

РАЗДЕЛ II. СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНОЕ ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИЕ
SECTION II. COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

УДК 81-23

DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2020-6-1-0-8

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Сравнительный анализ словообразовательных моделей
в русском и американском политическом сленге

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Статья поступила 21 января 2020 г.; принята 1 марта 2020 г.; опубликована 31 марта 2020 г.

Аннотация

В работе рассматривается политический дискурс с точки зрения его составных компонентов и типов, среди которых особый интерес представляет медийный дискурс, характерный для средств массовой информации и отвечающий требованиям последних. Этот тип дискурса нацелен на массовую аудиторию и отражает политический мир, принимая за основу взгляды и мировоззрение профессиональных политиков. Внимание обращается на язык, и сленг в частности, который используется политиками в интервью для того, чтобы донести информацию до обычных людей. Дана интерпретация сленга и его функций. Проведен анализ политического сленга, представленного в интервью средствам массовой информации президента РФ Путина В.В. и президента США Трампа Д. Были выделены словообразовательные модели русского и американского политического сленга, проведено их сравнение, а также анализ зависимости функций сленга от них. Сделан вывод о сходстве некоторых моделей в русском и английском языках. Существующие различия объясняются разницей между самими языками, один из которых является аналитическим, а другой синтетическим. Тем не менее, функции, выполняемые сленгом, одинаковы в данных языках при использовании сходных или незначительно различающихся словообразовательных моделей. При этом принцип использования сленга в речи политиков связан с эмоциональной составляющей первой.

Ключевые слова: интервью; медийный дискурс; политический дискурс; сленг; словообразовательная модель.

Информация для цитирования: Королева Л.Ю., Мордовина Т.В. Сравнительный анализ словообразовательных моделей в русском и американском политическом сленге // Научный результат. Вопросы теоретической и прикладной лингвистики. 2020. Т.6, N1. С. 73-83. DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2020-6-1-0-8

**Lyudmila Yu. Korolyova¹ | Comparative analysis of word-formation models in Russian
Tatyana V. Mordovina² and American political slang**

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Received 21 January 2020; accepted 1 March 2020; published 31 March 2020

Abstract. Political discourse is considered from the point of view of its components and types among which media discourse typical for the media and their requirements is of special interest. It is aimed at mass audience and shows the political world based on professional politicians' opinions and world perception. The language used by politicians in interviews to target ordinary people and slang in particular is studied. The interpretation of slang is given and its functions are described. Political slang represented in interviews of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin and the President of the USA D. Trump is analyzed. Word-formation models in Russian and American political slang are identified and compared. The dependence of slang functions on them is considered. The conclusion is made that there are some similar word-formation models in Russian and English, and their differences are due to the languages themselves one of which is analytic while another one is synthetic. However, the functions performed by slang words formed on the base of similar or slightly different word-formation models are the same. Moreover, the principle of using slang in the speech of politicians is associated with the emotional component of the first.

Keywords: political discourse; media discourse; interview; word formation model; slang

How to cite: Korolyova L. Yu., Mordovina T.V. (2020). Comparative analysis of word-formation models in Russian and American political slang. *Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, V.6 (1), 73-83, DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2020-6-1-0-8

Introduction

The term 'political discourse' is a complex phenomenon that includes various aspects of

people's life and activity. It has different interpretations. On the one hand, it is viewed as a language used by mass media and some

institutions to communicate in political and social spheres (Kirvalidze, 2016). On the other hand, it is considered as a technique for giving argumentation especially practical argumentation that can support or deny some ways of acting, giving reasons in every case (Fairclough, 2012). It is stated that politics is a process of continuous dispute over statements and ideas representing alternative ways of understanding concerning some state of affairs (Tarasova, Abramenko, 2017). In general, political discourse is defined as any speech behaviour the subject, the receiver or the purpose of which refers to the sphere of politics (Shagal, 2000). Specific political situations stipulate the use of different types of political discourse such as:

- *institutional discourse* which is typical for institutional settings and depends on the institutional requirements;

- *public discourse* based on public conversation;

- *media discourse* peculiar for the media and the requirements of the media (Fetzer, 2013).

These types affect the organization of the discourse and its textual component which helps develop political discourse as an integrated sort of people's activity (Schäffner, Bassnett, 2010).

