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## US PRESIDENTS' POLITICAL SPEECHES AS A MEANS OF MANIPULATION IN 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY SOCIETY

### Abstract

This article comprehensively analyses the potential for politicians' speeches to influence the public, taking into account the main linguistic and pragmatic factors: political, social, and cultural context, the communication occasion, the personality of the politician, and the structural features of the text that determine the psycholinguistic effectiveness of the speech. The purpose of the research is to study the functional and pragmatic opportunities of well-known US presidents' public speeches as a political tool and as part of a political strategy. It is a socio- and psycholinguistic study; its goal is not only to demonstrate the features of different types of communication strategies and tactics but also to explain how this variety arises, how society contributes to it and what complicates the emergence of productive social communications.

Political speeches use both purely lingual and extra-lingual means that determine the conceptual content and ways of verbalising meanings, explicable through specific strategies and tactics. The communication situation includes a chronotope and a format for political public speech. The personality of the politician, his or her image and status, social and political experience, and degree of eloquence - all play an important role in the preparation and implementation of the speech.

*Keywords:* political discourse, political communication, public speech, communicative strategies and tactics, political decision-making characteristics, democratisation.

### Introduction

The attention of psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and other representatives of the

humanities, in various aspects of social communications, reflects modern trends in social cognition, that is, understanding the variety of human life and the diversity of its interpersonal interac-

tions. The interdisciplinary nature of the subject under consideration - social communications - means that when it comes to understanding and explaining the effects of social communications, it is necessary to consider those fields of study that focus on verbal interactions, which have a vivid implementation, for instance, in political discourse and political communication.

Political communication is an integral part of social life, and political discourse has the potential to programme people's consciousness and behaviour. This article's goal is to analyse the functional, communicative, and pragmatic capabilities of speech tactics and strategies used in the political public speeches of famous US presidents (G. Bush, B. Obama, D. Trump, J. Biden) for manipulative purposes.

The study has a socio- and psycholinguistic nature and is intended not only to demonstrate the characteristics of different types of communication strategies and tactics but also to explain how such diversity arises; which factors contribute to it in society; and which complicate the emergence of productive social communications. In this regard, speeches of presidents as social leaders are of particular interest. Comparative analysis also includes politicians' personal aspects; their abilities to use linguistic units as tools for people's consciousness manipulation are singled out as a predictor of successful collaboration with society.

#### Literature Review and Research Methods

Modern scientific discourse on communication problems contains a large number of works that consider communication from different perspectives. Consistent development of theories of interpersonal, cultural, social, political, and mass communication can be found in the works of well-known foreign authors (Shannon, 1948; McLuhan & Fiore, 1967; Lasswell, 2006; Powell & Cowart, 2016); the works of scientists who made it possible to substantiate the emergence of communicative studies also deserve special at-

tention (Konetskaia, 1997; Pocheptsov, 1999). Leading Ukrainian scientists analysed different social components of communication problems (Kurasova, 2005; Motrenko, 2005; Lytvynova, 2008; Sosnin, Mykhnenko, & Lytvynova, 2011; Khabermas, 2002). In psycholinguistics, communication is considered, on the one hand, as a process of information exchange with the help of a common system of symbols and language signs (Oleshkov, 2006), and, on the other hand, as an ability of a person to change another's way of thinking (Parygin, 1999).

The process of transmitting information to society (verbal, nonverbal, emotional, cognitive) is carried out using a certain sign system (language, speech, facial expressions, gestures, etc.) through public speech. Psychology of communication, and philosophy of language are considered to be scientific paradigms, the goal of which is to identify the conditions for effective persuasive communication and development of social consciousness, including the aspects of its manipulation (Andreieva, 2000; Holovaty, 2006; Chernova & Slotina, 2012; Khmiliar, 2017). In linguistics, public speech studies are based on the achievements of scholars in the field of discourse analysis (Seriot, 1999; Sheigal, 2000; Bielova, 2004; Karasik, 2010), pragmalinguistics (Shevchenko & Morozova, 2005; Bezuhla, 2007; Susov, 2009; Frolova, 2009; Batsevykh, 2010), theories of speech activity (Leontiev, 2003; Rizun, Nepyivoda, & Korniev, 2005), and psycholinguistics (Gorelov & Sedov, 2004; Zasiukina 2008).

