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Bachelor's thesis

THE LINGUISTIC FABRIC OF JOE BIDEN'S SPEECH

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ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis examines Joe Biden's language profile and its role in shaping his identity, with a primary focus on his accent and idiolect. Considerable attention is given to the features of political discourse and their manifestation in Biden's language, as well as to the face-saving strategies he employs. Biden's individuality is analyzed through his unique coinages, while the perception of his public political persona is explored alongside the evolution of his language from his tenure as a senator to his presidency of the United States. The relevance of this thesis lies in its examination of the relationship between language use, political discourse, and public perception, highlighting the broader significance of individual language profiles.

The object of this study is the language profile of Joe Biden. Accordingly, the research centers on his phonetic features, pronunciation, lexical choices, grammatical structures, syntax, and rhetorical strategies as the primary subject of analysis. The study aims to examine the key components of Biden's language profile by defining the concept of a language profile and its relation to identity, thereby shedding light on two aspects of Biden's identity: ethnolinguistic and political.

Employing a combination of descriptive, analytical, and empirical methods, the study utilizes literature and media review, survey research, and comprehensive linguistic analysis across multiple levels. The corpus consists of twelve of Biden's monologues and dialogues from both formal and informal contexts, spanning a diverse time frame.

The study reveals that Biden's idiolect predominantly aligns with General American English, exhibiting minor influences from the Delaware Valley and Midland dialect regions, and reflects key features of political discourse. Additionally, his speech is characterized by storytelling, humor, empathy, and a folksy tone, which contribute to the distinctiveness of his idiolect.

Key words: Joe Biden, accent, idiolect, identity construction, language profile, language variety, political discourse, rhetorical strategies.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Робота зосереджена на мовному профілі Джо Байдена як чиннику формування його ідентичності, з аналізом вимови та ідіолекту. Окрема увага приділяється особливостям політичного дискурсу, їхньому прояву в мовленні Джо Байдена та застосованим політиком стратегіям підтримки іміджу. Індивідуальність Байдена проявляється в притаманних йому конструкціях; досліджується сприйняття його публічного образу й розвиток його мовлення від сенаторства до президентства. Актуальність дослідження визначається необхідністю розкрити взаємозв'язок між мовою, політичним дискурсом і суспільним сприйняттям, що підкреслює значущість вивчення індивідуальних мовних профілів.

Об'єктом цього дослідження є мовний профіль Джо Байдена. Відповідно, предметом аналізу є фонетичні особливості, вимова, лексичні та граматичні структури, синтаксис і риторичні стратегії, що складають мовний профіль Байдена. Метою дослідження є аналіз цих складових, що передусім вимагає визначення поняття мовного профілю та його зв'язку з особистістю, а відтак дозволяє висвітлити два аспекти особистості Байдена – етнолінгвістичний і політичний.

У роботі поєднано описовий, аналітичний та емпіричний методи, що включають огляд літератури та медіа, опитування, та комплексний лінгвістичний аналіз на різних рівнях. Корпус дослідження складається з дванадцяти монологів і діалогів Байдена, взятих із формальних і неформальних контекстів, та охоплює широкий часовий проміжок.

Дослідження показує, що ідіолект Байдена здебільшого відповідає загальноамериканській англійській, із незначним впливом діалектів Делаверської долини та Середньоатлантичного Заходу, та виразними рисами політичного дискурсу. Мовлення Байдена вирізняється оповідальністю, використанням гумору, емпатією та простим народним стилем, що формує впізнаваний ідіолект.

Ключові слова: Джо Байден, акцент, ідіолект, формування ідентичності, мовний профіль, мовний різновид, політичний дискурс, риторичні стратегії.

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INTRODUCTION

Language, by nature, takes on numerous definitions and shapes. For some, it is solely a communication means, which reflects the core essence of the term “language” in an overly simplistic way. For others, language is a powerful tool for shaping thought, evoking emotion, and guiding action, ultimately enabling persuasion, consolation, encouragement, or discouragement when used appropriately. Linguists may well view language as a DNA strand, and fairly so. Indeed, language, or rather the way one wields it, conveys valuable pieces of information that define who one is – gender, age, generation, ethnicity, local belonging, profession, social status, level of education, life experiences. That is, one can form an understanding of an individual based on their use of language, even without directly engaging with their personality. This bold inference hints at what is meant by a language profile and what the correct way to “decode” one’s language is, so that this “DNA strand” is studied expertly. Language is again being compared to a DNA sequence, and for good reason – similarly to DNA being made of molecules, language profile consists of various components, such as phonetic features, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, speech patterns and identity-related features. Consequently, a language profile, much like a code, can be deciphered and interpreted.

Thus, the **purpose** of the present work is to investigate the defining elements of the language profile of Joe Biden. Put differently, this Bachelor’s thesis aims to unravel how Biden’s usage of language shapes his identity and influences public perception, with a primary focus on the linguistic elements. Such a perspective offers a measurable and fairly reliable foundation for understanding the relationship between language and identity construction.

Taking into account the aim of the paper, the **object** of the study is represented by the language profile of Joe Biden. Thus, Biden’s phonetic features, pronunciation, vocabulary choices, grammar, syntax, speech patterns constitute the **subject** of the research.

To achieve the aim of the present study, the following **tasks** have to be fulfilled:

- Formulate a comprehensive definition of a “language profile” and examine its connection to linguistic identity.
- Analyze the impact of cognitive framing, specifically how language, or rather one’s language profile, shapes people’s perceptions of others.
- Define what an idiolect is and determine which factors shape an idiolect.
- Identify the key features of political language in the framework of political discourse.
- Examine Biden’s ethnolinguistic identity by analyzing his biographical information to infer the linguistic variety he speaks. Identify key phonetic features of the inferred variety and compare them with Biden’s actual speech patterns. Investigate the language features of this variety within Biden’s lexicon, grammar, pronunciation. Determine the linguistic variety Biden speaks based on this piece of the study.
- Find instances of code-switching in Biden’s speeches.
- Describe Biden’s idiolect, focusing on the lexical framework, grammatical structure, and rhetorical strategies. Establish the features of Biden’s idiolect that reveal his profession is connected to politics and political discourse.
- Trace the changes in Biden’s use of language over time.
- Conduct a survey among English-speaking students worldwide to develop an understanding of the public perception of Biden’s speech and identity. Analyze the findings.
- Draw conclusions based on the entire study.

The **methods** of the research are characterized by literature and media review, synthesis, deduction, survey study as well as in-depth analysis (theoretical on the one hand, and phonetic, lexical, syntactic, rhetorical, longitudinal and statistical analysis on the other hand). Thus, the research integrates all three components: descriptive, analytical, and empirical. **Material** of the research is represented by **twelve** Biden’s speeches.

Whether the topic of the thesis is **relevant** is not debatable for a number of reasons. First, studying one’s language profile gives a chance to investigate one’s language variety

and idiolect. Second, it helps to gain insight into how one's use of language reflects their identity. Third, each and every human being has their own language profile, which is why the matter in hand is applicable to any individual, having a massive impact on public perception. Fourth, studying Biden's language profile in particular showcases the use of language by a politician, which, in effect, implies features typical for political discourse, e.g., the use of specific rhetorical devices, which renders the research even more engaging. All of the aforementioned reasons impart undeniable **relevance** to the present thesis.

The **structure** of the Bachelor's thesis:

- Introduction highlights the aim and relevance of the research, outlines its subject and object, sets the tasks that have to be fulfilled, describes the key research methods and introduces the material addressed in the study.
- The body of the thesis consists of two parts:
 - i. The first one covers the theoretical aspect, examining such sociolinguistic phenomena as linguistic identity, idiolect, cognitive framing, political discourse and, most importantly, language profile.
 - ii. The second one centers on transcribing and analyzing Biden's speeches using a corpus-based approach. No stone is left unturned in the examination of Biden's accent, idiolect, and the evolution of his language. Public perception of Biden, shaped by his language profile, is given undivided attention, with a corresponding survey conducted.
- Conclusions summarise the results gained throughout the study.
- Summary explains why the present thesis matters to the scientific community and invites the expression of personal insights on the topic.

1. CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

1.1. Language Profile and Linguistic Identity

To be able to touch upon the connection between language and identity construction on a scientific level, it is prudent to start with the definition of language profiling – or rather, linguistic profiling per se. One of the dictionaries defines linguistic profiling as using speech characteristics or dialect to identify a speaker's race or religion or social class [37]. Additionally, it classifies linguistic profiling as a type of identification – evidence of identity; something that identifies a person or thing. Dennis R. Preston, a prominent American linguist and sociolinguist, the author of the book “Language Allegiances and Bilingualism in the US”, states that the assumption in linguistic profiling is that hearers can use speech as a means of identifying people according to such categories as class, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual preference, native language background and so on [48]. Again, he uses the concept of linguistic profiling and the word “identifying” in one and the same sentence.

It is crucial to consider the concept of linguistic personality. Lyubov Matsko defines a linguistic personality as a comprehensive representation of a language user's consciousness, including their national linguistic worldview, language knowledge, skills and abilities, linguistic culture and taste, as well as language traditions and fashions [5]. According to Yevgen Borinshteyn, a linguistic personality is an individual whose personal qualities and socio-cultural effectiveness in social relations are shaped by the influence of the linguistic culture they have acquired [2]. Florii Batsevyich argues that a linguistic personality is an individual who has a set of abilities and traits that shape how they create and understand texts, which are notable for their structural complexity and their accurate and deep reflection of reality [1].

The term lingual personality profile was introduced by Oleksandr Lavrynenko, who defines it as a specific type of functional relationship between the cognitive, motivational, and emotional components of a lingual personality. This relationship is determined by the

degree of development of each component and shapes the psychological characteristics of the individual. When one component dominates, it defines the orientation of the lingual personality; when all components are harmoniously developed, a neutral profile emerges, viewed as the closest to the ideal [4]. According to a more general and concise definition, linguistic profiling is a method used to identify or profile an individual based on the characteristics of their language [38]. Yet even this explanation aligns language profiling and identifying people conceptually.

Which implications does this have? Linguistic profiling usually involves spotting accents, identifying dialects, looking at sentence structure, observing word choices and is often used in sociolinguistic studies, particularly in the legal and social sectors. Linguistic profiling can aid criminal investigations by helping to narrow down potential suspects [38]. However, if misused, it may result in bias. According to Natalie Schilling and Alexandria Marsters, who have contributed to “The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics” published by Cambridge University Press, forensic linguistic profiling is the practice of analyzing anonymous speech samples in criminal cases to infer characteristics of a speaker based on their linguistic features [52]. The authors also highlight challenges like voice and dialect disguise, where criminals alter their speech to conceal their identity. Conversely, linguistic profiling can lead to discrimination. An American linguist Dr. Baugh used different accents, including African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and General American English (GAE), in one of his experiments to inquire about renting apartments [55]. His findings revealed that people with certain accents, especially AAVE, faced discrimination and were denied apartments. Dr. Baugh also referred to a historical example in the Bible where Ephraimites were identified and killed based on their mispronunciation of the word “Shibboleth”, which shows how language can be used as a marker for distinguishing friend from foe.

What is more, linguistic profiling has been implemented in psychology and psychiatry through the LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software [43]. In fact, LIWC analyzes language to reveal aspects of a person’s identity by looking at word

choices related to feelings, pronouns, and psychological processes. When people talk about traumatic experiences, their language can show their emotional state, helping to identify their needs, which assists on their recovery journey. For example, the abundance of social words could suggest the urge for community in the context of trauma.

