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**Bachelor's thesis**  
**Language Profile of Joe Biden**

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«Допущено до захисту»

Протокол засідання кафедри англійської філології

та міжкультурної комунікації

Протокол № 10 від 27.05.2024

Зав. кафедри \_\_\_\_\_ д. філол. н., проф. Алла БСЛОВА

**Kyiv - 2024**

## Acknowledgement

This thesis was completed under the guidance of my esteemed mentor, Associate Professor Anna Karaban. I am deeply grateful for her direction and participation. I hail from a small town in southern China and traveled 7,400 kilometers across the Eurasian continent to study in Kyiv. I feel extremely fortunate to be part of Kyiv University. In my high school in China, I was one of the 45 students in my class, an unnoticed denominator, not highly regarded by my teachers and parents. Over these years, thanks to Anna's encouragement and guidance, I have regained my confidence. Anna is wise, knowledgeable, and gentle.

In the past 1,253 days, we have experienced the pandemic and war together, giving me experiences vastly different from those of my peers in China. I went through a period of depression and lost direction in life when I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. During that gray period, I could share everything with Anna without reservation. I am deeply grateful for her support, which pushed me forward. I was fortunate to see my name nominated for the Erasmus exchange program in the first semester of my senior year, providing me the opportunity to broaden my horizons and enrich my life experiences.

All of this would not have been possible without Anna's help and encouragement. During those difficult times, Anna's presence was like a light shining into the hearts of us overseas students. If angels had a form, they would certainly look like Anna. In class, we discussed critical social topics in English, and she gave me a new perspective on viewing the world, my country, and society. As I approach graduation, I will carry this determination with me, bravely facing the world and moving forward.

Once again, I would like to thank my mentor, Ms. Anna Karaban, for her presence and guidance. Even though I may not be favored by God, I am grateful to have you. Thank you again, Anna.

## **Abstract**

This study analyzes Joe Biden's political discourse and the linguistic characteristics of his political communication, focusing on his State of the Union addresses from 2022, 2023, and 2024 and his strategic use of language in shaping political identity and public engagement. Political discourse, distinct from other types like social media or business communication, is crafted to influence public opinion and legitimize political actions. Our analysis uses quantitative and qualitative methods, including corpus linguistics tools like Voyant and theoretical frameworks such as Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar, Politeness Theory, and Communication Accommodation Theory.

We and "our," as well as frequent mentions of relatable themes like jobs, families, and the future, are notable features of Biden's speech that promote a sense of unity and shared goals. These linguistic choices are not just stylistic; they are strategic, enhancing his relatability and the emotional pull of his speeches. The analysis also points out Biden's use of specific rhetorical devices such as parallelism and metaphor, which strengthen the impact of his messages and facilitate a resonant narrative with his audience.

The study explores Biden's pragmatic strategies, particularly deixis and hedging. Deixis, through personal pronouns, fosters unity and shared responsibility, while hedging expresses uncertainty and politeness, reducing confrontation risks. The analysis reveals Biden's frequent use of inclusive language, pragmatic softening, and rhetorical enhancements to connect effectively with a diverse audience, thereby constructing a relatable and empathetic leadership image. These elements collectively form Biden's unique communication style, "Bidenese," characterized by emotional appeal, storytelling, and relational language.

**Key words:** Joe Biden, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Political Communication, Communication Accommodation Theory

## Анотація

У цьому дослідженні проаналізовано політичний дискурс та лінгвістичні характеристики політичної комунікації Джо Байдена, зосереджуючи увагу на його посланнях за 2022, 2023 і 2024 роки, а також на стратегічному використанні мови у формуванні політичної ідентичності та залученні громадськості. Політичний дискурс, на відміну від інших видів, покликаний впливати на громадську думку та легітимізувати політичні дії. У нашому аналізі використовуються кількісні та якісні методи, зокрема інструменти корпусної лінгвістики, такі як Voyant, а також теоретичні засади, такі як критичний дискурс-аналіз, системна функціональна граматика, теорія ввічливості та теорія комунікативної акомодатії.

Дискурс Байдена відзначається використанням інклюзивних займенників і фраз, які сприяють відчуттю єдності та спільних цілей, таких як «we» і «our», а також частим згадуванням близьких тем, таких як робота, сім'я і майбутнє. Цей мовний вибір є не лише стилістичним, але й стратегічним, він посилює його достовірність та емоційну привабливість його промов. Аналіз також вказує на використання Байденем специфічних риторичних прийомів, таких як паралелізм і метафора, які посилюють вплив його повідомлень і сприяють створенню резонансного наративу з його аудиторією.

У дослідженні розглядаються прагматичні стратегії Байдена, зокрема дейксис і хеджування. Дейксис за допомогою особових займенників сприяє єдності та спільній відповідальності, тоді як хеджування виражає невпевненість і ввічливість, зменшуючи ризики конфронтації. Аналіз показує, що Байден часто використовує інклюзивну мову, прагматичне пом'якшення та риторичні засоби для ефективного спілкування з різноманітною аудиторією, створюючи таким чином образ лідера, який викликає довіру та емпатію. Ці елементи в сукупності формують унікальний «байденівський» стиль спілкування.

**Ключові слова:** Джо Байден, дискурс-аналіз, прагматика, політична комунікація, теорія комунікативної акомодатії

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## INTRODUCTION

Political discourse, unlike communication forms found in social media or corporate settings, leverages language within political arenas to build, sustain, and interrogate power dynamics, identities, and ideological frameworks. This research centers on Joe Biden's political rhetoric, specifically analyzing his State of the Union addresses from 2022 to 2024. These addresses provide a valuable dataset for exploring how Biden articulates his political persona and tackles major topics like economic growth, healthcare reform, and global diplomatic relations.

The **relevance** of this study is anchored in the evolving landscape of political communication, where understanding linguistic nuances can significantly influence public perception and engagement, thereby affecting voter behavior and policy-making. Historically, the study of political discourse has underscored the potency of language in shaping political realities and social structures. Scholars like Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk have established positions emphasizing that discourse analysis can reveal the mechanisms through which language constructs social power and identity. This thesis builds on these foundations, aiming to delineate how Biden's language serves as a tool for identity construction and strategic communication.

The **purpose** of this research is to critically analyze the linguistic and rhetorical elements that characterize Joe Biden's speeches, with the **objective of understanding** how these elements function to construct his political persona and engage with the electorate. Specific **tasks** include analyzing patterns of lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics within Biden's speech, examining the effects of these patterns on public interpretation and response, exploring how Biden uses language to construct and communicate his political identity and compare the evolution of Biden's speech patterns and themes over the specified years.

The **object** of this research is the political discourse of Joe Biden, while the **subject** specifically entails the linguistic devices and rhetorical strategies he employs. The choice of Joe Biden as the research object is justified by his prominent role in

contemporary American politics and his distinctive communicative style, which offers a rich dataset for discourse analysis.

**Methodologically**, this thesis employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative critical discourse analysis. Utilizing tools like Voyant for corpus linguistics analysis and theoretical frameworks including Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Politeness Theory, and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). By examining Biden's frequent patterns, lexical choices, and discourse markers, we aim to uncover the linguistic strategies that underpin his political communication. The **methods** of solving research tasks involve a detailed examination of archival materials, including transcripts of speeches and public communications, as well as analysis of media coverage and public reactions on platforms like Twitter and YouTube.

This study seeks to illustrate how Biden's linguistic choices shape and reflect his political identity, demonstrating the power of language in political communication. By analyzing his speeches through these various lenses, we gain deeper insights into the strategies that make his discourse effective and impactful. The **practical value** of this study lies in its ability to enhance understanding among policymakers, speechwriters, and political analysts about the effective use of language in political discourse, which can be pivotal in shaping public opinion and electoral outcomes.

The **structure** of this work is systematically organized into several key sections: an introduction that sets the stage for the study, followed by a detailed methodology chapter, a comprehensive analysis of Joe Biden's linguistic patterns, a discussion that synthesizes the findings with existing literature, and a conclusion that highlights the implications and potential areas for future research.

# 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LANGUAGE AND POLITICAL IDENTITY

In this section, we explore the interplay between language and political identity by focusing on two main areas: the importance of political identity and the role of language in shaping and communicating this identity. We particularly examine how Joe Biden's linguistic features in his public addresses and informal discussions construct his political persona, distinct from other politicians like Donald Trump.

Language plays a crucial role in shaping and expressing political identity, acting as a tool for politicians to connect with their constituents and articulate their ideologies. The concept of language as a form of identity construction is well supported by *Berger and Luckmann (1966)*, who discuss how language and society are interdependent. *Wodak et al. (2009)* further emphasize that political identity is not just conveyed but actively constructed through language, suggesting that the ways politicians choose to present their messages can reinforce or reshape their public personas. This framework helps analyze how Joe Biden's linguistic choices reflect and influence his political identity.

Political identity through language is a dynamic interaction where language serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a symbolic tool for embodying and projecting political ideologies. According to *Edelman (1988)*, political language acts as a catalyst in shaping public perception and constructing political realities, where symbolic uses of language in political settings can have profound implications for public sentiment and engagement. Authors like *Chilton and Schöffner (2002)* explore how politicians use metaphors, narratives, and framing to connect their identities with broader national or community identities, thereby solidifying their position within the political landscape. This perspective will be applied to analyze how Joe Biden's speech patterns, word choices, and thematic focuses contribute to his portrayal as a relatable and authoritative figure, shaping his identity in the public eye.

Firstly, the significance of political identity is discussed, emphasizing how

politicians like Biden find their place on the political spectrum to influence voter behavior and policy-making. The Social Identity Theory (*Berger and Luckmann, 2011*) provides a framework here, suggesting that political alignment helps in forming clear alliances and oppositions, essential for microtargeting strategies in campaigns.

Secondly, we delve into how Biden's use of language in political discourse, as analyzed through discourse analysis, supports his identity construction and policy communication. This includes how framing and symbolic interaction play roles in aligning his messages with the values and expectations of his audience. By focusing on a streamlined analysis of Biden's speeches, this section highlights how specific linguistic choices not only reflect but actively shape political identities and engagements.

### **1.1 Political discourse**

Political discourse plays a critical role in political communication by shaping and reflecting political identities and power relations. This process is thoroughly examined through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a methodological approach developed and refined by scholars such as Norman Fairclough. CDA provides a framework for understanding how language is employed by political actors to construct, communicate, and legitimize ideologies and actions. Political discourse is a powerful tool in political communication, crucial for constructing identities, communicating ideologies, legitimizing actions, and influencing power relations. Political discourse involves the communication process that employs narratives and symbols to construct and interpret social realities, emphasizing the significance of symbolic capital in contrast to economic capital. It involves crafting collective master narratives from individual events through retrieval, projection, and textual analysis, utilizing these narratives as frameworks to shape perceptions and actions.

Discourse analysis as a tool for political analysis is richly detailed in the works of scholars such as Teun A. van Dijk and Ruth Wodak, who argue that discourse not

only reflects but actively constructs social and power relations (*Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 1998*). Their frameworks highlight how political discourse operates within a complex system of practices that influence societal structures and individual perceptions. In analyzing Biden's speeches, CDA will be used to identify discourse strategies that institutionalize certain ideologies and dispositions towards social issues, such as immigration or healthcare, thereby facilitating an understanding of how Biden's rhetoric aims to influence policy and public opinion.

Political discourse also involves a pragmatic dimension where the context of language use and the intent behind language choices are critical. Deborah Tannen's research into conversational style and indirect language use illuminates how pragmatic elements such as politeness, implicature, and presupposition play significant roles in political settings (*Tannen, 1993*). These elements help to convey subtlety, mitigate face threats, and manage public perceptions, which are crucial in political communications.

Michael Foucault's perspectives on discourse and power are also pivotal in understanding political discourse. Foucault argued that discourse is closely tied to power and that through discourse, power relations are produced and reproduced (*Foucault, 1972*). This perspective is useful in analyzing how political leaders use discourse to establish and maintain authority and control over public opinion and to shape ideological stances.

Central to political discourse is its focus on interpretive power, where myths and historical narratives serve as evidence to substantiate claims and influence societal views. Such discourse forms discourse communities that define insiders and outsiders, establish boundaries, and influence political actions and thoughts through its unique logic and rationale. Conceptually rooted in semiotics, linguistics, philosophy, and social sciences, political discourse shapes and is shaped by the cultural and political contexts in which it operates (*Reisigl, 2006*).

Based on Michel Foucault's assertion in "Power/Knowledge" that "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart" (*Foucault, 1972*), we can derive a

similar conclusion: "*Discourse not only conveys information but also constructs and maintains social structures and power relations.*"

## **1.2 Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis views language as a form of social practice that is not only shaped by but also shapes social structures. Norman Fairclough provides tools to analyze how political discourse operates within social practices and how it is instrumental in effecting social and political change (*Fairclough, 2013*). Fairclough's framework helps dissect the ideological underpinnings of political language and examines how language functions to maintain or challenge power dynamics.

Teun A. van Dijk's further develops the idea of discourse as a means of power enforcement and ideological control. Van Dijk explores how political elites use discourse strategies to reproduce societal dominance and influence public policy and perception (*van Dijk, 1998*). His approach emphasizes the role of macrostructures, such as schemata and scripts, in organizing political discourse. Political discourse involves various structures and strategies that serve specific purposes. Teun A. van Dijk's work (1998) emphasizes the role of macrostructures—such as overall themes or schemas—in organizing political discourse. Van Dijk's framework helps analyze how politicians structure their discourse to emphasize certain perspectives while omitting or marginalizing others. This includes the study of rhetorical strategies, such as the use of metaphors, framing, and narrative structures, which Ruth Wodak has extensively explored. Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) provides a methodology for analyzing how historical

In this study, we focus on the analysis of American political discourse, emphasizing the usage and methods of political discourse within the cultural and post-pandemic context of the United States. It is important to note that this research goes beyond examining the grammar, rhetoric, structure, and form of language. It also investigates how language constructs meaning and power relations in social interactions among individuals, between individuals and groups, and among groups

within society. While American political discourse includes oral, written, visual, and multimodal texts, due to space constraints, this paper will primarily focus on oral and written texts.

Regarding the selection of the research subject—Joe Biden—we first categorize Donald Trump as a non-mainstream political figure. In contrast, Joe Biden, compared to Donald Trump, represents a more traditional politician, making his study more reliable. With his extensive experience, including serving as Vice President for eight years under Obama, Biden is an undeniably seasoned and professional political participant. Furthermore, the social and temporal context of Biden's presidency is unique. Elected in 2021, Biden faced the urgent task of addressing the issues left by the previous administration. During a time when American society was in dire need of a "normal" and experienced politician to navigate the country out of the shadows of COVID-19, Biden's ability to unite the people and strengthen alliances through language became crucial. This multifaceted political figure provides a rich subject for analyzing political language.

### **1.3 Linguistic profile. Idiolect.**

Idiolect refers to the unique linguistic system or set of language habits used by an individual. Idiolect, a term rooted in linguistics, refers to the language use that is unique to an individual. This concept is crucial for understanding how individual differences in language usage can influence political communication. As pointed out by *Abercrombie (1965)*, an idiolect is shaped by a person's background, region, education, and personal experiences, making it a rich area of study for political figures whose language is their tool for connecting with the electorate.

Idiolect is rooted in sociolinguistics, where it is used to study how personal and social identity are reflected and constructed through language use. Labov's sociolinguistic studies laid foundational groundwork by emphasizing the importance of the smallest linguistic units in differentiating social groups and individuals within those groups (*Labov, 1972*). Every speaker's idiolect is seen as a personal signature,

shaped by a combination of innate preference, social interactions, and contextual influences.

In political discourse, the idiolect of leaders can serve as a powerful tool for charisma and persuasion. For instance, studies on Churchill's speeches reveal an idiolect characterized by rhythmical cadence and a masterful use of rhetoric that enhanced his speeches' motivational power (*Reynolds, 2004*). More contemporary studies have focused on how idiolects like that of Barack Obama utilize syntax and lexical choices to foster inclusivity and articulate sophisticated policy arguments clearly and compellingly.

The media plays a crucial role in shaping and broadcasting the idiosyncrasies of politicians to the public. Analyzing media transcripts of political speeches and debates can reveal how media framing might amplify certain idiolectal features to construct a specific public image (*Bell, 1991*). For example, media portrayals often emphasize the idiolectal quirks of politicians, such as Trump's assertive and confrontational style, which shapes his public perception.

Language profiling involves analyzing the characteristic features of a person's language use to identify patterns and peculiarities in their communication style. This concept is explored in the works of *Pennebaker and King (1999)*, who developed methods for quantifying linguistic style to predict various psychological traits. Applying this to a political figure like Joe Biden can reveal how his personal communication style, or "idiolect," supports his political image and effectiveness. *Tannen's (2007)* exploration of conversational style and its impact on public perception provides a basis for understanding how Biden's specific language choices might align with or deviate from expected political discourse norms. The concept of language profiling, particularly in the political arena, involves dissecting the unique stylistic and linguistic choices that define a speaker's public persona. *Holmes (2009)* discusses how leaders use language strategically to construct a desired impression, often tailoring their rhetoric to resonate with specific audiences or to reinforce their credibility and authenticity.

The linguistic profile of politicians can reveal much about their strategic use of language. **George Lakoff (1996)** emphasizes how politicians frame their rhetoric according to underlying moral frameworks that resonate with specific audiences, using metaphors aligned with the notion of 'strict father' for conservatives and 'nurturing parent' for liberals (**Lakoff, 1996**). Similarly, **Deborah Tannen's (1998)** discusses how adversarial framing in public discourse, particularly by politicians, fosters a combative rather than constructive dialogue, impacting political discussions profoundly (**Tannen, 1998**). James Pennebaker extends this exploration by using computational linguistics to show how the use of function words can unveil psychological patterns, offering insights into political figures' psychological states (Pennebaker, 2011). Advancements in corpus linguistics have greatly facilitated the study of linguistic profiles. Tools like LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) and other text analysis software allow researchers to perform detailed analyses of speech patterns and frequencies (**Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010**). These technologies enable the study of large datasets, providing empirical support for qualitative observations of language use.

Significant research has been conducted on the linguistic profiles of various political figures. For example, studies on Donald Trump's language style highlight his use of simple, direct language and his penchant for hyperbole and informal expressions, which have been argued to appeal to certain voter demographics. Trump's idiolect is characterized by its confrontational tone, frequent use of personal pronouns to assert authority, and unique approach to coherence and cohesion in public speeches (**Sclafani, 2018**).

Comparative linguistic analyses between different political leaders can also illuminate how language relates to political success and public perception. Sclafani (2018) explores how Barack Obama's linguistic style, marked by inclusivity and a higher level of formal structures, contrasts with Trump's more divisive and informal style. Such comparisons can provide deeper insights into how language styles resonate with different segments of the population

## 1.4 Methodology: Corpus linguistics and discourse analysis

Corpus discourse analysis merges the quantitative methods of corpus linguistics with the qualitative insights of discourse analysis, providing a powerful tool for examining the socio-political underpinnings and cultural contexts of language use. This interdisciplinary approach leverages large databases of text—corpora—to explore patterns in language that manifest across various texts and discourses.

The foundation for modern corpus discourse analysis was laid by **John Sinclair (1991)**, as he emphasized the necessity of studying authentic language use to understand how words typically combine in natural settings. This groundwork enabled subsequent scholars like **Paul Baker (2014)**, who applied these techniques to social issues, uncovering biases and trends in how language constructs identities such as gender.

In this section, we return to the specific methods of political discourse analysis, focusing on corpus and discourse analysis. Specifically, we utilize corpus linguistics and discourse analysis to examine the textual data from Biden's speeches, interviews, and other public communications. The analysis is divided into three main parts: quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and the inclusion of the Readability Index to assess the complexity of Biden's language. Given the diversity and complexity of political figures' speeches in different contexts, relying on a single analytical method cannot fully capture the richness of how political identity is constructed. Therefore, in the qualitative analysis, we have selected the following five commonly used methods in political discourse analysis: 1. Political Discourse Metaphor (*Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By 2008*) 2. Aristotelian Rhetoric (*Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, 2007*) 3. Critical Discourse Analysis (*Norman Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language, 1995*) 4. Systemic Functional Grammar (*Michael Halliday, An introduction to functional grammar, 1985*) 5. Ideological Square (Teun A. van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach, 1998*).

In the quantitative text analysis section, we use Voyant Tools as the primary instrument for text analysis. Voyant Tools' visualization capabilities and word frequency statistics, along with collocation analysis, allow for an intuitive understanding of the data within the studied texts. Voyant Tools (<https://voyant.lincsproject.ca/>) is a platform that facilitates text analysis by allowing users to study word frequencies, patterns, and relationships within digital texts, offering features like word clouds, keyword-in-context views, and trend analysis. It allows users to create and analyze a corpus by uploading documents, pasting text, or adding URLs. Once established, the corpus can be explored through various analytical tools such as generating word frequency lists, examining word trends across the corpus, and viewing detailed word usage contexts.

The corpus includes Biden's speeches, interview transcripts, social media posts (Twitter, YouTube), and White House communications. In cases where discrepancies occur in the data and texts, we will primarily rely on information published on the official White House website.

Using Voyant Tools, we will perform concordance and frequency analysis. We will analyze keywords based on the tool's output. By identifying the frequency and distribution of these keywords, we can recognize linguistic patterns and trends within the texts. This approach is crucial for analyzing language style, rhetorical techniques, and information dissemination strategies.

Voyant Tools is increasingly utilized in discourse studies to enhance textual analysis. *Olha Sivaeva (2023)* analyzed collocations with "PANDEMIC" in "The Economist" using Voyant Tools to determine their semantic prosody, revealing nuanced contextual expressions of positive, neutral, or negative sentiments throughout 2021. *Verbytska and Krysanova (2020)* integrated Voyant Tools with cognitive-discursive and computational methods to explore the concept of "DISTRESS" in English media, identifying key lexical patterns and semantic fields that illustrate how emotional distress is portrayed. *Roxana Rogobete (2022)* utilizes Voyant Tools to analyze a corpus of articles from Romanian cultural magazines, focusing on linguistic changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research

specifically examines the introduction of new vocabulary and semantic shifts, demonstrating how digital tools can effectively trace language evolution in response to societal events.

Finally, we plan to evaluate the readability of the texts based on the Automated Readability Index (ARI) standards (see Section 1.1). The rationale for including the Readability Index is that it helps assess the linguistic complexity of Biden's speeches, revealing whether the speech's target audience aligns with the language style used. This analysis can uncover how Biden adjusts linguistic complexity to convey different political messages and strategies.

$$4.71 \left( \frac{\text{characters}}{\text{words}} \right) + 0.5 \left( \frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentences}} \right) - 21.43$$

(Section 1.1 :Automated readability index formula)

## **Conclusions to Chapter 1**

In Chapter 1 we have explored the links between language and political identity, with a particular focus on Joe Biden's unique communication style. This examination is guided by the importance of political identity in shaping public perception and voter behavior but also highlights the role of language as a pivotal tool in constructing and communicating this identity.

Through the lens of theorists like Berger and Luckmann, and Wodak et al., we understand that Biden's language acts not merely as a medium of expression but as a fundamental constructor of his political persona, effectively influencing and reflecting his political identity. The study will try to find linguistic features of Joe Biden's language that distinguish him from other political figures such as Donald Trump .

Our theoretical review will allow us to leverage discourse analysis methodologies to dissect Biden's speeches and public interactions, revealing how he utilizes language to connect with diverse demographics, embodying values that resonate deeply with his audience. The pragmatic use of language, as discussed by

Deborah Tannen, and the critical perspective on discourse and power provided by Michael Foucault, further will enrich our understanding of how Biden's discourse strategies serve to reinforce his position within the political landscape.

The exploration of political discourse through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will allow us how Biden's speeches serve as a vehicle for ideological expression and societal influence a this approach highlights the reciprocal relationship between language and societal structures, which hopefully will allow us to see if Biden's discourse not only reflects but also has the potential to reshape societal norms and expectations.

This chapter prepares theoretical foundation to isolate the unique politician's communication style as a strategic amalgamation of rhetorical skills and personal authenticity, which plays a crucial role in how his political identity is constructed and perceived; how use of language articulates political ideology and to engages with the electorate and showcases the dynamic and powerful role of language in political communication.

## 2. JOE BIDEN'S IDIOLECT

Early life and Senate Profession Since this study investigates the political speeches of President Biden, it is crucial to present a background of the speaker, Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr., the incumbent President of the United States. Biden, the current President of the United States, spent his early years in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and New Castle County, Delaware. He earned a B.A. from the University of Delaware in 1965 and a law degree from Syracuse University in New York in 1968. In 1966, he married Neilia Hunter, and they had three children. After completing his education, Biden returned to Delaware to practice law before quickly transitioning into politics. He served on the New Castle County Council from 1970 to 1972. At the age of 29, he became the fifth youngest senator in American history upon his election to the Senate in 1972. Tragically, a month later, his wife and daughter were killed in a car accident, and his two sons were severely injured. Biden joined the Senate in 1973 and was re-elected six times, becoming the longest-serving senator in Delaware's history. In 1977, he married Jill Jacobs, a schoolteacher, with whom he had a daughter. In addition to his senatorial duties, Biden was an Adjunct Professor at Widener University's Law Department from 1991 to 2008. As a senator, Biden concentrated on key issues such as international relations, criminal justice, and drug policy. He chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 2001 to 2003 and again from 2007 to 2009, and he led the Senate Judiciary Committee from 1987 to 1995. Notably, during the Kosovo crisis, Biden was a vocal advocate for U.S. intervention to protect Kosovars from the assault by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević.

Joe Biden's linguistic style has long been established in media outlets such as The New York Times, where his political persona is closely associated with workers and laborers. For instance, in the article "Joe Biden: Everyone Calls Me Joe" (P, Nancy Doyle 2009), Nancy Doyle cited Howard Fineman statement which: "Joe Biden is not an academic, he's not a theoretical thinker, he's a great street pol. He comes from a long line of working people in Scranton—auto salesmen, car dealers,

people who know how to make a sale. He has that great Irish gift.” We will now conduct a brief analysis of Biden's idiolect focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and language habits, and provide a definition of his linguistic style. This analysis draws on 15 distinctive quotes from Biden as recorded by the website POLITICO (*Annex 1*).

Joe Biden's idiolect is characterized by straightforwardness and informality, warmth and affection, humor and self-deprecation, boldness and direct criticism, emotional and personal touch, empathy and pragmatism, and realism and humility. His use of profanity in a conversation with Obama, exemplified by “*You’re f—ing surprised!*”, showcases his candid and informal communication style, fostering a sense of authenticity and relatability. Biden's affectionate sign-off to Hillary Clinton, “*I love you, darling,*” demonstrates his warm and personal approach, enhancing his likability and emotional connection with others. His frequent use of humor and self-deprecation, such as “*I’ve twice been a Presidential candidate and I hope you do better than I did,*” helps humanize him and make him more relatable to the public. Biden's willingness to directly criticize, seen in his remark about Robert Gates, “*Bob Gates...has been wrong about everything!*”, reflects his boldness and assertiveness, crucial for establishing his stance on important issues. His personal and emotional interactions, such as telling Putin “*I’m looking into your eyes, and I don’t think you have a soul,*” highlight his intense and passionate communication style. His emphasis on understanding and pragmatism in diplomacy, illustrated by his statement “*It’s really very important...to communicate to the other guy that you understand his problem,*” showcases his empathetic and practical approach to problem-solving. Finally, Biden's expressions of contentment and humility, such as “*I can die a happy man not being president,*” underscore his grounded and realistic perspective.

Joe Biden's idiolect is defined by a blend of straightforwardness, warmth, humor, boldness, emotional engagement, empathy, and realism. These elements collectively shape his public persona as an authentic, relatable, and pragmatic leader. His unique linguistic style not only communicates his political messages effectively but also helps to construct and maintain his political identity, fostering a strong connection with his audience. By analyzing these linguistic traits, we can better

understand how Biden's language use influences his political image and resonates with voters.

According to New York Times journalist Katie Glueck, who focuses on the Democratic Party, Biden's language style is described as "folksy." Glueck reports, "And his supporters love his folksy style" (*Glueck, 2019*). Biden's language is characterized by its warmth and approachability, frequently using phrases such as "whatever," "look guys," "here's the deal," "I am serious," "this isn't an exaggeration," "it is not a joke," and "guys we need to realize that words matter."

These phrases contrast with the precise and considered language of Barack Obama, highlighting Biden's more relatable and accessible approach. For younger voters, particularly those under 30, Biden's language serves as a reminder that he comes from a different political generation. Glueck notes that "Biden's phrases are not tied to a particular policy prescription or even a particular political slogan." (*Glueck, 2019*) This reflects his deep roots in Delaware, where he served as a senator for decades and developed a personal connection with many people.

Biden's folksy style includes colloquial expressions and straightforward language, helping to bridge the gap between him and his audience. He often shares personal stories and family experiences, enhancing his relatability and credibility. This unique language style, characterized by a series of distinctive phrases, helps Biden effectively convey his messages and strengthens his public persona as a trustworthy and down-to-earth politician. These language habits not only aid in communication but also amplify the persuasive power of his speeches.

## **2.1 Discourse analysis of Joe Biden's speeches**

Using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, we present the analysis of the "Inaugural Address by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr." from the dimensions of Text Analysis, Discursive Practice, and Social Practice.

Biden uses terms such as “democracy,” “unity,” “hope,” and “renewal,” along with metaphors like “crucible for the ages” and “storm and strife.” These choices not only convey his policy messages but also construct social values centered around democracy, unity, and hope. These rhetorical strategies enhance the legitimacy and leadership of the Biden administration in addressing current crises by shaping public perception.

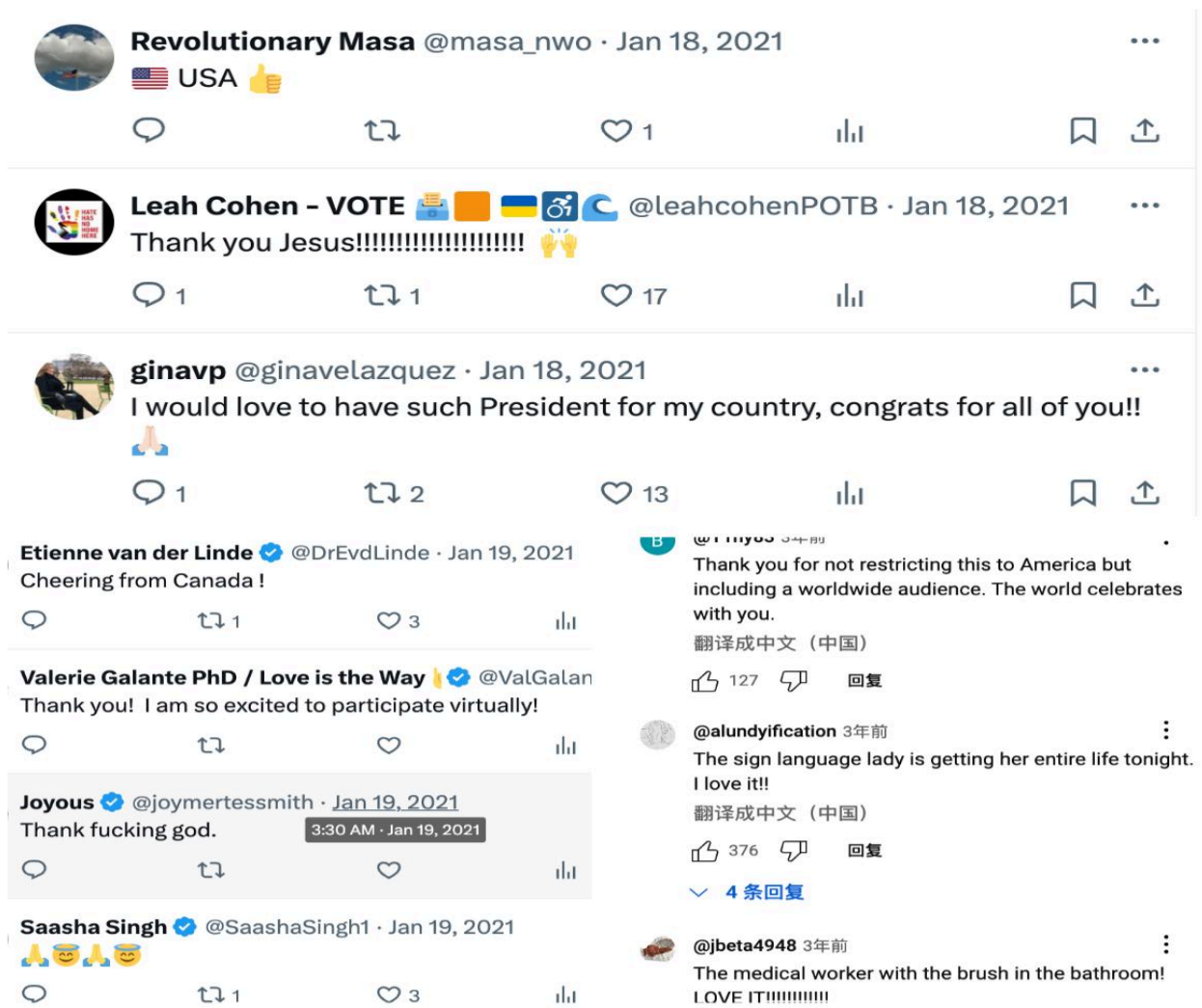
Biden's speech features numerous short sentences and parallel structures, enhancing its rhythm and impact, making the message more powerful and memorable: *“Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain.”*

The sentence “Politics need not be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war.” uses contrast and metaphor. The "raging fire" metaphor highlights the destructiveness of extreme political discourse, while "total war" emphasizes irreconcilable divisions. This structure succinctly urges the public to avoid extreme behaviors and promotes moderate and rational political dialogue, portraying Biden as an advocate for unity and peace: *“We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal.”*

The sentence *“We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again. Not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's. We will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example.”* uses parallelism to emphasize a new direction and goals in U.S. foreign policy. This powerful expression communicates Biden's vision for moral leadership, aiming to rebuild international trust and respect.

These examples illustrate how Biden's inaugural speech not only conveys policy information but also constructs and maintains specific social structures and power relations through linguistic choices, rhetorical devices, and sentence structures, validating the theory that discourse not only conveys information but also constructs and maintains social structures and power relations.

Public and media reactions to the speech demonstrate how discourse influences and reinforces social identity and political support. Positive reactions help consolidate Biden’s authority and legitimacy, while criticism and debate reveal different social groups’ interpretations of the discourse. Comments on social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter show enthusiastic support from Biden’s voters and supporters.



(from YouTube and Twitter comments)

Biden emphasizes the severity and urgency of the COVID-19 crisis by comparing it to World War II, legitimizing the need for emergency measures and reinforcing government authority: “A once-in-a-century virus silently stalks the country. It’s taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II.”

Biden addresses the rise of political extremism, white supremacy, and domestic terrorism, stressing the seriousness and threats posed by these issues, justifying strong

government measures to combat them: *“And now, a rise in political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.”*

Biden’s comprehensive social and economic recovery plan, including commitments to “rebuild the middle class” and “make health care secure for all,” is portrayed as necessary and morally justified through positive framing: *“We can reward work, rebuild the middle class, and make health care secure for all. We can deliver racial justice. We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world.”*

Through these examples, we see how Biden’s inaugural speech uses linguistic strategies to rationalize and legitimize his policies and actions. By framing them in historical, moral, and urgent contexts, Biden constructs and maintains social structures and power relations, supporting the theory that “discourse not only conveys information but also constructs and maintains social structures and power relations.

## **2.2 Frequency patterns in Joe Biden's discourse**

Based on the 2023 State of the Union Address delivered by President Biden, we imported the text from the White House official website into the Voyant text analysis tool. The text contained a total of 10,716 words and 2,099 unique word forms. For the purpose of analysis, the text was segmented into approximately 10 segments, each containing 100-110 words. We then calculated the frequency of word occurrences, categorizing them into unigrams, bigrams, and trigrams. The unigram frequency statistics obtained via Voyant-tool are detailed in section 1.2.

Summary Documents Phrases ?

This corpus has 1 document with 10,716 total words and 2,099 unique word forms. Created about a year ago.

**Vocabulary Density:** 0.196

**Readability Index:** 19.899

**Average Words Per Sentence:** 14.9

Most frequent words in the corpus:

- we're (60); going (47); it's (42); america (41); let's (40); people (38); know (38); president (37); years (36); new (36); law (33); american (33); just (32); 2023 (32); year (28); world (28); make (26); folks (26); tonight (25); that's (25); state (25); look (25); union (24); jobs (24); i'm (24); nation (22); right (21); heed (21); job (21); biden (21); share (20); act (20); we've (19); pay (19); home (19); house (18); february (18); country (18); congress (18); americans (18); potus (17); finish (16); record (15); pass (15); medicare (15); don't (15); www.whitehouse.gov (14); workers (14); utm\_source (14); time (14); link (14); https (14); come (14); cancer (14); big (14); work (13); stand (13); share\_id (13); percent (13)

items:

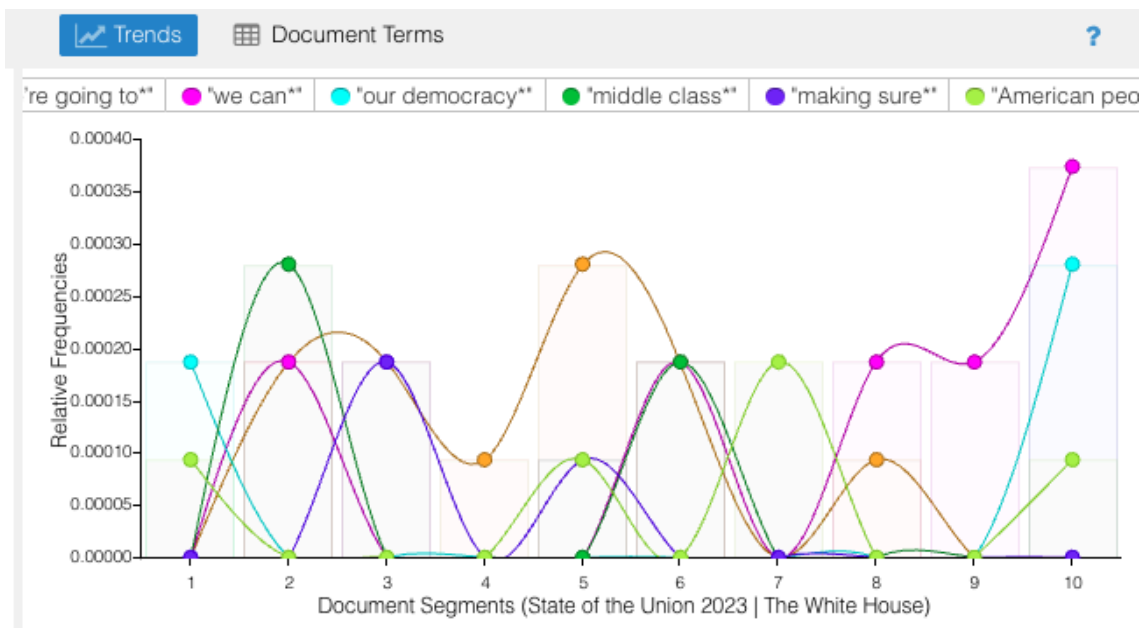
(Section 1.2 Voyant-tool corpus analysis summary)

In our analysis, we excluded modal verbs and tense words, which were analyzed separately. The remaining words were then sorted by frequency in descending order and categorized into nouns, verbs, adjectives, and others. This classification allowed us to focus on the core themes and stylistic features of Biden's address.

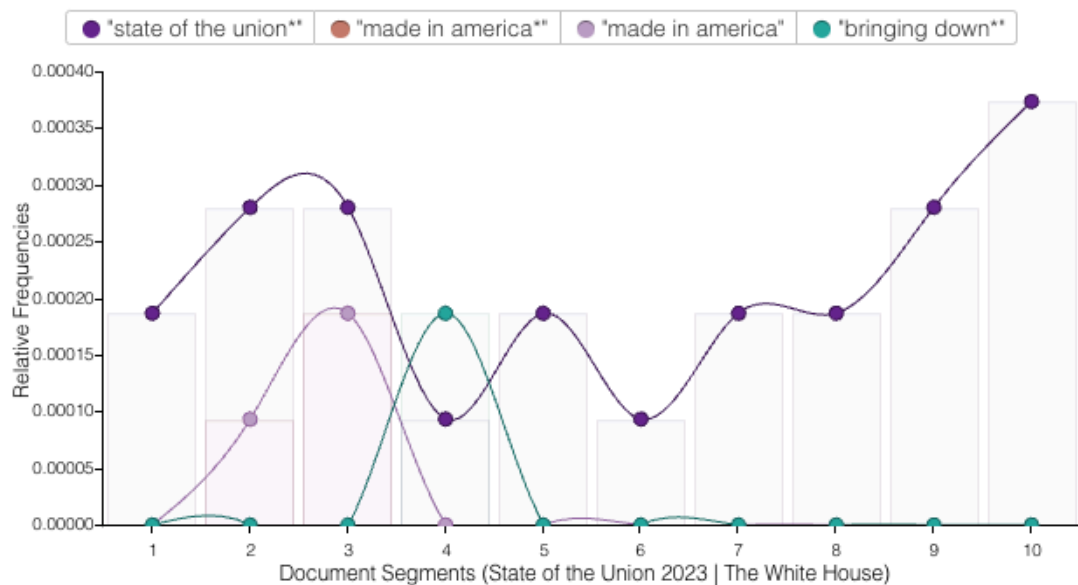
Noun	president, america, people, american, home, future, audience, office, laughter, americans, world, tax, year, history, house, bill, freedom, families, percent, record, state, states, law, jobs, country, build, folks
Verb	want, know, make, live, stop, think, thank, say, pass, look, opens, cut, created
Adjective	big, new, fair
Pronoun & contracted form	I'm, we're, it's, let's
Others	years, pay, way, tonight, predecessor, folks, tonight

(Table 1.3 Words Frequent classification)

The 2023 State of the Union Address covered several key themes: 1. Healthcare Reform 2. International Competition 3. Tax Reform 4. Defense of Democratic Values 5. Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery 6. Social Justice. Due to the nature of the address, specific vocabulary was concentrated in particular segments and was not uniformly distributed throughout the text. Therefore, we analyzed the distribution of the following bigrams in each segment (see link graph 1.4): "middle class" (5) "we can" (16) "Republican friends" (5) "our democracy" (5) "going to" (40) "making sure" (5) "American people" (5)



(Link graph 1.4 Bigrams distribution)



(Link graph 1.5 trigrams distribution)

Trigrams appeared less frequently compared to bigrams and unigrams but were nonetheless significant in highlighting key aspects of the address.

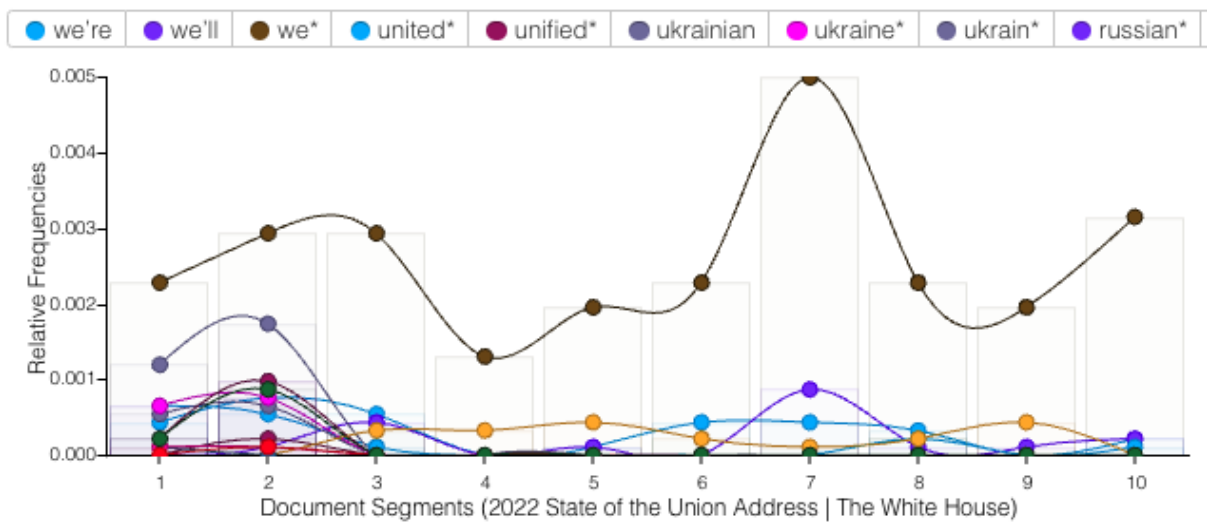
The following trigrams were identified and their distribution across the segments was analyzed: *"made in america (3)"* ,*"state of the union (3)"* *"here's the deal (1)"* ,*"created new jobs(4)"* *"we're going to (13)"*. The phrase "state of the union" was a recurrent trigram that underscored the central theme of the address. These combinations of nouns and verbs highlight Biden's commitment to rebuilding the American political and economic landscape, resonating with his campaign slogan "Build Back Better". Our analysis of unigrams, bigrams, and trigrams in President Biden's 2023 State of the Union Address reveals a focus on critical national issues such as healthcare, international competition, tax reform, democratic values, economic recovery, and social justice. By examining the distribution and frequency of key phrases, we gain insights into the linguistic strategies employed to emphasize these themes and the commitments made by the President. This analysis underscores the significance of Biden's rhetoric in addressing the challenges and aspirations of the nation.

### **2.2.1 Lexical choices**

To conduct an in-depth analysis of Joe Biden's lexical choices, we expanded our text samples from just the 2023 State of the Union Address to include the 2022 and 2024 addresses as well. The 2022 State of the Union Address contains 9,233 words with 1,955 unique word forms, while the 2024 address has 8,214 words with 1,838 unique word forms.

The 2022 State of the Union Address primarily focused on the following themes: 1) the Ukraine crisis, 2) post-pandemic economic recovery, 3) infrastructure development, 4) inflation, and 5) healthcare reform. For our analysis, we concentrated on the theme of the "Ukraine crisis." We identified and analyzed the distribution of specific keywords such as "ukrainian," "we," "we'll," "we're," "unified," "dictators," "folks," "russian," and "allies" (see Figure 1.6). By establishing

a semantic field centered on the Ukraine-Russia conflict, we aimed to analyze Joe Biden's lexical choices on this specific topic.



(Link graph 1.6 Ukrainian topic words distribution)

In the 2022 State of the Union Address, Biden frequently used terms like "we're," "we'll," and "united," emphasizing the solidarity and just stance of the United States and its allies in response to the Ukraine-Russia conflict. This positive self-description strategy effectively crafted a favorable self-image. Simultaneously, by using terms like "dictator" and "russian," Biden sharply criticized Russia's authoritarianism and aggression, thereby highlighting the adversary's negative image. The frequent use of "ukrainian" and "ukraine" further underscored the Biden administration's commitment to supporting Ukraine and its people.

Additionally if we employing the Ideological Square Analysis, we can observe the following:

1. Positive Self-Description: Biden's use of "we're," "we'll," and "united" underscores the unity and just position of the U.S. and its allies.
2. Negative Other-Presentation: The terms "dictator" and "russian" emphasize Russia's authoritarian and aggressive nature, constructing a negative image of the adversary.
3. Omission of Our Flaws: Biden's speeches rarely mention the mistakes of the U.S. or the West in the conflict, focusing instead on Russian aggression.

4. Emphasis on Their Flaws: By frequently referring to Russia's actions negatively, Biden strengthens the narrative of an adversarial and unjust opponent.

The interesting thing is that we roughly overlapped the textual vocabulary of the three State of the Union speeches to discover the following findings.

2023 State of the Union Address	2022 State of the Union Address	2024 State of the Union Address
folks/folk - 26 times	folks/folk - 19 times	folks/folk - 13 times
we're - 60	we're - 30	we're - 17
let's - 40	let's -29	let's - 7
look - 25	look - 26	look - 15
make -26	make - 26	make - 11
going to - 44	going to - 18	going to - 6
have to - 59	have to - 7	have to - 8
must - 10	must - 5	must - 5
need - 21	need - 19	need - 10

(Words Frequency table 1.7)

Joe Biden's lexical choices in the State of the Union addresses demonstrate his focus on approachable communication, collective action, and direct expression. His frequent use of terms like "folks" to create rapport, "we're," "let's," and "going to" to emphasize collective and future-oriented efforts, and "look," "make," "need," "have to," and "must" to convey urgency, collectively reflect his speech style and strategic messaging. These choices align with Biden's overarching narrative of unity, justice,

and resilience in the face of challenges, thereby reinforcing his political identity and rhetoric.

### 2.2.2 Grammatical patterns

In this section, we plan to analyze pronouns, tense, modal verbs, and sentence structure. Firstly, we refer to our previous analysis which concluded that Joe Biden's language exhibits a colloquial and easily understandable style. We further support this conclusion by calculating the readability index (ARI) of Biden's three State of the Union addresses (see Figure 1.1).

The readability index data for the 2022, 2023, and 2024 addresses are as follows:

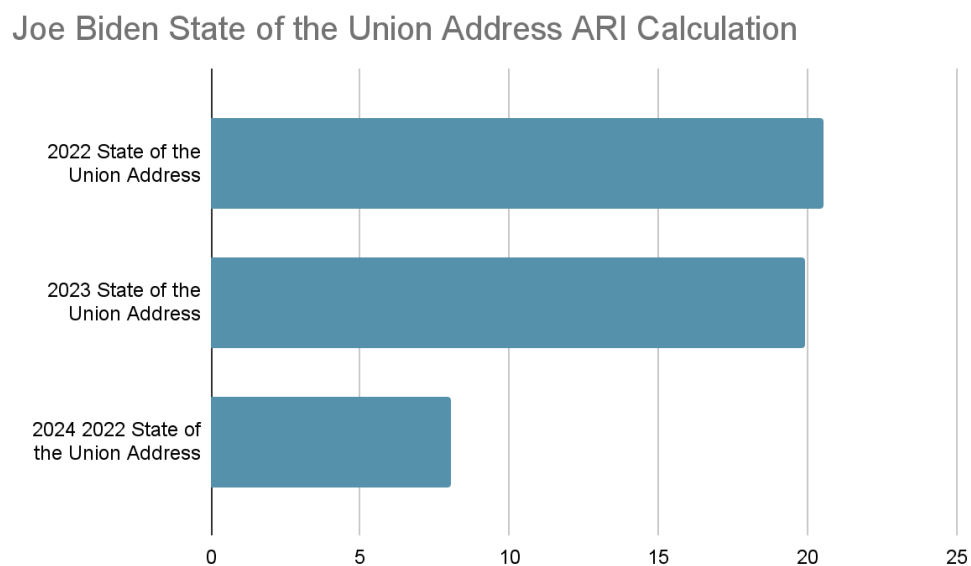


Figure 1.1

Analyzing the tenses used in Joe Biden's 2022, 2023, and 2024 State of the Union addresses, we find that Biden predominantly uses the present continuous tense and the future tense. These tenses highlight both current issues facing American society and plans for future development. Using Voyant-Tool, we compiled the frequency of pronouns in the three addresses, focusing on "we're" and "we will."

2022 State of the Union Address	2023 State of the Union Address	2024 State of the Union Address
we're - 30	we're - 60	we're - 24
we've - 18	we've -19	we've -10
we'll - 17	we'll -5	we'll - 2
we're going (to) - 6	we're going to - 11	we going to - 0

In the 2022 State of the Union address, Biden frequently employs the present continuous and future tenses to outline policy plans and actions. By frequently using the future tense (e.g., "we'll create," "we'll build"), Biden emphasizes the government's future vision and commitment, conveying confidence and determination in policy implementation:

***We'll create** good jobs for millions of Americans — modernizing roads, airports, ports, waterways — all across America. And we'll do it to withstand the devastating effects of climate crisis and promote environmental justice.*

***We'll build** a national network of 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations; begin to replace the poisonous lead pipes, so every child, every American has clean water to drink at home and at school.*

The use of the present continuous tense (e.g., "we're going to provide") indicates imminent plans, highlighting the urgency and ongoing nature of these actions:

***We're going to provide** — provide affordable high-speed Internet for every American — rural, suburban, urban, and Tribal communities. Four thousand projects have already been announced. Many of you have announced them in your districts.*

Additionally, showcasing progress already made (e.g., "have already been announced") enhances the credibility and specificity of the policies.

Biden also extensively uses modal verbs with a commanding or obligatory tone when describing his political views and government actions.

2022 State of the Union Address	2023 State of the Union Address	2024 State of the Union Address
have to - 7	have to -11	have to -8
should - 9 / shouldn't - 5	should - 8 / shouldn't - 0	should - 7 / shouldn't - 0
may -5 / might -2	may - 4 / might - 0	may - 2 / might - 1
must - 5	must - 10	must - 5
can - 40 / can't - 9	can - 28 / can't -11	can - 24 / can't - 4
could -6 / couldn't -1	could - 2 / couldn't -1	could -5 / couldn't -1

Biden frequently employs "must" and "have to" to emphasize the necessity and responsibility of the government and the public in specific situations: *We **must** be honest: The threat to democracy must be defeated; We now **must** beat the NRA again. But middle-class and working folks **shouldn't have to** pay more than 7 percent of their income to care for their young children* ". For example, "We must be honest" and "drug companies are going to have to pay Medicare back the difference" illustrate the imperative nature and necessity of these policies. The use of "don't have to" and "shouldn't have to" alleviates the audience's burden, indicating that certain costs or actions are unnecessary: *"You **don't have to** pay more than \$2,000 a year, no matter how much your drug costs are"; And if drug prices rise faster than inflation, drug companies are going to **have to** pay Medicare back the difference*, thus reduces the audience's financial concerns. The modal verb "must" is particularly effective in expressing the government's firm stance and determination, as seen in *"We now **must** beat the NRA again"*, demonstrating Biden's resolve on gun control issues.

Biden's strategic use of modal verbs effectively communicates the necessity and obligations of policies, alleviates public burden, expresses the government's determination, and enhances the persuasiveness and urgency of his speech. This

language strategy helps Biden clearly convey his policy goals and values, gaining audience understanding and support.

Through the sentences structure analysis, it is evident that Biden employs a variety of sentence types in his State of the Union addresses, including declarative (*I want competition with China, not conflict. And we're in a stronger position to win the conflict [competition] of the 21st century against China than anyone else for that matter — than at any time as well.; I ask Congress to pass proven measures to reduce gun violence.*) and imperative sentences (*Let's face reality. The climate crisis doesn't care if you're in a red or a blue state. It's an existential threat.; I say stop it. Stop it, stop it, stop it.; Pass universal background checks.*), rhetorical questions (*Why should anyone on the terrorist list be able to purchase a weapon. Why? Why?*), conditional adverbial clauses (*Folks, if we are to advance liberty and justice, we need to secure our border and fix the immigration system.*), and compound sentences.

The use of these sentence types not only enhances the diversity and appeal of his speeches but also effectively communicates Biden's positions, requests, and sense of urgency. By employing these grammatical structures and strategic language choices, Biden is able to convey his policy objectives and values clearly, fostering a deeper connection with his audience and garnering their support.

### 2.2.3 Discourse markers

Linking	Contrastive	introductory	Emphasizing
And - 578	however	Well - 47	In fact - 10
But - 144	although	look - 50	look - 12
Or - 58	yet -5	Anyway - 2	folks - 68
So - 105	X	X	X
Because -62	X	X	X

( Based on 2022 - 2024 Discourse markers use)

It is noteworthy that the term "folks" appears a total of 68 times across the three State of the Union addresses. Although "folks" is a noun, in Biden's discourse, it has essentially become a characteristic discourse marker. Referring to Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which posits that "the behavioral changes that people make to attune their communication to their partner, and the extent to which people perceive their partner as appropriately attuning to them," we can understand Biden's strategic use of "folks" in a more nuanced way. This theory, later applied to sociolinguistics by David Crystal, explains how language accommodation involves individuals adjusting their speaking style to resemble their conversation partner's speech more closely (Crystal, 2008). Semantically, Biden's use of "folks" not only serves to bridge the gap between himself and his audience but also facilitates audience engagement with serious political issues. By using a colloquial term like "folks," Biden makes his speech more relatable, encouraging listeners and voters to see themselves in the discourse and actively participate in political discussions.

In other words, the choice of vocabulary by political figures, along with the unique use of specific terms, significantly influences public perception of their public image. Biden's frequent use of "folks" exemplifies how linguistic strategies can enhance the relatability and appeal of political communication, fostering a sense of inclusivity and shared identity among his audience. This approach not only humanizes political discourse but also enhances its effectiveness by making complex political issues more accessible and engaging for the general public.

### **2.3 Pragmatics of Joe Biden's discourse**

This section supplements our analysis of Joe Biden's language use by focusing on two key pragmatic aspects: deixis and hedging. Our data is derived from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 State of the Union addresses. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate how political figures like Biden use these linguistic tools to convey specific intentions and achieve communicative goals within particular contexts.

Deixis involves the use of words that are context-dependent, referring to specific times, places, and people to convey meaning. In political discourse, deixis can help listeners understand the speaker's intentions within a particular setting and guide them towards specific objectives. For example, in Biden's State of the Union addresses, he refers to the Republican Party as "Republican friends" rather than using "they" or other terms. This choice highlights a sense of political decorum necessary for such formal settings, which was less evident in previous presidents' addresses, such as those by Donald Trump.

In the personal deixis part, the frequent use of personal pronouns like "we" and "we're" in Biden's speeches enhances the sense of unity and collective identity, making his discourse more engaging and persuasive. This inclusive language fosters a connection with the audience, encouraging them to feel part of the national endeavor. Deixis can also serve as a tool to navigate power dynamics and express respect. In Biden's 2024 Mother's Day Proclamation, he refers to Obama as "President Barack Obama," demonstrating respect for his predecessor and upholding the authority of the political system. Conversely, in the 2024 State of the Union Address, Biden refers to Donald Trump 15 times as "presumptive challenger" and 13 times as "former Republican president," but never uses his full name. This selective naming strategy subtly conveys respect while maintaining political distance.

Hedging, as a linguistic strategy, involves the use of words or phrases that soften statements, allowing speakers to express uncertainty, politeness, or caution. Walter Benjamin famously remarked that "It is the fate of the speaker to be misunderstood," highlighting the necessity of hedging to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation.

Hedging allows political figures to adjust their stance flexibly across different contexts without appearing inconsistent. For instance, in scientific research articles, hedging is used to present findings tentatively, increasing their acceptance (Hyland, 1998). Similarly, Biden uses hedging to introduce policies and opinions cautiously, making his statements more palatable to a broader audience.

Analyzing the use of deixis and hedging in Joe Biden's speeches offers valuable insights into his communicative strategies. Deixis helps establish context, build connections, and navigate power dynamics, while hedging provides flexibility, reduces assertiveness, and mitigates potential conflicts. These linguistic tools are crucial for understanding Biden's approach to political discourse, enhancing his effectiveness in public communication, and shaping his public image.

This pragmatic analysis underscores the importance of these strategies in political communication, offering a deeper understanding of how language can be used to engage, persuade, and maintain political decorum. By examining these aspects, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of Biden's rhetorical techniques and their impact on his audience.

### 2.3.1 Deixis

#### Personal Deixis

First person	We - 130 / We're -30	I* - 84 / I'm - 17	our - 77	us-27	my - 37	me - 8
Second Person	you -71	yours -4	you're - 9	you'll - 4	your - 28	yourself -3
Third person	they - 43	they're - 4	they'll - 1	It - 76	it's - 21	it'll -1

(2022 state of the union address )

First person	We - 161/ We're -60	I* - 125 / I'm - 24	our - 65	us- 36	my - 48	me -17
Second	you -	yours - 1	you're -	you'll - 0	your - 23	yourself

Person	107		4			- 0
Third person	they - 46	they're - 9	they'll - 2	It - 84	it's - 42	it'll - 0

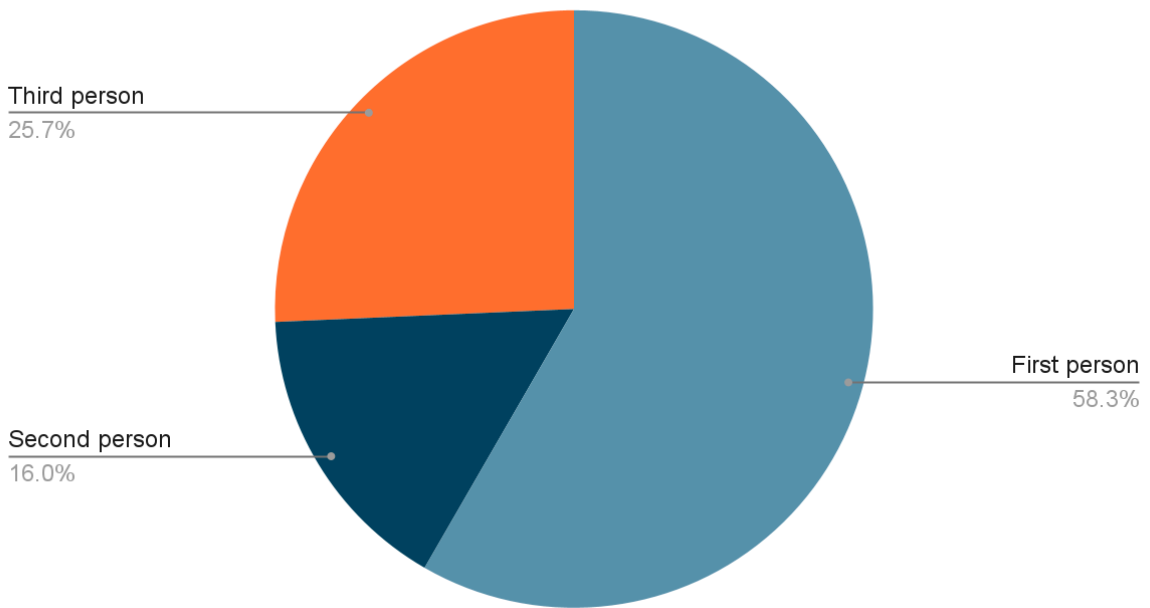
(2023 state of the union address )

First person	We -96 / We're -24	I* -147 / I'm - 31	our - 53	us- 12	my - 60	me - 25
Second Person	you - 107	yours - 0	you're - 0	you'll - 0	your - 21	yourself - 0
Third person	they - 52	they're - 10	they'll - 0	It - 86	it's - 0	it'll - 0

(2024 state of the union address )

Upon collecting and analyzing data from the three State of the Union addresses, we found that first-person plural deixis such as "we", "we're", and "our" occupy a prominent position, comprising 58% of all deixis in the texts. The use of these first-person plural deixis has a positive effect on social identity. According to Henri Tajfel and John Turner's Social Identity Theory (Turner, 1986), individuals gain self-identity through group affiliation. Bethan Benwell and Elizabeth Stokoe suggest that “identity is formed through the process of differentiation, which is relative and flexible, depending on the activities people engage in” (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). Therefore, the frequent use of first-person plural deixis in political speeches can enhance the audience's sense of group belonging and collective consciousness, positively influencing group cohesion and identity formation.

## Personal Deixis



According to CBS opinion polls from 2021-2024 (CBS New Poll - April 21-24, 2023), Joe Biden's support is primarily concentrated among ethnic minorities, particularly highly educated Black women. This indicates that Biden's discourse and policies have fostered centripetal force and cohesion in the diverse society of the United States.

### CBS News Poll – April 21-24, 2023 Adults in the U.S.



#### 3. Biden Job Approval (2 Categories)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

	Total	Gender		Age				Ideology		
		Male	Female	Under 30	30-44	45-64	65+	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Approve	41%	39%	43%	52%	49%	31%	36%	71%	45%	15%
Disapprove	59%	61%	57%	48%	51%	69%	64%	29%	55%	85%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Weighted N	(2,078)	(1,027)	(1,051)	(428)	(526)	(678)	(445)	(519)	(680)	(648)

	Total	2020 Vote			Party ID			Race			White by Education	
		Biden	Trump	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black	Hispanic	No Degree	4yr Degree+	
Approve	41%	77%	8%	79%	32%	14%	35%	66%	41%	30%	44%	
Disapprove	59%	23%	92%	21%	68%	86%	65%	34%	59%	70%	56%	
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Weighted N	(2,078)	(668)	(628)	(632)	(687)	(585)	(1,303)	(264)	(332)	(807)	(496)	

**7. Personally Like Biden**

Regardless of how you feel about his policies, do you like or dislike how Joe Biden handles himself personally?

	Gender			Age				Ideology		
	Total	Male	Female	Under 30	30-44	45-64	65+	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Like	49%	47%	51%	59%	58%	41%	39%	82%	54%	20%
Dislike	51%	53%	49%	41%	42%	59%	61%	18%	46%	80%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Weighted N	(2,073)	(1,029)	(1,044)	(422)	(527)	(682)	(442)	(521)	(679)	(651)

	2020 Vote			Party ID			Race			White by Education	
	Total	Biden	Trump	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black	Hispanic	No Degree	4yr Degree+
Like	49%	86%	12%	87%	42%	19%	42%	76%	55%	36%	50%
Dislike	51%	14%	88%	13%	58%	81%	58%	24%	45%	64%	50%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Weighted N	(2,073)	(659)	(630)	(625)	(687)	(586)	(1,292)	(264)	(333)	(797)	(495)

### 2.3.2 Hedging

When politicians express their viewpoints, they need to leave room for policy adjustments and political positioning. Thus, hedging is crucial in political language. Joe Biden's use of hedging helps maintain diplomatic courtesy, enhance unity, and reduce conflict risks in complex political environments. Hedging makes statements more flexible, adaptable to different perspectives, and less likely to alienate or oppose. For example, in the 2024 State of the Union address, Biden said, "*What makes our moment rare is that freedom and democracy are under attack at — both at home and overseas at the very same time.*" Pragmatically, this emphasizes the seriousness of the situation without making definitive assertions, providing room for interpretation. By using "rare," Biden softens the potential alarm of an absolute statement, warning the audience of democratic threats while calling for calm, implicitly suggesting that as America, any threat to the existing international order will be defeated.

Regarding his attitude towards Putin, Biden stated, "*Putin has unleashed violence and chaos. But while he may make gains on the battlefield, he will pay a continuing high price over the long run.*" The use of "may" shows Biden's cautious stance on predicting Putin's outcomes. Analyzing through Politeness Theory (**Foley, 1997**), Biden maintains basic diplomatic etiquette by using "may" to temper his criticism of Putin. However, Biden's off-the-cuff remarks have been more direct, such

as when he said, “*for God’s sake, this man cannot remain in power*” about Putin, causing diplomatic tensions. Similarly, he called Xi Jinping a dictator during a press briefing, further highlighting the difference between his prepared and spontaneous statements.

In discussing tax reform, Biden said, *"I may be wrong, but my guess is, if we took a secret ballot on this floor, that we'd all agree that the present tax system ain't fair. We have to fix it."* Applying Politeness Theory, "I may be wrong, but" serves as a face-saving device, showing humility and openness, making the speaker seem more approachable and reasonable. From the perspective of epistemic modality, "may be wrong" and "my guess is" soften the statement, acknowledging uncertainty and possibly differing opinions.

<b>Hedging words</b>	<b>2022 Frequency</b>	<b>2023 Frequency</b>	<b>2024 Frequency</b>
<b>can</b>	40	28	29
<b>could</b>	5	2	5
<b>may</b>	7	4	2
<b>might</b>	2	0	1
<b>should</b>	5	8	10
<b>would</b>	13	11	13
<b>possibly</b>	0	0	0
<b>probably</b>	0	0	2
<b>likely</b>	0	1	1
<b>apparently</b>	0	4	1
<b>some</b>	15	24	16
<b>many</b>	15	29	15
<b>a few</b>	2	3	1
<b>several</b>	0	3	0
<b>often</b>	1	4	1

<b>few</b>	4	5	7
<b>maybe</b>	1	1	0
<b>unless</b>	0	1	1
<b>seem</b>	1	0	0

(Hedging words frequency)

Based on this data, in all three years, "can" is the most frequently used hedging word. It appeared 40 times in 2022, 28 times in 2023, and 29 times in 2024. This indicates Biden often uses "can" to express potential or capability, demonstrating the feasibility of government policies and future possibilities.

Would is the second most frequent hedging word. It was used 13 times in 2022, 11 times in 2023, and 13 times in 2024. "Would" is typically used to express hypothetical situations or potential outcomes, emphasizing the possible impacts and future results of policies. And in modal verb part, the usage of "should" increased notably in 2023 and 2024, with 8 times and 10 times, respectively, compared to 5 times in 2022. This shows Biden frequently uses "should" to emphasize recommendations and necessary actions, softening the tone of his statements to express policy suggestions and guidance.

We also can turn the lens into an annual trends part, we could find out *Some* and *Many* both words saw a significant increase in usage in 2023. "Some" increased from 15 times in 2022 to 24 times in 2023, then decreased to 16 times in 2024. "Many" increased from 15 times in 2022 to 29 times in 2023, then decreased to 15 times in 2024. This indicates that in 2023, Biden was more inclined to use these words to express uncertain quantities or broad impacts, likely to enhance the generality and widespread effect of policy arguments. The word "*Apparently*" was used 4 times in 2023, compared to 0 times in 2022 and 1 time in 2024. This shows Biden might have used "apparently" more in 2023 to express perceived facts, carefully stating information.

However in my perspective I believe we shall focus on some low frequency words but significant hedging words such as: *May, Might, Could*. These words are

used to express higher uncertainty or possibility. Their usage fluctuated across the years but remained relatively low overall. In 2022, "may" was used 7 times, "could" 5 times, and "might" 2 times. In 2023, "may" was used 4 times, "could" 2 times, and "might" not used. In 2024, "may" was used 2 times, "could" 5 times, and "might" 1 time. This indicates Biden's cautious approach in some situations to avoid absolute statements. And *Possibly, Probably, Likely* were used very sparingly across all three years. Their low frequency suggests Biden seldom relies on these words to express uncertainty, possibly favoring more direct expressions. By the way *Maybe* and *Unless* were also used very infrequently, with usage at or below 1 time per year. This indicates Biden rarely uses these words to express conditionality or potential possibility.

## 2.4 Bidenese and Bidenisms

"Bidenese" and "Bidenisms" have become popular culture terms that encapsulate the idiosyncratic elements of Biden's language, including his unique communication style and gaffes, which collectively contribute to his public persona. The term "Bidenese" refers to the unique communicative style of President Joe Biden, characterized by his penchant for weaving personal stories into public discourse. Alex Thompson, Christopher Cadelago, Theodoric Meyer, and Daniel Lippman (2021) in Politico's Transition Playbook newsletter "He's fluent in Bidenese" focus on Vinay Reddy, President Joe Biden's director of speechwriting, and explores the challenges and nuances of crafting speeches for Biden. The article discusses how Reddy, along with senior adviser Mike Donilon, is pivotal in shaping Biden's addresses to match his distinctive speaking style known as "Bidenese". According to Reddy, Bidenese is known for its personal anecdotes and informal language – phrases like “*God love ya*” and “*not a joke*” pepper his talks, helping him come across as genuine and relatable; a key aspect of "Bidenese" is avoiding jargon and acronyms, which aligns with Biden's belief that communication should be clear and easily understandable. He insists that his speeches be free of

bureaucratic language so that anyone listening can understand the message without prior knowledge of the topic. Self-awareness and ability to take a jokey are also key – he might quip about his tendency to be verbose or about his age, which humanizes him and makes his public persona more approachable. Thematically Biden’s speeches focus on dignity and respect and referencing personal hardships and losses to connect on an emotional level. For instance, discussing the loss of his first wife and daughter, he often shares how personal tragedy has shaped his perspective and policy positions, particularly on issues like healthcare and family support.

"Bidenisms" are a distinctive set of expressions and verbal slips made famous by Joe Biden, often characterized by their folksy, candid, and sometimes confusing nature. This term began to gain traction around 2009 when Jeremy Stahl (2009) from Slate introduced a feature cataloging these unique sayings and gaffes, highlighting their blend of charm, awkwardness, and inadvertent humor. Examples of Bidenisms include memorable phrases like "*Stand up, Chuck, let ‘em see you,*" directed at Senator Chuck Graham, who uses a wheelchair, and "*I mean, you got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean,*" referring to Barack Obama. These expressions not only reflect Biden's personal speaking style but also his attempts to connect with listeners in a relatable manner, despite occasionally missing the mark.

They are often characterized by their folksy, candid, and sometimes confusing nature and encompass his distinctive phrases and frequently used sayings, which blend colloquial wisdom, personal anecdotes, and occasional verbal slips. Biden's speech is peppered with sayings like "*Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value,*" reflecting his Scranton roots and middle-class values. **Matt Viser (2020)** highlights how these sayings not only serve as a rhetorical device that connects Biden with his audience but also encapsulate the essence of his communication style, which blends personal anecdotes with political messaging. These phrases often stem from lessons and expressions Biden attributes to family members, adding a personal and relatable touch to his rhetoric. For example, he frequently quotes sayings from his father, like the one above and from his mother,

*"As long as you're alive, you have an obligation to strive, and you're not dead until you see the face of God."* Additionally, his speeches are peppered with folksy expressions such as *"My word as a Biden,"* and *"C'mon man,"* which have become signature parts of his public discourse. They not only serve to convey his political messages but also forge a connection with his audience by invoking a sense of common, everyday wisdom. In his speeches, Biden uses these expressions to connect with his audience, providing a folksy, authentic, and relatable touch to his public communications. Additionally, as Alex Thompson Bidenisms sometimes include quirky or outdated phrases that can be puzzling, such as his off-the-cuff remark *"God save the queen, man,"* at the end of a speech on gun violence, which confounded even his staff.

## **Conclusions to chapter 2**

In this chapter, we've explored Joe Biden's idiolect and its influence on his political identity and public perception. Joe Biden's linguistic style, shaped by his background and personal experiences, notably impacts his connection with the electorate and his effectiveness in political communication.

Joe Biden's idiolect is marked by its straightforwardness, informality, and emotive depth. His speech often incorporates personal anecdotes and colloquial language, making his public addresses highly relatable and grounded. Notably, his ability to interweave personal experiences with broader political messages allows him to forge a strong emotional connection with his audience. This approach not only humanizes him but also enhances his appeal as a leader who genuinely understands and cares about the public's concerns.

The quantitative analysis of Joe Biden's speeches, as conducted using advanced linguistic tools like Voyant Tools, provides substantial empirical evidence of his distinct idiolect. Through the examination of frequency patterns, we observed that certain key phrases and words recur across his speeches, reflecting thematic consistency and rhetorical emphasis. For example, terms like "democracy," "unity,"

and "America" feature prominently, indicating Biden's focus on these crucial concepts. Additionally, the analysis highlighted his frequent use of personal pronouns such as "we" and "our," underscoring his inclusive approach and collective identity construction. The linguistic tool also revealed a significant use of modal verbs like "can" and "must," which Biden employs to assert capability and necessity, reinforcing his leadership's proactive and determined nature.

This quantitative data not only corroborates the qualitative aspects of Biden's speech discussed earlier but also offers a concrete measure of the linguistic elements that define his public communications. Such data-driven insights enrich our understanding of how Biden's language functions to shape perceptions, engage audiences, and convey his political vision effectively.

The strategic use of language in Biden's discourse serves multiple communicative purposes: it reinforces his political messages, solidifies his leadership identity, and engages the public in a dialogue about crucial national issues. Through this linguistic approach, Biden not only communicates policy but also cultivates a political identity that is both authoritative and empathetic.

## CONCLUSIONS

Political discourse refers to the language used in political contexts, distinct from other types of discourse such as social media discourse and business discourse. Typically, the language used by politicians during campaigns, proposals, and diplomatic activities can be classified as political discourse. This type of language is usually carefully crafted and not commonly used in everyday life. In this paper, we focus on analyzing Joe Biden's political discourse, extracting the necessary elements and content for textual analysis based on the State of the Union addresses from 2022, 2023, and 2024.

The study was guided by a set of well-defined objectives, with the primary goal of critically analyzing the linguistic elements characteristic of Biden's speeches. This was achieved through both quantitative and qualitative methods, examining patterns of lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics within his discourse, and assessing how these linguistic features influence public interpretation and response.

In Chapter 1, we explored the theoretical frameworks that guide our analysis of political discourse, highlighting how language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of constructing social and power relations. Employing methodologies such as Corpus Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Politeness Theory, and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), we have identified key linguistic traits and strategies in Biden's political discourse. These frameworks have been instrumental in understanding how Biden's language in political contexts, especially during his State of the Union addresses, systematically constructs his political persona and engages with the electorate.

Chapter 2 provided a focused analysis on Joe Biden's idiolect, examining his distinctive linguistic style marked by straightforwardness, warmth, humor, and empathy. The quantitative analysis of his speeches revealed consistent use of phrases such as "we," "our," "you," "we're going to," and "we will," which emphasize inclusivity and collective action. This analysis also highlighted Biden's frequent use

of discourse markers like "folks," "come on," and "look," which contribute to his relatable and down-to-earth image. The combination of qualitative insights and quantitative data from tools like Voyant illustrates how Biden's speech patterns support his political messaging and identity construction.

In this study, we have focused on extracting and analyzing elements from Biden's State of the Union addresses from 2022, 2023, and 2024, concentrating on themes such as economic development, healthcare reform, and international relations. Our findings indicate that Biden's language is consistently geared towards addressing relatable and urgent issues, employing a lexicon that resonates with the American public. This is evident in the high-frequency use of words like "jobs," "families," "health," "work," and "future."

Additionally, our pragmatic analysis highlights Biden's strategic use of deixis and hedging. He frequently employs first-person pronouns to foster a sense of unity and shared responsibility, while his use of hedging serves to express uncertainty, politeness, and reduce confrontational risks. These linguistic strategies are crucial in navigating the complexities of political communication, ensuring that his messages are both inclusive and diplomatically cautious.

The comprehensive synthesis of these analyses conclusively demonstrates how Joe Biden's use of language is not merely communicative but strategically tailored to construct and communicate his political identity, aiming to effectively connect with and mobilize his audience. Through a detailed examination of lexicon, syntax, and pragmatic strategies across Biden's major speeches, this research sheds light on the evolution of his rhetorical approach over time, illustrating the dynamic interplay between language and political leadership. The insights gained from this study underscore the importance of linguistic choices in political communication, providing a nuanced understanding of how political figures like Biden use language to shape public perception and influence societal discourse.

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## Annex 1

### Biden quotes from POLITICO

1. “ You’re f—ing surprised!” – over lunch to Obama, who told Biden he was “surprised” the two were “becoming good friends,” according to one of Biden’s advisers.
2. “I love you, darling.” – Biden’s occasional phone sign-offs to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
3. “I’ve twice been a Presidential candidate and I hope you do better than I did.” – to political leaders at Ukrainian Parliament in April 2014. Osnos said Biden grabbed the right biceps of Vitali Klitschko, the Ukrainian politician and former international boxing champion.
4. “Bob Gates is a Republican, with a view of foreign policy that is, in many fundamental ways, different from mine. Bob Gates has been wrong about everything!” – on former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who in a January 2014 memoir said of Biden: “I think he has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades.”
5. “I had an interpreter, and when he was showing me his office I said, ‘It’s amazing what capitalism will do, won’t it? A magnificent office!’ And he laughed. As I turned, I was this close to him. I said, ‘Mr. Prime Minister, I’m looking into your eyes, and I don’t think you have a soul.’” – on a 2011 visit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was prime minister at the time. Biden said that Putin “looked back at me, and he smiled, and he said, ‘We understand one another.’”
6. “It looks like we’re alone, so why don’t you call me Mr. President and I’ll call you Mr. Prime Minister.” – Biden, in a meeting with a British government minister.
7. “The First Lady comes and I’m going to cower? That doesn’t fit type.” – on the scene in his White House Correspondents Dinner video in which he and actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus are caught by First Lady Michelle Obama eating ice cream in the White House kitchen
8. “I said, ‘You look like a thug!’ I said, ‘You’re so damn big.’” — to then-Ukrainian

President Viktor Yanukovich in November 2013.

9. “If I ever got to that point, I’d announce I had prostate cancer and I had to leave.” – on what he’d say if he had such a fundamental moral disagreement with Obama such that he’d have to resign as his vice president.

10. “Yeah, maybe.” – when asked earlier this year whether the U.S. could have done anything differently in Syria. Osnos said Biden waited 15 seconds to answer the question.

11. “I hadn’t been to class enough to know how to do citations.” – when asked about getting caught lifting passages of a paper in law school, which he chalked up to ignorance and not purposeful plagiarism.

12. “If you want the trappings, it’s a hell of a lot better to go into some other line of work.” – on Air Force Two, which Osnos noted had “restrained splendor” with an armrest that fell off and a cooler used as an extra seat.

13. “It’s really very important, if you are able, to communicate to the other guy that you understand his problem. And some of this diplomatic bulls— communicates ‘We have no idea of your problem.’” – on diplomacy and foreign affairs.

14. “I’m going to be in Iowa, I’m going to be in New Hampshire, I’m going to be in Nevada, I’m going to be in all those early states. Not by design. They’re the toughest races!” – when asked about campaigning in local races.

15. “I can die a happy man not being president.”