

Political Communication, Political Discourse and Rhetoric

The political discourse of the Greek parliamentary elections 2019 on the material of foreign media

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Abstract: The article explores the specificities of the political discourse of the Greek parliamentary elections in 2019. For analysis, we used foreign literature, recordings of interviews and debates that were broadcasted several months before and after the elections. We have made an attempt to characterize the specific features of political discourse within the framework of the general definition of “discourse”. Its main functions are highlighted. The authors of the research propose to consider issues of social control, legitimization of government by the mass media, social solidarity and differentiation as well as touch upon the problems of the “zombie effect” of the public and its intentional disorientation, formation of stereotypes and prejudices by the mass media. The relevance of the research is due to the great interest in the exploring of new discursive forms that are in the process of becoming.

Keywords: discourse, functions of political discourse, formation of stereotypes, mass media.

Introduction

The relevance and novelty of the research is due to the fact that political linguistics is considered as one of the fastest growing and most promising areas of linguistics at the present stage of development of society. Scientific interest in political discourse both in general and during the period of electoral processes, in particular, is caused not only by the increasing role of politics and politicians in the world, their stay in the spotlight of the mass media, the close cooperation of political structures with social communication systems, but also by the development of a number of new disciplines, in particular conflictology, imagology, PR management, communication science, etc. In politics as in statesmanship, rhetorical skills and communicative competencies of politicians enhance their influence and (self) presentation figure prominently. The article analyzes the means

of persuasion in the political discourse of the parliamentary campaign in Greece in 2019. The purpose of the research is a review of the functions of political discourse on the example of the parliamentary elections in Greece in 2019. For analysis, we used foreign literature, recordings of interviews and debates that were broadcasted several months before and after the parliamentary elections, which helped to answer the following questions: (1). What are the main functions of political discourse in the context of the parliamentary elections in Greece in 2019 based on European mass media? (2). The coverage of the parliamentary elections in Greece in 2019 by the Ukrainian media: was the function of orienting Ukrainians in the Greek electoral processes fulfilled? (3). Does the foreign press produce stereotypes about the Greek culture?

We have used such general scientific methods as descriptive and observation methods in the research.

Using the methods of theoretical analysis and synthesis, we systematized and synthesized the collected material. Among the special linguistic methods, we chose the method of contextual-interpretation analysis to consider the macrostructure of the context. The materials of the research were the news reports of foreign and Ukrainian mass media, texts of official presentations by Greek and foreign political figures, recordings of debates and political agitation. The hypothesis of the research relates to stereotypes about the Greek culture in the press. We make a suggestion that the crisis in Greece has become an ideal basis for creating new stereotypes by foreign mass media.

The concept of “*discourse*” has long gone beyond the borders of linguistics and now it has a pronounced interdisciplinary nature. This term has characterized such sciences as philosophy, psychology, political science, culturology, sociology, communication science, etc. For the first time it was introduced into scientific circulation in 1952 by Zellig Sabbetai Harris in the context of “discourse analysis” to denote “the method for the analysis of connected speech (or writing)”. [1] We join the opinion of those scientists who consider discourse as “a complex communicative phenomenon that includes, in addition to text, extralinguistic factors that are knowledge about the world, opinions, attitudes, goals of addressees”. [2]

The key concept for defining “discourse” is speech. It is speech – oral or written – that becomes the object of the research in studies on political discourse. Language as a concept is broader than text and context combined; it is a symbolic representation of reality, a portrait of its time. Language makes the conditions for communication which “allows diagnosing the arising of problems, identifying hidden threats and strengthening integrative communication in society”. [3]

The *characteristics of discourse* in its modern sense include the following ones: (1). Discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon that includes a social context that gives an idea of the participants in communication (and their characteristics) and the processes of producing and perception of messages [4]; (2). Discourse is any way connected with the subjective psychology of a person, therefore it cannot be alienated from the one who speaks [5]; (3). Discourse is by its very nature a cognitive phenomenon because it deals with the transfer of knowledge, with the handling of knowledge of a special kind, and most importantly, with the new knowledge creation [6]; (4). Discourse is a coherent text in conjunction with extralinguistic, pragmatical, sociocultural, psychological, and other factors, a text which is taken from the standpoint of the concept; a speech which is considered as a focused social action, as a component which is involved in the interaction of people and their mechanisms of consciousness (cognitive processes). [7]

Political discourse as a type of discourse is used to achieve, preserve and exercise political power. Its main purpose is the addressee's demand to express the vision of reality and to convince the addressees that such a vision is the only correct one. At the same time, the speaker operates with the events of the future, so the choice of the appropriate linguistic means can play a crucial role. Thus, political discourse is characterized by a number of specific means, namely the use of specific vocabulary which is determined by political activity; a peculiar choice and organization of certain structures of expression in accordance with the pragmatic conditions of communication prevailing in the process of professional activity of politicians.

