



Modern English-language political discourse: means and techniques of linguistic influence

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Abstract Political discourse, in its contemporary manifestation, serves not merely as a conduit for communication between political authorities and public personalities but also constitutes an essential component of mass culture and civil society. Formulated in a structured and influential manner, political discourse assumes a pivotal role: the molding of citizens' perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes, and the determination of societal and governmental developmental trajectories. This article scrutinizes present-day English political discourse, focusing on its principal means and techniques of linguistic influence. Signifying both substantive and manipulative dimensions, this discourse emerges as a noteworthy facet of the contemporary political landscape, necessitating meticulous attention and scholarly inquiry. The objective of this article is to analyze contemporary English-language political discourse to identify and elucidate its primary linguistic means and techniques of influence on society and the formation of political perspectives. The methodology employed in this study is founded upon an examination of literary sources, media materials, comparative analysis, and an exploration of linguistic techniques and manipulation technologies. The findings of this investigation underscore the significance of the media as a fundamental constituent of the contemporary information society, particularly in shaping and disseminating political discourse. The media fulfill several pivotal functions, encompassing the dissemination of information regarding political events and decisions, the formation of a public agency, and the exertion of influence on public perceptions of these subjects. Additionally, the media contribute to establishing a connection between political elites and citizens, rendering the political process more accessible and comprehensible. Furthermore, they employ linguistic and stylistic methods actively to construct images of political leaders and accentuate crucial facets of their biographies and public stances. Owing to the advancements in Internet technologies and the widespread accessibility of social networks, the media landscape is evolving to become more interactive and readily available to citizens.

Keywords: political discourse, media space, linguistic and pragmatic technique, linguistic and cultural technique, lexical and linguistic means, manipulation technologies.

1. Introduction

Political discourse constitutes a vital element within contemporary society and politics, wielding influence over how citizens perceive political events and decisions. In the prevailing information society, characterized by the omnipresence of mass media, social networks, and various media platforms, political discourse emerges as a potent instrument for shaping societal perspectives.

One pivotal facet underscoring the significance of political discourse is its capacity to mold public opinion and sway the views of citizens. Politicians employ diverse linguistic and communicative strategies to persuade individuals of the validity of their perspectives and decisions. Additionally, political discourse assumes a crucial role in delineating political priorities and agency, as asserted by Saul (2018). It serves as a reflection of topics pertinent to both citizens and political leaders, guiding the emphasis on political debates. Consequently, the analysis of political discourse aids in discerning which issues attain priority within society and the underlying reasons. Moreover, the importance of political discourse extends to its role in elucidating the cultural and linguistic attributes of a society. It stands as a significant factor in shaping national identity and influencing the perception of political processes within the context of a specific culture.

In a contemporary landscape characterized by the swift dissemination of readily available information, the scrutiny of English-language political discourse emerges as an essential instrument for the critical comprehension of political messages and decisions (Khajavi & Rasti, 2020). English-language political discourse holds specific significance and relevance in the



modern era. Unveiling the pivotal facets of this discourse not only allows us to comprehend but also to analyze the repercussions of political messages and actions on society at large.

The distinctive role of English-language political discourse in world politics is underscored by the influence exerted by the English language within the international community, where active interactions transpire on the global stage. English has evolved beyond being merely a communication medium; it has assumed the status of a symbol representing global leadership and influence. Consequently, delving into the study of English-language political discourse enables the disclosure of mechanisms influencing not only individual citizens but also the international arena. This underscores the relevance and importance of this area of research.

Through the analysis of English-language political discourse, comprehension emerges regarding the impact of words and messages on the shaping of political views, attitudes towards events, and the overall understanding of the socio-political context (Gal, 2019). In the contemporary milieu, a critical examination of political information is imperative, and the exploration of English-language political discourse equips us with tools to unveil the essence of political processes on both national and international scales. Consequently, the analysis of political discourse stands as a pressing undertaking for scholars, journalists, politicians, and citizens, contributing to an enhanced understanding of the modern political landscape and the dynamics of interactions among its key actors.

2. Literature review

Political discourse constitutes not merely a significant element of political communication and public life, but also serves as a pivotal tool for shaping political ideas. Within contemporary English-language political discourse, diverse means and techniques of linguistic influence are employed to attain a spectrum of political objectives.

Norman Fairclough regarded political discourse as an instrument for molding, altering, and harnessing the political worldview to prompt citizens to undertake diverse political actions. His research accentuated the significance of language in influencing the cognitive processes of citizens and shaping their political beliefs (Fairclough & Norman, 2014).

