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PERSUASION STRATEGIES IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BRITISH PARTY LEADERS' SPEECHES

Introduction. Modern societal development is defined by dynamism and rapid changes, which influence the creation and improvement of means of argumentation and expression of personal opinions, emphasizing their perception as the only correct ones. It leads to a blending and blurring of the boundaries between persuasion and argumentation (proof). Linguistic potential serves as a powerful tool of influence in the context of communication. Language resources provide the ability to describe various situations, convey personal visions of these events, manage audience perception, and shape evaluations.

In ancient times the oratory art was used for defense or accusation in legal proceedings. In modern times the function of political discourse is mainly directed at persuading the audience through communicative strategies and tactics.

Political discourse as a phenomenon covers an interdisciplinary spectrum and is determined by its essence and properties. Its principal function is to use the political power as a tool, including the power struggle, its conquest, maintenance, implementation, stabilization, and redistribution [1, pp. 3-10].

In the 20th century, scientists A. Adler, H. Lasswell, and A. George considered the desire for power as a compensatory mechanism in human psychology. Friedrich Nietzsche, on the other hand, viewed the pursuit of power as a fundamental instinct of man, considering every individual a seeker of power. These different approaches reflect a variety of contradictions in the analysis of the concept of power, prompting deep scientific discussions on this topic [1, pp. 3-31].

Persuasiveness in the political context is considered a mechanism of speech manipulation used to influence social or individual attitudes. Persuasive influence is fulfilled through strategies that are accomplished using specific tactics. Modern scholars studying persuasion see in this phenomenon a communicative function capable of being completed in various contexts, from personal interaction to addressing a mass audience. In particular, researcher D. O'Keefe emphasizes three main types of media persuasions: commercial, pro-social, and political. In the realm of political persuasion, special attention is paid to the role of television political debates, election campaigns, and political arguments in the context of their impact on public opinion, propaganda, and interpersonal communications [7, p. 3590].

Data and Methods of Research. Within the theoretical research, a comprehensive analysis of key strategies and linguistic principles used to shape and influence public opinion has been defined. The main aspects of persuasion have been made, the specifics of conviction in the discourse of political party programs have been detected, and the functioning of persuasive aspects in a political context has been represented.

In political discourse, persuasive strategies encompass the application of various rhetorical means (anaphora, parallelisms, rhetorical questions), which assure a significant impact on the audience. Political figures Rishi Sunak and Tony Blair skillfully apply these strategies to influence the emotions and perception of their audience, demonstrating skills in effective communicative influence.

The linguistic foundations of persuasiveness include a conscious choice of vocabulary, syntactic structures, and stylistic figures, which constitute persuasive discourse. These principles are critical for shaping public opinion and they allow politicians to clearly and effectively present their ideas to the audience.

The theoretical aspects of persuasiveness in English-language political discourse play a decisive role in understanding the mechanisms of political leaders influencing public opinion. It underscores the importance of effective communication in the political sphere.

In the practical study, a linguopragmatic analysis of the programs of British political parties was performed, focusing on persuasiveness. This research included a comparative analysis of the persuasion strategies used by the leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties in the United Kingdom and the specifics of using linguopragmatic strategies in their political discourse.

In analyzing persuasive strategies, the leaders of both parties use different approaches to communicating with the audience. The Conservative Party prefers traditional values, emphasizing national sovereignty and economic stability, and resorts to rhetoric that evokes a sense of national pride and security. The Labour Party, in turn, is focused on social justice, equality, and inclusivity, aiming to evoke empathy and support for social changes.

Linguopragmatic strategies used by these parties include the application of various linguistic means: metaphors, anaphoras, rhetorical questions, and other stylistic figures. Persuasiveness tools are formed a certain image of political leaders and parties, highlighting key aspects of their political programs. Persuasion strategies are used to create an emotional connection with the audience and reinforce the main political positions.

The conclusions of our study indicate that persuasiveness in the political discourse of British political parties is a complex phenomenon that includes the strategic use of linguistic and pragmatic elements. These elements exploited to influence public opinion and shape political convictions. The ability of political leaders to effectively apply these strategies to achieve their goals and objectives is significant.