The main channels for the implementation of political communication in the modern era are the mass media. Their special role in the development of political discourse gives the right to many researchers to talk about the tendency to merge political communication with the style of the mass media. [8] Political discourse is realized both in oral and in written speeches. The oral form of political discourse traditionally includes public speeches by politicians on radio and television, interviews, press conferences, parliamentary debates, television and radio news; the written form – a variety of documents, in particular, party programs, manifests, agreements, sections of political news in the press, political posters and leaflets.

Political discourse during the election period as an object of linguistic study has repeatedly attracted the attention of both foreign and domestic researchers (Corcoran P. (1979). [9]; Joslyn R. (1986) [10]; Pomper G. (2001) [11]; Wodak R. (2006) [12]; Wodak R. (2007) [13]; Benoit W. (2006) [14]; Filinskii A.

(2003) [15]; Gaikova O. (2003) [16]; Strelnikov A. (2005) [17]; Golubeva T. (2009) [18]; Akinchits N. (2007) [19]; Ananko T. (2018) [20]; Krivenko S.-V. (2016) [21]; Matsko D. (2010) [22]; Navrotska I. (2017) [23] and others).

Attention should be paid to the axioms on which, according to William L. Benoit, the functional theory of political discourse during the election period is based: (1). Voting is an act of comparison. (2). Candidates should stand out among opponents. (3). Political campaign messages are the moving forces to distinguish between the candidates. (4). Glorification, attack and protection are the methods for creating a candidate's preferred image. (5). The election discourse revolves around two topics: politics and candidates' identity of. (6). The candidate must receive a majority of the electors' voters who participate in the elections. [24]

The researcher Olga Gaykova views political discourse during the election period as a genre of institutional (political) communication, noticing, however, that the pre-election discourse as a complex communicative formation refers to different types of discourse: institutional – political and non-institutional – ritual and rhetorical. “The genre of pre-election discourse is something we see as a hybrid genre which combines the characteristics of institutional, rhetorical and ritual communication. The pre-election discourse is a speech act that has the features of the emotional state, appeal and incitement to action, and also a convincing message of a presidential candidate”. [25]

Tatyana Golubeva describes the pre-election discourse as an “activity, the localization of which is the time and area of the election campaign, and the resulting from these activity speech productions in conjunction with extralinguistic factors that actualize the sociocultural context of communication”. [26] Among the main characteristics of the pre-election discourse the researcher includes the quest for apologization (presenting his candidate or his party in a favorable light) and the focus on criticism which manifests itself in discrediting his opponent.

Alexey Filinsky [27] gives prominence to the following communicative features of political discourse: (1). Institutionalism as a mandatory attribute of political communication. (2). Conventionality which is implemented through the certain semantic forms (clichés, idioms, patterns). (3). The richness of the ideology as a means of expression. (4). Ideologies. (5). Myth-making which is necessary for the existence of ideologies.

Alexander Strelnikov [28] concludes that both political discourse in general and the presidential election discourse, in particular, are characterized by agitation and, therefore, evaluativity which is one of the main style-forming factors of political campaigning materials which are implemented through the selection

and classification of the described facts and events, the merging of factual and conceptual information, the use of specific linguistic evaluation tools etc.

1. The main functions of political discourse in the context of the parliamentary elections in Greece in 2019

As commonly known, the implementation of power struggle is the main function of political discourse. The 2019 institute of parliamentary elections in Greece as an instrument of legitimizing and stabilizing the existing political regime has become a crucial element of the country's modern political system. Thus, the elections in which Kyriakos Mitsotakis was elected as the Prime Minister of Greece made it possible to identify the alignment of political forces in Greece at the modern stage of its historical development, to determine the degree of citizens' confidence in the party watchwords which participate in the election process, and to express the voters' attitudes towards the specific political figures who run for such a high public office.

