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**STRATEGIES OF CREATION OF A POLITICIAN’S
COMMUNICATIVE IMAGE**

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Abstract

The author of the article in question considers such linguistic phenomenon as strategies of communicative influence employed at creating a politician’s communicative image, taking as a model the current president of the United States of America Donald Trump. The author analyzed a great number of texts created by the politician under consideration ranging from speeches to public statements to press conference statements, answers and comments to tweet posts during the period of about five years since 2013 up to present time. The aim of the research is to single out major means of making and maintaining a peculiar image of the politician of interest. The author refers to the notion of a communicative strategy or a strategy of communicative influence as an aspect of deliberate planning, arranging and achieving communicative and non-communicative intensions of a speaker / writer as well as the means of making up a communicative image as a whole. Peculiar attention is paid to such dominant and frequently used by Donald Trump strategies as strategy of self-presentation, discrediting of real and imaginary opponent, strategy of emphatic denial of obvious facts. It is worth mentioning that definite stylistic devices and expressive means within the frames of the mentioned above strategies are also dealt with.

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Keywords: Communicative strategy, self-presentation, discrediting, communicative image, stylistic device.



1. Introduction

The paper in question is devoted to the consideration of speech behavior of a politician as an integral part of creating his communicative image.

1.1. Relevance of the research

Nowadays great attention to speech behavior in mass communication explains the interest in personal and social aspects of the activities of a speaker. Acquiring and applying effective means of communicative influence have become an inalienable part of a so called norm of professional communication in politics as well.

1.2. Newness of the research

The newness of the research consists in proposing and developing the complex approach to political communication studies, in revealing and describing communicative strategies of one of the most prominent representatives of the US political elite; in analyzing linguistic, stylistic and rhetoric means and devices constituting the communicative strategies; in defining their role in creating the whole some communicative image of a politician.

2. Problem Statement

Our particular attention is drawn to one of the characteristics of a linguistic individuality behavior: we are particularly interested in the strategies of communicative influence in the texts (official addresses, blog entries, press conference comments, etc.) produces by the current President of the USA.

3. Research Questions

To achieve the purposes of the research the following research questions should be dealt with:

3.1. Communicative strategies in the texts by D. Trump

To single out basic communicative strategies used by Donald Trump in his speeches, public addresses and blogs in social networks (mainly Twitter blogs);

3.2. Language means

To define and comment upon the language means within the strategies singled out;

3.3. Communicative image

To reveal characteristic features of Donald Trump's communicative image, expressed by means of the strategies of communicative influence.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current research is to describe and analyze peculiar individual features of the strategies of communicative influence application in the textual material by Donald Trump and define their impact on the creation of the communicative image of the politician in question.

5. Research Methods

In accordance with the aim, tasks and the procedure, the following methods of research have been employed in our work:

5.1. hypothetical inductive method,

5.2. descriptive method,

5.3 interpretation,

5.4. contextual-functional qualitative and quantitative analysis,

5.5. method of continuous sampling. We used as the material for the study the texts of speeches, public addresses by D. Trump during the period of 2013 - 2018, as well as excerpts from his posts on Twitter.

6. Findings

There is no doubt about the fact that the major part of the population of any country, as well as the citizens of other states, closely link the image of the country and political developments in it with the public figure of the President. On the other hand, the main aim of the President is to please his own people (the population of the country), to meet their expectations and besides, to create an unforgettable image, to make it significant.

In the course of the research we considered an unfavourable combination of communicative strategies, which leads to the creation of the outrageous image of a politician. It certainly may attract some groups of population as well as repel others, or most likely create ambiguity and confusion.

The article deals with the consideration of the communicative image of current president of the USA Donald Trump, who cuts a figure which is very difficult to comprehend, a person with outrageous speech and non-verbal behavior, a person whose actions are extremely difficult to predict, which in the opinion of some political analysts, sociologists and psychologists is on the borderline with some mental disorder. The author of a word combination 'fake news', which thanks to him became "the word combination of the year" according to Oxford Dictionary; the person constantly blamed of being a racist, which may be easily proven by such utterances of his as 'shithole' (concerning Haiti and its people), or "laziness is a trait in blacks", etc., Trump himself strongly denies all the accusations and chooses the strategies of creating his image, which may be characterized as rather active, offensive, pushy. In this research paper we considered, analyzed and commented upon the most frequently used of them.