Ruth Wodak, an Austrian linguist and authority in critical discourse analysis, perceives political discourse as a tool wielded for political power. She underscores that political discourse is deployed for acquiring and preserving power, along with the objectives of stabilizing or redistributing power positions. Within the scope of her research, political discourse is construed as a mechanism for fortifying the influence of political elites and crafting the image of political leaders (Wodak & Ruth, 2011).

The advent of modern technologies, particularly digital media, and social networks, has brought about substantial changes in the dynamics of political discourse (Mialkovska et al., 2023). Natali Helberger, an expert in political communication, accentuates the role of these new tools in contemporary political communication. Digital media and social networks afford political actors the capability to formulate and propagate their messages through interactive platforms, thereby engaging their audiences (Helberger, 2020). This renders political discourse more accessible and interactive for citizens, thereby altering their modes of perception and participation in politics.

These facets underscore the reality that contemporary English-language political discourse is a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon. It not only mirrors political actuality but also actively exerts influence, molding civic consciousness, and delineating the trajectory of modern political processes.

3. Methods

A comprehensive review of literature, articles, books, and studies has been systematically conducted to accumulate information about contemporary English-language political discourse and its fundamental aspects. The study has delineated existing research and the principal domains of inquiry surrounding this phenomenon. Distinctive examples of political discourse from diverse sources, encompassing texts, speeches, and various media formats, have undergone analysis. Within this analytical process, rhetorical elements and linguistic means of influence have been identified. A comparative analysis of political discourse in diverse contexts, such as varying countries and political regimes, has been executed, facilitating the identification of similarities and differences in discourse patterns. Furthermore, an exhaustive examination of linguistic techniques employed in political discourse, incorporating rhetorical figures, stylistic devices, and lexical elements, has been undertaken. The study delves into how political discourse impacts citizens, encompassing an exploration of manipulation technologies and their repercussions. Additionally, the study explores the influence of cultural and linguistic peculiarities on the structure and content of political discourse. Based on this rigorous analysis, key conclusions regarding the means and techniques of modern English-language political discourse and their societal impact have been formulated.

4. Results and Discussion

The media, as a pivotal component of the contemporary information society, assumes a central role in shaping and disseminating political discourse. The array of media formats, ranging from traditional newspapers and television to social networks and internet portals, engenders a multifaceted environment fostering interaction among politicians, citizens, and society at large.

A primary function of the media is to circulate information about political events and decisions. Journalists operate as intermediaries between political elites and citizens, facilitating the establishment of a connection between decisions made at the highest echelons and their repercussions on the lives of ordinary individuals (Davis et al., 2018). The media's capacity to define and advocate for the public interest accords significant influence on the political process.

The media exerts influence on public opinion by determining which political topics and issues garner the most public attention. The concept of "agenda-setting" signifies that the media establishes the focus of attention, determining the subjects citizens will discuss and which issues will take center stage in the political discourse. Additionally, the media shape and direct political discourse through the selection of language, employment of rhetorical strategies, and approaches to presenting information. Journalists make choices regarding words and phrases that can impact the perception of political messages and establish a context for the public's understanding of them. Therefore, a meticulous analysis of the linguistic techniques and stylistic devices employed in media speech is especially crucial.

After the 2020 presidential election, The New York Times and Fox News employed distinct linguistic devices in describing the newly elected president. In The New York Times article titled "A President-Elect Shaped by Tragedy and Tradition," various linguistic devices were utilized to depict Joe Biden.

1. For instance, the phrase "Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. ran anyway. He ran like a grieving father who connected with a country in pain" characterizes Joe Biden as a "grieving father" exhibiting empathy for a nation in distress. This choice of language serves to construct an image of a leader characterized by compassion and shared values with the nation.

2. "Mr. Biden's victory on Saturday is the culmination of a career that began in the Nixon era and spanned a half-century of political and social upheaval" – This example accentuates Biden's extensive political career, highlighting his endurance and adaptability within the political landscape.

3. "But he was also closely attuned to moderate, older Black primary voters and had carefully followed which Democrats won in the toughest districts in the 2018 midterm elections" – Here, the media underscores Biden's attentiveness to the concerns of moderate voters and his strategic analysis of the 2018 midterm elections, demonstrating an emphasis on data analysis and a nuanced approach to elections.

4. "And through those peaks and valleys, Mr. Biden hewed to one consistent message: that the turmoil of the Trump era was an existential threat to the character of the country..." – This example illustrates how Biden consistently conveyed a particular message to leave a distinct impression on voters. He emphasized that the turmoil of the Trump era posed an existential threat to the nation's character, positioning himself as the figure capable of fostering reconciliation among Americans.

