LINGUISTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSING PERSUASIVENESS IN THE BRITISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Tetiana Harasym,

PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,
Department of English Philology and
Methods of English Language Teaching
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnaiuk National Pedagogical University
Ternopil, Ukraine
garasym@tnpu.edu.ua
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4971-7809

Abstract

This article examines the linguistic and stylistic techniques employed by Boris Johnson in his political speeches to enhance their persuasiveness and resonance with audiences. Political discourse, fundamentally aimed at influencing and convincing, is shaped by various pragmatic, sociological, and psychological factors and often leverages diverse linguistic strategies to achieve its impact. The politician's speeches are distinguished by the frequent use of logical and stylistic means of persuasion, including language tools such as emphasis, intensification, simplification, and polarization. At the stylistic level, Boris Johnson frequently incorporates expressive devices (epithets, metaphors, similes, hyperbole, and antithesis) that help create vivid imagery and engage listeners emotionally by comparing contrasting qualities or ideas.

Additionally, Johnson's syntactic choices – such as repetition, polysyndeton, rhetorical questions, and exclamatory sentences – emphasize key points and stimulate emotional responses from the audience, highlighting specific messages and calls to action. His speeches are characterized by a dynamic, engaging tone, where the speaker often begins by identifying challenges before shifting toward a more optimistic, supportive stance, fostering confidence and unity. Boris Johnson's discourse exemplifies a strategic and impactful approach to political communication through these techniques. Future research might further explore comparative analyses of persuasive methods across various political texts and languages to understand the mechanisms of influence within political discourse.

Keywords: political discourse, political speech, stylistic device, persuasiveness, communicative strategy, communicative tactics.

Introduction

In contemporary political communication, the ability of a politician to effectively influence and persuade an audience is crucial. Political discourse, by definition, is a structured form of communication shaped by the context in which it occurs and influenced by various pragmatic factors. Central to its purpose is using language to sway audiences, encouraging acceptance and support for the presented ideas. Boris Johnson, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, is known for his distinctive rhetorical style and persuasive communication techniques, which he frequently employs to engage listeners and underscore his political messages.

The article aims to examine the specific linguistic and stylistic strategies that characterize Boris Johnson's political speeches, analyzing how they enhance the effectiveness of his discourse. The politician's speeches reveal a strategic use of logical and stylistic tools to clarify his stance and influence audience perception.

Political discourse: definition and features

Political discourse is a coherent text of political communication combined with pragmatic, sociological, psychological, and other factors. Political discourse is actualized in such genres as a political speech, the inaugural address of the prime minister or president, a political document (presidential decree, content of the law), government reports in parliament, approval or discussion of the budget. A unique feature of political discourse, as well as discourse in general, is the relationship of discourse with its participants, i.e., speakers and listeners/readers, as well as with the communicative intentions of the one who speaks and influences the addressee. A significant role is given to using specific formal means when familiar language elements receive an unusual interpretation, when ordinary, at first glance, situations are used in new, unexpected contexts.

Critical discourse analysis interprets discourse as a resource of power, which the ruling social group uses to support its ideology and relations of subordination and submission – researchers of political discourse N. Kondratenko (Kondratenko 2009), Yu. Listuchenko (Listuchenko 2013), O. Myhailenko (Myhailenko 2009), L. Soloshchuk (Soloshchuk 2006), T. Stetsyk (Stetsyk 2014), D. Kharytonova (Kharytonova 2017), and V. Skriabina (Skriabina 2018) use linguistic methods, focusing on the study of text and language to identify practices of manipulating public opinion.

G. Kress (Kress 1979) claims that the ideological position is realized with the help of textual syntactic structure. Thus, the ideological form is translated with the help of linguistic content. According to R. Wodak (Wodak 2014, 305), power is always biased because the political sphere mainly involves the subjective interest of "behind-the-scenes forces."

The context plays a leading role in the political discourse theory of T. A. van Dijk (van Dijk 1993), who considers it a mental model with the help of which a participant in the political process perceives the information received. Each individual's mental model is a unique construct. Discursive practices are only possible with certain stereotypes, knowledge, group attitudes, and accepted opinions – many processes around the individual lead to a forced cognitive reduction using fixed mental models. So, the text is perceived in the context of our knowledge.

The impact of discourse on the formation of social-political reality and the construction of social knowledge is established. However, I. Butova (Butova 2009, 232) believes this influence has a reverse character, ensuring social practice and discourse interaction. Similarly, R. Wodak (Wodak 2014, 310) claims that "discourse and social, cultural reality precondition each other: discourse shapes society and culture in the same way as they shape it; their relationship is dialectical. This means that every case of language use makes its small contribution to the reproduction or transformation of

society and culture, including power relations". Discourse researcher I. Yushkovets (Yushkovets 2008, 11) believes that political discourse is institutional communication, which, unlike personal-oriented communication, uses its system of signs (terminology, phraseology, etc.).

