SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC ANALYSIS OF POSITIVE EVALUATIVE ADJECTIVES IN PRE-ELECTORAL DISCOURSE

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Articolul dat analizează utilizarea adjectivelor care exprima evaluare pozitivă în discursul media American din anii 1999-2008. Există o tendinţă clară către o evaluare pozitivă a calităţilor politicienilor sau a programelor lor şi a situaţiei social - politice, deoarece poziţia dominantă a adjectivelor, cu un grad puternic de evaluare pozitivă a fost cotat ca fiind cea mai mare din 2008 (74.69 % comparativ cu 53.02 % în 2000 şi 66,31 % în 2004). Căderea în utilizarea adjectivelor care exprimă caracteristici pozitive ale fenomenelor socio - culturale, subliniind calităţile bune ale politicienilor (de la 45,14 % la 23,69 %) este una dintre caracteristicile proeminente al vocabularului evaluativ pozitiv din anul 2008. Analiza lexico - semantică adjectivelor evaluative pozitive a relevat 9 grupe lexico semantice: apreciere, adorare, aprobare, respect, sprijin, importanţă, potenţial pozitiv, lipsa de atitudine negativă, şi satisfacţie, fiecare dintre care reflectă un anumit aspect semantic de evaluare fiind mai divers decât în 2000 şi 2004.

Peculiarities of evaluative vocabulary have increasingly fallen under the scrutiny of linguists in the past years (2, 3, 5) and still remain in the focus of scientific interest (1, p. 14). As L.Yu. Ivanov has duly noted, "though the concept of evaluation is intuitively clear, it can hardly be subjected to the definition that can satisfy if not all, then at least the majority of linguists"(8, p. 69). In English linguistics the most valuable contribution to the study of evaluation was made by such linguists as J. Martin, S. Hunston, G. Thompson, S. Conrad, D. Biber and others. In

Russian linguistics a big contribution to the scientific investigations in the field of evaluation has been made primarily by such linguists as N.D. Arutiunova, N. A. Lukianova, V.N. Telia, E.J. Volf, V.L. Shakhovski , L.M. Vasiliev and many others.

The term **"evaluation"** is used as an equivalent to J. Martin's **appraisal** (6) and in S. Conrad, D. Biber's **attitudinal stance** (2). It is defined by the above-named linguists as referring to the linguistic expression of speaker/writer's opinion along a number of semantic dimensions or parameters. That is, evaluation can relate to judgments of entities/propositions as good or bad, important or unimportant, comprehensible or incomprehensible, likely or unlikely, genuine or fake, expected or unexpected, etc (1, p.1).

As it is very well known, the evaluative vocabulary is fully dominated by adjectives, which was proven by deep analysis of evaluative adjective patterns in British English broadsheet and tabloid newspapers (3, p. 4). But this is true about the literary texts and also about the texts of non-political character. But, as it has been observed in pre-election campaign articles both adjectives and verbs come into play only a slight predominance of the first (37%) over the second (34.8%). As adjectives denote the qualities of objects and verbs denote actions, this proportion already provides a balance between subjective negative comments about the opponents' qualities or deeds, on the one hand and objective evaluation of the opponents' actions on the other. This makes the reader feel that all the comments made in campaign articles, including negative ones, are well-grounded and reasonable.

An analysis of 762 adjectives in 2000 American election media discourse with positive connotations has revealed a slight preponderance of adjectives with a strong degree of evaluation (53.02%). In this group of adjectives there was revealed by lexical and semantic analysis 6 lexico-semantic groups, namely, "Positive Characteristics of the Socio-cultural and Political Phenomena", "Positive Significance", "Positive Feelings and Desires", "Satisfaction", "Admiration" and "Recognition". The dominant lexico-semantic group is "Positive Characteristics of the Socio-cultural and Political Phenomena" because the evaluative adjectives from this group express the very general meaning of appraisal and are used to highlight the great moral and intellectual qualities of the policies. The most commonly used lexico-semantic group is "Positive Significance" (26.9%), including adjectives such as *great* (divisive national issue, promise for Gore-priorities), *greatest* (contribution), *significant* (conservative support), *most fateful* (decisions), *important* (litmus test), *global* (crusader), *huge* (financial advantage), *vital* (life force), *big* (push in Florida), *successful* (preschool program, presidents), etc. These adjectives express such an important aspect of evaluation as a positive value of a phenomenon or an object. This group includes some neologisms, such as *Texas-sized victory, Bush-friendly slate of electors,* which add their variety to this lexico-semantic group.

