THE MANIPULATIVE STRATEGY OF DISCREDITING IN US POLITICAL INTERVIEW

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Abstract

The research aims at the speech discrediting strategy investigation in the light of the manipulative influence on the addressee. The American politicians' interviews serve as a material for the case investigation. The paper considers, the concept of a political interview and the implementation of a discrediting strategy into a political text, highlights the main tactics and techniques of the discrediting strategy like the tactic of "unsupported derogation of authority", comparative tactics, the "quoting the object of discredit" tactic, accusation tactics, bullying tactics, the tactics of insult, polarizing tactics, tactics of a precedent text "hooking", the tactics of "aggressive opponent". The study provides the speech analyses of discrediting strategy implementation. The paper applies the methods of contextual and content analyses of political interview texts regarding the means of discrediting strategy realization via political discourse analysis. The paper results in describing discrediting strategy tactics and the language means that realize each tactic correspondingly.

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1. Introduction

The manipulation nowadays is one of the key communication strategies, based on the desire to impose the point of view or influence the recipients needs and opinions and aims to change the outlook of public consciousness (Abrahamyan, 2020; Velivchenko, 2019).

Manipulation is realized both in interpersonal and mass communication. Language manipulation as a method of influence is most often realized in two spheres of social life - politics and advertising. Being an effective tool of social consciousness influence, manipulation has become an inherent attribute of political communication. The recent years show the increase of interest to the problem of manipulative influence on the mass consciousness in psychology, political science, sociology and linguistics. Since the manipulative influence is built on the use of a whole range of different linguistic means, the question of studying them from the position of linguistics becomes especially relevant.

The restricted number of studies devoted to the problem of manipulative influence strategies and tactics (Egorova, 20215; Shkvorchenko, 2020; Velivchenko, 2019a), used in different types of texts, makes it difficult to determine the parameters of politicians' speech influence effectiveness. Of all the manipulating strategies the strategy of discrediting is considered to be one of the most preferred and frequently used by modern politicians, and requires a profound in-depth study. The research aims at the speech discrediting strategy investigation in the light of the manipulative influence on the addressee on the material of American politicians' interviews. The discredit strategy aims at creating a positive image of a politician against the opponent's negative one (Ankudinova, 2011).

Thus, the paper considers, the concept of a political interview and the political text implementation of a discredit strategy, highlights the main tactics and techniques of the discredit strategy, provides the speech analyses of discrediting strategy implementation. Sirotin (2019), for example introduces the new term "discrediteme" to denote language units that realize the strategy. Being a particular case of a language sign, it includes metaphor, precedent names, emotionally loaded vocabulary, expressive language means (Sirotin, 2019).

2. Problem Statement

The problem of language means (implementing the discrediting strategy) identification in political discourse is of particular importance in respect to politician's speech effectiveness. Thus, the study provides the speech analyses of discrediting strategy implementation by means of different tactics. Some tactics of discrediting strategy used by US politicians appear to be more frequent and more effective. The paper is to result in describing discrediting strategy tactics, the language means that realize each tactic correspondingly and revealing the most preferable tactics in political interview.

3. Research Questions

The paper raises the questions of political interview concept; the linguistic approach to the political interview concept; tactics and techniques of of a discredit strategy implementation into a political interview; describing particular language means used in discrediting tactics and techniques; outlining among the tactic of "unsupported derogation of authority", comparative tactics, the "quoting the object of discredit" tactic,

accusation tactics, bullying tactics, the tactics of insult, polarizing tactic, tactic of a precedent text "hooking", the tactic of "aggressive opponent" the most preferable ones in US political interview.

4. Purpose of the Study

The research aims at the US politicians' speech discrediting strategy investigation in the light of the manipulative language influence on the addressee by means of language means study.

5. Research Methods

The main methods of the study are the contextual and content analyses of political interview texts. The material for this paper includes TV and radio interviews of American politicians (ABC News, CNN, Fox News, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)) and newspaper publications (The Washington Post, The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The New Yorker, The Foreign Affair, The Project Syndicate, The Nation, The American Thinker) from 2009 to 2021). The topics of these interviews are both domestic and foreign policy of the United States.

