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"WE ARE NOT GOING BACK" VS "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN." THE DISCOURSE OF 2024 US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Abstract
The article is devoted to the discourse picture of the 2024 presidential campaign in the USA. The research was conducted within the framework of the "discourse – cognition – society" triangle. It is based primarily on three key principles of discourse analysis: sequentiality, constructivity, and strategies. A communicative-cognitive model of discourse analysis is proposed, which focuses mainly on the narrative structure of discourse as a macro-speech event. From this perspective, the discourse of the 2024 presidential campaign in the USA is examined as a cycle of stories united by a common "storyline." These stories are linked through several recurring sentences, among which several key ones are identified. The main strategies for shaping public opinion and the means of linguistic influence employed by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris are examined and described. The analysis centers on the speech activity of the presidential candidates and its semantic structure. Four levels of organization within the semantic structure of the presidential campaign discourse are investigated: general communicative intention, thinking stereotypes, strategies, and the tactics and methods of influencing the addressee. Common and distinctive features in the construction of narratives and strategies by the participants in the election campaign are characterized and identified. Studies of this kind offer new approaches to the application of discourse analysis in political linguistics and may be useful in exploring the mechanisms of public opinion formation and influence on audiences.

Keywords: discourse, discourse analysis, discourse linguistics, political discourse, cognition, strategies, tactics, stereotypes, manipulations, political linguistics.

Introduction

In modern humanities, interdisciplinary research is becoming increasingly common: we observe the use of methods drawn from various sciences, the emergence and rapid development of new fields, and the adoption of novel approaches within traditional disciplines. In contemporary linguistics, such methods as discourse analysis, argumentative analysis, and content analysis have become widespread. Current research focuses on political linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, genre and register theory, as well as the tactical and strategic potential of linguistic communication. The aforementioned methods and approaches can also be applied to the study of strategies for shaping public opinion and the means of linguistic influence on the audience, including manipulative techniques. This article is devoted to the discourse landscape of the 2024 presidential campaign in the USA; the research was conducted within the framework of the triangle "discourse – cognition – society." We agree with the opinion of T. van Dijk that this triangle indeed constitutes "the site of multidisciplinary discourse analysis" (Dijk, 1997, p. 24).

In general, the 2024 presidential race in the United States attracted global attention and was marked by tension, drama, and the antagonistic strategies of its participants. The parties primarily emphasized their differences, appealed to distinct values, and highlighted the historic significance of the moment. The material for this study includes debates between presidential and vice-presidential candidates, interviews, talk shows featuring the campaign participants, speeches at rallies, public addresses, and social media posts. We also examined interviews with individuals associated with the presidential candidates' campaign teams or those who could directly influence the course of the race. This includes interviews with Melania Trump and Elon Musk, as well as Doug Emhoff's posts on the social network X. Thus, the polyphony of speech genres collectively constituting the discourse of the election campaign was considered.

We mainly studied the narrative structure of the discourse of the 2024 election campaign, as it represents a type of macro-discursive event—a cycle of stories connected to one another by a common "plot" line. In general, such events can be united by a series of recurring slogans, among which several key ones can be distinguished. These included, for example, *We are not going back* (Democratic candidate Kamala Harris) and *Make America great again* (Republican candidate Donald Trump). Key slogans were repeated in speeches, advertisements, and hashtags; they served the function of ensuring global coherence (thematic coherence) within the discourse of the 2024 presidential election campaign.

Narratives were also examined in relation to the genre-register characteristics of the relevant materials (e.g., speeches, public addresses, interviews, etc.), as well as the strategies, tactics, techniques, and argumentation employed by the campaign participants. We refer to this model of discourse analysis as *communicative-cognitive*, as it focuses on the means of realizing the communicative and cognitive functions of language that manifest in discourse.

In studying the corresponding speech events and identifying key topics, we also employed Microsoft Copilot, a conversational AI based on the GPT-4 architecture. This approach enabled us to identify key topics, assess the tone of speeches and interviews, and classify communicative strategies intended to influence audiences.

We consider the nomination of candidates to be the initial part of the presidential campaign narrative. A distinctive feature of this campaign was that the Democratic Party

initially nominated Joe Biden, who, after a poor debate performance, was succeeded by Vice President Kamala Harris. This replacement—and the broader discourse surrounding its potential and necessity—added an element of intrigue. Moreover, it influenced the strategies of both Democratic and Republican campaign headquarters. As a result, the narrative of the race developed non-linearly, revealing, for example, the decline in relevance of certain slogans, their mirrored reframing (such as those concerning the candidates' ages), or the emergence of a "new narrative," as occurred with the rise of Kamala Harris.

Theoretical Framework

Discourse analysis can be characterized as a method that reflects the scholarly desire to study an object in a multifaceted way, with the object itself perceived as complex. In linguistics, mass communication theory, political science, and sociology, issues related to the functioning and classification of discourse are frequently discussed; however, the term *discourse* itself remains insufficiently defined in general scientific terms. In linguistics, the term *discourse* is borrowed from the French language, where it originally referred to a public speech on a relevant topic and, more broadly, to any dialogical speech. Émile Benveniste used the term in the sense of "speech that the speaker appropriates" (Benveniste, 2021, p. 16). Zellig Harris defined discourse as "a passage of text larger than a sentence" (Harris, 1963, p. 7). Despite the variety of approaches, they converge on the idea that discourse is a unit broader than a text. This interpretation corresponds to the definition proposed by the Ukrainian philosopher Myroslav Popovych, who argued that *discourse* means "not only the act of speech, but also the specific situation, the extralinguistic context, the unexpressed goals and intentions that accompany this act of speech" (Popovych, 2003, p. 27). The constituent

elements of discourse include the events under discussion, communicative-intentional information, the circumstances surrounding the events, the context in which these events occur, the evaluations of the participants involved, and information that correlates the discourse with the events. In this sense, "discourse is the central integrative unit of speech activity, and its informational trace is the text" (Zernetskyi, 1992, p. 17).