The second highest frequency of use is occupied by the dominant lexico-semantic group "Positive Characteristics of Socio-cultural and Political Phenomena" that are used to highlight the great moral and intellectual qualities of politics (19.55%). The group includes a spectrum of such adjectives as *hopeful (George W. During the GOP primaries), wise (laments), eloquent (plea for clemency), shrewd (McCain's strategy), compassionate (caucus), winning (agenda), award-winning (architect), ambitious (idea), experienced (insiders),* and adjectives with more extensive semantic structure such as *powerful (speech by George W. Bush, valedictory Gore's speech on the convention's first day, grassroots groups), good (news for Clinton), legendary (progressive), appealing (to the average Americans, to pro-life groups) , interesting (topic), perfect (antidote to the Clinton years), huge (victory for Democrats), etc.* Moreover, the group comprises compound adjectives, e. g: *crowd-pleasing (theme), good-humored, mild-mannered, tough-minded, pro-Gore ruling, Truman-like rise, Bush-friendly state of affairs,* etc.

The positive comments of the presidential candidates often include a series of adjectives from the above-analyzed group, and the semantics of the adjective complements other semantics that affects the overall tone of the statements, e. g:

Gore seems **earnest** and **purposeful**, if not **buoyant** *(Newsweek, May 23, 1999).*

The Vice President is nothing if not loyal (not to mention **helpful, friendly, courteous**, **kind** and obedient), but loyalty gets you only so far *(Monday, Aug. 31, 1998)*

Al Gore has been a remarkably **thoughtful**, **disciplined** and **serious** public servant. He is **much more substantive** than most politicians, including George Bush.

In these examples, various aspects of the moral portrait of Gore are highlighted and each subsequent adjective has brighter positive evaluative characteristics, and all three lexical units expressing positive universal moral qualities complement each other and form a very vivid and all-rounded picture of Al Gore. In the following example, the adjectives with high and moderate positive evaluation of expressing these universal moral qualities are combined with the description of the action of a political nature, e.g.:

e.g.: Gore and his handlers are hoping to focus their campaign in two ways: by proposing some "big" ideas that demonstrate Gore can be **bold**, and by portraying him as a **solid**, **decent** and **dependable** family man who will erase he oval Office character deficit while keeping the economy on course (Newsweek, May 23, 1999).

Often there is a combination of adjectives with both moderate and strong positive evaluation, e. g:

Is Bush **smart** (+ s, adj.) enough to be a **good** (+ mod, adj.) president? (Newsweek, December 25, 2000).

This example is very peculiar that the moral quality expressed by the adjective with a high degree of assessment «smart» is a necessary criterion in order to be a wonderful, great, great president, but just, just, just simply good. This shows how important and responsible the post of the president is.

Using adjectives with a high positive evaluation is often combined with other nominative parts of speech:

e.g.: Gore is feeling good (1) about Clinton "*not only because he is a friend (2), but because he is a person who has had the courage to acknowledge mistakes* (3) I am honored (4) to work with this great (5) President." (Time, **Monday, Aug. 31, 1998).**

It is important to note the game of the lexical context, which has a tremendous impact on the lexical meaning of the adjective, until you change the sign of evaluation, e.g.: *people against the powerful*. Here, the adjective «powerful» has a negative evaluation. Also, there are cases, when the adjective usually possesses a neutral evaluative meaning, but under the context it acquires the positive evaluative meaning, e. g:

The book was called McCain's ***harrowing*** *and* ***heroic*** *life story.*
The use of positive evaluative adjectives can sometimes be taken to the extreme, which also contributes to the change of the evaluation sign. An example is the use of oxymoron – a combination of negative evaluative adverb and positive evaluative adverb with a very broad semantic structure, e. g:

Gore can, it's true, be ***annoyingly perfect*** (Newsweek, August 08, 2000).
In rare cases, the function of an adjective in a sentence is carried by the so-called attributive group with a hidden context analyzed by Komissarov-Korallova in her famous book "The Theory and Practice of Translation», e. g:

Bradley's unequivocal answer, though the typical ***I-can-see-nothing-but-victory response*** of a presidential candidate, can also be interpreted as a subtle dig at Gore.

These attributive groups emphasize evaluative statements because they contain structural elements of a sentence, in fact, they are "sentences in a sentence", which is very unusual from a lexical and grammatical point of view. It's almost a direct question, so the evaluation seems to be rendered from the first person.

