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IMPOLITENESS STRATEGY IN DONALD TRUMP’S ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCOURSE

Abstract. The article provides the in-depth analysis of impoliteness strategy, vigorously employed in the course of US presidential election campaign by its candidate Donald Trump. The emphasis is placed on the linguistic and political aspects of the defined strategy, thoroughly examining its impact on the dynamics of political discourse, on voters as well as the relations with other political actors. A review of the scholarly interpretation of the concept of "discursive strategy" and, in particular, the strategy of "impoliteness" in political linguistics and political science is presented, different approaches and interpretations of the abovementioned phenomenon being comprehensively analyzed. Specific attention is placed on the significance of the functional language component application in political rhetoric in order to achieve a pragmatic goal. The article defines the key terms and concepts related to the strategy of impoliteness. A comprehensive analysis of impoliteness strategy employment in Donald Trump's 2023 campaign speeches is conducted. The study identifies the key cognitive-communicative tactics, linguistic stylistic means and expressive-emotional lexical units forming the foundation of this strategy, and cautiously analyzes their impact on the audience, including potential voters. This research delves into the context of the 2023 election period, characterized by noteworthy political events and social trends. The author considers not only the linguistic and rhetorical aspects of the impoliteness strategy, but also its impact on the socio-cultural dynamics, taking into account the contemporary political landscape. The conclusions of the article allow to evaluate the success of the impoliteness strategy employment, as well as to identify possible negative consequences, such as further expansion of political differences and increasing political polarization. The key trends and problems that may arise as a result of the use of this strategy in the political campaign are clearly identified. The accent is put on the importance of conducting further research in this field, in particular in the development of political communication and identification of effective strategies in order to improve the quality of political discourse. It is suggested to focus on the prospects of political discourse studies in order to develop a more constructive understanding of political environment in the United States of America.
Keywords: political discourse, political rhetoric, electoral process, communicative strategy, impoliteness strategy, linguistic approach.

Problem statement. Modern science is characterized by a vivid anthropocentric principle, which determines a harmonious combination of cognitive and communicative-functional guidelines of research. Interpersonal interaction in society combines different types of activity and is conducted with the active language employment, accompanied by certain states, feelings, processes, etc. This multifarious combination, within which the individuals socially collaborate, we commonly identify as the concept of discourse. Through the linguistic and extra-lingual symbiosis of modern research, discourse studies encompass the scrutiny of the text, the process context and its participants. At the present stage of philological science development, the study of discourse shifts its emphasis to the interdisciplinary nature of scientific exploration and the need to ponder the phenomenon in individual discursive practices.

The political component is an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the individual and is under the watchful attention of both ordinary citizens, who act as its direct participants, and scientists who study political communication: its existence, types, methods of implementation, pragmatic strategies and tactics of its enactment.

In the light of modern political realities it is problematic to avoid the consideration of cognitive-communicative strategies and tactics used by contemporary political leaders, aimed at reaching their goals, due to the fact that they serve as the manifestation of functional language component application in order to reach a conceptual communicative pragmatic goal. One such strategy, which takes a leading place in the political arena and leaves a deep mark in public discussion, is the strategy of impoliteness. This communication practice has been effective with many politicians, in particular, with Donald Trump, notably known for his non-standard decisions and somewhat provocative style. In this framework, the study is aimed at revealing the linguistic and political dimensions of the strategy, focusing on its main implementation tools as well as operation consequences for the society and the political process as a whole.

Given the growth of public weight of the subject matter and the significant influence of pragma-rhetorical strategy of impoliteness on the public opinion, the article is aimed at filling scientific gaps in the understanding of the abovementioned phenomenon. The analysis of impoliteness strategy in the context of Donald Trump’s campaign speeches will not only expand the understanding of political communication, but also provide a new perspective on the strategy implementation within the contemporary election process in the United States of America.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Studies of impoliteness have gained quite a lot of scholarly attention over the last few years, nonetheless, they
are limited compared to the research of the other communicative strategies. In conducting the delving, the analysis was based on the works of prominent scientists, among whom it is worth noting the following: P. Brown, E. Gino, J. Kalpeper, S. Levinson, C. Mills, H. Spencer-Oati.