Many researchers focus on the multilayered status of political discourse that implies "1) production, reception, transmission and distribution in traditional media and new media; 2) discourse domain, viz. professional politics, grass root politics, ordinary-life-anchored political action, public-life-anchored political action, and media-life-anchored political action; 3) participation, viz. politicians as professional politicians vs. 'non-professional politicians', e.g. lay persons, activists, ordinary people on the one hand, and professional political journalists and other media representatives on the other" (Fetzer, 2013: 1). It is claimed that most studies of political discourse focus on the speech of politicians of different levels (van Dijk, 2002; Albert, Raymond, 2019) as well as linguistic choices (Reyes, 2015; Silverstein, 2011; Katsara, 2016)

and language belonging (Kozminska, Schulte, Hawker and Hall, 2019).

In all these cases language is used to carry out communication as it is an integral part of relationships between people which are influenced by social, cultural, historic, ideological and institutional factors within political discourse. The use of specific language in political discourse can be considered to be a tool necessary for the exacerbation of the competition among politicians, each of whom expresses his own ideas and makes others accept his 'own world'. In addition, it is possible to distinguish 'the centre', 'outsiders', 'insiders' and others in political discourse (Chilton, 2004).

In our opinion, media discourse as a type of political discourse is of great interest nowadays as mass media play a dominant role in public life representing events which take place all over the world in different ways depending on journalists and their points of view. The sub-type of media discourse, which is quite relevant for our research, is political interviews where different participants of political discourse mentioned by P. Chilton can be observed. Politicians and journalists choose various techniques to convey the information to the recipients of the discourse. To do that politicians may use 'conversational genres' and focus on 'lifeworld discourses' taking into account the fact that ordinary people far from the world of politics can listen to them or watch them (Fairclough, 1998).

The language that is used by journalists and politicians in interviews is aimed at reaching the wide audience and thus can include various lexical units, lexical layers, stylistic devices etc. To give arguments for or against some statements in interviews politicians may refer to slang in general and political slang in particular. Slang is a very unique lexical phenomenon that can perform different functions depending on the participants of the discourse and their intentions. From the point of view of the information conveyed by politicians in interviews the impact that political slang has on the audience is quite significant. It is relevant to find out the sources that help slang to be

powerful. We can suggest that word-formation models play a specific role in this process. Thus, the aim of our study is to compare word-formation models of political slang in Russian and English and clarify the dependence of slang functions on word-formation models in the two languages. To do this we decided to focus on political interviews of the leaders of two countries, the Russian Federation (V.V. Putin) and the United States of America (D. Trump), to popular TV channels. It is necessary to distinguish the most common word-formation models of political slang for both cases and make a comparative analysis. To begin with, we will focus on the definition of political slang and its functions.

The interpretation of ‘political slang’. The main functions of slang.

It is still rather challenging to define the term ‘slang’. Linguists tried to trace down the origins of the word (Green, 2016; Adams, 2009; Coleman, 2012). One of the interpretations is that slang is a specific lexical layer that includes particular vocabulary and phraseology of professional dialects, social jargon and jargon of the criminal world on the one hand, and the layer of the widespread and comprehensive vocabulary and phraseology of colloquial speech on the other hand (Homyakov, 1969). E. Partridge states that slang is combinations of lexical units used in the spoken speech which may be quite unstable and often occurrent and reflect social consciousness of people who belong to some professional or social group (Partridge, 1979). Based on these definitions it is possible to claim that political slang must specify those lexical units that are typical for politicians and political situations and characterize the former as well as the latter in different ways with the help of words and word collocations formed in order to codify some implicit meaning and express a particular attitude to somebody or something whether it is irony, criticism or even humour. Thus, political slang can be applied in those political cases when it is appropriate to name some person or process so that other people can understand the implied sense of the statement in general and the

slang word (words) in particular. This technique can be targeted at the mass audience or only members of political parties or groups. In political interviews mass audience is taken into account and therefore political slang is used mainly to convey the information to people.

Slang words can perform the following functions:

- to express playfulness;
- to show wit or sense of humour;
- to express novelty;
- to understate things;
- to enrich the language;
- to reduce extreme seriousness in conversations;
- to show friendliness or intimacy;
- to imply secretness (Partridge, 1933).

The analysis of word-formation models in Russian political slang

In the interview of V.V. Putin to TV channels Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabia and RT Arabic, the president of the Russian Federation said:

“Что касается Ливии, то хаос, который воцарился после военных операций, к сожалению, пока не прекращается, но в этом случае наши западные партнёры просто нас – у нас в народе говорят, не знаю, как переводчики переведут – «надули». Россия проголосовала за соответствующую резолюцию Совета Безопасности. Ведь там что написано, в этой резолюции, если как следует прочесть?” (The interview to TV channels Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabia and RT Arabic, 2019).