The adjectives of the lexical-semantic groups "Positive feelings and desires" (3.54%), "Satisfaction" (0.1%), "Admiration" (1.18%), "Recognition" (0.788%) contribute to the diversity of lexical semantic field "Positive Evaluation". The group "Positive Feelings and Desires" includes such adjectives as *eager, loved, passionate*, etc., the group "Satisfaction" includes such adjectives as the *glad-handed (*Mrs. Clinton), *pleased* (about the Bush campaign), and so on, a

lexico-semantic group of "Admiration" includes such adjectives as *heroic, admirable, adoring*, etc.

The adjectives with moderate positive evaluation (46.98%) can be divided into three groups – "Weak Positive Evaluation" (0.03%), "Support" (15.74%) and the largest group – "Positive Characteristics of the Socio-cultural and Political Phenomena" used to highlight good qualities of the politicians (45.14%). The adjectives giving a moderate positive evaluation are such adjectives as ***popular*** *(Clinton),* ***good*** *(news for Clinton, policy, issue, decision),* ***valuable*** *(lesson),* ***smarter*** *(Jeb Bush),* ***clear*** *(impression, Kosovo results),* ***clear-eyed*** *(in their appraisal of would-be President Bush), smart coordinated (growth)* и прилагательные более специфической семантики ***sensible*** *(plan),* ***teachable moment*** *(about presidential election 2000),* ***solid*** *(economic performance, support),* ***remarkable*** *70 percent of registered voters,* ***winning*** *political argument,* ***credible*** *president debater,* ***skillful*** *debater,* ***decent, upright*** *(Gore).* Also in this group there are neologisms (e.g. ***Clintonite*** *items,* ***Bush-friendly, Truman-like*** *rise,* ***pro-Clinton***). Quite often there is punning play on the names and the first and last names of politicians, which is very bright, expressive lexical means of evaluation, as it plays an important role in the journalistic commentaries.

Lexical context plays a very important role here, so many adjectives that are neutral in the evaluative meaning gain contextual evaluation semes, e. g:

There is something serious at stake: whether the first trial of a president in 130 years will be **quick** (+) and civilized or **long** (-) and dirty (Newsweek, January 10, 1999).

This case shows that the adjective «quick» and «long», not having an evaluative meaning in general, under the influence of lexical context acquire antonymous evaluative meanings- «quick» becomes positive valued, and «long» acquires negative evaluative connotation. Both adjectives acquire contextual evaluative meaning.

The group "Support" includes such adjectives like *cheerful* (McCain), *cheery, inspirational* (campaign), etc. Lexico-semantic group "Weak Positive Evaluation" includes negative-evaluative adjectives used in negative structures (e.g: *it is not bad*).

In 2004 pre-election articles, the prevalence of adjectives with a strong degree of positive evaluation is even bigger than in the previous years (66.31% in 2004 compared to 53.02% in 2000). This group of adjectives includes 6 lexico-semantic subgroups – "Positive Characteristics of Socio-Cultural and Political Phenomena", "Positive Feelings and Desires", "Satisfaction", "Admiration", "Recognition". The most frequently used group is "Positive Characteristics of Socio-Cultural and Political Phenomena", used to highlight the good qualities of politicians, "Positive Significance". Its frequency is higher than in 2000 (39.05% compared with 19.55%). This group includes such adjectives as *strong (strong turnout in Philadelphia, strong Kelly ally), formidable (opponent), smart, appealing, nice, liberal (socially liberal programs), perfect (conservative record), exceedingly gentle friend, thoughtful (Kelly), compelling economic issues, powerful online fund-raising tool, happy and lucky decade, unique freedom of action, ambitious goals, terrific opportunity, etc.* Sometimes one can observe unusual compatibility of an adjective with a noun that gives a special colour to the statement, making it vivid and memorable, e. g. *the most energetic presidency of our lifetime.* This phrase contains a positive implicit evaluation of the president ruling. Also, this group includes neologisms expressed by composite adjectives, e.g. ***charisma-infused*** *Southern moderate, named Bill Clinton.* The use of such lexical means allows emphasizing the dignity of politicians.

The lexical and socio-cultural context plays a very important role in the formation of positive evaluative vocabulary of election campaign articles and debates, since research has shown that sometimes a neutral adjective with no evaluative meaning acquires a positive evaluation, e. g:

Bush improved his standing among blacks, Jews, Hispanics, women, city dwellers, Catholics, seniors and people who do not go to church. His biggest improvement came in **the bluest** of regions, the corridor from Maryland up through New Jersey and New York to Massachusetts. In Kerry's home state, Bush found close to 200,000 more voters than he did in

2000.

