” (they are shown in the boxes on the scheme. See Figure 1). These zones can concern both, semantic (contextual) characteristics of communication and pragmatic characteristics bound with individual peculiarities of the interlocutors’ speeches and pragmatic meaning of the utterances.

The vulnerable zones of communication include *personal markers*, *context thematizing peculiarities*, *agonal genre of political discourse*, and *the speaker’s social roles correlation*. *Personal markers* are speech peculiarities, temperament, manners of communicating with people, etc. They comprise a variety of all peculiar features of an individual communicative style of a politician. They are permanent and tend to regularly reveal themselves in every communicative act. *Context thematizing peculiarities* concern interlocutors’ personal interest, political language unpredictability (including nuances: the speaker’s personality, the audiences, motivation, historical settings etc.). They are conditioned upon the specificity of interpersonal communication. *Agonal genre of political discourse* is characterized by a deliberate use of invectives and profanity which serve as constituting elements of political discourse aggressiveness. *The speaker’s social roles correlation* appear in communication

when a person tries to combine several social roles in one communicative situation. This correlation has usually the form of role conflict or role strain (Figure 1).

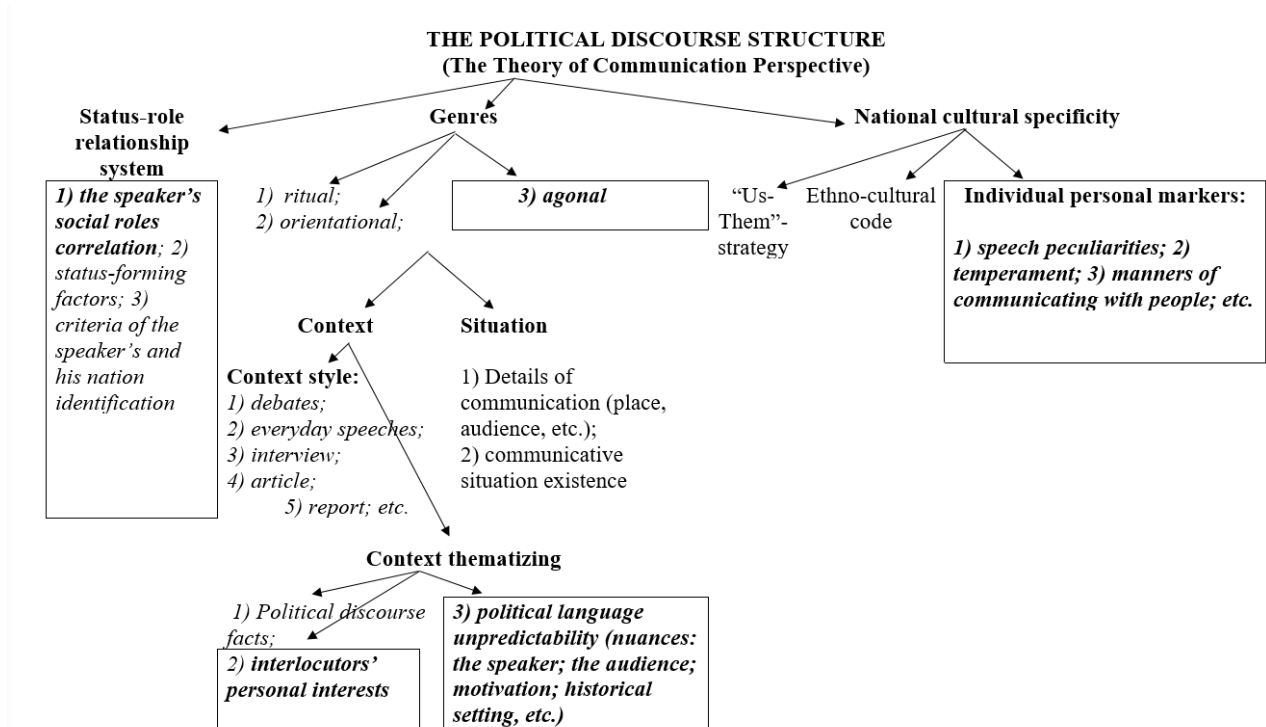


Figure 1. Political discourse structure (The Theory of Communication (a communicative pattern) perspective)

These vulnerable communicative zones comprise *elements of the speaker's individuality* as an integral part of political communication, which tend to influence not only the lexical and pragmatic specificity of their speeches, but also communication inference (perception and interpretation of their words) by the audience.

