

**Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology  
Department of English philology and Intercultural Communication**

**Master's Thesis**

**MANIPULATION IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE  
(based on Donald Trump's 2025 Speeches)**

**Daryna Tuz,**

2<sup>nd</sup> year student of the Education Program  
'English Communication Studies and Translation  
and Two Western European Languages'

Field of science: 03 "Humanities"

Specialty: 035 "Philology"

Supervised by:

**PhD., Kaptiurova Olena Viacheslavivna**

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

Робота присвячена комплексному дослідженню маніпуляції в англomовному політичному дискурсі на матеріалі промов Дональда Трампа у 2025 році. Актуальність теми зумовлена зростанням значення політичної комунікації у процесах формування суспільної свідомості, а також активним використанням мовних засобів для впливу на громадську думку в сучасному політичному дискурсі.

Об'єктом дослідження є політичний дискурс, розглянутий на прикладі промов Дональда Трампа, виголошених у 2025 році, а предметом – лінгвістичні засоби, стратегії та тактики реалізації маніпулятивного впливу.

Метою дослідження є виявлення та систематизація мовних механізмів маніпуляції, які спрямовані на формування певного сприйняття реальності у свідомості адресата.

Основними завданнями є з'ясування теоретичних засад мовленнєвої маніпуляції, визначення засобів її вираження на різних мовних рівнях, аналізі комунікативних стратегій, а також вивченні прагматичного ефекту впливу на аудиторію.

Робота пропонує цілісну модель аналізу маніпулятивного впливу у політичному дискурсі, у якій лексичні, стилістичні та граматичні засоби розглядаються у взаємозв'язку зі стратегіями й тактиками мовця. Такий підхід дозволяє виявити, яким чином різнорівневі мовні засоби об'єднуються для досягнення комунікативної мети – формування заданого образу політичної дійсності та впливу на сприйняття аудиторії. Дослідження спрямоване на розкриття механізмів прихованого мовленнєвого впливу в межах політичного дискурсу, що актуалізує його практичну цінність і відкриває перспективи для подальших досліджень у цій галузі.

*Ключові слова:* політичний дискурс, маніпуляція, Дональд Трамп, мовні засоби, комунікативні стратегії, комунікативні тактики, перлокутивний ефект.

## ANNOTATION

The research is devoted to a comprehensive study of manipulation in English-language political discourse based on Donald Trump's 2025 speeches. The relevance of the research lies in the growing importance of political communication in the processes of shaping public consciousness, as well as the active use of language tools to influence public opinion in contemporary political discourse.

The object of the research is political discourse, exemplified by Donald Trump's speeches delivered in 2025, and the subject is linguistic means, strategies and tactics of manipulative influence.

The aim of the research is to identify and systematise linguistic mechanisms of manipulation aimed at forming a certain perception of reality in the recipient's mind.

The main tasks include clarifying the theoretical foundations of linguistic manipulation, identifying the means of its expression at different language levels, analysing communicative strategies and studying the pragmatic effect of influence on the audience.

The thesis proposes a comprehensive model for analysing manipulative influence in political discourse, in which lexical, stylistic and grammatical means are considered in relation to the speaker's strategies and tactics. This approach allows identifying how various linguistic levels are combined to achieve the communicative goal of constructing a particular image of political reality and influencing the perception of the audience. The research is aimed at revealing the mechanisms of hidden linguistic influence within political discourse, which emphasises its practical value and opens up perspectives for further research in this area.

**Keywords:** *political discourse, manipulation, Donald Trump, linguistic means, communicative strategies, communicative tactics, perlocutionary effect.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In our world, language is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon. It performs not only a communicative function, but also actively shapes public opinion and behaviour. Language is created by society and for the needs of society. Therefore, linguistic research is not limited to language phenomena. Instead, language is studied in the context of its functioning in a society where mass communication is crucial.

Politics is one of the aspects of public life that people are exposed to every day. The recent US election campaign has demonstrated that political processes have an impact that extends well beyond national boundaries. This is possible due to the powerful potential of language as an instrument of influence that can shape public sentiment, facilitate decision-making and even change political course. However, quite frequently, this characteristic of language serves as the foundation for manipulation which is of growing concern in society.

The concept of manipulation in political discourse has its roots in ancient rhetoric, when Aristotle investigated methods of influencing the audience. In modern linguistics, such leading researchers as T. van Dijk, R. Wodak, N. Fairclough, A. Vezhbytska, N. Chomsky, and G. Lakoff have contributed significantly to the problem of using verbal means to achieve a manipulative effect in political communication and laid the theoretical and methodological basis for the study of this phenomenon.

Currently, the world experiences the instability of the political and economic situation. The study of language manipulation is an important area of research that carries both theoretical and practical significance. Understanding the mechanisms of manipulative influence can help people make better judgements, shield themselves from intrusive influence, and make rational decisions. A deeper understanding of manipulative influence and ways to effectively counteract to it determines **the relevance** of the research.

**The aim** of the research is to analyse the strategies and tactics of manipulative influence in political discourse through analysing Donald Trump's 2025 speeches.

The aim of the research requires completing the following **tasks**:

- to define the concept of political discourse;
- to investigate the power of manipulation in political discourse and define the difference between manipulation, persuasion and suggestion;
- to analyse lexical, grammatical and stylistic means of manipulation;
- to analyse manipulative strategies, tactics and the perlocutionary effect in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches starting from inauguration.

**The object** of the research is the English-language political discourse exemplified by Donald Trump's key public speeches of 2025.

**The subject** of the research are linguistic means of manipulation – lexical, grammatical and stylistic, and manipulative tactics in Donald Trump's political discourse.

In the research the following **methods** are used:

- a theoretical and analytical method for studying and systematising the theoretical aspects of manipulation;
- a content analysis method for identifying and analysing examples of manipulative language in political speeches;
- a descriptive method for describing linguistic means of manipulation and their functions in political discourse.

**The structure** of the research is determined by its purpose and objectives. It consists of annotations with key words, an introduction, three parts with conclusions, the general conclusion, summary and the list of references.

**The novelty** of the research lies in analysing the manipulative influence with a focus on Donald Trump's 2025 speeches. While Donald Trump's rhetoric throughout his first term as president (2016-2020) has already been the subject of numerous linguistic studies, the linguistic means of manipulation in his last speeches in 2025 remain almost unexplored.

**The language data** of the research are three Donald Trump's speeches delivered in 2025, namely: Inaugural Address, Address to Congress and "Liberation Day" Speech.

# I. MANIPULATION IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: THEORETICAL ASPECT

## 1.1. The concept of political discourse

To start with, language and politics are closely related. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, highlights this fundamental connection. He defines humans as political animals (*politikon zoon*), alongside emphasizing the unique human capacity for speech [45, 4].

This connection is further evidenced by the emergence of political linguistics which is viewed as a certain balance in the coexistence of linguistics and politics [3, 236]. It is worth mentioning that political linguistics did not arise as a specialized branch of linguistics or political science. Instead, like numerous other subdisciplines that originated at the end of the twentieth century, it emerged as an interdisciplinary field [20, 51]. Politics today is oversaturated with theoretical material, whereas linguistics serves as a source of practical material [3, 236].

In essence, the pursuit of “politics in language” and “language in politics” dominated the twentieth century. However, the term “discourse” had already been implemented in scientific terminology [20, 32].

Discourse is a complex phenomenon [51, 1]. A lot of scholars, including Teun A van Dijk, N. Fairclough, J. Habermas, M. Foucault, G. Cook, have contributed significantly to the study of discourse [50, 51, 53, 55, 58, 59, 66, 61, 48]. Teun A van Dijk, for instance, approaches the concept of discourse through its three primary dimensions: language use, the communication of beliefs, interaction in social situations [51, 2]. However, the definition of discourse still remains a subject of ongoing debate in modern linguistics [16, 286].

In fact, the majority of researchers see the concept of discourse in a broad sense. Generally, it is considered to be a multifaceted communicative event that encompasses extralinguistic elements and is inextricably linked to social, political, and cultural contexts [70, 167].

The term "discourse" originates from Latin *discursus* meaning *running about, running to and fro* or *movement*; in the Late Latin it started to refer to *conversation*

[99: e-ref]. It is worth mentioning that the notion of discourse is studied within several approaches which can be generalised as structural, situational and practice-based.

### **Structural approach**

The term *discourse* was initially introduced by Zellig Harris in 1952 in his article *Discourse Analysis* where he proposed to extend the description of isolated sentences to connected speech. Harris defined discourse as a structure above sentence level. Crucially, the occurrence of particular distinguishable elements, e.g. morphemes, enabled a researcher to obtain more information from a text revealing not only "*what* a text is saying, but *how* it is saying" [68, 2].

**Situational approach** brings into focus the communicative situation in which a text is created. Discourse is regarded as text placed into a situation, a social setting. Since discourse is a social category, it is never used with reference to ancient manuscripts because the connection with everyday life cannot be restored directly [97, 16].

The first step to treating discourse as situational occurrence was made by T. F. Mitchell in his 1957 pioneering article *The Language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica* which contained analysis of speech functions, participants, and physical environment of a particular speech event [82].

**Practice-based approach** focuses on an individual as the agent of discourse, employing linguistic units to create meaning. Any participant in communication is viewed as *a language personality* seen as a set of human abilities and characteristics underlying production and reception of a text [25, 2]. In this framework, discourse is conceived as a form of practice through which language personality is enacted [29, 240].

Importantly, within the practice-based approach, discourse is not merely the product of an individual's speech activity but is understood as a form of social practice. It both reflects and constructs social relations, norms, power structures, and ideologies [30, 42]. This perspective is particularly relevant for the analysis of presidential

political speeches, where discourse serves as a strategic tool to shape public opinion, legitimise authority and reinforce or challenge existing social orders.

Within the *structural* approach when Z. Harris introduced the idea of discourse analysis, there was not yet a fully developed typology of discourses as it is understood today. Harris's contribution was structuralist and formalist, aiming to extend linguistic analysis beyond the sentence level. He explored how patterns and transformations in text could be analysed using methods similar to those used in syntax and phonology. At that time, linguistics dealt with sentence-level analysis (especially in American structuralism and early Chomskyan generative grammar). There was no robust theory categorising different types of discourse such as narrative, argumentative, expository, procedural, etc. [40, 172].

Within *situational* approach, in the 1970s-1980s, discourse analysis evolved significantly, especially under the influence of functional linguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. As linguists began to treat discourse as language-in-use, realised in specific communicative situations and shaped by context (social, cultural, institutional), this shift led to the development of various typologies of discourse based on communicative purpose, context, and structure [97, 14-17].

From the 1970s onward, discourse was increasingly categorised not just by structure but by its purpose e.g. narrative vs. argumentative [40], social context, e.g. media vs. legal discourse [54, 473], interactional roles and speech acts [88, 22]. These typologies reflect the shift from structuralist views to more context-sensitive and function-oriented models [97, 16].

Later, especially in Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, Dijk, Wodak), typologies were developed based on domains of social life: *political discourse* including speeches, debates, manifestos; *media discourse* involving news articles, interviews, broadcasts; *educational discourse* with classroom interaction, textbooks; *legal discourse* where courtroom talk and legal documents are analysed; *medical discourse* with the doctor-patient interactions and case reports. This approach views

discourse types as shaped by power relations [60], institutional norms [50], and ideology [96 , 707].

Modern studies provide a broad **typology** of discourse [16, 294]. Medical, artistic, journalistic, advertising, military and other types of discourse are singled out. Attempts are being made to study the role of speech acts in the fields of religion, mass media, law and, eventually, politics [3, 3].

In the 1950s, representatives of the Cambridge and Oxford philosophical schools analysed the linguistic context of public opinion, laying the groundwork for political discourse theory [35, 128]. Classic works on this issue include those by T. van Dijk, J. Habermas, R. Barth, N. Fairclough, and P. Serio [70, 166].

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the scientific interest in political discourse has increased due to the growing importance of politics and politicians worldwide, their prominence in the media, and the tight integration of political structures with social communication systems [36, 264].

Despite being studied for a long time, political discourse has not got a single and unified definition yet. Its intricacy arises from a number of varying interpretations of the term "politics" itself. Indeed, according to Van Dijk, the vast majority of scholars identify political discourse by its actors, namely politicians. Speeches of presidents, prime ministers, members of parliament, government or political parties take a central role. However, the domain of politics is not restricted to its authors. From the interactional perspective, many recipients in political communicative events, such as the public, people or citizens should also be considered [52, 13]. Political discourse is thus primarily regarded as a social practice characterised by the interaction between political actors, the public, and linguistic resources [76, 220].

The lack of the common definition of political discourse raises a number of questions, such as whether the politician's newspaper interview constitutes mass-media discourse or political discourse [20, 36]. Politics is a social activity related to the organisation of the life of human communities, primarily the preservation of their social structures during interaction with other societies. Therefore, the term "political

discourse" refers to the full spectrum of communication activities that represent such activity [42, 134]. As a result, everyone has the right to determine political discourse at their own discretion [20, 36].

A common perspective is that political discourse serves to instill in the addressees – citizens of the community – the need for "politically correct" actions. In other words, the purpose of political discourse is to persuade and inspire action rather than to describe [41, 104]. That is what Horbenko refers to as the instrumental function of political discourse - a tool of political power [70, 167]. Akinchyts supports this idea suggesting the most accurate and concise definition of political discourse: language + power = political discourse [1, 73].

Looking through this lens, the concept of political discourse can be defined as a language or text together with cognitive and extralinguistic components [10, 92] which reflects the interaction between individuals, society, and the state shaping the way recipients see the world [70, 167].

Just as in ancient Greece, where rhetoricians wrote speeches to order, speechwriters entered politics in the early part of the twentieth century. In the United States, they became known as early as the time of President Roosevelt. Today, almost all senatorial and presidential candidates use their services, and the term 'speechwriter' has become part of presidential institutions in many countries [1, 73-74].

Furthermore, political discourse may take oral and written forms. The oral form (public speeches of high-ranking politicians, their interviews, speeches on radio and television, press conferences, parliamentary debates) is personal because it is based on individuality. In this case, argumentation is viewed as a combination of verbal, non-verbal and extralinguistic elements. The written form includes not only extensive documentation (contracts, agreements, protocols), but also the press (sections devoted to political facts) and political advertising (mainly posters) [12, 121].

It is worth mentioning that political discourse is now much faster, sharper and more heated due to the active involvement of the media and social platforms [62, 6]. Indeed, the vast majority of individuals do not actively participate in politics. They

tend to rely their perceptions of the political climate more on disseminated information they learn from the media rather than on firsthand political experience. Therefore, it can be claimed that there is a tendency for media and political domains to merge [Horbenko, 167-169].

Much work on political discourse was traditionally being done under the broad label of "rhetoric". It is not surprising therefore that the analysis of political communication was often reduced to the study of "political rhetoric" [47, 2013].

In essence, political discourse is a communicative practice wherein speakers aim to assign meaning to events and influence listeners. It functions as a linguistic tool used for ideological purposes and persuasion [61, 178]. From a discourse analysis perspective, political communication also involves a broad range of listeners: the general public, citizens, various social groups. As politics takes place in the public arena, many social actors contribute to its discursive practices [77, 1].

Political discourse is commonly characterized by its key speakers – politicians [29, 240]. Much of the academic focus is on the language and communication of those in political office or institutions, including presidents, prime ministers, members of parliament, and political parties at multiple levels. However, political engagement is not limited to formal figures; citizens, activists, and various interest groups also play a vital role. Therefore, in a broader view of politics, the scope of political discourse expands to include all participants engaged in the political process [77, 1].