In the Fox News article "Biden Wins Presidency, Trump Denied Second Term in White House," specific linguistic and stylistic devices were employed to characterize Joe Biden:

1. The utilization of emotional words and phrases:

- "I am honored and humbled by the trust the American people have placed in me..." – By incorporating the terms "honored" and "humbled," the language is chosen to underscore a heightened sense of responsibility towards the American people.

- "Proving once again, that democracy beats deep in the heart of America" – The phrase "democracy beats deep in the heart of America" is employed to accentuate the significance of democracy within the nation.

2. Utilization of metaphors:

- "The heart and soul of this country's at stake" – The metaphor "heart and soul of this country" is deployed to underscore the critical significance of the newly elected leadership for the nation.

- "We choose hope over fear, we choose unity over division" – The metaphors "hope over fear" and "unity over division" serve as linguistic devices to effectively convey the central themes of Biden's campaign.

3. Repetition:

- "I will be a President for all Americans – whether you voted for me or not" – The repetition of the phrase "for all Americans" is employed to accentuate the commitment to uniting citizens, irrespective of their political affiliations.

4. Informational arguments:

- "Biden emphasized that a record number of Americans of all races, faiths, and religions, chose change over more of the same. They've given us a mandate for action on COVID, the economy, climate change, systemic racism" – Biden utilizes informational arguments, integrating statistics to substantiate his plans and objectives.

5. Appeal to values and ideals:

- "The core values of this nation, our standing in the world, our very democracy, everything that has made America America is at stake" – Biden employs an appeal to values and ideals, emphasizing the jeopardy faced by "core values," the nation's global standing, and the essence of "democracy".

These instances illustrate that Biden employs a diverse range of linguistic and stylistic strategies to underscore his positions, evoke emotions, and persuade citizens of the validity of his actions and values.

With the advancement of technology and the ubiquity of the Internet, the media is evolving into a more interactive and accessible platform for citizens (Fitzpatrick, 2018). Social networks and online forums provide avenues for citizens to articulate

their opinions and engage in discussions on political matters. This engenders novel opportunities for public participation in the political process, thereby broadening the sphere of media influence on the shaping of political discourse.

In the course of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, both then-President Donald Trump and his contender Joe Biden actively utilized Twitter as a platform to articulate their perspectives and comment on pivotal political matters. The candidates leveraged Twitter as a direct means of communication with voters, accentuating their stances, and promptly responding to unfolding news. This facilitated opportunities for dynamic discussions on political issues and exerted an impact on the public's perception of the candidates (Ferrara et al., 2020).

For instance, in Donald Trump's tweet, "Voters are pouring in to support me! Make America Great Again! #Trump2020," he underscores the active backing from voters and advocates for the campaign slogan "Make America Great Again," which has evolved into a symbol of his political endeavor. In this instance, he accentuates the notion of revitalizing a "great" America. The tweet is strategically directed at his supporters, underscoring their significance in the electoral process.

In the tweet, "Democrats are trying to steal the election from you, don't let them! #KeepAmericaGreat," Trump alleges that Democrats are attempting to illegitimately take the election and urges voters to prevent such efforts. Additionally, he employs his "Keep America Great" slogan to perpetuate the collective national image of a "great" America and to sustain its stability. This tweet is strategically designed to influence public perception by framing the Democrats as a threat to the democratic process and reinforcing the idea of maintaining greatness under his leadership.

Joe Biden's tweet, "Today is a crucial day for our country. Support us in our efforts to make America better for all citizens. #BidenHarris2020," underscores the significance of Election Day and solicits support for his candidacy alongside Vice President Kamala Harris. Within the message, he articulates their shared objective of enhancing the well-being of all citizens in America.

"We must unite our nation and end divisions. Let's work together for the good of all Americans. #Unity" – In this tweet, Biden advocates for the unity of the nation, expressing his commitment to collaborative efforts for the well-being of all Americans. The inclusion of the hashtag #Unity underscores his goal of fostering national unity. These tweets offer insights into the strategies employed by both candidates in the 2020 presidential election, highlighting their emphasis on slogans and approaches to engaging with voters.

The media not only disseminates information but also determines how this information is perceived by the public. It is important to understand that the way information is presented, and the choice of headlines and images used in the news can influence the emotional reaction and attitude of citizens to political events. The media can shape the images of politicians, to strengthen or weaken their authority and trust (Krzyżanowski, 2020). Image creation strategies consist of the choice of images, stories, and comments that can influence citizens' perceptions of specific political figures.

In the contemporary information society, the media function as intermediaries in the interaction between politics and citizens. The information disseminated through the media holds the potential to shape our views, beliefs, and reactions to events. Consequently, it becomes imperative to meticulously scrutinize how the media wield influence over the perception of political occurrences and to adopt a critical approach as consumers of information.