However, the purpose of the present thesis is not to uncover fraudsters, nor is its aim to treat individuals with mental illnesses. It seeks to reveal what Biden's language profile reveals about his identity, and how it aligns with his image as a politician – much like solving a puzzle.

1.1.1. Language as a Reflection of Ethnolinguistic Identity

Human language is crucial in expressing both personal and group identities [54]. The words we use, the accents we speak with, our dialects, and the languages we choose all reflect our backgrounds and affiliations, contributing to our sense of self and belonging. According to the Ukrainian scientists Eliso Hryshchuk and Alla Kovalenko, language is crucial for ethnic identity, and even if individuals shift to another language, their ethnic identity can remain strong – at this point, language ceases to serve a communicative function but retains symbolic significance for ethnic identity [60]. Moreover, though it might seem apparent, various factors – social, psychological, and communicative – influence how individuals perceive and express their ethnic identity. Such a bold statement leads to the following consequence: political language, for example, can reinforce or challenge individuals' sense of belonging, influencing how they express their ethnic identity. Even though political language tends to be formal and neutral, political leaders might use specific language varieties to connect with particular groups; they can either elevate or marginalize certain languages or dialects. Prominent American scientist Howard Giles states in one of his papers on ethnolinguistic identity theory (ELIT) that stronger ethnic identity leads to more use of the group's language both within the family context and beyond – shown by the usage of language varieties [24].

At this stage, the difference between the terms language variety, accent and dialect, which are closely connected to ethnolinguistic identity, should be indicated. In fact, out

of the three terms, language variety is the more general one and is used to refer to any discrete form of a language; it is also the most neutral one. According to one of the dictionaries, the word dialect describes a particular variety of a language – it follows most of the rules of its respective language, but it may have different vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciations [35]. The word accent, on the contrary, pertains to just a distinct way of pronouncing a language – it does not include differences in lexicon and grammar [20].

The perpetual question, however, goes like this: how is identity defined when an individual speaks two or multiple languages? How is the trend of language being often equated with identity in linguistic research is dealt with in this regard? In effect, the view of the notion of a singular identity is being challenged, which highlights that people may well hold overlapping identities, reconciling pride in their ethnic and linguistic origins as well as the urge for integration into broader societies. However, it is absolutely necessary to acknowledge that identity is not diminished by one's ability to interact with other linguistic and cultural groups – proven by showcasing the research on the Kui people and their identity [53]. Indeed, code-switching does not necessarily correspond to different identities – identity should be better seen as enduring and evolving over time. In reality, it is not split or added to by the acquisition of languages. While multilinguals, like the Kui, do shift their language choices – sometimes because they want to hide their heritage due to shame – this behavior is not so much about identity fragmentation but about practical communication needs in different situations. This means that when people engage in code-switching, including politicians, their identity is not altered.

1.1.2. Language as a Reflection of Political Identity

Scholars have been, and still are, captivated by the power of language – speeches, slogans, catchphrases, and political rhetoric – used by public figures to persuade their audiences to embark on monumental endeavors, from waging war to securing peace [39]. In effect, politicians often manipulate language, wielding it as a powerful tool of mass persuasion. Language, according to Adrian Beard, Academic Head of English at Gosforth School in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, reveals a great deal about the ideology of those who use

it [11]. Anyone who listens to a politician's speech observes their choice of words, thematic preferences, rhetorical strategies, and intonation – all carefully crafted to achieve their goals. This definitely means the political language has a distinctive identity. Political language reflects political identity through its thematic focus, structure, and persuasive tactics [41]. Key features include intentional ambiguity to appeal to a broad audience, dissimulation between intent and message, imperative tonality to legitimize power, and an explicit polemic nature that frames discourse against political rivals. Moreover, the existence of political language implies the recognition of a stable linguistic code. Political language is characterized by a heightened pragmatic dimension, making it similar in that regard to advertising language [40].

Language identity plays a significant role in shaping people's perspectives on various culturally sensitive issues, such as foreign policy and historical memory, too [32]. Even George Orwell once said: "Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" [8]. If language shapes identity, and identity carries political significance, this undeniably gives rise to the concept of political language. According to Edelman, political language is the interpretations of political events and serves two primary functions: fostering quiescence and stimulating arousal [16]. In other words, political language encompasses the words and phrases used to frame political events, shaping their meaning and influencing public perception. Taking this in consideration, political identity is a reflection of one's beliefs and ideological stance. Political language both shapes and reinforces this identity by framing events, influencing perceptions, and persuading audiences through rhetoric, strategic ambiguity, and power dynamics.

Political leaders gain influence not just through formal status but through charisma, which is the unique personal qualities that connect them to people. Their image is shaped by how well they listen and respond to public needs, especially during crises. Modern media amplify this image, making authentic care for the population the key factor in

effective leadership. As Prof. Dr. Nataliya Petlyuchenko suggests, what truly matters is a leader's ability to show genuine concern for others, which builds trust and support [6].

1.1.3. Cognitive Framing and the Shaping of Identity

Cognitive framing plays a pivotal role in the political context and the formation of political identity; but what exactly does it mean? Framing is a cognitive bias, or a distortion in thinking [61]. According to Dr. Regina Lazarovich, PhD, clinical psychologist and founder of Compass CBT, people typically make decisions by categorizing options as either favorable or unfavorable, followed by a process of ranking them. This act of editing and evaluating choices implies that our perceptions are shaped by how information is framed. The same set of facts, when presented in either a positive or negative light, can significantly influence both how they are perceived and the decisions that follow. Understanding framing is essential as it reveals how the presentation of information, rather than its content, can influence decision-making and perceptions.

Several factors contribute to the framing effect, including education level, knowledge, cultural background, personal experience, preconceived notions, emotions, belief systems, attentional resources, and issue involvement. Higher education and increased knowledge generally promote skepticism toward framing, while personal experiences and belief systems play a significant role in how framed messages are scrutinized. Politicians often use framing to influence public opinion and shape voter behavior [11]. By presenting policies in ways that align with the values and concerns of their audience, politicians can steer perceptions. For instance, framing a tax policy as “fair and equitable” can appeal to notions of justice, while portraying it as “a job killer” may provoke fear of economic harm.

It is no surprise that both verbal and non-verbal language are closely linked to cognitive framing, and, as a result, play a significant role in shaping identity, especially in politics [42]. This was also outlined by Adrian Beard in his book “Language of Politics”. He claims, for example, that there is no such thing as “neutral” language or an unbiased report. When a news team reports a story, language, along with factors such as

camera positioning and event sequence, shapes how the audience perceives it. These choices reflect an underlying ideological perspective. For example, framing a statement like “The White House today threatened Saddam Hussein with military action over the UN inspectors affair” aligns with the American viewpoint, though the same story could be presented from different ideological perspectives. Adrian Beard also pays a deal of attention to abundance of rhetorical devices because rhetoric is “the art of persuasive discourse”, so R. Cockcroft and S. M. Cockcroft [11].

Metaphor and metonymy are commonly employed in political discourse to convey complex ideas and influence perception. A metaphor establishes a comparison between two concepts, as seen when a politician is said to “take flak” or “launch an attack,” drawing parallels to warfare. In contrast, metonymy substitutes a part or associated element for the whole, such as referring to the U.S. government as “The White House”. These rhetorical devices simplify communication and reveal how language strategically frames political realities. This shapes an individual’s idiolect in political discourse and reflects unique linguistic choices and stylistic preferences, ultimately influencing how audiences perceive the speaker.

1.2. Idiolect. Its Role in Personal and Public Discourse

It is remarkable how diverse the same language can be. Indeed, individuals tend to shy away from the absolute standard, which in principle does not even exist because any language is a dynamic organism with no fixed linguistic forms or samples used to convey similar if not the same thoughts, in order to express themselves through their speech. Therefore, it stands to reason that speakers do not tailor themselves to the language they speak but rather make it suit their background and worldview through the linguistic choices they make while communicating their ideas. To put it another way, everyone has a character, and so does the language one speaks. Obviously, such an inference is closely connected with an extensive field of study called sociolinguistics – the way we use and understand the language in social contexts [17]. Consequently, it is pivotal to examine this powerful and ever-changing tool, the main medium of communication, from the

standpoint of one's identity. The word "idiolect" comes from Greek with the prefix "idio" meaning "own/private/personal" and the suffix "lect" meaning "a language variety" [27]. The combination of these two morphemes accurately describes what an idiolect is: the language or speech pattern of one individual at a particular period of life [18]. It is surely of special interest, which aspects reflect individuality of the language. As a matter of fact, these are grammatical, lexical, rhetorical and phonological features, which constitute fundamental components of any language. In addition, I consider it appropriate to cite the definition of "idiolect" provided by an American linguist, Ronald Wardhaugh. In one of his books he wrote the following: "An idiolect is an individual's way of speaking, including sounds, words, grammar and style" [26].

By which factors is an idiolect shaped? What unequivocally should be mentioned in this regard are personal experiences, social interactions, upbringing, education, occupation and even media. Furthermore, the topic of idiolect has been an interest of scientific research of such prominent linguists as B. Bloch, L. Bloomfield, K. Hazen, N. Dittmar. Bloch was the first linguist to coin the term. Hazen stated that idiolects are limited by time, thus partially equating them to style. There were those who rejected the existence of the phenomenon and treated it like something illusive and specific, though. The notion of idiolect was thus opposed to the idea of langue elaborated by F. de Saussure. Among them, the names of R. Barts, R. Jakobson and W. Labov are found, who tended to extract the phenomenon from sociolinguistics [3].

According to John Edwards, an American sociolinguist, individuals develop a personal discourse-related identity through their idiolect – a unique combination of accent, dialect, register, stress, and intonation [67]. This linguistic identity takes shape and evolves through everyday interactions and social contexts. An idiolect is thus more than just an individual's way of speaking – it is a living expression of identity, shaped by social interactions and constantly negotiated through both personal and public discourse.

The scholars in discourse analysis, Davies and Harré, state that self-identity is not static but is constantly shaped and reshaped through discursive practices [62]. In

conversation, people experience their linguistic fingerprint – their idiolect – by contrasting their speech patterns, word choices, and stylistic preferences with those of others. This process, known as positioning, shows how identity emerges through interaction. Positioning can be interactive, where one speaker’s language influences how another person’s identity is perceived, or reflexive, where individuals shape their own identity through their distinctive way of speaking. This means that idiolect is not just a personal trait but a dynamic, evolving aspect of identity, continuously negotiated as speakers engage in different conversations and adapt to various social contexts.

On the contrary, the idea of a common interest, like market demand, forms the foundation of public discourse. But this foundation is, in fact, projected from the public discourse itself rather than being external to it. In politics, this is even more apparent: political discourse does not just respond to public opinion but actively shapes how people understand their shared interests. Public speech can feel urgent and personal, yet it is directed not just at us but at the strangers we were before hearing it. Public discourse works in two ways: it addresses individuals, but also reaches out to an undefined audience of strangers. This marks participants socially. For example, reading a gay magazine or attending a Black church signals belonging to a particular community, and many people avoid these actions to distance themselves from that identity. Similarly, practices like bilingual code-switching or linguistic fragmentation in postcolonial societies can preserve a sense of difference, resisting the idea of a unified public space. Additionally, public discourse craves attention like a child. Texts vie for the audience’s focus! An idiolect makes public discourse even more attention-seeking by giving speakers a distinct, recognizable voice. In politics, unique speech patterns or accents can make messages feel more personal and memorable, drawing people in. At the same time, an idiolect can signal belonging to a certain group, reinforcing the social dynamics of public speech [62].