Within institutional communication, political discourse stands out for its distinct structure and content. Its characteristics are tied to the institutional domain it represents, which is socially recognized and associated with exercising power. Political discourse is not merely interactional; it is purposeful and involves particular roles [81, 756] Since its main objective is to gain and maintain authority, its primary participants are politicians and the public. The content of political discourse includes core traits that appear across its various genres, although identifying a definitive set of features is challenging due to the flexible nature of discourse, which changes with context and purpose [85, 635].

According to social roles of the participants in communication, discourse can be institutional and non-institutional (a.k.a. personal, interpersonal). **Institutional discourse** refers to language use within and by formal institutions such as government or education to carry out their official functions. It is shaped by the structures, roles, and goals of these institutions and is often regulated by conventions, rules, and hierarchies [81, 758]. Institutional discourse is characterized by the asymmetry of participants' roles, goal-oriented and often task-based communication, formal language, specific genres of texts [Philips, 635-652].

Role asymmetry in institutional discourse means that the participants of communication have unequal power or authority – one party often leads or controls the interaction [56, 192]. In presidential speeches, the role asymmetry is manifested through linguistic choices and discursive strategies that reflect the president's position of authority over the audience [51, 11-24], e.g. the president speaks unilaterally, and the audience does not respond or interrupt; the president's speech is monologic, not dialogic, reinforcing a one-way flow of information from power to people. Moreover, the president often speaks not as an individual, but as the embodiment of the state or nation which is reflected in his phrases *as your president, the government will ensure* etc., as this role grants him legitimacy to declare, command, and represent. The president chooses what issues are addressed, how they are framed, and what values are emphasized which reinforces their discursive control over public discourse.

All institutional discourses are focused on achieving specific institutional aims. They are majorly task-based rather than socially driven [81, 761]. Therefore, the speakers tend to use formal registers, technical vocabulary, and jargon specific to the institution. Language is often depersonalized or impersonal including passive constructions, abstract nouns [56, 192].

Analysing institutional discourse helps uncover the ways how power and authority are enacted through language, how institutions shape and control meaning, how language policies and practices affect access, equity and representation.

Institutional discourse is constrained by legal, professional or organisational norms and limited to specific text types [81, 768].

There exist some specific characteristics of a political discourse – agonism, aggressiveness, ideological orientation and theatricality [73, 197].

**Agonism**, according to John Pløger, is a critical mode of thinking about conflict and reaching consensus [87, 12]. Political language is naturally competitive, with constant verbal clashes between those in power and their opposition. These exchanges often resemble sports competitions, involving rivals, strategies, regulations, and outcomes such as winning or losing [73, 197]. Using metaphoric expressions and figurative language provides the possibility for verbal manipulation, since they allow speakers to subtly shape perception, emotions, and interpretation without making direct or literal statements [75, 4].

Metaphors help frame how people understand complex or abstract ideas [75, 4]. For example, calling a political policy a “*war on poverty*” frames the issue in terms of battle and urgency, which can justify aggressive measures and rally public support, even if the actual policies are not combative [43, 2025]. This combative nature is most visible in election campaigns and debates within legislative bodies.

**Aggressive** tones and hostile remarks are typical features of political speech. As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, aggression includes unfriendly or forceful behavior or attitudes [Oxford D]. In politics, this form of speech supports a system of dominance, where verbal attacks aim to diminish opponents' status. According to John Seiter and Robert Gass, aggressive communication plays a strategic role in political manipulation by shaping power dynamics, silencing opposition, and steering public emotions in ways that serve a political agenda [89, 218].

Political figures criticize rivals who are not present, speaking to third parties or audiences through public appearances, interviews or speeches. Verbal aggression manifests in commands, threats, harsh criticisms and inflammatory slogans. Indeed, aggressive rhetoric (insults, threats, accusations, or interruptions) signals authority and

control [83, 4]. It helps a speaker assert superiority over opponents and present themselves as strong leaders, which can appeal to voters who value decisiveness.

Political discourse often conveys and reinforces **ideological frameworks**, i.e. a set of public beliefs, values, and social principles shared by certain political or social groups. This aspect aligns political discourse closely with military rhetoric, as both aim to promote strategic interests [73, 198].

Political speeches play a role in shaping public interpretations of history serving present ideological goals. As Wodak argues, political discourse often employs "discursive construction of national history" to reinforce collective memory and identity, particularly during moments of crisis or transition [95, p. 23]. Similarly, Chilton notes that political language functions persuasively not only through logical argument but also through metaphor and deixis, which situate the speaker and audience within a shared temporal and ideological framework. In this way, political speeches act as instruments of historical interpretation, shaping not only how the past is remembered but also how it is used to justify present action and envision future trajectories [45, 56].

Political speech often involves elements of **performance**, similar to those found in theater or advertising. Politicians are aware of their audiences and frequently engage in behaviors designed to attract attention and approval. These performances help shape public images of leaders and are often carefully choreographed, complete with prepared scripts and rehearsals. Campaign rallies, televised debates, and official ceremonies like inaugurations often contain spectacle-like elements. Likewise, political marketing including posters, ads, speeches, and public events, aims to build a favorable image and influence public behavior [73, 198].

To conclude, political discourse is a complex phenomenon, the main components of which are the text (in oral or written form), the extralinguistic context (purpose, circumstances, situation, method and time of implementation), the presence of an addresser and an addressee who interact [5, 217].

## **1.2. The power of manipulation in political discourse**

Politics is a multifaceted social phenomenon. It is a collective, complex and purposeful activity that requires broad communication between the state and citizens [21, 155]. Languages serve as powerful mediatory structures. Consequently, to act upon them means to act upon people [86, 38]. In modern society, given the globalisation of the communicative arena, the study of verbal influence on mass consciousness is becoming particularly relevant [18, 116].

Politicians have always had a wide variety of means at their disposal to influence society. Manipulation has emerged as one of the most prevalent methods of influence in contemporary politics. Language plays a crucial role in this regard [22, 47].

Long time ago, according to the prevailing opinion, language was considered to be a neutral medium used to transmit messages. However, this approach has shifted significantly to an activist explanation of the role of language in social life [64, 65].

People are social creatures and, as such, their behaviour is constantly influenced by other people in multiple ways [78, 1]. Language is a means of influence, it performs the function of managing human behaviour, as people speak not only to convey information, but also to influence, if not directly on behaviour, then on thoughts or feelings, on the minds of other people [22, 48].

In the modern world, manipulation is a completely universal phenomenon that occurs in every socially relevant aspect of human existence [18, 117]. In the 20th century, for instance, manipulation began to be widely applied and used in such fields as media, medicine and politics [31, 68]. Manipulation is considered to be most thoroughly investigated within psychology, though [21, 155].

The word "manipulation" itself comes from the Latin word "manus", which means "hand" [31, 67]. Over time, the term took on a metaphorical meaning, eventually coming to signify seizing control or pulling the strings — essentially, an attempt to turn a person into a puppet [4, 69].

Manipulation has first been defined by Goodin in 1980 as "intentionally and directly influencing someone's beliefs, desires and/or emotions such that he falls short

of the manipulator's ideals for belief, desire and/or emotion in ways typically not in his self-interest or ways that are likely not to be in his self-interest" [64, 231].

Extending the initial definition, contemporary dictionaries give modern interpretations of the term. Thus, according to Cambridge Dictionary "manipulation" is defined as "controlling someone or something to your own advantage, often unfairly or dishonestly" [101: e-ref]. Oxford Learner's Dictionary explains "manipulation" as "behavior that controls or influences somebody/something, often in a dishonest way so that they do not realise it" [102: e-ref]. As outlined in Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, the verb "manipulate" means "to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means especially to one's own advantage" [98: e-ref].

F.H. van Eemeren, a Dutch scholar, offers a concise and accurate definition of manipulation referring to it as "intentional deception of one's addressees by persuading them of something that is foremost in one's own interest through the covert use of communicative devices that are not in agreement with generally acknowledged critical standards of reasonableness" [57, 12].

For several reasons, political discourse seems to be the most typical domain of manipulative influence. First, there are different types of text (election campaigning, PR campaigns, political advertising, analytical reviews and commentaries). Second, a wide audience is involved. Third, and most importantly, there is virtually no censorship/criticism (in most societies, the ruling political party controls the media space), and the audience is practically unable to use critical speech [29, 172].

Thus, political manipulation is singled out. Political manipulation is a special kind of influence aimed at imposing implicit but desirable content for certain political groups under the guise of objective information in such a way that the recipient forms an opinion as close as possible to the one needed by the manipulator. Therefore, the goal of any manipulator or group of manipulators is to impose their will on another person or group of people [21, 155].

It is known for a fact that there are two distinct types of manipulation regarding the subject of manipulation, namely: interpersonal and collective. Interpersonal

manipulation is the use of various means and technologies of informational and psychological influence on an individual. On the contrary, collective manipulation refers to suppression of people's will by spiritual influence on them through programming their behavior. In the context of political discourse collective manipulation becomes the object of research [18, 117].

The main problem with political manipulation is that individuals and society at large are unaware of it [33, 179]. R. Cialdini, an American psychologist, in his book "The Psychology of Persuasion" mentions "the ability to manipulate without the appearance of manipulation". The author brings forward the idea that the victims of manipulation tend to believe that natural forces, not the intentions of manipulators, determine their compliance [46, 9].

Information in the broadest sense of the word is a reflection of the real world. However, the transmission of information is not a statement of the facts of objective reality, but rather their interpretation [19, 11]. Thus, through manipulation, the political elite creates the reality it requires, which the ordinary citizens view as facts rather than a subjective point of view [14, 100].

Influence on mass public may be exerted through specific linguistic expressions and syntactic patterns which can implant certain evaluations, opinions, or attitudes into the audience's minds. This type of influence is not always direct and does not necessarily involve the use of false information. To achieve its intended goals, manipulative communication can be realised through the following methods: distortion, omission or overloading of information, as well as the ways of presenting the information – mode and timing [11, 95].

**Distortion of information** takes place majorly through perspectivisation and shifts within the semantic field. They are particularly powerful in political discourse. *Perspectivisation* involves presenting information from a particular angle or standpoint that influences how events or people are perceived and evaluated. In political discourse, this technique is used to guide the audience's emotional and cognitive response by highlighting specific aspects while marginalising others. For example, a military

intervention may be worded as *a peacekeeping mission* to evoke legitimacy and moral ground, despite evidence of aggression [84, 251].

**Omission of information** involves silencing of some facts that a speaker intends to hide. According to Melani Schröter, politicians may omit crucial details from public statements to shape narratives that align with their political agendas while avoiding accountability [90, 2].

Strategic silence is manipulative in its essence, because saying nothing on contentious issues enables political figures to avoid polarizing their audience or exposing internal contradictions. Selective presentation of facts allows speakers to emphasize favorable aspects of a situation while downplaying or ignoring negative consequences [90, 114]. Media affiliated with particular political parties often contribute to manipulation by prioritizing coverage of certain events while disregarding others. In this way, omission of information may exclude alternative viewpoints or critical data, thereby narrowing public understanding and debate.

**Overloading** the audience with information takes place when politicians inundate the audience with a flood of statistics, figures, and fragmented facts to create the illusion of transparency and objectivity while diverting attention from the core issue [27, 36]. Excessive detail, when not contextually relevant, can fatigue the audience cognitively, reducing their ability to critically assess the message or detect inconsistencies. By presenting multiple loosely related data points, speakers may obscure causality and hinder the public's capacity to form coherent judgments. Overloading serves to neutralize dissent by overwhelming alternative narratives with sheer volume rather than argumentative strength [92, 9]. This tactic is particularly effective in press briefings or policy documents, where the abundance of technical or bureaucratic language can mask ideological agendas or controversial implications.

Manipulation of the **mode of presentation** involves visuals, emotions, slogans and vague language. The use of visual aids, such as selective graphs or symbolic imagery, can guide interpretation by emphasizing certain trends while minimizing others [63, e-ref].

Structuring the speech in a particular way such as placing emotionally appealing narratives before statistical data can prime audiences to respond affectively rather than analytically. Slogans can reduce critical engagement and foster uncritical acceptance. Vague language can obscure agency and deflect responsibility, subtly reshaping the audience's understanding of events [49, 4].

Manipulation of the timing of disclosure relies on the order and context in which information is presented and discussed. It influences the reception and interpretation of what is said significantly. For example, politicians often delay the release of sensitive information until after key political events such as elections or international negotiations politicians to avoid immediate backlash or scrutiny [72, 64]. On the other hand, introducing positive news shortly before elections or policy votes can be used to shift focus and generate favorable sentiment, regardless of long-term outcomes [Bennet, 34].

To summarise, political discourse is characterised by a powerful influence potential and the ability to direct public opinion in a direction favourable to the communicator. This determines its main function - achieving a political goal, in particular, gaining or retaining power [19, 113].

### **1.3. The boundaries between manipulation, persuasion and suggestion**

To completely understand the subtleties of influence, it is crucial to separate manipulation from persuasion and suggestion.

Some researchers of forms of influence on consciousness treat manipulation and persuasion as equals [15, 89]. Indeed, as Rom Harré, a British philosopher and psychologist, points out, they are both social psychological concepts which depict the processes of interpersonal interaction. They imply an asymmetrical direction of influence and seem to have psychological entailments [67, 126]. Moreover, they are both goal-oriented since the communicator's aim is to establish, change, or occasionally preserve a specific view or attitude towards a particular issue, aligned with the communicator's interests [37, 232].

However, the concept of manipulation is broader and significantly different from the concept of persuasion [15, 89]. The specific features that distinguish manipulation from persuasion are power and domination. It is worth noting here that the analysis of the power dimension of manipulation implies the existence of means by which some social groups or individuals exercise control over others. In addition, manipulation agents must meet individual and social criteria that allow them to exert influence on others. They must have access to and control over social resources (this includes access to the media and other forms of social discourse). Politicians can use social discourse as a means of exercising their political power and as a means of maintaining and reproducing it in society [24, 49].

Some researchers consider persuasion to be a component of the manipulative mechanism. The process of persuasion involves more than just the transmission of a message. Along with the transmission, information is analysed, which should include a system of logical evidence aimed at proving or, conversely, refuting any position. However, in the process of manipulation, it is rather surrogate beliefs that are used, rather than genuine ones [15, 89].

The idea of information analysis accompanied by a system of logical evidence is traced in the dictionary definition of persuasion. Thus, according to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, to persuade is to "*move by argument, entreaty, or expostulation to a belief, position or course of action*" where argument focuses on the rational part of the receiver, unlike the other two [100: e-ref]. Rational appeal lies in the attempt to convince the audience using logical reasoning, discussion, while emotional appeals that may occasionally be employed still respect the receiver's capacity to make an informed decision.

Furthermore, manipulation is artful since, as previously stated, the victim of manipulation does not recognise the influence exerted upon them [24, 49]. In other words, manipulators do not use a direct persuasion but camouflage their genuine intentions [37, 232 – 233].

Unlike direct persuasion where a speaker openly presents arguments and tries to convince the audience, manipulation never reveals its true goals [24, 9]. The manipulator hides their real intentions by using subtle tactics such as emotional appeals [79, 2], distortion of facts [80, 352], or strategic omissions [71, 186], so that the audience believes they are acting freely, even though their behavior is being carefully directed.

Harré holds a similar moral viewpoint. According to him, the ethical aspect of persuasion is rooted in the communicator's respect towards their audience by treating them as people. In contrast, when manipulation occurs, the speaker treats the audience as though they are things rather than conscious, active participants in the communication flow [67, 127].

