

ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИЕ И ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF BAKHTIN'S PHILOSOPHY AND ITS APPLICATION TO POLITICAL DISCOURSE

A. Simonyan

Russian-Armenian University
armine.simonyan@rau.am
ORCID: 0009-0003-4523-066X

ABSTRACT

Mikhail Bakhtin's key philosophical ideas – dialogue, monologue, polyphony, and the chronotope – have been applied to the realm of political communication, demonstrating how these ideas extend beyond literary theory and shape our understanding of communication, identity, and political discourse. For Bakhtin, language is inherently social, it emerges through human interaction and is never neutral. Human consciousness itself is dialogic, shaped by the voices, viewpoints, and experiences of others. Even internal thinking is an implicit dialogue, not a monologue. Dialogue transcends time and space, allowing statements across eras to interact. This fusion of time and space is expressed in Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope, a contextual frame in which meaning is formed. Bakhtin later expands these ideas through the concept of

polyphony, describing works – mainly Dostoevsky's – where multiple independent voices coexist without a single dominating viewpoint. Bakhtin's concepts-dialogue, polyphony, heteroglossia, and the chronotope – extend far beyond literature. Political discourse becomes a dialogic space in which diverse voices interact, values are negotiated, and cultures engage in complex, meaningful interaction.

Keywords: dialogue, monologue, polyphony, chronotope, political discourse, communication, time, space.

Introduction

In contemporary linguistics, the focus of investigation has progressively shifted from examining the internal organization of language to exploring the external dimensions of linguistic activity. This shift represents a natural and theoretically justified evolution accompanying the transition from one scientific paradigm to another. The earlier structuralist paradigm-centered primarily on the inherent properties of language-approached linguistic analysis through discrete units such as the phoneme, morpheme, word, and sentence. In contrast, the emerging cognitive-discursive paradigm reconceptualizes linguistic units as phenomena that must be examined within the broader framework of human cognitive processes and communicative behavior. Within this paradigm, language is understood not merely as a system of formal structures but as a dynamic instrument shaped by the interaction between individuals and their surrounding social, cultural, and physical environments. The use of language in professionally oriented communicative situations has also contributed to shifting linguistics beyond the notion of a closed, self-contained system. The representation of dynamic structure of communication in real speech situations has become the essence of discourse studies.

Today, active transformations in socio-political life, the widespread involvement of citizens in political processes, and the escalation of numerous international and domestic conflicts have drawn the attention of

linguists to the communicative behavior of politicians and their public image. The significance of political communication is rapidly increasing: issues of power are openly discussed, and the resolution of many political problems depends on how adequately these problems are interpreted through language use. Consequently, linguistics is now faced with the task of analyzing the full spectrum of linguistic peculiarities of political discourse.

In this study, we have made an attempt to apply Bakhtin's theoretical framework to political discourse and to reveal the socio-cognitive mechanisms that guide linguistic production and interpretation.

Mikhail Bakhtin is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century whose ideas have reshaped the study of language, literature, culture, and human communication. Although much of his work remained unpublished and little known during his lifetime, Bakhtin's intellectual legacy has grown significantly in the decades since his death. Challenging traditional notions of linguistic neutrality, Bakhtin positions language as a profoundly social phenomenon – one that is formed through interaction, shaped by context, and inseparable from human identity. At the center of his philosophy stands the human speaker, whose consciousness is inherently dialogical. Today, his concepts are implemented into the vast scope of humanitarian knowledge such as linguistics, literary theory, philosophy of language, cultural studies, anthropology and political discourse analysis.

Methods of investigation

The study incorporates a combination of several methods: theoretical-conceptual analysis, discourse analysis and intertextual analysis. This interdisciplinary approach shows how Bakhtinian theory extends beyond literary studies and the applicability of Bakhtinian theory into the field of political communication.

Main Body

Mikhail Bakhtin is a prominent thinker, philosopher and literary scholar whose social and intellectual legacy resonates across various fields

of the humanitarian knowledge. Bakhtin's heritage is characterized by his profound contributions to the study of language, culture, and society. For Bakhtin, language is not a neutral entity; it is deeply interwoven with social interaction, identity, and meaning. The carrier of language is the human being, the central figure in language studies. He is the individual who shapes and is shaped by language.

