

МЕТОДОЛОГІЯ АНАЛІЗУ МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНИХ ТЕКСТІВ

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REPRESENTATION OF THE STRATEGY OF INTERCEPTION BY PITCH VARIATIONS IN POLITICAL DEBATES

Політичне майбутнє кандидатів, які беруть участь у дебатах, часто визначається ступенем довіри до них, заснованої на стратегіях аргументації. Сьогодні політична аргументація набула особливої актуальності, особливо через її психологічний вплив на виборців. У політичних дебатах опоненти, які мають різне політичне минуле, використовують різні мовні та просодичні стилі.

За допомогою лінгвістичного аналізу відібраних аудіо- та відеоматеріалів ми виявили кілька лінгвістичних методів, які дозволяють досягти цілей диверсифікації, змагальності та персоніфікації в політичних дебатах, які є основними характеристиками цього типу політичного дискурсу. Відмінності між звичайними висловлюваннями, репліками-висловлюваннями, простими накладеннями реплік, обміном ролями і навмисними перериваннями також розглядаються як маніпулятивні засоби, оскільки ми стверджуємо, що вони є навмисними і визначаються комунікативними стратегіями мовців.

Особливу увагу ми приділяємо діалогічному характеру телевізійних дебатів, які в цьому типі політичного дискурсу проводяться на двох рівнях: «політик – опонент» і «політик – аудиторія». Учасники теледебатів використовують різні стратегії аргументації, щоб вплинути як на своїх опонентів, так і на виборців, часто навмисно прагнучи дискредитувати своїх опонентів і створити контрастний фон для маніпуляцій. Для цього аналізу ми зосередилися на стратегії перехоплення, одній з найбільш часто використовуваних у політичних дебатах.

У статті ми розглядаємо мовленнєву поведінку Дональда Трампа і Хілларі Клінтон як інструмент створення їх медійного портрету і персоніфікації їх політичних програм. Таким чином, у статті основна увага приділяється стратегії перехоплення та її просодичній реалізації за допомогою таких невербальних засобів, як зміна висоти тону, що супроводжується навмисними перебивками, зауваженнями, спростуваннями та підвищенням гучності голосу, які сприяють аргументації в політичних дебатах.

Мета цієї статті – визначити роль просодичних засобів в аргументативних політичних дебатах. Методологія дослідження включає підхід «Біологія коду» із застосуванням експериментальних фонетичних і фонологічних методів.

Аналіз показав, що просодія відіграє вирішальну роль не тільки у формуванні політичного дискурсу, а й у відображенні точок зору політиків. Ми намагалися поєднати просодію з аргументацією, що сприяє синтезу природності в політичних промовах. Перебивання порушують просодичну структуру висловлювання і вступають в протиріччя з фонетичними сигналами зміни ролей, такими як високий / низький тембр або зміни граничного тону. Опоненти висловлюють впевненість за допомогою змін тембру: низький тембр є показником напористості і впевненості, в той час як високий тембр передбачає невпевненість. Високий тон виникає, коли вводиться нова інформація (рема), тоді як низький тон відображає раніше заявлену інформацію (тема). Високий тон також може бути стратегією вираження емоцій або інструментом змусити опонента здатися і поступитися роллю.

Ключові слова: політичні дебати, аргументативний дискурс, риторичні стратегії, просодичні засоби, стратегія перехоплення.

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Introduction

Different strategies employed by politicians in debates have certain manipulative potential and directly affect the audience. In pre-election discourse, these strategies take on a more pronounced manipulative and influential nature, serving as a politically beneficial algorithm of speech-thought operations for constructing the world picture for voters [Knoblock, 2007, p. 10]. Since the widespread adoption of television in the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. presidential campaigns have capitalized on the entertainment value of televised debates. TV debates, as a form of political and mass-media discourse, align perfectly with the *divertissement* concept of modern American television.

TV debates have always attracted significant attention from researchers, becoming a subject of study across multiple disciplines, including political science, sociology, psychology, rhetoric and linguistics. The question of studying certain types of mass media discourse is achieving a wider scope now more than ever. With technological advancements attracting multimillion audiences and the rise of new information resources online, the psychological impact of political debates on voters has become increasingly urgent.

A candidate's political future largely depends on their persuasiveness and argumentative strategies in pre-election TV debates. The contrasting images politicians projected by politicians during debates exemplify the personification of political issues, a defining characteristic of televised debates. Indeed, the impact of political figures over the course of election campaigns can hardly be overestimated – voters do not cast their votes for a bare program party or candidate, but for the side that represents it.

The key features of argumentative and persuasive speech in political debates are confirmation and resolution. As Van Eemeren puts it, argumentation in political debates can be claimed to employ legitimation strategies as part of strategic maneuvering [Eemeren, 2010]. There is no doubt that the structural, grammatical, lexical, stylistic, rhetorical, verbal and linguistic means play a very important role in representation, defending, or rebutting an opinion. Hence, the following three aspects can be distinguished in the course of oral communication:

- a) verbal communication – words and syntactical rules linking them into sentences;
- b) prosodic or paralinguistic sound qualities – pitch, pitch variations, accent, pauses, and color of tone.
- c) non-verbal behavior (or body language) – facial expressions, gestures, mimes, body movements and the distance between interactants.

