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## THE STRATEGY OF NEGATIVE REPRESENTATION OF “OTHERS” IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: TACTICS OF IMPLEMENTATION

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the analysis of the strategy of negative presentation of “others” as local strategy within the global discourse strategy. The strategy of influence is considered to be the global strategy of political discourse. Persuasiveness is considered to be a universal property of political discourse and it manifests itself in form of speech manipulation. Political manipulation is treated as specific type of influence. The author interprets manipulation as peculiar communicative speech strategy, to realize which the speaker chooses certain methods and tactics and selects certain language means. The most common local strategies are the

strategies of positive self-presentation and negative presentation of “others”. The paper outlines the tactics to realize the strategy of negative presentation of “others”, namely such tactics as super-generality, exemplification, transposition and attribution, which are considered to be the most common ones. Although no language means are meant to be used for manipulation, the research has proved that almost any language means may be used for that.

**Keywords:** *political discourse, manipulation, local strategy, global strategy, tactic.*

**Калищук Діана. Стратегія негативної презентації «інших» у політичному дискурсі: тактики реалізації.**

**Анотація.** У статті розглядається стратегія негативної презентації «інших» як локальна стратегія у межах глобальної дискурсивної стратегії. Глобальною дискурсивною стратегією політичного дискурсу вважається стратегія здійснення впливу. Специфічним типом впливу є політичне маніпулювання. Автор трактує маніпуляцію як особливу комунікативно-мовленнєву стратегію, для реалізації якої мовець вибирає певні прийоми та тактики, а також відбирає певні мовні засоби. Найпоширенішими локальними стратегіями вважаються стратегії позитивної саморепрезентації та негативної презентації «інших». У статті аналізуються тактики, через які реалізується стратегія негативної презентації «інших», а саме тактики «Надузагальнення», «Наведення прикладу», «Розширення» та «Атрибуція», які належать до найпоширеніших. Проведений аналіз дозволяє стверджувати, що будь які мовні засоби можуть бути використані для реалізації маніпулятивного впливу на адресата.

**Ключові слова:** *політичний дискурс, маніпуляція, локальна стратегія, глобальна стратегія, тактика.*

**Калищук Диана. Стратегия негативной презентации «других» в политическом дискурсе: тактики реализации.**

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается стратегия негативной презентации «других» как локальная стратегия в рамках глобальной дискурсивной стратегии. Глобальной дискурсивной стратегией политического дискурса считается стратегия воздействия. Специфическим типом воздействия является политическое манипулирование. Автор понимает манипуляцию как особенную когнитивно-коммуникативную стратегию, для реализации которой адресант выбирает определенные приемы и тактики, а также отбирает определенные языковые средства. Самыми распространенными локальными стратегиями считаются стратегии положительной самопрезентации и негативной презентации «других». В статье анализируются тактики, посредством которых реализуется стратегия негативной презентации «других», а именно «Сверх-обобщение», «Приведение примера», «Расширение» и «Атрибуция», которые считаются самыми распространенными. Проведенный анализ разрешает утверждать, что любые языковые средства могут использоваться для манипулятивного воздействия на адресата.

**Ключевые слова:** *политический дискурс, манипуляция, локальная стратегия, глобальная стратегия, тактика.*

## **Introduction**

The analysis of political discourse, its functions, and the specific aspects involved interpreting it has been a topic of significant interest in recent decades. Political discourse has been analyzed from different points of view. It involves the verbal behavior of politicians, social inequality, which is expressed in the discourse or the content of political texts and speeches. However, all researchers agree that the main motivation that lies behind political discourse is the prospect of obtaining political power, and that is what determines the strategy of political discourse.

Persuasiveness is considered to be a universal property of political discourse and the strategies by which speakers or writers seek to achieve persuasiveness manifest themselves in utterances or texts in the form of speech manipulations. Speech manipulation is intended to modify attitudes on the level of society or of the individual, either by strengthening them or by weakening them. Using various linguistic means, the speaker can predict and model verbal and non-verbal behavior of the addressee in any direction needed (Chernyavskaya 2006:29).

Political manipulation constitutes a specific type of influence, the aim of which is to indirectly inculcate the audience with certain ideas. Some political groups present messages of this type as if they were objective information, in order to evoke a reaction which is close to the one which is desired (Gronskaya 2003:221). Mechanisms of manipulation are embedded in the language. One single language unit may be used either to uphold truth or to distort it. No single language unit is exclusively intended to be used for manipulative purposes, but almost any language unit may be used for that.