Comprehensive analysis of public speech within the political discourse in our case involves the integrated application of scientific research methods, in particular:

1. sampling method – to form the empirical material;
2. descriptive method – to generalise and interpret the speech material;
3. methods of analysis and synthesis – to systematise and organise the research material;
4. method of content analysis – to determine speech tactics and strategies;

5. method of comparative analysis – to analyse common and distinctive features of speech tactics used by different USA presidents in chronologically different political periods.

### Discussion and Results

No human activity can be realised without communication. In a broad sense, this means the exchange of information between individuals through a common system of symbols. This process can be mutual (information exchange) or single-vector (influence, the act of sending/transferring information). Analysing the characteristics of different types of social interaction, H. Lasswell argues that communication, in contrast to a conversation, is a single-vector impact aimed at obtaining a specific effect, and it is delivered by knowing the audience to which this impact is directed (Lasswell, 2006). In political communication, the addressee of speech activity is in many cases a person, not as an individual but as a representative of a certain stratum of the population, so it is important to choose such communication methods as will focus the addressee's attention on the message and at the same time correlate with his/her worldview. Considering such dependence, J. Charteris-Black calls language the source of politics' life force: the development of language does not depend on politics, but politics cannot progress without it. And the better the communication skills of politicians, the better they can use their skills to convince the public of their statements' truth (Charteris-Black, 2011).

In defining political communication, L. Powell and J. Cowart (2016) emphasise that politicians use communication not to convey information but to hide or distort it. D. Derhach and L. Shevchenko describe this concept in a broader sense, taking into account the primary goal of politics – influence. They believe that political communication aims to motivate citizens to act, make decisions, and maintain a certain position in the case of multiple views in the country (Shevchenko & Derhach, 2014). Thus, the pur-

pose of a political text is to influence the political situation by promoting specific ideas, emotional influence on the citizens of the country, encouraging them to take political action. Politicians use speeches as an essential tool to realise their purpose.

“A *speech* is a public performance on any occasion or the text of such a public performance” (Shevchenko & Derhach, 2014, p. 17). *Public speech* means an oral monologue of one person in front of a group of people, characterised by having a format with structural, communicative, and meaningful unity based on the aim of influencing the audience (Blokh & Freidina, 2011).

*Political speech*, according to L. Matsko, is “a prepared speech on acute political issues, which contains assessments of different modalities, justifications, facts, plans, and prospects for future political transformations” (Matsko, 2003, p. 201).

With the help of clearly defined, persistent and sustained actions, certain speech strategies and tactics create an opportunity to predict social events and activities that stabilise interpersonal relations in a society and generally control them. Politicians use all possible speech tactics and strategies to maintain control over a rapidly developing society. It is because, at this stage of historical development, influencing people and convincing them of the correctness of the chosen decision is not an easy task. Politics covers more and more spheres of people's life and the chosen methods of influence vary depending on the state of society.

Communicative strategies and tactics are considered to be a relatively new object of linguistic research compared to language, text, and even discourse, so at the current stage of scientific development, there are no unique and generally accepted definitions for explaining, distinguishing, and classifying the above-mentioned concepts. Some Ukrainian scholars (Zirka, 2005; Dmytruk, 2005, etc.) equate the terms *strategy* and *tactic*. Researchers who have a different point of view (Byalkivska, 2015, etc.) focus their research on determining the difference between

these words and tend to believe that a communication strategy is a set of measures that is necessary for the achievement of a goal and delivering a specific perlocutionary effect.

Any speech strategy aims to adjust the recipient's world model. The speaker introduces his/her interpretations of reality into the conversation to make them familiar through a series of sentences, reactions, and counterarguments. In most cases, there are several ways to achieve the intended objective. And this, in turn, compels us to make a choice that relates not only to the semantic content but also to the pragmatic, stylistic, and rhetorical aspects of speech activity (Kovalenko, 2019).

