

ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА /  
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**BORIS JOHNSON'S VS. DONALD TRUMP'S DISCOURSE FEATURES: SPEECHES OF TWO "TRICKSTERS"**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The article gives a comparative characteristic of the speeches of two political figures, which, according to their linguistic characteristics, can be attributed to the linguistic-psychological type "trickster".

The relevance of the research topic of this study is that the "trickster" as a linguistic personality is insufficiently represented in the linguistic literature.

In order to determine the specific distinctive characteristics of the trickster in political discourse, content analysis was applied, which made it possible to penetrate deep into this linguistic phenomenon and describe it in detail. This article outlines the features of the "trickster" peculiar to each politician separately, the peculiarities of their behavior and speech, based on their individual cultural and educational origins. Also, a comparative analysis of the speech behavior of these politicians is carried out, which reveals the general patterns of their speeches' construction.

**Keywords:** political discourse, linguopsychological type "trickster", the "trickster" archetype, speech characteristics.

**ОСОБЕННОСТИ ДИСКУРСА БОРИСА ДЖОНСОНА И ДОНАЛЬДА ТРАМПА: РЕЧИ ДВУХ «ТРИКСТЕРОВ»**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

В статье дается сравнительная характеристика выступлений двух политических деятелей, которые по своим лингвистическим характеристикам могут быть отнесены к лингвopsихологическому типу «трикстер».

Актуальность темы данного исследования заключается в том, что «трикстер» как лингвистическая личность недостаточно представлен в языковедческой литературе.

Для определения конкретных отличительных особенностей трикстера в политическом дискурсе был применен контент-анализ, который позволил глубоко проникнуть в этот лингвистический феномен и подробно его описать. В данной статье описываются черты «трикстера», присущие каждому политику в частности, особенности их поведения и речи, исходя из их индивидуального культурного происхождения и образования. Также проводится сравнительный анализ речевого поведения данных политиков, который выявляет общие закономерности построения их речей.

**Ключевые слова:** политический дискурс, лингвopsихологический тип «трикстер», архетип «трикстер», речевые характеристики.

**Introduction**

This article is devoted to the analysis of the individual speech characteristics of the two political leaders, allowing them to be attributed to the linguopsychological type correlated with the trickster. The relevance of this study is determined by the lack of knowledge and description of such a phenomenon as trickster, in the meaning of "linguopsychological type".

As an object of research, political leaders are considered as public persons whose deeds and speeches are publicly available for their scientific interpretation, but whose linguistic personality has not yet been deeply examined, in particular, with an attempt to realize the peculiarities of their worldview and self-awareness as individuals. The analysis was carried out on the material of such a genre of political discourse indicative of the characteristics of a politician's linguistic personality as public speeches of political leaders, the interest in which from researchers of political discourse and media discourse remains even taking into account the fact that both of them are officially retired at the time of publication of the article.

The main task of this study is to analyze and describe the behavioral and speech characteristics of these political leaders, as well as the language means in the idiolect of each of them, which allow us to attribute these two characters to the linguistic and psychological type of trickster. The main method of research is content analysis, which makes it possible to penetrate into the essence of the linguistic phenomenon, to identify the distinctive, essential characteristics of the object of research, to compare the speech and behavioral characteristics of political leaders, as well as to show their difference, taking into account different factors of their biography.

Before presenting a linguistic analysis, it is necessary to focus on the concept of "trickster". The term is formed by attaching to the base of the noun trick (unexpected course of speech or actions) and the suffix "ster", which usually contains a negative assessment. According to the Online encyclopedia "Krugosvet", the trickster is characterized by cunning, cruelty, rudeness, guile, the ability to transform or reincarnate [1].

## Research methods and principles

In the course of the study, the macro- and microstructure of speech features of former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Boris Johnson and former President of the United States of America Donald Trump, i.e. top politicians of the main English-speaking countries, were subjected to a comprehensive analysis. The transcript was used as the research material: 'Fox News Sunday' interview with President Trump, July 19, 2020; transcript of AP interview with Trump, 24 April 2017; PM speech in Greenwich: Prime Minister Boris Johnson's speech in Greenwich, 3 February 2020.

