

# Linguistic and Stylistic Features of English Public Speeches

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## Abstract

Political communication plays a special role in the life of modern society. Political speeches can be used to judge the direction of the development of political relations between states and the priorities of politicians in various spheres of social and political life. A political public speech is nothing but the interaction of a politician with the audience, a means of propaganda, a presentation of his position and views, a means of persuasion, and a tool for the power struggle. In political speeches, the important role of language as a means of struggle for power and a way to retain it is especially evident. This determines the relevance of studying the linguistic and stylistic features of political speech and identifying effective ways of linguistic influence on a wide audience. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the description of linguistic and stylistic means that contribute to the creation of an effective political speech in English on the example of the speeches of US President Donald Trump, whose speech style is of great interest to linguists. The article aims to describe the linguistic and stylistic means of creating expressiveness that Trump prefers in his speeches. An equally important objective is to determine the main functions of using linguistic and stylistic devices in a political speech.

**Keywords:** public speeches, political discourse, political terminology, speeches, stylistic means

## 1. Introduction

The research aim is realized by solving certain tasks. The journalistic style is a functional type of language that is devoted to the discussion of topical issues for the whole society, primarily socio-political ones. There are eternal problems: relations between the people and government officials, international politics, problems of the younger generation, right and wrong lifestyles, etc. However, there are also pressing issues of our time, such as the Covid-19 epidemic. Psychological health is also an issue, with a cross-sectional study identifying factors that influence depression and anxiety (Tsaras, K., Papathanasiou, I. V., Vus, V., Panagiotopoulou, A., Katsou, M. A., Kelesi, M. & Fradelos, E. C., 2018), and with the help of comparative analysis, the pregame expected mental state in teams was determined (Popovych, I., Pavliuk, M., Hrys, A., Sydorenko, O., Fedorenko, A. & Khanetska, T., 2021). The development and elaboration of the functionality and the distribution of roles in the positions of management teams was considered on the basis of the educational institution (Semenets-Orlova, I., Klochko, A., Tolubyak, V., Sebalo, L. & Rudina, M., 2020). In the relatively recent past, newspapers and socio-political magazines were the main platforms for discussing various topical issues that concern the entire population. Therefore, the journalistic style is often called newspaper journalism. The rapid development of electronic media has led to television and electronic social networks becoming the main channel of media discourse. Many newspapers have switched to an electronic format. A widespread view is that preference for a particular media channel is an indicator of the age status of the recipients of the information. This view, though, needs to be confirmed. Young people mostly use computers and smartphones to get up-to-date information, while older people read newspapers and watch TV programs.

Journalism occupies a very important place in the history of mass media development. At all times, the character of an era has been best manifested in journalism. Its subject matter and form of expression demonstrate the direction of socio-cultural shifts in society. According to traditional beliefs, the journalistic style (newspaper journalism style) emerged as an independent functional style of the English language in the mid-eighteenth century.

The problem of the boundaries of the journalistic style deserves attention. On the one hand, journalistic texts are associated with the mass media, while on the other hand, journalism is closely related to the speeches of politicians and preachers. Moreover, it can be traced in memoir literature and sometimes appears even in fiction.

## 2. Theoretical Background

An important issue in the definition of political terminology is the question of determining the criteria for distinguishing this layer of terminology. In this regard, researchers defining the term "political vocabulary" adhere to two main approaches. One group of scholars (Felber H., 1994; Katz, 1979) defines this term by listing the thematic groups that make up this subsystem. For instance, according to scholars, groups of political terminology include: "socio-political terminology, names of various party, state, public organizations and institutions, social realities and phenomena of life in different countries, as well as political idioms of the mass communication language

and political jargon" (Piet van Sterkenburg, 2003; Ilson, 1986, 1987; Abraham, 1996; Agricola, 1972). The second group of researchers prefers a more formalized definition of the term in question. They rely on some common semantic features that characterize the units included in the political terminology and thus define the boundaries of this subsystem (Khoma, 2015). Thus, in particular, D. Crystal defines political terminology rather narrowly as "purely scientific terms (terms of social and political sciences), professionalisms and general literary words and expressions, nomenclature units, proper names, emotionally colored lexical units" (Crystal, 1990, 1992).

