

## **WUT 2020**

### **10<sup>th</sup> International Conference “Word, Utterance, Text: Cognitive, Pragmatic and Cultural Aspects”**

## **PRESIDENT MACRON’S AND PUTIN’S IMAGE DISCOURSE ON THE MATERIAL OF THEIR TWEETS**

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### ***Abstract***

The President's speech, which is aimed at both informing and influencing the public, is subject to scientific consideration as an important component of identifying a particular country. In this regard, we find it most interesting to study the communicative behavior of an already elected political leader and identify strategies and tactics of image discourse that support the image formed during the election campaign. To expand coverage in the international media space, the Internet is the channel for transmitting image discourse. Internet users of social networks can evaluate the President's communicative behavior and engage in a virtual dialogue with him. The social network “Twitter” is the official channel of communication between the President and the public and has a multi-million audience. A limited-size tweet makes it possible to convey relevant information in a short and concise manner, maintaining the image of the initiator, and getting a quick response to it. The study of the tweets of the presidents of France and Russia allows us to identify the communicative strategy and tactics of their image discourse and assess their effectiveness. This article analyzes the implementation of speech strategies and tactics that support the image of the current presidents of France, Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frederic Macron, and Russia, Vladimir V. Putin, based on their tweets. In addition, the features of the speech behavior of the two presidents that affect the maintenance of their international political image are considered and compared.

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**Keywords:** Political media image, image discourse, speech exposure, communication strategies and tactics.



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## 1. Introduction

The international political situation requires a study of the forms and means of political marketing that can influence public behavior. Consumers of political marketing can include both the public as a whole and the distinction between certain segments: political like-minded, political opponents, “voters” (population) and the media. Political marketing is initiated by political parties and movements, various politicians, state authorities and, of course, presidents of countries. “One category of political product developed and promoted in political marketing includes the political image of the party or movement, as well as the representative of state authorities - the president” (Francz, 2017, p. 5). The increase in the general level of mistrust of state power in society and the increase in absenteeism updates the study of discursive means of forming and maintaining the political image of the President. Political image, being a product of political marketing, is not constant, being exposed to various factors, it is dynamic and specific. The instruments of political image formation are similar to those of political marketing: advertising, Public Relations, personal sales and promotion of marketing. The set of communications implemented within the framework of the above-mentioned instruments contributes to information and has an impact on the public. One of the main forms of forming and maintaining a political image that is credible to the public is image discourse. It makes it possible to use all communicative tools of political marketing, to most fully reflect the speech behavior of the president and to use specific strategies and tactics, contributing to strengthening his image. The president's image is associated with that of the state, the country he represents. Differentiation of political image allows to give the image meaning, to strengthen positioning, including on the international stage. The international nature of image discourse dictates the choice of an effective channel of information transmission. The Internet is the best media channel in the international media space. It allows to quickly communicate information and reflect personal communicative behavior of the addressee, and various social networks can give an official information reason hypertextuality. One of the official social networks and channels of communication between the President and the public is “Twitter”, which is a form of microblogging. The tweets are not only brief news reports, but are also a form of image discourse affecting the president's media image.

## 2. Problem Statement

This article attempts to systematize the discursive means of maintaining the media image of the current Presidents of France, Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frederick Macron, and Russia, Vladimir Vladimirovitch Putin, as well as to identify speech strategies and tactics of their speech behavior in terms of image discourse.

The study solves several problems: to define the concept of “image discourse”; Describe the features of the President 's political image discourse; Identify communicative strategies and tactics of speech behavior of the Presidents of Russia and France, used by them on the social network “Twitter”.

The object of the study is image discourse, which is the integration of different groups of texts transmitted through various channels, forming and supporting the image of politicians both pre-election and subsequent.

The subject of the study is language means of implementing communication strategies, which contribute to maintaining the political image of the Presidents of Russia and France on the Twitter network.

The specificity of the image discourse on Twitter is that it informs and affects the perceptions, opinions and values of the mass addressee, forming a certain media image and attitude towards it. This fact determines the need to study the image of the president in terms of inducing certain reactions (attitude and action) by language means, as well as in terms of speech influence on the consciousness of the public by information reasons and materials.

