

**RHETORICAL DEVICES AS A METHOD OF PERSUASION IN JOE BIDEN'S
SPEECH ON THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE**

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**РИТОРИЧНІ ПРИЙОМИ ЯК МЕТОД ПЕРЕКОНАННЯ У ПРОМОВІ ДЖО
БАЙДЕНА, ПРИСВЯЧЕНІЙ ПОЧАТКУ ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ**

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On 24 February 2022, a war broke out in Ukraine, causing significant socio-cultural and economic transformations in the world. US President Joe Biden is a man who has supported our people since the first hours of the war. Rhetorical techniques are used in Joe Biden's speech as the main tool to convince the audience of the reliability of the information being broadcast. Thus this article focuses on the analysis of the means of communication used by President Biden to influence public opinion of the people of Ukraine and the entire democratic world and to create a favourable image of the US government among the allies in wartime. Rhetorical devices serve as an important tool for expressing his ideological position, playing a crucial role in the effectiveness of persuasive, motivational and informative political speeches. This paper aims at outlining rhetorical devices and their impact on the audience in the first speech of President Biden to the entire democratic world on the outbreak of war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Keywords: *rhetoric, ethos, political speech, war in Ukraine, logos, pathos*

24 лютого 2022 року в Україні розпочалась війна, яка спричинила значні соціокультурні та економічні трансформації у світі. Президент США Джо Байден – людина, яка з перших годин війни підтримувала наш народ. Риторичні прийоми використовуються у промові Джо Байдена як основний інструмент переконання слухачів у достовірності інформації, яка транслюється. Отже, у фокусі цієї статті є аналіз засобів комунікації, які використовував президент Байден для впливу на громадську думку всього демократичного світу та створення сприятливого іміджу уряду США між союзниками в умовах воєнного часу. Риторичні прийоми слугують важливим інструментом вираження ідеологічної позиції, відіграючи вирішальну роль в ефективності переконуючих, мотиваційних та інформативних політичних промов. Мета роботи – визначити риторичні прийоми та їхній вплив на громадськість у першому зверненні американського президента Джо Байдена до всього демократичного світу у день початку війни в Україні 24 лютого 2022 року.

Ключові слова: *риторика, етос, політична промова, війна в Україні, логос, пафос*

Introduction. Language is a universal tool in the hands of a skilful user. Language plays an extremely important role in forming thoughts and expressing ideas. It is the main means of interaction between different groups of people. For political leaders, language is undoubtedly an important instrument. Politicians use various rhetorical devices to influence their listeners and convey their ideas as well as convince the audience of their views. A true political leader must master the art of rhetoric to ensure that their words are not clear and understandable to listeners, but also have a certain psychological impact. A political speech is usually a carefully crafted manifesto with a flawless position, marked by the use of persuasive arguments, emotional appeals and an expressive style of language to gain attention and support. With clear language and concise expressions, political leaders can skilfully play with the feelings of their listeners (Widdowson, H. G. 2014). They usually adapt their language to a specific target audience, taking into account various factors to preserve the image of an ideal leader.

Rhetoric and persuasion are concepts that have always been close to each other and can be considered an integral part of the same whole. Both are based on the ability to communicate effectively and influence others (Agnew, L. P. 2012). Aspects of rhetoric as an important means of persuasion are based on classical rhetorical principles that were developed by Aristotle (Reeve 2018). In his works, the Greek philosopher shows that persuasion based on logic is an important element of effective argumentation (Burnyeat, pp. 152–202). For this purpose, political leaders use statistics, facts, and arguments to convince the public that their decisions are correct, thus building a logically sound basis for their speeches. Aristotle also claims that emotional influence plays a huge role in persuasion (Dow 2009). In political speeches, emotions can be aroused through stories that are close and relatable to the audience. These are usually personal narratives, dramatic details that are emotionally charged to create a psychological connection with the audience and evoke emotions that will support political positions. The spirit of the people is also an important component of persuasion. The audience will always listen to someone who has strong credibility. In politics, this may include referring to one's own experience, competence or moral values to lend trustworthiness to one's statements and convince the public that one is right (Adjei-Fobi, C. K. 2011).

The focus of this study is the speech of US President Joe Biden on the outbreak of war in Ukraine. We aim at looking of the application in Biden's speech of fairly informal language rather than official statements. This generally indicates, first of all, that political leaders express their positions, ideas, intentions, promises or ideology directly through communication with the public. In this line, in this article the attempt is made to reveal the main functions of rhetoric in Joe Biden's speech.

