

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, COMMUNICATION**LANGUAGE MEANS OF EXPRESSING IMPLICIT EVALUATION
IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL DISCOURSE: PRAGMATIC ASPECT****Oksana Babelyuk**

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Summary

This article deals with role of politics and politicians in modern world, the linguistic tendencies of study of contemporary political discourse and the category of evaluation in general, and language means of expressing implicit evaluation in particular, which is considered to be a semantic and pragmatic category and one of the most powerful means of influence on the audience. The pragmatic aim of contemporary political discourse texts lays in the interpretation of event, conveying a variety of indirect or direct, supportive or opposing evaluating attitudes toward it. This study focuses on different evaluative language means used by politicians in their political speeches on different occasions within the appraisal theory framework, under which in this paper we understand a variety of meaning-making language means used by the speakers to express their evaluative involvement in communication.

Key words: implicit evaluation, political discourse, pragmatic aspect, appraisal theory framework.

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1. Introduction

Attention to contemporary political discourse, considerable strengthening of the role of politics and politicians in the modern world, which is now on the verge of a radical redistribution of its influence on the political map, and close cooperation between political structures and mass media, led to the emergence and quite rapid development of some new branches of knowledge, such as political science, conflictology, imageology, etc.

Any contemporary discourse and politics, in particular, reflect the meaning of evaluation, and some language means, that express evaluation meaning, are used to reflect the attitude, emotions and ideological preferences of the discourse organizer.

Political discourse is a rather popular area of research because it penetrates rapid changes in modern society viewed from multidisciplinary perspectives. A great variety of approaches,

concepts and definitions of political discourse testify to its interdisciplinary nature as well. Most often we come across scientific investigations of political communication and rhetoric (Bitzer, 1981; Chaffee 1975; Graber 1981; Swanson & Nimmo 1990), and in the field of presidential rhetoric in particular (Campbell & Jamieson 1990; Hart 1984; Snyder & Higgins 1990; Stuckey 1989; Thompson 1987; Windt 1990).

Being usually delivered by politicians, political discourse is a complex linguistic phenomenon, which is directly or indirectly aimed at distributing, or gaining political power and winning the majority of votes during elections due to its great pragmatic effect. This article deals with the category of evaluation in general, and language means of expressing implicit evaluation in particular, which is considered to be a semantic and pragmatic category and one of the most powerful means of influence on the audience.

The pragmatic aim of contemporary political discourse texts lies in the interpretation of the event, conveying a variety of indirect or direct, supportive or opposing evaluating attitudes toward it. That is why it is so important to analyze and explore the deep-seated attitudes and evaluative values implied in such texts from the perspective of evaluation theory.

In political discourse, there are different transitivity systems to highlight and imply a specific evaluation attitude. It is quite obvious that political discourse texts always express the author's attitude, as well as the media's pragmatic influence and ideology. Fowler (1991) pointed out that the media tend to employ special language resources, which are encoded with certain covert attitudinal denotation, to report the events happening beside us to coordinate the pragmatic influence on the readers.

This study focuses on different evaluative language means used by politicians in their political speeches on different occasions within the Appraisal theory framework, under which in this paper we understand a variety of meaning-making language means used by the speakers to express their evaluative involvement in communication.

2. The theoretical assumptions of evaluation theory

The evaluation theory “focuses on and explores the attitudes and emotions in the discourse to achieve the purpose of the alliance with communication partner (Martin and Ross 2003: 23).” Martin's Appraisal System Theory (AST) provides a powerful analytic tool for evaluation analysis. It consists of three subsystems: attitude, engagement and graduation. *Attitude* is concerned with positive and negative emotional reactions, feelings, and evaluations of things. It can, in turn, be divided into three systems: affect contains the resources for construing feelings and emotional reactions (like happiness/unhappiness, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and security/insecurity). *Judgement* is related to resources to assess behaviour according to different normative principles (social, moral, etc.). *Appreciation* encompasses resources to capture aesthetic valuation.

Attitude is often seen as the central system within Appraisal, how we can express feelings and evaluation of both people and things. Engagement is concerned with the dialogic positioning of the speaker/writer. Engagement helps define how the speaker or writer views the opinion (e.g., as open to negotiation or not) through resources such as projection, modality and concession. Finally, Graduation contains scales of Appraisal intensification degrees which can be high or low. Graduation is further subdivided into systems: Focus and Force. Through these two axes of scalability we can measure the intensification degree of an evaluation – how strong or weak the feeling is (Force) and the degree of prototypical (Focus). Force includes the analysis of intensification in gradable linguistic features through the presence of realizations such as intensification, comparatives, superlatives,

linguistic repetitions, morphology and phonological features. Focus comprehends non-gradable linguistic features in which graduation can adjust the strength of boundaries. Within Focus we find sharpen (prototypical values), and soften (non-prototypical).