A different opinion is held by H. Felber, who in his dissertation study understands political terminology as "a set of words and phrases containing a semantic component related to state and international politics and the political life of society". Accordingly, the researcher defines politics as "the activities of state bodies, public forces, and individuals related to the pursuit of power, its conquest, retention, and use, as well as the influence on power" (Felber, 1994).

Thus, political terminology is perceived by researchers in a narrow and broad sense. In the framework of this study, we are inclined to a broad understanding of the term "political terminology", which allows us to identify a much larger number of thematic groups for analysis. Accordingly, we interpret this term as a set of words and phrases that particularly clearly reflect the social structure of society, political system, and ways of organizing the socio-political life of the country in which the language is used, as well as that of other countries.

Another important issue when considering political terminology is the question of its relationship with political (socio-political) terminology. In this case, we can distinguish three main approaches. In particular, representatives of the first approach (Sager J.C., 1980, 1997, 2001) associate the concepts of political vocabulary and political terminology. Another group of researchers (Rey, 1995; Zgusta, 1971; Kulo, 2015), and (Rajandran, 2013) distinguish between these concepts, excluding political terminology from the socio-political vocabulary. Thus, these researchers note that political terminology is part of the terminology of the social sciences. As a result, it and political vocabulary represent two independent subsystems that include a certain number of lexical units. These units coincide in terms of expression, but differ significantly from each other, both in semantics and functionally. Furthermore, each of these subsystems contains a large number of lexical items that do not coincide either in terms of expression or content.

Moreover, there is a third approach, according to which political discourse is a part of political terminology. Representatives of this approach state that political terminology is characterized by general accessibility, ambiguity, conditioned by extralinguistic factors, the emotional coloring of many units, the presence of synonyms/antonyms in many units, and developed lexical combinability. However, they suggest that its characteristics also include terminology, systematicity, and correlation with a certain unambiguity of many tokens (Lewis, 1952; Bowker, 2003; Charteris-Black, 2011; Cushing, 1984; Buysens, 1943).

This allows us to put political terminology in a borderline position between general literary vocabulary and terminology. According to the researchers, political terminology is "special lexical units that denote certain specific concepts in the generally accepted system of political concepts". In addition, the researcher emphasizes the lack of stability of political terminology, as some of it is involved in the process of determination. Accordingly, the researcher concludes that political terms are not perceived as alien, but rather become publicly available units of language with mutual permeation into the general literary vocabulary (David, 2014; Lakoff, 1998).

This is often explained by the widespread use of political terminology in modern media. Thus, in this study, we are inclined to the opinion of the latter group and believe that political terminology is a part of political vocabulary. Furthermore, following them, we define political terms as special lexical units that denote certain specific concepts in the generally accepted system of political concepts. In addition to the most commonly used part of political terminology, political vocabulary includes some other lexical items. Their number depends on the approach used. For instance, some researchers analyze political vocabulary in terms of semantic fields. Accordingly, they distinguish the core of this layer of vocabulary. For example, according to Lakoff G., the core components of political vocabulary include socio-political terminology and literary vocabulary. Kageura K., in turn, refers to the core of words or phrases, the meaning of which includes the components "political", "social", and "public". Their presence is determined through dictionary definitions.

As for the periphery of the field of political vocabulary, for instance, Kageura K. considers its composition quite broadly, including lexical items from the fields of diplomacy, economics, and culture, which are used to characterize the state policy in a particular area. The state policy can be applied to a large number of spheres of social life, as it affects all areas of human activity.

Rey A., in turn, refers to political vocabulary:

- commonly used political lexical items;
- political terms - words or phrases that accurately and unambiguously name a concept and its relationship to other concepts within a special area;
- political terms that are used occasionally;
- precise vocabulary, including proper nouns, toponyms, and numerals;
- various political clichés and tropes that are characteristic of both journalistic and official business functional styles.

