UNIFICATION AND SEPARATION OF THE AMERICANS
IN THE INAUGURAL SPEECHES OF B. OBAMA AND D. TRUMP

Summary. This article analyzes nomination of power relations representing unity and division of the nation in 2013 B. Obama’s and 2017 D. Trump’s inaurgurals with the application of the conceptual relations for force. This paper draws on relations of attraction, enabling / disablement and blockage. It has been established that the idea of uniting the nation is transmitted by nominative units of attraction. Both inaurgurals split the nation into two classes: the upper and the lower. The meaning of the verbs that denote attaining success evokes the enablement of prosperity for the upper class, while verbs meaning opportunity loss trigger the disablement of lower class thriving. Verbs with the meaning of protection activate blockage relations underlying the presentation of the success of the upper class and supporting the opportunity loss of the lower class.

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**Literature review.** Significant for this article are the original cognitive linguistic studies by M. Johnson [9], L. Talmy [17] and G. Lakoff [10] who laid the basis of the cognitive approach to linguistics. Image schemas and their role in our understanding and reasoning were explored by C. Porcello [4], B. Hampe [7] and P. Gärdenfors [5], who rethought and enriched the original definition of image schemata suggested by M. Johnson [9]. Peculiarities of American inaugurals as a kind of rhetorical addresses were put forward by K. Campbell and K. Jamieson [2; 3], D. Graham [6], L. Italiano [8], M. Ngai [13] and F. Liu [11]. We base our analysis on cognitive approach to studying inaugurals offered by S. Potapenko [16].

**Task setting.** This paper’s main task is to single out lexical patterns of power relations that embody uniting and dividing the nation in Obama’s and Trump’s inaugurals.

**Main body.** According to K. Campbell and K. Jamieson, the inaugural belongs to epideictic oratory [2, p. 396]. Aristotle viewed the epideictic address as a form of rhetoric which was used on ceremonial occasions, which appeals to an audience that, in its turn, evaluates the rhetor's skill [1, p. 2-4], recalls the past and speculates about the future while focusing on the present [1, p. 18-20], employs a noble, dignified and literary style [1, p. 15] and amplifies or rehearses admitted facts [1, p. 27]. Based on this definition the structure of inaugurals includes the so-called moves [11, p. 2409], i.e. parts of the text, written or spoken, which achieve a particular purpose within the speech [11, p. 2409].

Inaugurals are structured into the following moves: reconstituting “the People”, rehearsing traditional values, enunciating political principles, enacting the presidency and fulfilling epideictic requirements [2, p. 396; 11, p. 2409]. Reconstituting “the People” move results in uniting the nation for the sake of ratifying the ascent to power [2, p. 396]. Being opposite to uniting the nation, dividing it embodies epideictic nature of the inaugurals, where resonant and controversial ideas are admitted facts [2, p. 404] of the society split into the upper and lower classes. However, in Obama’s and Trump’s addresses, dividing the nation is subordinated to the idea of American unity, for they emphasize the necessity to form a new, stronger consolidation under their presidency.

Both uniting and dividing the nation moves are represented in Obama’s and Trump’s inaugurals by the linguistic units that express power relations stemming from force image schemas of attraction, enablement, disablement and blockage which consist of a source, a target and of a direction (vector) of an action [9, p. 42].

**Uniting the nation** is the main point of the beginning of the presidents’ inaugurals.

Uniting the nation is evoked by the verbs with the semantics of bringing together resting on attraction relations. ATTRACTION represents a goal following the source [9, p. 47]. The force is represented by pronouns we and our and the adverb together. In President Obama’s address, the object the nation stands for the target of attraction. In Trump’s speech, the target of attraction is expressed by two levels: the level of the nation and the level of the establishment, denoted by the pronoun we, cf.

(1) Each time we gather to inaugurate a President we bear witness to the enduring strength of our Constitution. We affirm the promise of our democracy. We recall that what binds this nation together is not the colors of our skin or the tenets of our faith or the origins of our names (Obama [15]).

(2) We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and to restore its promise for all of our people (Trump [18]).