### 3. Research Questions

There is no single definition of the object of this study, “image discourse”. In some researchers image discourse is considered as a means of forming the image of an organization or a product (brand) (Klimova, 2012; Shefer, 2007, etc.), in others - as a means of political marketing (Kiuru, 2008, etc.). However, there is no comprehensive study of this interdisciplinary phenomenon. We consider image discourse as a form, including a set of texts of various communicative technologies (advertising, PR, promotion of sales, personal sales), integrated transmitted personally or indirectly, through mass media channels, in order to create and maintain an image. Image discourse is direct image-forming information that comes to the recipient through communicative technologies to position the image object and promote it in a competitive environment. The study of image discourse in the political environment is characterized by interdisciplinary ambiguity in the study of this issue. On the one hand, image discourse acts as a means of political marketing, on the other - is a form of reflection of communicative behavior of politics. Discursive means allow the possibilities of language to be used to shape political image and influence public consciousness. However, the creation and maintenance of the President's image by means of image discourse is impossible without interaction with the public, including international ones. A feature of modern media station is speed and dynamism, which allows to quickly assess the reaction of mass audience to information message. Social media in this media space helps to advance politics and shape its image, having a strong impact on the language consciousness of the public. Social networks also act as a means of virtual communication with feedback and the possibility of optimizing the reception of influence and interaction image discourse. Social networks as a universal tool in shaping not only their own image, but also other people 's image attract the attention of scientists, which leads to an increase in the number of studies devoted to this topic (Barkovich, 2017; Lenets, 2018; Sharkov, 2017, etc. ).The role of Twitter in election campaigns is explored from the positions of political science (Jungherr, 2016), linguistics (Lenets, 2016), psychology (Trub, 2016).

The most popular and official form of information interaction between the President and the international audience on the Internet is Twitter. The network is a microblogging service where each registered member has the ability to write short messages (tweets), with other users able to view and comment on them in chat mode. Tweets have a limit of 140 characters and can be sent by text messages, instant messaging, email. “The limitation of tweets by volume is reflected in the construction of statements on lexical, syntax and graphemic levels” (Shipilova, 2018, p.15). Kobrin (2015) defines “Twitter” as “a politicized platform where the system” its own is alien “is reflected in so-called retweets

(English retweet; Repeated communicative action, previously verbalized in a “foreign” account in the form of a media text, with the indication of the source)” (p. 96).

The material for this study was the tweets of French President Emmanuel Macron and Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovitch Putin for 2019 – 2020 (Emmanuel Macron, 2020, January. Tweet; Prezident Rossii. 2020, January. Tweet). Both presidents actively use the social network Twitter to inform about their activities and convey their own views on a certain problem or an important topical issue to the public. This allows us to talk about the existence of a certain communicative strategy in each president, which contributes to the positioning and identification of the image, while the channel of communication with the mass audience is the social network “Twitter”.

There are different views on understanding communicative strategies. Some researchers believe that strategies are only necessary when there are any communicative problems. Issers (2012) sees strategies as “a cognitive communication plan by which the optimal solution of communicative tasks of the speaker is controlled in conditions of lack of information about the partner's actions” (p. 100). At the same time, a wide variety of strategies based on the goals, objectives and concerns of the speaker is possible.

Following Issers (2012), we consider a pragmatic strategy to be the main strategy that makes image discourse more effective. Implementation of the strategy is achieved through communicative tactics, each involving one or more actions. In our study, we identified speech strategies and tactics used by the Presidents of Russia and France, highlighting and comparing their features.

All the tweets of the presidents were divided into two thematic groups: domestic and foreign policy of the country. Within the framework of the information reasons of each President, various issues are covered, which allows us to talk about the allocation of sub-themes. It should be noted that Emmanuel Macron writes on social network from the first person. The President of France pays more attention to foreign policy (67% of all tweets) and emphasizes the fight against anti-Semitism: “L'ombre noire de l'antisémitisme renaît” (“The dark shadow of anti-Semitism is reborn”), the situation in the Near and Middle East: “La présence de la France au Sahel n'a qu'un seul intérêt: la lutte contre le terrorisme” (“France's presence in the Sahel has only one interest: the fight against terrorism”). “Au Proche et Moyen-Orient, malgré les mutations de la région, nos forces engagées dans l'opération Chammal poursuivent les opérations de lutte contre Daech dont le califat territorial n'existe plus mais dont la menace pèse toujours, sous une autre forme, larvée, plus insidieuse” (“In the Near and Middle East, despite the changes in the region, our forces engaged in Operation Chammal continue the operations to fight Daesh, whose territorial caliphate no longer exists but whose threat still looms, in another form, more insidious”), expresses his condolences to the Turkish President on the earthquake and strengthens France's international image.

The account of V.V. Putin is held on behalf of a third person, is called “President of Russia”, which gives this microblog a more official status. The President's tweets pay only 7% to foreign policy, among which we can note the Holocaust, condolences to the President of Turkey on the earthquake, the settlement of the situation in Libya, the international format of relations (international meetings and negotiations). The communications are informative and neutral.