4.3. The Role Theory Perspective

The major goal of this part of the research has been questing the reasons, why and in which cases the invectives could become possible in the big-league politics' speeches. The analysis has proved the existence of social roles strains and conflicts in those cases, when the politicians tend to shift to colloquial style of communication and use abusive rhetoric in their speeches.

The socially defined role, which people have to simultaneously play from time to time, often mislead the actors: under the pressure of specific circumstances, they could fail to adhere to society's expectations of acceptable forms of a communicative behavior for the particular role and could inadvertently shift to another role, which is unacceptable (See: DeLamater & Myers, 2010).

According to Goode, people may even "not think about the conflict between two different roles" they play, and they do not recourse to social roles categorization (Goode, 1960). Thus, the roles tend to overlap and cause ambiguous perception by the audience.

Role strain occurs when the people have trouble, meeting the social roles expected of them. They also tend to experience *role conflict*, especially when these roles "have demands that are mutually exclusive", or *role overload*, when they do not "have resources to meet the demands of multiple roles" (Hopper, 2020).

Let us consider the examples of multiple social roles of an individual (a man) and his potential verbal and social contexts (Figure 2).

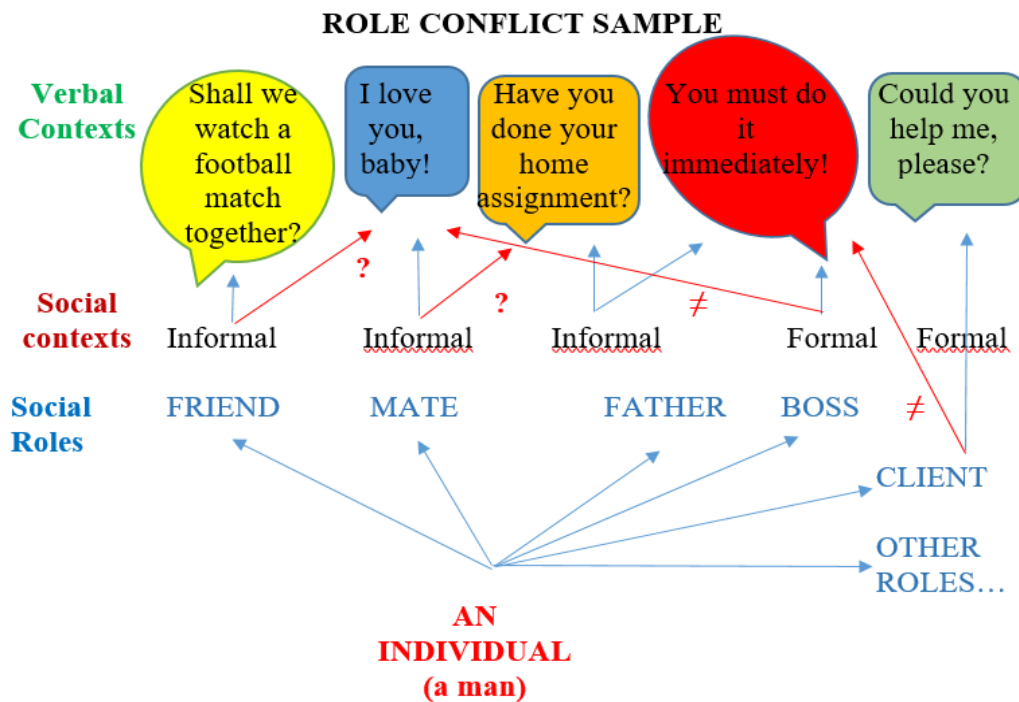


Figure 2. An individual's social roles conflict

The role conflict phenomenon elements can be categorized into three groups. They are: a) verbal context, b) social context and c) social role. The verbal context category concerns thematic contextualizing of communication. The social context determines the social character of the utterance, whether it is formal or informal (See Figure 2). The social role category defines the particular social role, the person plays in communication. Presumably, the correlation of these three categories deals with appropriateness or inappropriateness of a particular verbal context, if to apply it to a certain social role. It is important to note, that the term “appropriateness” corresponds to the internal assessment of communication, i.e. the Actor’s (or the Speaker’s) assessment. Interestingly enough, this assessment can differ from the external assessment perspective: while the Actor assesses his verbal context as “appropriate” (which is an internal assessment), the other person can perceive the Actor’s utterance “unacceptable” (the external Observer’s assessment). Thus, the terms “*appropriateness / inappropriateness*” and “*acceptability / unacceptability*” present opposite perspectives of a communicative act: from the Internal or the External Observers’ viewpoints, where the first pair of words (“appropriateness / inappropriateness”) can be used for the internal assessment, and the second pair (“acceptability / unacceptability”) tends to be used for the external assessment. It is fair to assume that the existence of this peculiarity of oppositional judgements can partially explain why the Actor (the Speaker) cannot always adequately assess the peculiarity of the social role he plays and the verbal context he chooses, and can eventually face role strain or role conflict.