1.3. Features of Political Language

As Lakoff appropriately shows, “language is politics, politics assigns power, and power governs how people talk and how they are understood” [58]. Apparently, political

language, whose features are the focal point of this chapter, is a key component of political discourse. But what is political discourse? Political discourse is a collection of all speech acts, as well as public law, tradition and experience, which is determined and expressed in the form of verbal formations, content, subject and the addressee of which belongs to the sphere of politics [41]. Political discourse can be defined as coherent oral or written text, expressed through both verbal and nonverbal means, which directly depends on the situation of political communication in combination with pragmatic, socio-cultural, psychological and other factors. Political discourse shows how individuals, society, and the state interact, shaping how people perceive the world. Political discourse aims to implement policies and achieve political goals. It shapes thoughts, values, and judgements in society, often by appealing to emotions rather than reason, using authorities, traditions, historical examples, and cultural norms. The persuasive function is strongest in political speeches, parliamentary debates, party programs, and propaganda materials. In democratic political discourse, it is important to maintain informativeness, rationality, clarity, logical argumentation, and dialogue. Political discourse depends on the speaker and the audience, the speaker's intentions, and the impact it has on the listener. Political discourse often involves polemics, where the goal is to negatively influence political opponents and persuade the public of the superiority of one's own values and views. The effectiveness of political discourse depends on how well its symbols align with the beliefs and values of the audience [41].

Political discourse has distinct characteristics, such as the use of specific vocabulary, specific structure, and unique ways of expression. The theatricality of political discourse lies in the fact that people are not only direct addressees but also spectators, viewing political events as a performance meant for them. The awareness of these spectators, whether conscious or unconscious, influences politicians' behavior, strategies, and language choices. Due to its potential to influence society, political speech carries ideology and supports propaganda, making it a tool for manipulation. In this

context, manipulation refers to the deliberate creation or alteration of a political reality through various linguistic techniques [41].

Political speeches on international issues are usually formal and aimed at global audiences, while messages to congress often shift towards a less formal or even informal tone. Today, even world leaders' public speeches, despite their formal setting, may include informal elements. One way to achieve a speech goal is to make rhetoric as friendly and relatable as possible by using informal language. This includes colloquialisms, slang, idioms, contractions, ellipses, and phrasal verbs. Biden's speech in particular feels informal because of the way he naturally connects with his audience. The president of the USA uses informal language to make himself seem closer to the person he's talking to – the ordinary Americans [25].

Politics, like all spheres of social activity, has its own code, a term used by linguists to refer to a language variety particular to a specific group. When analyzing politicians' use of language, several key language techniques can be identified [34]:

- Political Rhetoric: Politicians use persuasive language techniques to influence their audience. These techniques are, in fact, rhetorical devices.
- Pragmatics: Understanding language in context, considering the speaker's intent, audience, and situation.
- Forms of Address: How politicians address the audience to convey authority or build rapport.
- Political Spin: Presenting information to shape perception, highlighting certain facts while minimizing others.

Successful speakers, particularly in political discourse, must tap into the existing attitudes and emotions of their audience [33]. To be persuasive, they employ a range of rhetorical devices, including:

- Alliteration: Repetition of initial consonant sounds for emphasis.
- Allusion: Referring to something without directly mentioning it.
- Rhetorical Questions: Asking questions where the answer is implied.

- Lists of Three: A common structure used for emphasis.
- Metaphors: Comparing something abstract to something familiar.
- Repetition: Repeating words or phrases to reinforce a message.
- Imperatives: Commands that urge action.
- Flattery: Complimenting the audience to build goodwill.
- Emotive Language: Using language designed to evoke strong feelings.
- Hyperbole: Exaggeration for dramatic effect.
- Tautology: Saying the same thing in different ways.
- Prevarication: Avoiding answering a question directly.

Pragmatics in political language: David Crystal argued that Grice's conversational maxims do not always apply in parliamentary speech. Politicians often have motives beyond just maintaining a conversation, such as influencing others, which means they may not always follow the maxims of truth, relevance, or clarity. Besides, politicians use phatic tokens (like small talk, greetings, and compliments) to build social bonds and facilitate solidarity [34].

Forms of address in political language: Politicians often use personal pronouns like "I," "we," "you," and "they" in speeches to create familiarity with the audience. Norman Fairclough called this synthetic personalisation. This technique relies on personal deixis, linking language to the speaker's perspective. For example, "we" can create unity, while "they" distances opponents. By manipulating deictic expressions, politicians guide audience perception [34].

Political Spin: Politicians present information to shape perception, often by distorting facts and/or dodging direct answers. Common techniques include avoiding the question, misrepresenting facts, withholding information, repetition, and tautology [28].

1.3.1. Ethos, Pathos, Logos: Rhetorical Foundations

Before exploring ethos, pathos, and logos – the core elements of rhetoric – it is important to understand speech through the concept of the rhetorical triangle (Appendix

1). The rhetorical triangle refers to the idea that every speech, no matter the subject, requires three key components: the speaker, the audience, and the purpose [64].

For effective persuasion, the speaker must consider the audience and appeal to them in ways that foster conviction. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC) was the one who identified three core rhetorical appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos [19].

- Logos: The speaker appeals to the audience's reason through logic, facts, and evidence.
- Ethos: The speaker establishes credibility and trustworthiness, often by using inclusive first-person plural pronouns (we, us) to build a bridge to the audience.
- Pathos: The speaker seeks to evoke emotions through emotional language, sensory imagery, storytelling, and anecdotes.

According to Aristotle, ethos encompasses both the speaker's character and their reputation, as well as nonverbal elements like appearance and delivery. Pathos appeals to the audience's emotions, requiring the persuader to understand their emotional state – in fact, an ability akin to modern empathy or emotional intelligence. Aristotle associated virtues such as justice and wisdom with emotional appeals. Logos refers to the logical argument presented by the speaker, relying on the audience's ability to process information and using techniques like syllogisms (logical arguments with two premises and a conclusion) [10].

It is no wonder that Joe Biden also effectively used ethos, pathos, and logos in his speeches. Like previous U.S. presidents, including the older Bush, Obama, Clinton, and the younger Bush, these appeals have proven to be essential tools for persuading and connecting with the audience.

1.3.2. Face-Saving Strategies in Political Discourse

According to Goffman (1967), a sociologist who focused on the interaction between individuals and the social world, face is defined as the positive social value a person claims for themselves based on how others perceive their actions in a given social context. Brown and Levinson (1978), on the other hand, conceptualized face as the desire for recognition

and approval from others, defining it as “the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of in certain respects” [49].

Levinson’s definition of face highlights its two components: positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to “the want of every member that his/her wants be desirable to at least some others” (1987). These wants can range from personal values (e.g., love, loyalty) to actions we wish to pursue (e.g., going to the movies or studying). In interactions, we hope others will support these wants. On the contrary, negative face refers to “the want of every “competent adult member” that his actions be unimpeded by others.” In simpler terms, negative face is the desire for autonomy or the freedom to act without interference.

Goffman (1955) acknowledged that in our interactions with others, there are instances when we fail to present a particular “line” or maintain a desired face. He used terms such as “in the wrong face,” “out of face,” “shamefaced,” and “threats to face” to describe situations in which the face a person attempts to project is challenged or undermined. Emotional reactions, such as embarrassment, shame, humiliation, agitation, confusion, defensiveness, or chagrin, often signal face threats. In contrast, Goffman argued that those who can maintain their face despite such challenges demonstrate poise, which he defined as “the capacity to suppress and conceal any tendency to become shamefaced during encounters with others”. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory extensively addresses face-threatening acts, which they define as “those acts that by their very nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or speaker”. These acts can threaten either the positive face or the negative face, and may be initiated either by the speaker’s own actions or by the actions of others directed toward them.”

Goffman (1955) defined facework as the actions we take to maintain or restore the face we present to others (Appendix 2). It involves both protecting our own face and helping others maintain theirs. Politeness theory highlights the balance between the need for clear communication, in pursuit of one’s goals, and the need to protect both one’s own face and the face of others through facework (O’Keefe & Shepherd, 1987). When making

inherently face-threatening requests, individuals mitigate the threat by communicating clearly while simultaneously preserving the face of the other person.

Strategies for managing threats to others' faces:

- Discretion: Ignoring actions that could embarrass someone.
- Circumlocution and deception: Giving vague or misleading comments to avoid hurting feelings.
- Joking: Making light of a situation to reduce face loss and keep it humorous.
- Explanation: Providing context to avoid misunderstandings.
- Approbation: Praising someone's abilities to offset their failures or mistakes.
- Solidarity: Showing empathy.
- Tact: Making polite requests to minimize face loss.

Strategies for managing threats to one's own face:

- Accepting and correcting: Admitting the mistake and fixing it to restore face.
- Ignoring and denying: Pretending nothing is wrong or denying the mistake.
- Diminishing: Downplaying the significance of the failure, like saying it was a joke.
- Apology and compensation: Apologizing and offering something to make up for the harm caused.

Moreover, face-saving strategies can be categorized as cooperative or confrontational [50]. Cooperative face-saving strategies are used to demonstrate respect, build alliances. These include acknowledging others' status, emphasizing shared goals. On the other hand, confrontational face-saving strategies aim to undermine the opponent by criticizing their actions, challenging their authority, or highlighting their failures. These strategies are used to assert dominance or challenge a rival's credibility.

U.S. Presidents often use hedging as a politeness strategy to build a positive self-image and achieve political goals. According to the British linguist Hyland (2005), hedging involves softening or limiting statements through expressions like modal verbs, which shape the tone of their speeches [51]. Modal verbs such as "will" and "must" express optimism and certainty, reinforcing promises to gain public approval.

Additionally, “will” and “must” can function as boosters, intensifying the persuasive force of a statement. Meanwhile, verbs like “would,” “could,” and “should” act as attitude markers, signaling flexibility or thoughtfulness. “Can” and “may” are used to hedge opinions. Presidents also use the impersonal subject “it” to distance themselves from responsibility or make statements appear objective and universally. The speeches of presidents like George W. Bush and Barack Obama were examined to study the use of hedging as a politeness strategy. Building on this, the present Bachelor’s thesis aims to explore whether Joe Biden has used face-saving strategies, and whether hedging has been one of them. The study of his idiolect will help answer these questions and provide deeper insights into the linguistic features shaping his political discourse.

It goes without saying that all face-saving strategies (or facework, as put by Goffman) are relevant to political discourse as they reflect the dynamics of communication in high-stakes environments. Politicians quite often need to manage both their own image and their relationships with others, including allies, opponents, and the public. Given his long political career, Biden is likely to employ such strategies as well.