The implementation of speech strategy allows the use of various methods, which can be combined depending on the situation. So, if the *speech strategy* is understood as a set of speech actions aimed at solving a general communicative task for the speaker, then the *speech tactic* should be considered as one or more actions that contribute to the implementation of the strategy.

In *political discourse*, language acts as a mediator between politics and society, conveying the explicit meaning of the message. However, many scholars believe that it is the "hidden" meaning of speech that matters. Hence, we can formulate the function of political discourse, which distinguishes it from the general linguistic context and is most important, that is the function of persuasion (Medvid, 2012). Of course, from the semiotics point of view, any text is characterised by an impact on the recipient, but in political discourse, this is the main communicative goal of the text, and linguistic means are selected to embody a particular goal of influence and manipulation. Such an approach to the analysis of political discourse is one of the most interesting interpretations of the Sepir-Wharf hypothesis of linguistic relativity (Sepir, 1993).

The presidential terms of George W. Bush (2001-2008), Barack Obama (2009-2016), Donald Trump (2017-2020), and Joe Biden (since 2021) coincided with a historically significant period. At the turn of the 20-21 centuries, in an

era of democratisation, globalisation, and decolonisation, society is ready to express and demonstrate its disagreement at any moment. Therefore, governing society using modern speech strategies and tactics becomes especially relevant. Speeches do not consist of strict statements anymore. The presidents address the moral and national values of citizens more frequently. The *strategy of speech manipulation* has become a principal one at the moment, but the ways of its implementation by the mentioned presidents differ, which is the object of our study. The use of additional speech strategies and tactics depends on the individual personality characteristics of a particular president, and his socio-political positions, based on the socio-political events of a specific period to which he belongs.

In the speeches by all the Presidents, the mainstream strategy of manipulating society is implemented with the help of *appealing to universal values strategy*. For example, the first inaugural speech by George W. Bush (2001-2008) was based on a value-oriented strategy: "*America, at its best, matches a commitment to principle with a concern for civility; America, at its best, is also courageous; America, at its best, is compassionate; America, at its best, is a place where personal responsibility is valued and expected*" (Bush, 2001b). In this way, he tried to increase the morale of citizens. The use of anaphora serves as a marker that shows to what exactly the audience should pay attention. In the same speech, he touches upon the importance of freedom for American citizens, appealing to their emotions and patriotism: "*Through much of the last century, America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations*" (Bush, 2002). The use of metaphors makes the language brighter and attracts the audience's attention through associative thinking, and contextual antonymy enhances the emotionality of expression, which implements the tactic of creating the audience's commitment to the speaker.

Equality and freedom have always been-

among the most important values for Americans, and the fact that this is said by a representative of an ethnic minority who has reached unprecedented heights convinces the people that all this is real and encourages support. The *appeal to the moral values* of the people is a mark of the era of democratisation, the birthplace of which is considered to be the United States, as we can observe in the speeches of President Obama (2009-2016): “*The time has come to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness*” (Obama, 2009a).

*Appealing to universal values* is also found in Donald Trump’s (2017-2020) speeches, but the function of this strategy is of implicit character, for justifying his actions after the events on January 6, 2021, the scale of his manipulation of public opinion crossed all permissible boundaries – the storming of the Capitol and attendant violence not only made it impossible to certify the results of the vote, but also threatened people’s lives. Immediately afterward, he resorted to the strategy of appealing to universal values, thus again diverting attention from himself and concentrating it on the struggle against a common “enemy”: “*Defeating this pandemic and rebuilding the greatest economy on earth will require all of us working together. It will require a renewed emphasis on the civic values of patriotism, faith, charity, community, and family*” (Trump, 2021a). Trump’s address to the participants in the assault clearly shows the use of manipulative strategy, including the *tactic of substituting targets*. He explicitly uses *appeal to universal values* (peace, tranquility): “*It was a landslide election, and everyone knows it, especially the other side, but you have to go home now. We have to have peace*” (Trump, 2021b). At first glance, the antithesis used in the speech is intended to reassure the protesters, and the epiphora (*We have to have peace*) expresses Trump’s desire for peace and de-escalation of the election conflict. In fact, there has been an appeal to self-

esteem, which is one of the critical issues for US citizens. The former President called on protesters to sacrifice their dignity, thereby inciting their aggression. The stylistic device used only reinforced this effect, as the modality of the phrase does not imply a change of perspective on the conflict.