Thus, the concept of "*discourse*" can be interpreted as the result of the interaction between communicants in a socio-cultural context. It is a complex communicative phenomenon that encompasses the social context, information about the communicants, and knowledge of the processes involved in the production and perception of texts. The terms "*discourse*" and "*discourse analysis*" are now widely used in linguistics, including such branches as communicative, cognitive, socio-, and psycholinguistics. Scholars propose various interpretations of the term "*discourse*" and often use it alongside or in place of related terms such as "*text,*" "*speech,*" and "*dialogue.*" Discourse is a text considered as an event that unfolds in time and space—a text embedded in life.

Attempts to extend syntax beyond the sentence, the study of the pragmatic aspects of speech, the definition of speech as a form of social action, the exploration of its subjective dimensions, and the integration of insights from the humanities have contributed to the formation and development of discourse theory and discourse knowledge since the 1960s.

The leading methodological approaches to discourse analysis were developed within the frameworks of the British-American and French scholarly traditions, which differ significantly from one another (Kuranova, 2023, p. 48):

(1) In terms of the type of discourse: the French tradition primarily examines

written institutional discourse, whereas the British-American tradition focuses on spoken, everyday colloquial language;

(2) In terms of objectives: the French tradition aims at textual analysis, wherein the research object is constructed, while the British-American tradition is communicatively oriented and describes the specifics of language use;

(3) In terms of methodology: French researchers draw on structuralist methodology, linguistics, and the historical analysis of documents; British-American scholars rely on principles of interactionism, psychology, and sociology;

(4) In terms of origin: the French school of analysis stems from linguistics, while the British-American tradition originates from anthropology.

Common to both approaches is going beyond the text, considering extralinguistic factors in the communication process, and focusing on the social aspects of language.

Discourse analysis is a broad interdisciplinary field that emerged from the synthesis of achievements and methods across various linguistic and social sciences. Its main developmental trend at the current stage is a generally interpretative orientation. The modern method of discourse analysis encompasses a variety of approaches, wherein ethnographic, sociological, and psychological aspects are correlated with linguistic ones.

The development of discourse analysis as a method was influenced by the research of representatives of the Prague Linguistic School, European traditions (particularly the structural anthropology of the French ethnographer and sociologist Claude Lévi-Strauss), and later by American structuralism. These scholars paid significant attention to analyzing the narrative structures of myths, as well as literary and everyday plots. The method of discourse analysis was also shaped by the cultural-anthropological theory of Bronisław

Malinowski, which, based on the study of "primitive" languages, demonstrated the relationship between language and culture as determined by the social and biological nature of humans, and drew attention to "the phatic form of behavior" (Malinowski, 1920, pp. 33–78). Malinowski was among the first to combine the study of speech communication with the methods of anthropological and ethnographic fieldwork. One should also note the influence of the ideas of the English psychologist Frederick Bartlett, who experimentally demonstrated that the "process of memorization is not reproductive, but constructive and is based on the creation of an internal image of the surrounding world" (Pléh, 2020, pp. 287–299). Such an image is now referred to as a cognitive schema, discourse topic, or cultural background.

The development of semiotics provided discourse analysis with a set of general principles and a universal metalanguage. Another important source of modern discourse analysis was phenomenological microsociology and the sociology of language, whose main representatives include Erving Goffman, Aron Cicourel, and Harold Garfinkel. The name of H. Garfinkel is associated with the ethnomethodological tradition in sociology (the analysis and interpretation of everyday communication), from which conversation analysis evolved — the study of the structures of everyday spoken communication and the interpretations underlying it (Garfinkel, 2022). This method was developed by the American scholar Harvey Sacks in the early 1960s at the University of California (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1987). He analyzed telephone calls to the Los Angeles suicide prevention center and proposed a hypothesis about the structural organization of ordinary conversations, which could be studied through repeated observation and listening to recorded episodes of natural speech communication. Over time, Sacks focused on the mechanisms and rules

governing changes in communicative roles and the features of "the linear structuring of conversation in the aspect of the social organization of interaction" (Sacks, 1984, pp. 21–27). Eventually, the volume of analyzed material expanded, a new method for its study was developed, and its theoretical foundations were refined. Conversation analysis is also associated with the names of Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 696–735), who investigated "the changes in communicative roles in dialogue" and broadened the scope and characteristics of empirical material.

Since the 1960s, the development of discourse analysis has also been influenced by sociolinguistics, which has paid significant attention to the phenomena of linguistic variability caused by social factors. William Labov's works on the analysis of language functioning in real-life contexts contributed to a broader interest in different types of discourse (Labov, 1972): communication between a teacher and a student, a parent and a child, friends, a doctor and a patient, participants in a court hearing, a journalistic interview, etc.