So, according to Martin (*Martin & White, 2005*), the evaluation in a text can be *explicit* or *implicit*. The explicit evaluation is regularly realized through the vocabulary with clear attitudinal meaning, while the implicit is expressed by some neutral semantic structure (but with attitudinal denotation) in a text. There are three approaches to realising the implicit evaluation: metaphors that provoke the evaluation; 2) the flagging of graduation resources and 3) the affording of ideational meaning. The implicit attitude in the ideational meaning is mainly embodied by the transitivity system that belongs to the theoretical framework of functional linguistics and consists of processes, event participants, and event environmental components.

In recent years, research on the category of evaluation in general and in media discourse texts, in particular, has been continuous and fruitful. Taking into account the research methods of the category of evaluation, they can be divided into critical reading strategy research (*Liu Chengyu 2002*), social cognitive model and intertextual analysis (*Zhang Lei 2007*) and critical discourse analysis (*Shan Shengjiang 2011*). Although many scholars have obtained some satisfactory results in the field of evaluation in different texts and different discourses, these studies focus mainly on explicit evaluation language resources, and the researches on the implicit attitudes induced by ideational meaning are still rather weak.

The category of evaluation in the realm of psychology can be named as “conflicts between the “head” and the “heart”. In other words, we may experience feelings of apprehension and discomfort when encountering members of stigmatized groups even though we intellectually abhor prejudice and wish to express solidarity with minorities; and a small spider may elicit an unpleasant fright response although we know that it is entirely harmless. We may also feel romantically attracted to a particular person despite firmly believing that this person is not a good match; the sight of a high-calorie dessert may elicit an impulse to indulge although we know that it is unhealthy and detrimental to our goal to lose weight.

Over the last two decades, psychologists have gained valuable insights into the causes and consequences of such evaluative conflicts by comparing verbal judgments on traditional self-report measures (e.g., attitude scales, likeability ratings) to spontaneous responses on performance-based paradigms (e.g., sequential priming tasks, implicit association test). Hence, evaluative judgments on the former type of measures can be described as *explicit evaluations* in the sense that their evaluative meaning is explicit in the observed response (e.g., participants explicitly report their agreement or disagreement with an evaluative statement about an object). In contrast, spontaneous responses on the latter type of measures can be described as *implicit evaluations* in the sense that their evaluative meaning is implicit in the observed response (e.g., evaluative responses are inferred from participants’ latencies in responding to positive and negative words that are preceded by brief presentations of an object).

With this idea in mind, a special associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model has been worked out. It explains dissociations between implicit and explicit evaluations in terms of two functionally distinct mental processes (*Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007, 2011*). By specifying the mutual interplay between these processes, the APE model provides an overarching framework that specifies when implicit and explicit evaluations should be related and when they should be unrelated. Besides, the APE model can predict the conditions under which a given factor should lead to (a) changes in implicit but not explicit evaluations, (b) changes in explicit but not implicit evaluations, or (c) corresponding changes in implicit and explicit evaluations.

The category of evaluation from a linguistic perspective is a complex anthropocentric phenomenon, that reflects human nature and depends on the values and axiological norms of a person or society. That's why much attention has been paid to the evaluative aspect of linguistic personality in the framework of communicative linguistics (Karasik, 2004), as well as to the evaluative function of lexemes (Sinclair, 2004) and the use of evaluative language means producing a pragmatic impact on the addressee (Fraser, 1996).

A systematic interdisciplinary approach to the category of evaluation has been elaborated by H. Pryhod'ko, who states that evaluation has a universal character, and is observed in all spheres of human life. With this idea in mind, she treats evaluation as a complex of its linguistic and communicative peculiarities, as well as a semantic and pragmatic category (Pryhod'ko, 2013, p. 23), which is connected with a definite set of values.

By the way, there is no direct coincidence between values and perceptions, as people of different ages/genders may have different perceptions about many things. However, there are at least a dozen of values in society that might be accepted as shared ones (Sillars & Garner, 1982, p. 187) as communities are formed around shared values about the communal activity (Martin & White, 2005, p. 28). That's why values can be treated as one of the means of categorization based on evaluation, and the world can be described as a hierarchy of such values. Motives of evaluation and evaluation itself don't have a direct connection, though they are in a permanent empirical interrelation in the consciousness of people (Arutyunova, 1988).

According to Maslow (Maslow, 1999, p. 46), values are predetermined by certain needs at a definite period of life, such as 1) basic needs of the lower level (physiological needs, security) and 2) of higher level (love, acknowledgement, cognitive needs).