The Observer's assessment of the verbal context is supposed to be more objective (if we can speak about objectivity of any personal judgement at all). The verbal context helps the external Observer to define, which social role the Actor plays in a particular situation. The

roles' boundaries relatively limit the range of verbal contexts. Sometimes these contexts can intersect or overlap when the roles are close to each other by the context thematizing or their social context, which can be both formal and informal. When the Actor violates the boundaries of the social roles, he (or she) encounters role strain or role conflict. For instance, it sounds quite acceptable when the boss says to the employee, "You must do it immediately". The same phrasing in the other place, supposing a different set of social roles, for example, in a shop, can be assessed as unacceptable for the situation and can be interpreted as the client's aggressiveness. The same is true for the communicative situation, when the boss shifts to familiar manner of communication with his subordinate, and his phrase "I love you, baby!" can be judged as a harassment. The roles, which are contradictory by their nature, cannot allow the same verbal context. Thus, a particular verbal context, put in inappropriate communicative situation, can cause role strain or role conflict in communication. This, at first view, a primitive analysis leads to a more profound conclusion: this fact partially explains the specificity of the utterance pragmatics interpretation. On the one hand, the discrepancy of the social roles and the verbal contexts can produce a negative communicative effect and cause the communication failure. On the other hand, the stylistically and lexically neutral words used in inappropriate / unacceptable utterances, can acquire the property of stylistically negative items, or, in other words, contextually determined negative connotations.

Thus, we can reach the conclusion that the role conflict perspective is the result of the *external Observer's assessment* (Apresyan 1995; Jackendoff 1997; Verkhoturova 2008). In other words, it is *an outside viewpoint*. It is a judgement of the other people how they perceive the observed situation. The external Observer's judgement does not often coincide with the viewpoint of the Speaker, when it concerns the appropriateness of this or that speech formula in communication. What the external Observer considers invectives the Speaker can perceive as a normal phrasing.

Coming back to the particular situation of political discourse analysis, we can argue that the pejoratives can often be unintended and unnoticed by the politician and can lead to the social role conflict. The use of invectives by government officials is referred to *role conflict samples* because they do not correspond to the requirements of political rhetoric.

4.4. The Cognitive Linguistics Perspective: Pragmalinguistic Analysis

The research of the pragmatic component of the politicians' utterances is focused on the determination whether the violation of the political negotiations norms have been intentional or undeliberate.