6. Findings

6.1. The concept of political interview

The issue of political interview is generally studied in terms of political discourse that was researched by many authors like: Chilton (1985, 1988, 2004), Fridkin and Kenney (2011), Geis (1987), Isaksen (2011), Vanderbeck and Johnson (2011), Wilson (1990), Zupnik (1994), and others. The linguistic techniques used in political discourse are studied by: Arnold (1993), Bodoc (2018), Bolinger (1980), Edelman (1977), Fairclough (1989), Kenzhekanova et al. 2015, Thomans and Wareing (1999); Van Dijk (1977, 1993, 2001, 2004, 2006).

The present days show the audience to increase the interest in the intriguing, provocative, sensational content, that makes journalists use interviews for public opinion influence. Either the interview informs or expresses the opinion it is always aimed at forming a "positive or negative recipient attitude or worldview, to influence his way of thinking" (Ankudinova, 2011, p. 23).

The paper regards the political interview as a text that represents a conversation between an interviewer and a politician about politics, as well as the recorded result of such conversation, as opposed to the broad understanding of a political interview as a conversation about politics with any interlocutor of interest to the journalist (Lavrinova, 2010; Lenets & Sergeeva, 2018).

The linguistic approach to political interview studies deals with the interview participants communicative behaviour, their speech portraits and the strategies they use. Such studies have not only theoretical value, but also help to form the image of a modern politician (Dobrosklonskaya, 2008; Eliseeva, 2004).

The recent studies exploit the notion of political media discourse that is according to Nikitina (2006) is a complex communicative phenomenon that aims at the struggle for power via the public opinion design, includes the text as the verbalized result of speech, context - situational and socio-cultural, as well as special language means that meet the goals and objectives of discourse. Taubaev (2015) claims political discourse to be a "mechanism that solves human beings' social problems, makes their lives better. In political discourse we can see reflection of people's problems and their solutions and only politicians can take

measures in solving problems by using political discourse. But in order to solve they need to use manipulation" (Taubaev, 2015, p. 254). Thus, the text of a political interview can be regarded as the constituent of political media discourse.

Evaluation is considered to be one of the main political interviews features and can be represented at all linguistic levels, from lexical, word-formation, etc., to phraseological. Some concepts in the text are always endowed with positive or negative connotations and have a manipulative property, especially when creating the opposition "our own/foreign". This opposition is universal because it has a basic, axiological character.

The idea of "our own" is on the scale of right and good, while all "alien", respectively, is bad and wrong, is successfully used in interviews. There is a common enemy, the "alien", which is discredited by politicians and/or journalists (Kochkin, 1999).

The motive of any political interview is a struggle for power that implies creating a favourable impression of a politician, forming a positive image with potential voters, accusations remove, getting rid the audience of doubts (Lukina, 2003). In order to achieve a positive audience response, the politician in an interview uses two main strategies - self-presentation and discrediting (Parshina, 2005). "Self-presentation is one of the most important communicative strategies and meets the politician's goals of presenting himself in the most favourable light and thereby ensuring his ideological and political dominance" (Chistyakova, 2015, p. 195).

The strategy of self-presentation is intertwined with the strategy of discrediting. The later implies belittling an opponent, thus elevating himself in the audience eyes. Using the discrediting strategy, the political interview participants make a negative assessment of other politicians and their qualities, wishing to present their opponents in an unfavourable light, to undermine their credibility and to lower their self-esteem (Krendeleva, 2013).

Thus, the political interview can be seen as a text that is constructed as a conversation, aimed at influencing the audience's world view. The next part of the study is focused on the manipulative potential of the discrediting strategy, examining the tactics and techniques in detail.

6.2. Tactics and techniques of discrediting strategies in US politicians' interviews

This paragraph examines the discrediting strategy and the tactics and techniques of its implementation in US politicians' interviews.

Kateneva (2010) defines discrediting strategy as "a strategy based on diminishing the authority of the opponent (a concrete politician, party or government), the concrete figures' image levelling in the reader's mind (delegitimization), humiliation, insult and denigration of criticized object. The motive behind the strategy is that the journalist is trying to understand the causes and consequences of the situation, the main objective being to find the culprits and to expose their activities" (Kateneva, 2010).