For political parties and politicians that represent them, in turn the participation in elections is nothing more than an indicator of their own competitiveness, a criterion of the effectiveness of professional activity. In the current political and social situation it is the responsibility of voters to make a conscious decision that predetermines the development course of the country for a legislative period of time, which is limited by the end of the current electoral campaign and the beginning of the next one. In this regard, the question is if it can be argued that the legitimization of power (the explanation and justification of decisions on the distribution of power and public resources) takes place through the mass media? Accordingly, yes, since the party going to power had to convince voters of the need to cast their vote for its representative as the only worthy candidate.

The “New Democracy” took the first place with 39.85% and 158 seats in the Parliament, the “Coalition of the Radical Left” received 31.53% and 86 seats, the “Movement for Change” – 8.10% and 22 seats, the “Communist Party of Greece” was in the fourth place with 5.30% and 15 seats, the party “Greek Solution” took the fifth place with 3.70% and 10 seats, and the party “European Realistic Disobedience Front” with 3.44% and 9 seats took the sixth place in the number of MPs. The turnout in the 2019 parliamentary elections averaged 57.91% of registered voters.

“The new Prime Minister of Greece promises to be proud of Greece again,” the British BBC channel has commented [29], adding that Kyriakos Mitsotakis “has promised less taxes and more privatization and plans to revise the agreement with Greek creditors to make it possible to reinvest more money in the country.”

In his analysis, the journalist of this channel, Mark Lowen, noticed that Alexis Tsipras promised more than he could do. “With the beginning of the era of Mitsotakis, one of the iconic left leaders of Europe leaves the stage. But he will regain the opposition and will wait for the mistakes of the new Greek leader to take advantage of that,” the correspondent writes. The question arises: is it possible to talk about social solidarity as one of the main functions of political discourse (integration over the full society or individual social groups), or, conversely, about the social differentiation (alienation of social groups)?

“The center-right leaders are returning to power,” the Financial Times writes [30], adding that Kyriakos Mitsotakis “leads the return of the “New Democracy” after the failure of the campaign of Tsipras.” The British economic newspaper has commented that Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the son of the previous Prime Minister, said that he would “focus on tax cuts and bureaucracy and attracting foreign investment to create the workplaces and reduce the stream of young Greeks who go abroad.” “The result was the serious defeat of Mr. Tsipras, the long-standing radical who suddenly changed his political position and adopted the austerity program in exchange for saving Greece with 86 billion Euros when the country would leave the euro-zone.” Tsipras had relied on early voting, but the voters rejected the Prime Minister’s statement that the conservative government would cut salaries and allowances and would sell the state property to foreign investors at a low price,” the newspaper has commented giving the reason to state that the legalization of power takes place through the mass media.

Does political discourse exercise social control (creating the prerequisites for the unification of the behavior, thoughts, feelings and desires of a large number of individuals, that is, the manipulation of public consciousness)? Yes, definitely. The correspondent of the first German television channel “ARD” in Athens [31] noticed that the party “New Democracy” is “a modest figure resembling German Christian democrats. These are not the extreme conservatives that we see in other European crisis-stricken countries.”

The media factor is that the mass media act as a mediator between the subject and the people. According to the organizers of the pre-election campaigns, the media play a key role in creating the information space of election communication (the targeted audience gets the opportunity to become a witness and a direct observer of political events) but not to form the electoral decision. The financial newspaper “Handelsblatt” [32] reports: “Although Mitsotakis belongs to one of the oldest political dynasties in the country and, therefore, can be considered as a representative of the old elites who have destroyed Greece by their nepotism, many people see through him a renewal that can give a new life to

a troubled country.” The observer states that immediately after the oath of the new government, “Mitsotakis wants to submit his first reform package to the Parliament. The wide bill is already in the box. It provides, in particular, a public administration reform. With the approach of the administration to citizens and simplifying licensing procedures, Mitsotakis wants to lay the foundation for sustainable economic growth.” “In Greece the old dynasty is returning to power,” according to the online magazine “Focus”. [33] Thus, political discourse exercises social control by manipulating public consciousness.