The cognitive approach and the pragmalinguistic analysis demonstrate the discrepancy between the external Observer's assessment and the Speaker's introspective viewpoint.

The role conflict (or role strain) is perceived negatively by the external Observer, and the mixed-roles communication is interpreted as *the usage of inappropriate (or unacceptable) verbal context* (Apresyan 1995; Jackendoff 1997; Verkhoturova 2008). If to look at the same situation from a different angle, namely, from the Speaker's introspective viewpoint, sometimes it becomes difficult for the individual to identify which role he / she is playing at the moment while uttering this or that phrase. Thus, the Speaker experiences the consequences of the role strain or conflict in communicative interaction: the external Observer (the audience or the opponent) faces the frustrations of abusive language communication.

The cognitive analysis of this discrepancy in a person's communicative activity and his / her perception of his / her own words is indicative of a strong correlation with the "vulnerable zones of communication" within the political discourse structure. Precisely because of the existence of these zones, which condition expressive nature of the politicians' speech acts, we can observe the use of invectives and other insulting expressions. According to the critical discourse analysis in its turn, we can argue that invectives are more likely to be structurally determined by the political discourse practice. Being unintended by their nature, from time to time, invectives are being used by the politicians in different political events at present time.

In order to specify any particular communicative situation we need to use social framing approach and / or critical discourse analysis. These methods will be helpful in distinguishing the fact whether the use of invectives is deliberate (an agonal sign) or unintended (pragmatic borrowing).

According to Furko, "pragmatic markers (PrMs) comprise a functional class of linguistic items that do not typically change the propositional meaning of an utterance but are essential for the organization and structuring of discourse, for marking the speaker's attitudes to the proposition being expressed as well as for facilitating processes of pragmatic inferences" (Furko, 2017, p. 2). Agonal signs or pragmatic borrowings often become those pragmatic markers of communication, which facilitate understanding of the utterance in a certain way. As Angermuller argues, PrMs possess a high manipulative potential due to their ability to be "spontaneously recognized" (Angermuller, 2014, p. 60). Pragmatic markers tend to focus on the way, *how* the discourse is uttered, rather than *what* is uttered (Furko, 2017, p. 2). This *how* that is spontaneously recognized by the audience usually represents "alien" frame elements, which are beyond the scope of political discourse rhetoric framework.

For the sake of political correctness, the actual names have been substituted here with capital letters X, Y, Z, etc. Let us consider the following sample:

- 1) More than a dozen times, X was interrupted by protesters, including one who called him a "bigot." Late in the rally, a woman began screaming at X. "Yes, *darling*? Yes?" X said to the woman, who was quickly escorted out. "Well, she does not sound very tough. That's a very weak voice. Go a little louder, we can't hear you, *darling*. Wow." ("Vancouver Sun", Dec. 25, 2015)

If to analyze X's utterance separately, outside the context of the political leader's communication with protesters, the word *darling* as the "alien" element of the frame produces the effect of unintended abusive rhetoric, which is associated with pragmatic borrowings (social role strain result). Anyway, the interlocutory unity of communication, which is a logically bound "the utterance – the response" entity, facilitates some other pragmatic inference. Such a para-linguistic component as *screaming at X* points to the aggressive manner of interpersonal communication. We are observing here the woman's provoking shift to the interpersonal discourse level, a rather aggressive one, in order to make X accept the same communicative level in his response. "Pouring oil on flames," an additional aggravating element of provocative aggressive utterance becomes somebody's reply in which the person calls X a "bigot." X inadvertently comes under the influence of their manipulative strategic moves and responds in the same aggressive way. There is nothing abusive in a separate linguistic item *darling*, but being an alien to political discourse element, it produces the perlocutive effect of a sarcastic (or ironic) word, which is inferred as a word, intrinsically belonging to the category of invectives.