The recent linguistic studies prove this manipulative strategy to be the most successful in today's media (Nikitina, 2006) due to its special influence mechanism, which engages both the emotional and rational spheres of the addressee, thus making it possible to achieve the goals required.

Although there are several discrediting strategy tactics classifications, this paper exploits the classification elaborated by Kateneva (2010). The author identifies the following ones: "unproven belittling

of authority, comparative tactics, quoting the object of discredit, polarization, 'hooking', precedent text, turning neutral contexts into discrediting ones, insulting, aggressive opponent" (Kateneva, 2010).

The next part of the study examines the ways each of these tactics are used in US politicians' interviews, taken from The Wall Street Journal, CNN and other websites.

6.2.1. The tactic of "unsupported derogation of authority"

The unsupported derogation of authority tactic is extremely popular in recent political interview texts. The linguistic means with negative connotations is used to discredit the opponent. The most common techniques here are: belittling with irony, labelling, expressive irrationality and innuendo.

The example below is an illustration of the tactic implemented by means of irony derogation technique:

*(1) "And at the same time, **Europe is waking up -- I shouldn't say waking up, I don't mean it in a critical sense** - Europe is beginning to focus on how, in fact, they can play a constructive role in providing for access to their markets of the great natural resources that rest there."* (RFE/RL, 2021)

It is obvious that the author of the statement operates with a metaphor (Europe is waking up), after which he deliberately apologizes for such a comment, which takes the form of mockery.

Another example that illustrates the use of "belittling irony" is presented below. It was taken from an interview with Hunter Biden, in which he seeks to discredit the political figure of Donald Trump. Hunter Biden is a businessman and politician, son of U.S. President Joe Biden, who found himself in the midst of a major political scandal and corruption investigation in the United States:

*(2) "**Being the subject of Donald Trump's ire is a feather in my cap**. It's not something that I go to bed nervous about at night at all. The reason I'm able to do that is because I am absolutely enveloped in love of my family," said Biden* (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

"The "hint" technique is a manipulative technique based on the subtext creation. The reader gets only the illusion of recognizing the meaning. The use of such a technique can be seen in the following example.

*(3) "I think that they know who my dad is, and I think that **they know that my dad is not Donald Trump**," he said. "I certainly hope that there is no negative political ramifications of this. I think that the truth always wins."* (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

In his interview Hunter Biden alludes to family ties and generational continuity in the political "dynasties" of the United States, while deliberately associating his family (Hunter's father Joe Biden) with the true champions of truth in the controversial intricacies of people in power and not always "clean hands".

Next, let us turn to the interview with Joe Biden himself.

*(4) "Mr. Vice President, one last question on Iran. **Some Iranians argue that** your administration might ignore concerns about democracy and human rights while negotiating with Tehran on the nuclear issue."* (RFE/RL, 2021)

Interviewing Joe Biden, the journalist indirectly discredits the actions of the politician (as well as the actions of the entire state apparatus in general), appealing to public opinion (some Iranians argue). In this case the interviewer hint looks particularly "caustic" and critical, even though there is no open accusation against the authorities.

The technique of "labelling" is the designation of an event or actor by a word or expression associated in the recipient's mind with a negative phenomenon. This technique is based on the exploitation of prejudices and stereotypes, as the label created qualifies the object of description as something that the target audience of the publication finds suspicious, undesirable.

In his interviews, Joe Biden, being Vice President of the United States, often tries on the role of a public good advocate, and not just within one state, but globally.

*(5) "But **it is in the interests of the world, it is in the interests of the people of Iran, it is in the interests of the people of Europe** that Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon, not merely for the threat it may pose, less to us than to Europe and other parts of the world, but because of the cycle it may begin to generate, in terms of expansion of nuclear states. **I've been working my whole career as a U.S. senator and a vice president to put that genie back in the bottle [rather] than to expand it.** And the most destabilizing thing that could occur in terms of the spread of nuclear weapons **would be the impact of a nuclear Iran** on Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and the list goes on."* (RFE/RL, 2021)

The example shows the politician broadcasting without any hesitation his extremely positive efforts aimed at protecting the interests of society (*I've been working my whole career as a U.S. senator and a vice president to put that genie back in the bottle [rather] than to expand it*), which, judging by the initial statement (*in the interests of the world, it is in the interests of the people of Iran, it is in the interests of the people of Europe*), is supported by the audience. It is necessary to note that Biden's hero strategy looks particularly advantageous along with the ideological "enemy" discrediting (nuclear Iran) by labeling it. The use of euphemism (genie in the bottle) labels Iran - as a "villain". The idiomatic expression *put the genie back in the bottle* is generally used in a negative context, indicating the inability to resist the forces of evil. Meanwhile the Muslim world culture and mythology render "genies" good and evil spirits. By using this euphemism, the politician is labelling a particular country.