The creation of a good image can become the key to successful achievement of the goal by the addressee, so, it is necessary to have the speaker’s oratory skills, appropriate appearance, photogeny and telegeny. The linguistic presentation of the phenomenon of political life influences the development of image-based communication. One of the characteristics that are gaining significant weight in the era of television is the appearance of a politician which is often associated with the concept of “charisma” – the emotional and mental abilities of a person, thanks to that he is assessed as endowed with special qualities and able to have an effective impact on other people. Language always complements the power of charisma, especially in political communication. Thus, according to the newspaper “Stuttgarter Nachrichten” [34], the defeated Alexis Tsipras “tried to seduce voters with awkward gifts in the last elections, distributed bonuses and promised to increase pensions. The result of the elections in Greece is, first of all, a clear rejection of populism. This is its most important value not only for Greece, but for the whole of Europe.” Thus, the so-called agonal (from the Greek *«ἀγώνας»* – struggle) function of political discourse is the initiation of social conflict and demonstration of disagreement with the actions of the authorities.

The use of tools such as televised debates is a characteristic of modern politics. They provide an opportunity for voters to compare the candidates for the place of President or Prime Minister as politicians and individuals. The candidates for such a serious posts cannot afford to do whatever they think, or express their own thoughts on a particular issue, if this could harm their political career. Based on materials from “Die Zeit” [35], “The break is over. For four years, the newcomer Alexis Tsipras and his left party SYRIZA had been ruling Greece, but this historical exception passed. Sunday elections were won by his opponent and the opposition leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis. “Most likely, his triumph will bring him an absolute majority in the chamber. This leads Greek policy to nothing in many ways,” the observer continues, noticing that the autonomous government will be in the country for the first time since the crisis has begun. Along with the “New Democracy”, the next Mitsotakis, coming from a “family that has been co-

opted the country policy for a century, becomes Prime Minister again,” the author continues, referring to the history of the clash between the Eleftherios Venizelos clans and his ancestor Konstantinos Mitsotakis, claiming that during the period of crisis with the coming of Alexis Tsipras, the era of political dynasties is over” and “people in Greece are tired of these families, whom they have considered responsible for evil in managing the economy and politics, that has led to the worst debt crisis since World War II.” It should be noticed that in this way the mass media produce a “zombie effect” on society, which is understood as the process of reconciliation and distraction of its attention, of lulling vigilance, and in some cases, of mobilization which is to strengthen and to organize political supporters or opponents.

The communication strategies within the framework of political discourse have one goal – the power contest. Under the influence of the “presence of competing parties” factor, the speaker is forced to minimize the status of the opponent, to dethrone the positions of his political opponent and to maximize his own status. Thus, political discourse reflects the struggle of different forces for the possession of power. This determines the specificities of communicative actions in the framework of political discourse. Political communication in the broad sense of this concept includes any language formation, for example, the subject, the addressee, whose content belongs to the sphere of politics. [36] The French newspaper “Le Monde” [37], commenting on the political climate in Greece, notices that disappointed and indifferent Greeks have come to the ballot box again. Disappointment occurs mainly among young people. Today, elections are a minor issue for these young people who are concerned about their future. The newspaper cites an angry young man who at the end of January 2019 trusted Alexis Tsipras and now feels betrayed. During the January elections, he enthusiastically voted for the SYRIZA Radical Left Party of Alexis Tsipras. “Today I feel like I was betrayed, like someone I had trusted was cheating on me,” admits the angry young man Leftheris.

The communicative acts of political discourse are based on the desire to influence the interlocutor; this determines their explicit or implicit suggestibility which clearly dominates informativeness. As the scientist Mikhail Bakhtin says, every communication is a dialogue, but in this case, we are dealing with a dialogue in which one of the interlocutors dominates. The dialogue takes place according to the “leader-crowd” scheme, and the leader can also be a collective one (for example, a newspaper, a television channel, etc.) In such a dialogue, it is not effective to appeal to the ratio and some logically flawless evidences but it is an effective appeal to emotions. This leads to the fact that the texts of political

discourse are characterized by expressiveness and imagery which are manifested, in particular, in the appearance of abstract concepts and logical constructions for concrete mental “pictures” aimed to evoke the emotions predicted by the “leader”. Actually, “the functional specificity of political discourse in relation to other types of discourse is manifested in its basic instrumental function – the power contest”. [38]