Theoretical background. Rhetoric is the ancient art that studies the effectiveness of words to achieve certain goals in education, in the political arena, and at home with your family. The main

goal of rhetoric is to create the influential and persuasive speech with which you can control people. According to James Francis Murphy (2013, pp. 202–289), rhetoric can be viewed as “giving advice to others about the future use of language”. According to Murphy’s definition, this involves a preliminary study of thematic rhetoric, which leads to the formation of proven theories and reliable methods.

Every time we communicate with others, this energy emerges and has a certain effect on the listener. In Malmkjær’s view (2002), the emergence of rhetoric is related to the speaker’s desire to influence the audience. The scholar notes that there are key features that define rhetorical discourse. It is usually characterised by a clear plan, taking into account the preferences of the selected audience and aimed at achieving a specific goal (Malmkier, K. 2002).

In general, rhetorical discourse is a holistic, well-established, complex process that is based on human motivations and responds to a certain extent to the situation. In his reflections on rhetoric, Aristotle holds that its main task is to resolve various issues that have arisen in our minds (Reeve, 2018). He believes that there is no need to follow certain arts or systems, since we are dealing with practical concepts that do not have clear answers. Aristotle believes that rhetoric is a tool for solving different variants of unpredictable problems where the issue is not fixed or necessary. This distinguishes it from certain mathematical proofs. Aristotle points to three types of appeals (ethos, pathos and logos), which primarily represent different forms of audience engagement and are extremely useful for evaluating other people’s messages. By analysing a message using these tools, it is possible to conclude how useful and effective it is (Wynne, M. 2005).

Rhetorical theorist Lloyd Bitzer (2016) draws attention to the concept of convention. He points out that rhetoric deals with concepts in a broad area where there are no clear pros or cons and the probability of the false and the true is distributed in equal proportions. Bitzer adds (*ibid.*, pp. 1–14) that “rhetoric is applied to contingent and probable issues. These issues are the subject of factual disagreement, allowing for alternative beliefs, values, and positions”.

Rhetoric is the main root of political power. Very often, the distribution of latter is determined by the ability to clearly and concisely report one’s ideas to the masses. It was Foucault who studied the intersection of rhetoric and political power in society (Foss & Gill 2009). He views power not as a fixed hierarchy, but as a fluid concept associated with symbolic strategies that dominate at a particular time. Foucault argues that political power is linked directly to the practice of rhetoric. The philosopher notes that one should be careful with the use of rhetoric as a tool for concentrating and distributing power. This contributes to the formation of a certain ideology, which is a system of beliefs and affects the perception of things. First and foremost, rhetoric should serve as a tool for defending ideas, not for transforming these ideas into a negative direction that will be difficult for people to understand (Biesecker, B. 1992).

Methods and results

1.1. Material selection

This qualitative study focuses on words, not numbers. The research material is a speech delivered by US President Joe Biden right after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The speech was delivered from the White House, where the US President addressed the American people and the international community. The speech consists of about 3,800 words and lasts for 22:37 minutes.

3.2. Ethos

In order to show the credibility of the information he tries to convey, in his speech Biden uses ethos. In this way, he convinces people that he is a source of truthfulness:

Vladimir Putin has been planning this for months, as I've been — as we've been saying all along (President Biden's speech on February 24, 2022 (in the online resource "President Biden Delivers Remarks on Russia's Unprovoked and Unjustified Attack on Ukraine") - henceforward PBS)

When discussing geopolitical issues, this is an extremely important feature for gaining the trust of the audience. The use of the pronoun "we" indicates a collective point of view and the involvement of everyone in the situation. It helps the listener to subconsciously trust the speaker and become a part of the whole.

We saw a flagrant violation of international law in attempting to unilaterally create two new so-called republics on sovereign Ukrainian territory (PBS).

In this way, the President appeals to ethical considerations when emphasising violations of international law. He aims at evoking certain moral and ethical feelings in his audience. In the same way, in the passage below, Biden emphasises the violation of moral norms and human principles enshrined in an international document. The President is speaking directly not only to Ukrainians, but to the entire democratic world. It is worth noting that for many European states, violation of international law is a serious crime. In this way, the President manipulates the feelings of his listeners by pointing to moral norms.

He rejected every good-faith effort the United States and our Allies and partners made to address our mutual security concerns through dialogue to avoid needless conflict and avert human suffering (PBS).