Interestingly enough, stylistically neutral words or words with positive connotations, put into or juxtaposed to an alien context (which pre-supposes a different set of frame elements), can produce an opposite perlocutive effect, if to compare it with their separately analyzed

linguistic and pragmatic meanings. For example, the phrase “this woman is nice” can be considered a compliment in the ordinary context with its proper frame elements, i.e. in its direct meaning. When the word *nice* becomes an alien element in the example of political discourse frame (namely, when discussed professional qualities of an ambassador), being juxtaposed to the true characteristic of this position such as “brilliant negotiator,” the word *nice* acquires a negative connotation and falls into the category of invectives in a sexist rhetoric:

- 2) *Y is too "nice" to be the ambassador to Japan and is no match for her "brutal, brilliant" negotiators* (“The Washington Post”, Dec. 21, 2015).

Both samples ((1); (2)) of using alien components in political discourse rhetoric demonstrate different, oppositional communicative strategies and the nature of the pejorative utterances. The first case can be classified as an undeliberate shift to a lower communicative level under the pressure of manipulative strategies of the interlocutors. In other words, the invective speech in this case becomes a *pragmatic borrowing* and can refer to gender-discriminatory rhetoric. The second example demonstrates the deliberate placement of a positively charged word in an inappropriate context, having produced the effect of a critical judgment, in which a merit transforms into a substantial defect. This is an example of an *agonal sign*. Additionally, it is a gender-discriminatory rhetoric.

Therefore, the following question comes up in this respect: what is the difference between deliberate and unintended use of invectives, if we can classify them both as gender-discriminative utterances? A possible interpretation of this phenomenon is as follows: an *unintended utterance* (a pragmatic borrowing) can refer to (and, actually, it is highly to be) discrimination on the social status discrepancy. The speaker, who occupies a much higher social status position than his female opponent, does not need an additional reason for moral superiority over her, it is sufficient to an arrogant manner of speaking. The first example is rather a social status discrimination rhetoric. As for the second example, the equal social status of the communication counterparts does not provide the speaker any moral ascendancy over his rival. This need to feel superior over a woman provokes a politician to fall back on gender-discriminatory rhetoric, which is historically proven a powerful instrument of a woman degrading in any argument.

The unintended character of abusive political rhetoric can be intuitively and spontaneously inferred. Some particular *linguistic markers* of an abusive utterance can be indicative of its involuntariness. One of such markers can be *self-correction*.

- 1) X used vulgarity to describe Y's loss to Z in the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination as follows: "Even a race to Z, she was gonna beat Z. I do not know who would be worse, I do not know, how could it be worse? But she was going to beat – she was favored to win – and she *got schlanged, she lost, I mean she lost,*" X said, using a vulgar Yiddish word... (“CNN Politics”, Dec.22, 2015).

It is clear enough, that X did not intend to violate the communicative norms of political discourse rhetoric by using swear words. This shift to the lower style speech was undeliberate, and his double self-correction, when he tried to explain what he meant to say, proves the unintended character of his utterance. This self-correction in X's speech serves as the pragmatic marker for the proper inference of his swear words usage unintended nature.

4.5. The Research Methods Integration: How “Vulnerable Zones” of Communication Approach Couples with the Politicians’ Utterances Analysis

According to the abovementioned scheme (Figure 1), all “vulnerable zones” of communication concern individual peculiarities of the politicians’ speech. The status-role relationship system includes the speaker’s social roles correlation, which acts as the communication dimension, alongside many other criteria, influencing the utterances pragmatics inference. Coming back to the previous sample of X’s utterance (1), in which he used the vocative *darling* while addressing an unknown woman from the crowd, a commoner, the asymmetry in their social roles indicates to inappropriateness of this word, used by X inadvertently under the pressure of emotionally charged communication. Anyway, a more profound analysis of X’s speech peculiarities¹ (which belongs to the category of “individual personal markers”, being a part of the “National cultural specificity” criterion (See Figure 1)) proves that this word belongs to the parasitic filler words in X’s personal vocabulary, and he often uses it, when he loses his temper. According to the analysis of X’s political rhetoric, this word serves a double function: it is indicative of 1) his emotional tension (or, in other words, entering a zone of emotional instability) and 2) determines undeliberate shift to the lower level of colloquial speech.