Having considered the approaches and interpretations of political discourse, we note that at the present stage, there are trends that strengthen the connection between political and linguistic phenomena, as well as a deeper specialization of theories of political discourse. We consider political discourse as the discourse of politicians, a coherent text determined by the political communication situation in combination with pragmatic, sociological, psychological, and other factors. It is formed in the context of the functioning of political institutions (government meetings, parliamentary sessions, party congress, etc.). Public speeches of politicians, statements of politicians, political observers, commentators, mass media publications, and specialized publications dealing with various aspects of politics can be included in political discourse.

The primary function of political discourse is the function of influence through language and persuasion of the addressee in the correctness and expediency of what is proposed by the author of the text. The persuasiveness of political discourse texts is evident at all language levels. The linguistic essence of persuasiveness consists of a specific influence of the author of a written or oral message on his addressee to convince him of something, urging him to commit or not to execute particular actions. The communicative, persuasive process is represented by the situations in which people consciously produce messages aimed at causing a specific behavior of the recipient or influencing his point of view. Language means of different levels are used to create persuasiveness, for instance, at the logical level (emphasis on a specific question, concretization, intensification, simplification, polarization), at linguistic and stylistic levels (lexical, grammatical, and stylistic means of persuasion).

As a multi-genre type of public speech, political discourse is characterized by a specific vocabulary determined by political activity, a peculiar choice, and the organization of particular structures of expression by pragmatic guidelines, goals, and conditions of communication that have developed in the process of the professional activity of politicians. Therefore, linguistic manipulation of political consciousness in political discourse is carried out with the help of verbal implication at the expense of ideology, assessment, modality, mobility, semantics, and pragmatics of the word, variability of denotative and connotative meanings of the same language signs under the influence of social and cultural factors.

Public speech as a type of discourse

M. Babak (Babak 2006, 6) notes that politics is a set of linguistic actions, and at its center are those genres that correspond to the maximum extent to the primary purpose of political communication, i.e., the power struggle. Therefore, the central genres of political discourse are parliamentary debates and political speeches.

The linguistic aspect of political speech is characterized by using keywords, catchphrases, and stylistically unmarked and often emotionally colored vocabulary. As for grammatical means, personal pronouns of the first person (*I, we*) play an important

role. From the point of view of syntax, political speech is characterized by complex, elaborate constructions and infinitive and adverbial inflections. The use of metaphors, epithets, euphemisms, and other tropes makes the speech emotional.

The main communicative goal of a political public speech is a rational and emotional impact on the audience, causing a conscious or unconscious reaction of the recipient. The success of a public speech depends not only on the content but also on the style used by the speaker. Style is a socially conscious and functionally determined internally united set of techniques for using, selecting, and combining means of speech communication in the sphere of one or another social or national language, correlated with other means of expression that serve different purposes, perform other functions in speech social practice of the people.

The conditions under which the speaker-politician communicates with the audience (monologue speech in front of a large audience in an official setting) require several specific stylistic techniques to achieve a communicative effect. First of all, these are techniques capable of attracting listeners' attention to the speech's content. In this regard, the form of the presentation is of particular importance, particularly the prosodic design of the speech. Political speech is a functional type of oral speech, mainly on a personal level and with different speech styles; the specific rhythmic organization of speech can also be attributed to the signs of functional style. Thus, the language of politics is the primary means of manipulation in the political environment, and the text of a public speech is a specific social action of the subject with his communicative intentions, behavior, and interaction tactics with the addressee.

The study of persuasiveness in modern linguistics

Persuasiveness is a category of influence the addressee uses to convince the addressee of something, to urge him to perform or not perform specific actions. According to L. Phillips and M. Jorgensen (Phillips & Jorgensen 2004), there are two aspects to understanding the implementation of persuasive communication. From the addressee's point of view, the cognitive element of persuasiveness is related to planning and predicting a particular speech act according to the addressee's existing knowledge, presuppositions, and attitudes. The linguistic aspect covers the selection and combination of linguistic means in creating a persuasive text to express specific content, considering the statement's primary purpose.

From the addressee's point of view, the cognitive aspect is related to the addressee's personal knowledge, attitudes, and mental activity, which stimulates his attention to the publication and contributes to the successful interpretation of information. The linguistic aspect directly relates to realizing the perlocutionary effect of achieving one's goal using persuasive action. At the center of compelling communication are the addresser and the addressee. Influence is considered not a one-way process but an interaction in which the meaning of the influencing message is generated jointly by the sender and the recipient. Determining factors bring together the speech and cognitive action and interaction of the addresser and the addressee (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2004, 14).