In the study were used the fundamentals of analytical psychology of C.G. Jung, which consist in the fact that mental structures (archetypes) are present in every person. Trickster is a collective personification, a reflection of empirical psychology, psychology, one of the archetypal structures of the psyche [2].

The theory of the structure of rhetoric has received the greatest recognition in linguistic studies of discourse and has been used in this work. Its creators are considered to be American researchers in the field of computational linguistics, William C. Mann and Sandra A. Thompson [3]. The essence of this theory lies in the fact that discourse is further divided into indivisible predicatively combined sets of words and phrases, called "elementary discursive units". These elements are united by connections that have a complex semantic and structural nature and are divided into two groups: symmetrical and asymmetric. Symmetrical discursive connections in language correspond to a certain extent to compositional connections. They include three types of connections – sequence "I saw and told everything", opposition "I knew, but you didn't", conjunction, and the asymmetric ones have more than 20 names, among which the main ones are motivation "I came to warn you", concession "even though I know, but I won't say" and others.

This type of segmentation of parts of discourse is effective not only for describing the characteristics of a linguistic personality of a certain type, but also for axiological analysis of the content that this type wants to convey in his speech. The analysis of individual speech deviations from a certain standard that exists for speeches of a certain genre is also carried out, since they can bring important data to the characteristics of a linguistic personality.

## Discussion

However, the concept of "trickster" can be a more complex concept than just a buffoon. The image of the "trickster" is widely represented in artistic literature. In a veiled form, the image of the trickster was already present in mythological literature, but there is no unambiguous point of view by its definition [4]. The monograph by N.V.Kovtun is devoted to the image of the "trickster" in modern Russian literature, in which the specifics of the functioning and attribution of the image of the trickster in the literature of the turn of the XX–XXI centuries are investigated [5]. The book emphasizes the life-affirming, vital potential of the image of a modern cheat, a trickster, reveals its inherent capabilities, means of awareness and representation of the tragic. A significant contribution to the study of the trickster archetype was made by Paul Radin, who studied the myths of the Indians of North America, highlighting such signs of a trickster as the playful nature of actions, the inability to fit into a certain framework, the introduction of chaos, hypersexuality, a tendency to transformation and transformation, the broadcast of any ideas, the presence of a humorous beginning [2]. In the afterword to this book "On the psychology of the trickster image", the founder of analytical psychology K.G. Jung notes that in every person there are mental structures – archetypes. Trickster is a collective personification, a reflection of empirical psychology, psychology, one of the archetypal structures of the psyche [2. P. 276]. K.K. Kerenyi in his comments emphasizes: "The figure of the Trickster is a timeless prototype, the root of all the roguish creatures of world literature, covering all times and cultures" [2, P. 245].

Over time, the idea of the trickster archetype undergoes transformation. So, N.G.Strukova, analyzing the behavior of the hero in the novel "How I Became an idiot" deliberately puts on the mask of a buffoon and uses flexible escape tactics, resisting the rigid rationality of bourgeois society. The setting of the empirical author is aimed at ridiculing unlimited consumption, ironic comprehension of the main provisions of post-industrial society [6].

Russian researcher D. A. Gavrillov identified the following signs of cheating: the trickster violates established foundations and traditions; the trickster is a provocateur and initiator of socio-cultural destruction and turning the course of life; the trickster is immoral from the point of view of society and a cultural hero, he is often not taken seriously, he is ridiculous and reckless; the trickster is talented and original, a jack-of-all-trades, excellent speaker; trickster – werewolf: he is a master of reincarnation both external and internal; the trickster does not evolve, his image is static, so he is not afraid of death and perceives life as a game [7, P. 152].