### 3. Method

The following methods were applied in the work on the language material: descriptive, continuous sampling, dictionary definitions, and contextual and component analysis. The descriptive method includes the following successive stages: 1) selection of analysis units – phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, constructions, etc. (primary segmentation); 2) segmentation of selected units (secondary segmentation): division of sentences into phrases, phrases into word forms, word forms into morphemes, morphemes into phonemes, phonemes into

differential signs; 3) classification and interpretation of selected units. The descriptive method uses techniques of external and internal interpretation. The techniques of cross-level interpretation consist of the fact that units of one level are used as a means of linguistic analysis of units of another level. In cross-level analysis, the properties of the studied phenomenon are considered from the point of view of the adjacent level. This reveals new features of the phenomena under consideration and helps establish cross-level connections. For example, the syntax is studied from the point of view of morphological expression. Techniques of internal interpretation are different ways of studying language phenomena based on their systemic paradigmatic and syntagmatic connections, that is, as F. de Saussure said, studying language in itself and for itself. The paradigmatic technique includes the oppositional technique (based on comparing and contrasting language units, their differential features are established, and based on commonality and difference, the units are combined into different paradigmatic groups). The paradigmatic method is complemented by the syntagmatic method, that is, the study of the combinability of the studied units and their context. Syntagmatics often reveals the hidden properties of a linguistic unit, which may not be noticed with a paradigmatic (oppositional) approach. The descriptive method is widely used. It is used not only to describe language elements (phonemes, morphemes, words, constructions, super segmental units, grammatical categories, etc.) but also to study language functioning. The description of language facts is their qualitative analysis, and systematization, which creates a linguistic theory.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The material for the analysis of the use of linguistic and stylistic means of creating expressiveness were the transcripts of four public speeches by American President Donald Trump in the period from 2016 to 2018: Victory Speech (9.11.2016), Inauguration Speech (20.01.2017) (28.02.2017), State of the Union Address (30.01.2018). The way Donald Trump speaks is characterized by imagery and expressiveness. He actively uses various linguistic and stylistic means in his speeches. At the syntactic level, the most common are syntactic parallelism, emphatic structures, and inversion. Let us illustrate examples of the use of some linguistic means.

Syntactic parallelism:

- *We are going to fix our inner cities and rebuild our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, and hospitals. We're going to rebuild our infrastructure, which will become, by the way, second to none. And we will put millions of our people to work as we rebuild it.*
- *We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs.*

This technique performs an organizing, expressive, and rhythmic function. With this technique, Trump focuses on expressing a clear commitment to fulfilling his program. In the second example, syntactic parallelism enhances the emotional impact on the audience by reinforcing statements about the need to defend from other countries.

Syntactic parallelism is often combined with anaphora:

- *We have over 200 generals and admirals that have endorsed our campaign. We have 22 congressional Medal of Honor recipients. We have just tremendous people.*
- *If there is a mountain, we climb it. If there is a frontier, we cross it. If there is a challenge, we tame it. If there is an opportunity, we seize it.*

Anaphora is an effective rhetorical device because an idea that has been repeatedly stated is more likely to stay in the memory of listeners. In the third example, Trump uses syntactic parallelism combined with anaphora to emphasize that he is supported by the military elite. The idea of confidence in the success of joint efforts and the unity of the nation is reflected in the fourth example, where the president calls on the people, emphasizing that together they can solve any problem.

One of the most frequently used stylistic means of the syntactic level in modern English is inversion, which is the violation of the direct word order to highlight the most important information in a sentence. Inversion in the language is an indicator of the direct connection between syntax and thinking or the structure of the statement as a unit of language and the structure of logical judgment as the main form of thinking. Inversion, like any syntactic means of imagery, serves to demonstrate the expression and emotionality of speech.

Trump's speeches contain various types (both full and partial) of inversion. For instance:

- *After years of wage stagnation, we are finally seeing rising wages.*
- *It's a movement comprised of Americans from all races, religions, backgrounds, and beliefs who want and expect our government to serve the people and serve the people it will.*

In the above examples, inversion allows us to highlight certain parts of a statement, giving them additional emotional and semantic load, focusing the listeners' attention on certain points. In the fifth example, Trump seems to be summarizing the first year of his presidency, comparing it to the previous administration, which saw many years of stagnation in the field of wages. This helps to create a positive image.