Throughout electoral processes, the media exerts a substantial impact on the public's perception of candidates and their stances. Various news channels maintain distinctive tones in their coverage of candidates, thereby influencing public opinion. Events and scandals associated with election campaigns are extensively deliberated in the media from diverse perspectives, directly impacting the reputation of candidates.

In an audio recording from the Access Hollywood program, Donald Trump made the following controversial statement: "I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything."

The New York Times published an article featuring a transcription of this audio recording, garnering significant attention from both the public and the media. The publication promptly covered the ensuing outrage and condemnation from Trump's political opponents, along with the reaction of the Republican Party leadership. The New York Times also delved into the potential ramifications of this statement for Trump's election campaign. The response to Trump's words sparked a wide-ranging discussion on gender equality, violence, and dignity, thereby influencing the power dynamics in the 2016 U.S. presidential race.

Media and manipulation mechanisms wield a pivotal role in political English-language discourse, exerting influence on public perceptions, perspectives, and decisions. They function as filters, actively shaping and disseminating information, determining the salience of topics, and employing diverse methods and strategies to mold public opinion and beliefs (Azoulay, 2018). This dynamic involvement provides a prime avenue for influencing political processes, enabling the strategic management of public attention and influencing of decisions in various facets of political life, including elections and debates. The mechanisms of manipulation in political English-language discourse are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1 The mechanisms of manipulation in political English-language discourse

Source: compiled by the authors.

1. Fake news, also identified as disinformation, encompasses entirely false or unverified information that is presented as credible news and disseminated across diverse media platforms. Its impact on English-language political discourse is multifaceted. Fake news can fabricate entirely fictional narratives or distort real events into misrepresented versions, thereby exerting a substantial influence on public perception. These narratives may consist of invented stories, pre-conceived quotations, or pseudo-facts and are frequently propagated as news through various online platforms and social media channels (Mialkovska et al., 2023).

For instance, during the 2020 U.S. election, disinformation surfaced asserting that the election was fraudulent, alleging widespread election fraud leading to distorted results. The dissemination of this disinformation primarily occurred through social media and alternative news sites. Numerous fake news stories within this context featured slogans and conspiracy theories lacking substantiation, accusing specific political entities of attempting to subvert the democratic process. This propagation resulted in heightened political polarization and eroded trust in the electoral system. The potential of fake news to impact public opinion resides in its capacity to generate false claims or exaggerate perceived threats.

Moreover, fake news possesses the capability to instigate a pervasive skepticism regarding information disseminated by the media. This engenders challenges to the credibility of reliable information channels, potentially resulting in a broad devaluation of conventional news sources and journalism as a whole. Furthermore, political actors can leverage fake news as a strategic tool to advance their objectives, particularly by disseminating disinformation about their opponents during election campaigns (Vaccari et al., 2020). It constitutes a significant tool in contemporary political competitions, influencing both election outcomes and public opinion. Collectively, these facets underscore fake news as a pivotal factor in shaping political English-language discourse and public opinion, heightening the importance of its identification and mitigation as a critical task for both the media and society at large.

2. Political propaganda is a methodical and intentional undertaking by the media to advocate for specific political perspectives, candidates, parties, or ideologies. This can take the form of accentuating the positive attributes of political entities while concealing negative aspects and shortcomings associated with these entities. The objective of political propaganda is to sway public perceptions and attitudes, contributing to the molding of public opinion in alignment with its ideological tenets. Additionally, political propaganda may actively foster the discourse of political subjects and stimulate debate to support particular views or interests. The scale and reach of political propaganda can be formidable, employing a diverse array of media channels such as television, radio, newspapers, the Internet, and social media to connect with a broad audience and exert influence on public discourse. Its application spans diverse purposes, including bolstering specific candidates during elections, reinforcing state ideology, or shaping public opinion on particular issues. However, it is crucial to recognize that political propaganda has the potential to compromise the objectivity and equilibrium of the media, thereby fostering political polarization. This, in turn, can negatively impact public dialogue and decision-making processes.

The campaign leading up to the referendum on the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, known as Brexit, in 2016 was marked by extensive engagement in political propaganda. The "Vote Leave" campaign in the western part garnered public attention through the deployment of a substantial number of posters, commercials, and other materials that underscored elements of sovereignty and control over migration. Employing slogans like "Take Back Control," they sought to capture voters' attention and cultivate a favorable perception of Brexit. Conversely, proponents of the European Union highlighted aspects such as economic uncertainty and the potential consequences of Brexit to underscore the negative facets of departing from the EU. This example elucidates how political propaganda can leverage diverse aspects and arguments to

influence voters during significant votes and referendums, exemplified by Brexit, employing both positive and negative dimensions to attain its objectives.