A communicative strategy is a plan, a scheme for the speaker's implementation of a communicative intention, which involves the step-by-step use of language means to obtain the desired result or influence the interlocutor. Communicative strategy is not only the prerogative of the speaker, who initiates communication but also of the addressee, who operates strategies of response, avoidance of response, emotional reaction, etc. Communicative strategies have a concrete embodiment through communicative tactics. A communicative tactic is a speech act directed at implementing the speaker's communicative intention within the limits of the chosen communicative strategy. Speech interaction involves the planning of step-by-step actions and a general plan of interaction implemented through the global implementation of communicative intent in the form of a communicative strategy consisting of several communicative tactics.

The persuasion strategies are determined by speakers' general desire in political discourse to be convinced of their rightness, to be inclined to their own opinion, and to influence the process of making the necessary decisions by the addressee. V. Petrenko (Petrenko 2003, 100) believes that persuasion involves several conditions: "First, the addressee's ability to make a certain decision, perform a certain action of his own free will; secondly, the action expected to be performed by the addressee as a result of the act of persuasion should be considered positive for him; thirdly, the addressee must be able to accept certain assessments or attitudes or perform certain actions consciously". Argumentative and campaigning communication strategies represent persuasion strategies. Separately, this concept considers non-specialized tactics that can be used within any communicative strategy.

According to D. Kharytonova (Kharytonova 2017, 186), persuasiveness is a universal strategy of text creation for socio-functional discourses, which are united by rhetorical communicative-linguistic practice and are regularly reproduced in them. It exists in the form of a dialectical unity of a) a conceptual and thematic plan, including many options for the implementation of persuasive influence, and aimed at the recipient committing a post-communicative action initiated by the addressee; b) a dynamic cognitive-communicative process of text creation associated with the selection and actualization of pragmatic, semantic, and formal-stylistic variants of communicative-linguistic action; c) a set of text signals, the decoding of which by the recipient in the process of primary interpretation of the text (based on the recipient's image of the discursive situation of generation and perception of the text) will contribute to understanding the purpose of the strategy implemented by the addressee.

Thus, persuasive influence involves achieving the desired goal through persuasion based on rational justification, not excluding. Still, on the contrary, assuming and considering emotional and evaluative means of influence is subjective. In such texts, speakers use a wide range of persuasive devices: representing their own opinion on the issue, evaluating or judging the topic, strengthening arguments, demonstrating the problem in a positive or negative light, indicating probability, certainty, or commitment, stimulating the emotions of the audience, direct appeal to actions.

The strategy of persuasiveness has a hierarchical structure consisting of five levels "connected by inclusion relations":

a) general persuasive strategy, a functional characteristic of the texts included in the rhetorical metadiscourse, which correlates with his dominant persuasive intention;

b) personal persuasive strategies, implementation of persuasive intention in the form of content elements included in the propositional structure of individual texts;

c) persuasive communicative tactics, operations of selection and combination, thematic design, and linguistic or other coding of communicative-linguistic action subordinated to a persuasive strategic goal;

d) persuasive communicative steps, specific ways of implementing invariant communicative tactics;

e) markers of persuasiveness, linguistic and non-linguistic means of explication of the persuasive communicative step in the text structure (Horoshko & Poliakova 2018, 5).

When analyzing the discourse, it is customary to distinguish two main strategies that realize the persuasive intention of the addressees and with the help of which they maintain the balance of power: the strategy of justifying and denying inequality in society. The plan of justifying inequality in society provides arguments in favor of the division and polarization of the parties involved in the discursive act through a positive representation of us and a negative representation of them (Phillips & Jorgensen 2004). The denial strategy is based on the fact that there is no inequality. Therefore, there should be no difference between minorities and other groups in society, such as, for example, positive discrimination. However, since access to public discourse is limited for minorities and their voice is heard much less than the voice of the majority, it allows the dominant discourse to influence their mental models (Skriabina 2018, 265). According to T. van Dijk (van Dijk 1993), the cognitive use of power is often the most effective and can manifest in persuasion, manipulation, or deception.

So, the category of persuasiveness projects speech influence with a rational and emotional character. The theory of linguistic influence and persuasiveness are related to each other due to their pragmatic function – persuading the addressee to change their thoughts, assessments, and judgments (using illocutionary force), taking into account the intentions of the addressee and prompting post-communicative action (perlocutionary effect) in favor of the latter.

Linguistic means of expressing persuasiveness in Boris Johnson's public speeches

Three parts are distinguished in the compositional structure of a political speech: the introduction, the central part, and the conclusion. In the introductory part, the speaker establishes contact with the audience, seeking interest and preparing for the perception of information. The British Prime Minister begins his speech with a traditional greeting, which can be short or longer, depending on the degree of formality of the situation and addressees:

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, faithful late-night audience (Johnson 2019f);

Good afternoon, everybody, and thank you very much for coming (Johnson 2021b);

Good morning conference (Johnson 2021a);

Good morning, good morning, good morning (Johnson 2020d);

Good morning everyone, good morning (Johnson 2017).