The Birmingham School made a significant contribution to the development of the theory and practice of discourse analysis. Its "model of discourse analysis" is exemplified by the project *The English Used by Teachers and Pupils* (September 1970 – August 1972) (Kuranova, 2023, p. 50). The authors of the project studied the speech interaction of students and teachers during lessons and sought to answer the following questions: how are statements connected in the flow of speech; who controls the flow of communication and how; how do the roles of speaker and listener alternate; how are new topics introduced and previous ones concluded; and what kind of data can be used to demonstrate the existence of units larger than utterances. The school lesson was effective language material because it is free from the chaos and spontaneity of everyday spoken language, which made it easier to isolate the structural units of discourse.

Equally important for the development of discourse analysis were the works on analytical philosophy, which later evolved into the theory of speech acts, as well as into concepts such as the "logic of speech communication" and "rhetorical pragmatics." The conceptual structure of the pragmatic theory of language, which correlates linguistic objects with social actions, was established.

Thus, discourse is currently studied within the framework of logical-pragmatic theory of communication, conversation analysis, text linguistics, linguistic discourse analysis, discourse grammar, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic analysis of variation, ethnography of communication, etc. This variety of approaches accounts for the differences in types, styles, and methods of conducting discourse analysis. According to T. van Dijk (Dijk, 1997), "there are twelve dominant principles of discourse analysis (currently prevailing principles), each of which focuses on one or another concept: naturally occurring text and talk, contexts, discourse as talk, discourse as social practice of members, members' categories, sequentiality, constructivity, levels and dimensions, meaning and function, rules, strategies, social cognition" (pp. 29–31).

A brief description of each of the principles is given in Table 1.

In this article, we focus primarily on three principles: *Sequentiality, Constructivity,* and *Strategies.* This is because the focus of attention, as noted above, was the narrative structure of the discourse of the 2024 election campaign, which we characterize as a macro-speech event; in addition, we studied the strategies used by the participants in the race. To analyze these strategies, we applied the approaches outlined in the article by O. Zernetska and P. Zernetskyi, *"PR-Manipulative Influence. Communicative Theory and Practice"* (Zernetska

Table 1

Description of Discourse Principles

Naturally Occurring Text and Talk	Data are not edited, but studied 'as is'
Contexts	Discourse is studied as a constitutive part of its local and global, social and cultural contexts
Discourse as Talk	Analysis of ongoing verbal interaction in informal conversations as well as more formal or institutional dialogues
Discourse as Social Practice of Members	Language users are engaged in discourse not merely as individual persons, but also as members of various groups, institutions, or cultures
Members' Categories	The ways in which social members themselves interpret
Sequentiality	At all levels structural units should be described or interpreted relative to preceding ones; later elements may have special functions with respect to previous ones
Constructivity	Constitutive units may be functionally used, understood, or analyzed as elements of larger ones, thus also creating hierarchical structures
Levels and Dimensions	Different levels represent different types of phenomena involved in discourse, such as sounds, forms, meanings, or action. Language users strategically manage several levels or dimensions of discourse at the same time
Meaning and Function	What does this mean here? How does this make sense in the present context? Why is this being said/meant here?
Rules	Language, communication, and discourse are assumed to be rule-governed. At the same time, the study of actual discourse focuses on how rules may be violated, ignored, or changed
Strategies	Besides rules, language users also know and apply expedient mental and interactional strategies for the effective understanding and accomplishment of discourse and the realization of their communicative and social goals
Social Cognition	Mental processes and representations in the production and understanding of text and talk

& Zernetskyi, 2003). According to the authors' approach, political speech activity, in terms of content and means of expression, can be described as a complex, multi-level structure. In general, the semantic structure of political speech activity consists of four main macro-levels of organization: 1) macro-intention (general communicative intention), 2) stereotypes (schemes) of thinking, 3) strategies, and 4) tactics and methods of influencing the addressee of the discourse. Within this structure, various types of manipulation, implemented at all of the above-mentioned levels, occupy a significant place.

Macro-intentions organize and unify the entire individual discourse or a sequence of discourses, such as a political campaign. For example, the macro-intention of an election campaign is to achieve victory over an opponent.

People develop stereotypes (schemes) through personal experience or abstract processes of thinking. These categories can expand or be refined in accordance with changes in the direct or indirect experience of the individual. Stereotypes (schemes) of thinking are reflected in the basic themes of discourses; while they acquire new factual content each time, their semantic structure remains unchanged. Such schemes are embodied in the narratives of the corresponding political discourses. Thus, P. Zernetskyi and O. Zernetska identify "five statements that form the narratives of political discourse"

(Zernetska & Zernetskyi, 2003, p. 102): (1) who or what is the cause of the problem; (2) characteristics of political institutions; (3) the role of individuals; (4) cultural values; and (5) humanistic interests and values.

Strategies belong to the level of discourse organization, while tactics and techniques correspond to the elementary level. In general, the authors divide strategies into *relational* and *thematic*. *Relational* strategies determine the place of the corresponding speech acts in the discourse: they can be initial or responsive. *Thematic* strategies define the content of the discourse. Both relational and thematic strategies are strategies of direct action.

The list of the above-mentioned strategies is provided in Table 2.

Indirect action strategies are also characterized as information substitution strategies. We present a list of them in Table 3.

Tactics and methods of influencing the addressee are presented in Table 4.