The consideration of these needs might be crucial for the speeches of politicians if they want to win more votes. For example, Joe Biden's inauguration speech begins with a starting sentence: "*This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A Day of history and hope. Of renewal and resolve*". Using these parallel constructions with two epithets *America's* and *democracy's* Joe Biden implicitly expresses his desire to support the course of democracy started by his predecessors.

Moreover, cultural values are also essential for political discourse as they serve as a certain frame within definite ethnic groups. For example, Borys Johnson addresses his audience: "*Chag Sameach to Jews here in the UK and across the globe gathering around the Seder table this evening. Wherever you are making matzah and whoever you are breaking it with, I hope this Passover brings you joy and renewed hope*". In this textual fragment, we come across a traditional religious greeting "Chag Sameach" and cultural markers, such as "Seder table", "matzah", "Passover", which reveal cultural information about the Jewish celebration of Passover. It's quite obvious that ordinary readers are not aware of the notion "Seder table", except those, who belong to a Jewish community. So, "Seder table" is a ceremonial dinner at the table on the occasion of Passover in Jewish religious tradition, according to which special bread matzah is divided among all the members of the family. Having used a special greeting and cultural markers on this religious occasion Borys Johnson explicitly expressed his respect to the representatives of the Jewish community.

To sum it up, we can assume that the way politicians use different evaluative language means is what determines their political success. Therefore, Opeibi (2009) concentrate on the fact that "no matter how good a candidate's manifesto is; no matter how superior political thoughts and ideologies of a political party may be, these can only be expressed and further translated into social actions for social change and social continuity through the facilities provided by language". Consequently, it is not important how big the political achievements

are, any politician still needs special language means to persuade, convince, entertain, enlighten, inform, and promise other people. Language works as a bridge to the hearts of people in politicking. Relating to this matter, the support that citizens have for politicians will be determined by **what** they say and **how** they say it for success to be achieved in candidacy, programmes or policies.

3. Language means of expressing implicit evaluation in English texts functioning in modern political discourse

Evaluation can be defined as the speaker's objective or subjective attitude to a certain object, which can be explicitly or implicitly expressed by different language means. For example, saying *"my whole soul is in this: bringing America together. Uniting our people. And uniting our nation"* Joe Biden explicitly announces the motto of his work for the benefit of the people. *"I will be a president for all Americans. I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did"*. These sentences implicitly characterize Joe Biden as a leader who believes in his people, understands the current political situation and those who did not support him and is ready to unite the country. His decisiveness and confidence in his ability to reach his goals demonstrate his willpower, readiness to serve his people, positive thinking and success orientation. These personal qualities as well as his consecutiveness, political perspicacity, strong desire to better the lives of Americans, and readiness to struggle for democracy and unity of the nation helped him to be elected president and gain the highest position in the country.

In the abstract below, Donald Trump embodied the metaphor *"Trojan Horse"* to reveal his implicit negative evaluation of illegal immigrants living in America. A figurative image of a Trojan Horse is used as an allusion to describe something unknown or fake, unpredictable. It is also the name of a computer virus, which usually damages the whole computer system. The immigrants were compared to this virus since Donald Trump regarded them as people, who cause many problems to the United States and can damage the whole country: *"Most incredibly, because to me this is unbelievable, we have no idea who these people are, where they come from. I always say Trojan Horse. Watch what's going to happen, folks. It's not going to be pretty."* (Donald Trump's transmigration speech).

Being an example of a political discourse text Joe Biden's inauguration speech contains different evaluative language means, such as 1) social and political vocabulary (*democracy, unity, the peaceful transfer of power, political extremism, domestic terrorism, historic moment of crisis and challenge, violence, conservative vs liberal, peace, progress and security*), 2) gradations (*...more than two centuries, over the centuries, 108 years ago, yesterday, today, tomorrow*), 3) verbs, which mean a repeating action (*rebuild, renewal, resolve, retreat, restore*), 4) other stylistic devices of emotional influence (repetitions, rhetoric questions). Using rhetorical questions as evaluative language means *"Will we rise to the occasion? Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world for our children?"* Joe Biden attracts the audience's attention to the president direct answers: *"I believe we must and I believe we will. We will write the next chapter in the American story"* By the way, asking general questions with a rising tone is a rather successful stylistic device as modulation of a human voice allows to influence the audience's consciousness.

American society is known to be dedicated to the democratic values set by the Founding Fathers. For example, an experienced politician, Hillary Clinton, as a Democratic candidate repeatedly appeals to these values in her speeches, using sports metaphors: *"So it's great that*

we're back here today, and I am grateful to Jim Clifton and his team for joining us to highlight the urgent need for more and better information about women and gender equality around the world". "It is a race, a race between hope and fear, a race between potential realized and despair imbued in every pore of one's body".

In political discourse texts, the all-national values correspond to the keywords, which become explicit evaluative language means. In this example, Bill Clinton speaks about peace, and this lexeme became a definite semantic core with some collocations: "...*the United States will do whatever we can to support the peace process... and to minimize the risk of peace*"; "... *they (the leaders have agreed to restore the peace...*"; *to help both parties return to the hard work of building peace through negotiations*".

As Hofstede points out (Hofstede, 2011, p. 9), American society is characterized by a high degree of individualism, and masculinity, and a low level of power distance, which shows great equality between community levels and creates a more stable cultural environment. It also displays a low level of long-term orientation and leads to the society's belief in meeting its obligations and shows an appreciation for cultural traditions. A low level of uncertainty avoidance reflects a society which does not attempt to control all outcomes and demonstrates a high degree of tolerance for a variety of ideas and thoughts. So, having mentioned tragic moments in American history – the civil war, the Great Depression, world war, 9/11, – the president states: "...*enough of us came together to carry all of us forward. And we can do so now. We can see each other not as adversaries but as neighbors. We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces...*" The modal verb *can* is used to demonstrate the president's positive evaluation of the ability of the Americans to overcome these troubles. Moreover all these sentences start with the word "*we*" which serves as an evaluative language meaning to prove that the president trusts in his people and is sure to reach his goals together with Americans.

Epithet *deadly virus, safe schools, harsh, ugly reality, a desperate cry, eternal peace, a painful lesson, cascading crises (to name a few)* help to make his speech brighter and more impressive, they demonstrate the president's attitude towards his people and the situation in the country.

Characterizing the tense situation in the country, the president states: "*This is a time of testing. We face an attack on democracy and on truth. A raging virus. Growing inequity. The sting of systemic racism. A climate in crisis. America's role in the world. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with the gravest of responsibilities*".

Drawing attention to the problems America faces just now Joe Biden uses not homogeneous parts but short nominative sentences to make the speech more emotional and convincing. It is justified stylistically as it influences the audience's comprehension of the current situation in the country. As the human voice is one of the crucial elements of any aural speech the president deliberately uses short abrupt sentences to make the listeners understand how complicated the situation in the country is.

Understanding that his speech is addressed to be heard by the audience and not to be read the president uses very short sentences with numerous repetitions saying: "*We have much to do in this winter of peril and possibility. Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain*".

Calling people to unite to fight the common foes they face: "*anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, hopelessness*" the president states: "*With unity, we can do great things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome this deadly virus.*

We can deliver racial justice. We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world”.

The message is conveyed through short abrupt sentences, direct addressing of the people, numerous repetitions, appeals and calls and with the usage of the main instrument of any oral speech – the human voice.

Being a deeply religious person Joe Biden cites St Augustine, a saint of his church, who many centuries ago wrote that “*a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love*”. And he states that the common objects they love are opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honour, and the truth. Remembering that most Americans are religious people and trust in God president Biden mentioned the Bible in his speech. Referring to it he says “*we come together as one nation, under God, indivisible ...*” And continues: “*I promise you this: as the Bible says, weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning*”. He calls his citizens: “*Let us say a silent prayer for those who lost their lives, for those they left behind, and for our country. Amen.*” Joe Biden ends his speech with the words: “*May God bless America and may God protect our troops. Thank you, America*”.

4. Conclusions

This paper explores the implicit evaluation of meaning in contemporary English political discourse from the perspective of engagement and graduation. The generation of any discourse reflects the author's attitude, either explicit or implicit. Implicit attitudes are usually triggered by lexical grammatical structures that have no apparent attitude vocabulary. Attitude, engagement and graduation are the three subsystems of the evaluation theory. They are an interconnected whole. The paper provides an overview of appraisal theory used in contemporary political discourse. The theory deals with linguistic resources by which a text/speaker expresses, negotiates and naturalizes peculiar inner-subjective and ideological positions, practically with the language of evaluation. The engagement system indicates the source of attitude and emotions, a set of resources which position a text's proposals, especially with meanings which vary the speaker's engagement with the utterances. In the expression of ideational meaning, it intervenes in the communication system to construct the dialogue space between the subjects, and limits or accommodates different viewpoints. Special attention is paid to language means of expressing implicit evaluation in English texts functioning in modern political discourse and their pragmatic effect on the electorate audience. It has been worked out that stylistic analysis of English political discourse texts made it possible to elicit the most typical stylistic means and devices that are used by different politicians. It is proved that a considerable impact on the target audience could be made by the author's sustained extended metaphors, creative similes, personification, metonymy, associated epithets, lexical repetitions and synonyms. In the research, the authors proved that their convergence and interaction create a certain pragmatic effect on their audience and a definite rhythm, which is extremely important for such types of texts.

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