Bakhtin studies the notion of speaker through the lenses of monological and dialogical thinking. According to him, monologue ignores the perspectives of others; it neither acknowledges nor engages with differing viewpoints, positioning himself as the sole authority in the situation. Only the speaker is aware of the knowledge, information, and insight. He holds the role of a leader, with ideas reflecting his own vision and truth [1].

In the philosophical analysis of human life Bakhtin claims: Life is by its nature dialogical. To live means to participate in a dialogue, to ask questions, to listen, to respond, to agree, to argue and so on. In this dialogue, a person participates fully, with their entire life: with their eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, whole body, and actions [2].

Bakhtin came to the conclusion that our consciousness represented in the form of thinking, understanding and communication is always dialogical.

Communication is dialogue. It is the foundation of human existence, it involves an interaction of at least two authors, two subjects, and two texts. Understanding always involves a response. To understand means to answer. Even silent comprehension is shaped by anticipating or preparing a response. To see and understand the author is to perceive another consciousness and its world [3].

Most scholars claim, that communication equals dialogue whereas monologue represents thinking. Bakhtin, however, assumes that thinking is not a monologue, since every thought or word emerges through interaction with other people's perspectives. What we call an internal monologue is, in fact, a hidden dialogue, where different viewpoints collide. Even when alone, a person is engaged in a dialogue with their own past and present –

and this is an ongoing, dynamic process. Therefore, thinking is not a passive act but an active exchange between one's own thoughts and those of others.

Dialogue transcends time and space. Two statements, even if separated by time and distance, can enter into a dialogical relationship if they share a common theme or point of view.

Later Bakhtin introduced the concept of the *chronotope* to describe the inseparable relationship between time and space. The objective world or reality that exists independently of personal perception is always shaped by a specific context in which time and space are interconnected and mutually defining. It is through this unity that meaning is formed.

According to Bakhtin to engage with meaning one must first pass through the gateway of *chronotopes*. Any point of view is *chronotopic*, the value system as well [4].

Time and space are interwoven: temporal aspects shape the definition of space, and spatial elements influence the understanding of time.

Bakhtin's conception of dialogue was later broadened into the notion of *polyphony*. The concept of *polyphony*, originally derived from music, it refers to the simultaneous combination of independent voices within a single composition.

Bakhtin introduces the concept of *polyphony* in his analysis of Dostoevsky's novels, describing it as a narrative structure in which multiple voices, each with their own perspective, autonomy, and worldview, coexist without being subordinated to a single, authoritative voice of the author. Bakhtin argues that *polyphony* is fundamentally incompatible with monologic forms, which prioritize a singular, authoritative voice. In *polyphonic* prose, the author remains an active participant, but their role shifts. The author's will and initiative are not aimed at asserting their own views or imposing a dominant interpretation. Instead, they allow for a multiplicity of voices to emerge, where no single perspective holds absolute power, reflecting a more democratic and dynamic interaction of ideas [5].

We have made an attempt to analyze Margaret Thatcher's speech on European Political Architecture from Bakhtinian perspective.

Margaret Thatcher's speech on European political architecture stands as a masterpiece of political rhetoric. In this address, her primary aim was to persuade European leaders to reject deeper European integration. Let's analyze the speech through the lens of Bakhtin's theory.

The speech starts with these words:

"We are fortunate to be meeting in the Hague, a beautiful city kept beautiful by a country which values its architectural heritage.

Goethe described architecture as "frozen music".

And in a city like this it is not hard to imagine the grand symphonic melodies and subtle chamber music harmonies that might be released if we could defrost the Town Hall... architecture tells us a lot about ourselves, about our idea of God, about our relationship with our fellow-men, about our vision of Man's destiny. The medieval cathedrals gave us an exalted spiritual view of Man's place in a universe governed by an all-loving and all-seeing Creator" [8].

Margaret Thatcher inserts Goethe's voice into her own political dialogue. Reference to famous German writer, poet and philosopher can be viewed as a clear act of dialogic engagement. Meanwhile creating an atmosphere of polyphony, she includes multiple voices in the conversation. Bakhtinian chronotope is also incorporated here. Thatcher is constructing a specific historical time-space integrity where national identity, sovereignty, and culture were rooted. And in this respect deep European integration was threatening the stability of national chronotopes. Establishing a nostalgic cultural space of Dutch architecture, she opposed to the fluidity of new associations. She is engaging Goethe to support her own monologic message. Romanticizing the past with its medieval divine cathedrals, she indirectly criticizes modern European institutions.