Expressiveness is a mandatory attribute of election communication which is aimed to convince the voters of civil liability and professional concern about the subjects of the discourse. The degree of expressiveness depends directly on the genre form that implements the discourse, and in some cases on the individual style of the subject itself: “The Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and the SYRIZA party were shown the door by the Greek voters who paved the way for his conservative opponent Kyriakos Mitsotakis at the first parliamentary elections since the country’s recovery from the financial crisis,” the German news agency “DPA” writes. [39] “Yesterday’s elections showed massive dissatisfaction with Mr. Tsipras after four years of austerity through the reforms that he was forced to implement,” the agency adds. “The Independent” [40] notices that “Whoever wins the election, the poisonous bowl of applying the agreed conditions of the rescue will win,” and the “Die Welt” [41] summarizes the 2019 parliamentary elections in Greece in such a way: “The anger is gone, the Greeks are tired. Today, Greece votes for the fifth time in six years. Was it the victory of bourgeoisie or another victory of Tsipras? People do not care.”

“Alexis Tsipras is a pragmatic revolutionist,” the Swiss newspaper “Neue Zuercher Zeitung” (“NZZ”) reports. [42] “After the electoral defeats “It is unlikely that the SYRIZA will drown in obscurity, as in the case of most oppositional parties. Returning to its roots, the party would benefit little. He (*Tsipras*) will probably continue to strengthen his position as a center-left in order to inherit the once-dominant Social Democratic PASOK.”

“Elections in Greece: Mitsotakis won. The defeat of Tsipras which defied the severity and clashed with Europe,” the largest Italian newspaper “Corriere della Sera” quotes. [43] As it is stated in the article, “Alexis Tsipras has lost the majority, but he is not a defeated politician. Tsipras continues his career as an opposition leader, he is no longer a warrior who has nothing revolutionary, but he is pragmatic, flexible and almost technocratic.” Then the article lists the reasons that led the Greeks to turn away from the policies of the outgoing Prime Minister.

“Elections in Greece: Tsipras is punished for the austerity; the conservatives get an absolute majority,” the headline of the newspaper “Il Fatto Quotidiano”

[44] states, it emphasizes that “Greece turns the page and finishes the era of Alexis Tsipras, who was punished for “betrayal” through the austerity and negotiations with Europe.” Here, we believe, it is worth talking about social differentiation as one of the main functions of political discourse.

2. The Parliamentary elections in Greece 2019 through the prism of Ukrainian mass media

Today, Ukrainian TV mass media, broadcasting media and the press, which includes online news media, are the basic tools that influence the formation of political and social realities, and the nationwide media play a crucial role in all types of elections as these media are the main source of information. Thus, the news programs are intended to show the variety of views and to report the information that is relevant, updated, accurate, balanced, and based on facts. We may notice that in our country, the mass media are not afraid to show the reality in the way it is, they are not afraid to describe people’s emotions, positive or critical / negative opinions. However, the topic of the parliamentary elections in Greece in 2019 was described superficially, unemotionally, almost neutrally in the Ukrainian media. In our opinion, this neutrality could not be considered as a final goal because people are not interested in the superficial and exquisite news.

Often, the media coverage of the Greek parliamentary elections 2019 came down to a simple statement of the fact of the victory of Mitsotakis and the failure of Tsipras (“Ukrainska pravda” (“The Ukrainian truth”), “Zik.ua”, the Multimedia platform of international broadcasting of Ukraine “Ukrinform”, “Den” (“The Day”), “Tyzhden” (“The Week”) etc.) Frequently, the information was presented through a banal translation from Greek of the statements of candidates for the post of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Greece, or plagiarism of fragments of articles from European media: “Today, the complicated and amazing battle begins”, the leader of the “New Democracy” Kyriakos Mitsotakis stated after his victory. His party got 39.8% (158 seats) from the 97% of the already counted votes. According to his words, it is a clear mandate for changes. From now on, the era of Mitsotakis begins, and “one of the most iconic European left leaders for the last four years, Alexis Tsipras, has gone from the scene”, Mark Lowen from the BBC has written. [45] “His announced goal is to make Greece a better state for business and to modernize the bureaucratic apparatus”. “The Mitsotakis victory is due to fatigue from severe financial constraints on the part of the EU and high unemployment as a result of the “financial suffering” of 2015. When Tsipras took the leadership of the government, Greece experienced the highest point of the financial crisis in 2010,” “Reuters” agency writes. [46] We also notice that

