ABSTRACT
of the dissertation of
Abdiman Zhaniya
on the theme "Inaugural Address as Part of Political Discourse"
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
in the specialty "6D021000 - Foreign Philology"

The Inaugural Address is the first key and symbolic address of the elected president, carrying significant ritual and performative meaning, and holding a special place in political discourse. It serves as the ideological foundation for social unity at a new stage of the country's development, encompasses moral, ethical, and cultural values, and outlines the political principles of the new leader's domestic and foreign policy. Additionally, it symbolizes the transfer of power to the new president, confirming his legitimacy and establishing the primary ideological guidelines for his administration.

The Inaugural Address is delivered during a solemn ceremony, every element of which carries significance and is governed by strict rules and order. As a prominent genre of political discourse, the Inaugural Address is rich in expressive speech, rightly becomes the focus of linguistic research.

The relevance of the study stems from its inclusion within the contemporary framework of discourse theory, specifically in the context of political discourse. Its significance is further amplified by the need to identify both nation-specific and universal characteristics of inaugural discourse within the context of globalization, where public speeches are integrated into the international information environment.

The communication-oriented theory of political discourse, recognized as one of the prominent genres of political discourse, enables us to focus on analyzing the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan, allowing us to trace the similarities and differences in the strategies and rhetorical techniques of political communication across various political cultures.

Furthermore, the genre of the inaugural speech remains insufficiently studied within the Kazakh linguistic school, particularly regarding its structural, rhetorical, and discursive features. This underscores the novelty and practical significance of exploring this topic.

The scientific novelty of this dissertation lies in the fact that, for the first time, an attempt was made to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the inaugural genre within the framework of political discourse. This enabled the introduction of an in-depth analysis of the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of both countries into the scientific circulation of Kazakhstani political linguistics.

While Inaugural Addresses, which have been part of the political culture of the United States for over 200 years, continue to be actively studied by foreign researchers, they have not previously been the subject of special consideration in domestic linguistics. In this regard, the study of Inaugural Addresses of Kazakhstani presidents in the context of similar speeches by American presidents is of particular interest.

The aim of this study is to analyze inaugural speeches as a representative and typical part of political discourse.

The research objectives consist of three blocks:

1. Study the conceptual and methodological foundation of contemporary domestic and foreign linguistic research on political discourse; identify the general characteristics and functions of political discourse; and establish the specifics of the genre diversity within political discourse.
2. To examine and articulate the historical and cultural context of the inauguration ceremony in the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

3. Conduct a thorough functional analysis of the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan. This includes identifying the genre and structural features, examining the stylistic characteristics, and describing the rhetorical techniques used by the presidents of both countries to fulfill the functions of Inaugural Addresses.

The object of this study is the presidential Inaugural Addresses from 1991 to 2025, delivered by Bill Clinton, George Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden (Washington), as well as those performed by Nursultan Nazarbayev and Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (Almaty, Astana).

The subject of the research is ceremonial (epideictic) Inaugural Addresses, as a genre of political discourse.

Research material and sources:

The total number of Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan is 16 texts.

The American Presidency Project database of presidential documents is located on the University of California, Santa Barbara website at https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-documents-archive-guidebook/inaugural-addresses.

The Inaugural Addresses of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (in 2019 and 2022), as well as the last two Inaugural Addresses of President Nursultan Nazarbayev (in 2011 and 2015), are available on the official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan at https://www.akorda.kz/ru/speeches. The previous Inaugural Addresses of President Nazarbayev (in 1991, 1999, and 2006) were not published on his official website at https://nazarbayev.kz/public/ru. Therefore, the first three Inaugural Addresses of President Nursultan Nazarbayev were obtained from the collections "Selected Speeches of Nursultan Nazarbayev", available on the same website.

Methods of research of the Inaugural Addresses are presented through both general scientific and specific methods and techniques for data collection and analysis: discourse analysis, which encompasses methods of linguistic analysis (structural analysis, linguistic analysis of text, stylistic analysis of discourse); comparative analysis, which aids in identifying national-specific features of American and Kazakhstani political discourse within the genre of Inaugural Addresses; along with methods of observation, comparison, interpretation, generalization, and quantitative analysis techniques.