Margaret Thatcher used several stylistic devices in this passage. The first one is a quotation. Quotations have their own specific place in the text. 1) They stand aside as they are more meaningful, and 2) they provide coherent development of the plot. Referring to Goethe, she wants to attach significance and importance to the beginning of her speech. Then Margaret Thatcher talks about great medieval cathedrals as spiritual places in the

Universe, governed by “All-loving and All-seeing Creator”. Speaking about God, beautiful architecture, and music, she wants to emphasize the unique heritage of Dutch people, the heritage that survived in spite of many hardships.

The following passage begins with a question:

“What music would Goethe hear ...perhaps while acting as an advisor to the Commissioner responsible for developing a policy for European culture?”

“Surely the music would be something atonal and very long, perhaps performed by an orchestra including vacuum cleaner, scrubbing boards, and taxi-horns, with Songs of Harmonisation sung by a mixed choir from the Paris School of Deconstructionism.”

“And what a climax of discord and disharmony!” [6].

If the beginning of the speech was lexically colorful and harmonious, this part is characterized by atonal music coming from taxi-horns and vacuum cleaners. The derogatory effect is summarized afterwards.

The interrogative form of the first sentence conveys a shade of an implied dialogue, which is to be revealed in the next sentence.

The question used in this quotation expresses irony. It increases the stylistic effect of the speech charging it emotionally.

Bakhtin introduces the concept of *heteroglossia* to describe the coexistence of multiple voices, languages, and perspectives within a single text. In this passage we encounter **the polyphonic layering** of the high and the low, the sacred and the disrespectful,

“Songs of Harmonisation sung by a mixed choir from the Paris School of Deconstructionism”, noise coming from vacuum cleaners, scrubbing boards, and taxi-horns”.

In this example M. Thatcher uses one more stylistic device – a climax, which presupposes gradual boost of emotive evaluation. “What a climax of discord and disharmony!” Here we have a combination of logical and

emotional climax. The tension of the concept embodied here is realized by the arrangement of negatively colored emotional words ranked according to the increase of their meaning.

And the concluding sentence: "That is our yesterday's future".

Yesterday's future is a metaphor, which becomes a stylistic device when two different phenomena are realized simultaneously [7]. Though these words denote time, there is a lexical disagreement between them. The combination of yesterday and future creates an abstract image of something unreal and fantastic.

Later in one of her speeches she will say:

You see it in the end of empire – the German Empire, the Habsburg Empire, the French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Ottoman and British Empires. You see it in the disintegrating remnants of what used to be the Communist Soviet Union. You see it in Yugoslavia.

Nations are like human beings: they need self-esteem and room to be themselves.

Bakhtin's idea of polyphony with plurality of national voices and ideologies is reflected here.

To sound more impressive and critical about the idealistic vision of European integration she formulated it in French.

"C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la politique" [8].

Today, when a unified Europe already exists, Margaret Thatcher's speech may no longer sound up-to-date. Nobody knows whether her words will come true and how long the European Union will survive? But we can definitely state that Margaret Thatcher's individual charismatic identity will transcend time and space inspiring those who have access to political discourse.

Let's analyze Bakhtinian chronotope in John F. Kennedy's speech in West Berlin on June 26, 1963.

"All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words: Ich bin ein Berliner" [9].

President John F. Kennedy' delivered his speech in Berlin, at a critical moment of the Cold War. The speech electrified the Berlin crowd. Berlin at that time was a divided city. By declaring in German "*Ich bin ein Berliner*", Kennedy enters into a dialogue with a vast crowd of German people standing in front of him, he declares personal solidarity with them. The code-switching from English to German serves as a powerful rhetorical tool. By saying metaphorically that he is a Berliner, Kennedy implies he is sharing their wishes and desires and the fight for freedom. So, if we sum up, this passage is purely dialogical, the message trespasses chronotopic constituents, time and space making Berlin as a symbol of universal fight.