The central part of politicians' speeches, lexical content, linguistic means, tactics, and strategies of persuasiveness depend on the topic and purpose of the address. Boris Johnson ends his speeches mostly on an optimistic note, emphasizing the positive

development of the situation, and regardless of the topic of the speech, whether it is on the idea of Islamist terrorism, elections, or the pandemic:

We can beat it together. And we will (Johnson 2017);

...we can see the bright future ahead, and we can see how to build it, and we are going to build it together (Johnson 2021a).

In some of the speeches devoted to the pandemic situation, the prime minister's final appeal is to remain united as a unified nation and to protect people's lives:

...look out for each other and commit wholeheartedly to a total national effort (Johnson 2020h);

However, we must stay alert for now, control the virus, and save lives (Johnson 2020f).

Having analyzed the speeches of Boris Johnson 2019–2022, we conclude that many speeches of Prime Minister Boris Johnson can be attributed to ideological discourse, where ideology is a system of ideas and beliefs relevant to a particular social group or community, which represents socio-cultural norms and values of this group. It is characteristic of such speeches that all the meanings within this ideological discourse are united by only one fixed meaning. For example, all the ideas of Boris Johnson's first speech as Prime Minister (Johnson 2020b) are focused on the idea of "Brexit" or leaving the E.U. as the only relevant idea for the community of Great Britain, as the only accurate way of developing society, as the only proper way to a better life in the United Kingdom.

...we are going to restore trust in our democracy. We will fulfill the repeated promises of parliament to the people and come out of the E.U. on October 31, no ifs or buts. We will do a new deal, a better deal that will maximize the opportunities of Brexit while allowing us to develop a new and exciting partnership with the rest of Europe based on free trade and mutual support (Johnson 2020b).

Analyzing the text of Boris Johnson's inaugural speech, it is only possible to notice the author's involvement in journalism and his mastery of the word manifested in the construction of the text, text categories, and stylistics. It should be noted that against the backdrop of Boris Johnson's political career, Johnson continued his hobby, publishing a collection of essays and one novel. The ex-prime minister has bright charisma, and during his career, he has already formed a particular reputation and image in the mass media.

Boris Johnson stands out for his eccentricity, sharp statements, and non-standard behavior. These qualities attracted him to appear on many famous British television shows, and he became a popular favorite.

The lexical content of Boris Johnson's statements attracts attention. It should be emphasized that the Prime Minister does not abuse the use of emotional and expressive vocabulary, as stylistically neutral words dominate his speech: *begin, use, precise, be, saving, different, way, work, day, continue*, used in the literal sense without any stylistic coloring. Such vocabulary primarily enhances the naturalness of the politician's persuasive speech and leaves no doubt as to the truth of his statement. In addition, the politician's discourse is convincing due to the harmonious ratio of two groups of vocabulary: formal (*treatment, discover, contact, provide, increase, provided, unless, apologize, senior clinicians, debate, alternative*) and informal (*get, have, place, if, also, leave, let, need, job, tell, because, about, help*). Colloquial vocabulary helps a political figure to express his opinion convincingly and thus establish trusting relations with citizens. In addition, the prime minister's speech is characterized by the successful use of expressive turns, often evaluative. Despite the general logic of the speech, the prime

minister's speech style demonstrates imagery and emotionality in the depiction of referents or the interpretation of the concepts of a particular reference sphere. Using such stylistic figures as tropes allows Boris Johnson to give an emotional assessment of a referent (*people, events, facts, or himself*).

Our analysis states that the persuasive strategies, techniques, and means of Boris Johnson's speeches vary according to the period and the topic of the speech. Until the pandemic, theatricality, evaluation, promotion, and demotion strategies were dominant, but in the speeches related to the situation with the coronavirus, the strategy of intensification prevailed.

An example of the strategy of theatricality is shown in the following quotation. A large percentage of examples of strategy expression belong to the promise tactics:

My job is to make your streets safer...; My job is to ensure you don't have to wait 3 weeks to see your G.P. (Johnson 2020b).

In the following sentences, the tactics is highlighted by repeated repetition of the phrase "*my job is*". Anaphoric repetition, in combination with hyperbole, creates the image of a strong, decisive leader, ready to solve problems and take responsibility for the mistakes of others.