The aim of the article is to analyze the implementation of impoliteness strategy in Donald Trump's 2023 election campaign discourse, to investigate its discourse potential and language implication. To reach the defined goal, the following tasks need to be tackled: to define the fundamental nature of the concept of "strategy" in political discourse; to analyze the application of impoliteness strategy in Donald Trump's 2023 election campaign discourse; to identify and characterize the linguistic means of verbalization of impoliteness strategy in Donald Trump's election campaign speeches in 2023.

Results and discussions.

In the view of the considerable number of studies devoted to the research of the phenomenon of cognitive and communicative strategies, there are various interpretations of the concept of "discursive strategy" in modern linguistics. In a broad sense, it is a complex combination of speech acts aimed at achieving a communicative goal through the realization of the intention of the communicant.

T. van Dijk defines discourse strategies as "cognitive strategies projected into the sphere of speech interaction, aimed at effective manipulation of the conclusions formed" [1], the cognitive nature of the phenomenon is accentuated.

L. Bezuhla interprets the strategy as "a cognitive and pragmatic program of communication, conditioned by the motives (wishes, needs, interests) of the speaker, which determines the implementation nature of communicative acts in the discourse" [2, p. 83]. An integral part of any strategy is its tactic that influences the choice of the means and application methods of communicative actions through various techniques. In tactics tools are techniques i.e. various execution ways.

Impoliteness has not gained as much place in linguistic theory as politeness, and is often called "the other side of the coin of politeness" [3]. Most theories of impoliteness are based on the existing knowledge of politeness.

J. Calpeper's initial idea of impoliteness is based on P. Brown's and S. Levinson's theory of politeness and is thus described as "the opposite of polite". The author aspired to investigate the opposite effect of this strategy and, as a consequence, analyze how social collapse occurs. He presented strategies borrowed from P. Brown and S. Levinson, and then provided his own taxonomy. J. Liech identifies impoliteness as a continuum of speech acts, which "cost much to the listener", while politeness is "beneficial to the hearing" [4, p. 93]. He argues that his position is that "the theory of politeness is inevitably a theory also of impoliteness, since impoliteness is a non-compliance or violation of the limits of politeness"[4, p. 18].

H. Spencer- Oati takes the terms politeness and impoliteness as one whole and emphasizes the role of subjective judgment in determining polite or impolite
behavior. Thus, the author argues that politeness is "an appraisal label that people attach to their behavior, based on their subjective judgments of social adequacy" [5, p. 97]. Thus, the decision about what is polite and what is not, is influenced not only by theoretical constructs. On the contrary, it is greatly affected by the context and social norms by which a person distinguishes the prescribed, prohibited or permitted behavior in a specific communicative case [5, p. 99].

Impoliteness is not just a question of authority and different status in a relationship; on the contrary, politeness can be manifested in relationships where people have equal status and are in close relationships.

J. Kalpeper uses the following exhaustive definition of impoliteness: "Impoliteness is a negative attitude to certain behavior that occurs in certain contexts. It is supported by expectations, desires and / or beliefs about social organization, in particular, about how the identity of one person or group of people is mediated by others during the interaction. Situational behavior is perceived negatively – considered “impolite” – when it is contrary to what is expected of it, what somebody wants and/or what you think it should be. Such behavior always has or is assumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, i.e. causes or is believed to cause insults. Various factors can increase the perception of disrespectful behavior as offensive, including, for example, whether a person understands that the behaviour was intentional or not"[6, p. 423].

Negative impoliteness encompasses a verbal act, which includes:

– intimidation – insinuates the belief that actions that harm others will take place;
– compassion, despicably or ridiculously – emphasizes its relative power. The speaker does not treat others seriously, humiliates others (for example, employs diminishing words);
– invasion of somebody's space – literally (for instance, the speaker places himself/herself closer to others than the format of communication allows) or metaphorically (e.g., a speaker asks or speaks about information that is too intimate in view of the status of a relationship);
– clear association of the issue under consideration with the negative aspect;
– personalization, use the pronouns “I” and “you”;
– identification of somebody's fault;
– disruption of the conversation structure – interrupt the interlocutor [7].

The functions of impoliteness can be attributed to the following:

1. Affective impoliteness involves the emergence of an emotional influx during a conversation between the speaker and the object of impoliteness, usually anger with the implication that the object is responsible for the occurrence of this negative emotional state.

2. Forced impoliteness. This is the second function of impoliteness, which tries to reorganize values between the doer and the object, in which the speaker
benefits or enhances or protects his current gain. In addition, it includes coercive actions that are carried out with the intention to harm another person or to force it to be executed. This occurs in situations where the speaker belongs to a higher and more influential social level than the level of the listener.