Ukrainian media are characterized by the absence of serious political analysis of the Greek issues, they have often resorted to copying the articles of other people, they gave references to unchecked sources, they rewrote blog comments, etc.: “The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker tweeted: “I would like to congratulate you on your clear victory in the parliamentary elections. You know about my commitment to Greece and its people, who have lived through so much during the last decade. The honor, sustainability and European loyalty of Greeks, they deserve respect”. [47]

“Zik.ua” [48] cites Mitsotakis’ statement about the Greeks, who survived from the vicious circle, as he promised that Greece would proudly raise its head. This article mentions that “the Greek nationalist party “Chrysi Avgi” (“Golden Dawn”), which is known for its racist and xenophobic statements, does not take parliament seats this time while the right party of the ex-journalist Kyriakos Velopoulos, “Elliniki Lisi” (“Greek solution”) takes 10 seats. 3.71% of electors voted for a party of pro-Russian interests.”

Attention should be paid to the analytic article “Leftist populism crisis: What do the results of parliamentary elections in Greece say?” by George Kukhaleyshvili. [49] The Ukrainian IR-political scientist writes about the “political fiasco of Alexis Tsipras in Greece, who became the icon of European socialism in the twenty-first century, he was perceived as a new-breed Lenin, expressing the decline of left populism in Europe. He has been compared with Che Guevara because of his insistence in relations with the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. International creditors required the Greek authorities to take austerity measures which included increasing the rate of value added tax (VAT), cuts in pensions and state payments to state employees, raising the retirement age and privatizing state enterprises in order to solve the Greek national debt problem (178.6% of GDP). Greece takes up the second position (after Japan) in the National Debt Top List. Tsipras promised to refuse the austerity measures for the welfare improvement of Greek citizens. From the mouth of the left populists there were ideas of leaving the Eurozone, the European Union, NATO, and gaining credits from Russia.

The author also mentions that the rise of the “New Democracy” party to power in Greece is in the field of view of various centers of power and intersects with the interests of Ukraine. “The ideas about Russia as the creditor fall short of expectations. Tsipras was proclaimed as a traitor, who refused socialism”. It is important that Greece is a subject of interests for Ukraine and Russia at the same time: “the interest of Kyiv is the Greek support of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and anti-Russian sanctions. The interest of Russia is to promote the idea

of elimination of anti-Russian sanctions by official Athens in the EU. During its time in power, the government, which was formed by the SYRIZA party, took an ambiguous position on the Ukrainian issue. Then Tsipras publicly supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine. At the same time, the Minister of Labor and Social Solidarity from the SYRIZA party, George Kukhaleishvili, believed that sanctions interfere with dialogue with Russia. In March 2014, the ex-Prime-Minister of Greece Antonis Samaras from the “New Democracy” party declared that the EU should become a mediator in resolving the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.” G. Kukhaleishvili concludes that an important factor that affects the nature of the relations between Greece and Ukraine and between Greece and Russia is the large Greek diaspora. He emphasizes that more than 90 thousand ethnic Greeks live in Ukraine, while only 85.5 thousand – in Russia. In this regard, Ukraine has certain advantages.

3. Stereotypes about the “Greek” in the foreign press materials

It is believed that cultural prejudices (both negative and positive) usually serve either specific ideological and political positions or financial interests. We suppose that the crisis in Greece has become the ideal basis for the creation of new stereotypes by the non-Greek mass media. “The mass media decided not to shed light on real causes, contributing to a critical understanding of the problem and projecting negative stereotypes onto the Greeks, criticizing their mentality and lifestyle, often using extremely simplified explanations, bloated phraseology, exaggerations, exaggerations, and exaggerations”. [50]

We will consider the image of the Greek-German relations in the Greek press “Kathimerini” (“The Daily”), “Vima” (“The Step”), “Proto thema” (“The Lead Topic”). The words “help” and “support” are often used in the publications of these editions, and Germany and Greece are identified as “strong” and “weak” states. Germany is indicted for its rejection to help Greece, and it promotes a policy which is based on its interests, while the anti-Greek stereotypes are sometimes condemned. The “dangerous anti-Germanism” of the Greeks and “irrational demands” in relation to occupational debt are also mentioned.