Table 2

Direct Action Strategies

Direct action strategies			
Relational strategies		Thematic strategies	
Initial	In response	Positional	Confrontational
Attack	Protection	Creating "staged events"	Criticism of opponents' activities
Selling	Disregard	Creating pseudo-events	Offensive position in polemics
	"me too… I'm better"	Appointment to state or intra-party positions	Calls for positive change
		Creation of special units to investigate acute social problems	Emphasized optimism
		Distribution of state or public profits	Speech in defense of traditional values
		Conducting negotiations or consultations with world leaders	Centrist image
		Manipulation of socio-economic problems	Delegating criticism to distance oneself from demagogic rhetoric
		Expressions of support from authoritative leaders or appeals to influential international organizations	
		Exaggerating one's own successes or criticizing others	
		Position "above the fray"	
		Surrogate political campaigning	
		Blowing up a foreign policy issue to the scale of an international crisis	
		Attracting opponents or wavering supporters in regions where a politician lacks a small number of votes to win	

Table 3

Strategies of Indirect Action (Strategies of Information Substitution)

"To decorate a dry tree with artificial flowers" – using someone else's authority

"Bringing to the point of absurdity" – exaggerating negative information to such an extent that it is no longer perceived as negative

Beranger – neutralization of the effect of a resonant event

"Supporting a weak leader" – finding a weak leader among the opponent's team and promoting this individual in the political arena

"Transfer of neglect" – drawing attention to the unfortunate aspects of a political competitor's behavior, statements, and gestures

"Stealing the result" – minimizing the effect of an action beneficial to a political competitor's image by portraying it as trivial, or by performing one's own action simultaneously with, or immediately after, a competitor's action

Table 4

Tactics and Techniques for Influencing the Recipient

Suggestion techniques	Persuasion techniques
Firm statements presented as facts	Selection and conventional presentation of exclusively positive or negative facts
Handling comparative materials	Presenting statements or questions designed to provoke an emotional reaction from the object of persuasion
Selection of facts, strengthening and weakening of statements	Use of offensive epithets and metaphors
Fragmentation and urgency of material transmission	Exploitation of concepts and sentiments sacred to the people
Balancing of positive and negative evaluations	Substitution of values
Multiple repetition of the informational message conveyed	Exploitation of the opinions and views of authoritative figures
Demonstration of active defense of the recipient's interests	Selection of phrases that demand identical behavior and create the impression that "everyone does it"
Subliminal presentation of information	Creating the illusion of independent choice
Choosing the moment for information delivery	Suppression
Unification of material supply	Half-truth
Direct appeal to the audience's feelings	Caricature
Creation of a memorable slogan	A blatant lie
Calls for reconciliation between parties, creating the image of a peacemaker	Hint
Bluffing	Substituting rational-logical approaches and judgments with emotional statements aimed at creating negative stereotypes
	References to past successes and justifications for actions
	Intimidation
	Metacommunication – direct naming and positive characterization of an ally's actions

The hierarchy of presidential campaign discourse organization

We consider the macro-intention of the 2024 presidential campaign to be shared by both candidates – namely, the goal of defeating the opponent. At the same time, we observe that the verbalization of this macro-intention is expressed in different ways: for Donald Trump, it is the restoration of the lost greatness of the USA (*Make America Great Again*); for Kamala Harris, it is the irreversibility of forward movement and progress (*We are not going back*). We note the divergent vectors of the candidates' verbalized macro-intentions – a return to the best aspects of the past versus a movement toward a better future.

In the discourse of the 2024 presidential campaign, statements that shaped the respective narratives were identified. In particular, three types of statements were recorded in Donald Trump's campaign: 1) identifying who or what is the cause of the problem; 2) characterizing political institutions; and 3) highlighting the role of individuals. Statements about the causes of problems form a narrative of accusation, which develops according to a cause-and-effect logic. Donald Trump blames his opponents, primarily Joe Biden, as well as Barack Obama. After Joe Biden dropped out of the race, the focus shifted to Kamala Harris, who was portrayed as the cause of ongoing problems, with the Democratic nominee being framed as Biden's "double." In his accusations, Donald Trump consistently used the names *Joe* and *Kamala* together.

The characterization of political institutions was presented mainly in a negative light, reinforcing the statement about who or what caused specific problems.

The statement concerning the role of individuals was formulated in multi-vector narratives – with a positive evaluation of Trump himself and a negative one of his opponents.

Within the framework of the schemes embodied in the aforementioned narratives and statements, several topics were emphasized in Donald Trump's election campaign: tariffs, the economy, inflation, illegal immigration, previous experience, courage and consistency, environmental protection, Elon Musk, and foreign policy. The topic of previous experience, courage, and consistency was presented in a personal dimension. For example, in an interview with Elon Musk on the social network *X* (Donald J. Trump, 2024), Trump speaks about surviving an assassination attempt and expresses gratitude to his supporters. The topics of tariffs, economy, inflation, and illegal immigration were addressed through cause-and-effect reasoning, combining a positive self-assessment with a negative assessment of Joe Biden's administration. The topic of Elon Musk was incorporated into statements concerning the role of individuals and was also associated with economic development and advanced technologies. A key feature of most propositions was the use of evaluative language, incorporating terms such as *beautiful*, *wonderful*, *nice*, *incredible*, *terrible*, *disgusting*, *nasty*, etc.

Overall, the discourse of Donald Trump's election campaign employed a relatively limited set of recurrent propositions, which nonetheless allowed for the formulation of strategies differing in content and direction. Thus, in his victory speech following the election, Trump verbalized the following types of propositions: *This will truly be the Golden Age of America*; *I will fight for you, for your family, and your future every single day*; *Together we can truly **make America great again for all Americans***; *We are going to start by all putting **America first***; *We are going to make our country better than it ever has been*.

Kamala Harris's campaign featured the use of the following types of statements: 1) the role of individuals; and 2) humanistic interests and values. Kamala Harris negatively characterized

Donald Trump, but unlike her opponent, she shared "positive stories" about important people in her life – her mother, friends, husband, nieces, etc. For example, on *The View* TV program (*The View*, 2024), the Democratic candidate spoke about her mother, the difficult path she had to go through, and her illness. Kamala also talked about how she typically spends weekends with her grandnieces and her husband's children. This narrative can be seen as an implicit response to J. D. Vance's comment about *Childless Cat Ladies* who are "miserable in their own lives."

The statement about humanistic interests and values follows a linear sequence with the statement about individuals. Often, these statements are connected through semantic relations of part and whole. For example, Kamala Harris constructed a narrative about equal opportunities and a dignified life for ordinary people by telling the stories of those who influenced her development as an individual.

Within the framework of the schemes embodied in the above narratives and statements, several topics are highlighted in Kamala Harris's election campaign: *women's rights, rights and equal opportunities for all, opportunities for ordinary Americans, civil rights, small businesses, country before party, and the economy.*

Among the direct-action strategies in Donald Trump's campaign, several relational ones are distinguished: initial (attack) and responsive (defense). Within the framework of a single speech event (for example, a rally speech or a debate), Trump alternated between these strategies, moving from defense to attack and vice versa. The defense strategy mainly addressed responses to criminal charges and criticism of his activities during the previous term in office. Using this strategy, Donald Trump positioned himself as a victim of the system and left-wing politicians, as a defender of traditional values who had been unfairly

treated. From this defensive stance, he shifted to accusing his opponents — Joe Biden, and later Kamala Harris. Thus, the semantic component of opposition and contrast according to the principle of *I – They*, and for Trump's followers — *MAGA – Others*, can be traced. Donald Trump did not employ the strategies of selling or ignoring, as these imply a degree of neutrality and objective presentation of arguments. In general, he does not tend to use the strategy "me too… I'm better," which involves some acknowledgment of the opponent's successful arguments and incorporating them into his own rhetoric. This strategy is found only in combination with specific thematic strategies; examples of such combinations are provided below.

In Kamala Harris's campaign, we also observe relational strategies of attack and defense. Accusations against opponents, primarily Donald Trump, are accompanied by moral judgments of his actions. For example, in the program *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert, Kamala Harris speaks about the crude cynicism of Donald Trump, who is spreading misinformation about FEMA's response as the potentially catastrophic Hurricane Milton approaches landfall in Florida. "*Have You No Empathy, Man?*" – she asks her opponent (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 2024). The attack strategy in Kamala Harris's speeches and corresponding social media posts was verbalized through propositions such as Donald Trump is unfit for the Office and The American People Need to Turn the Page. The semantic component of opposition follows the model of "old – new," or "old – movement towards the better." The defense strategy primarily focused on justifying the policies of the then-current administration, as well as on attempts to differentiate her image from that of Joe Biden ("*I'm not Joe Biden*"). We also consider the implementation of certain actions as a form of response strategy: for instance, in reaction to the claim that Harris is a poor speaker and

afraid to answer questions, she participated in a series of interviews with various journalists — for example, *60 Minutes* (*60 Minutes*, 2024), a special interview for *Fox News* (*Fox News*, 2024), and participation in the *Call Her Daddy* program (*Call Her Daddy*, 2024), among others.

Thematic strategies, both in their positional and confrontational subtypes, are much more widely represented in the 2024 election campaign. For example, Donald Trump employed such thematic positional strategies.

Creation of "staged events." These include, for example, Donald Trump's appearance as *Garbage Man* in Wisconsin. "*How Do You Like My Garbage Truck? This Truck is in Honor of Kamala and Joe Biden*" ," he told reporters (Donald J. Trump, 2024). This strategy was also a response to Joe Biden's speech, in which the word *garbage* was used in reference to Trump's supporters. Thus, we observe the intersection of thematic strategies with relational (attack) strategies, as well as positional with confrontational strategies, since Trump's primary goal was precisely to criticize the actions of his opponents. Another example of a "staged event" was video footage from Pennsylvania, where Trump "worked" for a day at McDonald's (@globalnews, 2024; @AssociatedPress, 2024). The choice of the date and location of this event is also noteworthy – Kamala Harris's sixtieth birthday. (*"I'll get her a McDonald's hamburger,"* Trump said, wishing Harris a happy birthday from the drive-thru window.) Harris had previously mentioned in her speeches that she worked at McDonald's in her youth. Here, we again observe the intersection of relational (attack and partly "me too… I'm better") and thematic, positional, and confrontational strategies. As noted above, the "me too… I'm better" strategy was not typical of the 2024 campaign overall. However, it was implemented here using caricature techniques. Trump claimed, "*I've now worked for 15 minutes more than Kamala,*" as a jab at Vice President Kamala Harris's statement about

working at McDonald's during her college years.

Creation of pseudo-events. These included, for example, the release of the book *Melania* in the fall of 2024, shortly before the elections. In this book, Melania Trump shared her experience of staying in the White House during her husband's first term, discussed her childhood in Slovenia, her modeling career, and her relationship with Donald Trump. This pseudo-event gave rise to several other events, such as interviews, television appearances, and more (Marc Beckman, 2024; Donald J. Trump, 2024; Fox News, 2024; Donald J. Trump, 2024). It is noteworthy that this thematic positional strategy also partially intersects with the relational "me too… I'm better" strategy, since Melania supports women's rights to abortion, disagrees with Donald Trump's migration policy in certain respects, and thus borrows certain narratives from Kamala Harris's election campaign.

The strategy of appointing state or intra-party positions was less prominent during the election campaign. However, the media discussed the hypothetical participation of figures such as Elon Musk, J. D. Vance, and Robert Kennedy Jr. in the future government. The strategy of creating special units to study acute social problems was closely associated with Elon Musk's personality. In this way, Donald Trump sought to maintain the reputation of a figure who understands the urgent social concerns of voters and actively seeks solutions. Initially, the emphasis was placed on unnecessary government spending and the need to conduct a kind of audit, which could be entrusted to Musk. This strategy was linearly combined with another – the strategy of distributing state or social benefits. Within this framework, Donald Trump repeatedly accused the Biden administration of wasteful spending, especially concerning aid to Ukraine. In sequence with these two strategies, another emerged – the manipulation of socio-economic

problems. This was applied mainly to topics related to the economy, inflation, and illegal immigration. Narratives about illegal immigrants were particularly intense, often accompanied by stories about rising crime rates and threats to the security of U.S. citizens.

The results of the study indicate that Donald Trump's election campaign used a strategy of seeking support from world leaders. As part of this strategy, foreign politicians such as Andrzej Duda, Viktor Orbán, Boris Johnson, and Volodymyr Zelenskyi visited Trump's residence. At the same time, Trump himself defined the authority of these leaders and provided evaluative comments. For example, he described Viktor Orbán, who visited him at Mar-a-Lago, as a fantastic and decisive leader. Alongside this strategy was another – inflating foreign policy issues to the level of an international crisis. It should be noted that some of these issues, such as the war in Ukraine or the situation in Israel, can indeed be characterized as international crises. However, a distinctive feature of Trump's use of this strategy was his emphasis on his personal role as a strong leader capable of stopping wars and restoring peace. Trump repeatedly emphasized that no wars occurred during his presidency.

Among other thematic positional strategies, Donald Trump and his campaign team employed the strategy of exaggerating their own successes while criticizing others. This strategy was the most frequently used, as nearly all speeches, interviews, and social media posts referenced achievements during his previous presidency that were "lost" under Biden's leadership. This strategy was combined with a confrontational thematic strategy focused on criticizing opponents' actions. Its implementation was accompanied by evaluative statements such as "low IQ," accusations of corruption, lack of intelligence, and similar claims.

Among the confrontational thematic strategies, we highlight the use of an offensive stance in polemics, which was most effectively demonstrated during the debates with Joe Biden (The Wall Street Journal, 2024). This strategy involves actively attacking a political opponent by expressing disagreement, asking provocative questions, making value judgments, and using incriminating epithets. During the debate with Joe Biden, Donald Trump characterized his opponent as follows: *the worst President in the history of our country; the worst commander-in-chief; the worst administration in the history; he is absolutely criminal,* etc. (The Wall Street Journal, 2024). Trump accused Biden of opening the borders to terrorists, destroying Medicare, and described the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan as "*the most embarrassing day in the history of our country.*"

Donald Trump's 2024 presidential campaign included elements that aligned with traditional values, particularly in cultural and social issues. Among them, we highlight in particular: family and gender issues, education and cultural preservation, and religious and moral appeals. For example, Trump emphasized the promotion of the nuclear family and traditional gender roles. For instance, he pledged to promote *positive education about the nuclear family, the roles of mothers and fathers, and celebrating rather than erasing the things that make men and women different and unique* (Trump, n.d.). He also vowed to issue an executive order to end what he described as *transgender lunacy* in American institutions, indicating opposition to progressive gender identity policies that resonate with traditionalist views. His campaign promised to protect women's sports by excluding men from participation and to initiate civil rights investigations into school districts practicing race-based discrimination, aligning with conservative critiques of progressive social policies (Trump, n.d.). Trump proposed cutting federal funding for schools that promote Critical Race Theory or gender ideology, framing these as threats to traditional American values. He also advocated for a Parental Bill of

Rights and the direct election of school principals by parents, emphasizing local control and the traditional family's influence on education (Trump, n.d.). While not consistently running on an explicitly Christian platform, Trump occasionally referenced God and Christian morals, appealing to religious voters. His campaign was seen as endearing him to the traditional family unit and Christian communities, particularly through his opposition to progressive gender policies. Some Christian supporters even characterized Trump as chosen by God. The Republican candidate appealed to such beliefs; for example, on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, he shared a video titled *God made the Trump* (The Independent, 2024).

According to the results of the study, we identify several thematic strategies in Kamala Harris's campaign, among which the positional ones are represented by a much shorter list compared to those of Donald Trump. These include the exaggeration of her own successes and criticism of her opponents. Kamala Harris mainly emphasized the achievements of Joe Biden's administration in the economy, called for the preservation of these accomplishments, and criticized her opponent for interfering in the personal lives of Americans, such as by restricting women's right to abortion. The positional thematic strategy of attracting undecided voters or those previously opposed was also actively employed. To this end, the campaign involved Republican figures who had opposed Donald Trump. Republican Liz Cheney played an active role in Kamala Harris's election campaign (VP Kamala Harris, 2024). We also consider support for certain accounts on the X platform, such as *Republicans against Trump* (@RpsAgainstTrump), to be part of this strategy. This account was created by *Defending Democracy Together*, an organization founded in May 2020 as part of a political initiative called the *Republican Accountability Project* (formerly known as *Republican Voters*

Against Trump). Their mission was to defend democratic principles and criticize members of the Republican Party who were responsible for the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Among the confrontational thematic strategies used in Kamala Harris's campaign were the following: Criticism of the opponent's activities — this was aimed at raising doubts among voters about Donald Trump's capabilities. Emphasis was placed on his perceived inadequacy in terms of moral character, intelligence, and age for holding the office of president. For example, Kamala Harris made several pointed remarks about Donald Trump's age and fitness for office during the 2024 presidential campaign. In October 2024, Harris questioned Trump's stamina after reports emerged that he had canceled several media interviews due to exhaustion. She said: *"If he can't handle the rigors of the campaign trail, is he fit to do the job?"* (Meyers, 2024).

Around her 60th birthday, Harris gave a speech at a church in Georgia where she did not mention Trump by name but alluded to his age and behavior. Drawing on the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke, the vice president argued for policies rooted in compassion. She asked: *"What kind of country do we want to live in – a country of chaos, fear and hate, or a country of freedom, compassion and justice?"* (Chidi, 2024). These comments were part of a broader strategy to portray Trump, then 78, as out of touch and physically unfit for another term, particularly given his avoidance of debates and erratic public appearances.

An offensive position in the polemic was employed during the debates with Donald Trump, which took place on September 11, 2024, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (The Wall Street Journal, 2024).

Kamala Harris's campaign also incorporated strategies centered on calls for positive change and emphasized optimism. This primarily focused on addressing pressing issues such as

healthcare, caregiving for ill relatives, and the development of small businesses.

During the election campaign, Kamala Harris also used the strategy of indirect action, namely – "*decorate a dry tree with artificial flowers.*" We interpret this as the participation of Barack Obama and Michelle Obama in several of Kamala Harris's rallies (FOX 5 Atlanta, 2024; MSNBC, 2024).

The election campaigns of both candidates were accompanied by active support from individuals and groups on social media platforms, particularly X. In general, we interpret this strategy as a delegation of criticism to distance the candidates from demagogic rhetoric. Moreover, as part of this approach, family members were involved in both campaigns, including Trump's eldest son (*@DonaldJTrumpJR*), his wife Melania, Kamala Harris's husband Doug Emhoff (*@DouglasEmhoff*), and public figures affiliated with their campaign teams, such as Elon Musk.

Both candidates utilized a strategy of indirect action referred to as "*stealing the result,*" which involves attempts to minimize the impact of a politically advantageous event organized by an opponent, or to schedule a competing event simultaneously or shortly thereafter to divert public attention. For instance, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris held rallies only four days apart in the same arena in Atlanta, Georgia. Although not simultaneous, the proximity in time and location allowed the events to be perceived as competitive, underscoring the sharp contrast between their political bases and campaign messaging (Barrow, 2024).

Donald Trump employed this strategy when he sharply criticized Vice President Kamala Harris following her surprise appearance on *Saturday Night Live* just days before the 2024 U.S. presidential election (Saturday Night Live, 2024). His campaign accused Harris of "*cosplaying with her elitist friends*" and claimed she had "*nothing significant to offer*" Americans, portraying her appearance as a distraction from what they characterized as a failing campaign (Kukreti, 2024).

Trump's team also condemned what they referred to as a *fake accent* used by Harris during the sketch, which sparked backlash online. Critics accused her of pandering and employing a *blaccent*—a term often used to describe the appropriation of African American Vernacular English by non-Black individuals (Kukreti, 2024).

This strategy was also evident during campaign rallies and in public remarks from each campaign regarding the turnout at their opponent's events. Several of Kamala Harris's statements mocked the size and atmosphere of Donald Trump's rallies. During a presidential debate, Harris said: "*Attendees often leave early out of exhaustion and boredom*" (The Wall Street Journal, 2024). She criticized Trump for focusing on bizarre topics, including fictional characters and conspiracy theories, adding: "*You will not hear him talk about your needs, your dreams, and your desires*" (Shalvey, 2024).

In October 2024, Harris's campaign posted a split-screen video on Truth Social that juxtaposed Trump's boastful remarks about crowd size with a wide shot of a half-empty gymnasium at his Michigan rally. The caption read: "*@realDonaldTrump's lies vs. reality*" (Taheri, 2024).

In an MSNBC interview, Harris made a veiled remark about offering union members *something more*, implying that Trump's rallies lacked substance and energy (Stopera, 2024).

Within the framework of the above strategies, Donald Trump employed various techniques of suggestion and persuasion, including: assertive statements presented as fact; repeated dissemination of suggestive messages; portraying himself as an active defender of the target audience's interests; subliminal messaging; emotional appeals; use of memorable slogans (*Make America Great Again*; *Too Big to Rig*); projecting the image of a

peacemaker; emotionally charged questions or statements (*Vote! Vote! Vote!*); use of derogatory epithets and metaphors (*Crook Joe*, *Lying Kamala*); dissemination of half-truths; caricatures; outright falsehoods; and substituting rational-logical arguments with emotional declarations to foster negative stereotypes.