Speech manipulation consists in using the peculiarities and possibilities of a language and the principles of its use to influence speech recipients without them noticing it (Gronskaya 2003: 220-221). According to V. Y. Cherniavskaia, manipulation is perceived as a special communication-speech strategy, aimed at implicit, indirect inducement of the addressee to take some actions; at enhancing some desires, purposes and assessments in the mental schemes of the recipient, which will help the speaker achieve the desired result and this result may not coincide with the interests of the addressee (Chernyavskaya 2006: 19). The aim of speech manipulation is to induce the recipient to perceive some ideas as being veritable, not taking into account all the arguments (Dotsenko 2004). It may be treated as the implementation of a general persuasiveness strategy within the global discourse strategy of influence. **Global discourse strategy** is treated as the communicative intention of a speaker, based on social experience, to satisfy his own individual needs and desires, and as the language embodiment of this intention. This global discourse strategy is a basic instrument of linguistic discourse analysis (Martyniuk 2009:159). The implementation of a global discourse strategy involves the utilization of various local strategies. According to O. Issers, speech strategy is viewed as a set of speech actions aimed at achieving certain result (Issers 2006: 54). Anton Golodnov views speech strategy as a system of operations to select and combine, to thematically design and textually code some communicative actions which are performed by the speaker in accordance with a corresponding strategic goal (Golodnov 2003:11). Hence, speech strategy may be defined as an integral system of operations performed by the speaker in the process of selecting the means to fulfil his communicative goals to the optimal degree in actual communication.

Manipulation involves using language in some special and subtle manner in order to make an impact on the addressee. The speaker chooses certain methods and tactics and selects certain language devices (Chernyavskaya 2006:46-47). The most common local strategies are those of positive self-presentation, and the negative presentation of "others". Strategies of negative presentation are used to enable the

speaker to create the “WE” circle and to separate it from the “THEY” circle. The negative presentation of “others” in political discourse is not merely a description of “bad guys”, but a politically appropriate selection of some definite features, with an emphasis on the currently relevant properties which are to be defined in the discourse (Dijk 2013:245). Several different types of tactics can be employed to implement strategies for creating a negative presentation of “others”, Our investigation involves the analysis of the following tactics: super-generality, exemplification, transposition and attribution, which are considered to be among the most common ones (Leontyev 2003; Zasiékina, Zasiékin 2008:65-66).

### The study and discussion

The ‘super-generality’ tactic is one of the effective methods of exerting a manipulative influence in political discourse. This tactic consists of describing some aspects of unitary or partial experience, some single model, but in order to emphasize the importance and the cognitive value of the assessment, this model is transposed onto a more general group scheme. The characteristics of certain individuals or events are attributed by extension to all the members of some ethnic, social or other group, or to all ethnically or politically marked social situations.

(1) *Now, there’s no question that some regulations are outdated, unnecessary, or too costly. In fact, I’ve approved fewer regulations in the first three years of my presidency than **my Republican predecessor** did in his (7).*

(2) *... the President **did something that presidents don’t do** – and that is **launch a political attack targeted toward the domestic market in front of a foreign delegation**. On a day when were supposed to be celebrating the anniversary of Israel’s independence, he accused **me and other Democrats** of wanting to negotiate with terrorists, and said we were **appeasers** no different from people who appeased Adolf Hitler. ... Now that was frustrating enough, but then John McCain gives a speech. ... And then not an hour later, he turned around and embraced George Bush’s attacks on **Democrats**. ... I want to be perfectly clear with George Bush and John McCain and with the people of South Dakota. ... because **George Bush and John McCain have a lot to answer for** (1).*

In examples (1) and (2) the speaker expresses a negative evaluation of his presidential predecessor, intensifying it by the description of his specific actions, which are treated as being unacceptable in those situations. This negative evaluation is then applied by extension to all the representatives of Republican Party, as well as to their actions and, consequently, to their adherents; (in this case it concerns *Republicans*, a politically marked group). This enables the speaker to contrast his politically marked group – the *Democrats* – with them and to carry out the strategy of positive self-presentation. The lexical unit *appeasers* acquires some pejorative shades of meaning in this context and helps the speaker intensify the effect, emphasizing the contrast between *Republicans* and *Democrats*, which is a striking and perpetual characteristic of the American political environment.

The tactic of ‘exemplification’ is one of the most common methods of influencing an audience. It consists in ascribing some properties that are generally associated with some ethnic group or a “typical” representative of it to some specific event or some particular person. As opposed to the “super-generality” tactic, exemplification is used solely in connection with negative properties, as these tactics are typical of preconceived attitude.

(3) *This time, they want to give banks and insurance companies **even more** power to do as they please. And now, after a long and spirited primary, **Republicans in Congress have found a nominee for President** who has promised to rubber-stamp this agenda if he gets the chance. ... Ohio, I tell you what: **we cannot** give him that chance. Not now. Not with so much at stake. This is not just another election. This is a **make-or-break moment** for the middle class, and **we**’ve been through too much to turn back now* (6).