We will never have checks at or near the border in Northern Ireland. We will respect the peace process and the Good Friday agreement. We will go further and protect the existing regulatory arrangements for farmers and other businesses on both sides of the border; we will allow the U.K., whole and entire, to withdraw from the E.U., with control of our own trade policy (Johnson 2019d)

Thus, Boris Johnson chose his way of communicating with the people, with the working class, which needs answers to pressing social issues. His position is to show that every problem is his work, with which he must cope. A politician knows how to attract an audience thanks to verbal journalistic skills. Stylistic and syntactic techniques, presented in the form of various repetitions and parallel constructions, made it possible to make his speech more convincing, assertive, and fiery.

The evaluation strategy is the main component of the universal persuasive strategy of political discourse. The specificity of this strategy consists of the multipolar evaluation of one object by the subjects of the polemic, as well as the presence of at least two evaluation objects in the discourse ("*own – other*"). When evaluating one object by the subjects of the polemic, the subject-proponent defines the object of evaluation as a conceptual system of "*own*" and is evaluated positively. For the subject-opponent, the object of assessment is included in the "other" conceptual system and evaluated negatively.

As a subject-proponent, Boris Johnson includes his voters and political associates in the conceptual system of "*his*." Thus, using the tactics of appeal to authority and identification with a political figure (in this case, ex-Prime Minister of Great Britain Theresa May, whose name is an authority for the country), Boris Johnson emphasizes the importance of this figure in the life of Great Britain and his loyalty to the ideals it served. At the same time, he uses such expressive phrases as extraordinary service, a privilege to serve:

Above all, I want to thank our outgoing leader, Theresa May, for her extraordinary service to this party and this country. It was a privilege to serve in her cabinet and to see the passion and determination that she brought to the many causes... (Johnson 2019d).

Using the tactics of evaluating "*his*" politician implicitly creates a positive image for himself and his party, emphasizing that "*service for the good of this country*" is the primary goal of his political activity.

The following example illustrates how Boris Johnson draws the special attention of the addressee to what a significant contribution the Conservative Party has made to the life and development of Great Britain during the history of its existence, thereby forming a positive image for himself and his political associates and emphasizing his unconditional superiority over his opponents:

…but if you look at the history of the last 200 years of this party's existence, you will see it is we Conservatives that have had the best insights, I think, into human nature and the best insights into how to manage the jostling sets of instincts in the human heart (Johnson 2019c).

With the help of the superlative degree of comparison of "*the best*", the politician appeals to such philosophical questions as "human essence" and "unruly instincts of the human heart." By using the personal pronouns "*you", "we"*, the speaker deliberately creates an intimate atmosphere of the conversation, which gives it a trusting color. Addressing the people, the politician emphasizes that the British electorate trusts the fate of their country not only to him, the head of Great Britain, but also to his voters and like-minded conservatives, using to denote this invincible coalition, which is much larger and more robust than Boris Johnson himself, pronoun "*we"*, thereby enhancing the effect of the unity of the head of state with the people:

We can, we must and we will, even though things have not been made easier by the surrender bill... (Johnson 2019d)

A prominent place is occupied by the promotion strategy, expressed by such tactics as implicit self-presentation:

The doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters – they are going to get it wrong again (Johnson 2020b).

It stands out clearly in the speech due to the parallel construction, namely the climax: *The doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters*, which ensures the audience's concentration on the speaker's words.

Another example of a promotion strategy is the tactics of deflecting criticism:

I'm absolutely 100 percent anti-racist, I despise and loathe racism (Johnson 2017).

The downward strategy is expressed by the tactics of impersonal accusation in Boris Johnson's first speech as Prime Minister:

...that this country has become a prisoner to the old arguments of 2016 and that in this home of democracy, we are incapable of honoring a basic democratic mandate (Johnson 2020b).

The tactics is expressed by the metaphor "*prisoner to the old arguments*", in which the prime minister refers to the audience most likely to vote differently. The general motive of Boris Johnson's speech is positive. At that time, the Prime Minister did not know that he would face the most substantial test for the country and the world – the COVID pandemic, as a result of which he would have to address the public using completely different strategies.

The strategy of intensification is implemented in politicians' speeches on the topic of coronavirus infection with the help of several lexical means: semantic intensifications (*emergency committee; global pandemic; no escaping the reality*), repetitions and gradations (*Because this disease is particularly dangerous for you, for older people // it is still vital, perhaps more vital than ever // that we will get through*

this, this country will get through this epidemic (Johnson 2020f)). Thus, frequent repetitions of vocabulary with the semantics of illness, suffering, and danger give the speeches an alarming tone.

The politician seeks not only to inform but also to achieve complete trust in the direction of the government and citizens' compliance with its requirements. Auxiliary strategies include the pragmatic strategy of forming an emotional setting. Using his authority, the British prime minister uses the pronoun "*we*" to express the state's point of view, and also, when Boris Johnson speaks on his behalf, the pronoun "*I*," often combining it with evaluative words (adverbs, etc.): *I totally reject; I am profoundly optimistic; That is my point to you, my friends, my Excellencies; I invite you; I hope you will come there; I have no doubt that we can* (Johnson 2020b).

