

SECTION 3. ROMANCE, GERMANIC, AND OTHER LANGUAGES

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-664-5-15>

THE PROSODIC IMPLEMENTATION OF INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL SPEECHES (A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH PUBLIC LEADERS' WAR NARRATIVES)

ПРОСОДИЧНЕ ВТІЛЕННЯ ВПЛИВУ В ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ПРОМОВАХ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ НАРАТИВІВ ВІЙНИ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ ДЕРЖАВНИХ ЛІДЕРІВ)

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The modern stage in the development of phonetics and phonology is characterised by extensive theoretical and experimental research conducted within cognitive-discursive, communicative-pragmatic, and functional-energetic frameworks. Considerable attention is focused on investigating the prosodic actualisation of various discourse types and genres, as well as on examining intonational means and speech organisation as key determinants in the realisation of persuasive influence.

Although contemporary approaches to discourse analysis have enabled a more comprehensive exploration of its multifaceted nature, one of the most pressing and yet insufficiently addressed issues concerns the optimal organisation of political communication through linguistic resources, especially intonation, as a crucial instrument in the actualisation of rhetorical impact within political discourse.

In the current context of heightened dynamism and turbulence, political discourse attracts particular attention from social scientists and linguists because it seeks to fulfil the fundamental purpose of political communication. Speech plays a pivotal role in shaping a politician's public image and authority, as well as the level of trust they command among the

public [1, c. 8–9]. Against the backdrop of war, it is paramount to examine how politicians represent their state's interests in the international arena. Understanding which rhetorical strategies foster effective engagement with the democratic world not only shapes the international community's response but also enables politicians to advance their objectives.

It is important to point out that a political speech is interpreted as a carefully prepared oral address delivered in public with the aim of persuading the audience of the importance of particular political views, actions or positions; as a text that outlines the political situation and defines the prospects for political change; and as a highly politicised presentation containing both positive and negative evaluations, functioning as “an effective means of recognising and demonstrating leadership” and involving attempts to persuade and lead people [2, c. 14]. Such a speech is effective because it uses various strategies, tactics, and persuasive techniques, and because the speaker can skilfully interpret facts, implement expressive and emotive language, and use paralinguistic features of communication. Ultimately, a political speech serves as an effective means of influencing the audience and shaping their attitudes [3, c. 60–69].

The primary objective of a political speech is to persuade the audience. To achieve this goal there are certain technologies, that are understood as a clear sequence of the speaker's communicative actions, which, taking into account extralinguistic factors of communication, should lead to a certain quite specific result of influence [4, p. 30]. Speakers consider socio-cultural and historical factors, as well as the professional background, education, gender, age, and regional origins of their listeners.

It should also be noted that in political discourse, prosody plays a crucial role in enabling speakers to emphasise the emotional content of their message, draw attention to key points, and enhance the persuasive impact of their speech. As a system of suprasegmental components of the sound structure of the language, it is expressed in melody, tempo, pausation, voice timbre, loudness, stress, and rhythm, which are considered in terms of physical and perceptual characteristics. Prosody is one of the most vivid ways to influence the audience that corresponds to a specific situation of communication and the speaker's image [5, p. 14]. Prosodic features also contribute to the expression of tone and the interpretation of meaning.

Prosodic features play a significant role in political discourse. They enhance the emotional dimension of a message, strengthen its persuasive force and draw attention to the fundamental ideas. Prosody contributes to the expression of tonal and semantic nuances, and can convey diverse meanings. Through variations in pitch and loudness, prosody can attract subconscious attention, reinforce meanings expressed by lexical and syntactic means, or function as an independent carrier of meaning [6, c. 17].

In political speeches, prosody performs several important functions. Firstly, it creates an emotional effect; variations in intonation can indicate determination, indignation, sympathy, or confidence. Secondly, it highlights important messages, as strategic pauses and shifts in tempo draw attention to key arguments. Finally, rhythm and tempo facilitate audience engagement and information retention, making central concepts more memorable and influential.

The prosodic characteristics of political speech reflect various semantic, rhetorical, and situational contexts that can influence speech [4]. When analysing a corpus of political discourse from the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war, prosodic features deliberately aimed at exerting influence are examined both independently and in interaction with lexical and grammatical means. The primary prosodic characteristics of politicians' speech for implementing influence include the actualisation of utterances within short intonational groups; words highlighted by logical and semantic stress; extended tonal ranges; falling terminal tones; of varying pitch levels, often shifting to an emotionally charged word; varied tempo combined with increased loudness; perceptual pauses to emphasise the significant word; clarity of rhythmic organisation. The interplay of melodic, dynamic, and temporal prosodic parameters serves to focus the audience's attention to the speech and its pragmatic objectives.

Among many politicians, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer consistently demonstrates his support for Ukraine. His speaking style is generally calm and balanced, with clear reasoning and an emphasis on the importance of his political position, which conveys reliability and authority. He rarely employs sharp changes in intonation, reflecting his preference for careful analysis and informed decision-making. On the basis of the carried out auditory analysis, the typical features of the prosodic implementation of influence in Keir Starmer's speech on 24 February 2025, delivered at a meeting of world leaders commemorating the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine [7], include:

- short intonation groups and the low falling tone accompanied by slow tempo, normal loudness, and a regular and well-organised rhythm add persuasiveness and confidence: *we have been 'full of 'admi_ration^ξ for the in_credible re_sponse^ξ of the U_krainian people.*||;
- word accentuation and checked scales with an ascending pitch movement on the first stressed syllable, the mid falling tone which is intensified by an internal non-boundary pause before the nucleus accompanied by decelerated tempo: *This is a 'time for^ξ unity.*||; *Because ,russia's e'conomy 'is 'in^ξ trouble...*||;

- mid falling tones shifted onto significant words, in the combination with decelerated tempo: *In this \crucial moment| as \talks begin| – we must 'work to'gether to \shape the ,outcome.||*

- broken descending stepping scales combined with the low or high falling tones: *...it's \right| that we 'mark this \grim 'anni'versary³ to ,gether.||; in oppo'sition to \russia's 'bar`baric in,vasion;*

- low falling tone accompanied by decelerated tempo and normal loudness helps the speaker sound confident and categorical: *For 'three ,years| we have been u ,nited|.*

To conclude, prosody constitutes a fundamental component in shaping linguistic influence within political communication. Key prosodic features that underpin the realisation of political speech as a genre of English-language political discourse include melody, stress patterns, rhythm, pauses, tempo, and loudness. The strategic combination of these features significantly enhances the persuasive and communicative impact of political speeches on the audience.

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