Joe Biden (since 2021) always supported democracy throughout his time in power, regardless of his positions. *Appealing to universal values* is one of the leading motives of his inaugural speech. The best example of its application is a reference to the American Anthem because it is the most comprehensive source of the nation’s values: “It’s a story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me. It’s called “American Anthem”; “*Let us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our nation*” (Biden, 2021c) – Biden’s repetition of the first stanza of the anthem creates a kind of anepiphora, thus drawing the audience’s attention to his next words.

He often appeals to *universal moral values* using a spectre of tactics typical only for Biden. Standing for uniting the nation, Biden uses the *tactic of reference to authority*: “*Watching the scenes from the Capitol, I was reminded as I prepared other speeches in the past, I was reminded of the words of Abraham Lincoln in his Annual Message to Congress, whose work has today been interrupted by chaos*” (Biden, 2021e). In this case, it is important to identify the figure whose words the addressee will quote because the tactics may simply be ineffective. In this particular example, the figure of Lincoln, the national hero of the United States, who is associated with equality and justice, is an ideal choice. Biden appeals to Lincoln’s path to salvation and how different he was from what was happening in the Capitol.

*Addressing religious beliefs* popular within American society, he uses tactics to emphasise the significance and truth of the idea: “*Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love. What*



*are the common objects we love that defines us as Americans?"* (Biden, 2020b). The epanaphore used by the President focuses the listeners' attention on the repeated phrase and makes them think about it.

The peculiarities of implementing the mainstream strategy of society manipulation appear through *speech tactics* – common and different – used by presidents in their speeches. To the *common* ones we refer, for example, the tactics of agitation, self-presentation, condemnation and discreditation, concealing and goal substitution, contrast analysis and argumentation, warning and intimidation (especially typical for the pre-election period).

G. Bush, again and again, uses the *tactic of goal substitution*, providing the policy of war: *"Acting against the danger will also contribute greatly to the long-term safety and stability of our world"* (Bush, 2003). *Agitation* for military action is disguised as a call for peace. He uses the *tactic of contrastive analysis* to show that there is a reason for the military to be based there, and thus manipulate public opinion: *"The current Iraqi regime has shown the power of tyranny to spread discord and violence in the Middle East. A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions"* (Bush, 2003).

Despite his portrayal as the President of the new era, Barack Obama does not forget to pursue pro-government goals through the *tactic of self-presentation*, which is why Obama begins his speech on ending the war in Iraq with the words: *"As a candidate for President, I pledged to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end – for the sake of our national security and to strengthen American leadership around the world. ... Last year, I announced the end of our combat mission in Iraq. And to date, we've removed more than 100,000 troops"* (Obama, 2009b). He points out that he kept his promises. The *tactic of contrast analysis* was also used for this purpose: *"So today, I can report that, as promised, the rest of our troops in Iraq will come*

*home by the end of the year. After nearly nine years, America's war in Iraq will be over"* (Obama, 2009b).

The President mostly uses *the strategy of argumentation* (very often along with the *tactic of goal substitution*). Obama emphasises the population's poor health insurance to convince people of the need for reform: *"There are now more than 30 million American citizens who cannot get coverage. In just a two-year period, one in every three Americans goes without health care coverage at some point. And every day, 14,000 Americans lose their coverage"* (Obama, 2009c). But time markers make it easier to imagine the scale of the President's work. During Obama's term, he often did not keep his promises within the time limit that he had appointed himself. A key component of Obama's policy was health care reform: many of the President's optimistic promises have remained only promises.