In the following example, taken from a speech on the topic of fighting the pandemic, using the personal pronouns "*I*" and "*we*," the politician wants to indicate victory only if each citizen participates personally:

I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to beat the virus... We will beat the coronavirus, and we will beat it together (Johnson 2019f).

Moreover, of course, we continue to hope for the best. The way to get there and to achieve that optimum outcome is if we all follow the rules, wash our hands, cover our faces, keep our distance – and get a test if we have symptoms so that NHS Test and Trace can keep the virus under control. This is how we will avoid a return to full national lockdown. We've made huge progress together. I know we are going to succeed, and I know we are going to beat this – if each and every one of us plays our part (Johnson 2020f).

It is noticeable that Boris Johnson, using these pronominal forms, is trying to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding in society, involve every citizen in cooperation, and convince them of the importance of complying with all quarantine requirements.

Thus, the public political speech of Boris Johnson is a thoroughly informative and persuasive text with special typological features, the main invariant characteristic of which is an explicitly implemented directive function, manifested in the categories of persuasiveness and pragmatic orientation, supported by informative and argumentative linguistic actions. Effective political speeches help establish connections with voters, prove that the elected official understands his audience's needs, and make people remember him and support him in the next election.

Stylistic means of the persuasiveness of political discourse are the most numerous in the researched material, as they involve the use of expressive means of language to create in the addressee's imagination unique images of those objects or phenomena that the speaker is talking about, imprinting valuable information about them in the reader's mind.

Tropes are familiar in Boris Johnson's speeches. The use of epithets, which are an artistic figurative meaning that emphasizes a characteristic feature, defining the quality of an object, concept, or action, is frequent, for example: *fantastic government* (Johnson 2020f)*, amazing country, intellectual capital* (Johnson 2021b)*, turbulent time* (Johnson 2019f)*, a cold and heartless future* (Johnson 2019d)*, astonishing spectacle* (Johnson 2020h)*, constructive and reasonable proposals* (Johnson 2021b)*, supreme authority* (Johnson 2020h)*, deranged and ruinous plans* (Johnson 2020d)*, bizarre features* (Johnson 2019f)*.

It should be noted that in speeches on the topic of COVID-19, the use of adjectives in the comparative and superlative degrees is frequent: *the worst public health*

crisis for a generation; this disease is more dangerous; fewer people suffer, more beds are available; most dangerous period; most vulnerable people; NHS will be under the most pressure; the more vulnerable members of their family (Johnson 2020e; 2020f).

The examples show Boris Johnson has a negative attitude towards the coronavirus pandemic and reacts emotionally to this account. Evaluative vocabulary here acts as a means of reflecting conviction, but it can also be considered an element of a persuasive strategy.

Epithets with a pejorative meaning when predicting a gloomy future in digital technologies are the following: *a cold and heartless future, the grim finality, the machines insidiously programmed, a gloomy proem, dystopian fantasy.*

The harmful evaluative component is expressed by negative suffixes and prefixes *-less*, *dys-*, as well as components of the semantic meaning of the adjectives and adverbs.

Metaphors in Boris Johnson's speeches are able not only to affect the addressee emotionally but also to encourage reflection on the described problems:

...it has become clear that there are pessimists at home and abroad who think that after three years of indecision that this country has become a prisoner to the old arguments of 2016 (Johnson 2020b).

No one in the last few centuries has succeeded in betting against the pluck nerve and ambition of this country (Johnson 2020b).

In the analyzed speeches, we highlighted:

1) political metaphors: *the chaos and cacophony of two more referendums* (Johnson 2019d), *a monopoly of wisdom* (Johnson 2019c);

2) metaphors of "growth": *energize the country; we are going to rise and ping off the guy ropes of self-doubt and negativity* (Johnson 2019a);

3) metaphors on the topic of actions of the Ministry of Health: *The NHS is sacred to the people of this country* (Johnson 2020e);

4) metaphors about the dangers of the coronavirus: *the growth of this virus* (Johnson 2021b);

5) metaphors of military operations to describe the steps taken by the state to combat the pandemic: *to fight the disease, to beat the virus, to be enlisted* (Johnson 2021b).

The politician turns to the stylistic technique of hyperbole, assessing the described phenomenon and expressing the opinion that history has not seen anything like it. The expression a gathering force is an example of a hyperbolic metaphor based on an exaggeration of the importance of digital technologies. The strengthening of this effect also contributes to the negative form of the phrase. Although according to the English language rules, there can be only one objection in a sentence, the presence of two lines of standing negative sentences and the negative semantics of the verb ignore allow you to reinforce an ambiguous prediction.