We emphasize the subjective position of inequality in relations between the foreign and Greek press and, in particular, the way the Greek mass media perceive the image of Greece in foreign mass media during the crisis. In this case, we are talking not only about the choice-hiring, but also about the much more complex and unequal relations, while the Greek press has complained many times about the stereotypical representation of Greece by foreign media. We have researched a large number of printed and digital caricatures from all around the world, some-

times they are provocative and sarcastic, and so, we may suppose that they have become a decisive factor in the formation or criticism of stereotypes about the European economy in the context of the financial crisis in Greece and the problem of Grexit. The main conclusion is that the vast majority of foreign press articles mentions Ancient Greece, where ruined ancient temples are associated with modern economic ruins, and modern Greeks apparently irresponsibly waste both European capital and the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Conversely, Greek caricaturists do not use antiquity as often as foreign ones: their criticism is centered on famous people and situations without using generalized forms and stereotypes.



Pictures 1, 2.[51] The caricatures depict the “Sisyphus labor” of Alexis Tsipras. The destroyed ancient Greek temples are a metaphor for the country’s current economic losses. Thus, it is emphasized that the Greeks seem to irresponsibly waste both European capital and “squander” the cultural heritage of their ancestors.

A view of how the international press have covered and commented on the elections in Greece is illustrative in this context. For example, “The Greeks came for election for the fifth time in the last six years. The mockery is the leader of SYRIZA, Alexis Tsipras... Greece has plunged into a deep financial crisis, and

it does not matter who wins, it will have to carry out further tough economic reforms.” According to Richard Galpin, correspondent of the “BBC”, no matter what the winning party will be, it cannot be self-sufficient.” “Back to nothing” – that is the commentary of the “Die Zeit” newspaper [52] which states that “with Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the old dynasty returns to power – his agenda is not enough to understand how we have achieved this success.” “The Guardian” [53]: “The previous Prime Minister... is just ahead of his conservative opponent in the early elections, but the result will unlikely change the fate of the country.”

For its part, the news site huffingtonpost.it [54] offers the headline “Europe erases the dream of Tsipras (and of the lefts),” which, in addition to the detailed election results, adds the point of view of Irish parliamentarian: Sinn Fein Martina Anderson, who emphasizes that “the battle of SYRIZA is ours too, if SYRIZA loses, we will lose too”, – noticing the importance of the defeat of the Greek side of the wider European left. In addition, the newspaper publishes the interview with Luciana Castellina, an Italian communist, journalist and politician who was present at the press conference of Alexis Tsipras in the Zappio Palace in Athens. Thus, without openly acknowledging the defeat of the left forces, Castellina states that “this is a defeat, but this is not the end of the era.”

The victory of the “New Democracy” party in the 2019 parliamentary elections in Greece was also mentioned on the front page of the Italian newspaper “Il Secolo XIX” [55] which is specialized in publications about the church circles and the Vatican. “Early elections in Greece: a clear victory for the center-right. The defeat of Tsipras,” the headline of the newspaper states, emphasizing that “51-year-old Kyriakos Mitsotakis led his party to a clear victory which put an end to the era of the rule by lefts with Alexis Tsipras and opened the door to reforms, which pretended to make less taxation, more openness to private investment and less bureaucracy.” Unambiguously, the mass media maximally contribute to the orientation, and in some cases, to the deliberate disorientation of society in electoral processes through the formulation of tasks and problems, as well as by the way of forming a picture of political reality in the minds of society.

Conclusions

Politics plays an important role in the development of human civilization and in the life of individual countries and peoples. The growing interest in the research of political discourse is due to the dynamism of the political sphere, the development of the language system and the person’s desire to navigate today’s political processes. In accordance with the scientific arsenal, the political discourse in the period of the electoral processes refers to the type of communicative

activity which is a combination of various language formations that are relevant to the sphere of economic and socio-political life of the country, and it updates in the situations of election campaigning in order to attract supporters among the voters. The characteristics of political discourse include the use of stylistically marked units by the addressee (politician), making slogans and ellipticity of language forms, and the implementation of “dissolution” and “alienation” tactics by politicians.