Discussion. Persuasiveness in a political context is expressed as speech manipulations used as tools of influence to modify social and individual views. This influence defined through strategies that are performed using definite tactics. Modern persuasion researchers describe this phenomenon as a communicative function applied in various conditions, from personal interaction to communication with a mass audience. D. O'Keefe, for example, distinguishes three main types of media persuasions: commercial, pro-social, and political.

In the realm of political persuasion, emphasis is established on the role of television political debates, election campaigns, and political discussions in the context of their impact on shaping public opinion and propaganda. Research in this area includes the analysis of interpersonal interactions and other aspects of communication [7, p. 3590].

In interpreting persuasiveness as "an interweaving of logic and emotion" it is valuable to understand that each persuasive message has its unique set of components, distinguishing it from additional similar messages [2, p. 6]. Emphasis is fixed on the importance of persuasive communication in jurisprudence, particularly in prosecution and defense speeches, and its significance in economics to influence consumer activity [6].

Research Findings. Examining the programs of the Conservative Party of the United Kingdom, we focused on their first program, the Tamworth Manifesto, initiated by Robert Peel and dated 1834. The proclamation embodied key conservative ideas, emphasizing the importance of elitism and traditional values. In this context, it is crucial to consider the contemporary program and strategies of the Conservative Party through the lens of its latest leader and the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Rishi Sunak, assessing their persuasiveness [1].

Analyzing Rishi Sunak's first speech as Prime Minister, we identified the use of Aristotelian rhetorical strategies of ethos, pathos, and logos. These strategies contribute to the effective transference of statements and ideas through reliable sources of information, facts, and the power of the speaker [8].

In the introductory part of his speech, Sunak emphasizes his affiliation with the people, identifying himself as "*your new Prime Minister*" and using the phrase "*our country*". Such phrases demonstrate a solidarity strategy, particularly in the statement, "*It is only right to explain why I am standing here as your new Prime Minister*" [8].

He also highlights arguments supporting his appointment, mentioning the economic crisis, the pandemic, and the war in Ukraine, which have affected energy markets and supply chains worldwide: "*Right now our country is facing a profound economic crisis. The aftermath of COVID-19 still lingers. Putin's war in Ukraine has destabilized energy markets and supply chains the world over*" [8].

Sunak actively uses tactics of gratitude, praise, and criticism in his statements about the previous Prime Minister Liz Truss, which simultaneously serves as an argument in favor of Sunak's appointment, expected to pursue more successful policies.

Praise: *I want to pay tribute to my predecessor Liz Truss, she was not wrong to want to improve growth in this country, it is a noble aim. And I admired her restlessness to create change* [8].

Criticism: *But some mistakes were made. Not borne of ill will or bad intentions. Quite the opposite. But mistakes nonetheless* [8].

Overall, the use of a combination of different tactics in Sunak's speech demonstrates his ability to understand political situations and effectively apply rhetorical methods to capture and retain the concentration of listeners.

In his public speeches, Rishi Sunak, the newly elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, actively uses persuasive techniques to reinforce his image as a competent and responsible leader. His speeches are defined by a strategic approach to presenting plans and promises for increasing trust in his political course.

Sunak emphasizes his election as party leader and Prime Minister as evidence of his readiness to address existing problems: "*And I have been elected as leader of my party, and your Prime Minister, in part, to fix them*" [8]. This statement underscores his commitment to the cause and desire to work for the advantage of the country.

Referring to his work during the pandemic, Sunak reminds the audience of his efforts to protect people and businesses, stating: "*But you saw me during Covid, doing everything I could, to protect people and businesses, with schemes like furlough*" [8]. This comment highlights his ability to act decisively and with concern for the interests of citizens in challenging conditions.

Sunak's speech also contains promises regarding economic stability and consolidation of the country. He declares: "*I will place economic stability and confidence at the heart of this government's agenda... I will unite our country, not with words, but with action. I will work day in and day out to deliver for you. Trust is earned. And I will earn yours*" [8]. These words are proposed to reinforce trust in the government and its ability to respond to contemporary challenges.

Sunak pays particular attention to the principles of integrity, professionalism, and responsibility in government work, stating: "*This government will have integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level*" [8]. This statement reflects his commitment to citizens and aspiration for high criteria of governance.

Rishi Sunak also addresses issues of the future and generational legacy, especially in the context of financial policy and managing national debt, emphasizing: "*The government I lead will not leave the next generation, your children and grandchildren, with a debt to settle that we were too weak to pay ourselves*" [8]. This statement underscores his image as a responsible leader.