The element “Genres” in the discourse structure scheme comprises three subgroups: *ritual*, *orientational* and *agonal*, the latter of which also represents a vulnerable zone element, which is highly dependent on the speaker’s personality. As opposed to general interpersonal communication rules, which supposedly avoid “negative expressions and feelings, such as swearing or an angry tone” (Interpersonal communication: social etiquette and norms, 2021), agonal signs can include invectives and bellicose rhetoric. Moreover, using invectives has become a part of political theater. “In order to accomplish their intellectual and emotional purposes, dramatic performances utilize dramaturgical techniques that draw the audience in and allow them to experience events onstage in a particular way,” the politicians can unceremoniously dishonor their rivals by mocking at them and inventing insulting nicknames for labeling their opponents (Aydarova, 2016).

Invectives have occupied a certain place in political discourse as an integral part of political games and rhetoric. Nowadays, if vulgar abuse is still censured, invectives are admired (Noorani, 2005). This assumption finds endorsement in numerous examples of direct communication between the government officials (or the presidential candidates) and the public. This communication often reminds a stand-up show, where the political leader spatters his opponent with dirty words, being supported by the audience’s cries of encouragement or cheerful laughter.

The “Genre” subgroup element “Context Thematising” falls into three categories, two of which can be also classified as the vulnerable zone elements. They are 1) interlocutors’ personal interests and 2) political language unpredictability, including communicative situation nuances, such as *the speaker*, *the audience*, *motivation*, *historical settings*, etc. The analysis of X’s last presidential campaign gives us clue to understanding why and how the political theater performances are organized and demonstrated. It is obvious, that the presidential candidature’s estimation by the public is multimodal, the same multimodal the personality of the candidate is. That is why the politician rival’s degrading in the political theater performance involves not only their professional errors criticizing but also the critical judgments on the point of their personal characteristics, failures, and gaffes. Whatever the social role of the rival is, whether he (or she) is *a politician* (*a spouse*, *a customer* of a

¹ This assumption has been made on the analysis of numerous videos and scripts of X’s communication with the public.

restaurant, etc.) in a particular communicative situation, this person can be criticized for any imperfection, mistake, or misdeed. Thus, the political theater communicative context thematizing expands beyond the boundaries of political discourse themes. This fact, in its turn, leads to the political rhetoric boundaries expanding.

X's mocking at his political opponents is illustrative of it. He called N "Sleepy N" during their presidential election campaign, and still continue using this nickname for the reason that the elected president tends to get asleep at very important meetings (during a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett (29 August 2021) or at the COP26 summit in Glasgow (1 November 2021)), and often forgets where he occurs after a long journey across the country. X can easily use invectives and swearwords and very seldom apologizes (almost never) for the violation of diplomatic etiquette and general rules of communication.

Anyway, the purpose of this publication is not to collect as many as possible politicians' abusive utterances. The major goal of this research is to investigate the process of political discourse development, in order to clear out whether these changes are temporary, subjective, and totally dependent on the individual politicians' personalities, or it is a natural phenomenon, an objective proceeding according to consistent rules of social life, communication and language development.

5. The Results: The Objective and Subjective Reasons of Political Discourse Aggravation

The recent social discourse research demonstrates that the use of invectives in political discourse has become a norm nowadays. The politicians are not prosecuted or punished for their abusive rhetoric. They are not impeached and not threatened by removal from office. Furthermore, they are often supported by the public, when they mock at their rivals and use vulgar language. Agonal signs of the government officials' rhetoric have become a strategic tool of the political race. They have occupied their niche in the political theater structure, which artificial nature abrogate the politicians' responsibility for their aggressive and abusive rhetoric towards the audience.