All these aspects are essential for effective oral communication. However, the role of non-verbal techniques should not be neglected in political argumentation: “The ability to use and comprehend non-verbal behaviour is a mighty tool which can help us express what we really mean” [Zeynalova, Allahverdiyeva, 2017, p. 180].

In this respect, prosody carries a special weight, since it intertwines both linguistic and psychological properties, which are not always easy to distinguish, but vital.

In modern globalized society, the anthropocentric and cognitive levels are the angles political discourse is approached from. Debates, as a specific genre of political discourse, are often accompanied by the extensive use of prosodic strategies, which can be decisive in conveyance of opinions. In the debates, based on dialogical interaction with such main elements as opposite points of view and an audience to persuade, there is built a prosodic code possessing vital knowledge in order to make the difference. Besides, this genre is probably the best discursive framework reflecting the best utilization of prosody as a rhetorical tool to represent argumentation step-by-step and to “draw” an image of every politician.

Traditionally, it is believed that political debates are mostly formalized, subject to strict regulations, script-based and should be determined by such characteristics as formality and consistent role-playing. However, what happened on the US screens during September and October 2016 reflected that the pre-election debates only partially correspond to this traditional format. The dialogue between politicians presented to the public was less formal than usual – the rules set by moderators were often violated. Either because of the irreconcilability of positions, or because of the desire to impress the audience, the politicians were often interrupted by each-other entering into verbal opposition.

In televised debates, we encounter two levels of dialogue: one between politicians themselves and one between the politicians and the audience.

Both levels are equally important. At the former level, their openly expressed confrontation comes to the fore: struggling between the two rivals. At the latter one, in the interaction with audiences

the politicians act in a united front – as the sides of an election institution, conditionally opposed to the audience sitting in the debate hall, as well as TV viewers observing the progress. Everything the candidates utter is no longer addressed to their political opponent, but to the audience as a whole. It is on them they want to influence with speech strategies – it is them they are trying to manipulate.

The debate selected by us for the analysis in this article, was widely quoted and analyzed. Politicians and economists analyzed this debate for details of economic reform programs proposed by the candidates. For the linguists in the field of political discourse, media text, pragmatics and communication theory, a TV debate is a few hours audio and video recording of a vivid political discourse providing an excellent opportunity to put into practice theoretical provisions of communicative linguistics. For the latter, a televised debate is primarily a verbal opposition, the outcome of which depends on communicative-rhetorical skills of politicians.

In this article, we analyze various excerpts of dialogues extracted from the YouTube final debate recordings between the candidates for the U.S. presidency broadcasted on CBS News TV channel on October 19, 2016 [Wallace, 2016] and the transcript of the debate [Politico Staff, 2016] to fulfill the study.

On November 19, the University of Nevada Las Vegas campus hosted the third and final official debate between 2016 U.S. presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump organized by Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD). The moderator was Chris Wallace, the TV journalist and presenter of the Fox News channel, who is also a member of the Democratic Party.

One and a half hours of airtime was divided into six thematic blocks of 15 minutes each. Only the moderator had the right to ask questions. The six topics, selected by the host himself, were: public debt, immigration, economics, the Supreme Court reforms, international politics, and personal ability of leadership.

Judging by the complete transcription of the latest debates published by “The Politico”, foreign policy issues arose on the initiative of candidates in almost each of the six thematic blocks. For example, speaking of tax policy, Trump suddenly jumped into NATO and wondered why US allies were not paying Washington for military-political protection. The topic of Russia, however, arose after the transition to the second block of the questions – about immigration. Wallace asked Clinton to highlight her words from the hacked correspondence of her chief of campaign headquarters about the need for “a single market across the Western Hemisphere with open borders”. The Democratic candidate noted that it was about energy cooperation with Latin America, continuing the response by accusing Russia of breaking into the servers of her party.

Trump and Clinton were radically at odds about what the American economy needed to do. Key provisions of Clinton’s economic plan are raising the minimum wage and increasing taxes for wealthy Americans. Trump said the moves would add an extra \$20 trillion to the US national debt. Clinton, in turn, rebuked him for indulging the interests of the rich, promising to cut taxes for people who already live well. In her opinion, this was the path to “another economic crisis.” The heated debate was a hotbed for the ideological struggle between the politicians creating a fecund ground for the rhetorical-linguistic analysis full of argumentative and manipulative strategies.

Topically, the questions asked can be divided into two main groups. First, Americans were interested in personal qualities of the candidates; in particular, in relation to numerous scandals – eight questions. Secondly, they talked about the socio-economic problems within the US – the questions about Obamacare health insurance, the fight against Islamophobia, the tax system, the procedure for appointing the Supreme Court judges and the priority of energy policy.

According to the CNN poll, Clinton won the debate, according to 57% of the respondents; another 34% gave the victory to her rival. Unlike CNN, which has traditionally supported the Democratic Party, sociologist Frank Luntz, who works with conservative Fox News, said that in his 30-person focus group, 21 respondents were more satisfied with Trump’s speech and only 9 with Clinton’s. According to the YouGov sociological bureau, Clinton won the debate by 47% versus 42%.