3. Psychological influence through the media constitutes a significant facet of political English-language discourse. The media strategically employ headlines that are sensational, emotional, or controversial to capture attention and motivate the audience to engage with the material or read the article. The utilization of images and videos carries a potent impact on viewers' emotions. Media outlets may incorporate compelling visuals that elicit sympathy or outrage to bolster specific viewpoints or create lasting impressions (Mialkovska et al., 2022). Various techniques are employed to manipulate the emotions of viewers, including the elicitation of fear, anger, indignation, or hope, depending on the desired reaction. The media additionally shapes the overall mood and atmosphere in society through its portrayal of events and significant issues. This portrayal can either fortify or diminish optimism, and create a sense of crisis or stability, influencing the public's disposition to support particular leaders or policies.

In the 2016 US elections, a prominent illustration of the deployment of psychological influence through the media was observed in Donald Trump's campaign. The campaign strategically employed the slogan "Make America Great Again," designed to evoke emotions and foster an optimistic mood among Trump's supporters. The slogan pledged the restoration of America's greatness and the resolution of citizens' concerns. It engendered the perception that, with Trump as president, a new era was dawning for the country.

4. Social media assume a pivotal role in English-language political discourse, particularly within the contemporary information landscape. Their impact is evident in the dissemination and interaction with information, as well as in the shaping of public opinion. Social media platforms employ algorithms to analyze user behavior, presenting content that aligns with their perspectives (Bradshaw et al., 2020). This phenomenon can contribute to a "bubble effect," where users predominantly encounter information that reinforces their existing beliefs. Social media facilitates the effortless propagation of disinformation and fake news. The extensive user base and the option for open publishing enable the rapid dissemination of false messages capable of influencing public opinion. Moreover, the presence of bots on social media platforms contributes to the automated dissemination of messages.

In the 2020 United States election, the utilization of bots and fake Twitter accounts was identified as a means to disseminate disinformation and engage in manipulation. Several of these accounts presented themselves as belonging to ordinary citizens, sharing content designed to bolster or undermine specific candidates. An instance of such an account, identified as a bot, propagated assertions of a substantial number of fraudulent votes in the election, casting doubt on the legitimacy of the electoral process. This engendered a negative atmosphere and turmoil among the public, fostering detrimental political discussions.

5. Campaigning: The media assume a pivotal role in motivating citizens to take action and actively engage in political and public life. They wield influence over the electoral process by disseminating information regarding candidates and public addresses and endorsing civic initiatives and projects aimed at legislative changes or addressing significant social issues (Valentino et al., 2018). The media facilitate public discourse on vital topics and issues by providing a platform for the expression of diverse perspectives and fostering dialogue among citizens.

During the 2008 presidential election in the United States, presidential candidate Barack Obama orchestrated an intensive media campaign to mobilize and garner support from voters. His campaign established a robust information apparatus, encompassing a website, blog, social media pages, and various other media platforms.

One of the most recognized components of the campaign was the slogan "Yes We Can," prominently featured in Obama's public speeches, commercials, and across various media platforms. The campaign actively promoted citizen engagement in the electoral process, urging individuals to assume an active role in mobilizing and motivating voters.

6. Digital marketing and targeted advertising: Political campaigns leverage digital marketing for precise and focused advertising, disseminating political messages across the Internet (Blommaert, 2020). This strategy aims at specific audiences with particular political beliefs, constituting a vital element of contemporary election campaigns. Key facets of digital marketing in politics encompass message personalization, microtargeting, analytics, and testing, directing efforts toward key demographics, and engaging in communication with voters. However, digital marketing in politics also introduces challenges related to transparency, data security, and the potential to influence public opinion. Regulatory measures and oversight are imperative to ensure equitable and unbiased elections in this domain.

During the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States, the team of candidate Donald Trump extensively employed digital marketing and targeted advertising strategies, with a particular focus on leveraging social media platforms, notably Facebook.

Utilizing Facebook's analytical data, the campaign crafted voter profiles, enabling them to precisely tailor advertising messages to specific demographic groups. The incorporation of algorithms facilitated the display of ads aligned with users' perspectives and interests. This method proved instrumental in the Trump team's effective influence on voters, particularly in pivotal states.

7. Analytics and Public Opinion Research: In the contemporary landscape, both media entities and political campaigns actively employ data and analytics to scrutinize public opinion and assess the efficacy of political messages (Macagno, 2022).

This approach enables a nuanced understanding of audiences, facilitating the customization of communication strategies for optimal outcomes. The process involves comprehensive analytics and public opinion research, encompassing data collection, information analysis, audience segmentation, and strategy optimization. Diverse sources, including social media, surveys, website traffic, and responses to advertising, contribute to the data pool. Following analysis, the derived insights are utilized to discern trends, segment the audience, and gauge the effectiveness of communication strategies. This methodology enhances the comprehension of which political messages exert the most impactful influence on the audience, thereby augmenting the effectiveness of political and media communications.