6.2.2. Comparative tactics

Comparative tactics are used by journalists to form a negative reader attitude toward a particular person (group of people, social institution) by comparing to a person have been discredited. Politicians and journalists implementing this manipulative tactic have a wide range of possibilities to influence the target audience, as they can influence the feelings, the logic of thinking and the moral perceptions. The technique of "comparison" implies objects comparing or likening based on common (mostly negative) feature.

Comparison rarely takes explicit forms - more often implicit tactics of distancing and contraposition "us - them" are used, which are implemented at different linguistic levels. The example below shows the lexical level comparison.

*(6) "No. Look, we do not look at **Russia** and see a **zero-sum game** here. That's not how we view this relationship. The truth of the matter is that **European countries, eastern, central, western, all** have to deal with the reality **we all** are dealing with, and that is, if not energy **independence**, [then] not absolute **dependence**. It is **not a healthy thing** for **any country** to be in a position where their only source comes from a single source. **We outlawed monopolies in the United States** a long time ago."*
(RFE/RL, 2021)

This fragment contains such means of comparison as deictic pronouns (we, all, any), creating a sense of the mass with established "rules of the game", any deviation from which automatically excludes from the circle of "friends"; the antagonism-built metaphor (zero-sum game); opposites (independence / dependence); evaluative statements (not a healthy thing). All these means implicitly create a contrast, which, in turn, can be regarded as a discrediting hint.

6.2.3. The "quoting the object of discredit" tactic

The tactic implies quoting politicians whose credibility is questionable or has already been discredited. It is based on taking a phrase out of context and inadequate commentary.

The example below illustrates the use of direct quotation.

*(7) "It was just a few months ago, you were in Tbilisi and Kyiv reassuring the Ukrainians and the Georgians that the **"reset"** with Russia was not going to come at their expense. Here you are in Central Europe doing the same thing again. Despite all the reassuring words that are coming out of the administration right now on this subject, there is a lot of fear that the **reset** could turn into appeasement in this region."* (RFE/RL, 2021)

Quoting is used in an interview with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden to discredit him. The journalist uses quote "reset", authored by Joe Biden himself, first used to describe the new US administration intention to constructively rethink US-Russian relations and build a partnership between the two countries. However, Russia and the United States disagree in the term interpretation. The idea of disagreement was used by the interviewer, in a hidden way, to express his political reality critical assessment in the current political context.

6.2.4. Accusation tactic

As noted above, the use of the discredit strategy aims to undermine the credibility of the opponent (Egorova, 2015) and reduce his importance in politics. The example below shows this strategy to be implemented by means of accusation tactics with certain communicative moves. First is the use of words and expressions with negative connotations and critical judgments.

*(8) "The suggestion that he might not report an approach, even though he now has (controversial) top security clearance, astonished former officials who have had to go through the stringent vetting procedures. "This shows a lack of understanding of our legal system when it comes to Russia," said Brett Bruen, global engagement director in the Obama White House. **"Failing to report it is a clear security violation."*** (The Guardian, Borger, 2019)

In this case, the ideological antagonist of Jared Kushner, representing the administration of Barack Obama, makes a very clear critical conclusion regarding the actions of the US President son-in-law (a clear security violation).

6.2.5. Bullying tactic

The bullying tactics has the communicative task of ridiculing and humiliating the opponent. It is implemented generally by claims debunking or labelling. To implement the communicative move "labelling" Jared Kushner's opponent uses a fixed phrase with negative connotations (*Jared Kushner basically just put a for sale sign on his forehead*) and expressed his ironic stance on Kushner's actions by means of mockery tactics:

*(9) Sam Vinograd, who also worked in the Obama national security council, told CNN: "**Jared Kushner basically just put a for sale sign on his forehead** during this interview saying on national television he may not contact the FBI if a hostile foreign power contacts him. That really sends a message to Russia and any other foreign actor that Jared Kushner may be open for business during this 2020 campaign cycle."* (The Guardian, Borger, 2019)

The example below illustrates the mockery tactic used by the interviewer by associating Hunter Biden with the merits of his father yet U.S. Vice President Joe Biden. The example exploits a precedent name (Biden), which in this context has a positive image, but in relation to Hunter himself - a form of mockery:

(10) "If your last name wasn't Biden," Robach asked, "Do you think you would've been asked to be on the board of Burisma?" (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

6.2.6. The tactic of insult

The tactic of insult has a limited spectrum of use as it uses insulting vocabulary. I. Zhelvis indicates the following means, which allow to lower a person social status, to insult and humiliate his dignity: 1) comparing the addressee's name with obscene names; 2) accusing him of violating a social taboo; 3) using reduced or completely tabooed vocabulary to express a negative attitude, disregard for his social comfort (as cited in Kateneva, 2010). The author divides insult into indirect and direct. The indirect insult is realized by an anthroponym transforming into an ethnonym, amphibolization, disphemisation (Kateneva, 2010). The following example, taken from The Wall Street Journal interview with the US president Trump illustrates the tactics:

(11) A friend of mine brought this up the other day. Comey. Comey has proven to be a liar and a leaker. Proven. He tries to act like a choir boy. What he did with Hillary Clinton is outrageous. He saved her life, because all of those charges—I call it "Comey one, two, and three," all of those charges and Comey won, she was guilty of. She should have been taken out of the campaign and been on trial. (WSJ, Schwartz & Paletta, 2021)

The president criticizes the former FBI chief James Comey and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton actions. Trump uses emotionally expressive language (liar / leaker) and a strong expression (act

like a choir boy), which characterizes his opponent as a hypocrite. The abstract above combines the strategies of discrediting and heroizing, which allows Donald Trump to emphasize his own importance and positive image in the eyes of the audience.

The political discourse is awash with dysphemisms, that are deliberately harsh form of expressing the emotional evaluation of a stylistically neutral word or phrase. These units are often used to implement the discrediting strategy, with "labelling" to be the most common techniques. To create and reinforce an object of discredit negative image, the precedent texts are used:

(12) «Staying on the subject of Russia, "Banks not tanks" has been one of the phrases that have been batted around to describe Russia's strategy of buying up strategic assets in Eastern Europe, in particular, as a way to gain political influence in this region." (RFE/RL, 2021)

The phrase "Banks not tanks" describes, according to the speaker, the particular country international political and economic arena strategy.

6.2.7. Polarizing tactic

The basic principle of this tactic is "the sharp positioning of one social group in relation to others, attributing explicitly positive and negative characteristics to the units being contrasted" (Kateneva, 2010). The example below shows the polarization tactics realization by means of personal pronoun (we) repetition, used to position a group of new U.S. administration "resetting" Russian policy supporters.

(13) "We want to set the reset button. But we did not press the erase button, the memory erase button. We made it absolutely clear. I made it clear that there are two things, two principles that were not negotiable: no spheres of influence would we tolerate or be part of, number one, and number two, no veto power on the ability of any nation in any part of Europe or for anywhere in the world, for that matter, to make their own decisions, what alliances or unions they wish to join. And this is a process, but it is understandable that there is so much going on, it is a new administration, and I hope that the reassurance is understood and is taking hold". (RFE/RL, 2021)

In this case, the tactical and semantic variety of polarization appears as following: "We" (me and my team) plan to act for the public good, as opposed to our predecessors or current figures. In addition to the polarization tactics already mentioned, in the fragment cited above one can also trace the heroization tactic, which is realized by forming a positive image of the object of description by citing facts that demonstrate concrete actions aimed at protecting the interests of certain community – "we want to set the reset button"/ "we made it absolutely clear" / "no spheres of influence would we tolerate or be part of" / "no veto power".