Shared values are the foundation of governance in America. Appeal to them indicates that the President wants to emphasise his moral justification and that of the United States. By talking about the good faith efforts of his and his allies, Biden is emphasising a commonality of values of peace and humanitarian principles that can generate support among those who value such

principles. He is emphasising that Ukraine is not alone with the enemy, but has the whole democratic world with it, which supports peace and humanitarian principles.

In the past week, we've seen shelling increase in the Donbas, the region in eastern Ukraine controlled by Russian-backed separatists (PBS).

The historical perspective in the speech, demonstrated in the quote above, helps the listener understand the current situation and adds important context. The President draws our attention to the fact that the conflict on the territory of Ukraine has been going on for years. In this way, he arouses in the minds of listeners the desire to turn to historical facts and memory of the events in Donbas to understand the depth of the conflict. The statement that Donbas is controlled by "separatists" indicates Russia's negative influence on the events in the region, which led to the split in the population and the role of separatist groups. The historical background provides an understanding of the consequences of Russian interference in Ukraine's affairs.

We've been transparent with the world. We've shared declassified evidence about Russia's plans and cyberattacks and false pretexts so that there can be no confusion or cover-up about what Putin was doing (PBS).

In this statement, the President refers to honesty and transparency not only to the people of Ukraine, but also to the entire democratic world. He emphasises the importance of providing clear and truthful information, no matter how brutal that information may be. The President indicates that he is not hiding the facts and is ready to share them with everyone. His statement gives the impression that the government recognises the importance of honesty and is ready to be accountable to the world.

For months, we've been building a coalition of partners representing well more than half of the global economy (PBS).

In the quote above, the President indicates that the measures taken are not unilateral. Teaming up with allies indicates unity and an undeniable future victory. In this way, Biden supports Ukrainians and indicates that all decisions are part of a joint, broader international effort, which adds credibility to the president's position.

3.3. Pathos

Pathos is an important tool in the hands of the President to help control the emotions of his listeners. It increases the likelihood that the listener will adopt a certain point of view or act in a certain way that the speaker needs. Pathos is usually an integral part of any speech, not just political one.

Putin has unleashed a great pain on them (PBS).

This statement shows deep concern. The President emphasises the suffering of Ukrainians and reinforces this by using a moderate tone and adjectives. He shows that Putin brings only pain and suffering. In this way, Biden seeks to evoke emotional solidarity with the audience.

This is a dangerous moment for all of Europe, for the freedom around the world (PBS).

The President describes this war as a threat not only to the Ukrainian people, but also to the entire world. He points out that the outbreak of the war leads to violation of freedom and peace for everyone. In this way, Biden presents the outbreak of war as a moral issue, appealing to feelings of justice and common values.

God bless the people of a free and democratic Ukraine. And may God protect our troops (PBS).

It is well known that religion is a driving force as it guides people and plays a crucial role in the way they perceive the world around them. The appeal to God in the quote above plays a symbolic role, thus indicating moral values. It also strengthens the credibility of the political leader in the eyes of those who believe in God and creates the perception of a highly moral president. In a situation as difficult as Ukraine's, invoking God expresses a sense of compassion and support.

I spoke late last night to President Zelenskyy of Ukraine (PBS).

President Biden herein creates a special empathic connection by pointing to personal communication with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This helps to strengthen the sense of unity and loyalty to the one true country. Thus, Biden evokes positive emotions primarily for Ukrainians. For them, Biden has been a leader since the beginning of the war, and his personal communication with the President of Ukraine has only emphasised unity.

3.4. Logos

Logos in Biden's speech is extremely important because it is built on logical facts and historical evidence to persuade the audience. Logos is used to provide clear arguments and concrete data. First of all, Biden provides clear and understandable facts that Russia has been preparing for a full-scale invasion for years.

He [President Putin] moved more than 175,000 troops, military equipment into positions along the Ukrainian border (PBS).

In the quote above, Biden provides clear facts and numbers assess the situation. In this way, he is pointing out to the need for military support for Ukraine and the provision of necessary weapons to fight.

This is a premeditated attack. Vladimir Putin has been planning this for months (PBS).

Biden reveals the fact that this war was clearly and deliberately planned by Russia. He points out the intentional killing of Ukrainians and seeks to establish a logical sequence of events so that listeners understand the scale of the disaster.

He rejected every good-faith effort the United States and our Allies and partners made to address our mutual security concerns through dialogue to avoid needless conflict and avert human suffering (PBS).

President Biden herein points out that the conflict could have been avoided through diplomatic dialogue. The President once again emphasises the deliberate attack and shows that the US and its allies did everything possible to resolve relations between the two countries. Thus, Biden continuously reveals Putin in the eyes of humanity as an unscrupulous and cruel tyrant who is unable to resolve issues through diplomatic means.