Unfortunately, President Kennedy in his emotional speech didn't mention why it was divided, he didn't say anything that it was Germany that occupied most of Europe. And this terrible war had with huge amount of losses, on the territory of the USSR it lasted nearly four years with 27 million deaths. After complete surrender of Germany, European countries (mainly UK and France), the USSR, and the United States did decide to divide Germany into four parts. This division was a result of agreements made among the Allied powers during and immediately after the Second World war.

Politicians skillfully reshape chronotope, the notion of time can be expanded – linked back to historical events or extended forward into the future.

A similar strategy can be applied to the notion of space.

The next example is the slogan "Make America Great Again" used by President Trump in 2016.

The slogan can be regarded as an attempt to start a dialogue with Americans, it is a direct appeal to an idealized past – a vague, emotionally charged image of a time when the United States was supposedly stronger, safer, and more prosperous. The temporal vagueness is deliberate: no specific time is mentioned, allowing each listener to project their own nostalgic version of "greatness" of their country. By referencing a mythologized past, Trump stimulates emotional longing and national pride.

The next component of the chronotope is space, and the space in the slogan is America, which is in trouble and it needs revival.

Let's analyze this example: "If we don't build the wall, we won't have a country anymore" [10].

Time is represented here inherently; the space is more important, it is the country which is on the verge of loss. So, it is necessary to protect it by building the wall. The call to "Build the wall" draws the attention of the audience to territorial boundaries of the country, to its space which needs protection. By reinforcing and fortifying American frontiers, President constructs a reality where people would be safe and not endangered by external threats.

Lexical units representing Bakhtinian chronotope, that is time and space are not neutral linguistic elements; they function as cognitive frameworks through which individuals interpret and shape reality. In political discourse, emotional appeals – such as evoking nostalgia for a glorified past or emphasizing looming threats – are strategically used to mobilize and unify the public.

The last politician to be analyzed from a Bakhtinian perspective is Eleanor Roosevelt – First Lady, global activist, and key architect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works" – Excerpt from Eleanor Roosevelt's famous speech "IN YOUR HANDS: A Guide for community Action" [11].

Roosevelt's rhetorical question "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin?" – invites a dialogue with the reader. She places human rights within everyone's intimate, personal chronotope, transcending national boundaries.

Syntactic parallelism is used to build rhythm and reinforce key ideas: the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works.

These small places – home, neighborhood, school, and workplace – are crucial in everyone's life, and at the same time, they serve as the foundations where universal values are shaped.

Eleanor Roosevelt's message goes beyond her immediate audience; her words are addressed to other countries or groups with shared values or interests. This creates a perception of widespread agreement and unity.

Conclusion

We have made an attempt to expand the conceptual and philosophical boundaries of literary studies of Mikhail Bakhtin. By reading and analyzing passages from famous politicians, we get engaged in a dialogue with them – an exchange that reflects another key Bakhtinian idea: the dialogue between different cultures, which he considers the most complex and meaningful form of dialogic interaction. Bakhtin's major concepts – including dialogism, monologism, polyphony, and the chronotope – offer powerful analytical tools for understanding how meaning is produced and perceived. Originally developed in relation to literary texts, these ideas extend far beyond the boundaries of literature. They illuminate the dynamics of political communication, public discourse, and cultural interaction, revealing how speakers position themselves within networks of time, space, and political beliefs.

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ФИЛОСОФИЯ М.М. БАХТИНА И ЕЕ ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ К ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМУ ДИСКУРСУ

А.А. Симонян

Российско-Армянский университет

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые философские идеи Михаила Бахтина – диалог, полифония, разноречие и хронотоп – активно применяются в сфере политической коммуникации, выходя за рамки литературной теории и влияя на понимание языка, идентичности и политического взаимодействия. Для Бахтина язык по природе социален и никогда не бывает нейтральным; человеческое сознание также диалогично и формируется через процесс коммуникации с другими. Диалог преодолевает границы времени и пространства, что отражено в понятии хронотопа – контекстной рамки формирования смысла. Концепция полифонии, описывающая сосуществование самостоятельных точек зрения без доминирующего взгляда, усиливает это понимание. В политическом дискурсе эти идеи позволяют рассматривать его как пространство коммуникации, где пересекаются ценности и сталкиваются культурные ориентации.

Ключевые слова: диалог, монолог, полифония, хронотоп, политический дискурс, время, пространство.