In the cited utterances from both presidents’ inaugurals, uniting the nation is expressed by the predicates gather, binds and are joined that share the common meaning of putting together [12] and represent the vector of attraction relations. However, the predicate binds in Obama’s inaugural expresses a greater degree of attraction, as to bind means to tie together [12], while to gather and to join in Trump’s address stand for bringing together [12] being weaker in meaning.

Unity as the source and establishment as the target of attraction relations are expressed by the pronoun we in the next utterance from Trump’s address:

(3) Every four years, we gather on these presidents’ inaugurals, uniting the nation is expressed by the predicates gather, binds and are joined that share the common meaning of putting together [12] and represent the vector of attraction relations. However, the predicate binds in Obama’s inaugural expresses a greater degree of attraction, as to bind means to tie together [12], while to gather and to join in Trump’s address stand for bringing together [12] being weaker in meaning.

The position of the predicate gather that represents the vector of attraction relations, used in this utterance from Trump’s address, differs from the Obama’s (1) utterance. Obama starts uniting the nation with this predicate, and Trump uses gather to assemble the establishment at the end of the uniting move.

**Dividing the nation** shows the split of the Americans into two different entities opposed to each other: the upper and the lower classes.

The prosperity of the upper class is expressed by units with the meaning of success that activate the relation of enablement. ENABLEMENT is characterized by the presence of some inner force vector and the absence of any barriers and restraints for moving [9, p. 47].

The misery of the lower class is denoted by the verbs with the meaning of success absence that evoke the DISABLEMENT image schemas and by the units that denote obstacles to success based on the BLOCKAGE relations. DISABLEMENT reflects the inability to act [9, p. 47], and BLOCKAGE is formed by the vector of power, which stops or changes the trajectory of movement as a result of collision with a restraint [9, p. 45].

The opposition between the upper and lower classes is presented by the adversative conjunctions but and while.

The upper class is named by the units referring to small amount of people (the small group, few), to high society (Washington, politicians, the establishment), and the deictic units they and their. The lower class is verbalized by the units denoting a big amount of people (many), ordinary people (the people, the citizens, struggling families), and by the deictic unit you.

The privileged position of the upper class and the deprived status of the lower class are underlined by contrast between the linguistic units that express success and activate enablement and those that name the absence of success and thus point
In the utterance from Trump’s speech, given above, the predicate protected names blockage relations stopping the undesirable forces and empowering success enablement for the upper class.

In Obama’s inaugural, linguistic units denoting success enablement for the upper class form an opposition with the units referring to the opportunity disablement for the lower class. This opposition becomes the source of distress for the whole country:

(8) For we, the people, understand that our country cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it (Obama [15]).

In this utterance from Obama’s address, the success enablement for the upper class is expressed by the predicative group do very well, while prosperity disablement for the lower class is represented by the predicative group barely make it. The predicate cannot succeed triggers opportunity disablement for the country.

Conclusions. In Obama’s and Trump’s inaugurals the nation’s unity is expressed by linguistic units with the meaning of ‘putting the items together’ that rest on attraction relations. In both addresses, unity is named by nouns and pronouns referring to America serving as a source of attraction. The nation’s division into upper and lower classes is represented by the enablement-disablement opposition that rests upon two contrasting relations: enablement, that expresses the ability to act, and disablement, showing the inability to act. The high position of the upper class, depicted by the units with the semantics of small amount of people, is expressed by verbs denoting bringing success which rests on prosperity enablement. The miserable state of the lower class, named by the units with the semantics denoting big amount of people, is represented by the predicates with the meaning of the loss of opportunity triggering the disablement relations. The lexical units with the semantics of protection evoke blockage relations underlying the presentation of the success of the upper class. Units denoting obstacles to the advancement refer to the blockage relations. Perspectives for the further study include the complex analysis of both presidents’ inaugurals and comparison of their power relations models in order to present what ideas Obama and Trump voice and how these ideas are named. Similar analysis can be applied for other presidents’ inaugurals not only in America, but also in different countries. In this way, the cross-cultural comparison of political speaking can be conducted.

References: