Metaphorical Namings of MPs in the British Parliament

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Abstract. This article deals with the studying of metaphorical representations of space used to name the MPs in the political discourse of the British parliamentary debates. It determines cognitive background and extralinguistic factors influencing the usage of metaphoric models in the British parliamentary debates. Such debates represent the events and phenomena regardless the party that gains majority in the parliament.

Keywords: metaphor, parliamentary debates, frontbenchers, backbenchers, crossbenchers, locative

Introduction. Political sphere is in constant focus of interest among scholars of philosophical, political, social, cultural and linguistic studies. Within the frame of modern cognitive and communicative linguistics one of the most productive branches to studying various aspects of politics is cognitive-discourse approach. Usually such studies focus on the language role in the ways of obtaining and maintaining power that is highly reached through the usage of different cognitive metaphors as an effective tool and means of politics. Political metaphors appear within the system of values and are grounded on the traditional acceptable norms and rules of the society [3]. Thus, such metaphors serve as a key of understanding the peculiarities of culture, norms and traditions in any society and are mostly reflected in the language system. However, some of them can find no correspondent precise equivalents in the other cultures, and as a result, they are not represented in the language forms. This characteristic feature of political metaphors leads to lacunae as lexical gaps that appear as a result of the absence of equivalents of the lexemes taken from source language into target language. I. Panasiuk states that lacunae are signals or markers of an intercultural or interlingual difference in the meaning [7, p. 44]. In the political sphere functioning of metaphors and their realizing in language forms correlate with the organization of the state political systems, as well as with the events and phenomena of the societal life.

Overview of the last researches. Specific features of political communication and the fundamental role of metaphors in politics are seen in the works of many famous scholars (P. Chilton, N. Fairclough, H. Haidar, M. Johnson, J. Lakoff, A. Musolff, S. Schaffer, R. Wodak). The analyses of metaphors functioning in the political sphere, their peculiarities and functions are given in the works of such prominent linguists as T. van Dijk, C. Kennedy, A. Mussolff, J. Zinken etc. Significant works by N. Arutynova, V. Clemperer, Yu. Fedenev, M. Minskyi, G. Pocheptsov, H. Ortega-and-Gasset concentrate on political metaphors at different stages of the society development and their connection to the conceptual systems of different cultures. Usually scholastic researches provide their visions of the political metaphors without complex analysis of the metaphors' namings in the onomasiological perspective. This fact determines the novelty of the paper, the topicality of which is specified by the necessity to envisage the constant basic metaphorical representations functioning in the parliamentary debates in the UK. This analysis of the debates as one the most important types of official communication helps to better understand the relation between the societal,

cultural processes and language phenomena. It also enables a deeper insight of the British political image of the world.

The **aim** of this paper is to define the traditional metaphors of space functioning in the political discourse of the parliamentary debates in the House of Lords and the House of Commons in the British parliament. It fulfills such **tasks** as defining the linguistic and extralinguistic factors stipulating the formation of metaphors in the language of the British parliament.

Material and research methods. Taking into consideration the significant role of the British parliament in the world, the importance of its decisions for the international political arena, nowadays its proceedings are broadcast on radio and television and represented in detail on the official website where the debates' transcripts are available. The studying of such transcripts (hansards) encompasses the parliamentary debates of the British parliament in the post-Thatcher period. The basic methods used in this paper are the metaphoric modeling that helps to better understand the mechanism of donor and recipient domains' integration for the formation of the traditional metaphors in the British parliament and the propositional modeling that helps to define the structures of propositions in the domains. One more method is the contextual-interpretational analysis used to interpret the taken from the transcripts text fragments that contain metaphoric lexemes.

Results and discussions. Metaphors are considered to be the most productive creative means of language enrichment [1]. They refer to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another [5]. G. Lakoff and M. Johnson state that the pervasion of metaphor is both in thought and everyday language. Being a basic cognitive structure, metaphors help us to understand a relatively abstract concept by means of more concrete concept. Metaphors play a very significant role in human thought, understanding or even creating our social, cultural, and psychological reality, because they are used effortlessly by ordinary people in everyday life [4; 5]. Political sphere is not an exception, as it is filled with different metaphorical representations that help to make it vivid by means of figurative reflection of events, phenomena and peculiarities of the political life.

Political life in the UK, especially its parliamentary system is characterized by a strict following of the traditions, norms and customs. The peculiarities of the MPS allocation in the House of Lords and the House of Commons is in the great dependence on their connection to the authority and opposition. All political parties are precisely allocated in certain parts of the Chambers. The key figures – Her Majesty's Government and the Official Loyal Opposition

Shadow Cabinet – are set in the centre of the House of Commons, on the front benchers, facing each other from the opposite sides. These traditionally-inclined peculiarities are reflected in the language forms and members of Parliament get specific namings due to their allocation and functions in the Chambers. The placing of the MPs in the chambers, their distancing towards the centre of the chambers is crucial for both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. As a result, members are used to be called *frontbenchers* and *backbenchers*:

The third and final talent that is required is the recognition that the Speaker is of course the champion of the Back Benchers against not just those on the Government Front Bench but those on the Opposition Front Bench, too (18 May 2010: Column 1);

I know that you will be dedicated, that you are 100% committed to this House and that you will be fair to both sides and to Front and Back Benchers (18 May 2010: Column 4);

Gentleman mentioned Opposition Front Benchers (14 September 2015: Column 739).

Such a nomination demonstrates predicative-argument motivation characterized by the choice of motivator correlating with various terms in the propositional structure [1, p. 483]. In case of MPs namings they are represented by the term of locative activation. Locative is considered as space component in the propositional structures. Government officials from the sides of Official Coalition and Opposition are places in the centre facing each other. The adversarial layout is influenced by the tradition as it has been peculiar to the first permanent House of Commons in St. Stephan's Chapel [9].

The placement of sits for the MPs realizes the idea of the competitive atmosphere for better questions and critical remarks' exchanging and peculiar political theatrical performance staging. This specific performance is in fact a competition where two leading sides are constantly opposing each other by means of demonstrating their strong sides and revealing weak sides of the opponents. Such parliamentarians are called *frontbenchers*; this naming reflects their direct placing either in the House of Lords or the House of Commons. But it is also connected with the metaphorical association based on their function as these members of parliament perform the leading function in the parliamentary procedures (*in both the Commons and the Lords, Government ministers and Opposition shadow ministers sit on the front benches and are known as 'frontbenchers'* [8]).

At the same time those who do not take part in the Official or Shadow Cabinet, do not strongly affect the country's legislative process are placed on the rear sits and as a result are named *backbenchers*. E.g.:

I must ask the indulgence of the House because I have not spoken as a Government Back Bencher since 1 August 1951 and, like every Government Back Bencher, I have been sitting by my telephone since the election. I can honestly claim that it is my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's special wish that I should remain in the position that I now occupy (7 May 1997: Column 6).

Above all, I would defend the rights of Backbenchers to hold the Government to account and to champion the causes dear to their hearts (18 May 2010: Column 2).

The fact that the role of such MPs on the British political arena is much more limited in comparison to the ones from Her Majesty's Government or the Official Loyal Opposition Shadow Cabinet results in the naming *backbenchers*. This lexeme implies two components of meaning: in the direct meaning it hints at the placement of the MPs in the Chambers (*so-called because they inhabit the rear seats in the parliament* [8]), in the figurative meaning it represents their status and role in the political life of the UK (*they might be former ministers or prime ministers who have resigned, lost leadership challenges or been demoted from cabinet. Or they might be unwilling or unsuited for a ministerial post* [8]).

One more group of MPs that is also functionally important for the British parliament is so-called *crossbenchers*:

Independent Crossbenchers L. Hennessy of Nympsfield and L. Bilimoria spoke in this debate (9 October 2012: Column 1085).

The location of the crossbenchers is determined by their status in the parliament: having no political parties' affiliation they are situated between and perpendicularly towards the Government and Opposition. This naming shows that they are "on the crossroads" between the power and the opposition, belonging to no political party and participating in political proceedings independently without sharing any common ideas . This group of people that encompasses life and hereditary peers becomes a differentiating feature of the House of Lords and is not inherent in the House of Commons.

The studyings of the Hansard texts of the British parliamentary debates demonstrate that the space and distance towards the centre of the Chambers are key features for naming the MPs in the British parliament. This tradition is preserved regardless the political party that possesses the power. Such a cultural peculiarity is not limited to the UK parliament, but is typical for the parliamentary systems of member states of the Commonwealth of Nations. However, this phenomenon is a lacuna for the Ukrainian politics as here the MPs allocation is determined by the party affiliation. At the same time the parliamentarians' sits towards the centre of the parliament do not influence their status on the political arena of the country. This fact affects the language system, i.e. the official terms "frontbenchers", "backbenchers" and "crossbenchers" in namings of members of Verhovna Rada do not exist in the Ukrainian language.

V. Shakhovsky mentions in his theoretical works that many aspects of the human activity are not simply transferred by words: language is poorer than the validity and its semantic space does not cover the whole world [2]. As a result, some language representations of cultural phenomena in other languages can somehow distort the original meaning of the words. According to A. Musolff, metaphorical models realize in the political discourse pejorative and ameliorative changes in meanings, they add some emotive and evaluating components [6]. Thus, the only of the above mentioned political terms, namely "backbenchers", is used in the Ukrainian language but is restricted to the mass-media where it gets a derogatory shade of meaning. It names politicians that do not actively participate in the decision-making processes and is used only in the context of criticizing. This way of compensating the political phe-

nomenon of the British parliament by means of linguistic code of the target language seems invalid due to the fact that this term has no negative meaning in the source language. In terms of politics backbenchers in the British parliament have a right to freely express their point of view and support the electorate in their constituencies, participate in the debates and propose amendments.

Conclusions. Thus, the metaphors of space appear to be productive in the British parliamentary life. Conceptualizing politics on the basis of spatial signs enriches the system of political terminology. Mapping spatial sign elements onto politics leads to the creation of new meanings that help to deeper perceive the organization of the hierarchical relations in the British parliament.

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