The Republican Party is characterized in terms of its economic policy, which is considered to be ineffective and is presented as one of the reasons for the worsening of the economic crisis. These negative features are ascribed to that party's presidential candidate (*Republicans in Congress have found a nominee for President*), making it possible for the speaker to provoke a negative attitude to, or even outright rejection, of his opponent in the addressee without any further explanations or arguments. To accomplish that purpose the speaker uses the comparative degree of *more* combined the intensifier *even*, but with one member of the comparison reduced, which hinders the members of his audience from arriving at an accurate interpretation and induces them to accept it as absolute truth. The idiom *make-or-break moment*, used by the speaker, functions as an intensifier in this context and places emphasis on the significance of the decision to be made. By using the inclusive pronoun *we* the speaker creates “his” circle and draws the audience into it. The modal operator *cannot*, repeated several times, enables the speaker to induce the recipient to oppose his opponent without even realizing it.

(4) *Our **Iran policy is a complete failure right now**, and that is the policy that **John McCain is running on right now**. He has nothing to offer except the naive and irresponsible belief that tough talk from Washington will somehow cause Iran to give up its nuclear program and support for terrorism. I’m running for President **to change course, not to continue George Bush’s course*** (1).

In example (4) the speaker uses the same tactic with respect to the foreign policy of George Bush, to his administration and to the Republican Party in general. As the military conflict in the Middle East was strongly criticized by Americans, Barack Obama refers to these events in the context of the faults of his predecessor – *Iran policy is a complete failure right now*. Calling his opponent by name and blaming him for continuing to support those ineffective and harmful strategies (*is the policy that John McCain is running on right now*) with no logical arguments provided allows the speaker to get support from the audience, as he introduces himself as one who opposes the policy referred to above, that has caused so much disappointment for America – *«I’m running for President to change course, not to*

*continue George Bush's course*», using the lexeme *change*, which indicates a new course for the USA. The lexical units *nuclear program* and *terrorism*, with their negative connotation, occurring in combination with the universal quantifier *nothing*, are used to describe the opponent and his political course, with the intention of evoking a negative evaluation of *John McCain* on the part of the audience.

The 'transposition' tactic constitutes the transposition of some negative experience from one cognitive sphere to the experience in some other cognitive sphere, the so-called 'spreading' of a negative attitude. If any negative detail in the scheme or model is expressed or represented, it may affect the entire model or scheme, either downwards or upwards. A negative attitude to some specific property is ascribed to all the other properties and people who possess ones.

(5) *For seven years, we have seen President Bush's answer. ... Well, the Republicans want eight more years of the same. They see **tax cuts for the wealthy** – and they say, why not some more? ... They see **five years in Iraq** – and they say, why not a hundred more? Now we know the Republicans won't give up the White House without a fight, well let me be clear, I won't let anyone swift boat this country's future. Together we're going to take back America because I see an America where our economy works for everyone, not just those at the top, where prosperity is shared ... (2).*

Example (5) reflects the negative evaluation of the political course of the opponent in general by referring to the most vulnerable points of his policy, which have been strongly criticized by Americans (the potential voters over whom the political opponents are fighting) – *tax cuts for the wealthy* and *five years in Iraq*. The speaker inculcates the addressee with the idea that the only possibility of changing or improving the situation is to support his course, which is the opposite of the ones cited above, and this may lead to a "better" America – *an America where our economy works for everyone*, where the indefinite article is used to emphasize the alternative. To draw a boundary between himself and the opponent, the speaker models "their" circle, which includes the opponent, his adherents and those supported by them, and "our" circle with the speaker himself and all Americans, whom he is trying to attract. The reference to «*the wealthy, those at the top*» as the antithesis of «*everyone*» (*the rest of Americans*) highlights this contrast.

(6) *It meant policies that to address things like the **madrassas** that had grown up in important parts of the world and support to terrorism, material support to terrorism that was coming even out of friendly countries – not out of friendly governments, out of friendly countries. And whether or not you have to go to the root of that and literally start to change the basic nature of **a Middle East** in which there is politics but it's the politics that's going on in **the radical mosques**. ... That's why there are no strong alternatives on the moderate side because those legitimate channels for the development of moderate political forces were shut off by **authoritarianism** (3).*

In example (6) the speaker refers to radicalism as a negative property typical of a certain ethnic group, which leads to *authoritarianism* and poses a threat to other

ethnic groups, or even to the whole world. This threat is described using the label *terrorism*. This feature is ascribed to an ethnic group which is not specifically named, but which is identified by implication. The speaker uses the metonym *the madrassas* for that purpose. At the same time this negative property, radicalism, is attributed by extension to all Muslims, even though once again they are not specifically identified, when reference is made to *the radical mosques*.