In this article, the trickster is considered as a "linguopsychological" type, in contrast to the "linguistic personality" and "linguocultural character". This term is far from ambiguous. It can be defined as a certain psychological, ideological and other individual characteristics of a set of personalities, a matrix of speech behavior [8]. In the study of the linguopsychological type, the speech works of the linguistic personality, real or fictional, which is the object of the study, are taken into account. This is how the term "linguopsychological type" differs from the term "linguocultural type", which has been thoroughly tested in the linguistic world, where not only the speech of the object of research itself is studied, but also statements about it from other persons.

"Trickster" is an archetype that can be represented in different types of discourse. Journalism, in particular political discourse, is no exception. Journalism, in particular political discourse, is no exception. First of all, the problem of its ontological status should be noted. On the one hand, it should certainly be attributed to institutional discourse, since the main topics and key concepts of politics involved clearly go beyond personal discourse. But, like other types of institutional discourse, political discourse bears the stamp of personal and thus personal attitude of people to politics, who discuss these issues not only in public places, but also in the circle of friends, family, etc. [9, P. 107]. However, many researchers note that by now there has not been an unambiguous scientific concept of political discourse as a phenomenon [10, P. 166].

## Main results

It seems more rational to start the consideration with the differences in the speech characteristics of both politicians. They are distinguished by a different level of education and culture, since B. Johnson received a deeper humanitarian education than Donald Trump, which affected their differences in the speech competence of their native language. The synonymous thesaurus of B. Johnson is much richer than the same indicator of D. Trump, the ratio is 52% : 48%. Johnson makes unprepared speeches freely, while Trump makes noticeable pauses in oral speech and fills in semantic gaps with discursive markers, which under certain conditions can be considered as parasitic words. The ratio between them is 54%: 46%.

Let's give as an example an excerpt from D. Trump's speech: "Of course, I've made changes, *you know*, at the top. I mean, we're going to have different *people* coming in, because we have our *people*. They have their *people*, and I have great respect for them. But if you read the *stories* — the various *stories*, there's *disputing* — I mean, they're *disputing*..." [11, P. 116-117].

It is possible to note other individual differences that did not receive special study during the study, since they were not included in the object of study (they were not characteristic features of the linguistic-psychological type of trickster), but which it seems necessary to highlight from the standpoint of comparative analysis of individual speech. Different levels of humanitarian training and different initial cultural level determine the features of the use and construction of syntactic structures. In Johnson's unprepared speech, about 55% are complex sentences and semi-predicative structures, while Trump's speech tends to use mostly simple sentences, and thus the percentage of complex syntactic constructions is reduced to 45%. Let's give an example from D. Trump's speech: "Well, if you look at the president of China, people said they've never seen anything like what's going on right now. I really liked him a lot. I think he liked me. We have a great chemistry together" [12, P. 147].

In addition, B. Johnson's general erudition seems to be quite broad, so in his speech he uses various allusions to well-known facts of history, literature and art 2-2.5 times more often than D. Trump. As an example, here is a paragraph from B. Johnson's speech: "The same applies even more emphatically to social policy — and here again I dispel the *absurd caricature* of Britain as a nation *bent on the slash and burn* of workers' rights and environmental protection, as if we are *saved from Dickensian squalor* only by *enlightened EU regulation*, as if it was only thanks to Brussels that we are not preparing to send children back up *chimneys*" [13, P. 201]. In this paragraph, the keywords are italicized units of evaluative content, pronounced in this case in an ironic sense with emphatic emphasis in the sounding speech. The abundance of these words is aimed at manipulating the consciousness of listeners, who, having heard them in such numbers during a small segment of speech delivered in a confident voice, will inevitably accept this assessment as beyond doubt. But to enhance this effect, Johnson uses one of his favorite techniques — allusion (as if we are *saved from Dickensian squalor*). First, this is a reference to Ch. Dickens as the most famous author who wrote about the poverty of ordinary English people, and secondly, linking the statement with the historical fact when, after the great fire in London in 1666, the city authorities, fearing further fires due to soot-clogged chimneys, with the cleaning of which professional chimney sweeps could not cope, appealed to the population with an appeal to send their children for this job, where the children not only received scanty pay for their work, but also many died due to the lack of basic safety equipment. Due to this, the general sound of the paragraph becomes ironic, and since it is the antecedent of the above block, which could cause unnecessary reflections and questions, thereby putting an end to the debate on this issue. Such an ironic discharge of the previous content containing problematic moments is a typical characteristic of the trickster, and not only of politics.