3. Funny impoliteness implies exploitative entertainment. Participants of entertainment realize who the target is, whereas the target is not always the real person.

4. Institutional impoliteness. This is a specific phenomenon of a general nature. It includes behavior or actions carried out by individuals acting on behalf of a group that shares the same system of values. For example: rude attitude to a person of a higher social status in order to raise their own status within a certain group [8].

The strategy of impoliteness in Donald Trump's election campaign discourse represents a specific approach to communication, which is characterized by the use of tactics of discredit, reproach, accusation, destructive criticism, negative evaluation, humiliation and insult, characterised by aggression and use of emotionally coloured vocabulary and stylistic means in order to reach the political goals defined by the speaker.

Consider the practical aspects of Donald Trump's exploitation of impoliteness strategy in his 2023 campaign speeches.

The insult tactic is one of the most widely used ones in Donald Trump's rhetoric. With the purpose of its implementation, the author uses a wide range of stylistic means from sarcasm to antithesis, combining them with direct negative attributes. In the following example, the speaker utters a series of offensive characteristics of his opponents in the political struggle: Hillary Clinton and current US President Joe Biden:

"We could go on about this one, but the next day or very shortly thereafter, we had the debate starring crooked Hillary Clinton, who I don’t call crooked anymore because I use the name now for Biden. Now we call her beautiful Hillary. She’s a beautiful woman. Now I want to use that name ’cause it’s more appropriate. I like... which is better, sleepy Joe or crooked Joe? I like crooked better" [9].

Donald Trump turns out to be a master of the use of impoliteness strategy in his communication. He perfectly combines sharp sarcasm, personal attacks and image manipulation. D. Trump applies sarcasm and contempt, announcing that he no longer uses the nickname "crooked" for Hillary Clinton, but now uses it for Joe Biden. It creates the impression of superiority, irony and bitterness. Another stylistic technique that is skilfully operated by the speaker is the antithesis. The transition from "crooked" to "beautiful woman" indicates D. Trump's ability to personally attack political opponents and at the same time manipulate insults depending on the political situation. The question "which is better, sleepy Joe or crooked Joe?" generates an emotional response in the audience, creating the impression of active interaction, group unity and involvement. In general, this example demonstrates not
only the use of impoliteness strategy as a means of political communication, but also D. Trump's ability to flexibly manipulate insults and to create the desired image in different situations.

The tactic of discredit is often accompanied by the strategy of persuasion, with the accompanying tactics of argumentation and is implicated by direct evaluative markers. The following example brilliantly illustrates the combination of adjectives with a clearly expressed negative connotation and the emotionally coloured refrain - numerous repetitions of "crooked" for the intensification of the negative image, visualization of the picture of a disgusting, vile person, which is executed to humiliate the opponent:

"I never hit him this hard, but now I say it. He's the most incompetent president we've ever had. He's the worst president we've ever had. He's a total crook. A total crook" [10].

Donald Trump expresses severe criticism of the current president, using emotionally charged characteristics such as "the worst president", "the most incompetent president". This replica serves as a vivid example of gradation: the growth of expressive-emotional component of the author's rhetoric. The use of the aforementioned stylistic means significantly affects the negative perception of the current president by the audience. The statement "I never hit him this hard" can be used to emphasize the exceptionality, superiority of the speaker and amplify his magnitude among the listeners. This declaration is an example of an emotionally coloured impoliteness strategy in a political context, aimed at establishing the negative impression of the actions and characteristics of the current US President Joe Biden, discrediting him in the eyes of the American nation.

One more illustration of the usage of discredit rhetoric:

"Today, the radical left Democrats and their allies and the fake news media right back there. All those people with the camera" [10].

Donald Trump points at political opponents and non-opposition media. The expression “radical left Democrats” possesses clear negative colouring, emphasizing the radical position of political opponents. Emotionally coloured collocation: “fake news media” is intended to discredit and condemn the media by claiming that they are disseminating false or artificially created news.

The author exercises the tactics of negative evaluation, characterized by the degree of intensity of the use of rude tone, the evaluation of appearance, the application of informal language. The application of the expressions "the hell" and "I don't know how" increases the impression of discontent or surprise about the appearance of the person discussed, with a clear but indirect emphasis on disapproval:

"I do not know how the hell, he really looks so much better than 49" [10].