Domestic policy issues (23% of reports) are covered in E. Macron's tweets mostly on social aspects: “Les résultats des réformes engagées depuis le début du quinquennat sont là: en deux ans et demi on a créé plus de 500 000 emplois” (“The results of the reforms undertaken since the beginning of the five-year period are there: in two and a half years more than 500,000 jobs have been created”). “Durant 12 ans, on a détruit des emplois dans l’industrie. Depuis 8 mois, on en recrée” (“For 12 years, jobs in the industry were destroyed. For the past eight months, we've been recreating them”). “Les résultats des réformes engagées depuis le début du quinquennat sont là : en deux ans et demi on a créé plus de 500 000 emplois” (“The results of the reforms undertaken since the beginning of the five-year period are there: in two and a half years more than 500,000 jobs have been created”). E. Macron shares with the public the real results of his work and sets tasks: “Entre le catastrophisme de certains et l’immobilisme d’autres, nous devons suivre une 3<sup>e</sup> voie : regarder le problème écologique en face et changer nos comportements” (“Between the catastrophism of some and the immobility of others, we must follow a third path: to look the ecological problem in the face and change our behaviors”).

The main topics of tweets (93% of reports) of the President of Russia in domestic political issues, covered in early 2020, are devoted to the resignation of the government and changes in its composition: “Президент внёс кандидатуру Игоря Краснова на должность Генпрокурора. Юрий Чайка освобожден от должности в связи с переходом на другую работу” (“The President has nominated Igor Krasnov for the post of Chancellor General. Yuri Chaika has been relieved of his post in connection with the transition to another job”). “Дмитрий Медведев назначен Заместителем Председателя Совета Безопасности, Михаил Мишустин возглавил @Pravitelstvo\_RF. Указы Президента” (“Dmitry Medvedev was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Security Council, Mikhail Mishustin headed the @Pravitelstvo\_RF. Presidential Decrees”).

“Встреча с @Pravitelstvo\_RF: отставка Правительства, реализация #Послание2020” (“Meeting with @Pravitelstvo\_RF: Commitment of the Government, implementation of #Post2020”), amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation: “Владимир Путин внёс в @dumagovru законопроект о поправке к Конституции” (“Vladimir Putin introduced a bill on the experiment to the Constitution in the @dumagovru”) and promises of social and economic changes to improve the standard of living of the population: “Владимир Путин: Наступивший год — рубежный. Перед Россией стоят прорывные, исторические задачи” (“Vladimir Putin: The coming year is a milestone. Russia faces breakthrough, historical challenges”). “#Экономика: В 2021 году темпы роста ВВП России должны быть выше мировых” (“#Economics: Russia's GDP growth rate should be higher than world GDP growth in 2021”). “К 2024 году все уровни медицинского образования должны быть целевыми. Существенно изменится порядок приема в вузы” (“By 2024, all levels of medical education should be targeted. The procedure of admission to universities will change significantly”), etc. The feature of V. Putin's tweets is interesting - congratulations on the birthday of famous people and significant dates: “Владимир Путин поздравил дочь первого Президента России Бориса Ельцина Татьяну Юмашеву с Днём рождения” (“Vladimir Putin congratulated the daughter of the first President of Russia Boris Yeltsin Tatiana Yumasheva on the birthday”), “Сегодня киноактёр, продюсер, исполнитель песен Дмитрий Харатьян отмечает юбилей. Поздравление Президента” (“Today the actor, producer, singer of songs Dmitry Haratyan celebrates the anniversary. Congratulations of the President”), “Сегодня 60

лет исполняется композитору и певцу, заслуженному деятелю искусств Игорю Николаеву. Поздравление Президента” (“Today, the composer and singer, honored artist Igor Nikolaev, is 60 years old. Congratulations of the President”), “Команда “КАМАЗ-Мастер” выиграла ралли-марафон “Дакар-2020” #Dakar2020. Поздравление Президента” (“The TEAM “Kamaz-Master” won the rally-marathon “Dakar 2020” #Dakar2020. Congratulations of the President”). With similar messages V. Putin shows that he remembers people who have contributed to the political, cultural and sports life of the country.

