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COMMUNICATIVE AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL ADDRESS (BASED ON VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI'S ADDRESSES)

КОМУНІКАТИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ СТРУКТУРИ ПОЛІТИЧНОГО ЗВЕРНЕННЯ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ ЗВЕРНЕНЬ ВОЛОДИМИРА ЗЕЛЕНСЬКОГО)

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The paper attempts to examine political addresses by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered during the first six months of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The research is done within the framework of a structural and communicative approach. It provides a detailed analysis of a political address as a genre of political discourse using analytical and empirical methods of contextual and interpretive analysis. The paper also shows a detailed analysis of the communicative significance of the address for the meaningful impact on the audience.

In the paper, it is distinguished three main parts of the political addresses delivered by the president. They include the introductory communication unit, main communication unit, and closing communication unit. The introductory communication unit is realized through various forms of addressing the nation which include greeting the audience and establishing a connection. The main communication unit which follows presents the main points of information. They are organized as arguments in a clear and concise form. It is also characterized by using persuasive language and rhetorical questions to engage the audience and maintain their interest. The analysis of the texts shows that the points in the president's speech are organized logically, and the audience is carefully guided through them. The final part of the political address, a closing communication unit, is also characterized by a smooth inner structure. There, the president demonstrates inspiration and motivation for the audience by highlighting the significance of the national commitment to the course of the war and the urgency for action. He always expresses gratitude to the defenders and common people for their brevity and courage by using specific structures and vocabulary consistent with the national idea. The closing remarks usually hold a memorable statement or call to action.

Key words: political discourse, political address, V. Zelenskyy, structure, communicative unit.

У статті зроблено спробу дослідити політичне звернення як жанр політичного дискурсу на основі політичних звернень президента Володимира Зеленського, виголошених протягом перших шести місяців повномасштабного російського вторгнення в Україну. Дослідження виконано в рамках структурно-комунікативного підходу. Воно містить детальний аналіз політичного звернення з використанням аналітичних та емпіричних методів контекстуального та інтерпретаційного аналізу. Також детально проаналізовано комунікативну значущість звернення для цілеспрямованого впливу на аудиторію.

У роботі виокремлено три основні частини політичних звернень Володимира Зеленського. До них належать вступний комунікативний блок, основний комунікативний блок і завершальний комунікативний блок. Вступний комунікативний блок реалізується через різні форми звернення до нації, які включають привітання аудиторії та встановлення зв'язку з нею. Основний комунікативний блок, який є наступним у структурі політичного звернення, подає важливу інформацію для слухача. Він складається з низки аргументів, що мають чітку і стислу форму. Для цієї частини також характерно використання аргументативної лексики та риторичних запитань, спрямованих на залучення аудиторії та підтримання її уваги. Аналіз текстів звернень показує, що комунікативні частини промови президента мають виражену логічну структуру, що дозволяє аудиторії легко стежити за думкою лідера. Заключна частина політичного звернення, що є завершальною комунікативною одиницею, також характеризується чіткою внутрішньою структурою. У ній президент надихає та мотивує аудиторію, підкреслюючи важливість національної ідеї для перебігу війни та необхідність подальших дій. Він завжди висловлює подяку захисникам і звичайним людям за їхню мужність і відвагу, використовуючи специфічні структури і лексику, характерні для такого типу висловлювань.

Ключові слова: політичний дискурс, політичне звернення, В. Зеленський, структура, комунікативна одиниця.

Introduction. Since the beginning of the full-scale russian invasion of Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been addressing Ukrainians on a daily basis. In his video messages, the president conveys his position and informs people on important state, international, military and social actions taken by the government. His addresses are part of the political discourse which is defined as a form of communication that encompasses various genres and plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, policy decisions, and the overall democratic process [3; 4; 8; 17]. It involves the interaction between politicians, policymakers, activists, journalists, scholars, and the general public. The goal of political discourse is to promote understanding, generate consensus, resolve conflicts, and ultimately influence political outcomes.

Scholars have extensively studied political discourse, identifying different genres within it and analyzing their characteristics, functions, and effects [1; 16]. It is expressed through various mediums, including public speeches, debates, interviews, addresses, political campaigns, social media, and traditional media outlets. There are various approaches and criteria used for the division of genres of political discourse. In our work, we consider political address as the genre of political discourse based on its subject-address relations [13; 14]. In our case, addressed by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in the context of modern political discourse in Ukraine, they refer to a specific genre of political discourse where the president delivers a formal speech to the nation as a whole. They serve as a means for the leader to communicate the government's vision, policies, and plans to the public. These speeches are typically carefully crafted and prepared, combining persuasive language, rhetorical devices, and emotional appeals to captivate and engage the audience.