In Trump's speeches, emphatic structures are widely used on lexical, grammatical, and lexico-grammatical levels. This technique allows for a logical emphasis in a sentence, thus highlighting its most important part.

- *What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people.*
- *And it is the people who are making America great again.*

In the above examples 7 and 8, the emphasis is expressed by the constructions *What ... is* and *it is ... who* respectively. This is used to manipulate the listener's attention to the fact that with the election of a new president, the people will finally play an important role and their

opinion will be considered. The use of this technique helps to highlight exactly the part of the information that represents a positive assessment of the new political program.

As for stylistic means of expression at the lexical level, Donald Trump's speeches are particularly frequent in lexical repetition, epithets, antithesis, and metaphors. Lexical repetition is an effective rhetorical means because an idea that has been repeatedly expressed is more likely to remain in the memory of listeners.

- *We are one nation and their pain is our pain. Their dreams are our dreams. And their success will be our success.*
- *My duty, and the sacred duty of every elected official in this chamber, is to defend Americans - to protect their safety, their families, their communities, and their right to the American Dream.*

The stylistic effect of repetition is to give greater expressiveness and importance to the repeated word or phrase, which is a means of manipulating the audience and influencing its opinion. Thus, multiple repetitions of the word *rebuild* in the first example reflect the president's ambition and grandiosity of his plans. Repetition of the keywords *pain*, *dreams*, and *success* emphasizes their importance and builds trust and a sense of unity with the speaker. The word *duty*, which is repeated in the tenth example, emphasizes Trump's seriousness in fulfilling all his promises, which increases his credibility as a leader.

Another feature of Trump's speeches is the use of contrast, or antithesis, created by lexical means.

- *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.*
- *As we strengthen friendships around the world, we are also restoring clarity about our adversaries.*

In the above examples, antithesis is used to enhance the intensity and expression of language. The antithesis used in the example above increases the contrast and emphasizes the gap between the working class and the officials. Moreover, this antithesis manipulates the listeners' opinion, forming a negative perception of the previous administration's policies and a positive attitude towards the new one. The *friendships-adversaries* opposition determines the course of the country's foreign policy.

Trump's speech is rich in epithets. Epithets are always subjective and carry an emotional assessment, helping to understand the speaker's opinion. Scientists call an epithet the main means of expressing an individual opinion.

- *...and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid...*
- *And while they celebrated in our nation's capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.*
- *We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny.*

Epithets increase the emotionality of the speech, helping to emphasize that the president is extremely concerned about the problems affecting the country's population, and sincerely sympathizes with people or admires them. This stylistic technique demonstrates that the leader understands the situation in the country, emphasizing his attitude toward it. It is about recognizing the need for change, realizing the role of the past, etc., which in turn strengthens the position of the new leader and determines the credible tone of the president's communication with the people.

## 5. Conclusion

As noted above, the use of metaphors in political speeches helps politicians to realize the functions of persuasion, giving a manipulative touch to their speeches. Metaphors allow for a definite connotation of abstract ideas. They can help to present complex political concepts as simple and understandable, to unite or divide participants in political discourse. Thus, the article analyzes the means most widely represented in Trump's speeches. They are syntactic parallelism, emphatic structures, inversion, lexical repetition, epithets, antithesis, and metaphors. The use of these means of linguistic influence allows for a more effective impact on the target audience, making the president's speeches more emotional, imaginative, and memorable. The high degree of expressiveness of the speech allows them to influence the consciousness of the audience and receive a predictable response. The analysis of the use of linguistic and stylistic means in Donald Trump's public speeches allows us to identify their main functions. These functions include exercising ideological influence, shaping and manipulating public opinion; forming a critical attitude towards the previous government, and, as a result, a positive assessment of the new political program. Moreover, the use of such means helps to create a positive image of the politician and build trust in him/her. These means help the politician to focus the audience's attention on certain moments of his speech; add imagery to his speech and show emotional expressiveness. Thus, such actions are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of information influence.

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