We also found that the pragmatic strategy of image discourse of the Presidents of France and Russia reflects the following tactics:

- self-presentations: “Vous connaissez la baguette, les camemberts et vins français. Mais savez-vous que, partout dans nos régions, des Français font perdurer nos savoir-faire et innover? 120 objets de #FabriquéEnFrance sont exposés à l’Élysée ce week-end. En voici quelques-uns” (“You know baguette, camemberts and French wines. But do you know that, everywhere in our regions, French people keep our know-how going and innovate? 120 objects of #FabriquéEnFrance are on display at the Élysée This weekend. Here are a few”) (E. Macron). E. Macron does not separate himself from France and its heritage, inviting him to visit the exhibition of 120 achievements of France at the Elysee Palace.

“Президент предложил вынести на общественное обсуждение ряд поправок в Конституцию, гарантирующих приоритет Основного закона в российском правовом пространстве” (“The President proposed to bring to public discussion a number of amendments to the Constitution guaranteeing the priority of the Basic Law in the Russian legal space”). “Владимир Путин предложил провести голосование граждан по ряду предложенных поправок к Конституции: “Всё в конечном счёте должны решить люди”” (“Vladimir Putin proposed to hold a vote of citizens on a number of proposed amendments to the Constitution: “Everything must ultimately be decided by the people””) (V. Putin). Vladimir Putin shows himself in these reports to be a democratically minded politician discussing political decisions with the public;

- establishment and maintenance of contact: “#Победа75: Встреча с ветеранами Великой Отечественной войны и представителями патриотических объединений в Санкт-Петербурге” (“#Победа75: Meeting with World War II veterans and representatives of patriotic associations in St. Petersburg”);

- promises: “Great discussion with @realDonaldTrump on digital tax. We will work together on a good agreement to avoid tariff escalation”. “Dans cette région bousculée par les divisions, la place des chrétiens d'Orient est importante. Là où ils sont menacés, la vocation de la France est de les aider. Nous allons lancer un fond pour accompagner les écoles qui forment 400 000 jeunes à travers toute la région” (“In this region shaken by divisions, the place of Eastern Christians is important. Where they are threatened, France's vocation is to help them. We will launch a fund to support the schools that train 400,000 young people across the region”) (E. Macron).

“С 1 января 2020 года при рождении первого ребенка семья получит право на маткапитал в размере 466 617 рублей” (“From January 1, 2020, at the birth of the first child, the family will be entitled to a matcapital of 466,617 rubles”), “Предлагаю обеспечить бесплатным горячим питанием всех учеников начальной школы с 1 по 4 класс” (“I propose to provide free hot meals to all primary

school pupils from 1st to 4th grade”), “Предлагаю предусмотреть ежемесячные выплаты на детей от 3 до 7 лет включительно с 1 января 2020 года #ПосланиеПрезидента” (“I propose that monthly payments for children from 3 to 7 years of age be provided, including from 1 January 2020 #ПосланиеПрезидента”) etc. (V.V. Putin);

- solidarization: “Notre message est clair: nous restons attachés à l'accord sur le nucléaire iranien et appelons l'Iran à s'abstenir de toute nouvelle action violente ou de prolifération. Nous restons prêts à engager le dialogue avec l'Iran sur cette base pour préserver la stabilité de la région” (“Our message is clear: we remain committed to the Iran nuclear agreement and call on Iran to refrain from further violent or proliferation action. We remain ready to engage in dialogue with Iran on this basis to preserve the stability of the region”). E. Macron uses 1 person of plural to show cohesion on the Iranian nuclear issue. Speaking about the problem of anti-Semitism, E. Macron emphasizes: “Ici vivent les trois grandes religions du Livre, ensemble, à travers des lieux qui ont marqué leur propre Histoire. Le rôle de la France, par la laïcité, c'est de dire que reconnaître la part de chacun avec calme, respect, c'est un pas vers la capacité à vivre ensemble, en paix” (“Here live the three great religions of the Book, together, through places that have marked their own history. The role of France, through secularism, is to say that to recognize everyone's share with calmness and respect is a step towards the ability to live together, in peace”). E. Macron raises the theme of a united Europe: “L'Europe doit se tenir unie. Ne jamais oublier. Ne jamais se diviser. C'est aussi cela notre enseignement” (“Europe must stand united. Never forget. Never divide. That is also our teaching”). Continuing the subject of anti-Semitism, Macron calls for everyone to remember the Holocaust; Says that people must unite so that such horror does not happen again: “J'appelle à ce que chacune et chacun apporte au Mémorial de la Shoah ses archives. Que ces carnets qui paraissent innocents, ces lettres retrouvées, soient à chaque fois vus comme des traces indispensables, qui aideront à poursuivre le travail des historiens et de la mémoire” (“I call on everyone to bring their archives to the Holocaust Memorial. May these notebooks, which seem innocent, these letters found, be seen each time as indispensable traces, which will help to continue the work of historians and memory”).