The word «надули» has different meanings, one of which is colloquial. It is interpreted as “to deceive, to trick” (the dictionary Academic). The word is formed with the help of the root word <дуть> and the prefix <на>. It should be noted that the word is used to express the negative evaluation of American actions regarding Libya.

In the same interview there is the following fragment:

“Давайте говорить откровенно, иначе разговор будет неинтересным, он будет постным. Есть противоречия, о которых

Вы сейчас только упомянули, у стран региона” (The interview to TV channels Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabia and RT Arabic, 2019).

In the discourse the word “**постный**” is interpreted as “dull, unlively” (the dictionary Academic). Political dialogues can be characterized by this word in case they are uninteresting. The word is formed with the root <пост>, the suffix <н> and the ending <ый>.

The next fragment of the interview:

“Они вышли из этого договора, стараясь обеспечить себе явные стратегические преимущества, полагая, что у них такой «зонтик» будет, а у России не будет” (The interview to TV channels Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabia and RT Arabic, 2019).

President Putin V.V. uses the word «**зонтик**» in the meaning “protection”. It is formed with the help of the root <зонт> and the suffix <ик>. It is evident that the suffix helps to understate the intentions of the USA in the sphere of nuclear security.

Let us consider the following fragment from the interview of the president of Russia to Oliver Stone, an American film-maker, scriptwriter and producer:

“Это позднее начало использоваться для раскачки самой Российской империи” (The interview to Oliver Stone, 2019).

The word “**раскачка**” means “the manner of walking with some kind of swaying” (the dictionary Academic). The use of the word in the political discourse implies the process of destabilization aimed at the Russian Empire. The word is made up of the root <раскач>, the suffix <к> and the ending <а>.

This is the fragment from another interview:

*“Пиком абсурда стало обвинение России во вмешательстве в американские выборы. Чем всё это закончилось— хорошо известно— **пшиком**. И понятны выводы комиссии Мюллера об отсутствии такого сговора— **наскрести** фактов не удалось, потому что их просто не было в природе”*

(The interview to the newspaper “Corriere della Sera”).

The word “**пшик**” is interpreted as “nothing, nonsense” (the dictionary Academic) and is formed by the root word <пшик>. There is one more word that can be referred to slang, i.e. “**наскрести**”. The word means “to collect something slowly” (the dictionary Academic). It is made of the prefix <на>, the root <скрес> and the verbal ending <ти>. Both words denote the negative attitude of the speaker to the described processes.

In the interview to the newspaper “The Financial Times” V. Putin said:

“Мне бы очень хотелось, чтобы все участники этого мероприятия, а «двадцатка», на мой взгляд, сегодня ключевой международный форум, который посвящён вопросам развития мировой экономики, чтобы все участники «двадцатки» подтвердили своё намерение, хотя бы намерение, вырабатывать общие правила...” (The interview to the newspaper “The Financial Times”).

The meaning of the word “**двадцатка**” in the modern political slang refers to the union of 20 states with the most developed and developing economy (Wikipedia). It is formed with the help of the root <двадцат>, the suffix <к> and the ending <а>.

In the next fragment of the interview we can focus on the statement:

*“Россию обвиняли и, несмотря на доклад Мюллера, продолжают, как ни странно, и дальше **крутить эту пластинку** с обвинениями России, связанные с мифическим вмешательством в выборы США”* (The interview to the newspaper “The Financial Times”).

The expression “**крутить пластинку**” is interpreted as “to replay the film or some music etc. recorded on gramophone records” (the dictionary Academic). In political slang it is used to show that politicians give the same information during a long period of time and do it repeatedly and intentionally. The expression is made up of the verb <крутить> and the noun <пластинку>.

The journalist's question "Не кладёте ли вы слишком много яиц в китайскую корзину?" is followed by the answer "Во-первых, у нас яиц достаточно, а корзины, куда их можно раскладывать, не так уж и много, – это первое. Второе, мы всегда оцениваем риски" (The interview to the newspaper "The Financial Times").