Understanding these processes and fostering critical thinking is crucial for discerning information from disinformation, ensuring a more objective and rational political discourse. Resistance and response to manipulation in political English-language discourse can take various forms. Strategies to counteract manipulation are delineated in Table 1.

Table 1 Strategies to counteract manipulation

Name	Description
Critical thinking	One of the paramount strategies for resisting manipulation is the cultivation of critical thinking. Individuals need to acquire the skills to scrutinize information, assess its credibility and sources, and differentiate factual content from disinformation. Proficiency in the fundamentals of critical thinking serves as a safeguard against falling prey to the snares set by manipulators.
Information literacy	Individuals well-versed in the functioning of media and social networks tend to exhibit greater resistance to manipulation. Information literacy plays a pivotal role in enabling individuals to discern subtle methods of influence, thus providing a shield against them.
Active information consumption	Selecting trustworthy news sources, diversifying the channels of information, and seeking various perspectives is imperative. Active consumption of information serves as a safeguard against falling into the snares of monopolistic information.
Public reactions	Individuals can voice their dissent and respond to manipulation through diverse channels such as social media, public engagements, and discussions. They can unveil fake news, critique political figures, or report instances of disinformation to law enforcement agencies.

Source: compiled by the authors.

In the contemporary information landscape, characterized by increased accessibility and continuous availability of diverse information facilitated by the Internet and social media, the significance of education and media literacy has heightened. Competence in media consumption literacy and the cultivation of a critical approach to information are pivotal elements in safeguarding individuals' information security and fortifying societal resilience against external influences.

Education forms the cornerstone of media literacy development. Commencing from early educational stages and persisting throughout the learning trajectory, individuals should cultivate the skills to comprehend, analyze, and assess the information encountered in the media (Mialkovska et al., 2023). This encompasses proficiency in distinguishing between facts and opinions, discerning sources of dependable information, comprehending methods of information manipulation, and fostering critical thinking skills.

Media literacy encompasses the capacity to recognize and counteract disinformation, fake news, and various forms of manipulation. Proficiency in verifying sources and scrutinizing information for accuracy, along with contextual analysis, aids in steering clear of disinformation pitfalls and maintaining an objective interpretation of events. Additionally, media literacy plays a crucial role in the realm of culture and social values. It fosters critical thinking and the aptitude to analyze diverse perspectives while comprehending various approaches to issues. This contributes to the cultivation of constructive political discourse, the advancement of civil society, and the preservation of democratic values. Ultimately, media literacy assumes significance in ensuring the information security of citizens. In the context of escalating information conflicts and cyber threats, literacy in the use of the Internet and social media stands as a linchpin for safeguarding one's privacy and personal data.

In political discourse, the employment of emotional language is a crucial aspect. Political leaders and public figures strategically utilize this technique to prompt specific actions from the public and to evoke sentiments of sympathy or antipathy towards particular ideas or individuals. The infusion of emotional nuances is accomplished through the utilization of lexical choices, intonation, and gestures, rendering the speech more expressive and persuasive.

An illustrative instance of the effective use of emotional coloring in political discourse is found in Barack Obama's "Yes We Can" speech during his 2008 presidential campaign in the United States of America.

In this speech, Obama employs the phrase "Yes We Can" as a motivational leitmotif. It transcends a mere expression of a positive opinion or political stance. Instead, this phrase serves to evoke emotions, instill a sense of community, and foster unity among the audience.

The emotional tenor of the speech is further accentuated by the tone and rhythm of Obama's delivery. Uttering the words "Yes We Can" with profound emotion and unwavering confidence, he imparts a distinctive expressiveness. This serves to impact the listeners' emotions, uplift their morale, and motivate them to take action.

Rhetorical figures and stylistic devices constitute an essential component of political discourse. Their application serves to enhance the persuasiveness of speech and augment its impact (Kovalchuk et al., 2023). Political leaders deploy techniques such as allegory, metaphor, epiphany, and antithesis, among others, to underscore the significance of their ideas and positions.

Let's examine the utilization of rhetorical figures and stylistic devices in Barack Obama's "Yes We Can" speech:

1. Repetition: One of the most prominent rhetorical figures in the speech is the repetition of the phrase *"Yes, we can."* This repetition appears several times in the speech and functions as a central motif, reinforcing the themes of hope, possibility, and unity.