Review of Publications. Political discourse is discussed in several research publications most of which define it in terms of being a form of communication that encompasses various genres and plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, policy decisions, and the overall democratic process [3; 5; 9]. T. van Dejk states that the role of political discourse is to enact, reproduce, and legitimize power and domination [17, p. 360]. It is transmitted by “members of more powerful social groups and institutions, and especially their leaders (the elites)” who “have more or less exclusive access to, and control over, one or more types of public discourse” [17, p. 356]. It means that politicians and other public representatives control political discourse. In times of full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a principal role of performing power control belongs to the president. We may find

quite a lot of works which approach a political discourse of this period from a various angle of study. It is approached from the perspective of its cultural and linguistic aspect [7], considering its communicative strategies and tactics [15], and also as a part of the warfare [5]. The linguostylistic specificity of V. Zelenskyy's political speeches [6] together with the comparative aspect of the linguopragmatics of his New Year's greeting [8] is also within the scientific scope of modern political research.

The aim of the article. In this paper, a structural approach is employed to analyse the communicative implementation of the addresses by President V. Zelenskyy which, in our opinion, play a crucial role in shaping the national policy in times of full-scale invasion. It is aimed to examine them within the framework of a communication unit (introductory communication unit, the main communication unit and the closing communication unit).

The following **research methods** were used: 1) contextual and interpretive analysis helped to study the ways of implementing the president's message and to understand the overall content of the address, as well as its possible interpretation by the audience; 2) the empirical method facilitated the identification of address structure through an in-depth analysis. It was also used to investigate the communicative meaning of each part of the address structure.

Results and Discussion. For the structural and communicative analysis of political address, we referred to the official site of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (February 2024 – July 2024).

Political addresses often follow a specific structure, beginning with an introduction to establish rapport and capture the attention of the listeners. The body of the address contains the main points and arguments, which may include policy proposals, reflections on the current state of affairs, or calls to action. Finally, the conclusion typically restates key messages, offers a compelling summary, and concludes with an optimistic note. Following the study by I. Loseva [11], we distinguish between the introductory communication unit [ICU], the main communication unit [MCU] and the closing communication unit [CCU] to structure the political addresses delivered by V. Zelenskyy (Fig. 1).

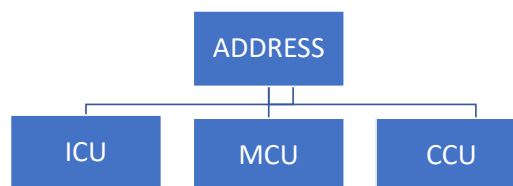


Fig. 1. Structure of address

In the course of our research, we found out that the head of Ukraine starts his address by greeting the audience and establishing a connection: *“Citizens of Ukraine. What do we hear today? It’s not just rocket explosions, battles, the roar of aircraft. It is the sound of a new Iron Curtain lowering and closing Russia away from the civilized world. Our national task is to make this curtain pass not through our Ukrainian territory, but at the home of Russians”* [18]. This is the beginning of his afternoon address to the nation on the first day of the war. He appeals to each citizen of Ukraine and does not go into an explanation of the situation but establishes contact with the audience by asking a question *What do we hear today?* Each person in the country heard air alarms which announced the threat of the upcoming missiles and aircraft during the whole day. The question might be seen as a rhetorical one but the president answers *No*. In the next sentence, he explains the true meaning of the question and answers itself – *the new epoch of Russia’s isolation from the civilised world has come*.

In his next address, which was delivered one month after the war outbreak, the head of state starts: *“Free people of the free world! Ukrainians and citizens of all countries who value freedom! Friends! On March 24 it will be the month of our resistance. Heroic resistance of the Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian people to the ruthless invasion of Russia. It’s already a month of our defense against the attempt to destroy us. Wipe off the face of the earth”* [19]. The president addresses not just the citizens of Ukraine but each person who considers themselves free in the free world. And then he continues with the word *freedom* which connects people in different countries sharing the same values: *free people – free world – value freedom*. Here Volodymyr Zelenskyy enlarges the audience and includes in his greeting each person of the free world. As lots of Ukrainians evacuated the country, he greets them as *Ukrainians of all countries* and specifies the quality which combines each person in the world – *people who value freedom*. He becomes even closer with each of them by calling them *friends*. It is the final world of the introductory part after which the speaker moves to the main part of the address.

The address which was delivered on 24.04.2022 starts: *“Today I will begin my evening address to you without greetings. Today Russia launched another missile strike at Ukraine, at Odesa. As of now – 8 dead. At least 18 wounded. Ordinary peaceful people. Among those killed was a 3-month-old baby girl. How did she threaten Russia? It seems that killing children is just a new national idea of the Russian Federation”* [20]. This was the day when Christians

of the Eastern Rite celebrated Holy Saturday – the day which is considered to be a special one between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection in the Christian tradition. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says that he does not want to greet people and, in this way, the sentence is the greeting itself. Greeting follows with the purpose statement of not addressing the people and setting the tone for his speech. The reasons for that are given in the next sentences which say that a different missile attack was launched at Odessa with eight people dead and at least 18 wounded. The tragedy of the day unites everyone, and the shared grief is the reason for not greeting people. In this way, the president shows that formality is not necessary in this case as everyone has a shared pain in their heart.