2. CHAPTER 2. THE LANGUAGE PROFILE OF JOE BIDEN

2.1. The Salt-of-the-Earth Accent of Joe Biden

Joe Biden has adeptly preserved his relatable, down-to-earth image and, despite his position in politics, connects with the public, largely due to his speech style and accent. His use of “folks” or “fellows” is nothing short of impressive! Joe Biden’s accent is neither prestigious nor glamorous; it’s deeply rooted in his background and regional ties. Delaware is where he spent most of his life following his family’s move from Scranton, Pennsylvania to Claymont when he was eleven years old [36]. Claymont is located in northern Delaware, near the Pennsylvania border and within the Philadelphia metropolitan area, so the speech there is shaped by the Delaware Valley English, which is also spoken in southeastern Pennsylvania and nearby New Jersey [9]. Delaware Valley English, a dialect that influenced Biden’s speech to a certain extent, is a subset of the Mid-Atlantic dialect group including speech varieties from southeastern Pennsylvania (particularly Philadelphia), parts of New Jersey, and northern Delaware (Appendix 4). Biden also attended the University of Delaware in Newark, where Delaware Valley English influences are prominent as well [56]. Biden’s speech exhibits some characteristics of this accent, though they are rather sparse in his overall language. Tracing back to Joe’s beginnings, he was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The area is identified with the Midland English, a variety that is often regarded by speakers as accent-free [44, 59]. The dialect is still evolving and displays several distinct features that render it divergent from General American English. Scranton is located at the northern limit of the Midland dialect region and potentially marks the boundary where Midland and Northern dialect features overlap (Appendix 3). Given that Biden was born and spent his formative eleven years in Scranton, it can be argued that the Midland accent laid a foundation for his speech, along with the Delaware Valley English influences.

The speeches taken for analysis are the following:

- Joe Biden’s impassioned speech on apartheid in resurfaced 1986 [13]
- 1988: Joe Biden Insults Voter About His ‘IQ’ [12]

- NATO summit event 2024 on July 11 in Washington, D.C. [63]

2.1.1. Midland American English Features in Biden's Speech

Before examining the specific Midland American English features present in Joe Biden's speech, it is essential to outline the defining characteristics of this variety. The breakdown of Midland American English features was prepared using the article by Ukrainian scholars Kateryna Vukolova, Ph.D. in Linguistics, and Tetiana Smoliana, Ph.D. in Linguistics [30], along with the article by Labov, W., Ash, S., & Boberg, C. from "The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology, and Sound Change" [33]. The online article "Understanding the American Midland Accent" further enhanced the understanding of this variety [59].

Phonological Features:

- fronted /oo/:

go is pronounced as / gʊ / ~ [gou]

- fronted /u:/:

/u:/ is pronounced further to the front of the mouth; it is often diphthongized

- fronted / aʊ /:

house is pronounced as [ha:s]

- fronted /ʌ/:

among younger speakers, /ʌ/(as in strut) is undergoing fronting: [ɜ] (according to Labov)

- lowered /eɪ/:

the diphthong /eɪ/ (as in day) typically starts from a lower tongue position compared to Northern accents just above it, so that the Midland diphthong tends to be closer to [ɛɪ] or even [ɜɪ] (according to Labov)

- use of schwa [ə] – also typical of GAE:

sofa ['soʊfə] = sofa / 'səʊfə /

- tensed /æ/ is raised to [eə] before nasal consonants (e.g., fan), while it stays low [æ] in other environments

- /r/ is pronounced in all positions – typical of GAE
- epenthetic /ɹ/:

law and order is pronounced as [ˈlɔːɹ ən ˈɔːrdə]

- flapped consonants – typical of GAE
- dark /ɹ/ in syllable-final positions – typical of GAE
- /t/ is sometimes glottalized, depending on the speaker

Grammatical Constructions:

- Positive Anymore: “Anymore” is used positively to mean “nowadays”.
- Need + Participle: Constructions like “*The dishes needs washed*” (to be washed) is common.
- All the + Comparative: Used to mean “as [adjective] as,” e.g., “*He worked all the harder.*”
- Alls: A sentence starter replacing “all that,” e.g., “*Alls we had was love.*”

Intonation: Standard North American.

Biden's Midland American English Features:

PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES	GRAMMAR	LEXICON
✓ Fronted /oo/ Sound: <i>go slow</i> [01:50], [13] ✓ Fronted /u:/ Sound: <i>student</i> [00:33], [12]	✓ Positive Anymore: <i>“You’re a liability in the Democratic Party anymore”</i> [01:05], [12]	✓ “All” in “you’ve all” [01:07], [12] <i>(The Midland dialect, like many Southern-influenced varieties, tends to explicitly mark 2nd person plural)</i>

2.1.2. Delaware Valley (Philadelphia) English Features in Biden's Speech

Before examining the specific Delaware Valley (Philadelphia) English features present in Joe Biden's speech, it is essential to outline the defining characteristics of this variety. To prepare the breakdown of Delaware Valley English features, an article on Quora featuring observations from individuals born or living in Delaware, who share their insights on the region's dialect features, was utilized [65]. Additionally, the online article "Exploring the Philly Accent: A Unique Linguistic Phenomenon" further enriched the understanding of this variety [21].

Phonological Features:

- raised /æ/ → [ɛə]

man = [mɛən]

- /ɑr/ (as in "are") instead of /aʊr/ (as in "our") – *ungliding*
- /æɪ/ (as in "al") instead of /aʊɪ/ (as in "owl") – *ungliding*
- /mɛr/ (as in "mare") instead of /meər/ (as in "mayor") – *ungliding*
- /oʊ/ → [ʌ]

home = [hʌm] – *lowering*

- /æ/ → [iæn]

"soft A" in certain words raises to [iæn] (e.g., ran → reeanne [ˌiæn])

- /aʊ/ → [eɪ] or [æ]

/aʊ/ can become [eɪ] or flat [æ] (e.g., towel → tayel [teɪəl] or tal [tæl])

- /oʊ/ → [ɛoʊ]

word-final /oʊ/ shifts to [ɛoʊ], blending [ɛ] with [oʊ]/[ʊ] (e.g., so → seooww [seoʊ])

- vowel shift between "e" and "a" in the first syllable:

in words like "chawclette" (instead of "chocolate"), "kermel" (instead of "caramel"); the vowel in the first syllable is a blend between [ɛ] (as in "bed") and [æ] (as in "cat")

- rhotic with occasional r-dropping: /r/ → Ø (in word-final or pre-consonantal positions)
- th-fronting: /ð/ → [d], /θ/ → [t] (e.g., *this* [dɪs], *that* [dæt])

- flapped consonants – *typical of GAE*
- dark /l/ in syllable-final positions – *typical of GAE*

Grammatical Features:

- be done + Noun Phrase (NP) = finished with something

I am done my thesis → “*I have finished my thesis.*”

Biden’s Delaware Valley (Philadelphia) English Features:

PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES	GRAMMAR	LEXICON	INTONATION
✓ Raised /æ/ Sound: <i>act</i> [02:17], <i>black</i> [00:40], <i>fact</i> [00:56], <i>damn</i> [00:25] – [13] <i>(tensed /æ/ before voiceless stops)</i> ✓ Occasional /ɑ/ rather than /æ/ in the initial position (foreign vowel preservation): <i>Africaners</i> [01:14], [13] ✓ Ungliding: ▪ <i>/ar/ (as in “are”) instead of /aʊr/ (as in “our”) [00:35], [13]</i> ▪ <i>/aʊ/ is closer to the /a/ or /ɔ/ as in</i>	No regional markers observed.	No regional markers observed.	The accent adopts an intonation pattern, with a slight rise in pitch towards the end of a sentence – [12], [13].

<i>South</i> [00:36], [13] ▪ <i>their</i> is pronounced like [ðɛr] instead of [ðɛə] [01:01], [13]			
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2.1.3. Biden and GAE

PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES	GRAMMAR	LEXICON	PRAGMATICS
✓ Lax /æ/ Sound (+ schwa /ə/ in the first syllable) (GAE): <i>ashamed</i> [02:21], [13] ✓ Rhoticity (GAE): Biden’s speech retains r-coloring, which renders it fully rhotic. Joe Biden primarily uses the /ɹ/ sound. This can be observed in his pronunciation of words containing “r,” such as in “<i>heard</i>” [01:48], [13] ✓ Voiceless stops /p/, /t/, and /k/ are strongly aspirated (GAE):	Standard Grammar, [13], [63]	<i>You are a hell of a lot better.</i> [00:35], [63] (“hell” - vocabulary unit used across regions)	Emotional speech which is the result of the usage of emotionally charged language (repulsive, repugnant); speech is direct and confrontational. The informal tone surfaces through conversational phrasing and direct address, Biden’s rhetoric is accessible and persuasive. However, there are generally no regional markers observed.

<i>repugnant</i> [01:13], <i>repulsive</i> [01:12], <i>crushed</i> <i>[01:42]</i> , <i>timetable</i> [01:39] – [13] ✓ Flapped /t/ Sound <u>(GAE)</u> : <i>responsibility</i> [01:04], [13] ✓ “Dark L” Sound <u>(GAE)</u> : <i>rationale</i> [00:58], <i>availbale</i> [01:10] – [13] ✓ “Caught-cot” merger: <i>not observed</i> <u>(GAE)</u> – [12], [13], [63]			
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2.1.4. Biden’s Use of Code-Switching

Joe Biden occasionally shifted his speech style by imitating regional or foreign accents during public appearances. These moments are fairly rare and often unscripted; they often seem intended to connect with particular audiences or to add emphasis/humor. Additionally, Biden is known to speak only English, which likely explains the relative scarcity of code-switching in his speech [15].

For example, in a 2012 speech in Rochester, New Hampshire, while criticizing the outsourcing of call center jobs, he briefly slipped into what sounded like an Indian accent: “How many times you get the call, ‘I’d like to talk to you about your credit card’?” [58]. He stopped himself mid-sentence, but the imitation was widely noted and even criticized, especially because it echoed a 2006 remark in which he stereotypically associated Indian-Americans with running convenience stores and speaking with a conspicuous accent.

Biden’s attempt to reference Indian-American English – or to mimic it – appears to have been unscripted and awkward rather than deliberately mocking. Still, it reflects a broader pattern in American popular culture, where mimicking Indian accents has not historically been regarded as offensive as mimicking other minority accents, despite criticism from within the Indian and Indian-American communities.

Another example came in March 2023, when Biden spoke at an event honoring Labor Secretary Marty Walsh [23]. There, he used a playful version of a Boston accent – saying “Mahty Walsh from Bahstin” – dropping the /r/ sounds typical of the local dialect. In more informal settings, he has also occasionally used a Southern-sounding drawl, as in the line “Don’t know where y’all been, God Damn Boy” [29]. Linguistically, these brief shifts involve changes in pronunciation (such as r-dropping or vowel reduction) and rhythm, but they do not amount to systematic code-switching. Rather than signaling a full switch between dialects or registers, they are short, performative imitations that are best understood in context. They show Biden’s attempt to be relatable or humorous, though reactions to these moments have sometimes been mixed, depending on how the imitation is perceived.

Another prominent instance of Joe Biden’s code-switching occurred during a 2012 campaign speech in Danville, Virginia, where he addressed a predominantly African American audience. In criticizing Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan’s proposed economic policies, Biden stated that they were going to “unchain Wall Street” and “put y’all back in chains.” The use of “y’all,” a second-person plural form associated with Southern American English and African American Vernacular English (AAVE), alongside the historically charged slavery metaphor, was widely interpreted as a deliberate rhetorical shift [7]. While Biden later clarified that his phrasing was a reference to Paul Ryan’s previous use of the term “unshackle,” the remark was nonetheless perceived by many as an attempt to align himself more closely with the linguistic and cultural identity of his audience. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this moment illustrates performative code-switching as well – not as a natural alternation between dialects, but as a strategic

adaptation of speech style to evoke solidarity or emotional resonance. However, one can underscore the ethical and rhetorical risks of employing racially coded language in political discourse, particularly when it draws on painful historical associations.