To confirm the success of a chosen course, Donald Trump (2016–2020) applies *the tactic of exaggeration*: *"If we hadn't reversed the failed economic policies of the previous administration, the world would not now be witnessing this great economic success"* (Trump, 2020) and *self-presentation tactic*: *"At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens; ...I will fight for you with every breath in my body - and I will never, ever let you down"*. *"From the instant I took office, I moved rapidly to revive the U.S. economy - slashing a record number of job-killing regulations, enacting historic and record-setting tax cuts, and fighting for fair and reciprocal trade agreements"* (Trump, 2020). However, he does not mention the details of how the presidential administration managed to achieve such rates of economic development and changes in domestic policy, i.e. it is possible to trace the *tactic of information concealing*.

Every President uses the tactic of condemnation, but D. Trump's speeches are characterised by straightforwardness and certain aggression. This comprehensively characterises his image as a politician and also allows us to track and pre-

dict the specifics of the implementation of the political course he has chosen. Even his inaugural speech is based on the *condemnation tactic* - the President openly discredits the previous government to emphasise the importance of changing the government and the correctness of the people's decision: "*We are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People. For too long, a small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost*" (Trump, 2020a). The tactic of contrast analysis is used for the same purpose: "*Washington flourished - but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered - but the jobs left, and the factories closed. The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country*" (Trump, 2017).

Joe Biden uses the *presentation tactic* to show America in a better light: "*So with your help, the United States will again, lead, not just by the example of our power, but the power of our example*" (Biden, 2021a). Through a play on words, Biden emphasises that the US policy will not focus on aggression, intimidation and persecution but on the multi-vector development of society, attracting attention to his policy, to his personality as a politician (an implicit form of self-presentation). "*We shine the light of Liberty on oppressed people. We offered safe havens for those fleeing violence or persecution, and our example pushed other nations to open their doors as well*" (Biden, 2021a), this example demonstrates the tactics of emphasizing the importance of the President's ideas.

Biden, with his characteristic tact and caution, uses the *tactic of condemnation*: "*Though many of these values have come under intense pressure in recent years, even pushed to the brink in the last few weeks, the American people are going to emerge from this moment stronger, more determined and better equipped to unite the world in fighting to defend democracy because we have fought for it ourselves*" (Biden, 2021e). He condemns the policy of the previous government, which turned America - a bulwark of equality

and democracy - into a state that was forced to fight for this very democracy. But at the same time, through the tactic of describing prospects, the President expresses his faith in the American people and his intention to ensure the country's prosperity.

Regarding different political views and goals, and socio-political situations in the country, the *speech tactics* of presidents may differ.

For example, the presidential period of G. Bush coincides with the war in Iraq, which influenced greatly on the US policy. The terrorist attack became a starting point for changes in G. Bush's speech structuring: there is extensive use of *confrontational and manipulative strategies* and tactics. In his address to the nation on September 19, 2001, he said: "*The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge collapsing structures have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and quiet, unyielding anger*" (Bush, 2001a). The President uses the tactic of description, but the chosen vocabulary and ascending gradation make it clear that the main purpose was to create an image of an enemy. He goes on to say in an informative tone: "*America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom*" (Bush, 2001a). In this case, there is a manipulative tactic of goal substitution. It was impossible to determine the real reasons for the attack in such a short time, but the people demanded answers, so the President again emphasised the value of freedom.

During the period of the United States' intensification of military activity, the use of confrontational strategies in Bush's speeches increased, and the President uses *aggressive tactics*. For example, in a speech on the future of Iraq, he says: "*In Iraq, a dictator is building and hiding weapons that could enable him to dominate the Middle East and intimidate the civilized world*" (Bush, 2001a). In this case, he used the *tactic of intimidation*. Nowadays, we know that there was no reliable confirmation of the President's words at that time, so we may say that he used the manipulative *tactic of distorting information*. President Bush also uses a *warning tactic*: "*If we have*

to act, we will act to restrain the violent and defend the cause of peace" (Bush, 2005). The usage of a conditional mood construction conveys his readiness for action. He understands that the international community does not support his military initiative in Iraq, so Bush uses more *aggressive tactics* to convince people that he is right: "*Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking time bombs, set to go off without warning*" (Bush, 2005). The *intimidation tactic* had to instill fear into people and force them to support his point of view. The use of comparison already makes the statement emotional, but the association with the bomb in the fight against terror really terrifies: "*My hope is that all nations will heed our call, and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own*" (Bush, 2005). This example illustrates the call for *action tactic*. The use of diseuphemism conveys Bush's contempt for terrorists who cannot confront the power of the United States.