One of the main functions of political discourse is its use as an instrument of political authority, namely: it is the struggle for power, power acquisition, its retaining, realization, stabilization or redistribution. The discourse obviously appears to us as a means / a method of exercise of political power, and it is its repeater. The involvement of discursive strategies in the struggle for power is one of the key methods of manipulative influence on the society and of ensuring the dominance on it. In the conditions of information openness and pluralism of interpretations of the socio-political agenda, the hybridization of instruments of ideological influence is obvious. Thus, discourse not only participates in the struggle for power, but also reflects it.

One of the most effective mechanisms for ensuring the legitimacy of power are the mass media, since they act as a mediator of information between the state and society. Thus, the electorate using the mass media has a chance to impress upon the authorities its opinion or desire. On the other hand, the current government can influence society through the mass media, explaining their actions or justifying the current policy. It is an indisputable fact that having the opportunity to disseminate important information “in one’s own direction” or to keep silent about it means to have double power.

In the political discourse, social solidarity is viewed primarily through the prism of collective goals and interests that brings together the citizens within communities of different levels – from small groups to the whole country. The idea of the social solidarity is in demand both by political elites and by the general public. It is updated by politicians in order to legitimize their images of the future (through promises), and solidarity itself is interpreted mainly in the category of patriotism that fosters society in the face of the enemy or external threats. The emphasis on social (with common goals and tasks) and mental (with common views) integrating mechanisms brings political discourse from social solidarity to the concept of social cohesion. And conversely, in some cases, it is necessary to speak about the deliberate social differentiation which leads to the alienation of individual social groups.

In furthering the discussion, we will go with the protest functions using the

example of political actors, who generally have completely different possibilities of appealing to the audience. Oppositional politicians are far below the ruling elite in their access to officially legitimating public policies, where the existing “rules of the game” are used in the interests of the current government. Therefore, they execute the deficit of position in an unofficial public space, demonstrating their political protest messages to the audience in this way. As a means of protest letters can be used the promotional billboards, decals, stickers, political graffiti etc.

The “zombie effect” provided by political discourse is manifested in the manipulation of the consciousness of the general public, in fact, this function is expressed in the ability of political discourse to “canalize” the public opinion and the public attitudes in the required directions. The channel of manipulation includes the creation of an appropriate emotional mood of the electorate, in particular, pride in a country, confidence, sense of community, hope, fear, cynicism, hostility, hatred etc. “Zombification” can also be carried out in the form of a direct appeal to voters of candidates for a post or position, for example, in the genres of slogans, calls, proclamations, etc. Often the information about a particular candidate for an important public post can be obtained through conclusions and inferences, “reading between the lines.” In this case, it is essentially where and when, under what circumstances the message was made or what the manner of presenting the information (intonation, mimicry, gestures) was. Thus, the electorate can make a conclusion about the level of culture and intelligence of the speaker, his political preferences, his honesty and sincerity, aggressiveness or a tendency to compromise, etc.

We can safely say that the mass media to a large extent contribute to the orientation of society in the electoral processes (through the formulation of tasks and problems, the formation of a view of political reality in the minds of the electorate). Consequently, the dissemination of information about the state of affairs in the political community is one of the most significant functions of the political discourse in relation to people. This is due to the fact that in most cases, people do not directly touch on the world of politics, and their knowledge in this area is mainly based on verbal “pictures” that are artificially imposed, but not on their own experience of political participation. Similar parallels can also be drawn in the analysis of the electoral processes in a foreign country. A typical example in the research is the coverage of the parliamentary elections in Greece in 2019 in Ukraine. It was reflected by the mass media superficially and unprofessionally, in our opinion, due to the lack of competence of Ukrainian journalists in this regard.

All these functions characterize the structure of political discourse as a system of a complex, controversial, but progressively developing process of forming values, ideas, and norms, development and making of the decision on the basis of certain arguments to achieve social peace.

We agree with the Greek researchers that the foreign mass media mostly form a biased opinion among Europeans without going into consideration of the real causes of the economic crisis in Greece and without projecting the negative stereotypes onto the Greeks, criticizing their mentality and lifestyle, often using overly simplified explanations, bloated phraseology and exaggeration. Undoubtedly, the article does not exhaust all aspects of the issue under consideration. In the further scientific research in this direction we plan to analyze the discourse of individual Greek politicians.

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