Biden's speech closely aligns with General American English and carries a naturally relatable, "salt-of-the-earth" tone. This inherent accessibility allows him to connect with diverse audiences without significant shifts, which may explain the relative scarcity of overt code-switching instances in his public discourse.

2.2. Linguistic Features of Biden's Idiolect

Idiolects of famous people, especially politicians, acquire special importance. This thesis aims to investigate the language employed by Joe Biden, an American politician and the 46th president of the United States [66]. Undoubtedly, people, especially those willing to keep track of the latest events, pay attention to what he says because Joe Biden is a major player in the international political arena. However, it is not only about the content but also the way he talks. Sparking audience's interest and persuading listeners are among the tasks facing any politician. Joe Biden achieves these goals in a specific manner, partially with the help of his idiolect. Joe Biden's idiolect will be analyzed from three perspectives: lexical framework, grammatical framework, and rhetorical strategies.

For this purpose, it is necessary to examine a selection of Joe Biden's speeches so that they can serve as a basis for the forthcoming research. The following speeches form the focal point of my analysis:

- "President-elect Joe Biden's Full Acceptance Speech" (07.11.2020) [47]
- "President Biden Delivers Address to the Nation. Biden addresses the nation on support for Israel and Ukraine amid both wars" (October, 2023) [22]
- "Joseph R. Biden welcomes Architectural Digest to Washington, D.C. for a tour of the Oval Office and White House" (December, 2023) [28]
- "President Biden's Full Speech on Democracy from Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, PA" (01.09.2022) [45]
- "Biden on the War in Ukraine" (24.02.2022) [14]

- “President Biden presses Congress on funding for Ukraine, National Security” (12.06.2023) [46]

These speeches were chosen because they cover different topics and settings – from formal political addresses to more personal moments – allowing for a well-rounded analysis of Biden’s typical word choices, grammar, and rhetorical style.

2.2.1. Lexical Framework

Joe Biden’s lexical choices are central to the construction of his language profile, and thus his public persona. His vocabulary blends informality with emotional resonance, aiming to establish a personal connection with his audience.

Colloquial and folksy language: Biden consistently uses informal expressions such as “folks”, “buddy”, “guy”, “I get it”, “here’s the deal”, “you got my back”, “I got your back”, “give each other a chance”, “like it or not”, “it’s about time”, “you know”, “it’s sick”, “here we go again”, “come on in”, “I admired the hell out of him”, “by the way”, “my fellow Americans”, “it’s in our hands”, “I made a bet on you”, “look, I know”, “America stands up to bullies”, “bunch of lies”, “give (everybody) a fair shot”, “get a kick out of”, “the give and take of”, “turn their back on”, “extreme Republicans are playing chicken”... These words, phrases and expressions make Biden a relatable, down-to-earth leader because they lower the register of his speeches and emphasize approachability.

Inclusive vocabulary and repetitive personal pronouns: Lexical items like “we” (Personal Pronoun), “we all” (Personal Pronoun+Adverbial Modifier), “we the people” (Personal Pronoun+Appositive Noun Phrase (collective noun)), “you” (Personal Pronoun), “you all” (Personal Pronoun+Adverbial Modifier), “our” (Possessive Pronoun), “(we do) ourselves” (Reflexive Pronoun), “who among us” (Interrogative Pronoun+Prepositional Phrase), “together” (Adverb), “each other” (Reciprocal Pronoun), “my fellow Americans” (Vocative Phrase), “our nation” (Noun Phrase), “folks” (Informal Plural Noun), “everyone” (Indefinite Pronoun), “you know” (Discourse Marker), “It’s in our hands, yours and mine” (Possessive Pronouns) dominate his speeches, which means

Biden seeks to unify the American people. This use of inclusive language supports a political ethos of collective action, responsibility and solidarity.

Emotionally loaded lexis: Biden's lexicon is quite often emotional, e.g. "full hearts", "admired the hell out of them", "sacred", "horrific horror", "pure, unadulterated evil", "deep pain", "tragic loss", "completely annihilate", "tyranny", "disastrous consequences", "carnage and darkness and despair", "brutal assault", "naked aggression", "sinister vision", "flagrant violation", "fiece", "mean", "nasty", "clear, convincing victory", "inflammatory", "pariah"... These collocations/lexical items are emotionally loaded because they use intensifiers, strong adjectives and vivid imagery, which pushes certain emotions, be it positive or negative, to the forefront.

Phrasal verbs: Biden uses phrasal verbs to keep his language down-to-earth and accessible. Examples include: walk away, put away, tear apart, take off, bring down, come together, speak out, come out, check out, build back, go back, come back, keep up, stand up, step up, end up, clear up, and many others. "Tonight I'm asking our nation to come together..."

Signature phrases: Certain expressions recur and become markers of Biden's idiolect: "not a joke"; "literally"; "inflection point"; "the soul of America"; "folks"; "my fellow Americans"; "the flame of (liberty)", "real solutions"; "in my heart"; "break our hearts"; "May God bless America."; "May God protect (our troops/our nation/all those who...); "Let me be (crystal) clear..."; "As I made crystal clear..."; "I want to say as clearly as I can..."; "I want to say this plain and simple..."; "Let me be clear about that."

2.2.2. Grammatical Framework

Cleft sentences: These structures enable Biden to isolate and stress what he thinks is important. Examples: "This is what our administration will be all about"; "That's what I'd like to talk with you about tonight"; "That's what great nations do and we are a great nation"; "That's why tomorrow I am going to send to Congress an urgent budget request"; "American leadership is what holds the world together"; "That's why John Meacham helped my brother pick out those five portraits up there"; "This was the Resolute desk that

John Kennedy had”; “This is where America made its declaration of independence to the world more than two centuries ago”; “This is where the United States Constitution was written and debated”; “That’s what we stand for”; “This is who we are; it is a vision that the United States and freedom-loving nations everywhere will oppose.”

Imperative and modal constructions: Commands like “Let’s...”, “Do (not)...” and modals like “must”, “should”, “can” suggest urgency and shared responsibility, while also positioning Biden as both a motivator and a commander-in-chief. Examples of imperative constructions: “Don’t tell me it’s not possible in the United States.”; “Let’s give each other a chance.”; “Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end here and now.”; “Let us be the nation that we know we can be.”; “Let us not forget who we are.”; “Let’s get past them”; “Let’s get this done.” Examples of modal constructions: “We must make the promise of the country real for everybody, no matter their race, their ethnicity...”; “We must restore the soul of America.”; “We can do it.”; “I know we can.”; “We can define America in one word – possibilities.”; “We must make sure that they have what they need.”; “We must, without equivocation, denounce anti-semitism.”; “We cannot give up on peace.”; “We cannot give up on a two-state solution.”; “We must never forget...”; “We must be honest with each other and with ourselves.”; “America must choose to move forward...”; “We must be stronger, more determined, and more committed...”; “I believe we can and must do that again...”; “That’s who we must always be.”; “Everyone should be given an opportunity to go as far as...”; “Gas companies should not exploit this moment to hike their prices...”; “United States can and should take pride that...”; “There are dangers around us we cannot allow to prevail.”; “This aggression cannot go unanswered.”; “They cannot be extinguished by tyrants...”; “Together we can choose a different path...”; “It can never be an acceptable tool...”; “I believe we could build a better America...”; “We could make America safer...”

Conditional sentences: This grammatical framing supports Biden’s future-oriented, solution-driven style. Examples: “If we can decide not to cooperate, then we can decide to cooperate.”; “If the United States and allies withdraw, our allies will, as well.”;

“If we don’t stop putin’s appetite for power and control in Ukraine, he won’t limit himself just to Ukraine.”; “What would happen if we walked away?”; “There is nothing, nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.”; “If it did, the consequences for America would be much worse.”; “If we walk away now, it’ll only embolden other...”. Biden’s use of first and second conditionals highlights what is at stake and what is possible, aiming to encourage listeners to act before it is too late.

Contractions: Biden uses contractions to sound more conversational and relatable. Such contractions include: there’s, can’t, we’ll, isn’t, I’m, don’t, it’s, didn’t, won’t, that’s, I’ll, you’re, they’re, he’s, she’s, wasn’t, couldn’t, shouldn’t, wouldn’t, hasn’t, hadn’t, we’ve, I’ve, I’d, we’d, they’d... “ There’s no way out.”

Simple sentence structures and short bursts: Particularly when making emphatic points, Biden favors truncated sentences that convey clarity and strengthen rhetorical impact. Examples: “It’s wrong.”; “It’s fundamental.”; “It’s never easy!”; “It’s as simple as that!”; “That’s not the answer!”; “Mark my words.”; “ It’s long overdue.”; “ There’s no way out.”; “ We’ve done that.”; “ We’re good people.”; “ I refuse to let that happen.”; “It’s pretty cool.”; “These are hard things.”

2.2.3. Rhetorical Devices

Repetition: Biden regularly repeats words and phrases to underscore urgency and hammer key ideas. Examples include: “There are *far more Americans, far more Americans, from every from every* background of belief who...”; “They spread fear and *lies, lies* told for profit and power.”; “We passed the most important climate initiative *ever, ever, ever.*”; “It’s *a task, the task*, of our time.”; “*For weeks, for weeks*, we have been warning that this would happen.”; “*Within moments, moments*, missile strikes began to fall on historic cities across Ukraine.”; “*There is no doubt, no doubt* that the United States and every NATO ally will meet our Article 5 commitments.”; “...committing *atrocities, atrocities* against Ukrainian civilians.”; “...kidnapping *thousands of Ukrainian, thousands of Ukrainian children* from their parents and families.”; “The people of the United States can and *should take pride – they should take pride –* that...”; “We *can’t let putin win. Say*

it again: we can't let putin win.”; “Literally the entire world is watching, the entire world is watching.”; “...stand for freedom – literally stand for freedom...”; “American oil and gas companies should not, should not, exploit this moment to hike their prices.”; “Together, together, we can choose a different path. We can choose a better path.”; “We’ll have something that we do not seek – make it clear, we do not seek.”; “America is a beacon to the world. Still, still.”

Metaphor: Biden’s use of metaphors adds vivid imagery to his language. Examples: “America is an idea, the most powerful idea in the history of the world, and a beast in the hearts of the people of this country. It beats in all our hearts and unites America. It is the American creed, the idea that America guarantees that everyone be treated with dignity. It gives hatred no safe harbor...”; “They live not in the light of truth but in the shadow of lies”; “We are in the battle for the soul of this nation”; “Every generation has opened this door wider...”; “We can see the light. Light is now visible, light that will guide us forward”; “I will defend our democracy with every fiber of my vein”; “insurrectionist who placed a dagger at the throat of our democracy”; “a staged political theater in moscow”; “naked aggression”.

Hyperbole: Hyperbolic language helps Biden frame his message with optimism and exceptionalism. Examples: “The broadest and most diverse coalition in history.”; “There’s not a single thing we can’t do, not a single thing beyond our capacity.”; “The most extraordinary experiment of self-government the world has ever known.”; “They’re how we became the greatest nation on earth.”; “We passed the most important climate initiative ever.”.

Anaphora: “*We the people* are the true heirs of the American experiment that began more than two centuries ago...”; “*We the people* are burning inside...”; “*We the people* will not let anyone or anything tear us apart...”; “*We the people* must say this is not who we are.”; “...*I’m proud* of the campaign we built and ran. *I’m proud* of the coalition we put together...”