Thus, the structure of political discourse has changed, and new forms of political rhetoric and communication have appeared. Theatricality, puppetry and showmanship of some political establishment representatives gave researchers an idea of delineating this phenomenon as a "political theater." The political theater phenomenon is characterized by the politician's teaming up with the audience in order to argue his / her case, but the far going consequences of this rhetoric are creating value-based background of society, and formation of the concept of the right and the wrong in people's minds (Safonov, 2007: 131-132; Grigorieva, 2001). The consequences of such theatricality in political discourse performance are: 1) transformation of people's perception of reality; 2) reshaping of the mode of political communication 3) the politicians' social roles blending; 4) the politicians' theatrical transformations.

The transformation of people's perception of reality lies in the fact that they perceive the politicians' speeches as an entertaining theatrical show and do not associate them with their real life. They do not think of the politicians' verbal aggressiveness effect on domestic or foreign affairs. The people tend to lose a sense of reality when they communicate with the representatives of the government authorities.

Reshaping of the mode of political communication is a characteristic feature of contemporary communication in whole. The personal social circle of politicians has enlarged greatly due to the appearance of the Information Technologies: many government leaders tend to socialize

with commons in social media sites, sharing their ideas with a big audience. Indirect (i.e. not face-to-face) communication and lower social status position of the leaders' interlocutors condition the use of low jokes and vulgar words in their interpersonal communication.

The politicians' social roles blending is observable when they encounter *role conflict* or *role strain* phenomena. We argue about the existence of psychical (or emotional) tension of a person, feeling discomfort dealt with the roles overlapping. Social roles blending supposes a certain feeling of psychological comfort, when a person combining two or more social roles within one communicative situation does not realize this discrepancy and perceives it as normal.

The politicians' theatrical transformations is another feature of the political theater mode. The politicians tend to grow into roles of showmen, which allows them to abrogate responsibility for their words and promises. Feeling an actor on the scene, they can lie and tell fabricated stories in order to impress the public (we do not imply here any presidential elections program, where we observe some other strategies and technologies). We could have attributed this phenomenon to the social role strain category, but we cannot do it on the reason of its specificity: the politicians' theatrical transformations are *conscious and intended*.

The aggravation of political rhetoric content is also forwarded by subjective reasons. Firstly, bad language use in political communication is conditioned by the individual characteristic features of politicians: their individual speech peculiarities, temperament, manner of communicating with the public, etc. (it is another vulnerable zone element in the communication scheme (See Figure 1)). According to the research of individual characteristics of politicians' communication styles by Glasser, an individual, who occupies the highest political position in the country, can drastically damage the quality of political and public discourse. He exemplifies his assumption by the analysis of X's rhetoric, saying that the former <...> President "exhibits a kind of anti-intellectualism, both in his tone and his vocabulary. He is unpredictable and contradictory. He has no comment to "facts" or "truth" or any other concept having to do with the reliability and validity of what he says." Glasser adds the following detail to his comment: "the bigger issue here is X's disdain for the press and his contempt for the people, including the people who voted for him." (Shashkevich, 2017).

Unfortunately, X is not the only unique example of the political leader, who often shifts to low language rhetoric while communicating with the public. There are a lot of preeminent figures among those ones who "used less-than-flattering words." Many of them were reported to give profanity-laced speeches to their rivals and the audience (Hornick, 2011).

As Dr. Cavazza and Ass. Prof. Guidetti (UNIMO, Department of Communication and Economics) prove by their research the effectiveness of swearwords, arguing that even if "the effect of profanity in terms of perception of the speaker is controversial, there is evidence of its positive effect in terms of persuasiveness, mediated by language intensity" (Cavazza & Guidetti, 2014). Their investigation of the examples of the electoral campaigns draws them to the conclusion that vulgar messages sometimes help to convey consensus between the rivals (Ibid.). Profanity is highly emotional and produces the effect of a negative surprise that is often more favorable than if the surprise is positive (Johnson, 2012). This specificity of swearwords makes them attractive in the politicians' individual choice of their speeches vocabulary. An emotion-charged speech is always impressive and more persuasive by its perlocutive effect. This is another subjective reason of the politicians' preference in their use of invectives and low style vocabulary.