The stylistic set of the former British Prime Minister includes about 80-90% of the existing linguistic stylistic means of all levels, except phonetic, such as assonance, alliteration and paronomasia, while the linguistic stylistics of the former President of the United States is limited mainly by syntactic means (parallelism, repetition, parcellation, parenthesis and some others) and partly by metaphors, metonymies and their varieties, figures of quantity.

However, all these are individual differences due to different conditions for obtaining knowledge about the world and, possibly, different degrees of linguistic ability, which is not the basis for categorizing these features under the sign of a certain psychotype. These are, in general, the differences in the individual speech of the two mentioned politicians.

Now, as for the general characteristics of the discourse of these politicians, and how they can be united by the concept of "linguistic-psychological trickster type". Noting the differences in the thesaurus plan of lexical and phraseological means in the speech arsenal of both politicians, it should be noted that both actively and effectively use evaluative vocabulary for the successful construction of a speech signal. Both politicians effectively use words of both negative and positive evaluation, but quantitative calculations and the results of content analysis show that both representatives of the supreme power in their country more often use the vocabulary of negative evaluation content. Regardless of the individual arsenal of linguistic and stylistic means, both skillfully use them to achieve the necessary pragmatic result. Both politicians relatively rarely suffer communication failures, but even in this case they easily cope with problems of this kind. At the same time, the pragmatics of their use of language means is quite often aimed at surpassing their partner or their communication partners in the degree of argumentation of their views expressed during communication, dominating them in communication. Both are masters of speech manipulation of their interlocutors, readers or listeners. Both like to impose their views and points of view on the interlocutor by means of language communication. Both skillfully create texts or segments of texts, both have a speech that is logical, coherent and argumentative.

### Conclusion

Based on all that has been said, the following conclusions can be drawn: firstly, trickster is a universal concept and is characteristic of all cultures and languages. In this paper, he is considered as a linguopsychological type (the term was introduced in the works of I.V. Chekulai and O.N. Prokhorova), on the basis of speech and behavioral characteristics typical of political leaders using an arsenal of linguistic and behavioral manipulative tools that allow working with the electorate and the population of the country as a whole. Secondly, the trickster as a type of linguistic personality can be realized in all kinds of discourse: artistic, fairy-tale, political and others. Both B. Johnson and D. Trump are tricksters from the standpoint of the concept of linguistic personality. Thirdly, a comparative analysis of these two political leaders allows us to identify a number of distinctive features between them, based on the peculiarities of their education, cultural background, speech competencies of

their native language (the use of complex syntactic constructions, allusions, linguistic stylistic means, in particular, the use of metaphors, metonymies, figures of quantity, etc., and this was expressed in different ways the percentage of their use). Common to both political leaders is the use of evaluative vocabulary, the competent use of linguistic pragmatics. The speech of both leaders is logical, connected and reasoned. At the same time, in their speech there are fleeting, sometimes imperceptible, nuances of using linguistic means to achieve such things as individual self-affirmation in the world political arena, as shocking public opinion to increase attention to one's own person.

The conducted research shows that "trickster" is a universal concept and is characteristic of all cultures and languages. The trickster as a type of linguistic personality can be realized in all types of discourse: artistic, fabulous, political. In this paper, he was considered as a linguopsychological type on the basis of speech and behavioral characteristics typical of political leaders using an arsenal of linguistic and behavioral manipulative means that allow them to work with the electorate and the population of the country as a whole. Both B. Johnson and D. Trump are tricksters from the standpoint of the concept of linguistic personality. As part of the analysis of the speech of each of the politicians, features were identified that, reflecting the specifics of their behavior, actions, habits, communication with people in general and in speech communication in particular, gave us grounds to attribute them to the psychological archetype, which K.G. Jung defines by the term "trickster".

### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

### Рецензия

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### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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