Alliteration: Biden uses alliteration to make his message more memorable and impactful for his audience. Examples: “profound progress”, “defend democracy”, “built on bedrock science”, “defeat despair”, “nation of prosperity and purpose”; “It’s always been a bad bet to bet against America.”; “horrific horror”, “pay a price”, “free and fair elections”...

Rhetorical Question: Biden’s use of rhetorical questions serves to provoke thought. Examples: “Can you believe it?”; “What will the history of this era be written as?”; “What about putin’s actions against Ukraine?”; “Who among us is really prepared to do that?”; “Who in the United States are prepared to walk away from that?”; “If we walk away and let putin erase Ukraine’s independence, what aggressors around the world will be emboldened to try the same?”.

Antithesis: Biden tends to set opposing ideas side-by-side. Examples: “They live not in the light of truth but in the shadow of lies”; “The contest between democracy and autocracy, between sovereignty and subjugation.”; “I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide but unify...”; “...see each other not as enemies, but as fellow Americans.”

Lists of Three: “The Bible tells us to everything, there’s a season – a time to build, a time to reap and a time to sow...”; “an outpouring of joy, of hope, renewed faith”; “a nation united, a nation strengthened, a nation healed”; “God love you all. May God bless America and may God protect our troops.”; “to live in safety, dignity and peace”; “...the people who are fighting for the same things we fought for 250 years ago – freedom, independence, self-determination.”; “a nation of hope and unity and optimism”; “a nation of fear, division and of darkness”; “I know your courage, I know your hearts and I know our history.”; “We are still an American that believes in honesty and decency and respect.”; “We have to defend it, protect it, stand up for it each and every one of us.”; “We must be stronger, more determined and more committed...”; “All are entitled to be treated with decency, dignity and respect.”; “Opportunity, liberty and justice for all are most likely to come to pass in a democracy.”; “Liberty, democracy, human dignity – these are

the forces far more powerful than fear and oppression.” By providing lists of three (like a real politician does), Biden reinforces his message and highlights its importance.

2.3. The Evolution of Joe Biden’s Speech

Joe Biden’s political career spans over fifty years, beginning in 1970 as a county council member and culminating in his presidency starting in 2021. After becoming one of the youngest U.S. Senators in 1973, he served in the Senate for 36 years, followed by two terms as Vice President (2009–2016), and later as the 46th President of the United States [66].

This long political trajectory offers a unique opportunity to trace the evolution of his public speaking – from the assertive rhetoric of a young senator to the more deliberate, empathetic communication style of a national leader. His speech reflects both his personal growth and adaptation to changing political roles and public expectations.

2.3.1. Tone and Delivery

In his earlier speeches, such as the 1986 address on apartheid and the 1988 confrontation over his IQ, Biden’s speaking style was characterized by a high level of emotional intensity. His tone was passionate, sometimes combative, and his delivery was energetic and fast-paced, in a way that helped Biden avoid stuttering. Moreover, he often raised his voice for emphasis and spoke in a manner that felt forceful. His rhetorical approach relied heavily on emotion and confrontation, which made his speeches powerful and sometimes even overly impulsive. Biden's voice was strong, fast, and assertive.

In his later speeches, such as his Full Acceptance Speech in 2020 and his address on democracy in Philadelphia, Biden’s speaking style evolved into one that is more measured and reflective. While still passionate, Biden’s tone became more reassuring and aimed at unifying the nation. His delivery slowed down, with deliberate pauses. Biden’s voice carried authority but was less combative, and his rhetoric shifted toward appeals for solidarity and collective action rather than confrontation. Though he still conveyed

emotion, his speeches became more focused on empathy, hope, and resilience, which highlighted his experience and leadership. Biden's voice became calmer and raspier.

Referring to Aristotle's concept of ethos, pathos, and logos will help shed light on the underlying strategies shaping Biden's tone and delivery. The tables below show that while ethos and logos were present in Biden's earlier speeches, pathos was the dominant appeal. In his later speeches, pathos remained very strong, but Biden strengthened ethos by connecting more personally with the audience and emphasizing unity, and enhanced logos by including more facts and evidence.

Earlier Speeches	Ethos	Pathos	Logos
Biden's 1986 Speech on Apartheid	Biden builds a connection to the audience using inclusive pronouns and rhetorical questions: <i>"We have favorites... Our loyalty is not to South Africa; it's to South Africans."</i> <i>"What's our timetable? What are we saying to that repugnant regime?"</i>	Biden uses emotional, charged language to stir anger, shame, and urgency in the audience: <i>"Ugly white regime."</i> <i>"They begged, they borrowed, they crawled."</i> <i>"These people are being crushed."</i> <i>"I hate to hear..."</i> <i>"I'm ashamed..."</i>	Biden points out logical flaws in U.S. policy: <i>"Progress toward peace requires a timetable..."</i> <i>"They tried everything for 20 years."</i>
Joe Biden Insults Voter	Biden shows his intelligence and hard work to build trust and	Biden taps into emotional memories and creates a sense of moral duty:	Biden provides evidence: <i>"We have never as a party moved this</i>

About His “IQ”	authority with the audience: <i>“I went to law school on a full academic scholarship, the only one in my class.”</i> <i>“I graduated with three degrees from undergraduate school, 165 credits, only needed 123.”</i> <i>“I’d be delighted to sit down and compare my IQ to yours if you’d like.”</i>	<i>“Nobody asked Martin Luther King what his legislative agenda was – he marched to change attitudes.”</i> <i>“The women’s movement did not move with a constitutional amendment – they marched to change attitudes.”</i> <i>“This party better understand... it’s about time we change our attitude.”</i>	<i>nation by 14-point position papers and 9-point programs.”</i> <i>“You’ll see my 15-point plans and 19-point position papers... and be able to judge who knows more.”</i>
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Later Speeches	Ethos	Pathos	Logos
President-elect Joe Biden’s Full Acceptance Speech	Biden presents himself as a unifier and public servant devoted to all Americans: <i>“Hello, my fellow Americans and the people who brought me</i>	Biden appeals to the audience’s emotions by expressing sympathy, reflecting on personal loss, using storytelling, and sharing religious values:	Biden cites concrete facts and outlines clear plans for economic recovery...: <i>“We’ve won with the most votes ever cast for a presidential ticket in</i>

	to the dance, Delawareans.” “I’ll work as hard for those who didn’t vote for me as those who did.” “I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide, but to unify.” “I’m humbled by the trust and confidence you’ve placed in me.” “It’s the honor of my lifetime that so many millions of Americans have voted for that vision.”	“My heart goes out to each and every one of you.” “I understand what it means to lose. To lose a wife, a daughter, a son.” “I would not be here without her love and tireless support of Jill, and my son Hunter and Ashley, my daughter, and all our grandchildren and their spouses and all our family.” “So, remember, as my grandpappy said when I walked out of his home as a kid up in Scranton: ‘Joey, keep the faith.’ And our grandmother, when she was alive, she yelled, ‘No, Joey. Spread it. Spread the faith.’”	the history of the nation, 74 million.” “We cannot repair the economy, restore our vitality, or relish life’s most precious moments... until we get COVID under control.” “The refusal of Democrats and Republicans to cooperate... is a decision, a choice we make. And if we can decide not to cooperate, then we can decide to cooperate.”
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		<i>“The Bible tells us: To everything, there’s a season – a time to build, a time to reap and a time to sow, and a time to heal. This is the time to heal in America.”</i>	
Biden's Full Speech on Democracy from Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, PA	Biden builds ethos by presenting himself as a unifying leader who represents all Americans: <i>“We are still, at our core, a democracy.”</i> <i>“I’m an American president – not the president of red America or blue America, but of all America.”</i> <i>“I believe it’s my duty – my duty – to level with you, to tell the truth no matter how difficult.”</i>	Biden appeals to emotions by urging the audience to take action and think about how their choices affect democracy and future generations: <i>“We are not powerless in the face of these threats. We are not bystanders in this ongoing attack on democracy.”</i> <i>“Think of the children... the next generation – they’re watching, and they will judge us by our actions.”</i>	Biden uses facts and logical comparisons to highlight past events, potential consequences, and achievements: <i>“They tried everything last time to nullify the votes of 81 million people. This time, they’re determined to succeed.”</i> <i>“Democracy cannot survive when one side believes there are only two outcomes to an election – either they win or they were cheated.”</i>

	<i>"We're all in this together."</i>		<i>"We passed the largest economic recovery package since Roosevelt... the biggest infrastructure investment since Eisenhower..."</i>
Biden on the War in Ukraine	Biden emphasizes unity and shared effort: <i>"We stand up for freedom. This is who we are."</i> <i>"The United States is not doing this alone... we've been building a coalition of partners representing well more than half the global economy."</i>	Biden builds an emotional bridge to his audience by evoking feelings of outrage and by reinforcing a sense of moral responsibility: <i>"The russian military has begun a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity."</i> <i>"I know this is hard, and that Americans are already hurting... I will do everything in my power to limit the pain</i>	Biden uses specific facts and measurable actions to appeal to logic and reason: <i>"putin moved more than 175,000 troops, military equipment, and blood supplies to the border."</i> <i>"We've now sanctioned russian banks that together hold around one trillion dollars in assets."</i> <i>"Between our actions and those of our allies and partners, we estimate that we'll cut off more than half of</i>

		<i>the American people are feeling.”</i>	<i>russia’s high-tech imports.”</i>
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Equally important is examining how Biden managed facework both as a young politician and later as President of the United States. For politicians as public figures, maintaining positive face is typically more crucial, as they must present themselves as competent leaders and appeal not only to their supporters but ideally also to those who did not vote for them. The table below shows which face-saving strategies Biden used the most:

Face-saving strategy	Examples
Denying	“I’m not calling for violence, Jordan.”
Challenging one’s competence (confrontational face-saving)	“I’d be delighted to sit down and compare my IQ to yours if you’d like, Frank.”
Highlighting one’s failures (confrontational face-saving) + hedging (it seems to me)	“It seems to me you’ve all become heartless technocrats, it seems to me that you forget that what happens is we’ve never as a party, we have never as a party, moved this nation by 14-point position papers and 9-point programs.”
Joking	“I understand the disappointment tonight. I’ve lost a couple times myself.” “When I had darker hair...” “I’m the only Irishman you’ve ever met, though, that’s never had a drink.”

	“And now I want to hand it over to the President of Ukraine, who has as much courage as he has determination. Ladies and gentlemen, president putin – president putin, he is gonna beat president putin. President Zelensky! I'm so focused on beating putin, we gotta worry about it. Anyway. Mr. President. You are a hell of a lot better.”
Approbation	“I had asked my brother to help me set up my office in here on the rug and the furniture because he’s a better architect than I am.”
Explanation	“Let me share with you why making sure Israel and Ukraine succeed is vital for America’s national security. You know, history has taught us that when terrorists don’t pay a price for their terror, when dictators don’t pay a price for their aggression, they cause more chaos and death and more destruction.” “Let me say it again: our forces are not and will not be engaged in the conflict with Russia in Ukraine. Our forces are not going to Europe to fight in Ukraine, but to defend our NATO allies and reassure those allies in the East. As I made crystal clear, the United States will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of American power.”
Solidarity & Empathy	“Like so many others, I am heartbroken by the tragic loss of Palestinian life, including the explosion at the hospital in Gaza, which was not done by the Israelis. We mourn every innocent life lost.” “I know this is hard and that Americans are already hurting. I will do everything in my power to limit the pain the American people are feeling.”
Hedging	“I think I’d probably have a much higher IQ than you do, I suspect...”