In defining the strategic priorities of his future political activity, the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Rishi Sunak, focuses on the critical aspects of the country's social and economic development. He promises to strengthen the healthcare system, improve the quality of school education, reduce crime rates, secure national borders, take care of the environment, and support the Armed Forces. He expresses these promises in his official address: "*And the heart of that mandate is our manifesto. I will deliver on its promise. A stronger NHS. Better schools. Safer streets. Control of our borders. Protecting our environment. Supporting our armed forces*" [8].

These commitments reflect Rishi Sunak as a leader focused on the essential social and economic challenges while managing the country. It is also noteworthy that Sunak emphasizes the need to support the Armed Forces in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which is regularly featured in the British media. It indicates the importance of ensuring safety for every citizen, especially in times of global instability.

Addressing the economic prospects of the United Kingdom post-Brexit, Sunak emphasizes the need for: "*Levelling up and building an economy that embraces the opportunities of Brexit, where businesses invest, innovate, and create jobs*" [8].

It indicates his vision of strengthening the national economy as a crucial factor for ensuring the property of citizens, and the successful development of the country. Sunak talks about "*the tough decisions that still need to be made*", underscoring a realistic approach to country management and readiness to solve complex problems.

Overall, Rishi Sunak's political strategy, expressed in his first official address as Prime Minister, is based on tactics of gratitude, empathy, criticism, praise, promises, and advice aimed at satisfying the essential needs of the population in safety, proper care, reputation, and self-realization. His address includes a clear action plan and promises reflecting his commitment to the concerns of the country and its citizens.

Throughout its existence, the Labour Party of the United Kingdom has experienced significant changes in its ideology and leadership. For many years, the party followed the principles of democratic socialism and played a crucial role in British politics. At the turn of the era, prominent figures such as Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson emerged, and later Tony Blair, under whose leadership starting from 1995, the party began to move away from traditional socialism and towards the concept of a mixed economy. While in power, the Labour Party implemented large-scale nationalization programs in the steel, coal, and gas industries and automotive transport. One of the party's essential achievements was the foundation of a free healthcare system and the development of public housing programs. By 2013, the Labour Party was a member of the Socialist International, whose secretariat was established in London, and later became an observer. At the time of writing, the party leader was Jeremy Corbyn [4].

Tony Blair is considered one of the most famous party's influential ideological figures. In his speech following the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, Tony Blair, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, demonstrated stability and loyalty to the ideals he proclaimed during his first term. Blair's speech helps to understand his views on the relationship between the United Kingdom and the EU, especially in the economic, political, and trans-border aspects [3]. Blair advocates for maintaining strong economic ties and the status of the United Kingdom as a main player in the European Union. In his speech, he highlights British potential financial losses and reduced influence on European policy after leaving the single market and customs union.

Blair also emphasizes the importance of the transatlantic bridge between England and the USA, which, in his opinion, is crucial for preserving freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. He believes, that closer cooperation between Europe and America contributes to stability and prosperity in the world [5]. According to his words, the United Kingdom is a connecting element between the two shores of the Atlantic and supports trans-border cooperation.

Tony Blair's speech reflects his commitment to the ideological principles of Blairism, which include an emphasis on cooperation with Europe and transatlantic collaboration. He underscores the importance of values such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as the role of the United Kingdom as a key player on the international stage. Blair's speech demonstrates the consistency of his political views and their connection to the previously formed system of his value beliefs.

Main strategies in the rhetoric of the Labour Party leader are:

• Economic Argument. Tony Blair emphasizes the economic losses the country will experience after leaving the single market and customs union. This strategy is aimed at logically convincing the audience of the impracticality of Brexit from the point of view of the country's economic well-being. He notes: "*It left space for a culture to develop in which sectional social and economic interests have fought to secure rights for themselves without a corresponding sense of their obligations to work for the wider public interest. Indeed, I believe that the origins of one of the greatest failings of the economy in the post-war period - short-termism - located in our lack of a clear national purpose*" [5].

• Political Argument. The politician discusses the loss of the opportunity to declare the interests of a political union. He uses this argument to emphasize the importance of the United Kingdom's influence on European political processes, as noted in his statement: "*Modernisation is the key. It has driven everything this government has done – whether in our constitutional reforms or our reforms of the health service or the education system or the system of criminal justice or our relations with Europe*" [5].

• Transatlantic Aspect. Blair focuses on the importance of transatlantic cooperation and the role of the United Kingdom as a mediator between the EU and the USA. This argument accentuates the significance of the United Kingdom as a key player in maintaining international order and cooperation. He asserts: "*On Europe, standing up for Britain does not mean being anti-Europe. It is not pro-British to be anti-Europe. The EU is part of the modern world. Britain is part of the EU. Standing up for Britain means fighting for British values, getting the best for Britain, whether it is economic reform, moving Europe closer to the USA or protecting the British rebate*" [5].

• Appeal to Values. Statements about the "transatlantic bridge" and the role of the United Kingdom in strengthening freedom, democracy, and the rule of law reflect an appeal to average values that unite the United Kingdom, the EU, and the USA. It evokes an emotional response in the audience and supports the idea of cooperation and unity. "*Standing up for our country means standing up for what we believe in. It means standing up for our values and having the strength to realize them in the modern world*" [5].

• Consistency of Views. The speech demonstrates the consistency and thoughtfulness of the politician's and his party's views, which is a strategy of persuasiveness that generates trust in the speaker. It shows that his convictions are stable and increases confidence in the eyes of the audience.

1) "That the United Kingdom is stronger together than apart; all the constituent elements of the Union: its great cities, regions, and nations are stronger united than separate, stronger together than the sum of their parts" [5].

2) "Standing up for our country means standing up for what we believe in" [5].

3) "Modernisation is the key. It has driven everything this government has done - whether in our constitutional reforms or our reforms of the health service or the education system or the system of criminal justice or our relations with Europe" [5].

4) *"This government's progressive programme of constitutional reform is now moving us from a centralised Britain, where power flowed top-down, to a devolved and plural state"* [5].

5) *"We can have confidence in our future. Britain is no longer in decline. We are rediscovering our strength and values. We are uniting those values to a common purpose: modernising the nation for the 21st Century. If we succeed, Britain will be stronger and fairer, on the road to providing opportunity and security for all"* [5].

These strategies used in Tony Blair's speech serve to emphasize the importance of his ideas and arguments regarding Brexit and support his position as an effective leader, capable of presenting convincing arguments for his country.

Thus, both leaders utilize different persuasion strategies, yet each has different characteristics. Sunak focuses on domestic policy, emphasizing his commitment to the interests of citizens, using tactics of gratitude, solidarity, and responsible promises. On the other hand, Blair is focused on foreign policy, supporting international cooperation and partnership, and applying rationalization and justification strategies to his decisions. Both approaches have strengths in their respective contexts and demonstrate a deep understanding of societal needs and international relations.

Conclusions and Prospects. This paper/article has analyzed scientific publications and theoretical materials related to persuasiveness in political discourse. The concept of persuasiveness is described as a process that includes various rhetorical and linguistic means to influence the audience. The main strategies of persuasiveness are described, including elements of alliteration, anaphora, metaphor, and climax, aiming to create a convincing presentation of political ideas. An evaluation of the role of these strategies in forming a successful political message was conducted, which is of significant importance in political discourse for shaping public opinion.

The vocabulary, syntax, and stylistic elements were examined to achieve a persuasive impact in the observation of linguistic elements. Linguistic strategies of persuasiveness that include the choice of words, syntactic constructions, and stylistic elements influencing emotions, convictions, and actions of the public were considered. A comparative and contextual analysis was assisted in public speeches and political programs of the leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties. It was persistent how these strategies reflect the general political goals and ideologies. According to the data obtained, leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties use different persuasive strategies. Conservatives focus on traditions and national sovereignty, while Labour emphasizes social justice and inclusivity. Both parties use persuasive means to strengthen their political programs and influence the electorate.

The article conducts the analysis of the linguistic and pragmatic elements to achieve influential objectives in political discourse. Specific examples of the use of these strategies are considered with a focus on their effectiveness and impact. These strategies help political leaders stress the main aspects of their programs and establish a connection with the audience.

Thus, persuasiveness in English-language political discourse is a complex phenomenon that includes the strategic use of linguistic means and a deep understanding of audience psychology. Leaders of political parties in the United Kingdom successfully use persuasive techniques to achieve their goals and shape public opinion.

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