The introductory communication unit [ICU] is followed by the main communication unit [MCU] and presents the main points or arguments clearly and concisely. The next piece of address was recorded three months after the full-scale attack on Ukraine and the president starts nominating it immediately after the greeting: *“The third month of our defence is over. This is a long time. A term not foreseen by the world’s leading intelligence agencies. This was not even assumed by our enemies. And this is what motivates the world to look at our land, Ukraine, in a completely different way”* [21]. In this piece, the idea of time is specified by the word combinations *third month – long time – a term*. It conveys the idea that the period of three months of resistance is perceived as the probation period for the whole nation and its involvement in the war. The Ukrainian leader uses simple sentence construction in the first two sentences and provides further reasons in the subsequent ones. Further in the text Volodymyr Zelenskyy provides facts and examples to support the idea of the brave defence of the Ukrainian people: *“15,227 Ukrainian men and women were awarded state awards. 12,550 of them are servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. 1801 warriors of the National Guard. 205 border guards. 182 police officers. 167 employees of the Security Service of Ukraine. 138 representatives of the State Emergency Service. 99 representatives of the Main Intelligence Directorate. 38 employees of the State Special Communications Service. And also – employees of the Department of State Protection, the Foreign Intelligence Service, NABU, SBI and the Judicial Protection Service, who also contributed to our defence. 155 Ukrainians were awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine, 75 of them posthumously. 1016 settlements of Ukraine have already been de-occupied”* [21]. He organises his points logically by stating only the facts and using numbers to show the precise number of people being awarded for their service.

The main part of the address is also characterised by using persuasive language and rhetorical questions to engage the audience and maintain their interest. For example: *“But in the interceptions of their conversations, we hear that they are well aware that this war does not make sense for Russia and that strategically their army stands no chance. But it takes time and still a lot of extraordinary efforts by our people to break their advantage in the amount of equipment and weapons”* [21]. To convince people that this war does not make sense for Russia the president uses different lexical forms of addressing the enemy in their conversations – *they are all aware – Russia – their army* and intensifies their state by employing negative forms *does not make sense – no chance*. By giving the reasons for the failure of Russian troops on the battlefield the president addresses the audience by asking a rhetorical question: *“And they want to cover it up with lies that they are not fighting at full strength? Miserably* [21]. He emphasises the number of losses which Russia suffer to intensify his point: *“Almost 30,000 Russian soldiers killed. More than 200 downed aircraft. Thousands of lost Russian tanks, armored vehicles and other equipment. Russian missile ammunition is almost completely used up”* [21]. It gives the effect that the points in his speech are organised logically, and the audience is carefully guided through it.

The closing communication unit is characterized by 1) showing inspiration and motivation to the audience by highlighting the significance of the national commitment to the course of the war and the urgency for action, 2) expressing gratitude to all people involved in the war, 3) ending with a memorable statement or a call to action. The following night address in its closing part illustrates how Volodymyr Zelenskyy supports and greets the nation on gaining the status of a candidate for the EU membership: *“Do not rejoice at a slap in the face of Moscow, but be proud of applause for Ukraine. And that’s why I want to see us in one family. Let it inspire you”* [22]. He calls on the concept that Ukraine and the EU are one family and being a part of it is the reason for feeling proud. He uses the motivational phrase *Let it inspire you* to encourage and deliver the idea of a better future for the Ukrainians.

To express gratitude to the defenders and common people for their brevity is a peculiar feature of the final part of the address: *“I am grateful to each of our defenders who ensure our security this night before Easter and every day. Who defend the state. Who fight for the freedom of Ukrainians”* [20], *“I am grateful to everyone who decided to be with Ukraine on February 24”* [21]. Such an approach shows unity with all people and reinforces their commitment to the cause of victory. The final sentences of the address on 24.06.2022 are: *“Well, tomorrow is the battle again. With new strength. With new wings”* [22]. The last two sentences do not contain a subject or predicate but only word combinations with *new + strength/wings*. In this way, the idea of a new battle [*battle again*] is supported by the wish to have new strength and courage. The rhetorical device of metaphor *strength = wings* is applied to call people to further resistance and defence.

The closing remarks are always marked in the text in bold font. Some addresses contain national farewell words such as: **“Glory to Ukraine!”** [Zelenskyy 22]. They also may consist of several sentences and farewell words: *“I am grateful to everyone who defends our country! And I wish all of us, all Ukrainians, a fruitful new week. Glory to Ukraine!* [23]. They all convey the idea of national unity and solidarity.

Conclusions. In the paper, a detailed analysis of political addresses by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered during the first months of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine was carried out. The application of the structural and communicative approach proved their effectiveness for it. The undertaken analysis showed the logical structure of each address (also presented by a figure) which consists of the introductory communication unit, the main communication unit and the closing communication. It influences the communicative significance of the address for a meaningful impact on the audience. We consider the semantical analysis of the political addresses under study carried out by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on specific occasions to be a prospective direction for further scientific research.

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