The tactic of ‘attribution’ is used to combine negative schemes or models in order to achieve cognitive coherence. The cause-consequence connection which the speaker wishes to construct is presented as the only possible conclusion, despite the fact that other plausible explanations could be offered.

(7) *Somehow, he (Governor Romney) and his friends in Congress think that the same bad ideas will lead to a different result. Or they're just hoping you won't remember what happened the last time we tried it their way. Well, Ohio, I'm here to say that we were there, we remember, and we are not going back. We are moving this country forward* (6).

By referring to the experience which they have in common—*we were there, we remember*, which is described in extremely negative terms—the speaker can blame his political opponent *Governor Romney* and his party for all the problems in American society. *Governor Romney* is presented as a promoter of «*the same bad ideas*» which are referred to as the cause of all the current problems in America. The pronoun *same* implies the continuation of the same harmful strategies, and it is predicted that the consequences will be harmful as well, although neither the ideas nor the consequences are specified — they are just ascribed to the opponent in the form of a supposition. On the other hand, the political direction of the speaker and his party is described in the following terms: «*we are moving this country forward*». When juxtaposed with the phrase «*we are not going back*», it («*we are moving this country forward*») sets up a basic antithetical pair *forward – back* which induces the recipient to form the conclusion that the political opponents of the speechmaker will lead their country into the past, and will deprive them of their future.

(8) *There is no doubt, therefore, that al Qaeda is operating in Iraq. There is no doubt that we've had to take very strong measures against them, and there is no doubt that the Iraqi security forces have got to be strong enough to be able to withstand not just the violence that has been between the Sunni and the Shia population and the Sunni insurgency, but also al Qaeda itself. So one of the tests that the military commanders will have on the ground, in the province for which we've got direct responsibility now and before we move from combat to overwatch, is whether we are strong enough and they are strong enough to enable them to stand up against that threat* (5).

(9) *The lesson of this experience is clear: The terrorists can kill the innocent, but they cannot stop the advance of freedom. The only way our enemies can succeed is if we forget the lessons of September the 11th, if we abandon the Iraqi people to men like Zarqawi, and if we yield the future of the Middle East to men like Bin Laden. For the sake of our nation's security, this will not happen on my watch* (4).

In the above examples (8) and (9) *al Qaeda* is referred to as the main reason for the war in Iraq. This name – *al Qaeda* – has become a label, and most Americans associate it with the most significant threat to their safety. Using the lexemes *whether* and *enough*, George Bush implies strong doubt that Iraq is able to protect itself and its people and to defeat their common enemy. This weakness of Iraq may pose a threat to the USA (*whether we are strong enough and they are strong enough to enable them to stand up against that threat, terrorists can kill the innocent*) and all the factors cited above are intended to give the impression that there only one possible conclusion — that the war in Iraq is essential and inevitable. To support this thesis, the speaker refers to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, a national tragedy in America. By using the modal operator *can*, he obliquely gives a warning that this tragedy is likely to happen again – «*our enemies can succeed*», if they (America) stop the war in Iraq – *if we abandon the Iraqi people*. Consequently, the only way to prevent this catastrophe and to avert the danger from their motherland is to continue the war in Iraq.

The following example also illustrates the attribution tactic:

(10) *He (John McCain) offered the promise that America will win a victory, with no understanding that Iraq is fighting a civil war. Just like George Bush's plan isn't about winning, it's about staying. And that's why there will be a clear choice in November: fighting a war without end, or ending this war and bringing our troops home. We don't need John McCain's predictions about when the war will end. We need a plan to end it, and that's what I've provided during this campaign* (1).

The implication is that addressee has no choice but to accept the idea that if *John McCain*, the political opponent of the speaker, is elected president, then the war in Iraq will continue. The recipients have the following conclusion thrust upon them – it's unlikely that *John McCain* will keep his promise to stop the war. This is illustrated in the phrase *we don't need John McCain's predictions about when the war will end*, where the lexeme *predictions* with regard to *John McCain's* policy is contrasted with the lexeme *plan*, which concerns the speaker's course. It implies that, unlike his opponent *John McCain*, Barack Obama has already elaborated definite steps to take definite measures within the course suggested – *that's what I've provided*. If Americans support the speaker's political programme, it will fulfill their expectations and bring about what they are wishing for – *ending this war and bringing our troops home*, and that is the main message in this extract.

## Conclusions

The strategy of the negative presentation of “others” is one of the most common ones in political discourse. In our research it is treated as a local strategy within the global discourse strategy of influence. Presenting a negative image of “others” may be accomplished by the use of a number of different tactics. We have singled out those which are the most common – super-generality, exemplification, transposition, and attribution. In order to implement the tactics, various language means are used. Our analysis has demonstrated that almost any language means may

be used in manipulation strategies, though none of them is meant to be used for manipulating.

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