Viewing from this perspective, the socio-psychological mechanism of persuasion involves, on the one hand, the purposeful, conscious nature of influence, the use of arguments and facts, adherence to the logic of proof and justification, appeal to truth and significance, and, on the other hand, the recipient's conscious, attentive and critical attitude to the content of the information offered to them and the way it is presented [32, 120]. A persuasive influence can be considered successful if the recipient has grasped the goals, intentions, and meaning of the message with the feeling of real freedom of choice [34, 279].

Therefore, the main prerequisite that distinguishes persuasion from other forms of influence, and above all from manipulation, is the ability of the recipient to control the process, to participate in it and, most importantly, to be aware of it. Regarding politics, it is persuasion that should come to the fore in the modern electoral process as one of the main obstacles to the spread of such negative information and psychological influences as manipulation [17, 153].

Another important aspect to consider is suggestion. Since the purpose of manipulation and suggestion is to form the addressee's attitude that will contribute to the realisation of the speaker's intentions, these concepts are often confused [23, 380].

Suggestion is an influence on a person's mental state that is accompanied by a decrease in consciousness and critical perception of external information with a lack of desire to comprehend, analyse or evaluate it. The nature of the influence here is not directed at the logic of an individual, their ability to think, analyse, evaluate, but at their readiness to receive orders, instructions, advice and act in the requested direction.

Unlike persuasion, the social and psychological mechanism of suggestion does not require a critical attitude and arguments in favour of the truth and significance of the information provided to the object of influence [32, 109-113]. This difference goes back to the Aristotelian concept of rhetoric, according to which the rhetorician has two levers of influence on the audience – logical (logos) and emotional arguments (pathos). In case of modern speech influence, persuasion is based on the consciousness, the mind of the recipient, and suggestion – on emotions. Thus, the essence of suggestion is to influence a person's feelings, and through them, their will and mind [2, 9].

The fundamental difference between the concepts of suggestion and manipulation lies in the fact that suggestive influence is deeper in nature, as it is caused by a biopsychological stimulus while manipulation does not suppress rational thinking, but only directs it in the direction necessary for the manipulator [28, 158].

In psychology, suggestion is defined as the process by which a person accepts an idea, belief, or impulse generated by someone else without critical analysis or conscious reasoning. It often happens when the person is in a receptive emotional or mental state such as relaxation, excitement, or fear [91, 304].

In political discourse, suggestion works by suppressing the audience's rational thinking and appealing directly to their emotions, instincts, or subconscious associations. The politician resorting to suggestion in their speeches doesn't aim to persuade the public through logical argument, facts or evidence. Instead, they will rely on repetitions, strong imagery, slogans, symbols, rhythms, and emotional triggers to implant ideas or feelings that the audience accepts without critical thinking [74, 64].

Since language is a major instrument to exert power in political discourse, mechanisms of suggestion in politics include systematic use of keywords – specific

lexical items that carry strong emotional, ideological, or cultural meaning and are used repeatedly to shape the audience's perceptions and reactions, e.g. *terrorists*, *patriots*, *liberty*, or *enemy within* immediately trigger strong emotions and mental images, even before any full argument is made [94, 87-121].

Along with keywords, politicians resort to phonological stylistic means of verbal influence, various play on words; they also skilfully realise the ambiguity in the word meanings. Having carried out the semantic analysis of verbs used in political advertising texts capable of having a suggestive influence on the recipient, it was determined that the semantic nucleus of such verbs has been determined to contain such concepts as desire, movement, gain, and promise [39, 120].

The table below presents a comparison of three types of social influence - manipulation, persuasion, and suggestion, based on various ethical and cognitive criteria [32, 138].

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>manipulation</b>	<b>persuasion</b>	<b>suggestion</b>
Initial discrepancy between the recipient's and the communicator's perspective	+	+	+
Recipient's awareness of the influence	-	+	-
The ability of the recipient to critically analyse information	-	+	-
Freedom to make decisions (social autonomy)	-	+	-
Recognition of the influence as morally acceptable	-	+	+
The opportunity to express your point of view to the communicator	-	+	-

Table 1. Comparison of the concepts of manipulation, persuasion and suggestion [32, 138]

Table 1 shows that the concepts of manipulation, persuasion, and suggestion differ significantly in terms of communicative dynamics, ethical implications, and the recipient's autonomy. All three strategies begin with an initial discrepancy between the communicator's and the recipient's perspectives, indicating an intention to influence or change the recipient's viewpoint.

However, the concepts diverge considerably in how the influence is exercised. In persuasion, the recipient is consciously aware of the attempt to influence them, and is encouraged to engage in critical analysis of the presented information. This process respects the recipient's freedom of decision-making and allows for dialogue, making persuasion generally viewed as a morally acceptable form of influence.

In contrast, manipulation operates covertly since the recipient is unaware of the influence, is discouraged from critically evaluating the information and has limited social autonomy. The manipulator controls the interaction in a way that denies the recipient the opportunity to express their perspective, making the process ethically problematic.

Suggestion shares many features with manipulation, such as a lack of awareness and critical reflection, but it typically functions on a more emotional or subconscious level. Like manipulation, suggestion limits autonomy and dialogue, and is similarly not recognised by the recipient as an influence.

Ultimately, since persuasion respects the recipient's autonomy and critical thinking, it is the most morally acceptable type of influence. On the contrary, suggestion and manipulation are less transparent and restrict the recipient's capacity to completely comprehend or contest the influence being exerted.

## **Conclusion to chapter I**

Discourse is studied within structural, situational and practice-based approaches. The first holds that discourse is a structure above sentence level; the second one treats it as a social category, a text placed into a social setting; and the third defines discourse as practice through which language personality is realised. The typologies of discourse developed based on domains of social life: political, media, educational, medical, legal.

It may be conclusively stated that political discourse takes a significant role in social and cultural life. However, it still lacks a clear and single definition. For this reason, political discourse may often intertwine with other types of discourse, for example, mass-media discourse.

Describing political discourse as a distinct type of discourse, scholars define its primary function — to gain, hold, and exercise political power. During a speech, politicians do not only inform the audience about some aspect of public life, but also struggle to win their favour, persuade to take some position, and gain their support.

Political discourse has a number of prerequisites for manipulating public consciousness. Manipulation in political discourse can be defined as one of the aspects of public relations in which the author creates an image or argument that contributes to the realisation of their interests. So, politicians through the purposeful conscious selection of linguistic means convey a certain meaning in order to achieve a programmed pragmatic impact, the audience is usually unaware of.

Finally, a comparative analysis of manipulation, persuasion and suggestion shows differences between these forms of influence. Manipulation is characterised by a low level of awareness of influence on the part of the recipient, limiting their critical thinking, freedom of decision-making and ability to express their own position. At the same time, persuasion is based on open and morally acceptable influence that recognises the recipient's autonomy and ability to think analytically. Suggestion, on the other hand, falls somewhere in the middle between manipulation and persuasion: it also limits the conscious perception of influence and the recipient's autonomy, but usually does not have the same level of covertness as manipulation.

## II. CLASSIFICATION OF LINGUISTIC MEANS OF MANIPULATIVE INFLUENCE IN DONALD TRUMP'S 2025 SPEECHES

A political speech is considered to be the most prototypical genre of political discourse. As a manifestation of political discourse, political speech is a public speech which serves as an effective means of gaining recognition and demonstrating leadership [7, 50].

In the book "Analysing political speeches" the author defines political speech as "a coherent stream of spoken language that is usually prepared for delivery by a speaker to an audience for a specific purpose on a political occasion" [44, 13].

Public speech has traditionally occupied a prominent place in US political and public life. It plays the role of a means of "communication" between politicians and the public, an effective tool of influence, especially manipulative one. A good example of this are the public speeches of the current 47th President of the United States of America - Donald Trump [22, 95].

This research is based on the following speeches delivered by Donald Trump in 2025:

- **Donald Trump's 2025 Inaugural Address**, delivered on January 20, 2025, in the Capitol Rotunda. In this speech, President Trump outlined his vision for America's future, promised a "golden age of America," stressing the issues of national unity, economic prosperity and a strong national defense;
- **Donald Trump's 2025 Address to Congress**, delivered on March 4. In this speech, the President highlighted the executive orders he has issued and laid out his vision for how Congress should begin implementing his sweeping legislative agenda;
- **Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" Speech**, delivered on April 2. In this speech, President Trump announced implementing comprehensive trade tariffs aimed at addressing the US trade deficit and asserting economic independence.

## 2.1. Lexical means of manipulation in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches

All of Donald Trump's speeches that were previously mentioned employ a range of lexical means of producing a manipulative impact.

Choosing vocabulary with positive or negative connotations is a technique used by many politicians. Evaluative vocabulary is important for establishing manipulative influence as the recipient is expected to adopt the evaluation of the object or phenomenon provided by the author [13, 60].

Thus, in the analysed speeches, Donald Trump intentionally uses positively connotative vocabulary to frame his political perspectives as aligned with the national values of American society: "faith", "wealth", "democracy", "freedom", "prosperity", "safety", "peace", "proud", "prosperous", "free", "thrilling": *We will move with purpose and speed to bring back hope, prosperity, safety, and peace for citizens of every race, religion, color, and creed [103]. ...to restore common sense, safety, optimism, and wealth all across our wonderful land [104]. ... the day that we began to make America wealthy again. Going to make it wealthy, good and wealthy [105].* Such statements resonate with the audience because the President mentions the core values of democracy, of which Americans are so proud.

Vocabulary with negative connotation is used to create a negative image of the previous administration, in particular Joe Biden, to highlight its failures and justify the need for change: "corrupt establishment", "complete disrepair", "crisis of trust", "inflation crisis", "the worst president", "insane", "economic catastrophe", "inflation nightmare", "total mess", "hemorrhage": *For many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens while the pillars of our society lay broken and seemingly in complete disrepair [103]. As you know, we inherited from the last administration an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare [104]. In sleepy Joe Biden's last year in office, the United States hemorrhaged one hundred thousand manufacturing jobs [105].*

Donald Trump's rhetorical manipulation also extends to the use of euphemisms. One of the most striking examples is Donald Trump's declaration of "Liberation Day"

to mark a sweeping tariff policy. The term "liberation" is a euphemistic framing of an economic attack. By coining a celebratory name for the day, he softens the aggressive nature of the action (a trade war) and gives it a positive, patriotic connotation.

However, Donald Trump more often resorts to dysphemistic language choosing harsh or provocative expressions for opponents and unwanted policies. For instance, in the Address to Congress, Donald Trump blames "radical-left lunatics" for undermining justice system: *In recent years, our justice system has been turned upside down by radical-left lunatics* [104]. Likewise, the federal bureaucracy is deliberately termed "the swamp", as in his promise to be "draining the swamp": *Any federal bureaucrat who resists this change will be removed from office immediately because we are draining the swamp* [104].

Another characteristic feature of the researched speeches is the use of lexical units belonging to the same semantic group. Thus, the President keeps emphasizing a chance of reaching a new level of development repeating words from the same semantic field of novelty and change: "reclaim", "restore", "rebalance", "reborn": *Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced* [103]. *My administration will reclaim power from this unaccountable bureaucracy, and we will restore true democracy to America again* [104]. *April 2nd, 2025, will forever be remembered as the day American industry was reborn, the day America's destiny was reclaimed* [105]. This repetition creates a persuasive rhythm and ingrains key promises in the audience's memory thereby fostering manipulative influence.

The analysed speeches demonstrate an active use of verbs belonging to the semantic group of struggle and opposition which are united by the common connotation of resisting threats and taking active action against enemies or problems: "defend", "repel", "defeat", "protect", "fight", "annihilate", "eliminate", "halt", "remove". Some of the found examples of their use include: *While they are plentiful, they will be annihilated by this great momentum that the world is now witnessing in the United States of America* [103]. *Every day, my administration is fighting to deliver the change America needs* [104].



Word	Use
will	93 times
great	17 times
America	14 times
nation	14 times
government	11 times
back	11 times
country	11 times
today	10 times
every	9 times

Table 2. Most frequently used lexical items in Donald Trump's Inaugural Speech.

As it is seen, "will" appears to be the most frequently used word which conveys a feeling of development and dynamism and shows a discourse focused on the future.

The word cloud and the chart demonstrate the predominance of positively coloured concepts such as "great", "America", "nation", "country" which enhance the sense of national unity and belonging by appealing to the audience's patriotic feelings. The frequent use of words with positive connotation by Trump automatically sets the listeners' mood and defines the way they perceive the President's words since the more word is repeated, the more eager people are to believe it.

The word "government" plays a dual role functioning as a means of identifying problems of the previous administration and as a tool for mobilising public support around a new programme of action. The word "back" is used to create an image of a "golden past" which was lost after the change of power. In this way, Trump reinforces the message that with his return to office, the country will also "return" to its success. Some examples of this message include: *And we are going to bring law and order back to our cities. In recent years, our nation has suffered greatly. But we are going to bring it back and make it great again, greater than ever before [103].*

By using "today" Donald Trump constructs a feeling of the historical moment as if people are witnessing something big right now: *Today, I will sign a series of historic executive orders [103].* It also reinforces the message: "It was bad → today I am acting → it will be better".



As it was previously stated, in the Inaugural Speech "will" is the most prevalent word. However, in the speech, addressed to Congress, "going" is nearly equivalent to "will" in terms of frequency. This indicates a shift from a declaration of the speaker's intentions to an emphasis on the process of their implementation.

Words referring to the people and nation are also prominent: "people" and "country" are used repeatedly to foster a populist, inclusive tone suggesting that the people and the country are foremost in Donald Trump's mind. The idea of American greatness is continuously reinforced by the frequent pairing of the words "America" with the adjective "great" in the President's well-known slogan and beyond it. Each time he says "great", whether describing "great American patriots", "greatest economy", or his "great" plans, he instils a positive evaluation in listeners' minds.

The adverb "now" also stands out as the speaker repeatedly uses it to create urgency and immediacy: *Countless thousands of these terrorists were welcomed into the U.S. by the Biden administration, but now every last one will be rounded up and forcibly removed from our country. Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades, and now it's our turn to start using them against those other countries* [104]. This invites the audience to believe they are seeing a turning point in history by creating the idea that historic change is happening at this very moment.

Another subtle but powerful repetition is Donald Trump's use of "ever" and "never" to frame superlatives. For instance, he claims his victory brought "the most ever" swing in optimism, that illegal crossings hit the "lowest ever recorded" or that opponents' failures are like "nothing we've ever seen". By means of such phrases as "than ever before", "never seen anything like it", and "never been anything like it" Donald Trump manipulates perception giving the listener the impression that the situation is unprecedented in history and that the drastic measures he suggests are necessary.



Following that, the words "people" and "country" emphasize how often he references the national community.

The word "percent" appears 38 times, which is striking in a political speech. It stems from Donald Trump's tactic of citing numerous tariff rates and statistics which give an impression of concrete evidence backing his claims. Moreover, like in the Inaugural Address and the Address to Congress, Donald Trump manipulates the audience with such words as "will", "great", and "now" which emphasize an optimistic assessment and forward-looking optimism throughout the speech.

Throughout the "Liberation Day" Speech, Trump repeatedly uses the verb "think" to guide his audience's perceptions and urge them to think about particular facts in order to frame those facts as self-evident. For example, pointing to the loss of American factories, the President says: "*Think of what that is, ninety thousand. Think about putting a map up and putting tacks on it. You wouldn't have enough room...*" [105]. This imperative "think" not only dramatises the statistic but also subtly leads the audience to conclude that such deindustrialisation is unacceptable.

Similarly, Donald Trump uses "think" to anticipate criticism and dismiss possible disagreement. After explaining his reciprocal tariff plan, the President insists: "*Think... they charge us, we charge them. We charge them less. So how can anybody be upset?*" [105]. Here, "think" serves as a hint to follow his reasoning, which leads the listener to conclude that the policy is undeniably fair.

Donald Trump also uses "think" to frame shared beliefs and then reframe them in his favour: "*You know, you think of European Union very friendly. They rip us off*" [105]. This kind of rhetoric positions the speaker as the truth-teller by implying that everyone had been thinking of the situation wrongly until his disclosure.

In conclusion, the analysis of lexical units demonstrates that none of Donald Trump's word choices are accidental. Instead, all the speeches exemplify how the President uses language as a tool of manipulating the audience. Each lexical unit is chosen in such a way that will elicit a desired reaction of the recipients. Thus, through evaluative vocabulary Donald Trump instils strong feelings – anger at the opponents or certain policies and pride in the bright future of America and its leader. Words from

the same semantic field and repetitions serve to ingrain key promises and messages in the audience's memory. Notably, the word cloud analysis of three speeches reveals a recurring core lexicon, with the most frequently used words remaining consistent across all researched speeches. It underlines the systematic nature of Donald Trump's lexical choices and their role in reinforcing key ideological messages.

## 2.2. Stylistic means of manipulation in Donald's Trump 2025 speeches

Undoubtedly, a lot of politicians nowadays employ a range of stylistic devices to enhance the expressiveness and impact of their speeches. Donald Trump is no exception. In his speeches, he uses many figurative and stylistic devices that, on the one hand, contribute to the creation of his political image and persona, and, on the other hand, highlight certain aspects of his personality [9, 14].

One of the most commonly employed stylistic devices in the analysed speeches of Donald Trump is an **epithet**. For example, to support the idea of national glory and unity, the speaker uses the following epithets: thrilling new era of national success, rich nation, fair, equal, and impartial justice, the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation, growing nation, one glorious nation, free, sovereign, and independent nation, magnificent, law-abiding American citizens, the wonderful people of North Carolina, hardworking American citizens. Creating an idealised picture of the nation through such epithets helps to mobilise support and reduces the audience's inclination to critically reflect on reality.

Donald Trump also resorts to using relevant epithets to create an image of a "golden age" that came under the speaker's leadership and the promise of even greater prosperity in the future. *Instead, we built the greatest economy in the history of the world* [105]. *With God's help, over the next four years, we are going to lead this nation even higher, and we are going to forge the freest, most advanced, most dynamic, and most dominant civilization* [104].

Right at the beginning of the Inaugural Address Donald Trump uses **antithesis**. In his criticism of the previous administration, the speaker contrasts two realities: one in which the government is unable to defend its "magnificent, law-

abiding American citizens" and the same government that willingly provides sanctuary to "dangerous criminals" from all over the world: *It fails to protect our magnificent, law-abiding American citizens but provides sanctuary and protection for dangerous criminals, many from prisons and mental institutions, that have illegally entered our country from all over the world* [103]. The same tendency is vividly seen in the following statement: *We now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home while, at the same time, stumbling into a continuing catalogue of catastrophic events abroad*. The manipulative purpose of such an antithesis is to cause indignation, fear and distrust of the current government, thereby preparing the ground for Trump to perceive himself as the only defender of true American values.

The American President's discourse also incorporates the use of **similes**. In particular, in the analysed speeches similes serve two primary purposes. Referring to the experience of the past, Trump focuses on his achievements during the first term and fosters the perception of their inevitable recurrence in the future: *Like in 2017, we will again build the strongest military the world has ever seen* [103]. *To unshackle our economy, I have directed that for every 1 new regulation, 10 old regulations must be eliminated, just like I did in my very successful first term* [104].

In the following statements Trumps also resorts to hyperbolised similes: *National unity is now returning to America, and confidence and pride is soaring like never before* [103]. *And, by the way, we're going to have growth in the auto industry like nobody has ever seen*. [104]. *These tariffs are going to give us growth like you haven't seen before* [105]. By means of this stylistic device Donald Trump appeals to listeners' emotions and fosters the impression that the occurrences under the speaker's leadership will be remarkably positive and unprecedented. It is worth mentioning that in the Address to Congress, for example, 16 cases of using the hyperbolised similes like "like never before" or "like nobody has ever seen" were identified which indicates a conscious strategy employed by the speaker.

Among the stylistic means of manipulation used by Donald Trump **irony** plays an important role: *And we have ended weaponized government, where, as an*

*example, a sitting president is allowed to viciously prosecute his political opponent, like me. How did that work out? Not too good. Not too good* [104]. In this excerpt, Trump implies that the previous president was viciously prosecuting him as a political opponent. The phrase "not too good" in this context is ironic since in this way Trump mocks his opponents: despite the government's attempts to "use" the system against him, he remains strong, popular and, as he says, "stages a historic political comeback".

The research shows that Donald Trump's discourse is rich in **metaphors** which also become means of manipulative influence. In the course of analysis of his 2025 speeches the following semantic types of metaphors were identified:

- **metaphors related to nature:** *A tide of change is sweeping the country, sunlight is pouring over the entire world* [103]. *Six weeks ago, I stood beneath the dome of this Capitol and proclaimed the dawn of the golden age of America* [104]. *From this day forward, our country will flourish* [103]. All three metaphors draw upon images of nature and serve to create an optimistic, inspirational tone typical of the inaugural speech. "The tide of change" and "dawn of the golden age" convey the idea of the scale of transformation, "sunshine" symbolises hope and regeneration, and "flourish" evokes associations with growth and vitality.

In the following example Trump associates the state bureaucracy and corruption with swamp which needs to be "drained" or destroyed: *Any federal bureaucrat who resists this change will be removed from office immediately because we are draining the swamp* [104]. In addition, the President uses the metaphorical expression "they were going through the sky" describing a sudden and dramatic rise in prices of eggs: *The egg prices came down 50% ...Once we got involved, they were going through the sky* [105];

- **metaphors related to travel** which are used by Donald Trump to create an image of a great perspective or common goal to strive for: *The call of the next great adventure resounds from within our souls* [103]. *The journey to reclaim our republic has not been an easy one — that, I can tell you* [103]. *For \$5 million, we will allow the most successful, job-creating people from all over the world to buy a path to U.S.*

*citizenship* [104]. In the first example, the President uses the metaphor of an adventure to inspire the citizens and shows that the country is facing great prospects which call for courage and determination. The metaphor of the journey in the second example is a way of describing the struggle for national interests or independence. The metaphor of the path, in turn, emphasises the idea of moving towards the citizenship making the process of its obtaining more attractive and accessible to those who are able to follow this "path";

- **metaphors related to body parts:** *The spirit of the frontier is written into our hearts [103]. They (Americans) crossed deserts, scaled mountains, braved untold dangers...and put the universe of human knowledge into the palm of the human hand [103].* Taken together, these metaphors appeal to national pride and historical heritage. Trump appeals to the emotions of the audience, emphasising that the spirit of bravery, independence and innovation is in the heart of every American. According to him, thanks to the Americans, science, technology and knowledge have become so accessible that they can be "placed" in the hands of everyone.

In the following metaphor hands symbolise control and active action: the country's destiny is presented as something that can be physically taken and changed. This image creates a strong impact on the public, instills a sense of personal responsibility for America's future and encourages unity and active participation: *Now it is our time to take up the righteous cause of American liberty, and it is our turn to take America's destiny into our own hands [104].*

While delivering "Liberation Day" Speech Trump appeals to the metaphor of debt placed on heads: *This is why we have that amount of debt that's been placed on our heads over the last number of years, and we're really not taking it anymore [105].* The debt is portrayed by Trump as a heavy burden that other countries have imposed on the American people through unfair trade terms. This image strengthens the call for resistance and change. At the same time, it reinforces the approval of the leader who promises to rectify the situation and protect the country's interests.

**Metonymy** is another stylistic device characteristic of Donald Trump's discourse. For instance, the word "America" is used to represent the people, its

citizens, as well as the principles and ideals behind it. By means of metonymy, the President conveys a picture of the nation's greatness and unity, which influences the listeners and makes them feel patriotic and proud of their country: *America will reclaim its rightful place as the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation on earth, inspiring the awe and admiration of the entire world* [103]. *Every day, my administration is fighting to deliver the change America needs, to bring a future that America deserves, and we're doing it* [104].

During the "Liberation Day" Speech, for example, Trump also resorts to metonymy while covering the issue of comprehensive trade tariffs against American farmers: *And China charges American rice farmers an over-quota tariff rate of 65%. South Korea charges different from 50% to 513%. And Japan, our friend, charges us 700%* [105]. "China", "South Korea" and "Japan" are used as metonymies for the governments or government agencies that make tariff decisions. In other words, the President refers to the government or specific policy decisions rather than the country as such. This application makes the statement more straightforward, emotionally charged, and helps to create a sense of injustice among the public and the need to act in response.

Furthermore, the analysed Donald Trump's speeches contain **parallelisms**: *We will not be conquered, we will not be intimidated, we will not be broken, and we will not fail* [103]. *We will keep you safe. We will make you rich. And together, we will take Greenland to heights like you have never thought possible before* [104]. *We will supercharge our domestic industrial base. We will pry open foreign markets and break down foreign trade barriers* [105].

The repeated use of parallel constructions "we will" and "we will not" enhances the persuasiveness of the President's speeches and leaves no doubt about its veracity. In the examples provided above, these constructions emphasise the fact that the President is trying to get closer to the people and indicate that in the future they will do a common cause and have common goals.

The further analysis of stylistic means of manipulation demonstrates the use of **hyperboles** by Donald Trump: *Our country can no longer deliver basic services*

*in times of emergency, as recently shown by the wonderful people of North Carolina ... or, more recently, Los Angeles, where we are watching fires still tragically burn from weeks ago without even a token of defense [103].* In this example, hyperbole is used to emphasise the government's passivity, creating the impression that absolutely nothing is being done to combat the fires. This reinforces the criticism of the government's actions and causes the listener to feel indignation.

In the following example Trump also hyperbolically describes the limitless potential that, as said by the President, has been lost or forgotten: *And, through it all, we are going to rediscover the unstoppable power of the American spirit, and we are going to renew unlimited promise of the American dream* [104]. The hyperboles "unstoppable" and "unlimited" play on the emotions of the audience, including patriotism and national pride. The idealisation of the "American dream" is used to create a positive perception of the future and to reduce criticism of current difficulties.

The issue of the southern border security is one of the central topics in the researched speeches. Covering the issue Trump appeals to the hyperbole exaggerating the scale of the problem, causing fear and anxiety in listeners and reinforcing the division between "us" and "them": *How about allowing millions and millions and millions of people to pour into our country with open borders where it's so sad to see even now* [105].

The use of **rhetorical questions** is also worth noting though they are not quite common in the researched 2025 speeches of Donald Trump. Thus, addressing the same problem of dangers posed by open borders, Donald Trump uses the question not intended to require an answer: *...there were hundreds of thousands of illegal crossings a month, and virtually all of them, including murderers, drug dealers, gang members, and people from mental institutions and insane asylums, were released into our country. Who would want to do that?* [104] Here, the rhetorical question emphasises the absurdity of the situation: the President hints that no one with common sense would agree to deliberately endanger the security of their own country.

One more example serves as a good illustration of the rhetorical question used as a way to appeal to opponents: *So, Democrats sitting before me, for just this one night, why not join us in celebrating so many incredible wins for America? For the good of our nation, let's work together and let's truly make America great again.* [104] Since the question is framed in such a way that does not imply objection, it makes listeners feel obliged, even indirectly, to agree with the demand to work together for the good of the country and the nation.

Moreover, the discourse of the American President is based on the use of **repetitions** which are quite common in the researched speeches: *Every single day, we will stand up and we will fight, fight, fight for the country our citizens believe in and for the country our people deserve* [104]. *Many of these biggest - the biggest companies in the world, they've committed to build, build, build. We're going to build, build, build, sir* [105]. Regular, rhythmic repetition of key concepts such as "fight" and "build" increases the power of influence on the audience, while activating the latter's attention, forcing them to concentrate on the word and remember it. In this way, Donald Trump draws the audience's attention to the actions he promises to take, creating a favorable picture of an active leader.

**Allusions** found in the analysed speeches are also worth mentioning. One of the most vivid examples is the well-known slogan "drill, baby, drill" [93: e-ref] which was used by Donald Trump both in the Inaugural Speech and Address to Congress: *The inflation crisis was caused by massive overspending and escalating energy prices, and that is why today I will also declare a national energy emergency. We will drill, baby, drill* [103]. *As you've heard me say many times, we have more liquid gold under our feet than any nation on Earth and by far. And now I've fully authorized the most talented team ever assembled to go and get it. It's called drill, baby, drill* [104]. In these examples, the allusion to "drill, baby, drill" evokes the associations with the slogan first used by Michael Steele, former Maryland Lieutenant Governor, who voiced support for increased oil and gas drilling during the 2008 Republican National Convention. It became even more well-known after Sarah Palin, the Republican vice presidential nominee, used it in the debate. Thus,

appealing to this slogan is aimed at consolidating Donald Trump's image as a leader who supports economic growth and energy independence. The President appeals to a wide audience that supports the idea of maximising the exploitation of the country's natural resources, regardless of environmental or other social consequences.

Furthermore, to make the statement more expressive and easier to remember, Donald Trump resorts to the use of **anaphora**: *It's time to stop this madness. It's time to halt the killing. It's time to end this senseless war* [104]. *We will not forget our country, we will not forget our Constitution, and we will not forget our God* [103].

Therefore, the use of stylistic means in political discourse, in particular, the political speeches given by the newly elected US President Donald Trump contributes greatly to the manipulative impact on the audience. The President uses a significant number of stylistic devices, deviating from the neutral way of conveying information, to enhance the effect of the statement, to strengthen the emotional and aesthetic impact on the audience, to form a vivid picture that will stick in the recipients' minds for a long time.

It can be conclusively stated that political rhetoric is characterised by the use of stylistic devices in, with the use of epithet, metaphor, metonymy, parallelisms, antithesis, irony, simile, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, repetition, allusion and anaphora being particularly popular in the analysed speeches.

### **2.3. Grammatical means of manipulation in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches**

In the analysed speeches, **passive voice** is frequently employed as one of the grammatical means of manipulation. Unlike active voice, which requires a clear indication of the performer of an action, passive voice enables concentration on the action itself or its consequences, therefore leaving the agent either invisible or unknown: *American ships are being severely overcharged and not treated fairly in any way, shape, or form* [103]. *And, by the way, we're going to have growth in the auto industry like nobody has ever seen. Plants are opening up all over the place. Deals are being made* [104]. *Our country and its taxpayers have been ripped*

*off for more than fifty years, but it is not going to happen anymore* [105]. The passive voice in the given examples conceals the performer of the action - it is unclear who exactly is causing damage to American ships, who is ripping off the country and what kind of deals are being made. By presenting information as an objective truth and omitting specificity, such formulations enhance the dramatic effect and allow the speaker to influence the audience's emotions without providing them with the chance to verify the facts or challenge the information.

Additionally, there are cases when the performer of the action is mentioned but remains secondary to the focus of the sentence. For instance, in the following statement, the passive voice is purposefully used in place of the active voice to put "many more" (scams) first, rather than those who exposed them: *Under the Trump administration, all of these scams — and there are far worse, but I didn't think it was appropriate to talk about them... Many more have been found out and exposed and swiftly terminated by a group of very intelligent, mostly young people, headed up by Elon* [104]. Thus, Trump focuses on the successful outcome rather than on how and by whom it was achieved.

Donald Trump in his speeches also uses **modal verbs**, which contribute to creating a manipulative effect:

- **will** is the most frequently used modal verb in all the researched speeches (the Inaugural Speech – 94 times, the Address to Congress – 62 times, the "Liberation Day" Speech – 33 times). This modal verb helps to create the illusion of absolute certainty and control, and gives the impression that the described events are bound to happen: *We will reinstate my Remain in Mexico policy. I will end the practice of catch and release. And I will send troops to the southern border to repel the disastrous invasion of our country* [103]. *We will keep you safe. We will make you rich. And together, we will take Greenland to heights like you have never thought possible before* [104]. *We will supercharge our domestic industrial base. We will pry open foreign markets and break down foreign trade barriers* [105];

- the modal verb **can** serves as a tool of manipulation to convey the idea of powerlessness and incompetence of the previous government: *Our country can no*

*longer deliver basic services in times of emergency, as recently shown by the wonderful people of North Carolina [103]. We now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home [103]. They never paid ten cents to any other president, and yet they paid hundreds of billions, so much so that Biden couldn't do anything [105];*

- **have to** appeals to collective responsibility, increasing the emotional pressure on the audience and fostering the impression that listeners should act within a given strategy or policy: *We have to take care of our law enforcement. We have to [104]. You know, it's like I say to the leaders, look, you gotta take care of your country, but we have to start taking care of our country now [105]. We have to unify. We can't be separated. We have to get it done [105].*

It is worth adding that in contrast to "will", the grammatical construction "**be going to**" frequently used by Trump, conveys planning and preparation, which makes the promise more convincing and emotionally stronger: *We're going to win like never before [103]. But we're going to find out where that money is going [104]. There's going to be new investment [105].*

Donald Trump also resorts to **inversion**, which helps to change the emphasis and reinforce certain aspects of the statements: *Never again will the immense power of the state be weaponized to persecute political opponents — something I know something about [103]. This is my fifth such speech to Congress, and, once again, I look at the Democrats in front of me, and I realize there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy or to make them stand or smile or applaud. Nothing I can do [104].* In the first example, the inversion highlights the solemnity of the promise, emphasising the determination to act. In the second example, the elliptical inversion adds emotional intensity and emphasises the speaker's position as a victim who appears to be doing his best but is faced with the prejudice of his opponents.

**Personal pronouns** should also be taken into account while examining grammatical means of manipulation. Thus, Donald Trump fosters a sense of community, solidarity and unity with his audience by using the pronouns "we" and "our." They give listeners the impression that they are a part of something big or

significant: *We will measure our success not only by the battles we win but also by the wars that we end — and perhaps most importantly, the wars we never get into* [103].

The use of the personal pronoun "I" enhances the President's credibility as a responsible and resolute leader who will personally guarantee a result: *During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first* [104].

In addition, to enhance personalisation, instead of generalising with phrases like "people should be hired", Trump uses "you" to address the listener directly, making the statement personally meaningful: *We believe that whether you are a doctor, an accountant, a lawyer, or an air traffic controller, you should be hired and promoted based on skill and competence, not race or gender* [104].

**Conditional sentences** are another grammatical means of manipulation characteristic of Donald Trump's political discourse. The manipulative potential of conditional sentences is particularly evident in the Address to Congress and "Liberation Day" Speech. Thus, during the Address to Congress, the President uses the third conditional that puts his political opponent Kamala Harris in a bad light: *OpenAI and Oracle — Larry Ellison — announced \$500 billion investment, which they wouldn't have done if Kamala had won* [104]. Trump manipulates the audience through a hypothetical assumption that is presented as an almost obvious fact, although without any supporting evidence.

A very similar manipulative technique is seen in Donald Trump's following statement: *And we will not cut Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid benefits, and the Democrats will because if they got in, the entire economy would collapse* [105]. This statement has no factual basis as well, but it has an emotional impact on the audience, imposing fear of alternative choices and strengthening trust in the speaker as the sole defender of stability in the country.

Donald Trump uses conditionals to appeal to emotions and morale: *But if we truly care about protecting America's children, no step is more crucial than securing America's borders* [104]. Formally, this is a hypothetical condition, but in reality it

creates a binary opposition: supporting the closing of borders indicates concern for children, while opposing it means being on the side of the threat.

Apart from that, conditional sentences are used by Trump to emphasise his achievements and to create an image of a hero without whom everything would be lost: *If I didn't terminate that, United Auto Workers, you would have had no jobs in this country* [105].

**Tag questions** are not quite common in the analysed speeches delivered by Donald Trump in 2025, however, in the Address to Congress they appear as an effective rhetorical device. For example: *Wokeness is trouble. Wokeness is bad. It's gone. It's gone. And we feel so much better for it, don't we?* [104]. By means of a tag question, the politician addresses the audience as if demanding confirmation, thereby creating the illusion of a common position and strengthening the emotional bond with the public.

Further analysis of the speeches demonstrates the use of emphatic auxiliary **did** as a manipulative means: *If you look at China, I took in hundreds of billions of dollars in my term...so much so that Biden couldn't do anything. They wanted to try and terminate it... So, they did ease it up. They did things that they shouldn't have done* [105]. In this context, did emphasises that this was indeed done by the administration of Joe Biden. In this way, the President reinforces his position and eliminates any possible doubts of the listeners in advance. This creates an effect of confidence and makes the audience view what is stated as an unquestionable truth.

In addition to emphatic auxiliaries, Donald Trumps also resorts to the use of **emphatic sentences**: *It is my hope that our recent presidential election will be remembered as the greatest and most consequential election in the history of our country* [103]. *It was love like Corey's that built our country, and it's love like Corey's that is going to make our country more majestic than ever before* [104]. They serve to amplify the ideological value of the statement, imposing a particular interpretation of events and reducing the space for critical analysis.

The use of tenses, in particular **tense shifting**, is also of great interest in the context of manipulation. For instance, in the Address to Congress, Donald Trump

shifts from Past Simple to Future Simple to juxtapose the negative occurrences of the past (uncontrolled migration) with optimistic plans for the future (attracting brilliant, hardworking individuals): *So, while we take out the criminals, killers, traffickers, and child predators who were allowed to enter our country...we will now bring in brilliant, hardworking, job-creating people* [104].

The same tendency is seen in the following example: *In recent years, our nation has suffered greatly. But we are going to bring it back and make it great again, greater than ever before* [103]. After emphasising the state of suffering and hardship with the Present Perfect ("in recent years" most probably refers to the period of Joe Biden's administration), the President promises improvement with the help of the construction "be going to". The blending of past and future tenses enables manipulation of the perception of reality by placing emphasis on the problems of the past and the optimistic promises of the future.

Similar idea of contrast between the present or the past and the bright future is realised through the use of **comparative adjectives**: *And now we're going to build on that foundation to create a more peaceful and prosperous future for the entire region* [104]. *With today's action, we are finally going to be able to make America great again, greater than ever before* [105]. In this way, Donald Trump manipulates the audience creating growth dynamics which tend to be positively perceived by people.

**Superlative adjectives** also contribute greatly to the manipulative effect in the researched speeches. Donald Trump frequently uses superlatives in order to make a striking impression on the audience. This is usually an exaggeration of his assessment: *America will reclaim its rightful place as the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation on earth, inspiring the awe and admiration of the entire world* [103]. *We are going to create the highest quality of life, build the safest and wealthiest and healthiest and most vital communities anywhere in the world* [104]. *In my first term, they said tariffs would crash the economy. Instead, we built the greatest economy in the history of the world* [105]. Such rhetoric serves to create an appealing picture of the future that aligns with the audience's conception of an ideal state and to idealise past accomplishments ("the greatest economy in the history of the world").

Moreover, the use of superlative adjectives performs a function of demonizing opponents while simultaneously highlighting Trump himself: *I think they're comparing me to the worst administration in the history of our country, so I appreciate that at least* [105].

One more grammatical means of manipulation that Donald Trump actively uses in his speeches are **exclamatory sentences with the structure "What a + (adjective) + noun!"** In particular, the President uses this structure to generate excitement about his administration's achievements and present them as something grand and unquestionably positive: *We couldn't recruit. Now we're having the best results, just about, that we've ever had. What a tremendous turnaround* [104]. *I declared a national emergency on our southern border and I deployed the U.S. military and Border Patrol to repel the invasion of our country. And what a job they've done* [104]. Without doubt, such sentences create a vivid emotional assessment of events without the need for logical justification.

Another grammatical means of manipulation found in Donald Trump's political discourse is **double negation**, which performs the function of an emphatic statement. For instance: *If we work together, there is nothing we cannot do and no dream we cannot achieve* [103]. Instead of direct statements like "we can do anything" or "we can achieve any dream" which are more neutral, double negation first focuses the listener's attention on a potential obstacle (cannot) and then eliminates it (nothing, no dream) which creates a powerful emotional impact on the audience.

**Participial phrases** are used by Donald Trump to disguise a value judgement as a neutral description: *I will direct our government...to eliminate the presence of all foreign gangs and criminal networks bringing devastating crime to U.S. soil, including our cities and inner cities* [103]. The participial phrase "bringing devastating crime to U.S. soil" functions as an additional grammatical structure that easily "merges" with the main part of the sentence and presents the action as an unquestionable fact rather than a subjective opinion or assumption.

To summarise, as the analysis shows, political speeches are often designed to have an impact not only through content but also through grammar. Donald Trump in his 2025 speeches uses a number of grammatical means which serve as a tool of manipulation. Among them are passive voice, modal verbs, conditional sentences, inversion and tense shifting. With the help of such grammatical means the President not only strengthens his own position but also reduces listeners' critical perception, create the illusion of objectivity and evoke an emotional reaction of the audience.

## Conclusion to chapter II

In conclusion, the analysis of Donald Trump's 2025 speeches demonstrates a well-planned combination of lexical, stylistic and grammatical means that collectively increase the manipulative impact of his political rhetoric.

Lexically, Donald Trump intentionally shapes the political narrative in his advantage by using emotionally charged vocabulary, repeating key words and using semantic framing. His reliance on both euphemisms and dysphemisms shapes public perception by softening controversial policies and amplifying threats. The recurrence of specific lexical units across multiple speeches, as confirmed by frequency analysis, highlights a consistent, strategic approach to rhetorical manipulation.

Stylistically, Donald Trump employs a rich array of rhetorical devices that construct vivid imagery and emotional resonance. Epithets portray an idealised nation and magnify his achievements, whereas antithesis strongly contrasts a gloomy present or past with the "thrilling" future he promises. Likewise, metaphors and hyperbolic similes charge his claims with a sense of momentum and importance.

Grammatically, the speeches reveal strategic constructions that bolster Donald Trump's authority and limit the potential critique. Frequent use of the passive voice foregrounds problems or actions while shifting the focus from the agents. Alongside, modal verbs, with "will" being the most prominent, project absolute confidence in future outcomes, as if his proposed successes are not just plans but foregone conclusions.

Together, these lexical, stylistic, and grammatical means do not function in isolation but converge to form a unified rhetorical force. The analysed speeches reveal how language can be deployed not merely to inform or inspire but to shape thought and consolidate power.

### III. MANIPULATIVE STRATEGIES IN DONALD TRUMP'S 2025 SPEECHES

#### 3.1. Strategies and tactics of manipulation in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches

When describing the manipulative process, two central terms are used: strategy and tactic. Strategy is a general, comprehensive plan for achieving the speaker's goal. In other words, it is a principal task set by the speaker. Tactic, on the contrary, are practical steps taken by the speaker to implement the chosen strategy [18, 117].

It is significant to point out that in modern pragmalinguistics, there is no single approach to the problem of classifying communicative strategies and tactics [6, 60]. This research is guided by the classification of strategies provided by Olga Dmytruk in her research "Manipulative Strategies in Modern English Communication" [8].

**The strategy of group identification** is used to encourage the addressee to identify with the speaker, their position, party, and to evoke a sense of belonging and community [18, 117]. In the researched speeches delivered by Donald Trump this strategy is implemented by means of the following tactics:

- **tactic of solidarity** which is realised primarily through Donald Trump's use of inclusive pronouns such as "we", "our", "us" to portray himself and the audience as a single, unified group with shared goals: *We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of* [103]. *With that goal in mind, we have developed in great detail what we are calling the gold card* [104]. *It's not fair to our farmers. It's not fair to our country* [105].

This tactic can be well illustrated by the example from Donald Trump's economic "Liberation Day" remarks where he proclaims: *"But now it's our turn to prosper... With today's action, we are finally going to be able to make America great again, greater than ever before"* [105]. By saying "our turn" and "we", Trump implicitly connects with the public by framing his initiatives as the will of the American people. The listeners feel that the President shares their identity and interests and, as a result, become more emotionally invested in his agenda.

It is worth noting that the inclusive pronouns were found in all the speeches under analysis. For a better visual presentation, the following chart was created:

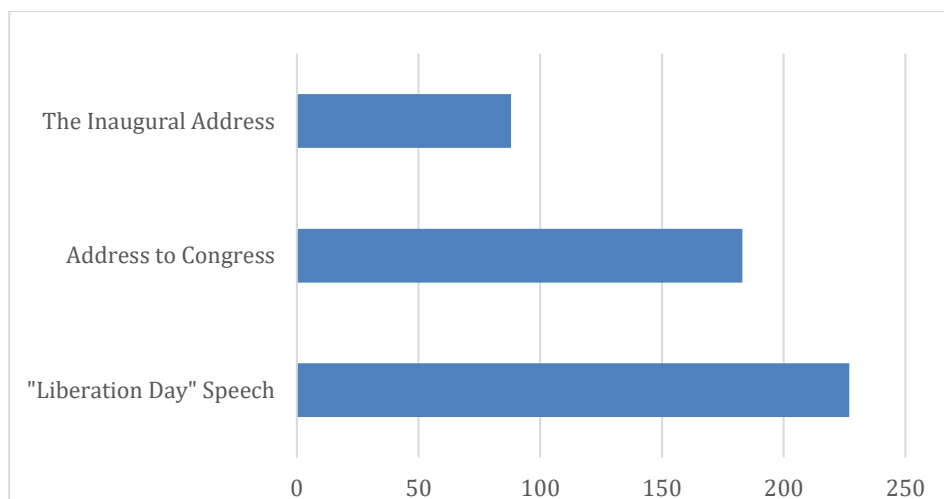


Figure 4. The number of uses of "we" in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches

One more way of realisation of the tactic of solidarity is appealing to common values and experience: *...give the people back their faith, their wealth, their democracy, and, indeed, their freedom [103]. We have been treated very badly from this foolish gift that should have never been made, and Panama's promise to us has been broken [103]. We suffered the worst inflation in 48 years...[104]. For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, and plundered by nations near and far [105].*

In addition, the unification of society and the recently elected president is achieved through the use of the adjective *entire* and the pronoun *all* and appealing to diverse segments of society: *Our entire nation is going to be transformed [105]. ... for all of God's creatures on the edge of the Gulf of America [104]. As our victory showed, the entire nation is rapidly unifying behind our agenda [103]. ...every element of our society: young and old, men and women, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, urban, suburban, rural [103]. We believe that whether you are a doctor, an accountant, a lawyer, or an air traffic controller, you should be hired [104].*

Within the tactic of solidarity the manipulative effect is also achieved through expressing gratitude to the audience: *I want to thank you for the tremendous outpouring of love and trust that you have shown me with your vote [103].* It is simple to gain the audience's favour by delivering a speech full of gratitude and admiration;

- **us vs. them tactic** which lies in the attempt to foster an attitude of loyalty and altruism in the audience. This tactic can be used to make people identify their views with in-group sentiments and opposing views with out-group attitudes [8, 107].

For instance, in the Inaugural Address the President touches upon the issue of immigration policy and resorts to specific vocabulary to portray "us" (American citizens) as virtuous and moral and "them" (immigrants) as dangerous and posing threat: *It fails to protect our magnificent, law-abiding American citizens but provides sanctuary and protection for dangerous criminals, many from prisons and mental institutions, that have illegally entered our country from all over the world* [103].

Another good example is found in his "Liberation Day" Speech where he describes how *"American steelworkers, auto workers, farmers, and skilled craftsmen – we have a lot of them here with us today – they really suffered gravely. They watched in anguish as foreign leaders have stolen our jobs, foreign cheaters have ransacked our factories, and foreign scavengers have torn apart our once beautiful American dream"* [105]. In this case, Americans are "our" in-group and are shown as victims, while "foreign" players are a bad out-group that inflicts harm. His harsh policies (tariffs, border crackdowns, etc.) are therefore more likely to be accepted by supporters as essential safeguards for the in-group.

Us vs. them tactic is also manifested in all the researched Donald Trump's 2025 speeches through criticism of the previous administration: *For many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens* [103]. *We ended all of Biden's environmental restrictions that were making our country far less safe* [104]. *In comparison, under Joe Biden, the worst president in American history...* [104]. *In sleepy Joe Biden's last year in office...*[105]. *As you know, we inherited from the last administration an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare* [104].

No less interesting is the fact that along with depicting the previous administration as detrimental to the welfare of the country, Donald Trump sharply contrasts himself and his administration: *My recent election is a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal and all of these many betrayals*

*that have taken place and to give the people back their faith, their wealth, their democracy, and, indeed, their freedom [103]. Under my leadership, we will restore fair, equal, and impartial justice under the constitutional rule of law [103]. My administration will reclaim power from this unaccountable bureaucracy, and we will restore true democracy to America again [104].* What is more, mentioning such human values as faith, wealth, democracy, freedom, justice and phrases "under my leadership/administration" in one sentence awakens in the recipient's mind the connection between the person mentioned and the concepts with a positive connotation which greatly contributes to manipulative effect.

**The strategy of information distortion** is another manipulative strategy employed by Donald Trump. By means of this strategy the President maximises the impact of favourable facts and minimizes unfavourable ones. Depending on the nature of the information transformation, the following tactics were singled out:

- **tactic of repetition** which is mostly realised by the use of short, repeated sentences or statements. According to Dmytruk, the shorter the statement is, the less evidence is required and, therefore, it has a stronger influence on the recipient [8, 86].

For example, in the Address to Congress, by repeating the same accusation, Trump ensures that criticism of Joe Biden's administration is foregrounded in the listener's memory, even though no specific evidence or context is provided: *The problem with it was that Biden didn't enforce it. He didn't enforce it. Fifty billion dollars of purchases, and we were doing great, but Biden did not enforce it [104].*

In the same speech Trump mentions Marco Rubio, Secretary of State: *Marco has been amazing, and he's going to do a great job. But he's already proven — I mean, he's a great gentleman. He's respected by everybody... He's going to do a fantastic job. Thank you. He's doing a great job. Great job [104].* Phrases like "great job," "fantastic job," "respected" are used often to bolster Rubio's reputation and credibility and engrave his favourable image in people's minds.

To achieve a longer-lasting manipulative effect, politicians resort to repeating set phrases or slogans [8, 90]. The slogan "Make America Great Again" has already been widely recognised as a political symbol of America. In all three speeches, Trump maintains the tradition and uses this slogan adapting it as necessary depending on the topic being covered: *I was saved by God to make America great again* [103]. *As president, I'm fighting every day to reverse this damage and make America affordable again* [104]. *Reversing this trend is one of the top priorities for our new presidential commission to make America healthy again* [104]. *...the day America's destiny was reclaimed, and the day that we began to make America wealthy again* [105]. Repetition is a popular tactic among politicians since constant encounter with the concept contributes to its artificial prioritisation in people's minds [26, 138];

- **tactic of exaggeration** is present in all Donald Trump's speeches that were analysed. In the 2025 speeches, he often employs superlatives like "greatest ever", "worst in history", "nothing like it", which make a powerful impact but often lack accuracy. For instance, he labels his predecessor "the worst president in American history" and then claims that under Biden "*hundreds of thousands of illegal crossings a month, and virtually all of them... were released into our country*" [104].

Moreover, during "Liberation Day" Speech the President refers to the American economy during his first term as the greatest in the history: *In my first term, they said tariffs would crash the economy. Instead, we built the greatest economy in the history of the world* [105]. It may be considered exaggeration since studies show that the US economy under President Trump has not reached its peak historical performance and has also suffered greatly during the coronavirus lockdown [6, 61].

Likewise, Donald Trump resorts to exaggeration to ridicule his opponents: *I look at the Democrats in front of me, and I realize there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy...I could find a cure to the most devastating disease — a disease that would wipe out entire nations...and these people sitting right here will not clap, will not stand, and certainly will not cheer for these astronomical achievements. They won't do it no matter what* [104]. Curing a world-ending disease

is an obviously over-the-top scenario, used to mock Democrats for not clapping him. In this way, the President underlines the contrast - if even that wouldn't please his opponents, then truly nothing will.

The tactic of exaggeration is also evident in Trump's use of numerical data, which have a great influence on both consciousness and imagination. To be more precise, during the Address to Congress the President focuses on what he considers to be unjustified state budget expenditures on foreign programmes: *\$22 billion from HHS to provide free housing and cars for illegal aliens. \$45 million for diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarships in Burma. \$40 million to improve the social and economic inclusion of sedentary migrants. \$8 million to promote LGBTQI+ in the African nation of Lesotho, which nobody has ever heard of* [104]. In this research, four examples are considered, but in the speech, the President cites 19. Stating exact numbers conveys a sense of impartiality and authority. A speech backed up by exact numbers takes on a completely different weight - the audience unquestioningly accepts information that is supported by specific numbers [8, 93].

However, the further analysis shows that non-exact numbers also carry a hidden manipulative meaning. In the following example data is exaggerated to create a positive image of the President: *We will take in trillions and trillions of dollars and create jobs like we have never seen before* [104];

- **tactic of understatement** is present in the researched speeches, though rarely. For example: *The journey to reclaim our republic has not been an easy one — that, I can tell you* [103]. By using the ordinary phrase "has not been an easy one" to describe significant occurrences, Donald Trump minimises the scope of the experience. The public would have been more negatively impacted if the phrase "has been difficult" had been used;

- **tactic of simplification** the usage of which is based on a characteristic feature of the human psyche - the tendency to simplify [8, 96]. Thus, Trump states: *With my actions today, we will end the Green New Deal, and we will revoke the electric vehicle mandate... In other words, you'll be able to buy the car of your choice* [103]. Trump mentions difficult political initiatives which are further

transformed into the straightforward statement that resonates with audience's emotions and is easily understood.

One more example serves as a good illustration of the tactic of simplification. During the Address to Congress Trump says: *Joe Biden especially let the price of eggs get out of control* [104]. This claim simplifies the intricate economic issue of inflation to a single product that everyone can understand: eggs.

Another clear example is how Donald Trump explains the idea of reciprocal tariffs in his "Liberation Day" Speech: *Reciprocal. That means they do it to us and we do it to them. Very simple. Can't get any simpler than that* [105]. International trade and tariffs are complicated issues in practice, but with his direct simplifications like "they tax us, we tax them, simple!" Donald Trump plays on people's sense of justice while ignoring the important details. To put it briefly, Trump simplifies and emotionally resonates his plans by reducing complicated reality to simplistic phrases or binary consequences;

- **tactic of fact-twisting** which is realised through highlighting some facts and suppressing others [8, 98]. One of the recurrent topics in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches is the issue of immigration at the southern border. In particular, in the Address to Congress Trump selects some terrible instances of crimes committed by illegal immigrants and portrays them as a general problem: *Last year, a brilliant 22-year-old nursing student named Laken Riley ...went out for a jog...That morning, Laken was viciously attacked, assaulted, beaten, brutalized, and horrifically murdered* [104]. *Last June, Alexis's 12-year-old daughter...walked to a nearby convenience store. She was kidnapped, tied up, assaulted for two hours under a bridge, and horrifically murdered* [104]. *Roberto and another agent were patrolling by the Rio Grande ... when heavily armed gunmen started shooting at them* [104]. By selectively presenting facts, Trump introduces one piece of information (which is true) while omitting others, such as, for example, general crime rate or facts about other immigrant groups, so fostering distorted perceptions of reality.

Moreover, the tactic of fact-twisting is traced in the selective presentation of accurate data. Donald Trump states: *"As a result, illegal border crossings last month*

were, by far, the lowest ever recorded" [104]. The President makes use of the superlative "the lowest ever recorded," which conveys the idea of undeniable success, however, he does not provide any supporting facts or statistics. At the same time, when Trump wants to reinforce another statement, he actively uses specified data, as in the example of Social Security program: *Believe it or not, government databases list 4.7 million Social Security members from people aged 100 to 109 years old* [104]. Therefore, where it is beneficial to produce a shock effect or to substantiate accusations, accurate figures are given, but where there is a need to create a positive image without the risk of being refuted, non-specific generalisations are used;

- **tactic of fragmentation.** Donald Trump tends to simplify the complex socio-political situation into two opposing images - a "catastrophic present" and an "ideal future" under his leadership: *In recent years, our nation has suffered greatly. But we are going to bring it back and make it great again, greater than ever before* [103]. *Countless thousands of these terrorists were welcomed into the U.S. by the Biden administration, but now every last one will be rounded up and forcibly removed from our country* [104]. *Our country and its taxpayers have been ripped off for more than fifty years, but it is not going to happen anymore* [105].

Analysed 2025 speeches delivered by Trump also reveal a **strategy of immunisation** the main purpose of which is to make it impossible to challenge the speaker's position. In other words, this technique is presenting one's opinions as naturally authoritative or widely accepted in order to protect them from criticism or skepticism [8, 102]. The following tactics within the given strategy were singled out:

- **tactic of universality** which is evident in Donald Trump's use of sweeping universal expressions – words like "everyone", "always", "never", "nobody". By delivering statements in absolute terms, he presents them as universal truths or foregone conclusions. For instance, describing the bright future of America, the President asserts: *"It's going to be fantastic for everyone. There will never have been a transformation of a country like the transformation that's already happening in the*

*United States of America*" [105]. Such wording appears to be undisputable since, if everyone benefits, then logically nobody is against it.

By presenting information as a fact spoken by many, Donald Trump gives the listeners confidence that the majority of members of a group accept particular values, beliefs, programs, and share the point of view being proposed: *As you know, we inherited from the last administration an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare* [104]. *In fact, it has been stated by many that the first month of our presidency ... is the most successful in the history of our nation by many* [104];

- **tactic of reference to authority** used by Donald Trump to give the impression that experts or official evidence back him up making the statement harder to dismiss. For instance, during his "Liberation Day" Speech in 2025, the President cites a government report to support his trade complaints: *"It's all detailed in a very big report by the US Trade Representative on foreign trade barriers... It's very upsetting when you read it, when you see what people have been doing to us for thirty years"* [105]. By referring to an official document, namely the U.S. Trade Representative's report, Trump implies that an expert analysis confirms the unfair treatment of America. This reference to authority gives credibility to his drastic trade policies and encourages the audience to believe that "if the government's own report says so, it must be true".

Even when not citing formal reports, Donald Trump tends to sprinkle remarks like "they say" or mention polls and rankings. For example, in the Address to Congress, he claimed that the first month of his presidency was the most successful in U.S. history, adding that "number two" on the list was George Washington: *"And what makes it even more impressive is that — do you know who number two is? George Washington. How about that?"* [104]. Though Donald Trump admits uncertainty about the credibility of the ranking (*"I don't know about that list, but we'll take it"*), he deliberately suggests that his claims do have external validation.

Additionally, Donald Trump appeals to a higher power (God), in particular, while mentioning the assassination attempt in Pennsylvania when he was shot in the ear: *I was saved by God to make America great again* [1,2]. In this way, the speaker

strengthens his own legitimacy and presents his ideas as part of the divine will, which causes emotional pressure and forms the image of a leader with a presumably holy mission. Apart from that, Donald Trump appeals to the moral authority of Martin Luther King, a prominent historical figure: *Today is Martin Luther King Day. And his honour — this will be a great honour. But in his honour, we will strive together to make his dream a reality* [103]. The speaker uses the image of Martin Luther King as an authoritative figure in the struggle for justice and equality. In this way, the President tries to show that his political struggle is a continuation of the great tradition of defending rights and freedoms.

**The strategy of truth evasion** is another manipulative technique present in Donald Trump's speeches. It is realised mainly through the selection of emotionally charged vocabulary which affects the way recipients evaluate the information delivered to them. The following tactics within the given strategy were found:

- **tactic of name-calling** lies in Donald Trump's use of critical labels and epithets to characterise opponents, policies or institutions. Throughout his 2025 speeches the President describes things he opposes with pejorative or mocking labels. For instance, Donald Trump refers to the Green New Deal as "the ridiculous Green New Scam", labels the Paris Climate Accord "unfair", accuses the World Health Organization of being "corrupt" and calls the U.N. Human Rights Council "anti-American" [103]. By merely name-calling, the President reduces complicated phenomena to simple, emotionally charged nicknames. In this way, he does not need any discussion of climate policy, global health and human rights as each of these labels immediately shapes the audience's perception of the entities.

Similarly, Donald Trump labels the press as "fake news" whenever their reporting challenges his claims or contradicts him: *When I was starting to decide to run and I went to number one in the polls very rapidly, I want to say—like, let's say, in the first hour. And then shortly thereafter, it looked like I was going to win and the fake news was saying, "Oh, no. Don't do this."* [105];

- **tactic of glittering generalisations** is a tactic opposite to labelling. It is primarily characterised by the use of sweeping positive statements which sound

impressive and true. Thus, Donald Trump's speeches frequently contain grandiose, ambiguous claims about America's greatness and unique position in the world which are intended to evoke patriotic feelings but are not supported by accurate data – a classic technique employed by Donald Trump. The Inaugural Address contains a number of glittering generalisations: *America will reclaim its rightful place as the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation on earth, inspiring the awe and admiration of the entire world [103]. *We will be a nation like no other, full of compassion, courage, and exceptionalism [103].* Such statements are highly ambitious and deliberately not factual claims that can be verified or falsified.*

Another example is his promise of "a thrilling new era of national success" and "the golden age of America" under his leadership [103]. These promises evoke strong emotional responses and foster a sense of inevitable success, which can diminish the perceived importance of inconvenient realities such as economic limitations or international criticism.

Beyond **what** Donald Trump says, the way he structures the information in his speeches is also of great importance. **The strategy of structuring information according to its relevance** is one more manipulative technique used by Donald Trump. This strategy encompasses the following tactics:

- **tactic of primacy and recency emphasis.** Donald Trump takes advantage of the psychological tendency of people to remember the first and last items and carefully arranges information so that the most impactful or persuasive points occupy the positions of the greatest influence – the beginning and the end of the speech. For this reason, he starts his speeches with accomplishments and powerful statements, then closes with inspirational or emotive appeals. For example, at the very start of his Address to Congress, after a brief greeting, he immediately declares "America is back" and then continues with the summary of actions from his first weeks in office: *We have accomplished more in 43 days than most administrations accomplished in four years or eight years, and we are just getting started...Over the past six weeks, I have signed nearly 100 executive orders and taken more than 400 executive actions — a record — to restore common sense, safety, optimism, and wealth all across our wonderful land.*

*The people elected me to do the job, and I'm doing it* [104]. Such introduction shapes the way all subsequent information is perceived because listeners are already manipulated to view Donald Trump as an effective leader.

Conversely, at the end of his speeches, Donald Trump often returns to grand themes and emotionally charged claims. In the Inaugural Speech, for instance, after listing policy changes, he ends with soaring rhetoric about national renewal and unity: *America will be respected again and admired again, including by people of religion, faith, and goodwill...We will not be conquered, we will not be intimidated, we will not be broken, and we will not fail...We will stand bravely, we will live proudly, we will dream boldly, and nothing will stand in our way because we are Americans* [103]. He then closes with the promise of "golden age of America" and a traditional "God bless America." By such inspirational conclusion the President ensures that the audience's final impression is one of hope, patriotism and emotional attachment to him as a leader;

- **tactic of implicit framing** which is vividly represented by the inclusion of personal anecdotes in Donald Trump's speeches where emotionally charged stories guide audience interpretation and support broader ideological narratives. Thus, in the Address to Congress, Trump tells the stories of Laken and Jocelyn, girls who were brutally murdered by two immigrants: *That morning, Laken was viciously attacked, assaulted, beaten, brutalized, and horrifically murdered. Laken was stolen from us by a savage illegal alien gang member... Last June...Jocelyne...was kidnapped, tied up, assaulted for two hours under a bridge, and horrifically murdered. Arrested and charged with this heinous crime are two illegal alien monsters from Venezuela, released into America by the last administration through their ridiculous open border.* [104]. Such imagery is designed to evoke horror and anger. By revealing the perpetrators as "a savage illegal alien gang member" and "two illegal alien monsters from Venezuela" released by the prior administration's policies, Donald Trump invites the audience to emotionally link immigration with violent chaos. Although Trump does not state directly that all undocumented immigrants are criminals, he implicitly generalises by emphasizing

extreme, emotionally charged cases which leads the audience to believe that such events are representative.

A similar tactic is applied to cultural issues. Telling the story of Payton McNabb, a high school athlete injured during a girls' volleyball match, Donald Trump recounts how a male player "invaded" the game and caused a traumatic brain injury that ended her athletic career: *But when her girls' volleyball match was invaded by a male, he smashed the ball so hard in Payton's face, causing traumatic brain injury, partially paralyzing her right side, and ending her athletic career... And, Payton, from now on, schools will kick the men off the girls' team or they will lose all federal funding* [104]. The anecdote evokes sympathy and at the same time implicitly makes the audience see Trump's response and his policy of banning men from playing in women's sports as a moral necessity.

In conclusion, Donald Trump's 2025 speeches showcase a sophisticated use of manipulative strategies and tactics. By forging a strong sense of group identification, distorting information to his advantage, immunising his statements against criticism, evading inconvenient truths and structuring his speeches to achieve a maximum effect, Donald Trump produces a powerful manipulative influence on the audience. By means of different manipulative tactics realised within a certain strategy, Donald Trump does not just communicate policies, but actively shapes the audience's perception of reality, aligning it with his political goals. The President manages to successfully appeal to the frustrations and aspirations of the listeners leading them to believe that he and his agenda are the solution.

### **3.2. The perlocutionary effect in Donald Trump's 2025 speeches**

The perlocutionary effect is one of the key components of speech act theory developed by John Austin. According to this theory, a speech act consists of three levels:

- locution – the direct utterance, that is, the actual act of speaking words;
- illocution – the speaker's intention, the communicative purpose of the utterance;

- perlocution – the impact of the utterance on the thoughts, feelings, or actions of the listener [38, 101].

The perlocutionary effect is considered as the result of the complex influence of illocutionary forces of an utterance on the recipient, causing changes in their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural states. These effects are not determined solely by the linguistic form but depend heavily on how the utterance is interpreted by the listener. As Austin notes, perlocutionary acts may result in effects such as convincing, surprising, or frightening, which can align with, exceed, or contradict the speaker's intentions [38, 101–108].

Building on this framework, Searle developed a typology of illocutionary acts (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations) and reaffirmed the distinction: while illocutionary force relates to the conventional function of an utterance, perlocutionary effects concern the real impact the utterance has on the audience [88, 25–26; 40–41].

Concerning politics, perlocutionary dimension is central to this field: politicians use language not merely to convey content (illocutionary acts) but, above all, to evoke emotions, shape opinions, and mobilise actions. Manipulative political communication strategically exploits perlocutionary potential. This often involves covert perlocutionary aims, where seemingly neutral statements elicit emotional responses like criticism, trust or fear [69, 700-701]. In particular, Wodak in her book "Politics of fear" introduces the concept of "politics of fear", in which political actors highlight perceived threats, such as crime, terrorism, or cultural decline, to justify exclusionary measures and reinforce their authority [96, 6].

Recent political speeches, such as Donald Trump's Inaugural Address, 2025 Address to Congress and "Liberation Day" Speech, illustrate how rhetorical choices are designed not just to communicate policy, but to produce perlocutionary effects like fear, outrage, loyalty or hope, often guiding public opinion and behaviour beyond the literal content of the speech. These examples show that perlocutionary effects are essential to political manipulation, when language is not only informative but also performative and action oriented.

Right from the start of the Inaugural Speech, Donald Trump mentions the American dream that "will soon return and flourish as never before" [103]. This statement implicitly contains the assertion that the "American dream" was lost in previous periods but will be restored thanks to the efforts of the new administration. The perlocutionary effect of this statement is to instil confidence and emotional uplift, awaken feelings of hope and optimism about the future. It is achieved through the reference to the culturally loaded concept of the "American dream", which carries strong ideological and emotional resonance, the metaphorical framing of its "return" and ability to "flourish", which personifies an abstract concept and gives it dynamism and the intensifier "as never before", which elevates the claim and suggests an unprecedented level of national prosperity. Together, these elements position the new leadership as a force of historical renewal, encouraging the audience to place trust in the administration's vision and narrative.

Donald Trump paints a gloomy picture of America, invoking a sense of crisis and betrayal. He speaks of a "radical and corrupt establishment" that has left the country in ruin and chaos: *We now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home... It fails to protect our magnificent, law-abiding American citizens but provides sanctuary and protection for dangerous criminals... that have illegally entered our country from all over the world* [103]. The locutionary content here constitutes an accusation that former administration has been incompetent and has allowed criminals to endanger Americans. The intended perlocutionary effect is fear and anger: fear of "dangerous criminals...from all over the world" and anger at a government that "refuses to defend" its own people. By emphasising "dangerous criminals" and the government's failure to stop them, Donald Trump's words are designed to instill a feeling of impending threat to people's safety and way of life. Indeed, fear that the country is in danger and resentment toward the previous leadership are the audience's expected responses. This emotional state prepares the audience to look for a solution, which makes it easier for Donald Trump to portray himself as the solution.

Critically, the effectiveness of this strategy in shaping public perception was noted by observers. The Guardian editorial characterised Donald Trump's 2025 inauguration speech as a "rightwing call to arms" that "presented a grim picture of a country on its knees that only he can revitalise...Mr Trump offered fear" [65: e-ref]. This assessment underscores how the illocutionary component of the speech (talk of unity or renewal) was paired with an underlying perlocutionary effect of fearmongering and division. In essence, the President's words while initially congratulatory, carried a subtext meant to intimidate "enemies at home and abroad".

Trump uses explicit images of domestic chaos, such as unaddressed natural disasters, public systems failing and communities in despair: *...other states who are still suffering from a hurricane that took place many months ago...fires still tragically burn...without even a token of defense. They're raging through...communities...They don't have a home any longer...Everyone is unable to do anything about it. That's going to change* [103]. Outrage at the implied irresponsibility ("unable to do anything") and fear of a society that appears to be collapsing are evoked by the images of raging fires and abandoned victims. Sympathy for the victims and outrage at those in positions of authority who "let this happen" is the perlocutionary effect that is intended.

At the same time, the President makes a pivotal statement by adding "That's going to change". This short declaration conveys an illocutionary force of a pledge to change the situation. The audience is reassured by its perlocutionary effect, which signals that it is going to get better under Donald Trump's leadership. Therefore, his manipulative language is characterized by this pattern: he describes a serious issue in emotional detail before making a sudden promise to address it.

Throughout the speech the President appeals for personal commitment and loyalty. Donald Trump mentions an attempt on his life: *an assassin's bullet ripped through my ear...I was saved by God to make America great again* [103]. Donald Trump is portrayed in this narrative as a chosen savior or sacrifice hero. The intended perlocutionary effect is strengthening his credibility by presenting his survival as fate and himself as divinely protected for the benefit of the country. Listeners who accept

this framing may feel a stronger emotional bond and loyalty as it suggests that supporting Donald Trump is a part of a greater, even sacred, purpose for America.

In 2025 Address to Congress, Trump's tone is triumphant. He opens with the line: *America is back. ...Six weeks ago, I stood beneath the dome of this Capitol and proclaimed the dawn of the golden age of America. ...It has been nothing but swift and unrelenting action to usher in the greatest and most successful era in the history of our country* [104]. The illocutionary force here is assertive and congratulatory – he is asserting success and momentum. The perlocutionary effect intended is excitement and pride. By claiming unprecedented achievements ("more in 43 days than most administrations...in four years") and using superlatives ("greatest...most successful era"), Donald Trump's goal is to make his supporters feel vindicated and optimistic, as though their choice has already paid off. This fosters a sense of collective pride: the audience, particularly those who supported him, is inspired to believe that "America's momentum is back, our spirit is back, our pride is back" [104]. The phrase "is back" is used repeatedly and functions as a rhetorical tool to reinforce the feeling of national revival. The perlocutionary goal is to inspire confidence ("the American dream is unstoppable") and a forward-looking enthusiasm. Listeners are encouraged to feel they are part of a historic comeback, reinforcing their loyalty and emotional investment in President's leadership.

Trump's use of claims of victory to sway perceptions of legitimacy is a noteworthy manipulative technique: *The presidential election of November 5th was a mandate like has not been seen in many decades. We won all seven swing states...giving us an Electoral College victory of 312 votes. ... We won the popular vote — by big numbers...* [104]. Here, the locution refers to a factual statement on the scope of his victory. The illocutionary conduct could be interpreted as boasting or highlighting a mandate. His supporters are intended to experience a sense of validation and victory as a result of the perlocutionary effect. Such claims (especially if they are known to be exaggerated) may provoke anger among opponents or skeptics.

It should be mentioned that Donald Trump gets interrupted. The transcript shows that the speech is interrupted by a comment about Medicaid: *You are — you have no*

*right to cut Medicaid* [104], followed by reactions from the audience. Demonstrating rhetorical control, the President continues his remarks uninterrupted and draws attention to a point he seeks to reinforce: *we [Republicans] won counties...on a map that reads almost completely red* [104]. By triggering a critical interruption, Trump creates a situation in which the perlocutionary effect becomes highly effective. The outrage expressed by his opponents, likely anticipated, enables him to display controlled indignation and project strength to his audience. As a result, the interrupter appears hostile, while Trump reinforces his image as a firm and resilient leader. The supportive exclamations of "USA! USA!" from his followers show that the intended perlocutionary effect was successfully achieved, as it stirred national pride and directed hostility toward the critic. The moment can be seen as strategically used, as Trump's rhetoric framed the protest as an attack on a patriotic message, which strengthened his supporters' rejection of the opposition.

Trump continues to appeal to the theme of safety and fear, especially in relation to crime and law enforcement, to defend his hardline policies in the Address to Congress. After telling the story of the killed police officer's widow, he makes the promise: *we're going to get these cold-blooded killers and repeat offenders off our streets, and we're going to do it fast...I've already signed an executive order requiring a mandatory death penalty for anyone who murders a police officer* [104]. In addition, he requests legislation from Congress to allow officers to carry out their duties: *without fear of their lives being totally destroyed. They don't want to be killed. We're not going to let them be killed* [104]. The purpose of this narrative is to incite fear and anger over violent crime by telling a tragic incident and then declaring harsh punishments. It then shifts to provide moral pleasure and reassurance that the government, under Donald Trump's leadership, will be strict on criminals. It has two perlocutionary effects on the public: on the one hand, it inspires fear and outrage as listeners envision horrible crimes and feel angry about violent crime, on the other hand, it creates relief and confidence. By declaring "we're not going to let [police] be killed" [104], the President portrays himself as the defender of law and order who will restore safety, which calms those who are worried about crime and makes them trust his leadership. This classic

manipulative technique, the combination of strongman reassurance and fear appeal makes the audience more open to severe policies (like mandatory death penalty) since it has emotionally driven them into a situation where they feel that such actions are necessary.

The inclusion of heartwarming and inspirational human interest stories is another tactic Donald Trump uses in this speech to provoke positive emotions. He makes conscious efforts to evoke empathy and optimism. For instance, he presents a 13-year-old boy named D.J., who loves the police and survived brain cancer and arranges to make the boy an "honorary Secret Service agent". Although the illocutionary act in this instance is ceremonial or praiseworthy, the perlocutionary result is obviously intended to provoke strong emotions in the audience. This story of personal courage and Donald Trump's gesture of kindness serve to humanise him and provide an emotional high point. It strengthens affective loyalty among supporters by reinforcing the perception of the President as a kind leader who rewards good citizens. The heartwarming story may perhaps make even opponents feel good. From a manipulative perspective, these kinds of moments can soften the listener, reducing their critical thinking and increasing their openness to the speaker's entire message.

Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" Speech is another illustrative case of perlocutionary manipulation focused on economic nationalism. In this address, the President announced a major executive order on trade ("reciprocal tariffs") and framed it as a historic turning point for American industry. In order to evoke anger at foreign enemies, outrage at the failures of previous leaders, and finally pride in America's renaissance, the speech is loaded with strong imagery of national humiliation and victory. The term "Liberation Day" itself is symbolic: Donald Trump casts the policy change as the "day American industry was reborn" and "America's destiny was reclaimed" [105], evoking the liberation of a nation from foreign domination. By choosing such a title, the perlocutionary aim is to make the audience feel that this is a moment of emancipation – that Americans are finally "free" from some oppression or injustice. This sets an emotional tone of celebration and relief, even before delving into details.

The speech begins with a harsh critique of decades of U.S. trade policy. Donald Trump proclaims: *"For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, and plundered by nations near and far, both friend and foe alike. American steelworkers, auto workers, farmers, and skilled craftsmen...really suffered gravely. They watched in anguish as foreign leaders have stolen our jobs, foreign cheaters have ransacked our factories, and foreign scavengers have torn apart our once beautiful American dream"*[105]. This language is extraordinarily vivid and intentionally emotive. Words like "looted," "pillaged," and "plundered" draw from the lexicon of war and violence, portraying trade imbalance as an existential threat to the nation. The list of victims (steelworkers, farmers, etc.) personalises the damage, reaching ordinary Americans, while the list of perpetrators ("foreign leaders...foreign cheaters...foreign scavengers") clearly identifies an out-group to blame. The perlocutionary effect embedded here is outrage and indignation. Listeners are led to feel that America has been robbed and humiliated by foreigners ("near and far").

Moreover, the use of "anguish" to describe the workers' feelings encourages the audience to empathise with that pain effectively transferring the emotional weight to them. In this way, Donald Trump manipulates the audience into a state of collective grievance, a sense that "we have been mistreated!". This plays on nationalist feelings and possible hostility toward outsiders. From a speech act perspective, the President's locution here is an assertion of historical fact, but the perlocution is to incite provoke a sense of injustice and a desire for retribution. It also implicitly absolves domestic factors or leaders of blame by externalising it.

After that, Donald Trump immediately turns to assurance and a sense of victory. He declares that this unfair era is ending: *Our country...has been ripped off for more than fifty years, but it is not going to happen anymore. It's not going to happen* [105]. The repetition of "it's not going to happen" is a performative utterance intended to comfort the audience and promise protection. As a promise or assurance, the term has illocutionary force. Perlocutionarily, it mitigates the sense of victimhood he just elicited, replacing it with anticipation of justice.

Then Donald Trump frames the signing of the executive order as a monumental act: *In a few moments, I will sign a historic executive order...This is one of the most important days, in my opinion, in American history. It's our declaration of economic independence* [105]. By invoking the Declaration of Independence, the President elevates a policy move to the level of a revolutionary act. This grandiosity aims to highlight pride and hope. Listeners are to feel they are witnessing a great patriotic victory that will be remembered for generations.

Donald Trump continues with hyperbolic promises: *But now it's our turn to prosper...With today's action, we are finally going to be able to make America great again, greater than ever before. Jobs and factories will come roaring back... We will supercharge our industrial base...pry open foreign markets...This will be indeed the golden age of America. It's coming back, and we're going to come back very strongly* [105]. The illocutionary act is promising or predicting a prosperous future, while the perlocutionary goal is to motivate and energise the audience with a vision of imminent success. Phrases like "greater than ever before" and "golden age" are meant to convey confidence, offer reassurance, and create the impression of an imminent turnaround that brings a dramatic end to a prolonged period of hardship. Listeners who felt angry and cheated moments earlier are now led to feel hopeful and empowered. This emotional shift is manipulative. Essentially, he first establishes a problem and victimhood (perlocution: anger, sorrow), then provides a solution and victory (perlocution: joy, pride). The overall perlocutionary effect is to cement trust in Donald Trump's leadership and to encourage public acceptance of aggressive trade measures by disguising them as patriotic.

Moreover, the President's language in the "Liberation Day" Speech often uses inclusive pronouns ("we", "our") when talking about the upcoming success, but exclusive, distancing language ("they", "those nations") when talking about the past experiences. For example: *They manipulated their currencies...stole our intellectual property...But we will pry open foreign markets...We will come back very strongly*" [105]. By doing so, Donald Trump perlocutionarily strengthens group identity among the audience ("we Americans") in opposition to foreign countries depicted as

threatening. Such identity-building is fundamental to manipulation since it encourages audiences to adopt a polarised worldview and often to accept extraordinary actions. Listeners are more likely to tolerate even trade wars if they deeply feel that "we" are justified in striking back against "unfair them". This is an example of how perlocutionary effects can result in behavioural consequences. If the audience is emotionally engaged, they may support policies they would otherwise question.

It's also important to consider how these perlocutionary impacts affect political identity and public opinion. Donald Trump's rhetoric in the "Liberation Day" Speech contributes to a populist-nationalist political identity among his supporters. They see themselves as patriots who have "finally fought back" economically against a corrupt global system. This illustrates a broader point that successful perlocutionary acts in political manipulation often override factual discourse, anchoring people's opinions in feelings rather than in objective analysis.

The analysis of Donald Trump's Inaugural Address, the Address to Congress, and the Liberation Day speech shows that perlocutionary effects play a central role in his rhetorical approach. Instead of presenting detailed policy discussions or relying on factual explanations, the President uses language to trigger emotional responses such as fear, pride, anger, and loyalty. These emotions help shape how his audience understands political situations. Through simple phrases, emotionally loaded vocabulary and repetitive messaging, he portrays himself as a protector and leader, while depicting others as threats. These perlocutionary effects foster emotional alignment with his message and reinforce audience loyalty.

Such strategies are effective because perlocutionary acts do not depend on factual accuracy. They work as long as the intended emotional reaction occurs. By consistently appealing to emotions, Donald Trump builds a strong connection with his base, encourages polarised thinking, and makes it more difficult for opposing arguments to be heard or accepted. His rhetoric demonstrates how political language can be used not just to inform, but to influence emotions and behaviour. Recognising how these effects operate is essential for understanding the power of speech in shaping public opinion and democratic participation.

### **Conclusion to chapter III**

The comprehensive analysis of Donald Trump's 2025 speeches demonstrates a consistent and deliberate use of manipulative strategies, tactics and perlocutionary mechanisms aimed at shaping public opinion and reinforcing political loyalty. Across all three speeches that were analysed, manipulation emerges as an integral communicative technique through which Donald Trump constructs ideological meaning, encourages emotional response and consolidates his authority.

Strategically, the speeches exhibit a reliance on group identification, information distortion, truth evasion, immunisation and structured relevance. The strategy of group identification facilitates emotional attachment and minimises critical distancing from the audience. Distortion and evasion are employed to manipulate factual content, reinterpret historical events or conceal inconvenient truths. Structured relevance is used to selectively highlight particular issues or fragments of reality while omitting others. Immunisation prevents opposing viewpoints by dismissing them in advance or portraying them as threats to collective well-being.

These strategies are implemented through a set of tactics that reinforce the manipulative effect. Tactics such as repetition, exaggeration, solidarity, glittering generalities, fact twisting, simplification, name-calling, the use of authoritative references ensure the successful implementation of strategic goals, embedding the speaker's ideological worldview in the audience's cognitive and emotional frameworks.

The effectiveness of the strategies and tactics is most clearly observable in its perlocutionary impact. The speeches are structured not merely to assert, inform or promise, but to elicit targeted emotional responses such as fear, outrage, pride, reassurance that align with political objectives.

Taken together, the findings illustrate how Donald Trump's manipulative strategies, tactics and perlocutionary intent interact to create manipulative, emotionally resonant political messaging.

## CONCLUSION

Political discourse is a purposeful, ideologically motivated form of communication designed not only to inform, but to shape thought, evoke emotion, and mobilise behavior in favour of political goals. Far from being a neutral exchange of information, it operates as a strategic tool of influence.

Within political discourse, manipulation emerges as a key communicative mechanism. Manipulation in politics can be defined as a subtle, indirect form of influence aimed at conveying specific messages to the audience under the appearance of objective information, so that the audience is led to form opinions closely aligned with those desired by the manipulator. Unlike straightforward persuasion, which appeals openly to the audience's reason and autonomy, manipulation was shown to operate more subtly by disguising true intentions behind appeals to unity, patriotism, or common sense.

The analysis of political manipulation reveals how language is used to evoke specific responses while reducing the listener's capacity for critical reflection. At the lexical level, political discourse relies heavily on emotionally and ideologically loaded vocabulary. Word choice serves to frame events, individuals and ideologies in either favorable or unfavorable terms, depending on the speaker's objective. Thus, positive lexical items are employed to idealise the speaker's actions, identity and vision for the country, while negatively charged terms delegitimise the opposition and construct a narrative of threat or failure.

Beyond word choice, Donald Trump's rhetoric makes extensive use of stylistic devices. Vivid epithets engage the audience emotionally, create idealised images of the nation and its future under his leadership. Metaphors and similes construct emotionally resonant comparisons that simplify complex realities and appeal to shared cultural imagery. Hyperbolic statements exaggerate both threats and achievements. Antithesis, anaphora and repetition increase memorability and solidify narrative coherence. Rhetorical questions subtly compel agreement by implying that any alternative stance is illogical or unpatriotic.

In addition to lexical and stylistic choices, grammatical constructions in Donald Trump's rhetoric also function as tools of manipulation. The use of passive constructions shifts focus away from agents of action, thereby reducing accountability. Modal verbs express certainty or obligation framing future outcomes as inevitable or morally necessary. Personal pronouns serve to construct solidarity or distance. Sentence inversion is used to emphasise key elements and draw attention to emotionally charged statements, while conditional sentences introduce hypothetical scenarios that intensify perceived threats or promises.

Donald Trump's political discourse exhibits a highly structured and consistent use of manipulative strategies, each realised through a variety of tactics. The strategy of group identification is achieved primarily through the tactic of solidarity and "us vs them" tactic to create a sense of common purpose between the President and the audience and separate the in-group from opposing entities. Information distortion is another central strategy, operationalized through tactics such as repetition, exaggeration, simplification, understatement, fact-twisting, and fragmentation—all of which manipulate how facts are selected, framed, or intensified to create a distorted perception of reality. The strategy of immunisation serves to preempt or delegitimise criticism by presenting views as universally accepted or supported by evidence, often through the tactic of universality or reference to authority. The strategy of truth evasion relies on emotionally loaded labeling, including name-calling and glittering generalities, to avoid complex explanations or critical scrutiny. Finally, structured relevance shapes audience focus and recall through the tactic of primacy and recency emphasis—strategically placing key information at the beginning or end of speeches—and implicit framing, often delivered through emotionally charged anecdotes that subtly steer interpretation.

The perlocutionary effect represents the ultimate impact of these combined elements revealing the emotional and psychological responses that political discourse seeks to elicit. In manipulative rhetoric, the goal extends beyond merely conveying statements. In other words, it is aimed at generating targeted mental and emotional reactions.

Considering everything, the findings of this research illustrate how manipulation functions in political discourse through the integration of lexical, stylistic, grammatical means and discursive strategies. The analysed political speeches demonstrate a deliberate and systematic use of rhetorical strategies aimed at reinforcing leadership and directing audience interpretation, all under the guise of authenticity and national commitment.

This underscores a critical challenge in contemporary democratic societies. As political discourse becomes increasingly emotionally charged and strategically designed, the public's capacity to engage critically is often diminished and the foundational principles of open, informed democracy are at risk. Therefore, it is crucial to identify these manipulative patterns and provide citizens with the means to examine and challenge them. Only through sustained critical awareness public discourse can be preserved as a forum for genuine deliberation rather than control, and democracy upheld as a practice of collective reasoning rather than a product of manipulated agreement.

## SUMMARY

Дослідження присвячено аналізу маніпуляції у політичному дискурсі на прикладі промов Дональда Трампа 2025 року. Актуальність теми зумовлена зростаючим впливом політичної комунікації на формування громадської думки в умовах інформаційного перенасичення та ідеологічної поляризації суспільства. В епоху мас-медіа і соціальних мереж політичні тексти все частіше набувають маніпулятивного характеру, апелюючи до емоцій замість аргументів. Усвідомлення і розкриття мовних механізмів такого впливу є важливим як для лінгвістики, так і для розвитку критичного мислення громадян.

Об'єктом дослідження є англомовний політичний дискурс, а предметом – лінгвістичні засоби маніпуляції та комунікативні стратегії у цих промовах. Метою роботи було виявити і охарактеризувати стратегії та тактики маніпулятивного впливу у політичній риторичі на основі промов Дональда Трампа. Для досягнення цієї мети були поставлені такі завдання: визначити поняття політичного дискурсу, дослідити природу маніпуляції у політичній комунікації та розмежувати її з переконанням і навіюванням; проаналізувати лексичні, стилістичні та граматичні засоби маніпуляції; проаналізувати стратегії і тактики маніпулятивного впливу та перлокутивний ефект у промовах Дональда Трампа. Виконання цих завдань дозволило всебічно окреслити механізми маніпулятивного дискурсу.

Матеріалом дослідження стали три ключові промови Дональда Трампа, виголошені у 2025 році: інавгураційна промова, звернення до Конгресу та промова на День визволення. Ці тексти були обрані через їх репрезентативність, високий ступінь емоційного впливу та частоту використання маніпулятивних мовних прийомів.

У першому розділі окреслено теоретичні засади дослідження політичного дискурсу та маніпулятивного впливу. Здійснено узагальнення поглядів дослідників щодо політичного дискурсу як особливого типу інституційної комунікації, що характеризується цілеспрямованістю, ідеологічною

забарвленістю та прагненням до впливу на масову свідомість. У межах розділу уточнено поняття маніпуляції як прихованої форми впливу, що здійснюється за допомогою мовних засобів з метою непомітного нав'язування певної картини реальності. Крім того, проведено розмежування між маніпуляцією, переконанням і навіюванням.

У результаті проведеного теоретичного аналізу було з'ясовано, що маніпуляція в політичному дискурсі виступає як стратегічно спланована, прихована форма впливу, що реалізується за допомогою мовних засобів та прагне сформувати потрібне бачення дійсності в аудиторії без її усвідомленої участі. Також було встановлено, що на відміну від переконання та сугестії, маніпуляція має прихований характер і ґрунтується на емоційній та когнітивній вразливості адресата. Переконання передбачає відкриту аргументацію, логічне обґрунтування позиції мовця та збереження свободи вибору реципієнта. Сугестія (навіювання), у свою чергу, діє на підсвідомому рівні, спираючись на автоматичне засвоєння інформації без критичного осмислення. Маніпуляція поєднує риси обох цих впливів, але відрізняється своєю цілеспрямованістю, стратегічністю та прагненням приховати справжню мету комунікації. Вона апелює переважно до емоцій, використовує асиметрію у володінні інформацією та формує у реципієнта ілюзію добровільного, незалежного прийняття нав'язаних ідей чи оцінок.

У другому розділі було здійснено комплексний аналіз лексичних, стилістичних і граматичних засобів маніпуляції у політичному дискурсі. На лексичному рівні проаналізовано вживання емоційно забарвленої лексики, позитивно й негативно оцінних одиниць, евфемізмів, дисфемізмів, повторів та ключових семантичних груп слів. На стилістичному рівні розглянуто використання риторичних фігур і тропів: епітетів, метафор, порівнянь, гіпербол, антитез, анафор, паралелізмів і риторичних запитань. На граматичному рівні було проаналізовано вживання пасивних конструкцій, модальних дієслів, інверсії, умовних конструкцій, займенникових форм та інших синтаксичних засобів, що впливають на сприйняття висловлювань.

У результаті аналізу було виявлено, що лексичні засоби використовуються для формування позитивного іміджу мовця та негативного образу опонентів шляхом оцінної номінації, семантичного протиставлення і лексичної повторюваності. Стилiстичні прийоми забезпечують посилення емоційного впливу на аудиторію, спрощення складної інформації та створення ефекту риторичної переконливості. Граматичні засоби виконують функцію структурування маніпулятивного повідомлення: пасивні конструкції маскують джерело дії, модальні дієслова надають твердженням вигляду необхідності або неминучості, а займенники формують ефект залучення або дистанціювання. Таким чином, кожен рівень мовної організації виконує свою функцію у створенні цілісного маніпулятивного впливу.

У третьому розділі проаналізовано маніпулятивні стратегії та тактики, реалізовані у політичному дискурсі Дональда Трампа, а також перлокутивний ефект як результат їхнього застосування. Особливу увагу було приділено виявленню цілеспрямованих комунікативних стратегій, які служать загальними моделями впливу на аудиторію, а також мовленнєвих тактик, за допомогою яких ці стратегії втілюються у конкретних мовних засобах. Серед стратегій було виокремлено: стратегію групової ідентифікації, спотворення інформації, імунізації, уникнення правди та структурованої релевантності. В межах кожної стратегії було проаналізовано відповідні тактики: солідарності, протиставлення «ми – вони», повтору, перебільшення, узагальнення, фрагментації, апеляції до авторитету тощо.

У результаті аналізу встановлено, що зазначені стратегії й тактики функціонують узгоджено, формуючи системну модель впливу на масову свідомість. Вони сприяють емоційному залученню, спрощенню складних проблем та формуванню сприятливого іміджу мовця. Перлокутивний ефект розглянуто як підсумковий етап цього впливу — мовленнєві засоби викликають у слухачів цілеспрямовані емоційні реакції, такі як страх, гнів, гордість або надія. Саме ці реакції посилюють переконливість промов, створюють емоційно

забарвлений контекст сприйняття й формують готовність аудиторії до підтримки озвучених ідей.

Отже, проведений аналіз свідчить, що політичний дискурс Дональда Трампа у 2025 році будувався як цілеспрямовано маніпулятивний. Лексичний, стилістичний і граматичний рівні були задіяні з метою формування вигідного для мовця змістового посилу, а реалізовані стратегії й тактики забезпечували ідеологічне навантаження і психологічний вплив.

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