The expression "класть яйца в одну корзину" (the dictionary Academic) is a proverb that is interpreted as "to take risks, to put at stake" but it is used in the interview to denote the process of investments into some activities profitable for the policy of the country and can be considered to be a slang expression. It is formed with the help of the verb <класть>, the noun <яйца>, the preposition <в> and the adverbial modifier of place, the noun <корзину>.

The next example of the discourse:

"Ваш коллега правильно сделал, что засмеялся, потому что ответ смешной, Вы даже не представляете какой. Ответ был такой: мы не знаем. Но если вы не знаете, что будет завтра, зачем **сплеча рубить** сегодня? Вот это кажется примитивным, но именно так обстоит дело" (The interview to the newspaper "The Financial Times").

The phraseological expression "рубить сплеча" is defined as "to act straightforwardly, often thoughtlessly and on the spur of the moment, regardless of other people's wishes" (the dictionary Academic). The president pronounces the words to illustrate thoughtless and hasty actions of the USA regarding Syria. The expression is made up of the verb <рубить> and the adverb <сплеча>.

One more fragment of the interview:

"Вся эта **возня** вокруг шпионов и контршпионов, она не стоит серьёзных межгосударственных отношений" (The interview to the newspaper "The Financial Times").

The word "возня" has the following interpretation: "noisy, irregular movements in some game, fight or slow work" (the dictionary Academic). It is used in the interview to underline incomprehensible actions which pretend to be aimed at the identification of Russian spies. The root word is used in this case.

We analyzed 20 examples taken from interviews of the president of the Russian Federation to mass media and identified the most common word-formation models in political slang used by V.V. Putin. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Word-formation models in Russian political slang

No	Word-formation model	Percentage of usage
1.	The prefix + the root	10%
2.	The root+the suffix+the ending	40%
3.	The root +the suffix	20%
4.	The root word	20%
5.	The prefix+the root+the ending	10%

Besides, the following word chains were distinguished: the verb+the noun, the verb +the noun+the preposition+the noun, the verb+the adverb.

The analysis of word-formation models in American political slang

Now let us consider the political slang used by D. Trump in his interviews to mass media. In his interview with CNBC Trump said:

"OK. Now, in my first quarter, which I consider to be the second quarter because I was there now long enough to have made an impact and don't **kid yourself**, regulations are just as big as the tax cuts" (The interview to CNBC).

The expression "to kid yourself" means "to believe something that is not true, usually because you want it to be true" (Cambridge dictionary). It is formed of the verb <kid> and the reflexive pronoun <yourself>.

The next example of the political slang used in the interview:

*“I got rid of the individual mandate, the most — the biggest part and the most unpopular thing in **Obamacare**, which really repeals **Obamacare**, because it can't live without the mandate, because that's where a lot of the money came”* (The interview with CNBC).

The word “**Obamacare**” is interpreted as “the law of the care about patients and affordable health system proposed by president Obama and signed in 2010” (Wikipedia). So the word is made up of the noun (name of a person) that has become a common name but is still capitalized <Obama> and the noun <care>.

In the interview with Time Donald Trump said about defeating ISIS and its supporters:

*“That's true. Well I have. We defeated ISIS, the caliphate. We've taken back the caliphate. That doesn't mean one of the **crazies** doesn't walk into a store all bombed up”* (The interview with Time).

The word “**crazies**” refers to people “who act in a strange or threatening way, esp. those who are mentally ill” (Cambridge dictionary). The description reflects the president's attitude to such people. The word is the plural form of the word “crazy” and it is formed with the help of the root <craz> and the suffix <ie>.

The similar type of political slang example is a more emotional description of ISIS supporters:

*“And bombs — I'm not saying any fighting is finished because with these people, you never know. They're totally — they're **stone-cold** crazy. But there's ISIS”* (The interview with Time).

The word “**stone-cold**” means “very or completely” (Cambridge dictionary). It is used to show the absolute degree of craziness on the part of bandits. The slang word is formed with the help of compounding. Two root words <stone> and <cold> are combined. It should be noted that one of the words is a noun and another one is an adjective.

In the following part of the interview the president of the USA characterized Hillary Clinton and said:

*“The press is protecting the DNC, the Democrats, **crooked** Hillary”* (The interview with Time).

So the word “**crooked**” is defined as “dishonest” (Cambridge dictionary). It is very emotional and has a negative connotation. It is made of the root <crook> and the suffix <ed>.

In the following part of the interview the president stated:

*“I'd rather keep them from coming up, it would be a lot easier because I don't like it. But I'm — it's crazy. I got such a bad **rap** on that”* (The interview with Time).