Background studies of the topic

Today the scope of argumentation research crosses the boundaries of verbal studies and is expanded into analyzing functions of such non-verbal elements as gestures [Gelang, Kjeldsen, 2011], images [Groarke, Tindale, 2013; Birdsell, Groarke, 1996; Birdsell, Groarke, 2007], and even music [Branigan, 1992]. The means of communication we address in the argumentation process in general,

as well as in forming public opinion by representation of individual and common interests, values and inspirations to popular actions, like debates, have altered in terms of modern technological developments which have resulted in the urgency to deal with more than verbal elements. Some linguists also suggest that argumentation can emerge in various means of expression – non-verbal behavior, pictures and speech inclusive [Gelang, Kjeldsen, 2011]. Authors, who explore the functions of non-verbal communication in argumentation, claim that non-verbal means can function as argumentation strategies indicating to politician's ethos: "...recipients of a message in a rhetorical situation create their perception of the speaker through a holistic perspective" [Gelang, Kjeldsen, 2011, p. 567].

In general, the viewpoint that these features have a vital communicative role has already been firmly accepted which is observed in extensive coverage in the literature on the role and impact of prosody in communication: "A speaker may indicate, through prosodic means, to which information the listener should pay particular attention (accentuation, emphasis), and he may provide cues about the syntactic organization of utterance (phrasing). Intuitively, however, the communicative function of prosody is most readily associated with the expression of attitude and emotion" [Vroomen, Collier, Mozziconacci, 1993, p. 577].

The success of debates as an oral form of public speeches largely depends on intonation. It is important that all structural and content elements of oral speech are prosodically adequately formalized – it serves as the key to correct (as intended by the speaker) interpretation of content by audience. Argumentative reasoning in debates has its own structure, which also appears to have a certain impact on intonation organization, and therefore, requires consideration.

The current stage of political discourse research is essentially pragmatics-oriented. Although argumentation in political discourse, as well as the rhetorical-stylistic means to persuade or manipulate have been addressed, they don't indicate any regard concerning prosodic means.

All the same, some studies focus on how prosodic variability in English speech reflects sociocultural factors [Valeriyevna, 2021]. Others argue that the prosodic design of political speeches is a complex of phonetic means (syllable, foot and intonation) used by the speaker and are closely related to semantic emotiveness [Porchesku, Rubleva, 2019; Shakhovsky, 2009; Freidina, 2011].

Koval, who has a deeper insight into prosodic features of solemn and less solemn political speeches, characterizes the former by slow speed, an increase in volume and fractional division of phrases into syntagms implemented in the vast majority of cases through spaces in the sound, maximum time slice and a large number of stressed syllables. However, prosodic organization of the less solemn political speeches includes fast pace, an average volume, the smallest fractional division of phrases into syntagms, pauses and unstressed syllables [Koval, 2008].

Some other works represent prosodic phenomena as a necessary source of information about segmentation, connotative, pragmatic, communicative, modal, stylistic meanings of a text in general. According to them, those texts are capable of expressing various shades of meaning, coercively captivate attention due to volume, shift in pitch, etc. [Pennington, 1996; Alexiyevets, 2002; Kalyta, 2018; Blokh, Freydina, 2017; Chikilyova, 2005; Polieieva, Vasik, 2020; Wichmann, 2000; Kovalyov, 2008].

Besides, we can also coincide with such researchers who argue that prosody, especially, fluency, pitch variations and fast tempo, fulfils the communicative function, mainly associated with the expression of emotion and attitude [Touati, 1993; Kišiček, 2018; Fedoriv, 2016; Savchuk, 2019].

Considering the importance of the temporal parameter of intonation, some linguists testify that the temporal extent is the vital context for existence of speech units. Rhetorical (conscious or unconscious) pauses accomplish a speech with definite connotations and subtexts to allow speakers to put their thoughts and emotions into words more clearly [Kalyta, 2018; Svetozarova, 1982]. There were also attempts to focus on one prosodic means in political discourse. For instance, Brown and others state that the pause is a relevant political discourse marker which serves to emphasize "the high-key information centre of the utterance", to capture and direct attention of an audience by emphasizing the semantic core [Brown, 1990, p. 135; Chanturidze, 2018]. Interestingly enough, some works relate prosodic parameters (especially, intonation, speech rate, intensity) to communication skills and speech skills of speakers to characterize their linguistic identity from the standpoint of linguopsychology [Strangert, Gustafson, 2008].

As observed, there have been works focusing on prosody – melody, stress, loudness, tempo, pausation, rhythm, pausation, speech rate, intensity, etc., in general, or from socio-cultural and linguo-rhetorical standpoints of undoubted interest in the last few years. However, there has been no attempt to consider functional or structural features of interception as a prosodic means, not to mention in political discourse. Saw, the paper *aims* at benefiting to identify the role of prosodic means in argumentative political debates.

Data and methods

We selected audio excerpts from the final debate between the 2016 U.S. presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton for analysis. Prosodic features are crucial in strengthening argumentation and should not be neglected in argumentation analysis of political debates.

Our study is based on the code biology approach (or biological code), specifically the prosodic features outlined in Gussenhoven's "Frequency Code" theory [Gussenhoven, 2002]. The essence of this approach centers around biological codes of intonation in speech. This interpretation focuses on the dimensional aspects of pitch variation production, which are universal across languages and convey paralinguistic semantics. According to the theory, from social standpoint, high pitch is related to politeness, vulnerability, submissiveness and femininity, while low pitch voices conveys assertiveness, authority and masculinity. In political discourse, the social impact of pitch, whether high or low, is influenced by the size of the speaker's larynx.

Our *methodology* is further supported by experimental phonetic and phonological research methods.

Using PRAAT software for speech analysis, we considered the role of pitch variations in argumentative structure of political debates, which have a significant impact on both opponents and audiences. Duration of the analyzed excerpts are represented in minutes and seconds below each excerpt.

We infer that argumentation in political debates can arise through various expressive means, including non-verbal elements such as prosody.

In the examples below, we trace the strategy of interception as it is applied through prosodic means by each candidate. This strategy is evident in communication styles of D. Trump and H. Clinton. Considering how the participants expressed their opinions, the "evaluative commentary" (a kind of a reverse signal communication in contrast to the classical feedback signals to express understanding of a partner or draw attention to their words) is the most common pattern the politicians enjoy at the debate. We believe that these are also reactions to their remarks as the indicators of attention and decoding of messages by audiences.

Results and discussion

The linguistic context in which political debates are realized is the reflection of deliberate use of rhetorical techniques, stylistic features as well as certain lexical and grammatical structures [Verbych, 2011, p. 24]. To fulfil the target communicative task – to create a persuasive public speech, politicians choose the most expressive, emotive, stylistically marked and evaluative structural linguistic means. In order to persuade the audience, the speaker has not only to form an emotionally and logically agreeable speech, but also to intone it in compliance with all the mentioned qualities. The successful realization of political discourse is at advanced level determined by "not only verbally encoded message content" [Fedoriv, 2010, p. 81], but also certain prosodic means functioning as a whole to express it perfectly.

Political discourse has a peculiar melodic and rhythmic organization, subordinated to such extralinguistic and linguo-cultural qualities as specific features of language personality, language variant and conditions of communication. Politicians are required to be able to shift the power and pitch of the voice and rhythm owing to the emotions they intend to send.

The notion *prosodic features* refers to speech and voice cues of a speaker which include voice quality, pitch, loudness, tempo, pauses, voice timbre, melody, accentuation, speaker's fluency, non-fluency and similar features which form the system of suprasegmental components of the sound structure of language owning not only physical, but also perceptual characteristics. These usually make some widely-situated, additional contribution to a definite

non-situated content of the argument. For example, the staccato rhythm accompanying verbal messages represents authority, strictness, dominance and bossiness; the faster tempo or higher pitch may contribute to the perception of speaker's happiness; slow and quiet speech accompanying the lower pitch may indicate the state of sadness or depression, etc. However, some other prosodic features besides intonation, pitch range and tempo can also serve as argumentation strategies.

The rhythmic pattern of utterance, loudness/intensity and word emphasis play a crucial role in political debates. The latter mainly serves to identify the most important word – the one with logical stress in a sentence, especially to represent the rheme (the part of a sentence that represents new information), or simply to make parts of a sentence into a communicative whole, i.e. to distinguish parts of speech according to their communicative importance. For example, the staccato rhythm or the legato rhythm (smooth transition between syllables and indefinite articulation) representing verbal message which establishes authority and indicates dominance, often can be observed for a strict manner of giving orders. Or, intensity and loudness are also perceived as persuasion means in political debates.

It has to be mentioned that prosody signals the dynamics of meaningful deployment of a speech act by combining grammatical and lexical means into a whole and becomes a vital component of discourse presentation. Since during intercourse the sides pay much attention to the prosodic markers in both – interpretation and perception of speech sounding, one of the main mechanisms for managing modern communicative activity is considered to be the prosodic culture of political discourse [Postnikova, 2011, p. 9]. Besides, the power of effective meaning expression, specific communicative impact performance on the interlocutor and the ability of conducting information can be related to close relationship of prosodic organization of speech with other levels of discourse production [Kalyta, 2018; Shtakina, 2011]. Thus, it can be noted that prosodic means play the main role in fulfilment of the communicative strategies and semantic models in political debates.

Together with other means of non-verbal behavior, prosodic features have been affirmed [Knapp, Hall, Horgan, 2013; Burgoon, Birk, Pfau, 1990] to contribute to speaker's persuasiveness (example: loud speech or high intensity, pitch variations, faster tempo and fluency) and attitude changing skills. All in all, it must be mentioned that prosodic features may function as primary elements of an argument – the key for perception of the overall message in certain situations, rather than simply argument strengthening additional elements.

As it is mentioned above, prosodic features contribute to speaker's ethos which aims at the perception of his credibility, benevolence, honesty, trustworthiness and personality besides his and audience's correlation with emotions [Zuckerman, Sinicropi, 2011; Moore, Hickson, Stacks, 2004; Zuckerman, Miyake, 1993; Kimble, Seidel, 1991]. The contribution has been mentioned to be cardinal to the speaker's ethos since antique days. We witness it even in Aristotelian Rhetoric: “[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt. And this should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person” [Aristotle, 1991].

In political discourse, hence in debates, which are also considered to be testimonial claims, a speaker's ethos is vital since the intention is to persuade. While discussing the importance of ethos in testimonial claims, Govier differentiates normative credibility, which is dependent on speaker honesty, sincerity and reliability [Govier, 1993]. According to the author, speakers' rhetorical credibility depends on the impression they yield: “the extent to which one is regarded as believable, and is believed, by others.”

In political debates, the most frequent way of holding a communicative initiative is often increasing volume of a speaking voice. According to the vocal analysis, in the following excerpt, Clinton uttered the end of the interrupted phrase almost twice as high as it began when Trump tried to interrupt her, but such a significant increase in volume causes him to retreat:

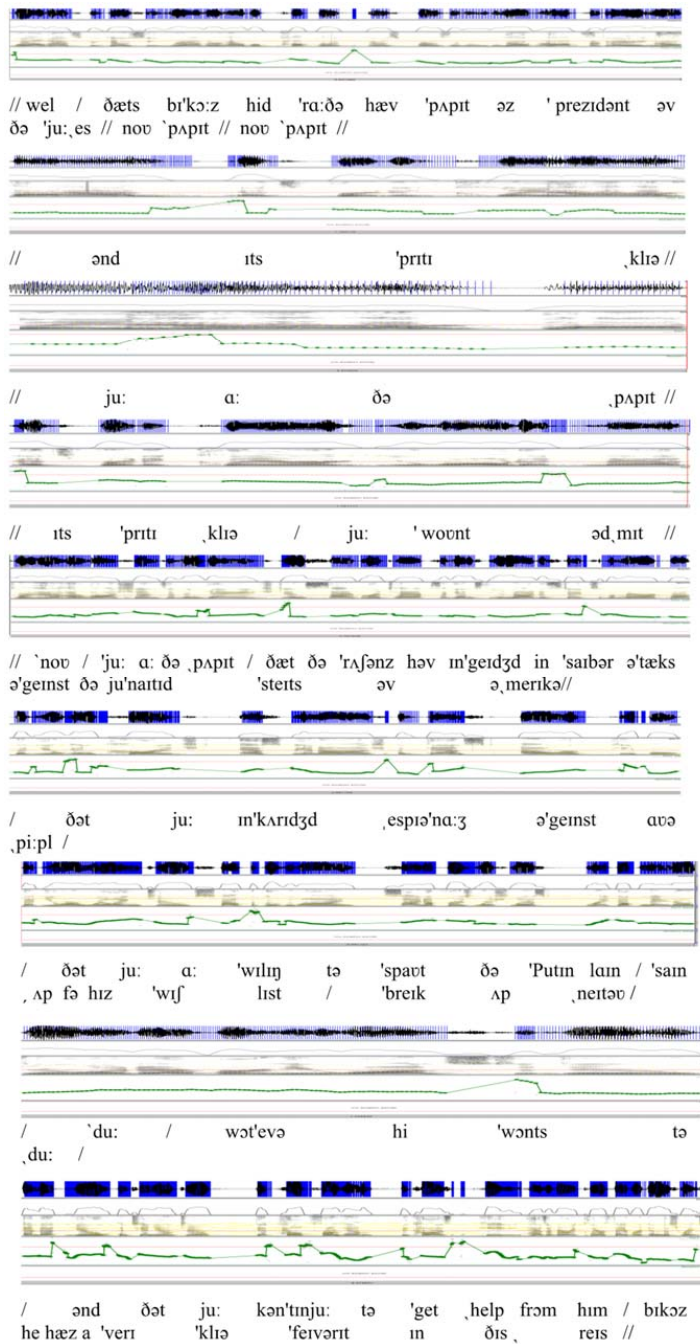


Fig. 1. The excerpt lasts between 30.14-30.50 minutes/seconds.

Transcript:

Clinton: Well, that's because he would rather have a puppet as president of the United States.

Trump: No puppet. No puppet.

Clinton: And it's pretty clear...

Trump: You are the puppet.

Clinton: And it is pretty clear you won't admit...

Trump: No, you are the puppet.

Clinton: ... that the Russians have engaged in cyber-attacks against the United States of America. That you encouraged espionage against our people. That you are willing to spout the Putin line, sign up for his wish list, break up NATO, do whatever he wants to do. And that you continue to get help from him because he has a very clear favorite in this race [Politico staff, 2016].

As it is obvious from the transcript, the passages uttered with the maximum pitch and tonal range are the prosodic parameters with the potential to serve as the means of intensification. In this excerpt, we also observe the use of replica (... *he would rather have a puppet as president of the United States*), however, the change of the communicative role, does not happen. Continuing her thoughts, Clinton also resorts to a kind of tactics of “ignoring” the interlocutor. As for Trump, it is not clear who he is addressing to – the interlocutor or the audience. Since he is not ready to make a full speech contribution, he just comments on the interlocutor’s statements, and in this case without intercepting communication initiative. In general, Trump uses evaluative commentary tactics on purpose as the main rhetorical strategy to conduct the pre-election televised debates. However, this is not always the case. The remark-comments – the tactics of intercepting initiative is very often implemented.

In the excerpt, the strategy of refutation is also observed achieved by negative pronouns, adverbs or particles [nou ‘rʌpɪt // nou ‘rʌpɪt// `nou / `ju: α: ðə ʀʌpɪt /]. Prosodically, in political debates, refutation is based on a wide-focus voice segment and is usually conveyed through high pitch range. In political discourse, refutation is the strategic means which can be a pragmatic indicator of assertive modality, as the goal is the representation of definiteness and precision.

Trump also raises his voice during the debate frequently. One of the cases is displayed in the analysis of the following junction of remarks in Figure 2:

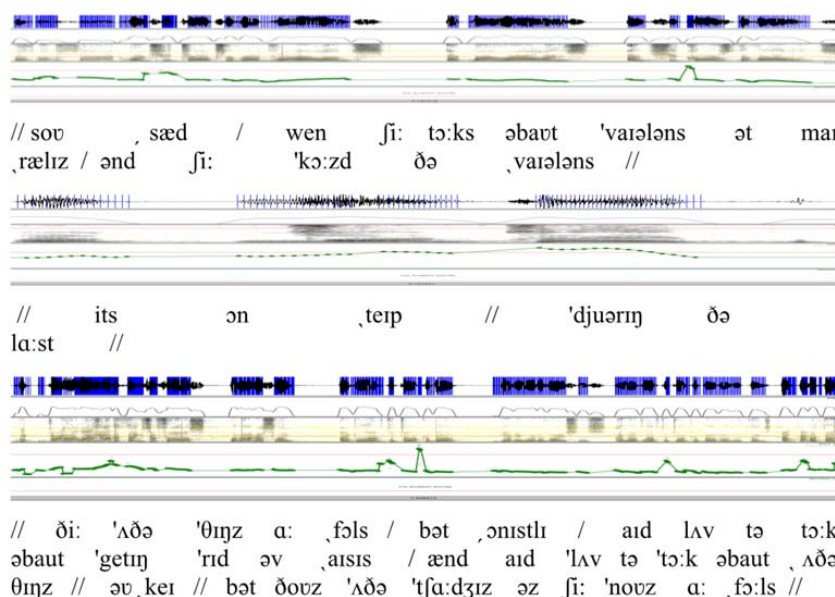


Fig. 2. The excerpt lasts between 58.10-58.25 minutes/seconds.

Transcript:

Trump: So sad when she talks about violence at my rallies and she caused the violence. It's on tape, during the last. The other things are false, but honestly, I'd love to talk about getting rid of ISIS and I'd love to talk about other things.

Wallace: Okay.

Trump: But those other charges, as she knows, are false [Politico staff, 2016].

Each speaker conveys the degree of confidence in the utterance by means of high or low pitch. The low pitch is the indicator of assertiveness and certainty, whereas the high pitch that of uncertainty.

In the last example, although, unlike Trump, moderator Wallace begins his line after a short pause, Trump, by virtue of his own considerations is not yet ready to give up the role of the speaker and uses high pitch as a phonetic marker to leave the word after himself. Thus, the most important feature of interruptions is their wedging in the phonetic design of the statement. In general, the pitch range width refers to the existence of the utterance in the information structure of the discourse. The high pitch range occurs when new information (rheme) starts, whereas the low pitch range appears at the end of the discourse where the old data (theme) is represented.

In fact, it is a very frequently displayed performance in argumentation to show assertion. As it is obvious from the example above, in political debates, this feature is also used as a deliberate attempt to hold attention of the audience by originating the rhythm in the utterance.

In this excerpt, we also witness the opponents making interruptions in the debate which differ from common interruptions in that they stop the speech as soon as they reach the communicative center of the utterance. However, there are moments in the debate, when the strategy of interception is carried out by the communicators through repetition of words [ɪks'pɪəriəns] or certain parts of sentences [ˌju:wə:veri mʌtʃ ɪn'vɒlvd] with several logical stresses. Here, again the speakers gradually raise their voice, and the opponent gives up or concedes the role. Sometimes, the opponent who wants to initiate speech input, goes back down, giving the opponent the opportunity to finish the remark. This use of prosody is evident in Figure 3:

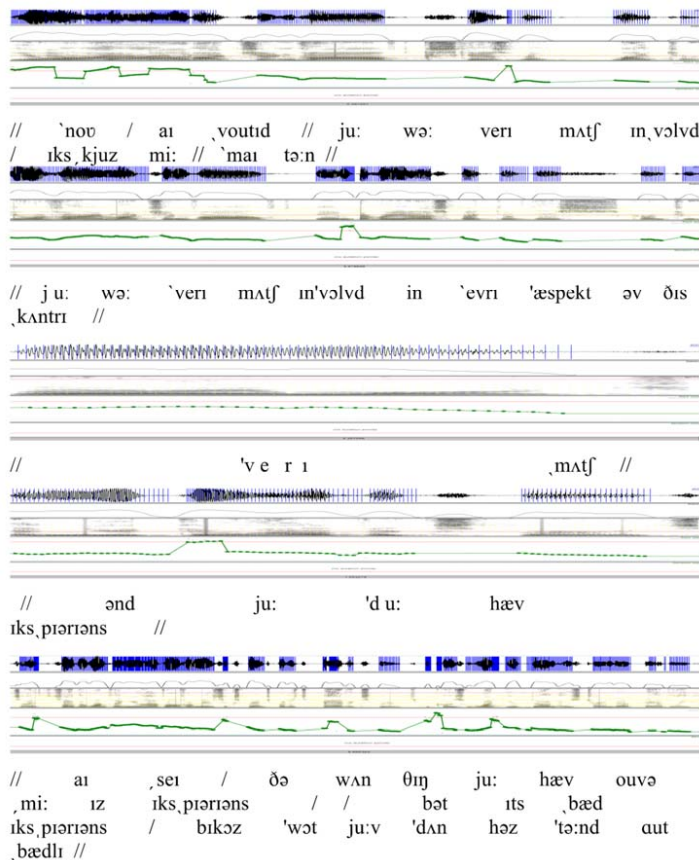


Fig. 3. The excerpt lasts between 47.40-48.00 minutes/seconds.

Transcript:

Clinton: No. I voted...

Trump: You were very much involved, excuse me. My turn. You were very much involved in every aspect of this country. Very much. And you do have experience. I say the one thing you have over me is experience. But it's bad experience because what you've done has turned out badly [Politico staff, 2016].

Here D. Trump wedges himself into H. Clinton's line without waiting for the best timing, often marked with a short pause or volume decrease. He interrupts the interlocutor in the middle of the syntagm. The opposite side decides to keep silent and gives her role up.

Pragmatically, interruptions should be distinguished from remarks. In overlapping case of remarks, as in the following example, the communicative center – the rheme of the statement (... *went after a disabled reporter, mocked and mimicked him* – Fig.4) usually accompanied with terminal tone, and is always well heard. A new remark begins only when the rheme is uttered. As a rule, this feature is not observed in interruptions. Besides, it is incontrovertible evidence that the interruption is the strategy to attain initiative in political debates. The most important characteristics of interlocutor interruptions is violation of the phonetic design of the utterance which we observe in Figure 4:

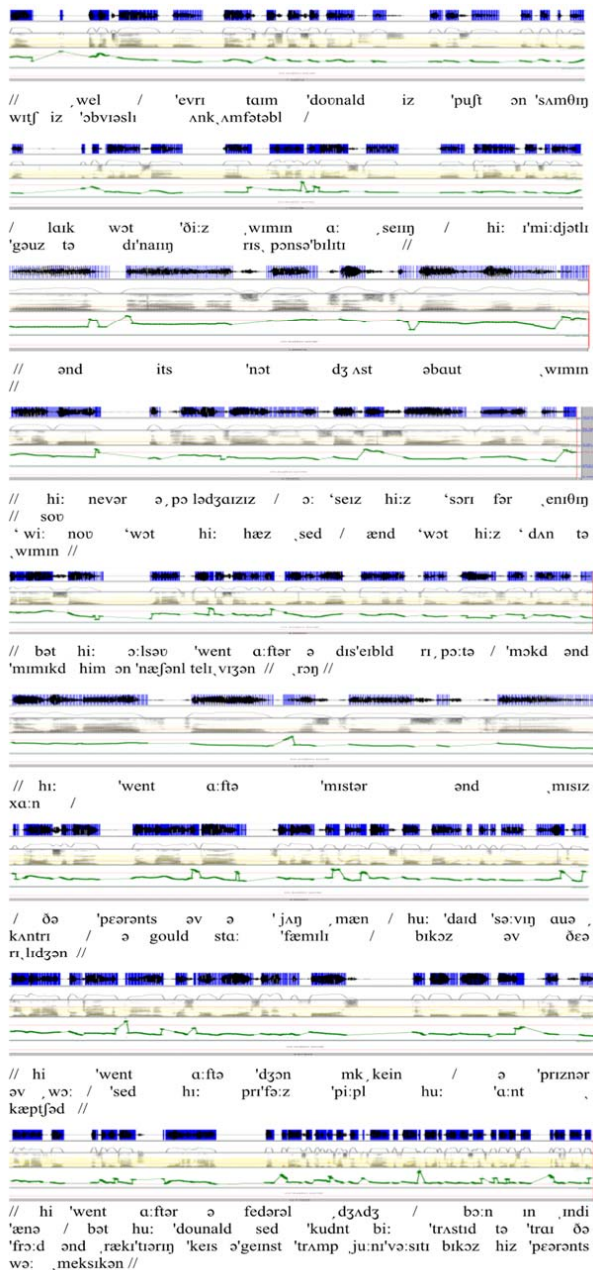


Fig. 4. The excerpt lasts between 56.30-57.35 minutes/seconds.

Transcript:

Clinton: Well, every time Donald is pushed on something, which is obviously uncomfortable like what these women are saying, he immediately goes to denying responsibility and it's not just about women. He never apologizes or says he's sorry for anything, so we know what he has said and what he's done to women. But he also went after a disabled reporter, mocked and mimicked him on national television.

Trump: Wrong.

Clinton: He went after Mr. And Mrs. Khan, the parents of a young man who died serving our country, a gold star family because of their religion. He went after John McCain, a prisoner of war, said he prefers people that aren't captured. He went after a federal judge born in Indiana but who Donald said couldn't be trusted to try the fraud and racketeering case against Trump University because his parents were Mexican [Politico staff, 2016].

In this excerpt, Trump begins his speech input on the last syllables uttered by Clinton, but listeners do not perceive this as an interruption. The final tone sounds, the thought is clear, and the post-terminal syllables may be well omitted in order to save time. In general, both sides interrupt each-other on an upward or flat tone. Listeners usually perceive this as a gross violation of the position of role-switching. Clinton is clearly not going to finish her speech input. Trump interrupts in the wrong place, but the difference in the positions expressed is so significant for Clinton that despite her unusual practice of increasing the volume, this brings her a communicative victory. As a rule, this behavior is not characteristic of Clinton – the function of this strategy is to ensure effectiveness of communication in political debates. Violation of prosodic norms may entail the emergence of interference in the implementation of communication process and in the transmission of information.

Conclusion

In political debates, each opponent makes specific choices to construct their argumentative discourse. In this type of discourse, prosodic means aim at fulfilling the only vital role — to make almost any argument successful. This study focused on the argumentative strategy of interception, which can be achieved through various prosodic features. Our analysis reveals that prosody is crucial not only in shaping political discourse but also in reflecting politicians' viewpoints. Our analysis of key dialogical excerpts from the debate demonstrated both the content of the arguments and the manner in which they are delivered can positively and negatively impact on the strength of the argument. We tried to match prosody with argumentation, which contributes to synthesizing naturalness in political speeches.

Interruptions disrupt the prosodic structure of the statement and conflict with phonetic signals of role switching, such as high/low pitch or terminal tone variations. Opponents convey confidence through pitch variations: the low pitch is an indicator of assertiveness and certainty, whereas the high pitch suggests uncertainty. High pitch occurs when the new information (rheme) is introduced, while low pitch reflects previously stated information (theme). High pitch can also be a strategy to express emotions or a tool to make the opponent give up and concede the role. One more nuance concerning interruptions in political debates is that they are distinctive of remarks in terms of "accompaniment" of the communicative center (rheme) with a terminal tone, which is not observed in interruptions.

Moreover, the goal in political debates is sometimes the representation of definiteness and precision in what is being refuted. Refutation is the strategic means — the pragmatic indicator of assertive modality. We witnessed that refutation is based on a wide-focus voice segment and is usually conveyed through a high pitch range. Increasing voices serve as signals of resistance to relinquish the communicative initiative. In addition, the strategy is sometimes employed to reach a decisive conclusion, regardless of interruptions or remarks. To sum up, those utterances that contain politicians' viewpoints, contain the most important data in communicative content and are distinguished with the help of pitch modulation.

This analysis seeks to deepen understanding of non-verbal argumentative strategies in political discourse. The existing conflict of goals, emotional struggle, linguistic and paralinguistic means are the evidences of competitive nature of this discourse, as A. Mammadov observes: "...a significant part of the meaning of text is contained in explicit information expressed by linguistic signs in text.

The textual potential of these signs and expression of the potentials in language realize the actual meaning of text" [Mammadov, 2008, p. 52].

It is clear that politicians employ not only prosodic markers but also a range of structural, lexical, rhetorical, and stylistic elements to express and reinforce their point of view. Thus, future analysis will further explore the relationship between non-verbal and verbal features in political discourse.

Adherence to Ethical Standards

Since the study is an analysis of the phonograms of political debates, the videos of which are already in the public domain, it does not require any ethical restrictions. It is purely academic in nature and does not affect people.

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REPRESENTATION OF THE STRATEGY OF INTERCEPTION BY PITCH VARIATIONS IN POLITICAL DEBATES

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Key words: *political debates, argumentative discourse, rhetorical strategies, prosodic means, strategy of interception.*

The political future of debating candidates is often shaped by the degree of credibility based on argumentative strategies. Today, political argumentation has gained particular relevance, especially due to its psychological impact on voters. In political debates, opponents who possess different political backgrounds employ diverse linguistic and prosodic styles.

Through linguistic analysis of selected audio and video materials, we identified several linguistic methods that achieve the objectives of divertissement, competitiveness and personification in political debates, which are the main characteristics of this type of political discourse. The differences between ordinary utterances, remark-utterances, simple overlays of remarks, role exchanges and intentional interruptions are also considered as manipulative means, as we argue that these are deliberate and determined by the speakers' communicative strategies.

We focus particularly on the dialogic nature of televised debates, which in this type of political discourse operates on two-levels: "politician – opponent", and "politician – audience".

Participants in televised debates use various argumentative strategies to influence both their opponents and voters, often deliberately aiming to discredit their opponents and create a contrasting background for manipulation. For this analysis, we focused on the interception strategy, one of the most commonly used in political debates.

In the paper, we examine the speech behavior of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton as a tool to create their media portrait and personify their political programs.

Thus, the article focuses on the strategy of interception and its prosodic realization by means of such non-verbal tools as pitch variations accompanied by deliberate interruptions, remarks, refutations and increasing volume of voice which contribute to argumentation in political debates. In other words, the paper *aims* at benefiting to identify the role of prosodic means in argumentative political debates.

The *research methodology* involves the code biology approach by applying experimental phonetic and phonological methods.

Our analysis reveals that prosody is crucial not only in shaping political discourse but also in reflecting politicians' viewpoints. We tried to match prosody with argumentation, which contributes to synthesizing naturalness in political speeches.

Interruptions disrupt the prosodic structure of the statement and conflict with phonetic signals of role switching, such as high/low pitch or terminal tone variations. Opponents convey confidence through pitch variations: the low pitch is an indicator of assertiveness and certainty, whereas the high pitch suggests uncertainty. High pitch occurs when the new information (rheme) is introduced, while low pitch reflects previously stated information (theme). High pitch can also be a strategy to express emotions or a tool to make the opponent give up and concede the role.