This is by no means a complete list of the objective and subjective reasons why profanity is widely used in political utterances. The superficial logical explanation of this phenomenon's existence is that vulgarity is not prohibited, and the people using vulgar words in public are not prosecuted. Thus, everything, which is not prohibited, is allowed. Anyway, this phenomenon needs to be thoroughly researched from the psychological perspective additionally.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, a number political discourse rhetoric samples represent a mixture of communicative styles, vocabulary and registers within one individual's speech. This fact points toward the hypothetical nonexistence of pure political discourse samples in politicians' fluent speech. Carefully-worded speeches (read or recited by politicians from a rostrum) only can serve as exceptions to the rule. The reason is that they are specially designed and composed by their professional speechwriters according to the requirements of the political rhetoric style. The majority of the rest examples of political discourse have the form of different styles interfusion, incorporating colloquial speech wording and vulgarisms. This discrepancy is conditioned by written and oral speeches differences, the latter of which is complicated by the structural peculiarity of communication process, including such a multimodal subject as a human being. *The existence of vulnerable zones of communication* in political discourse structure is provided by a human's social roles variety, which a person tends to change while communicating in accordance with presupposed social role requirements. The asymmetry between the presumptive type of discourse and actual rhetoric produces the effect of role strain or role conflict in communication. The use of invectives, vulgarisms and profanity in politicians' speeches is the bright illustration of this asymmetry.

The variety of examples of political rhetoric norms violation is bound with the human factor, which includes the personality of political leader, his personal communicative style, the interlocutors' personal interests and many other individual aspects of communication. All of them are the part of the vulnerable zones in accordance with the theory of communication.

The *pragmatic borrowings* from everyday speech discourse (whether they are invectives or slangy versions of the speech), which are increasingly frequent in political discourse nowadays, are *determined by the political discourse structure itself*. The invectives in politicians' speech are structurally conditioned (though unacceptable and inadmissible from the moral and the institutional communicative norm perspectives). They are emotionally triggered by emotion-charged communicative situations.

The *agonal signs* in political discourse, being the same unacceptable and inadmissible in institutional communication practices, have become a part of political theater with specific set of strategies, tactics and tools. In contrast to interpersonal communication norms, which do not encourage the use of profanity and abusive rhetoric, the political theater discourse can be overloaded with vulgar messages, which help to convey consensus between the rivals and produce effect of a negative surprise that is sometimes more favorable than if the surprise is positive. Unlike the perception of real life, the political theater performances are perceived by public as theatrical shows estimated and judged accordingly. Lies, fabricated stories, abusive nicknames of the rivals, profanity and other negative things within the political theater actions tend to entertain people and gain supporters in the audience.

It is not completely clear, whether it is possible to fully infer the pragmatics of the utterance. It is also hard to interpret communicative acts properly having not sufficient input information about communication as a whole. Anyway, we can argue, that *there are certain communication markers, which help us to distinguish agonal signs or pragmatic borrowings*

in communication, deliberate abuse of the interlocutor, or an unintended shift to colloquial speech or profanity, the examples of which have been analyzed and demonstrated in this publication.

Agonal signs and pragmatic borrowings can both appear in gender-discriminatory or sexist rhetoric against women and be either intended or undeliberate by their nature. Anyway, there are certain pragmatic markers that help us define the actual essence of a politician's abusive rhetoric. It is important to note, that different abusive rhetoric utterances can often represent an overlapping combination of discriminatory types, such as social status discrimination and sex and gender discrimination.

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