The following line serves as another model of the negative evaluation tactic exploitation through the use of sarcastic statements and the expression of negative judgment of the top figures of the US political elite:
"At some of our rallies and then I’ll say, «our real president is Barack Hussein Obama». They’ll say he doesn’t know who the president is. He thinks it’s Barack Hussein. No, I’m being sarcastic. They imitate it, but they’re disgraceful" [11].

D. Trump indicates that he calls Barack Obama "our real president is Barack Hussein Obama" at some gatherings, but then claims that this is a sarcastic statement. This technique creates certain contradictions and can mislead voters. Negative attributes: "disgraceful" and predicates: "imitate" can increase the distance between the supporters of D. Trump and those who ridicule his statements, increasing the degree of confrontation.

"He's a dictator. He is a horrible human being" [11].

Donald Trump's strong subjective negative assessment of his opponent is expressed using categorical negative claims. The expression: "He's a dictator" contains a powerful message that indicates that D. Trump is trying to provide a very clear assessment of the opponent by comparing him to a dictator - a brutal, authoritarian leader who ignores the system of checks and balances and uses rough administration style. In order to effect his audience of all social backgrounds and educational strata, D. Trump uses the collocation "a horrible human being", which complements and clearly depicts the image of a heartless, merciless, foolish man.

Quite often Donald Trump implies impoliteness strategy using gradational epithets and conceptual metaphors:

"But crooked Joe Biden’s banana Republic ends on November 5, 2024" [9].

The usage of the epithet "crooked" manifests his dissatisfaction and disgust with Joe Biden. The speaker aims to insult his political counterpart, to humiliate him in the eyes of Americans.

A typical instance of the application of a negatively colored metaphor is the "banana republic", which is used to evaluate the activities of the current US president as unstable, corrupt and ineffective ones. The author assures the voters that everything will end on 5 November, that is, as it should be understood from this line, after he wins the presidential elections.

The following example demonstrates the exploitation of humiliation tactics by virtue of characteristic expressive and evaluative, functional and stylistic means:

"I have these high-priced lawyers, and they’re fine, but they go out and I say, "Go speak to the press". And you have these animals out there. Oh, there they are, right up there. You have these animals out there. They’re vicious animals" [9].

In the abovementioned avowal Donald Trump employs impoliteness strategy, operating metaphorical similes and emotionally charged lexemes to describe mass media representatives with whom his lawyers frequently communicate. The metaphor "they are animals" negatively portrays individuals who behave aggressively or in a very suspicious manner. The use of the emotionally colored adjective "vicious" indicates that D. Trump evaluates these people as quite cruel or dangerous ones.
"You ever heard of CREW? Bunch of losers. They've been losing for seven years, but they don't stop" [10].

In the aforementioned statement, Donald Trump utilizes impoliteness strategy, imposing a blunt negative assessment of the CREW organization. The vivid nominative "losers" forces the audience to negatively evaluate CREW, as it indicates their inefficiency, which reduces the authority of the organization.

In his rhetoric D. Trump quite often uses accusation tactics:

"Under crooked Joe Biden, we have uncontrolled inflation and invasion of our southern border, rampant crime, wars in Europe and a war that just started in the Middle East. And look at what's going on with the attack on Israel. This world is a mess. I was very honored. One of the strongest leaders... Thank you" [10].

In the given example, Donald Trump presents Joe Biden's government as ineffective and blames it for a number of social, economic, and even global scale foreign policy problems.

The proclamation: "we have uncontrolled inflation and invasion of our southern border, rampant crime, wars in Europe and a war that just started in the Middle East" is a direct accusation that a number of serious problems arose or deepened during the presidency of Joe Biden, such as inflation, illegal migration, crime and military conflicts, which has a catastrophic consequence on the US economy in general and the well-being of every American in particular. The designation of crisis situations on the world political arena indicates the loss of the No. 1 political player position, which used to effectively ensure peace, stability and balance of power in the entire world. This rhetoric is intended to lead the audience in their believe that in order to return the status quo, prosperity, and stability on the domestic and foreign arenas, it is necessary to vote for the leader who will be able to ensure world "peace".

Self-admiration and gratitude: "I was very honored. One of the strongest leaders... Thank you" is aimed at strengthening the indication of his own superiority and defining himself as a powerful leader who, in contrast to his opponent, whom he strongly criticizes, can cope with all the challenges.