We've shared declassified evidence about Russia's plans and cyberattacks (PBS).

In the quote above, Biden tries to build a logical explanation for Russia's aggressive behaviour. He insistently draws the audience's attention to the fact that the US government did not stand by and conducted its own analysis even before the large-scale invasion began. In this way, the President emphasises that America is a progressive country that can easily reveal the plans and highlight the tactics of the Russian government.

Today, I'm authorizing additional strong sanctions and new limitations on what can be exported to Russia (PBS).

By imposing sanctions and announcing them in his speech, Biden indicates that Russia is still under the control of the diplomatic world. Biden presents facts and suggests that such measures will have a significant impact on the economy of the terrorist state, linking the cause (sanctions) and the effect (economic consequences).

3.5. Rhetorical devices

In this speech, President Biden uses various rhetorical techniques and tools to effectively convey his message.

Putin is the aggressor. Putin chose this war (PBS).

Repeating certain phrases or words in a political figure's speech is an extremely important tool. In his address, Biden anaphorically repeats the noun "Putin" to indicate his importance and involvement in the events in Ukraine. The repetition makes this person more salient to the audience and helps create a clear link between his personality and aggression, which is crucial.

We will limit Russia's ability... We will limit their ability (PBS).

In the example above, a similar repetition sets the rhythm and energy, increasing the emotional charge of the listener. The anaphoric reiteration of "We will limit" together with the epiphoric one of "ability" indicates the determination of the allies in their decisions. This creates an emotional charge and makes the listeners believe and be convinced of what is being said. In this case, the repetition serves as a tool to portray unity and seriousness in further restrictions on Russia.

Putin's actions betray his sinister vision for the future of our world (PBS).

It is worth drawing our attention to the function of alliteration in the President's speech. The repetition of the /s/ sound in the nouns "Putin's" and "sinister" creates a smooth and rhythmic effect, which makes the statement more memorable. Alliteration serves more as an amplifier of the emotional state of the listeners, forming, in our case, hatred and negativity towards those who started the brutal war.

Liberty, democracy, human dignity these are the forces far more powerful than fear and oppression (PBS).

In this case, the antithesis arises from the juxtaposition of positive values ("freedom, democracy, human dignity") and negative values ("fear and oppression"). Biden uses this device to show the contrast not only between the two warring states, but also between Russia and all countries of the world. The contrast helps to clearly distinguish between two opposite sides and also strengthens the argument, helps the author to prove his position convincingly and clearly.

Putin has unleashed a great pain on them (PBS).

Additionally, in the example above, a metaphor is used to describe the impact of Putin's aggression to convey the deep suffering and challenges faced by people in Ukraine and to emphasise the enormous impact of Putin's deeds. The depiction of "great pain" creates an important image that helps the reader to imagine the intensity of the suffering and the consequences of the actions.

Twenty-seven members of the European Union, including France, Germany, Italy – as well as the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and many others (PBS).

Finally, the use of enumeration makes the information delivered by Biden structured and easy to understand, giving the audience a clear picture of the diversity of allies. It emphasises the global nature of the joint effort. In this way, Biden focuses on the scale of the disaster, which will directly affect everyone.

Conclusions and discussion. As illustrated above, rhetorical techniques help to formulate a clear understanding of the current situation in the minds of the people of Ukraine and other democratic states. The speech by President Biden was released on the first day of the war, on 24 February 2022. In his speech, the US President used a variety of rhetorical devices to support the spirit of the Ukrainian people and expressed support from around the world. The techniques outlined in previous sections made the President's speech more convincing and effective. The speaker uses his authority and status as the leader of an influential state to emphasise the importance of events and convince the audience of the correctness of his actions.

In general, the rhetorical principles and devices in Joseph Biden's speech play a key role in rendering the convincing information and activating the audience's position on extremely important events. They also enhance the impact of ideas at the level of rhythm, imagery and the use of

language in general. It was with the help of rhetorical means that Joe Biden managed to instil faith and hope for a brighter future and victory in the hearts of thousands of Ukrainians in the first hours of the war.

Further research could concentrate, in line with the tenets of empirical study of literature and media (Чеснокова 2011; van Peer & Chesnokova 2019), on effectiveness of Biden's speeches as well as on the emotional affect they have on the audience. On a more general note, the time is ripe to offer evidence-based testimony to the qualitative analysis we offered above.

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