**UKRAINE AS A MANIPULATIVE TOPIC IN D. TRUMP’S 2024**

**CONVENTION SPEECH**

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Due to its social significance, political discourse is one of the topical issues for a great number of linguists [3, p.27]. It is an important tool for influencing public opinion and shaping political decisions. The rhetorical techniques used in political discourse help politicians achieve their goals, persuade the audience, and manipulate information. For governments or leaders, public speaking is an important way to show statesmanship and eloquence. It is a means of attracting groups of people who come from different classes [2, p.11]. Yulia Astuti compares language to a weapon used by politicians to gain people’s belief. In other words, politicians arm themselves with decorated language which is made as influential as possible since they know that voters, although not all of them, judge the politicians and create perceptions about them through the language they produce [1, p.1].

One of the distinctive features of political discourse texts is the use of propaganda and rhetorical (stylistic) devices. Metaphors, comparisons, allusions, and hyperboles can be mentioned among the most commonly used stylistic means of formulating political propaganda and ideology in political discourse, giving them more expressiveness, emotional content, brightness in the perception of the audience and, accordingly, creating more leverage to manipulate it [3, p.28].

But not only words can be used for the sake of manipulation. Topics also can be manipulated to attain the desired goals. Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, this topic is often used with manipulative aims. Politicians frequently invoke the current war in Ukraine in their speeches to manipulate public opinion, often using it to evoke fear, assign blame, or highlight their own leadership qualities. This tactic can simplify complex geopolitical issues into emotionally charged narratives that serve their political agendas.

In the recently delivered traditional convention speech, D. Trump doesn’t make an exception. He refers to the Ukrainian topic three times, mainly for the sake of promising to end international crises, stop wars, and reach global peace. Below we consider how he manipulates this theme and what tactics and rhetorical devices prevail in these parts.

Thus, one of the tactics D. Trump resorts to is the tactic of blame shifting, where he blames the current administration for international crises, positioning himself as the solution. He claims that certain events *“would have never happened if I was president,”* creating a hypothetical scenario to highlight his supposed superiority. Trump blames his opponents for turning a *“world at peace”* into a *“planet of war.”* In this part, we observe the juxtaposition of two contrasting ideas, *“world at peace”* and *“planet of war,”* to highlight the stark difference between them (Antithesis). Also, the use of metaphorical language to transform abstract concepts (peace and war) into tangible images (world and planet).

Other tactics include an appeal to authority. He references Viktor Orban, a *“tough leader,”* to validate his own toughness and effectiveness.

Appeal to fear is another tactic used in the speech. Descriptions of bombed-out cities and falling buildings aim to evoke fear and urgency: *“Look at what’s happening with Ukraine. The cities are just bombed out. How can people live like that, where buildings, massive buildings are falling to the ground…”.* The rhetorical device that accompanies this tactic is hyperbole/exaggeration, which is used to strengthen the effect of fear: *“now the world is blowing up around us,”* *“The whole world is exploding, what’s happening, what’s going on”.*

Also, we can observe the tactic of appeal to ethos, by means of which Trump builds his credibility by stating he started no new wars, presenting himself as a peacekeeper: *“I was the first president in modern times to start no new wars”.*

In conclusion, in the context of information wars and propaganda, knowledge of rhetorical techniques is crucial for recognizing and defending against manipulation. This is particularly important in modern conflicts, where information is wielded as a weapon. Studying rhetoric aids in developing strategies to counter disinformation and maintain information security.

The study of rhetorical devices is vital for modern linguistics, as it helps understand how language is used to influence audiences, shape opinions, and form beliefs. In peacetime, this knowledge contributes to effective communication across various fields such as politics, advertising, education, and media. In wartime, rhetorical devices gain even more significance, as they can be used to mobilize the population, maintain morale, and counter enemy propaganda.

**List of References**

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