D. Trump implements impoliteness strategy through the use of persuasion tactics, using a rhetorical question as a powerful expressive speech technique:

"I happen to be loyal, unlike some people, right?" [10].

The author emphasizes his own loyalty, indirectly indicating the lack of loyalty in "some people". The contrasting remark: "unlike some people" has the message of impoliteness as it gives the audience the impression that other people are not loyal or devoted.

Donald Trump vigorously manipulates impoliteness strategy with the intention to destroy his political opponents and ruin the image of Joe Biden:

"Our opponents are showing every day that they hate democracy. They're trying every illegal move they can to try and steal this election because they know
that in a free and fair fight against President Trump and crooked Joe Biden, Biden doesn't have a shot. He's going to be going down into his basement again. He's going to be hiding" [10].

The statement: "Our opponents are showing every day that they hate democracy" is a strong negative appeal, as it accuses his opponents of hostile attitude towards democracy - the basis of American statehood, which for centuries has been the core of values and beliefs of every American, starting from the Founding Fathers to Generation X representatives. This extremely powerful and weighty accusation sounds like a call for action to return the system of checks and balances, the ground forming concept of American identity, blemished by Joe Biden.

The declaration: "They're trying every illegal move they can to try and steal this election" is intended to create the impression that the opponents are using illegal methods to influence the voting, emphasizing the unreliability of their actions.

One more case of expressive functional means exploitation, aimed at emphasizing the inefficiency or inability of the opponent:

"These are very smart people, but they're dealing with very stupid people, our leader" [10].

Applying the mentioned ironic juxtaposition, the author portrays his political counterpart as a weak, uneducated and short-sighted politician and an ineffective team leader.

The dramatic tactics of destructive criticism was chosen by the speaker in the following fragment:

"Since Biden got in, he has been weaponizing the government against his political opponents, like a raging third world tyrant. That's what he's been doing" [9].

Donald Trump criticizes Joe Biden, claiming that he is using administrative resources against his political opponents. The expression: "like a raging third world tyrant" compares Joe Biden with the tyrant, portraying him as the negative "third world" politician, emphasizing his incompetence, immorality, cruelty, authoritarianism, use of the apparatus of rough administration, with absolute disregard for the needs and aspirations of the nation and the world.

A careful analytical procedure of impoliteness strategy in Donald Trump's political rhetoric makes it possible to single out several characteristic features that the author employed in his 2023 election campaign speeches:

1. Aggressive style of communication in order to achieve one's political goals, using unrestrained emotional assessment through expressive-emotional vocabulary, direct negative attributes and indirect expressive speech acts to mark political opponents, creating a negative image and even demonizing them.

2. Rhetoric of dominance and superiority, employed to increase his own rating. Voters' attention is attracted by using sharp and controversial statements, with a wide range of stylistic devices from irony and harsh sarcasm to refrains and antithesis. A frequent appeal to stereotypes and associative images of opposition
which expands the negative perception, provoking in the audience contempt and disgust for political opponents.

3. Donald Trump not only makes negative statements, but also tries to justify his accusations by appealing to the audience, creating a picture of a common group identity, as opposed to his political counterpart that undermines the fundamental values of American nation and statehood - the principle of democracy. He uses appeals and instructions that direct voters to certain conclusions leading to radical changes.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned findings, Donald Trump's impoliteness strategy is an example of political rhetoric aimed at raising one's own image and manipulatively influencing public opinion through tactics of discredit, humiliation, insult and radical criticism of his opponents.

Conclusions and prospects of further research. It can be concluded that impoliteness strategy, exploited by D. Trump is quite effective in attracting public attention. Dexterity in the use of derogatory statements and attacks on opponents ensured a high level of media attention and discussion of the author's political appeals. It was found that the strategy under the analysis contributes to the creation of the image of a strong and decisive leader who is able to express his views without unnecessary restrictions. Using impoliteness strategy can further divide society, fueling political divisions and increasing political polarization.

It is worth noting that further research of the long-term consequences of impoliteness strategy in politics and its impact on the quality of political discourse is considered to be highly beneficial for the development of scholarly thought. Since the analyzed strategy is a rather extensive object of research, it is seen as a reasonable perspective to focus further studies on specific directions and means of its implementation.

References:

