

Analysing the Power of Language in a Political Text

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Abstract: This research tackles the analysis of overstatement as a persuasive tool and one of the manifestations of the power of language in a political text. It aims at:

1. Demonstrating the concept of the power of language and the common theories related to it.
2. Demonstrating the concept of persuasion as an effective tool in language power.
3. Illuminating the effect of overstatements, as a kind of persuasion, on the audience to accept or reject certain opinions or strategies.

The researcher has chosen a political speech delivered in front of the US Congress on March 16, 2022 by the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, which is taken as a sample. The procedure followed in this research was reading and writing down the overstated sentences used by the Ukrainian President and illuminating their powerful effect in persuasion.

The President presented his issue in an exaggerated way to get the desired effect on Congress to obtain their support in his war against Russia, using some Stylistic ways as superlative degree of comparison of adjectives, metaphor, and hyperbolic metaphors.

Keywords: Volodymyr Zelensky, Power of language, Political Text, Persuasion, Overstatement.

استقصاء القوة في اللغة في نص سياسي

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المستخلص: يتناول هذا البحث تحليل "المبالغة" بوصفها أداة اقناع فعالة وواحدة من مظاهر القوة في اللغة في نص سياسي. يهدف البحث الى:

1. تسليط الضوء على مفهوم "قوة اللغة" والنظريات الخاصة به وشرح مفهوم "الاقناع" بوصفه أداة فعالة في قوة اللغة.
 2. ايضاح أثر المبالغة باعتبارها أداة من أدوات الإقناع في الجمهور لقبول أو رفض بعض الآراء والاستراتيجيات.
- اختارت الباحثة خطبة الرئيس الأوكراني فولوديمير زيلينسكي أمام الكونغرس الأمريكي في السادس عشر من آذار لعام الفين واثنين وعشرين نموذجا للتحليل وذلك باستخراج جمل المبالغة في خطابه وبيان أثرها الفعال في الإقناع. استخدم الرئيس الأوكراني أسلوب المبالغة في عرض قضيته لأحداث الأثر المطلوب في نفوس أعضاء الكونغرس من أجل إقناعهم للحصول على الدعم والمساندة في حربه ضد روسيا واستعمل لأجل ذلك عددا من أساليب المبالغة مثل درجة صيغة التفضيل للصفات والاستعارة والمبالغة في الاستعارة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فولوديمير زيلينسكي، قوة اللغة، النص السياسي، الإقناع، المبالغة.

1. Introduction.

1.1 The Basis of the Study:

Language is the ideal method of communication in our culture, the powerful tool we use to empower our desires, and to direct and line up our energy. We're constantly using language to elicit our ideas and beliefs into concrete reality. As we become more aware of the impact and power of language, we can make more informed and insightful choices about how we express ourselves and how we interpret others. Accordingly, linguists have been busy developing theories regarding the power of language to understand how language can be exploited to achieve the desirable results. These theories are Waring theory, Fairclough theory, Giles Accommodation theory, Goffman: Face theory, Brown and Levinson theory and Sinclair and Coulthard theory.

The most prominent field in which the use of language as a tool of power appears is in the field of politics, as the authority is the one who can exploit the media and use language in it for influence and persuasion. To do so, it uses certain techniques as simile, metaphor, allusion, repetition, overstatements, parallelism, alliteration, humour, imperative verbs, etc.

Overstatement, which this research sheds light on, is the act of describing or explaining something in a way that makes it seem more important or more serious than it is actually. Therefore, it is considered to be an effective rhetorical tool for persuasion, especially by politicians, which will be demonstrated after analysing the speech of the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky before the US Congress on March 16, 2022, to get their support in his war against Russia.

1.2 Aims of the Study.

The study aims to:

1. Review the concept of the power of language in detail and its importance in persuasion, especially in political texts, and tackle the most important theories pertaining to it.
2. Analyse the effective impact of overstatement as a powerful rhetorical tool to influence and persuade the public in the speech of the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky before the US Congress on March 16, 2022.

1.3 Limits of the Study.

This study is limited to:

1. Demonstrate the persuasion as one of the manifestations of the Power of language.
2. Tackle an overstatement as one of the effective rhetorical devices in persuasion.
3. Demonstrate the power of language in persuasion by using overstatement in the speech of the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky before the US Congress on March 16, 2022.

1.4 The Procedure of the Study:

This research is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical (the analysis of the text). The researcher has chosen the speech of the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in front of the US

Congress on March 16, 2022, trying to demonstrate the effective impact of the overstatements he used for persuasion.

1.5 Value of the Study:

The research has a two- fold value: theoretical and practical. On the theoretical part, it presents a detailed survey of the concept of power of language, and persuasion as one of its manifestations as well as the concept of overstatement as a powerful rhetorical device in persuasion. On the practical side, the research illuminates the big effect of overstatements on orienting the emotions and opinions of the audience. Thus, the research is thought to be valuable to the teachers of English linguistics, textbook writers, analysts, and translators.

(Honourable professor, we used to write the value of the study in this way, as if it were a cliché, and this is present in all my previously published researches, but if you find it necessary to abbreviate it, I don't mind)

2. Language and power:

Language is a natural human system of conventionalized symbols through which humans can express and communicate their thoughts and feelings and perform different functions. It's a means of human communication, whether spoken or written, using words to express what we think or believe (Freud, 2018).

Language, however, is not merely words, it's a cultural, social and psychological phenomenon which has a power that makes it able to control one's environment and influence events. It enables us to take different positions in world through shaping the way we see the world and how we act on a daily basis (Shashkevich, 2019).

We usually use language to achieve our purposes daily in a very skilful manner, deliberately or un-deliberately (Westerlundruslana, 2015).

2.1 Language Power Theories:

2.1.1 Wareing Theory: Shan Wareing) (cited in Study Smarter, 2022) stated three main types of power:

1. **Political power:** refers to the power of authority, such as politicians or police.
2. **Personal power:** a power which depends on person's occupation or his role in society. For example, a head teacher has more power than a teaching assistant.
3. **Social group power:** Social group power can be defined as a power presented by a group of people attributed to certain social factors as age, class, gender or ethnicity. As suggested by Wareing, these three types of power can be divided into instrumental power and influential power. Instrumental power is authoritative i.e. people who have this power, do not have to convince others of their power of persuade them to listen to them, because of the authority they have. For example, government

officials, police, and head teachers are people who have instrumental power. They use language to maintain or strengthen their authority. Instrumental Power language features are:

- Formal register.
- Imperative sentences as demands, advice or giving requests.
- Modal Verbs, e.g., 'should, shouldn't', 'must, mustn't'.
- Mitigation: using language to reduce the seriousness and the impact of what is being said.
- Conditional sentences, e.g. (if you don't do this, You'll regret).
- Declarative statements, such as, (in this lecture, we'll look at the organs of speech).
- Latinate words, using words derived from Latin or simulate Latin (cited in ibid).

Influential Power: it is the power, which is used to influence and persuade people to do something by those who do not have any authority but trying to have power and influence over others. This type of power is seen in adverts, books, newspapers, and politics (Much Ado Revision, 2022).

Features of influential power are:

- Assertions using Forceful and confident statements of facts such as: (We all know that England is the greatest country in the world).
- Metaphors: a powerful Figure of speech that is used to reassure the audience and elicit the power of memory, connecting the speaker and the listener with a strong bond.
- Loaded language: language that provokes strong emotions and exploits feeling.
- Embedded assumptions: the speaker assumes that the listener is really interested in what he is saying.

Instrumental and influential powers are present in some spheres of society, as in politics. Politicians have authority over people, because they impose the laws, and at the same time they try to persuade them to accept their policies (Study Smarter, 2022).

2.1.2 Fairclough Theory:

The linguist Norman Fairclough stated four types of power:

1. Power in spoken discourse: in which there are two participants, one is powerful and tries to impose Conversational constraints on the less powerful participant, as in the case between the teacher and student, or manager and employee.
2. Power within the discourse: power which is demonstrated by the choice of language, e.g. formal register. If a person in an interaction uses formal modes of address (as 'sir ') and the other is not, this shows a power imbalance in the language itself.
3. Power behind discourses: indicating power other than linguistic features such as, ideological, political, legal, hierarchical, hence lexical choices reflect a wider power at play (My Tutor, 2022, Study Smart 2022).
4. Synthetic Personalisation, it is a concept that describes an artificial Friendliness used by powerful institutions to reinforce their power. Fairclough referred to it as "a tendency to give the impression of

treating each of the people handled en masse as an individual." This concept shows how power is constructed through manipulation of language. Politicians, advertisers and charity campaigners often target their audience in very familiar and Friendly way to make them feel special. To do so, Fairclough suggested three stages:

1. Building relations through personalisation: Creating an informal and intimate register by using personal pronouns, informal lexis, cultural references, grammatical and graphological choices.
2. Manipulation of members' resources: this refers to the reader's cultural and cognitive understanding of the world. The text producers carefully select the cultural references in visual advertisements and in written or spoken texts to make readers accept their ideology and their view of the world.
3. Build the consumer (audience) into the ideal receiver of the ideological message via a picture or language (OCR, 2017).

2.1.3 Giles Accommodation Theory:

Howard Giles developed the theory that refers to process by which participants in a conversation adjust their accent or diction, or any other aspect of language to match the speech style of the other participant (Nordquist, 2020).

The theory is about convergence and divergence. Convergence means we adjust our language to be more like the other person's language style to reduce the social distance between the speakers. This makes the participants feel appreciated and valued. Divergence, on the other hand, is emphasising the differences in our language against the language the person we're talking to (My Tutor, 2022) people in this case do not want to accommodate. For example, two people belong to different social classes may deliberately choose to maintain their specific style of communication to enforce the differences between them.

2.1.4 Goffman: Face Theory:

According to the sociologist, Erving Goffman, face is the positive social value a person claims by acting in a certain way, dressing in a certain way, or caring himself in a certain way. We're expected to act in an expected way so as not to appear as something else. This is usually employed in social situations to support convention. This can be presented in:

Presentation of face: maintaining own face and respecting others has an important social value to maintain social interaction.

Face-threatening act: acts like mock, criticise, discredit, ignore, and interrupt, can jeopardise social interaction (Lambert, 2020) (Much Ado Revision, 2022).

2.1.5 Brown and Levinson: Face Work:

Peneolope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson proposed a theory which is centred on the notion of Politeness and leads back to the term of "face" introduced by Ervin Goffman. They distinguish between:

Negative politeness strategies: Strategies that are performed to avoid offense through using social conventions that respect privacy and show that one doesn't want to introduce, for example, 'excuse me', formal address terms, or mitigated imperatives.

Positive politeness strategies: Strategies used to avoid offense by confirming Friendliness. They work to reduce the Social distance and form relationships through communication, for example, complements, name address, offer of friendship, compliments, showing direct interest, etc. (Ello, 2022).

2.1.6 Sinclair and Coulthard Theory: I. R. F Model:

Sinclair and Coulthard developed a rank scale model to analyse discourse. Initiation-response-feedback, or IRF, expresses teacher-Fronted educational conversation in which the teacher initiates, the learner responds, the teacher gives feedback. For example, a teacher asks a learner a question about the use of the present perfect, the learner gives an answer, and then the teacher says whether the answer is correct or not. Though this approach has been criticized as being more about the learner saying what the teacher wants to hear rather than real communication, still it can provide a useful framework for developing meaningful communication in a well-controlled form. For example, there is room for authentic input in an IRF dialogue such as:

- How many brothers do you have?
- Three!
- Oh, so you've got three brothers! That's a Family!, etc. (British Council, 2022).

This was a brief overview of the most important theories related to language and power that show the great impact of language on social interaction in all its aspects, including politics.

3. Power of Language in Political Texts:

There is no doubt that the authority through the ages has tried and is trying to make the language an investment that achieves its existence, entity, and hegemony, because it's the real owner of the means of language production, particularly the media. The danger of language is evident in that it's the tool by which the authority can direct the masses and change public opinion on any issue. It is able to tighten its grip on the collective mind of the masses through playing with words and their meanings.

The use of language in politics has led to change in a number of concepts and ideas on many issues related to the state and politics, such as citizenship, democracy, freedom, justice, equality terrorism, and other concepts. These concepts are the keys to the linguistic game that the authority wields with the help of the media, writers, and researchers who can create the concept and manipulate it to deliver it to the minds of the masses who could either accept it and live with it or not according to what will serve the interests of the authority.

The masses are the victims of this game, because they're being led unconsciously to meanings and connotations they see as absolute truth and pure good whereas may be they're just falsehoods (AL- Kofhi, 2016). The term "terrorism", for instance, which is one of the most commonly used terms in our contemporary times until now still lacks a specific reference related to its connotation, i.e. it's a term that

refers to different concepts deliberately-used by the authority to drop it on whom it wants, when, and where it wants. Overtime, repeated use of this concept in a certain way will form a specific conception with a certain significance which may be recorded in dictionaries or taught in schools and universities (ibid).

Carol Cohn, while working in a defense and technology centre in the US, discovered that the defense intellectuals who were working there used a specialized language variant, which she called technostrategic. She found that this language contains several linguistic devices that have a special strong effect on its speakers. The first device is the use of abstractions in the form of abbreviations, as BAMBI, meaning Ballistic Missile Boost Interception. She suggests that such concepts educe positive feelings, in order to distance the speakers from the horrible reality they are discussing.

Cohn introduces a further device, which is euphemism. For example, terms such as "clean bombs" or "damage limitation Weapon" provoke the idea that these extremely destructive nuclear weapons are much less harmful than they actually are. Using these linguistic devices, according to Cohn, turns discussions about nuclear arms and their consequences into strictly technical conversations, masking the lives of thousands of people that are at risk. She sees that technical strategic language affects and configures speakers' thoughts, and she comes to believe that this language both reflects and shapes the nature of the US Strategic nuclear project and that it plays a central role in allowing defense thinkers to think and act as they do (Freud, 2018).

Politicians usually use rhetorical devices in their speeches as effective tools to persuade others to give them power. Rhetoric, which is the art of using language effectively and persuasively, is used by politicians as political strategies to create persuasive arguments in political debates. Here are some of the strategies used in political rhetoric:

- Simile and metaphor.
- Allusion.
- Repetition.
- Overstatements and understatements.
- Parallelism.
- Puzzled or redundant questions.
- Leading questions.
- Use of lists.
- Alliteration.
- Use of 1st person plural pronouns changes in tone and intonation.
- Using imperative verbs.
- Use of humor.
- Tautology prevarication, etc. (Moore, 2003) (Study Smarter, 2022)

Here are some examples that demonstrate the use of some of these rhetorical devices in some real political texts:

- 1- The moving, motivational and persuasive rhetoric of Churchill's speeches during the world war in 1940 demonstrate the effectiveness of language. Churchill's 'We will never surrender', made the British people cling to hope where really there was none. He used the first plural pronoun 'we' which is repeated at the beginning of each sentence and echoed in 'our' produced the desirable effect of proclaiming collective awareness of the resistance. Consider: "we shall not flag nor Fail ", " we shall go on to the end ", "we shall never surrender ", etc. Besides repetition, Churchill used alliteration as a persuasive technique as in "flag nor fail", "streets and hills" (Huckle, 2018).
- 2- Peggy Noonan, Ronald Reagan's speechwriter, used a powerful technique that is allusion to explain the disaster of challenger space shuttle explosion in 1986. Allusion means using a powerful phrase that the audience already know. So, he borrowed an image From John Gillespie Magee's poem "High Flight" which begins: "Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth" and ends: "...I've... put out my hand and touched the face of God". Noonan Said: "We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye, and slipped the surly bonds of earth, to touch the face of God (Moore, 2003).
- 3- To make a statement and introduce it by asking a question or series of questions is a powerful technique in information leaflets that pose the question from the readers' viewpoint. A question like "How can a Labour government raise standards in education?" leads to an exposition of the party's policy. For example, a booklet called 'Welcome to the Labour party' which gives information to new members, contains pages including statements that are introduced by questions, each set out as a section heading, like:
 - "How can I get involved?"
 - "What happens at local policy Forums?"
 - "Do I have to go along to a local policy forum to have my say? ", and "What is the future?" (ibid).

4. Power of Language in persuasion:

All of the aforementioned rhetorical means are in fact means used to persuade and influence the recipients. Persuasion is the act of changing individuals' perspectives and ideas through making them see things the way speakers want them to see. Kenechukwu, et al. (2013: 955) explained that persuasion is a way to get people to take the desired action.

Lakoff (1982) defined persuasion as the non-reciprocal attempt or intention of one party to change the behavior, intentions, feelings or viewpoints of the recipients by communicative means. Political rhetoric, religious sermons, advertising, propaganda, court language are examples of persuasive discourse. According to Searle (1969) persuasion is recognized as a directive speech act which indicates that the speaker's purpose is to get the hearer to commit himself to some course of action. In this sense, persuasion is an attempt to make the world matches the words.

Twenty three centuries ago, Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, presented many philosophical and intellectual achievements concerning the theory of rhetoric, which he defines as the art of speaking and addressing the audience in a persuasive manner. This theory is not only limited to persuading through speaking, but it also includes all types of communication as writing and visual communication. Aristotle developed a triangle which each side of it represents a fundamental base that the persuasion stands on.

Aristotle's triangle of rhetoric and Persuasion consists of three elements (parts), which are: Logos, Ethos, and pathos.

Logos (Logic): The purpose of using logic in Persuasion is to ensure the clarity of the message conveyed to the audience, as well as organizing the ideas and presenting them in a regular sequence to create a complete and correct vision of the idea to be communicated.

Logic relates to the reliability of the information and sources a speaker uses when addressing his audience which makes his words convincing, because he approximates the truth and avoids the ambiguity. The application of logic for persuasion helps to draw the audience the speaker's/ writer's point of view and helps them to avoid mistakes, besides providing sufficient arguments that respond the audience's doubts and questions. The speaker/ writer can make sure that he applies the logic in his speech or in the text addressed to the audience by asking himself a number of questions, the answers of which will reveal any defect or errors, if any. Examples of these questions are:

- Is the idea/ message clear and determined?
- Are the reasons and evidences supporting the idea/ message strong and reliable?
- Is the arrangement of ideas logical? (Al – Talafih, 2022).

Ethos (Credibility): Ethos means persuasion through character. The speaker/ writer is able to convince the audience of his message or idea by proving that he is credible, fair, and knows very well what he is talking about. Credibility " in Aristotle's triangle is not limited to proving the morals and good character of the speaker/ writers, it also includes making the audience feel that they too are good and worthy of respect, and that their opinion is always respected. To verify credibility for persuasion, we should know:

- What are the qualifications of the speaker/ writer?
- Is the speaker/ writer qualified to discuss the proposed idea?
- Does the speaker/ writer use reliable sources that are appropriate to the idea/ message being presented?
- Does the speaker, writer respect different points of view?
- Does the speaker/ writer present the idea in a clear and professional manner?
- Does the speaker/ writer use the tone or style that suitable for the audience?
- Does the choice of words used by the speaker/ writer fit the audience and the proposed idea? (ibid).

Pathos (Emotions): Exploiting emotions in persuasion is accomplished through stimulating the emotions of the audience, i.e. the speaker/ writer directs the emotions of the recipients in a particular way in order to win them over to his side.

It's worth noting that the speaker/ writer should be careful when using emotions in persuasion lest the audience feel that their emotions are being manipulated, a matter which may lead to counterproductive results. To verify the exploitation of emotions in persuasion, we should know:

- What type of feelings will be transmitted to the audience in accordance with the nature of the idea/ message? Will it be feelings of sadness, fear, anger, etc.?
- Is there mutual trust with the audience? (ibid).

Modern theories suppose many techniques in persuasive language. The most common techniques are:

- **Claim:** our claim is the gist of our argument. When delivering a persuasive message, we have to state our claim as clearly as possible. This enables us to demonstrate our viewpoint vividly and ensures that the audience will understand the message correctly. In addition, it ensures that there's only one interpretation thus prevents other different interpretations.
- **Repetition:** We can use repetition to emphasize our point and reinforce an argument. Repeating words or phrases creates a familiarity with our point or message, hence stays in the mind of the audience and makes the message more memorable. To do so, we have to choose the key points that we want to emphasize and keep on repeating them throughout the text or speech. However, repetition should be used wisely, because overdoing it will make the audience think that the content of the message is redundant (Yambao, 2020).
- **Colloquial Language:** Sometimes it's useful to use colloquial language in persuasion, because it makes the message clearer. Besides, it seems friendlier and makes the idea more practical and realistic.
- **Jargon Words:** Although we have been advised not to use jargon or complex terminology as much as possible, yet they're effective in persuasion. This is helpful if the audience is professional and intellectual. Using jargon words and formal language makes the speaker appear knowledgeable and the idea for message appears reasonable and rational (ibid).
- **Anecdotal evidence:** An anecdote is a type of evidence that based on a personal story. People relate to personal experiences and stories which are good ways to define new concepts. It triggers imagination, thus it makes the idea more vivid and relatable and keeps the audience engaged. It is effective especially when supported by Facts (Waldron and Payne, 2021).
- **Bias:** Bias means presenting one side of an issue to influence audience. The speaker/ writer states his claim and biases then explains why this one- sidedness is helpful and making sense to the audience.

- **Expert opinion:** Quoting expert opinions can help making our persuasive message more credible. Not only does it add substance, but it puts more weight on our argument. When people see that experts agree with us, they are moved and think that it would make sense to agree with our opinion. The characters whom we want to quote should be respected and well known to make our claim more powerful and believable.
- **Facts and Statistical evidence:** Incorporating statistics and facts into our persuasive message adds weight to our argument, because it shows that we have researched and investigated our claim. The message will be considered correct because the facts and statistics are indisputable and irrefutable (Yambao, 2020).
- **Generalization:** It indicates that what is true for some is true for the majority. It is used to simplify the problem and prove that our claim makes sense because the effect experienced by many. However, this is effective if the audience's position is already on the same side as ours, but is not convincing for those who have doubts and evidence to refuse it. Thus, we have to use generalizations that tell common beliefs that many accept and support.
- **Comparison:** Comparison is another technique used to simplify complex issues through comparing two things to present an idea. It can guide the audience to see how things relate and thus will help in getting them to agree with our viewpoint. We usually use similes, metaphors, and analogies to illustrate comparisons.
- **Clichés:** A cliché is an overused phrase. It can help communicating our viewpoints quickly, because it is familiar and uncomplicated. So, the audience can easily grasp our point and consequently easily accept our idea (ibid).

These techniques, in addition to the aforementioned rhetorical techniques, are effective means to have a beneficial and realistic effect on the audience as long as they're not used for manipulation, so as to achieve mutual benefit for both parties.

5. Overstatement as a powerful Technique in Persuasion:

Overstatement, also exaggeration, or hyperbole, is when language is used to amplify the intended meaning. These statements are not intended to be taken literally rather, they're used to emphasize the importance of our statement. If verbal irony says the opposite of what we mean, exaggeration simply says more than what we mean (Dunhan, 2019).

It is a rhetorical device or figure of speech that is used to evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression. A sentence like "The bag weighed a ton" is an overstatement and makes the point that the bag was very heavy, though it doesn't weigh a ton actually (English Dictionary, 2022). Overstatement is the opposite of understatement which is representing something as less than what it is. When making an understatement, the issue at hand is minimized or made to seem less important for an ironic effect or

simply to be polite for example, someone wins his first trophy and saying it was "not a big deal" when it was a big deal (Your dictionary, 2022).

The Overstatement is mostly used in political Speeches and texts, as politics is the field of competition between candidates and the race to win the public for this party or that or this ideology or that. So, there is nothing better than using exaggeration by politicians, because it is a powerful way to influence the emotions of the public and gain their affection. For example, Margaret Thatcher (1998) (cited in Al-Dalawi and Al-Mahdawi, 2019) overstates praising the merits of the addressee in the following:

"You are members of the finest police force in the world. Our long and proud tradition of freedom under the law, which has been the envy of other countries, has always depended and still depends on a wholly impartial police Force." such a type of praise threatens the addressee's faces in that it puts pressure on the addressee in future which means that he might be expected to do some action to preserve the values that have been mentioned by the speaker.

Tony Blair (1998) (cited in *ibid*), intends to make his addressees comply with what he wants them to believe or act. Consider the following example: "But I also believe America at its best is a powerful force for good in the world; one of a few countries willing and able to stand up for what it believes." Mr. Blair overstates a compliment by numerating the merits of the addressee. His intention is to put pressure on the addressee to consider the implied desire.

6. Text Analysis:

This research is concerned with investigating the power of language in persuasion by using overstatement in the speech of the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to the US Congress on 16 March- 2022. He was trying to persuade them to stand by Ukraine in its war against Russia by providing it with arms and the maximum possible material support and imposing severe sanctions on Russia to repel aggression against Ukraine. Let's consider the following sentences:

"Just like many other cities and communities in our beautiful country which found themselves in the worst war since World War II."

The Ukrainian president here describes this war as the worst war after the World War II. It's clear from this description that he intends to exaggerate the effect on Congress, as it brings to the mind the terrible memory of the Second World War, which took the lives of millions, as well as the material and psychological devastation it caused. Certainly, no one wants to return to such wars, and therefore the hostile state must be confronted with deterrent procedures. In this context he says:

"Those who give their best sons and daughters to stop this full- scale Russian invasion."

We note here the use of the superlative degree of comparison of adjectives, which is one of the ways to express overstatement, as 'worst' and 'best.' The above examples of the use of the superlative degree of comparison of adjectives strengthen the listener's impression and influence his emotions (Vlasova, 2021), besides the use of the adjective 'full – scale' which has a profound impact on the feeling of the ferocity of the war.

- In: "It went on a brutal offensive against our values. Basic human values."

We also notice the use of the exaggerative adjectives 'brutal', and 'offensive' which enhance hostile feelings against the enemy. Besides, the president describes that this attack is only on the Ukrainian national values, but on all human values, trying to convince the audience that Russian aggression threatens the whole world, not only Ukraine, and thus the whole world should be united in the confrontation. We can feel the exaggerated description that the-specific Russian military operations on Ukraine are expanding to include the whole world.

- In his speech, Zelensky used stylistic ways of expressing overstatement through metaphor and hyperbolic metaphor (ibid). In the following sentence, we can sense the exaggerated use of metaphor by describing the sky of the US being turned to black in the morning of December 7, 1941 because of the plane attacks:

"Remember Pearl Harbor. The morning of December 7,1941, when your sky was black from the planes attacking you."

Similarly, he said:

"Right now, this moment, every night for three weeks, in various Ukrainian cities, Russia has turned the Ukrainian sky into a source of death for thousands of people."

Using hyperbolic metaphor Zelensky over- described .the Ukrainian's sky to the source of death by the massive bombing of the Russian planes that kill thousands of people every day and night. In this context, the president deliberately used a hyperbolic metaphor based on comparison which plays a very significant role in affecting the audience's emotions and urging them to be convinced in his point of view. Such hyperbolic metaphors can be also seen in the following:

"All American companies must leave Russia from their market immediately because it is flooded with our blood ", he described Russia as soaked in Ukrainian blood.

Also, when he said: "Today my age stopped when the hearts of more than 100 children stopped beating", he presented a hyperbolic metaphorical image to deeply touch the Congress' feelings and affect their decision, particularly when he used the word "children" to win their sympathy. And even the number may be an exaggeration. "

- Other examples of overstatement can be seen in the following:

"We have to destroy every single aggressor who seeks to subjugate other nations."

The President here wants to emphasize that the only reason behind the Russian war against them is to subjugate and enslave them, while the world knows that the war had other preludes and reasons that are not limited to subjugation and enslavement only. He was exaggerating in presenting the hostile state as a tyrannical oppressor in order to spread hatred and malice in the hearts of the recipients. Let's look at the rest of the overstated sentences in this speech:

"I am asking to make sure the Russians do not receive a single penny they used to destroy people in Ukraine,... the destruction of Europe",

"...we have to defend this principle in the whole world",

"We have to defend the world ",

"... and quickly to save the world, to save life",

"Strong is brave and ready to fight for his citizens as citizens of the world for human rights",

"We're fighting for Europe and the world and our lives in the name of the future. That is why today the American people are helping not just Ukraine, but Europe and the world to keep the planet alive. To keep justice in history",

"I wish you to be the leader of the world".

In the above sentences, the President was repeatedly mentioning 'Europe' and the 'world' meaning to say that Russia doesn't want to swallow Ukraine alone, but the whole world and even the planet! This exaggerated description spreads fear and anxiety in the souls of the audience, considering that this war will destroy them as well. The President, as a consequence will win not only the Congress, but the whole world in his side. Accordingly, it will be easy to persuade the Congress to provide Ukraine with all the financial, military and humanitarian support it needs.

7. Conclusion.

The research has come to the following conclusions:

1. The concept of power of language refers to the lexical items and linguistic strategies used by people to assert and maintain power over others.
2. Persuasion is a literary technique used by writers/ speakers to present their ideas through reason and logic, in order to influence the audience. It's an art of effective speaking and writing in which writers/ speakers make their opinions believable through reasoning, evoke feelings, and establish their credibility.
3. Persuasion is mostly used by politicians for the purpose of winning the public to their side and makes them believe in what they impose on them. To do so, they use some persuasive techniques as, metaphors, simile, allusion overstatements, repetition, alliteration, etc.
4. An overstatement is an exaggeration used when we want to emphasize something important or impressive.
5. Overstatements were used by the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in his speech before the US Congress on March 16, 2022 in order to persuade them to help Ukraine in its war against Russia. He used certain stylistic ways as superlative degree of comparison of adjectives, metaphor, and hyperbolic metaphor to deeply affect their feelings and emotions.

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