“#Победа75: В день 77-летия прорыва блокады Ленинграда Владимир Путин принимает участие в памятных мероприятиях, приуроченных к годовщине” (“#Победа75: On the 77th anniversary of the breakout of the siege of Leningrad, Vladimir Putin takes part in commemorative events to mark the anniversary”);

- opposition: “Je l'ai dit, le répète: on ne signera plus d'accords avec des puissances qui ne respectent pas l'Accord de Paris sur le climat” (“As I said, repeats it, we will no longer sign agreements with powers that do not respect the Paris Climate Agreement”);

- recognition of existence of a problem: “L'antisémitisme n'est pas seulement le problème des Juifs. C'est d'abord le problème des autres. Nous ne laisserons pas faire. La promesse de la France est bien une promesse de souvenir et d'action. Zakhor, Al Tichkah. Souviens-toi, n'oublie jamais” (“Anti-Semitism is not just the problem of The Jews. First of all, it is the problem of others. We won't let that happen. France's promise is indeed a promise of remembrance and action. Zakhor, Al Tichkah. Remember, never forget”). “La menace augmente. L'actualité des dernières semaines ne fait que le confirmer. La sécurité de la Nation, son avenir, sont en jeu. Je resterai ferme sur mon engagement :

l'objectif reste de porter l'effort de défense à 2% du PIB en 2025 ” (“The threat is increasing. The news of the last few weeks only confirms this. The security of the nation, its future, are at stake. I will remain firm on my commitment: the objective remains to increase the defense effort to 2% of GDP by 2025”). “Plastique: comment permettre au secteur de s'adapter ? On ne peut pas dire aux dizaines de milliers de citoyens qui travaillent dans ce secteur : “Ton travail n'existe plus parce qu'on interdit du jour au lendemain”” (“Plastic: how can the sector adapt? The tens of thousands of citizens who work in this sector cannot be told: “Your work no longer exists because it is forbidden overnight””).

V. Putin recognizes the existence of a demographic problem: “#Демография: Россия вступила в сложный демографический период. Наша обязанность – обеспечить устойчивый рост численности населения” (“#Демография: Russia has entered a difficult demographic period. It is our responsibility to ensure sustainable population growth”).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study is to describe the communicative strategy and explore tactics that reflect the speech behavior of the current Presidents of France, Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frederick Macron, and Russia, Vladimir Vladimirovitch Putin, who maintain a media image in the public mind through the social network Twitter.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The following methods of research were used: discursive analysis, interpretation method and contextual analysis, as well as solid sampling methods, elements of statistical analysis. The validity of the results obtained is due to the use of the quantitative calculation method.

#### **6. Findings**

Communicative behavior of the President and creation of his attractive media image by means of image discourse helps to solve topical problems of the modern information society aimed at reflecting political activity and information openness in the virtual space. The image of the President must meet the demands of the public and, if this is not the case, it leads to a decline in the level of confidence in the representative of the State power. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the media image of the president in an integrated manner, through the analysis of communication strategies and tactics reflected in image discourse.

So, Vladimir Putin's communicative image is a man of action. The texts of the president's tweets are brief and informative, devoid of subjective assessment. In his reports, Vladimir Putin implements pragmatic strategies, the predominant tactics of which are self-presentation, recognition of the existence of the problem, and promise.

The media image of V.V. Putin can be attributed to the dominant type of communicant, who, as a rule, seeks to take possession of the initiative, exercises an active ideological influence on the interviewer, positions himself as an active Rusophone, as his microblog is conducted only in Russian and appeals mainly to solve the internal problems of the nation.



Emmanuel Macron positions himself as a rational and rational reformer president (in tweets he notes the successful results of his reforms), who is engaged in dialogue and actively involved in the resolution of international conflicts; Who hears and takes into account all points of view. The French president's tweets are more likely to cover foreign policy issues, with his microblog being conducted from the first person, and he is not separate from France and the French people.

## 7. Conclusion

In today's information space, the Internet environment is the fastest and most effective channel for information exchange. Discursive means of political marketing contribute to the creation and strengthening of the image of the president. The image discourse realizes pragmatic strategy, which is reached thanks to tactics revealed in a research: self-presentations, establishment and maintenance of contact, promises, solidarization, opposition, recognition of existence of a problem. The social network "Twitter", as a channel for communicating communicative behavior, in this case, promptly informs and has a speech exposure on public perceptions and opinions, forming a media image of and attitude towards a particular president and attitude to him.

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