First of all it is necessary to consider the very notion of “a communicative strategy” or “a strategy of communicative influence”. Currently there is no universally accepted definition or even more or less universal interpretation of the term, that is why we find it possible to agree with P. V. Zernetsky and those who support his point of view and refer to his definition as it is rather accurate, laconic and functional. So, P.V. Zernetsky considers that a communicative strategy is a creative realization by the communicant of his plan of composing his speech behavior with the aim of achieving a global verbal (or non-verbal) target of communication in the frames of a speech event (Gerassimova,2017). Taking into consideration the definition given above, we distinguish in D. Trump's texts the following dominant communicative strategies: self-presentation strategy, discrediting strategy and the strategy of emphatic denial. The use of these strategies in combination leads to the creation of the image of an aggressive, charismatic and very self-assured politician.

Further on we are going to analyze the strategies mentioned above individually, one by one.

Self-presentation, in O.N. Bykova's point of view is “an emotional self-posing of a speaker, indirect demonstration of mental qualities of his personality for building up a definite impression of him and his purposes” (Kudashkina & Zolotarev, 2017). In political speech self-presentation plays the key role (Zelyanskaya, 2013). This strategy may be manifested in two modes: as direct and as indirect self-presentation. In D. Trump's speeches the predominant type is that of direct self-presentation. So, it stands to reason to dwell upon its characteristics in more detail. Direct self-presentation is an explicit favourable characteristics given by a speaker to himself. This mode is resorted to when the accusations against a politician call first and foremost for the amelioration of his image in the eyes of the audience.

So, let us give some examples:

1) *“My IQ is one of the highest — and you all know it! Please don't feel so stupid or insecure; it's not your fault.”* The president openly says that he is a genius. To explain this statement he resorts to a popular in the western world theory of the IQ, which, in his opinion is extremely high in his case. To emphasize the idea he uses the superlative degree of the adjective “*high*”. Further we come across an improper generalization “*you all know it*”, which is resorted to not as a personal subjective opinion, but as a proven objective fact. To crown it all the author uses derogatory epithets “*stupid*” and “*insecure*” with reference to all other people in general and to those who criticize him in particular. More than that, the second sentence in form is a polite condescending request more reminding of mockery at possible opponents (Trump, 2013).

2) *“I'm just thinking to myself right now, we should just cancel the election and just give it to Trump, right?”* Judging by this statement the presidential candidate is so confident in himself (or at least is pretending to be) that he considers the elections just an unnecessary formality. The rhetorical question in this case serves as emphatic statement and addressing himself in the third person creates an illusion of the objective impartial estimation (Maccaskill, 2016).

Sometimes Trump's self-presentation acquires grotesque forms. Examples are numerous, especially when he speaks of his exceptional assets, such as small, neat hands and far from small “sign of manhood”, *“Look at those hands, are they small hands? And, [Republican rival Marco Rubio] referred to my hands: ‘If*

they're small, something else must be small.' I guarantee you there's no problem. I guarantee." (Krieg, 2016).

Yet not always Trump's self-presentation directly refers to him personally. Sometimes it is indirect, for example, in those cases when he flatteringly mentions the USA and Americans, hinting that he is the main and consequently the best representative of the great nation.

Let us refer to only one quotation from Trump's speech during the sitting of the UNO General Assembly of September 19, 2017, *"This week gives our country a special reason to take pride in that example. We are celebrating the 230th anniversary of our beloved Constitution, the oldest constitution still in use in the world today. This timeless document has been the foundation of peace, prosperity, and freedom for the Americans and for countless millions around the globe whose own countries have found inspiration in its respect for human nature, human dignity, and the rule of law. The greatest in the United States Constitution is its first three beautiful words. They are "We the people." Generations of Americans have sacrificed to maintain the promise of those words, the promise of our country and of our great history"* (Swanson, 2017). Trump mentions the US Constitution, implying that the document is a paragon of humanism, dignity and the triumph of law. The author makes use of such strong epithets as beloved; timeless; foundation of peace, prosperity, and freedom. He also uses the epithet 'great' with reference to the history of the USA, giving the quotation from the very Constitution. Besides, it is worth noting that such a small extract from the speech as given above abounds with words with a positive evaluative connotation (pride, peace, prosperity, freedom, inspiration, respect, human dignity, beautiful words).

Indirect self-presentation is also perceived in that that D. Trump mentions great (in his opinion) achievements of his country in international policy. And though the examples given to a great extent refer to the period before Trump's presidency, he takes credit of all achievements of the Americans to himself, *"America does more than speak for the values expressed in the United Nations charter. Our citizens have paid the ultimate price to defend our freedom and the freedom of many nations represented in this great hall. America's devotion is measured on the battlefields where our young men and women have fought and sacrificed alongside of our allies."*

One more thing worth mentioning is the fact that D. Trump tries to present himself as an efficient leader, capable of doing the job entrusted to him by the People, *"In America, the people govern, the people rule, and the people are sovereign. I was elected not to take power, but to give power to the American people where it belongs. In foreign affairs, we are renewing this founding principle of sovereignty. Our government's first duty is to its people, to our citizens, to serve their needs, to ensure their safety, to preserve their rights, and to defend their values. As president of the United States, I will always put America first"*. In the extract the speaker plays a part of an obedient and ardent executor of the will of the people of the USA, adherer to the ideals of democracy and observance of human rights and freedoms. This is also an example of indirect self-presentation on his part.

Besides the strategy of self-presentation in the texts studied by us, the tendency of D. Trump to discredit his opponents, be it Hilary Clinton (his rival for precedency), Barak Obama (his predecessor as a President), 'recalcitrant' mass media or the leaders of other countries, is more than evident. The strategy of

discrediting is directed at making a negative image of an opponent. In its application, the locus act is generally aimed at changing the cognitive and value orientations of the observers. This strategy can be implemented through a series of techniques: ridicule, undermining confidence, insult, and the explication of lies.

So let us give some examples of the way D. Trump makes productive use of the strategy of discrediting his opponents or just those whom he considers to be his rivals (and the list may be too long to give in this work):

1) *One of the key problems today is that politics is such a disgrace. Good people don't go into government* (Trump, 2016). The author implies that all professional politicians (his opponents) are scoundrels.

2) *"The only card [Hillary Clinton] has is the woman's card. She's got nothing else to offer and frankly, if Hillary Clinton were a man, I don't think she'd get 5 percent of the vote. The only thing she's got going is the woman's card, and the beautiful thing is, women don't like her"* (Transcript: Donald Trump's Victory Speech, 2016). Trump says that his opponent Hilary Clinton does not have any real merits and that she abuses the fact that she is a woman, implying that from the very start she has been a rather weak unstable political figure.

3) *Or CNN, which is so bad and so pathetic, and their ratings are going down* (Donald Trump's 57 most outrageous quotes from his Arizona speech, 2017). The author uses a derogatory epithet "*pathetic*" in reference to one of the most influential media sources in the country. He also completely unsubstantiatedly states that the ratings of *CNN* are dropping (so he tells intentional lies or misinformation).

4) In is not below Trump to directly offend the representatives of other countries. Thus, he calls Kim Chen In (the leader of North Korea) "*short and fat*", "*little rocket man*", hinting at insignificance and inadequate self-esteem, in Trump's opinion, of the opponent.

Along with discrediting opponents, D. Trump actively uses the strategy of emphatic denial of obvious facts. This strategy is resorted to when the speaker is put in such conditions that he has to justify himself or somehow explain his unseemly acts or reckless statements. As Donald Trump may boast of a great number of such situations and statements, he has to make use of the strategy of emphatic denial quite so very often.

Some examples are due to illustrate the statement:

1) *"No, I'm not a racist. I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed"* (Trump: 'I am not a racist', 2018). Trump uses multiple negations and an emphatic structure with the adjective in the superlative degree. But everybody but lazy knows that the statement flatly contradicts a great number of D. Trumps statements of evidently racial character.

2) *"There aren't too many people outside protesting"* (Valverde, 2017). The president denies an evident fact – actually thousands of people were marching in the streets.

3) *"Clinton made a false ad about me where I was imitating a reporter GROVELING after he changed his story. I would NEVER mock disabled. Shame!"* (Trump, 2016). In this extract apart from the use of grammatical devices (emphatic phrase with a modal verb "would", contrast of compound two-part

sentences and a simple one-part sentence, the use of an exclamatory sentence), the author resorts to graphic expressive means, capitalizing a number of words.

7. Conclusion

So, as a result of the analysis of a number of text authored by US President Donald Trump, we have identified such dominant strategies of communicative influence as self-presentation, discrediting real and possible opponents, emphatic denial of obvious facts. It is worth noting that the application of these strategies is typical both for public speaking and for posts in the social network Twitter, which indicates the existence of a constant, stable trend towards their application. Besides, it is of great interest that the strategies mentioned above are used not separately, but in different combinations, which strengthens the communicative effect produced. Even used separately each of the analyzed strategies is rather active, aggressive, pushy. Used in a combination they produce an interesting communicative image – that of the image of a charismatic, outrageous, assertive, aggressive, authoritarian politician striving to achieve his aims by all means. On the level of linguistic and stylistic means these strategies are characterized by the application of the following means, noticed by us in all the texts by American politicians that we have come across: emotionally coloured vocabulary with ameliorative and pejorative connotations, the use of implicatures, the use of different intensifying grammatical structures, emotionally loaded epithets, rhetorical questions.

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