Using enumeration, Boris Johnson emphasizes the all-encompassing nature of Google's Internet service, from which it will be tough to hide anything:

You may keep secrets from your friends, from your parents, your children, your doctor – even your personal trainer – but it takes real effort to conceal your thoughts from Google. And if that is true today, in the future there may be nowhere to hide (Johnson 2020b).

In this example, the connection between lexemes is made by the anaphoric repetition of the preposition from and the pronoun *your*. Repetition gives the phrase a rhythmic character and unites it into a single list of elements that characterize universal values accepted in society, especially such spheres of life as family, friends, children, care for health, and well-being. Also, in the given passage, the author uses the

synonymous phrases to keep secrets, to conceal your thoughts, and to hide. Both sentences are constructed in the form of opposition (antithesis), wherein in the first case, the contrast is achieved through the use of the conjunction "*but*" – but in the second – in the form of the lexical opposition today – future.

Depicting the appearance of "smart cities" that will be permeated with sensors, Boris Johnson uses a stylistic device of comparison, with which he compares the urban environment to a Swiss pharmacy, where everything is spotless and precise:

Smart cities will populate with sensors, all joined together by the "internet of things", bollards communicating invisibly with lamp posts. So there is always a parking space for your electric car so that no bin goes unemptied, no street unswept, and the urban environment is as antiseptic as a Zurich pharmacy (Johnson 2021b).

Figurative comparison as antiseptic as a Zurich pharmacy is built on the manifestation of similar qualities and characteristics of the environment and the Swiss pharmacy. A sign of comparison is the adjective antiseptic – completely free from infection, which the speaker uses to give the highest positive assessment of the cities of the future. The stylistic technique is a simple comparison built on comparing the phenomena of life according to their inferiority. The object of comparison is the pharmacy of Zurich because Switzerland has a highly developed healthcare system, and it can justifiably be set as an example. The phrase "*no bin goes unemptied, no street unswept*" is an example of litotes – the use of a prefix with negative semantics (*un-*) is used along with the negative part "*no*" the exact phrase in the affirmative form.

To achieve a humorous effect in his speech, the Prime Minister uses a pun:

*Let's get **Brexit** done, but first, my friends, let's get **breakfast** done* (Johnson 2019a).

In this victory speech, when the Conservatives won the election, Boris Johnson's pun is based on the similarity between "*Brexit*" and "*breakfast*". The politician successfully repeatedly uses a pun to create a comic effect. The speaker wants to demonstrate his cleverness to the audience and change the serious tone to a simpler and more familiar one for the average citizen. The impact of such expressions on the recipient is quite strong since such constructions combine logical, rhythmic, emotional, and expressive aspects.

The stylistic technique used to create the persuasiveness of Boris Johnson's speeches is antithesis (contrast) – emphasizing the opposite in life for greater expressiveness of what is depicted.

We will not accept any diminution in food, hygiene or animal welfare standards but I must say to the America bashes – In doing free trade deals we will be governed by science and not by mumbo-jumbo (Johnson 2017).

In this passage, the word "*mumbo-jumbo*", which can be translated as "abracadabra" or "dance with a tambourine," is contrasted with the word science – "science," which creates a comic effect. Speaking about the supply of products from the U.S., the politician said that when concluding free trade agreements, they will be guided by "science" and not "abracadabra."

The creation of persuasiveness of political discourse at the grammatical-syntactic level takes place by using those grammatical forms and syntactic constructions that can influence the reader's perception of the text to convince him based on comparison of phenomena, intensification of evaluation, direct or indirect calls to action, etc.

The figure of enumeration is a stylistic figure of speech, which consists of the use of homogeneous members of the sentence that perform the same syntactic function, refer to the same member of the sentence, and are connected by a coherent connection.

A vivid example of the use of enumeration can be found in Boris Johnson's speech at the U.N. General Assembly:

But we must be still more ambitious. We need to find the right balance between freedom and control; between innovation and regulation; between private enterprise and government oversight. We must insist that the ethical judgments inherent in the design of new technology are transparent to all. Moreover, we must make our voices heard more loudly in the standards bodies that write the rules. Above all, we need to agree on a common set of global principles to shape the norms and standards that will guide the development of emerging technology (Johnson 2020b).

The prime minister creates the ground for further arguments and lists concrete steps designed to shape public opinion on specific international issues and, in this case, mobilize U.N. member states to action. For this purpose, the British Prime Minister actively uses the linguistic category of modality: the implementation of influence is carried out through modal verbs (must, need), which express a call to action. The same syntactic structure of statements, parallelism, and repetition of the preposition between, which introduces the opposition of the contextual antonyms freedom – control, innovation – regulation, and private – government, make it possible to achieve the effect of expressiveness by emphasizing the semantic contrast of the listed lexical units.

The use of repetition is a characteristic feature of a politician's speech. Thus, by using the repetition of the modal verb must, its emotional and reinforcing value increases, and thus, the Prime Minister emphasizes the duty of every citizen to listen to the decisions of the government:

I must give the British people a very simple instruction – you must stay at home. Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households (Johnson 2020h).

The same is observed when using the repetition of the modal verb should:

... these are the only reasons you should leave your home. You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No. You should not be meeting family members ... You should not be going shopping ... you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can (Johnson 2021b).

Syntactic repetition is used to demonstrate the intensity of thought and call to action:

I thank you because so many millions and millions of people across this country have been doing the right thing. Millions going through the hardship of self-isolation. Faithfully, patiently, and with thought and care for others as well as themselves (Johnson 2020h).

Boris Johnson uses this technique to show that many people are also self-isolating during the pandemic, that we are not alone, and that the speaker thanks people for caring for themselves.

Because it will help our national program to unite and level up and bring together our whole United Kingdom. ... And by expanding our trading relationships to improve the productivity of the entire nation by expanding infrastructure, education, and technology, you know that our program is to bring this country together, combine that with greater free trade. ... Let's bring that country together (Johnson 2019d).

In the given example, the phrase to bring the country together is a peculiar motto of Boris Johnson. The Prime Minister uses this expression to show how important the issue of preserving the state's integrity is for the country's future as a whole and for him, as a politician, in particular. He uses it during almost every speech on the topic of the coronavirus, with the aim, presumably, of cementing the title of the man who wants to unite the country.

Another syntactic device of political discourse is a rhetorical question. This technique sharpens the listeners' attention, enhances the impression, increases the receptiveness of the listeners to the information provided, and, therefore, inclines them to the speaker's position:

So, why I asked innocently, are they so despicable in the eyes of all decent British people? (Johnson 2020b).

In another speech, the combination of a rhetorical question with a "culinary" metaphor demonstrates the stylistic uniqueness of the politician's rhetoric:

...I know that some of you may have been mildly peppered with abuse on the way in, but are you ashamed? Are you downcast? (Johnson 2020b).

In the next example, the irony is enhanced by repeating the same syntactic construction (*your+noun*) and the antithesis (close people oppose the search engine):

You may keep secrets from your friends, from your parents, your children, your doctor – even your personal trainer – but it takes real effort to conceal your thoughts from Google (Johnson 2019f).

We generally call metaphor the most productive stylistic device with the most significant pragmatic potential. However, we found that metaphors often combine with other means and techniques. For example, a politician uses an anaphora, a metaphorical comparison, and a grammatical construction – conditional subordinate clauses of the second type:

... If parliament were a laptop, the screen would be showing the pizza wheel of doom. If parliament were a school, Ofsted would be shutting it down. If parliament were a reality T.V. show, then the whole lot of us would have been voted out of the jungle by now... (Johnson 2019f).

No less emotional and theatrical is Boris Johnson's winning speech style before he officially assumed the post of Prime Minister.

I would just point out to you of course nobody, no one party, no one person has a monopoly of wisdom (Johnson 2020b).

This passage combines the repetition of negative constructions of no one and the metaphor of a monopoly of wisdom.

The combination of several synonyms in one sentence with a negative meaning, from weaker to stronger in ascending order, can have a substantial impact on the addressee, demonstrating the growth of negative traits in the character of Brexit opponents:

The doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters – they are going to get it wrong again (Johnson 2020b).

Here is another interesting example:

But if you look at the history of the last 200 years of this party's existence, you will see that it is we Conservatives who have had the best insights, I think, into human nature (Johnson 2020b).

Boris Johnson directly addresses the audience using a conditional subordinate clause, and the emphatic construction it is we Conservatives who lends great persuasiveness to his speech.

Conclusions

This study has analyzed the linguistic and stylistic strategies used in Boris Johnson's political speeches, highlighting his approach to engaging and persuading

audiences. Political discourse is shaped by pragmatic, sociological, and psychological factors, aiming to influence opinions and gain support. The politician's speeches exemplify this objective through a strategic blend of logical and stylistic techniques, including emphasis, intensification, and polarization, alongside lexical, grammatical, and stylistic devices that strengthen his arguments.

A key feature of Boris Johnson's rhetoric is his use of stylistic devices (epithets, metaphors, similes, hyperbole, antithesis, repetition, polysyndeton, rhetorical questions) to create vivid imagery and clarify complex ideas through meaningful comparisons as well as emphasize key points and evoke emotional responses from the audience, aligning their perception with the politician's message. The analysis reveals that Boris Johnson often begins with a focus on challenges, employing a strategy that underscores negative aspects before shifting to a more optimistic narrative, fostering confidence and encouraging unity. Johnson's rhetorical approach demonstrates his skill in connecting with audiences, establishing himself as a compelling figure on the global stage.

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