Kamala Harris applied the following techniques of suggestion and persuasion: assertive statements presented as fact; use of comparative materials; repeated messaging; portraying herself as an active defender of the audience's interests; strategic timing in the presentation of information; direct emotional appeals; use of memorable and frequently repeated campaign slogans (*We are not going back; Let's win this!*); hints; creating the illusion of independent choice; referencing past successes; employing intimidation (primarily regarding the consequences of choosing her opponent); and *metacommunication* techniques, including the positive portrayal of Joe Biden.

Conclusion

Thus, the article provides an in-depth analysis of the discourse landscape of the 2024 U.S. presidential election campaign. We applied a communicative-cognitive, multi-aspect model of discourse analysis, which emphasized a comprehensive examination of the two primary functions of language — communicative and cognitive. The focus of attention was on three main principles of discourse analysis: Sequentiality, Constructivity, Strategies. This model primarily concentrated on the semantic structure of discourse, enabling the identification of major narratives and key propositions within the campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. A novel feature of this study was the use of Microsoft Copilot — a conversational AI developed based on the GPT-4 architecture — to examine relevant speech events, identify key

themes and tonalities, and classify strategies for influencing audiences.

We defined the discourse of the 2024 election campaign as a macro-speech event and investigated the strategies employed by the candidates. The analysis of strategies, tactics, and techniques used in the campaign enabled a multi-level study that considered their hierarchical organization. The semantic structure of political speech activity is characterized by four principal macro-levels of organization: (1) macro-intentions; (2) thinking stereotypes (schemata); (3) strategies; (4) tactics and techniques aimed at influencing the addressee of the discourse. The features of the verbalization of macro-intentions by the U.S. presidential candidates were clarified: Donald Trump predominantly emphasized the restoration of America's past greatness (*Make America Great Again*), while Kamala Harris focused on the irreversibility of progress (*We are not going back*). The verbalized macro-intentions of both candidates are characterized as multi-vectoral.

The discourse of the 2024 presidential campaign revealed statements that shaped its core narratives. Donald Trump's campaign was characterized by three types of statements: (1) identifying who or what is responsible for current problems; (2) evaluations of political institutions; and (3) the role of individuals. Statements regarding the causes of societal problems formed a narrative of blame, structured according to a cause-and-effect logic. Within the frameworks of these narratives and corresponding statements, several prominent themes emerged in Trump's campaign: tariffs, the economy, inflation, illegal immigration, previous leadership experience, courage and consistency, environmental protection, Elon Musk, and foreign policy. Trump relied on a limited set of repeated propositions, which, nevertheless, generated a wide variety of strategies differing in content and direction.

Kamala Harris's campaign employed two main categories of statements: (1) the role of individuals; and (2) humanistic interests and values. A dominant narrative emerged that could be characterized as a "positive story" centered on issues significant to the Democratic candidate. Within the frameworks of the narratives and statements, Harris addressed several key themes: women's rights, equality of opportunity, support for ordinary Americans, civil rights, small businesses, prioritizing the country over party, and the economy.

The study resulted in a detailed description of the various types of strategies used by the candidates — relational, thematic, and informational substitution (indirect action). Notably, Donald Trump's campaign deployed a significantly larger number of thematic strategies than Harris's. Trump's campaign was marked by attack, defense, and self-promotion strategies, with frequent overlap among them — for instance, thematic strategies intersecting with relational (attack) and positional with confrontational ones. Kamala Harris's campaign was distinguished by strategies of self-promotion, critique of opponents, and a positional thematic strategy aimed at attracting undecided voters and opponents — metaphorically described as "decorating a dry tree with artificial flowers." Both candidates employed the strategy of delegating criticism as a means to distance themselves from overt demagoguery. This was primarily executed through the use of social media support groups and techniques such as "stealing the result."

Further research of this kind opens new avenues for the application of discourse analysis, enriches methodologies in political linguistics, and reveals mechanisms behind the formation of public opinion and audience influence.

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Анотація

Статтю присвячено дискурс-картині президентської кампанії 2024 р. у США. Дослідження, здійснене в рамках трикутника «дискурс – пізнання – суспільство», базується переважно на трьох принципах дискурс-аналізу – послідовності, конструктивності, стратегіях. Запропоновано комунікативно-когнітивну модель дискурс-аналізу, яка зосереджена передусім на наративній структурі дискурсу як макромовленнєвої події. За такого підходу дискурс президентської кампанії 2024 р. у США досліджується як цикл історій, пов'язаних однією «сюжетною лінією». Ці історії об'єднують повторювані речення, серед яких виділено кілька ключових. Були досліджені та описані основні стратегії формування громадської думки, засоби лінгвістичного впливу на аудиторію, які використовували Дональд Трамп і Камала Гарріс. Увагу було зосереджено на мовленнєвій діяльності кандидатів у президенти та її семантичній структурі. Досліджено чотири рівні організації семантичної структури дискурсу президентської кампанії: загальний комунікативний намір, стереотипи мислення, стратегії, тактики та методи впливу на адресата. Схарактеризовано та визначено спільні та відмінні риси формування наративів і стратегій учасниками виборчої кампанії. Дослідження такого штибу відкривають нові підходи у застосуванні дискурс-аналізу в політичній лінгвістиці та можуть бути корисними для вивчення механізмів формування громадської думки і впливу на аудиторію.

Ключові слова: дискурс, дискурс-аналіз, дискурс-лінгвістика, політичний дискурс, пізнання, стратегії, тактики, стереотипи, маніпуляції, політична лінгвістика.

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