The word “**rap**” is interpreted as “a judgment or a reaction” (Cambridge dictionary). It is used for the emotional evaluation of some critics. This is a root word.

Let us consider the next part of the interview:

*“It started with Japan, morphed into China, now it's China, Japan, it's everybody. And everybody has taken advantage of our country. They have **ripped** our country off”* (The interview to CNBC).

The phrasal verb “**rip off**” means “to cheat someone by making them pay too much money for something” (Cambridge dictionary). The president of the USA uses this verb to express his negative attitude to China, Japan and their economic policy. As it is a phrasal verb it is made up of the root word (verb) <rip> and the preposition <off>. Cambridge dictionary also has the noun rip-off which is marked as a slang word (Cambridge dictionary).

In the interview with “Face the Nation” president Trump characterized the North Korean leader in such a way:

*“And at a very young age, he was able to assume power. A lot of people, I'm sure, tried to take that power away, whether it was his uncle or anybody else. And he was able to do it. So obviously, he's a pretty smart **cookie**”* (The interview with “Face the Nation”).

The word “**cookie**” is defined as “a person of the type mentioned” (Cambridge dictionary). It is usually used with some adjective, e.g. in this interview with the adjective “smart”. The word has both the positive and negative connotation

that is noticed in the discourse. It is formed with the help of the root <cook> and the diminutive suffix <ie> (it helps to show the negative attitude to the person but at the same time possesses some affection).

The next part of the interview:

“...the premiums are too high. The deductibles **are through the roof**, so you never get to use it ” (The interview with “Face the Nation”).

The expression “**be through the roof**” means “to rise to a very high level” (Cambridge dictionary). It is made up of the verb <be>, the preposition <through> and the noun <the roof>.

Speaking about his 100 days being the president of the country D. Trump said:

“Just relax. Don't worry about this **phony** 100 day thing. Just relax. Take it easy. Take your time” (The interview with “Face the Nation”).

The word “**phony**” is interpreted as “represented as real but actually false” (Cambridge dictionary). It is used to highlight the president’s ironic attitude to this milestone and the necessity to evaluate some progress made during these days. The word consists of the root <phon> and the suffix <y>.

In the same way we examined 20 examples of the political slang used by the president of the USA in interviews to mass media and distinguished word-formation models which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Word-formation models in American political slang

No	Word-formation model	Percentage of usage
1.	Compounding	30%
2.	The root +the suffix	40%
3.	The root word	30%

It should be noted that there are also phrasal verbs and word chains, i.e. the verb+the reflexive pronoun, the verb+the preposition+the noun, that are typical for American political slang.

Results and discussion

According to the analysis made it can be said that there are more word-formation models in Russian political slang than in American one. The proportion is 5 to 3. The similar models are: the root + the suffix and the root word. It is important that the slang words formed on the base of these models in both languages are used to understate some political processes or politicians and their role in the former.

We have not come across compounding in Russian. But in English slang words of this type help the political leader of the USA to strengthen the connotation of the described state of affairs or people and show wit.

As for word chains, some of them are similar, e.g. the verb+the noun, only in English they can include prepositions that is quite peculiar for this language. Moreover, adverbs

are used more often with the verb in Russian while it is more common to combine verbs with reflexive pronouns in appropriate cases in English. In both languages such word-formation models of slang are employed to show wit or sense of humour.

In general, Russian is a synthetic language so there are many word-formation models that include endings. In English there can be suffixes added to roots but no endings. The latter are the indicator of Tense forms. English is an analytic language, therefore some word chains in the examined interviews are formed with the help of prepositions, e.g. *be through the roof* unlike Russian *рубить плеча*.

There are no models in the analyzed interviews of the American president with prefixes.

Conclusion

The results received are quite provisional and give only some ideas about word-formation models used in political slang and the dependence of the functions of the latter on them. Further studies are needed to get a clear picture

of the word-formation process and its impact on the meaning of slang. However, it is evident that V. Putin and D. Trump being the political leaders of two powerful countries refer to slang in their interviews to express their attitude that can be either negative or positive to specific processes or countries on the world arena. Slang in this case helps make their speech emotional and lively and show their wit or sense of humour. At the same time Russian and English are different languages and this fact stipulates differences in word-formation models of slang in particular although its functions are the same.

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Конфликты интересов: у авторов нет конфликта интересов для декларации.

Conflicts of Interest: the authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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