The *tactic of demonstrating shared concerns and an emotional connection* with the voters is typical for Obama, and it is manifested in the famous speech "Address on Signing Health Care Reform Bill into Law". Obama identifies with the people, using the tactic of inclusivity: "*We are a nation that faces its challenges and accepts its responsibilities. We are a nation that does what is hard. What is necessary. What is right. Here, in this country, we shape our destiny. That is what we do. That is who we are*" (Obama, 2010). At the same time, his words have a different meaning: the President says that he has common concerns with the people; he has also faced difficulties and problems, but, despite everything, he had implemented the planned bill. That is, Obama uses the *tactic of goal substitution* to explain the postponement of his promises: the use of parallelism underlines the President's conviction that all his actions are worthwhile. At the same time, let us note the use of "demonstration", instead of "common concerns" in the Pres-

ident's speech. In this case, with the help of opinion polls, economic and social statistics, the "core values" of the electorate are studied, i.e. what makes voters most worried and anxious. Based on specific political, economic, and social problems that had been identified, Obama developed his programme making promises to voters which in many cases were not fulfilled. But because these promises are usually shrouded in such a vivid and seemingly convincing pragmatolinguistic cover, they inspire hope and contribute to the psychological manipulation of voters.

In the previous historical period, presidents were quite careful about making promises, but in Obama's speeches, on the contrary, they are quite common. Even in his inaugural speech, we hear: "*Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this America: They will be met*" (Obama, 2009a). The use of the appeal to the listeners creates the illusion of dialogue, which increases the addressee's interest in the speaker. Sometimes the *tactic of promise* in Obama's speeches borders on the *tactic of warning*: "*Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end*" (Obama, 2009a). The President talks about the work of the previous government's programmes, and, on the one hand, promises to solve the problems that may arise, and on the other hand, warns the authorities about their fate in the absence of results. The direct tactic of warning also can be found in his speeches. For example, he addresses those who plan to wreak havoc in the country harshly, but at the same time with restraint: "*And for those who seek to advance their goals by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken – you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you*" (Obama, 2009a).

The key feature of Trump's speeches is the presence of an image of the enemy. Especially in foreign affairs, he relies on the *tactic of creating an image of the enemy*, for example, China,



which is the cross-cutting theme of most of his speeches. This tactic, depending on the context, is supported by the *tactics of accusation and reproach*: “*For decades, China has taken advantage of the United States; ... China’s massive theft of America’s job*” (Trump, 2017). In this way, the President explains the sanctions and restrictions on economic and political activities with China, appealing to national values and the dignity of US citizens. Thus, combining different tactics, he skilfully manipulates the flow of information received by the addressee.

During the pre-election campaign 2020 (D. Trump-J. Biden) the pandemic situation led to the ‘*enemy image creation*’ tactic being used for the health sector: “*It’s a China. You know, they call it COVID. They call it all different names. It’s the China virus. China, maybe the China plague*” (Trump, 2020a). Repetitions not only attract the attention of the recipients but also make Trump’s statement more emotional, and the comparison of the virus with the plague creates a negative connotation of a completely different, more significant scale.

Another example is Trump’s denial of the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election. The ex-president’s position and careless statements about innovations in the voting system (transmission of votes by mail) were the reason for protests from his supporters. In Trump’s speech during the rally on January 6, 2021, we can trace the multilevel nature of the speech techniques. He uses *conflicting tactics of accusation, delegitimation, and discredit*: “*They rigged it like they’ve never rigged an election before*”; “*...All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical left Democrats, which is what they’re doing and stolen by the fake news media*”; “*I was told by the real pollsters, we do have real pollsters. They know that we were going to do well, and we were going to win*”; “*They’ve used the pandemic as a way of defrauding the people in a proper election*” (Trump, 2021b). The examples show the implication of subjective opinion through “objective facts”, because the data given by Trump are

not confirmed, and the “sociological polls” (*real pollsters*) indicated by him are impersonal; Trump conveys dissatisfaction and frustration with the “inaction” of citizens, their unwillingness to establish the presidency of the truth (*proper election*) - and, as a consequence, calls them to action.