2. Antithesis: The employment of antithesis, evident in the contrast between *"impossible odds"* and *"we can,"* strengthens the narrative of overcoming challenges and underscores the optimism for change. For instance, Obama states, *"For when we have faced down impossible odds, when we've been told we're not ready or that we shouldn't try or that we can't, generations of Americans have responded with a simple creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, we can."* This use of antithesis encourages the audience to embrace challenges and cultivate a belief in their ability to succeed.

3. Metaphors and Allegories: Obama employs the metaphor of *"corridors of shame"* to depict the inadequate state of education. This metaphor creates a vivid and emotional image, underscoring the urgency for change within the education system.

4. Paradox: The use of paradox accentuates the significance of hope and its role in the history of the United States: *"In the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope."*

5. Rhetorical Questions: Obama utilizes rhetorical questions to actively engage the audience and stimulate contemplation: *"But in the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope. Is there a doctor in the house? Is there a builder in the house? Is there a soldier in the house?"* These rhetorical questions invite the audience to reflect on their roles in shaping the American narrative.

6. Strength of Argumentation: The speech incorporates several well-structured arguments and logical reflections to substantiate its claims, including the commitment to ending the war in Iraq, addressing the needs of veterans, and resolving issues that affect all citizens.

7. Emotional Appeal: Obama conveys his gratitude to the audience with expressions like *"Thank you, New Hampshire. I love you back. Thank you. Thank you."* This emotional appeal enhances the connection between him and the audience, fostering a sense of shared appreciation and engagement.

These rhetorical figures and stylistic devices enhance the effectiveness of Barack Obama's speech, providing it with rhetorical expression and aiding in the consolidation of key ideas in the audience's memory.

Political leaders employ a diverse range of speech strategies to attain their objectives in political discourse. These strategies encompass appeals to significant historical figures, persuasion through evidence and logic, and the identification of the speaker with the audience. Each of these strategies contributes to shaping public opinion and exerting influence on political decisions.

Barack Obama's "Yes We Can" speech incorporates diverse speech strategies that enhance its effectiveness and amplify its impact on the audience. The analysis of these strategies, along with examples from the speech, is detailed in Table 2. These speech strategies played a pivotal role in enabling Barack Obama to craft an influential and persuasive speech that left a lasting impression on the audience, ultimately shaping public opinion.

Table 2 Speech strategies of the "Yes We Can" speech

Name of the strategy	Example	Description
Appeal to emotions	I am still fired up and ready to go.	Barack Obama employs emotionally charged language to convey his eagerness and determination, expressing his enthusiasm for achieving goals.
Celebrating the winner and recognizing the opponent	I want to congratulate Senator Clinton on a hard-fought victory here in New Hampshire. She did an outstanding job.	Obama compliments his rival, acknowledging her efforts and success.
Appeal to pride and identity	We are one people, we are one nation.	Obama underscores the unity of American identity and shared objectives, fostering a sense of national pride.
The tone of voice and intonation	That's what this election is all about... It belongs to the organizers, the volunteers, and the staff who believed in this journey and rallied so many others to join the cause.	When contemplating the shared identity and objectives of Americans, the tone underscores the significance of unity.

Source: compiled by the authors.

In political discourse, words and phrases often acquire specific meanings that may deviate from their conventional usage. This provides an opportunity for politicians and public figures to manipulate the linguistic domain to achieve specific goals.

The reinterpretation of words in political discourse is a significant aspect of speech influence, wherein politicians and public figures attribute new or specific meanings to words and expressions to attain particular political objectives. This concept involves fostering a positive image through the reinterpretation of words, employing distinct political jargon, and manipulating public opinion by altering the meanings of words. The reinterpretation of words in political discourse serves as a crucial tool for influencing the perception and comprehension of political events and initiatives.

In English-language political discourse, there have been numerous instances of the reinterpretation of words and expressions. One well-known example is the use of the term "fake news" in a context that does not consistently align with its original meaning. Commencing in 2016, during the US presidential campaign, the term "fake news" gained popularity and was employed to discredit independent media or adversaries, even if their news was accurate. This reinterpretation of the term "fake news" resulted in a blurred understanding and confusion between genuine news and disinformation. Political actors and certain media outlets utilized the term to accuse each other of disseminating fake news to disparage or undermine the credibility of their rivals. This example illustrates how political discourse can alter the meaning of terms and words to achieve political objectives. Consequently, the term "fake news" has evolved to connote not only false news but has also forfeited its objectivity, becoming a tool in political contention.

The deployment of euphemisms is commonplace in political discourse, serving as a significant method to shape public perceptions of political decisions. Euphemisms enable politicians to mitigate negative associations and alter the perception of specific events or choices (Shkvorchenko, 2020). Employing euphemisms is one approach to attenuate the adverse repercussions of particular political decisions. Rather than directly articulating unpopular actions, politicians opt for more indirect or less objectionable terminology. Furthermore, euphemisms empower politicians to uphold their political image, particularly when confronted with the necessity to make unpopular decisions. For instance, the term "revenue enhancement" is employed in lieu of "tax increase." Politicians utilize this euphemism to diminish the negative connotations of tax hikes, seeking to underscore that such measures are undertaken to augment the state's financial resources or enhance financial stability, rather than constituting an escalation in the tax burden on citizens.

In political discourse, manipulating the reverse meanings of the words "for" and "against" serves as a potent tool to influence public opinion. Politicians strategically employ this technique to shape positive or negative perceptions of their initiatives, decisions, and candidates. Utilizing the word "for" imparts a positive connotation, highlighting the beneficial aspects of their proposals. Conversely, the word "against" is employed to detract from the popularity of these proposals by emphasizing the prevention of negative consequences or the restriction of rights. A pertinent illustration of this can be observed in the discourse surrounding the proposition to increase taxes on individuals during the 2020 US presidential election. Presidential candidate Joe Biden advocated for tax reform to ensure fairness in taxation, contending that raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans would contribute to funding social programs and reducing inequality. In contrast, opponents leveraged the reverse meaning, asserting that this initiative was against stimulating entrepreneurship and jobs, and against individual freedom of choice in managing their finances.

In political discourse, ideological terms and phrases play a pivotal role in shaping political perspectives and facilitating communication between politicians and the public. These expressions harbor distinct ideological connotations, contributing to the organization of political discussions, the delineation of political stances, and the formulation of critiques against opponents (Moten, 2020). Ideological terms also function to mobilize supporters and act as tools for critiquing or refuting political initiatives. For instance, within contemporary English-language political discourse, politicians deploy terms like "conservatism," "liberalism," "socialism," "nationalism," and "globalism" to signify their ideological orientations and attract supporters who align with their views. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that ideological terms and phrases do not invariably offer unequivocal definitions of political beliefs and may exhibit variations in meaning contingent on the context. Moreover, they become subjects of controversy and debate when politicians endeavor to underscore distinctions between themselves and their adversaries.

In general, ideological terms and phrases play a crucial role in shaping political discourse by elucidating political configurations and aiding the public in comprehending political positions and actors. For instance, in U.S. political discourse, the term "supply-side economics" is utilized to characterize economic theory and policies endorsing tax cuts for businesses and affluent individuals, premised on the assumption that this will spur economic growth and elevate overall income. Coined during the administration of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, significant tax reforms were implemented to favor businesses and the upper class. Within political discourse, the term is subject to discussion and criticism contingent on political perspectives. Some political parties and figures endorse supply-side economics as a mechanism to invigorate investment and economic growth, while others contend that this policy exacerbates societal inequality.

5. Conclusions

Language and style in English-language political discourse wield a substantial influence on the construction of images of politicians and the apprehension of political ideas. The media employs an array of linguistic devices and stylistic means to attain their objectives in political discourse, encompassing the formation of candidate images and the molding of public opinion. The

significance is further underscored by the deployment of rhetorical devices and speech strategies by political leaders to fortify their positions and sway their audiences.

Education and proficiency in comprehending, scrutinizing, and assessing media information are pivotal for the judicious utilization of information and safeguarding privacy in the digital realm. Given the escalating influence of the media in shaping political discourse, citizens must be adept at navigating information and possess the acumen to differentiate between authentic information and disinformation. Media literacy further augments the cultivation of critical thinking, a prerequisite for fostering constructive political discourse and upholding democratic values.

In the contemporary political discourse and media landscape, the influence of language and media literacy holds paramount significance in shaping public opinion and political decisions. Proficiency in comprehending the tools and techniques of language influence facilitates a more nuanced analysis of political discourse, while media literacy plays a pivotal role in fortifying information security and society's resilience to external influences. Further research in this domain has the potential to enhance our comprehension of the intricate interplay between language, media, and their impact on political processes and society at large.

The utilization of diverse linguistic strategies, rhetorical figures, and stylistic devices empowers political leaders and the media to manipulate public opinion by shaping the emotional state and attitudes of citizens toward political issues. This influence becomes particularly pronounced in the realm of English-language political discourse during elections and significant political events.

Simultaneously, the examination of political discourse and language strategies persists as a pressing endeavor for researchers. A more comprehensive exploration of the reinterpretation of words and phrases in political messages, alongside an investigation into the influence of social networks and Internet portals on the shaping of political opinions, holds substantial scientific and practical promise. Ongoing critical analysis and reflection by researchers are essential for understanding contemporary political discourse, given its impact on the evolution of democratic processes and societal values.

Ethical considerations

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Conflict of Interest

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