	“I find kind of interesting...” “Well, I must admit it surprised me.” “For that is what America, I believe, is about.” “We’ll continue to hold them accountable, I might add.” “As hard as it is, we cannot give up on peace.” “Here, in my view, is what is true.” “This is something we've been saying all along.” “Should they become necessary...” “I think the American people are [not prepared to walk away] either.” “It could have disastrous consequences...”
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2.3.2. Speech Fluency and Non-Verbal Communication

The evolution of Joe Biden’s speech fluency, paralanguage, body language and appearance has been traced over time. In his younger years, he spoke quickly and fluently, with no slip-ups. As he grew older, however, instances of stuttering and articulation difficulties began to affect his delivery, making his speech disjointed and halting. Over time, Biden began pausing more often during his speeches, sometimes placing deliberate emphasis on each word to highlight the message he wanted to get across. He started speaking more slowly and occasionally stuttered, which sometimes prompted him to repeat a word or phrase in order to pronounce it correctly. At times, Biden would say the wrong word by mistake, such as when he once said “putin” instead of “Zelenskyi”, though he usually corrected himself immediately [63].

Throughout both his younger and older years, Biden frequently used his right hand while speaking. He often pointed with his index finger when explaining something, and when elaborating on a point, he would gesture with both hands, spreading them outward and moving them slightly downward in an assertive manner. In his later years, he also

began to cough occasionally during speeches, always covering his mouth with his right hand.

Notably, Biden's facial expressions have remained consistent across time. The upward movement of his eyebrows and occasional frowning are characteristic features of both his earlier and later public engagements, which signals focus and seriousness. Although his appearance was generally formal, he sometimes allowed himself to smile, which made him appear less stern, especially during his president-elect acceptance speech. Biden consistently maintained steady eye contact, both in his younger and later years. His posture remained upright throughout his public life. However, in earlier years, his body language was more expressive, especially when he spoke with passion, whereas in later years, his movements became more restrained.

Biden consistently wore suits with a tie, and during his presidency, he also wore a pin of the American flag on the left side of his suit jacket. Biden always maintained a neat and formal appearance.

2.3.3. Public Perception of Biden's Speech and Identity: Survey Insights from English-Speaking Students Worldwide

Public perception of Biden's speech and identity was explored through a survey shared with English-speaking students at Kyiv Taras Shevchenko University, the University of Regensburg, and the University of Tübingen. Students at these institutions, including international students, shared their insights. The survey yielded 63 responses [31].

Survey Question 1: How much do you think Biden's speech style influences public trust in him? (Appendix 5)

Most respondents (58.7%) said it influences trust somewhat, depending on the situation. About 16% believed it has a strong positive impact, making him seem relatable, while 11.1% felt it doesn't matter much. A few (7.9%) gave humorous answers, saying they're "more interested in the memes." In the open responses, some participants were more critical. One wrote that Biden's speech "makes him seem like a senile man who is

not fit to be a president.” Another said his speech style, compared to Trump’s “boisterous” delivery, hurt his public image. Others pointed out his stuttering or moments of forgetfulness, saying it “reflected poorly” and led to distrust. One summed it up by saying that his speaking “influences trust a lot, but not in a positive way.”

Survey Question 2: What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you hear Biden speak? (Appendix 6)

The majority of respondents (66.7%) associated Biden’s speech with “grandpa vibes,” suggesting a warm but aged presence. 17.5% mentioned empathy and sincerity, while 11.1% described his style as long-winded or rambling. Very few noted passion and conviction. In open comments, one person mentioned “dementia,” and another said they didn’t have a clear impression of him, pointing to mixed or uncertain perceptions overall.

Survey Question 3: What’s the most unforgettable part of Biden’s way of talking? (Appendix 7)

Most respondents (39.7%) highlighted Biden’s occasional slip-ups as the most memorable aspect of his speech. 30.2% noted his frequent use of words like “folks” and his unique way of emphasizing them. 15.9% mentioned his heartfelt tone, and 12.7% pointed to his tendency to tell random personal stories. In an open comment, one participant referred to his often nonsensical speeches, suggesting a less coherent quality in his communication.

Survey Question 4: What do you think about Biden’s speech fluency? (Appendix 8)

The majority of respondents (65.1%) felt that Biden’s fluency varies, with some days being sharper than others, while 22.2% noted that his speech can be shaky at times, which is hard to overlook. 7.9% found his speech pretty smooth, and a small group (4.8%) said that the occasional slip-ups didn’t bother them.

Survey Question 5: How does Biden’s stutter and occasional speech disfluency affect your perception of him as a speaker? (Appendix 9)

The majority of respondents (44.4%) said they notice the stutter, but it doesn’t affect their perception of his message. A significant portion (31.7%) wondered if it might reflect

cognitive decline, while 17.5% found it distracting and made his speeches harder to follow. Only 6.3% felt it made him more relatable.

Survey Question 6: How much do you notice Biden's non-verbal communication?

(Appendix 10)

Most respondents (46%) said they don't notice much of Biden's body language. However, 22.2% felt his body language made his speeches feel more personal, while 14.3% found that his gestures and facial expressions added to his message. 15.9% pointed out the iconic finger-pointing and hand claps. One open comment suggested that his non-verbal cues contribute to the perception of him as senile.

CONCLUSION

The present research has enabled the “decoding” of Biden’s language as a “DNA strand,” focusing on his accent, idiolect, the evolution of his speech, and public perception, thereby fully achieving the objectives set at the outset.

Biden's speech reflects Delaware Valley speech patterns and Midland English influences, while remaining closely aligned with General American English. Such a blend affirms his image as “our guy”. His largely standard lexical and grammatical choices keep his speech accessible to a national audience, while regional features, like the positive anymore, phonetic ungliding or rising intonation, make his speech recognizable and distinctive. Biden’s occasional use of code-switching through accent imitation and dialect shifts serves as a performative strategy to connect with specific audiences, which he employs sparingly. The analysis of Joe Biden's accent leads to the conclusion that it can indeed be described as “salt-of-the-earth”.

The distinctive features of Biden’s idiolect include lexical choices such as colloquial language, inclusive vocabulary with repetitive pronouns, emotional lexis, phrasal verbs, and signature phrases (e.g., “inflection point,” “the soul of America,” “folks”); grammatical patterns including cleft sentences, imperatives, modal verbs, conditionals, contractions, and truncated sentences; and rhetorical strategies such as repetition, metaphor, hyperbole, anaphora, alliteration, rhetorical questions, antithesis, and triadic lists. Together, these elements help Biden engage with a broad public while conveying the emotional expressiveness, imperative tonality, polemical potential and theatricality that political discourse often demands.

Joe Biden’s communication style has evolved noticeably over time, particularly in terms of tone, delivery, speech fluency. Pathos was a dominant force in his earlier speeches, and it remained strong throughout his career. Over time, however, Biden increasingly reinforced ethos by connecting more personally with his audience and emphasizing unity, and strengthened logos by integrating clearer facts and evidence into his arguments. Biden’s earlier delivery was fast and fluent, while in later years, it involved

slower pacing, more pauses, and occasional disfluencies, including stuttering and slips of the tongue. His paralanguage and body language remained largely consistent, though his movements became more restrained with age.

The survey results reveal a nuanced view of Biden's speech style: while many find it relatable and warm, others see his slip-ups and disfluency as signs of decline. His tone, phrases like "folks," and non-verbal cues are memorable to many, but opinions on their impact vary.

Considering all the aforementioned elements, combined with the thematic focus, structure, and pragmatic aspects of speech, it is evident that Biden's language demonstrates the hallmarks of political discourse. Additionally, Joe Biden comes across as an eloquent storyteller with a strong sense of humor. His occasional articulation issues may make his speaking style more relatable, though some perceive them as a significant drawback. Overall, Biden's speech style can be described as direct, folksy, reassuring, and candid.

SUMMARY

Аналізуючи ідіолект Джо Байдена, ця бакалаврська робота робить внесок у ширше вивчення політичного дискурсу та варіативності американської англійської мови. Фокус дослідження є багатовимірним і охоплює аналіз діалекту, ідіолекту та суспільного сприйняття мовлення політика. Особлива увага зосереджена на формуванні ідентичності через призму ідіолекту та розвитку комунікативного стилю Байдена від часів сенатора до президентства.

Робота базується на міждисциплінарному підході, поєднуючи елементи лінгвістики, соціолінгвістики, політичного дискурсу та медіааналізу. Така перспектива має велике значення не лише для розуміння особливостей мовлення конкретного політика, а й для вивчення механізмів формування політичної комунікації загалом. Дослідження демонструє, як регіональні та індивідуальні мовні маркери можуть виконувати риторичну функцію та формувати політичну ідентичність.

Регіональні маркери в мовленні політиків можуть варіюватися від виразних до помірковано приглушених залежно від комунікативного контексту та індивідуального профілю політика. Мовлення Джо Байдена здебільшого відповідає нормам стандартної американської англійської, тоді як регіональні ознаки присутні в мінімальній мірі. Він рідко вдається до зміни мовного коду, застосовуючи її вибірково для посилення контакту з певними аудиторіями. Такий підхід робить його промови максимально зрозумілими та прийнятними для широкого національного загалу. Водночас, серед політиків існують і ті, чия мова відзначається яскраво вираженими регіональними рисами. Наявність таких рис може слугувати як перевагою, підкреслюючи автентичність і посилюючи зв'язок із локальними аудиторіями, так і викликом, адже надмірна регіоналізація може ускладнювати сприйняття повідомлень більшою, загальнонаціональною аудиторією, знижуючи універсальність політичного дискурсу.

Крім того, робота порушує важливу тему того, як публічні виступи політиків відображають і впливають на мовну норму. Дослідження показує, що неформальні мовні засоби, такі як розмовна лексика, фразові дієслова та скорочення, дедалі більше інтегруються в політичний дискурс, що яскраво проявляється у стилі спілкування Джо Байдена. Відомо, що одним із ключових аспектів політичного дискурсу є реалізація прагматичних завдань, які частково здійснюються саме через неформальний стиль мовлення. Варто відмітити, що політики широко застосовують різноманітні риторичні фігури (повтори, метафори, гіперболи, анафори, алітерації, риторичні питання, антитези тощо), а також фундаментальні риторичні прийоми, визначені Арістотелем – патос, логос і етос. У промовах Джо Байдена особливо виразним є патос, який він активно використовує для того, аби викликати емоційний відгук в аудиторії. Цей елемент доповнюється риторичними фігурами та емоційно забарвленою лексикою. Такий підхід дає політикам змогу впливати на людей, апелюючи не лише до логіки, а й до емоцій, що, очевидно, є одним із способів маніпулювання слухачами. Не випадково Орвелл зазначав: “Політична мова створена для того, щоб брехня звучала правдиво, вбивство – респектабельно, а чистий вітер мав вигляд солідності” [2]. Байден також часто вдається до оповідальності та відкрито демонструє свою віру, зокрема цитуючи Біблію. Подібні риторичні стратегії широко застосовуються політиками, проте їх актуальність і ефективність значною мірою залежать від особистості самого політика та культурного контексту країни, яку він представляє, що робить дослідження їх впливу доцільним у сучасній політичній комунікації.

Оскільки для політиків збереження репутації є надзвичайно важливим, стратегії підтримки іміджу відіграють ключову роль у політичному дискурсі. Особливо цікаво дослідити грань прийнятності використання жартів у політичних промовах. У промовах Байдена гумор використовується досить виразно і суттєво впливає на його комунікативний стиль. Водночас ця стратегія, за певних обставин, може не лише підтримувати, а й підірвати репутацію політика. Цікавим є те, що

чорний гумор майже не використовується політиками. Ймовірно, це пов'язано з тим, що частина аудиторії сприймає його досить критично.