The main provisions submitted for defense:

1. The Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan fulfill all four traditionally distinguished functions of the Inaugural Address as a unique genre of political discourse: a) the integrative function – unites the nation around common goals; b) the inspirational function – strengthens national values and emphasizes historical achievements; c) the declarative function – outlines the policy and priorities of the new administration; d) the performative function – officially announces and confirms the transfer of power. However, within these parameters, the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan differ in various functional topoi. Despite their common features, the emphasis in performing these functions varies: the presidents of the United States focus on democratic values and historical continuity, while the presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan emphasize stability, traditions, and national unity.

2. Inaugural Addresses are often classified as political performatives. Analyzing the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of both countries allows us to join the arguments of scholars who support this view (K. Campbell, K. Jamieson, O. Yudina, etc.). This is backed by the key characteristics of Inaugural Addresses as a genre of political discourse confirmed in the study: an appeal to the people's history as the source of traditional values, an appeal to

national unity which legitimizes the elected president, and a declaration of the political principles of the new country, among others. Inaugural Addresses employ various rhetorical devices—primarily metaphors, parallelism, antithesis, and repetition – which enhance the ritualistic nature of this genre of political discourse. These stylistic devices reinforce key ideological statements, making Inaugural Addresses more memorable and persuasive. Simultaneously, the audience's attention is drawn to the performative act of delivering the Inaugural Address, as it symbolizes a unique political moment that proclaims the speaker as the president of the country.

3. As a rule, presidents use a distinct style of speech that incorporates various expressive linguistic means to enhance their impact on the audience. The language of Inaugural Addresses plays a key role in shaping public perception. For example, the frequently used pronoun "we," which emphasizes national unity, serves different functional purposes: in the Inaugural Addresses of US presidents, it is used inclusively, addressing the entire nation ("We, the citizens of America...," Trump, 2017); in the speeches of the presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it is used more often, highlighting the collective responsibility of the people. In the Inaugural Addresses of US presidents (from B. Clinton to the first Inaugural Address of D. Trump), the use of the first-person singular pronoun has noticeably decreased, indicating a shift in focus from individual leadership to the collective governance of the state.

Differences in political and social systems, as well as culture, traditions, and worldviews, have resulted in significant distinctions between American and Kazakh Inaugural Addresses as genres of political discourse. Their noticeable substantive difference is manifested, firstly, in American Inaugural Addresses of presidents, where elections are not regarded as an instrument or manifestation of national unity. In contrast, within all Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, elections are seen as an act of unity for the nation, which elected the president to the highest office in the country, supported his campaign against other candidates, and on the day of inauguration stands united as a witness to his inauguration. Secondly, a distinctive feature of the Inaugural Addresses of the two countries is the use of religious symbols. This is vividly and consistently expressed in the Inaugural Addresses of U.S. presidents; however, there are no references to religious symbols, God, or holy books in the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Only during his 2022 Inaugural Addresses does the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, K.-Zh. K. Tokayev, mention the sacred place for all Muslims – Mecca, the Kaaba, prayer, and the Holy Quran. Notably, like most official speeches of the Kazakh political elite, the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan are delivered in the state languages of Kazakh and Russian. It has been observed that over time, the percentage of Kazakh and Russian fragments in the Inaugural Addresses of Kazakh presidents changes significantly, with a noticeable reduction in excerpts in Russian.

Overall, inaugural addresses serve as powerful rhetorical tools that reflect the political culture and governance principles of each country. Despite similarities in the techniques used and their priorities and ideological narratives, shaped by internal and external historical contexts as well as the political environment, their approaches differ significantly, inevitably affecting the linguistic means employed.

The theoretical significance of the study lies in its contribution to understanding the essence and characteristics of Inaugural Addresses as a genre of political discourse. It identifies both general and specific constitutive features of the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the two countries from 1991 to 2025, a period marked by significant geopolitical upheavals. This allows for an examination of the Inaugural Addresses of both presidents within their interactional contexts and communicative constitution.

A more detailed understanding of Inaugural Addresses as an ontologically self-sufficient object of linguistic research, possessing stable structural, communicative, and pragmatic

characteristics, has been obtained. In addition, the applicability of the classification of political fields of Inaugural Addresses proposed by Martin Reisigl has been successfully verified, allowing us to systematically determine the functions of inaugural discourse in the context of various spheres of political activity. Altogether, this can be extrapolated to the description of other genres of political discourse. The work offers classification and functional approaches adapted to the political and speech realities of Kazakhstan, thereby enabling us to expand the conceptual and terminological apparatus of domestic linguistics.

The practical significance of this study lies in the potential application of the theoretical principles and conclusions of the dissertation to the development and teaching of courses on political discourse, modern rhetoric, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, stylistics, oratory, and the theory and practice of intercultural communication. This research addresses existing gaps in Kazakhstani linguistics, particularly in the genre-discursive approach to political texts, especially Inaugural Addresses, which have not been systematically and comparatively explored to date. The research can serve as a methodological foundation for examining political discourse in academic programs related to linguistics, journalism, political science, and intercultural communication. The dissertation materials hold practical relevance for specialists in public and political communication, such as speechwriters, political strategists, press services, and image makers. These materials can facilitate the development of practical guidelines and recommendations for crafting speech strategies, preparing and analyzing official addresses and ceremonial speeches, creating political messages, assessing political events, and examining public rhetoric. They can also support the development of media content and analytical messages aimed at a broad audience. Additionally, the provisions of the dissertation can be tailored for specific purposes and assist in cultivating students' discourse competence in practical English and Kazakh language courses.

Therefore, the work holds considerable applied and interdisciplinary significance that can help shape a national framework for studying political discourse and offer scientific and methodological backing for educational and research efforts in the area of political linguistics.

Dissertation approval. The main provisions and results of the dissertation research were presented and discussed, starting in September 2014, at scientific and methodological seminars for doctoral students, during a scientific seminar in 2024 with the attendance of the Honorary President of the American Councils for International Education (ACCELS), Professor D. Davidson and Academic Director of the Flagman program (ACCELS/ACTR), Professor M. Lekic (foreign scientific consultant of the doctoral student), members of the Faculty of Philology departments, and young scientists. This research was also presented at meetings of the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, as well as at international and national scientific congresses and conferences. The findings were published in journals recommended by the Committee for Control in the Sphere of Education and Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as in a foreign scientific journal.

The total number of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation is 7. The main provisions of the dissertation are presented in the journal included in the Scopus database (1 publication); in the materials of international congresses, conferences, and seminars (2 publications); in journals and publications recommended by the Committee for Control in the Sphere of Education and Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (3 publications) and others.

The goals and objectives of the study determined **the structure and content** of the work.

The first chapter of the dissertation analyzes concepts such as “discourse, political discourse, Inaugural Address”. It examines the varieties and primary functions of political discourse and evaluates the relationship between language and politics, as outlined in both

domestic and foreign linguistic studies. Additionally, it analyzes the constitutional features of Inaugural Addresses as one of its genres and explores the rectitude of the inauguration ceremony, which decisively influences the substantive and linguistic specific genre characteristics of the Inaugural Addresses of the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The second chapter examines the structural features of the inaugural speeches of American presidents, with a particular focus on their distinctive compositional elements.

The third chapter examines the structural features of the inaugural speeches given by the presidents of Kazakhstan, highlighting the distinctive elements that distinguish them from similar speeches in the American political tradition.

The fourth chapter focuses on the functional and genre specifics of the inaugural speeches given by the presidents of the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan, considering them as a distinct genre of political discourse.

The conclusion encapsulates the findings of the study, synthesizes the main results, and evaluates the potential for further exploration of the subject.