In his speech on US foreign policy, the newly elected President firmly adheres to the policy of unity, extending it to cooperation with other states and international organisations. Biden’s attitude to *cooperation* is completely different from his predecessors. This creates a contrast for the international community, which should be assured that a similar course will apply to other socio-political aspects of the president’s activities. Diplomatic cooperation and restoring international relations are the main aims of Joe Biden’s foreign policy. That is why commenting on any interstate activity (especially with countries-competitors or -aggressors) should be careful and comprehensive: “*Leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies and key partners once again. By leading with diplomacy, we must also mean engaging our adversaries and our competitors diplomatically, where it’s in our interest and advance the security of the American people*” (Biden, 2021f).

As the President’s goal is to de-escalate tension among the population, he calls for unity. On January 6, 2021, Joe Biden delivered a speech addressing public order violators. He uses opposing *tactics of distancing and amalgamation simultaneously*: “*The scenes of chaos at the Capitol do not reflect a true America, do not represent who we are*” (Biden, 2021e). He separates the protesters from the general population of the country, turning them into a category of strangers. But, using the first person plural (*we are*) expresses his positioning of himself as part of the American community, as a supporter of its values. This approach evokes in the minds of citizens a desire for unity, to belong to a larger group, which is quite logical because any human is a social being who finds it challenging to overcome non-recognition, loneliness, and exile.

The *tactic of generalisations* is intended to convince citizens that they have made the right choice, that mutual understanding and support from the government is indeed expected for all segments of the population without exception: “*I will be a President for all Americans. I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did*” (Biden, 2021a). It is crucial to formulate every sentence correctly and carefully select vocabulary for it, because pathos and excessive emotionality can turn statements into empty promises and cause negative reactions in listeners.

All speech tactics used by this or that president are combined into a characteristic sub-strategy of speech manipulation that is unique to him:

- George Bush has chosen the *strategy of confrontation* attributable to both his political views and the situation in the country and abroad.
- Barack Obama's speeches tend to apply the speech *cooperative strategy*. Even when using the tactic of reproach, condemnation, or warning, he maintained a typical restrained tone, which positively characterised his personal qualities.
- Donald Trump's speeches are characterised by *conflict-generating strategy*, which he uses to implement his political course. If his predecessors were temperate in expressing aggression or threats, Trump considers conflict to be the key factor in achieving the goal. This approach characterises the ex-President more as a successful businessman with an iron grip (who he is) than as a politician who promotes the interests of his party and people.
- Biden's choice of *maintaining contact strategy* and the prevalence of appropriate cooperative tactics in combination with individual manipulative ones were equally influenced by several factors: first, the escalation of conflicts and contradictions within the country; second, the need to restore US international relations; third, the very image of Joe Biden as a centrist

Democrat, a politician with many years of experience, whose hard work and conscientious approach led him to the presidency of the United States.

## Conclusion

The phenomenon of politics, in general, provides a comprehensive approach to solving any issue. Thus, we can speak not only about the historical conditionality of the choice of specific speech strategies and tactics, as a tribute to the rules and generally accepted norms of the time, but also about their direct dependence on the specific socio-political situation of the country and the attitude of the international community to it. Therefore, considering the dynamics of speech strategies and tactics in the speeches of USA Presidents in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, we conclude that the pragmalinguistic characteristics of a political speech are significantly influenced by social features of a particular historical and political period, as well as by the individual and political values and ideologies of the speaker – the President. The process of communication involves the use of a large number of speech tactics while the choice of means, channels, and styles of communication depends on the personal characteristics of the subjects of communication, in our case - the Presidents.

The variety of speech strategies and tactics of social communication, in particular those implemented through speeches of politicians/Presidents, confirms their role and importance in establishing a psychological and political atmosphere in society and its social support, in developing and creating stable and positive interpersonal relations and interactions as the basis for the collaboration of society and the leader.

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