Суспільне сприйняття політиків багато в чому визначається їхнім мовленням, яке включає як вербальні, так і невербальні аспекти. Відгуки учасників проведеного опитування відображають, як мовні особливості політика можуть формувати уявлення про його особистість, компетентність і рівень довіри з боку аудиторії. Результати дослідження підкреслюють важливість врахування соціокогнітивних аспектів, таких як сприйняття віку політика, ознак можливих когнітивних змін, а також мовних помилок і невербальної поведінки. Саме ці фактори суттєво впливають на формування довіри та публічного образу політичних лідерів, що робить їх необхідними для комплексного аналізу політичного дискурсу не лише на прикладі Байдена, а й у ширшому контексті сучасної політики.

Важливою темою для подальших досліджень є володіння політиками іноземними мовами та питання, чи доцільно вести переговори з іноземними партнерами безпосередньо, чи краще покладатися на перекладача. Переклад не завжди здатен точно передати всі мовні нюанси, тоді як обмежений словниковий запас або граматичні конструкції політика під час спілкування іноземною мовою можуть негативно впливати на ефективність комунікації. Зокрема, Байден спілкується виключно англійською, однак дискусія про те, чи було б ефективніше, якби він використовував інші мови у робочому контексті, лишається відкритою. Це питання дає простір для подальшої полеміки.

Кожен політик запам'ятовується своїм унікальним стилем комунікації, як вербальної, так і невербальної. Проте справжнім мистецтвом є вміння сформувати власне мовлення в політичному дискурсі таким чином, щоб воно залишалося максимально демократичним, об'єктивним та професійним, адже мовлення формує образ особистості й впливає на її сприйняття оточенням.

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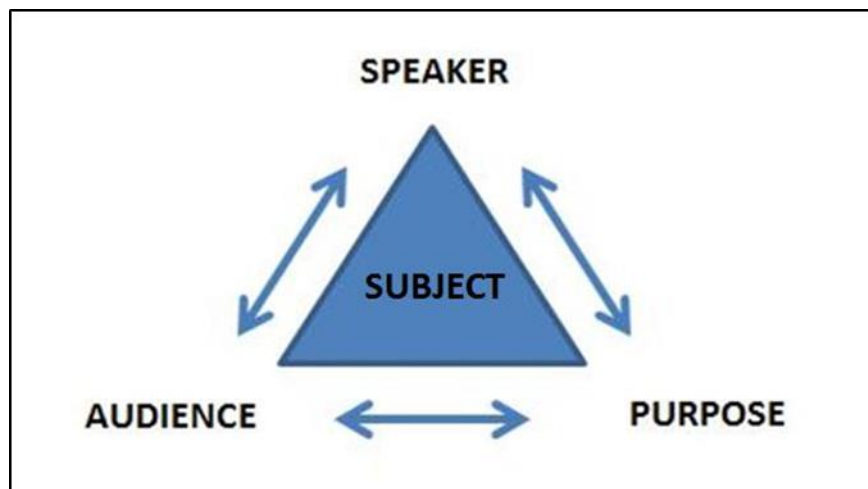
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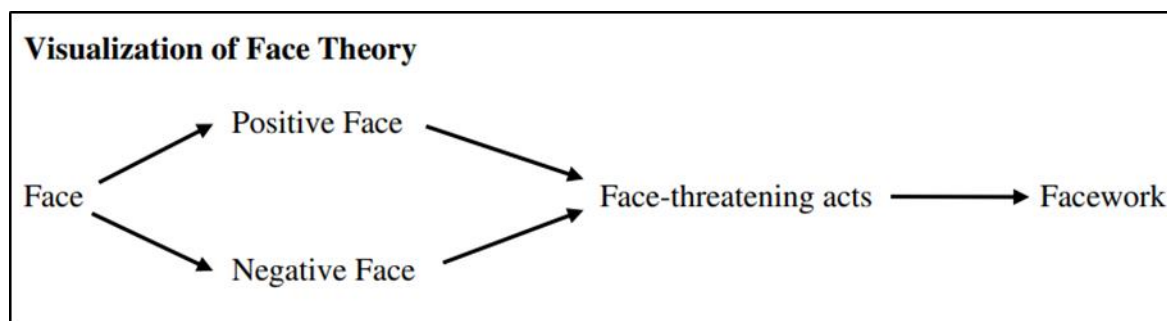
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The rhetorical triangle [64]



Appendix 2: Face Theory [64]



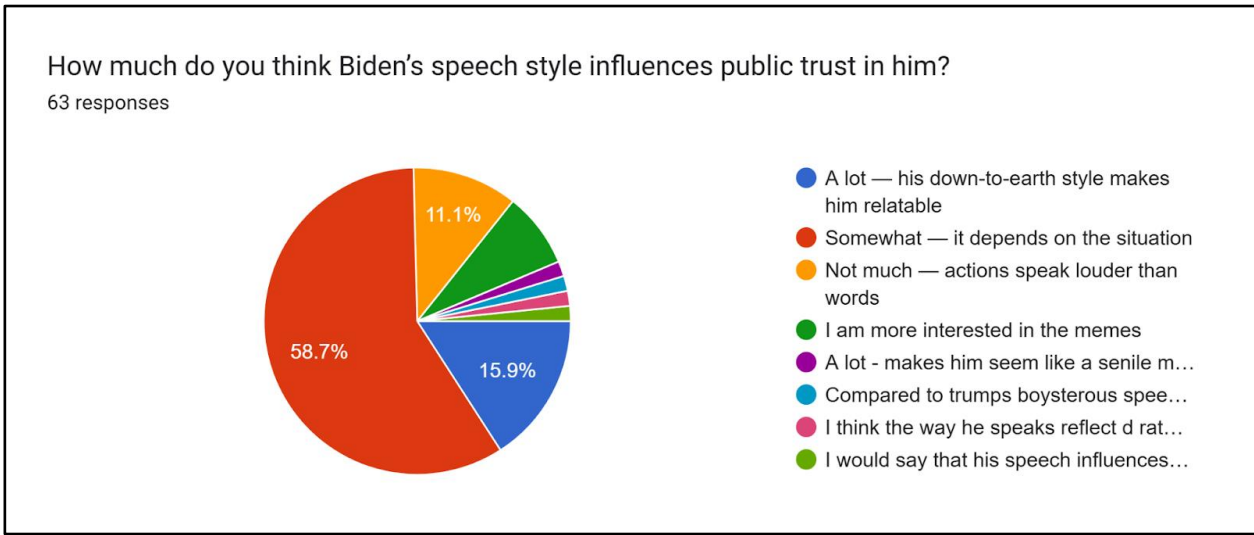
Appendix 3: An overall view of American Dialects (Labov, Ash and Boberg) [33]



Appendix 4: Delaware Valley [9]



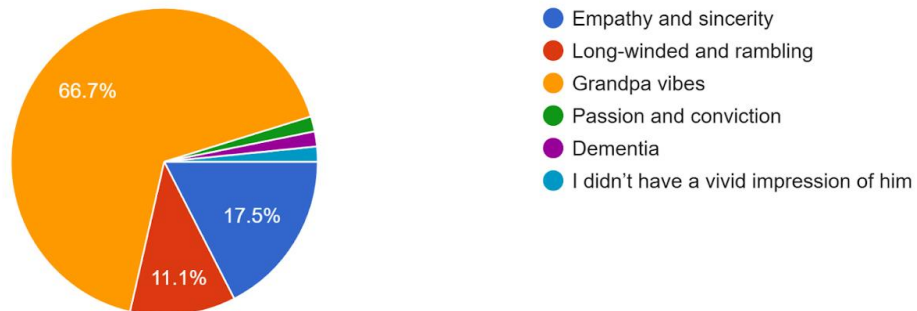
Appendix 5: Survey Question 1 – Response Chart



Appendix 6: Survey Question 2 – Response Chart

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear Biden speak?

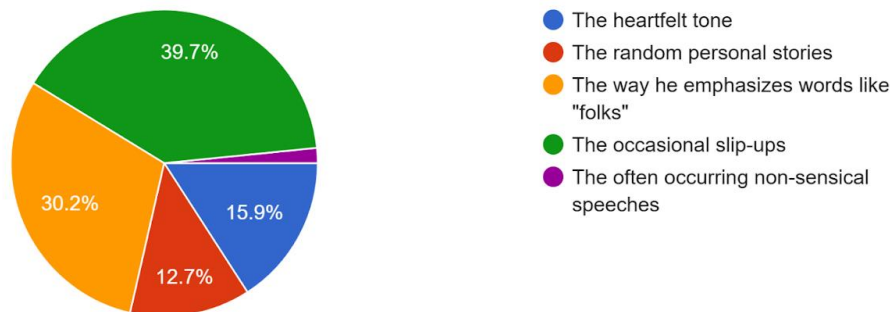
63 responses



Appendix 7: Survey Question 3 – Response Chart

What's the most unforgettable part of Biden's way of talking?

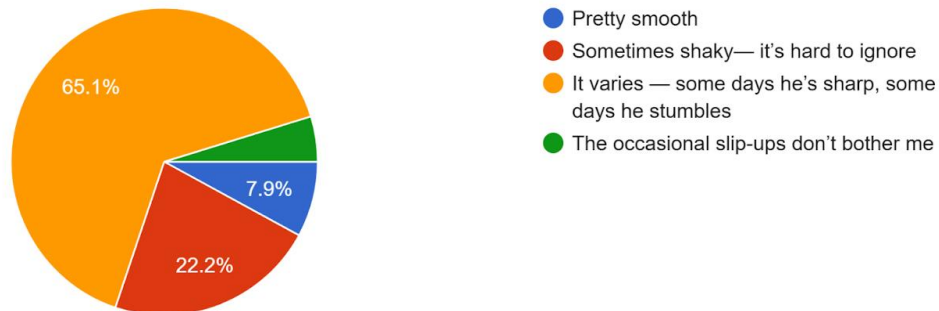
63 responses



Appendix 8: Survey Question 4 – Response Chart

What do you think about Biden's speech fluency?

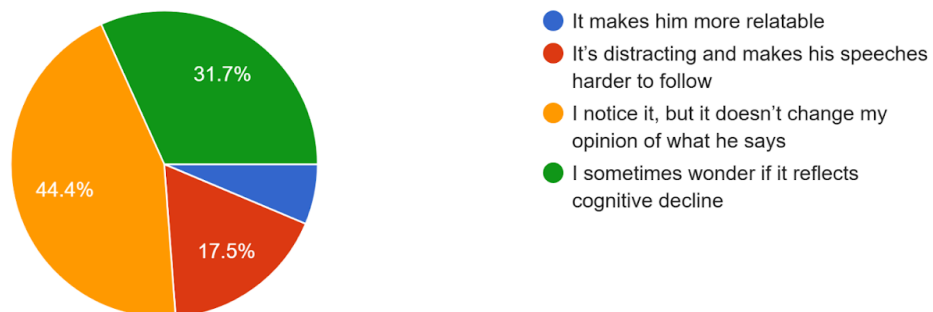
63 responses



Appendix 9: Survey Question 5 – Response Chart

How does Biden's stutter and occasional speech disfluency affect your perception of him as a speaker?

63 responses



Appendix 10: Survey Question 6 – Response Chart