From this example it follows that the superlatives **«the bluest»** indicating the color is used to denote "democratic, popular among Democrats" (this evaluative meaning has been acquired as a result of the use of blue in the pictures polls for Democrats and red for Republicans). The next frequently used adjective group is "Positive Significance" which is ranked first by frequency use in articles in 2000 among the adjectives with a positive evaluation of high degree, and for four years the use of adjectives in this group decreased slightly (from 26.9 to 25. 3%). In 2004 pre-election campaign articles the most common adjectives that lexical-semantic groups are ideographic synonyms ***crucial*** *(crucial topic in deciding how to vote, crucial swing states, crucial issue, etc.),* ***big*** *(donations, big win in the state's Democratic primary, big victories in two critical states, etc.),* ***biggest*** *(the biggest factors, the biggest issue in the coming elections, biggest political contributors, the biggest challenge for the Bush White house, the biggest gap between the Democrats and the Republicans in the history of the Gallup poll), great (advantage), greatest (the greatest victory, etc.), big-hitting* ***(big-hitting corporation, etc.)***, ***significant (****significant time and money),* ***considerable*** *(considerable influence),* ***consistent*** *(consistent message, etc.),* ***important*** *(important get-out-the-vote organizations),* ***serious*** *(serious national conversation, serious presidential debate, Bush's serious foreign policy, etc.).*

On the third place on the frequency use of adjectives with a high degree of positive evaluation are adjectives from lexico-semantic group "Positive Feelings and Desires" (1.54%). In comparison with the electoral lexicon in 2000 the percentage of consumption decreased significantly (from 3.54% to 1. 54%). In 2004, the most widely used adjectives of lexical-semantic groups are passionate *(desire to lead the country they love), well-loved (daughter), impassionate protesters, etc.*

The use of adjectives of lexical-semantic groups "Admiration" and "Recognition" has not been fixed in comparison with 2000, indicating a small decrease of lexical means of expressing praise. Adjectives expressing positive explicit evaluation of a moderate degree are used in 2004 electoral articles less than in 2000 (the percentage fell from 46.98% to 33.69%). This group of adjectives is divided into 3 subgroups "Weak Positive Evaluation", "Support" and "The Positive Characteristics of Socio-cultural and Political Phenomena" used to highlight the good qualities of the politicians. The latter group is the most frequently used, however, the percentage of use of less than 2000 (with 45.14% to 32.04%). This group includes such adjectives as *responsible, credible, friendly, pragmatic, popular, disciplined, fair, balanced, smart, electable, positive, respectful, sound, disciplined, honest, etc.* The survey has showed a sharp decline in the use of adjectives from the group "Support" (from 15.74% to 1.083%). This group consists of adjectives *supportive*, compound adjectives such as, *court-supported, state-supported* ideology, neologisms with the names of politicians *Bush-supporting* friends, *Brahimi-backed* government.

The least frequently used lexico-semantic group is a group of adjectives expressing weak positive evaluation (0.57%). This group includes negative evaluative adjectives used in negative structures.

The analysis of 245 positive evaluative adjectives in 2008 electoral papers has shown the increased prevalence of adjectives with a high degree of positive evaluation (74.69% compared with 53.02% in 2000 and 66.31% in 2004). Consequently, there is a clear trend towards a positive evaluation of politicians' qualities or their program or socio-political situation. As you can see from the statistics, the prevalence of the adjectives with a high degree of positive evaluation was observed before, but in 2008 their use was increased to a greater extent. This increase was due to a bigger use of adjectives expressing positive socio-cultural characteristics and positive realia, highlighting the good qualities of a politician.

The use of adjectives denoting the importance of a positive phenomenon significantly decreased in 2008. The effect isn't felt so far (from 26.9% in 2000 to 25.3% in 2004 and 24.49% in 2008). However, many positive evaluative adjectives just fall out of common use. These adjectives are from the lexico-semantic groups "Positive Feelings and Desires", "Admiration"

and "Recognition", which were previously little used, but they contributed to the diversity of positive evaluative lexicon of 2000 and 2004 electoral articles.

The use of adjectives with positive moderate evaluation is insignificantly reduced compared with the other historical periods (46.98% in 2000 to 25.3% in 2008). The fall in using adjectives giving positive characteristics of socio-cultural and political phenomena, highlighting the good qualities of the policy (from 45.14% to 23.69%) is one of the prominent features of 2008 positive evaluative vocabulary. Another interesting fact is that lexico-semantic group "Support" disappears altogether from the general use of positive evaluative adjectives in 2008. However, there has been weak growth of adjectives expressing a weak positive evaluation.

The analysis of 245 adjectives that in this or that way positively evaluate the politician's program, actions or his personal qualities allowed us to make two classifications. So, according to the semantic aspect of evaluation 9 lexico-semantic groups have been revealed: appreciation, adoration, approval, respect, support, importance, positive potential, lack of negative attitude and satisfaction. The most interesting for the analysis thematic groups are "Adoration", "Approval" and "Positive Significance".

Lexico-semantic group "Adoration" includes the following adjectives: fascinating, transcendent, brilliant (organizers, campaign), compelling, beautiful, amazing, terrific (candidates, job), wonderful, formidable, adorable, great (the world's greatest moral leader, great (debate), an admirable (seriousness). These adjectives have been come across for many times and the frequency of their usage constitutes (11.7%). From the point of view of semantic relations, they are **ideographic synonyms** because, one the one hand, they have common semantic component (admiration) in their semantic structure, but, on the other hand, they differ in shades of meaning. The adjective adorable is the synonymic dominant of the group. It should be also noted that some members of the group are the adjectives of wide semantics (e.g. great, brilliant, etc.), but some adjectives are more specific in their meaning (e.g. transcendent, compelling, etc.).

Lexico-semantic group "Approval", the adjectives from which are more frequently used (23.69 %), consists of such adjectives as *good (friend, applause line), unequivocal (speech), lovely support, balanced, workable (plan), affordable (care), a good, smart, positive (campaign), right, artful(series of questions), accurate (criticism), active (racial justice), consistent (team), fine (editorials), positive (political game), healing (speech), cool (demeanor), elegant (counterpunching), graceful (exit), pretty smart (argument), the right (Democrat).* All these adjectives belong to one micro semantic field. By the term "**semantic fields"** it is meant "closely knit sectors of vocabulary each characterized by a common concept". All the adjectives contain the semantic element of approval, of being "good", but compared with the previous group, here the denotational meanings of the adjectives are entirely different. They characterize different ways of being "good". Political pre-election media discourse abounds such "approving" adjectives and they are often used in one sentence to give a detailed comprehensive positive characteristic of a politician's program:*e.g.: Her [H. Clinton's] health care plan is* **balanced, workable**, *will contain spiraling costs, and give all Americans access to* **affordable** *care [1].*

The main difference between the two lexico-semantic groups "Adoration" and "Approval" consists in the degree of positive evaluation. Adjectives from group "Adoration" have a very high degree of positive evaluation but adjectives from group "Approval" give moderate evaluation. This difference may be of great importance when giving a comment in political pre-election media: e.g.: But overall she [Hillary Clinton] is only a **good** candidate, not a **great** one [2]. Here the adjective from group "Approval" stands in opposition with the adjective from group "Adoration". The aim of such a "game of adjectives" is to affect the choice of electorate, and, finally, the outcome of presidential elections.

Lexico-semantic group "Positive Significance" is the most prevalent (35.9%). It includes the following adjectives: strong (candidate, party, records, support, nominee), powerful (coalition, sentence), long-standing (support), remarkable (man, campaign), grand (speeches,

strategy, campaign, man), serious (rival), extraordinary (speech), supreme confidence, eminent, fundamental (change), winning (theme), important, significant, global (size), huge (fund-raising apparatus), high (praise), considerable (popularity). The denotational meaning of the members of the group has the seme of a big importance of the object, especially when this has an effect on what happens in the future. But all these adjectives express absolutely different aspects of significance, which is why they are not synonyms but the members of a word-family.

Thus, there is a clear trend towards a positive evaluation of politicians' qualities or their program or socio-political situation because the dominance of the adjectives with a strong degree of positive evaluation has been ranked as the highest (74.69% compared with 53.02% in 2000 and 66.31% in 2004). The use of adjectives with positive moderate evaluation is insignificantly reduced compared with the other historical periods (46.98% in 2000 to 25.3% in 2008). The fall in using adjectives giving positive characteristics of socio-cultural and political phenomena, highlighting the good qualities of the politicians (from 45.14% to 23.69%) is one of the prominent features of 2008 positive evaluative vocabulary. The lexico-semantic and syntagmatic analysis of positive evaluative adjectives has revealed 9 lexico-semantic groups: appreciation, adoration, approval, respect, support, importance, positive potential, lack of negative attitude, and satisfaction, each of which reflect a certain semantic aspect of evaluation being more lexically and stylistically diverse than in 2000 and 2004.

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