6.2.8. Tactic of a precedent text "hooking"

It is a manipulative tactic of referring a political situation to historical facts, situations described in parables, myths, folklore, works of fiction, commercials, in order to make comparisons. This tactic is implemented via stereotypical thinking, cognitive confrontation, and travesty.

The technique of "playing on stereotypical thinking" is the use of stereotypes to form an attitude toward a specific person, group of people or event. A stereotype is "a reproducible linguistic unit (word, expression) or a scheme for linguistic or speech unit constructing (word, phrase, phrase, text)" (Kateneva, 2010).

In the following example Hunter Biden uses an allusion to a widely known and popular fairy tale and its characters, commenting on the actions of the incumbent president of the country and his administration.

*(14) "They feel like they have the license to go out and say whatever they want," Hunter Biden said. "It's insane to even -- **it feels to me like living in some kind of, you know, 'Alice in Wonderland,'** where you're up on the real world and then you **fall down the rabbit hole**, and, you know, **the president's the Cheshire Cat** asking you questions about crazy things that don't bear any resemblance to the reality of anything that has to do with me."* (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

That is a socially oriented discrediting tactic and technique, which operates through reliance on the recipient's background knowledge and on stable stereotypes. Biden's reference to the famous fairy tale 'Alice in Wonderland' only reinforces his idea of the insanity of what is happening, as this work of fiction gives rise in the minds of the audience to very specific associations with something strange and beyond comprehension. In the context of the entire statement, such comparisons, among other things, seem highly ironic.

Let's turn to the example of using some specific precedent names aimed at opponent discrediting.

*(15) "I've been through some **sh**-- stuff in my life. I've been through some real, real stuff. This isn't real stuff. It isn't. It truly isn't. That part of it, that **Barnum and Bailey** -- you know, say anything, do anything you want, you know, I mean, like, you know, **Donald Prince Humperdinck-- Trump Jr.** is not somebody that I really care about," said Hunter Biden.* (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

So, in his interview, Joe Biden's son makes a mildly unflattering comment about the son of incumbent President Donald Trump. Here he uses a reference to the novel The Princess Bride by American writer William Goldman, one of the characters of which is named Prince Humperdinck. In the novel, this character is among the group of "villains," being a cynical and high-minded man. Biden's allusion was not at all accidental, for it speaks for itself. In addition to the specific personality, Biden also characterizes the overall situation by comparing it to Barnum and Bailey, America's oldest traveling circus, famous for its "substandard" performers with various mutations and physical deviations. Obviously, such an allusion to one's opponents is frankly sarcastic.

The tactics of "turning neutral contexts into discrediting contexts" consists in setting the reader up for a critical perception of positive or neutral information about the event. This tactic is implemented through the techniques of intrusive commentary, amphibology, and visualization, which are often used in the same text.

*(16) "However, was it poor judgment to be **in the middle of something that is...a swamp** in — in — in many ways? Yeah." – "I gave a hook to some very unethical people to act in illegal ways to try to do some harm to my father. That's where I made the mistake," said Biden. "So, I take full*

responsibility for that. Did I do anything improper? No, not in any way. Not in any way whatsoever."
(ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

 Biden Jr. argues his actions propriety in the context of tense relationship between his father and Donald Trump. While acknowledging his own mistakes, he nevertheless discredits the activities of Trump and his inner circle by metaphorically calling them a "swamp". In this case, the neutral lexeme is used in a figurative sense and describes a social environment that has little integrity or legitimacy.

Below is another fragment from Hunter Biden's interview, in which he again uses semantically and stylistically neutral lexeme "noise", which, in the context of the entire statement acquires negative connotations - a lively discussion of something, sometimes having no basis for it.

*(17) "Unlike them, I don't spend a lot of time thinking about them. I really don't. **It's all noise**. And what they do is **they create just an enormous amount of noise**. I have to then answer questions - about accusations made by probably the most unethical group of people that we've ever seen in this republic," Biden said.* (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

This way Biden denotes his attitude to the increased interest to his person on the current US administration ideological opponents' part.

6.2.9. The Tactic of "aggressive opponent"

The tactic consists in presenting the interlocutor in an unfavourable light by demonstrating his incompetence, inadequate behaviour or even reporting compromising information. The journalist's task is to create the illusion of a dialogue between him and the object of criticism while putting the opponent in the position of a guilty or justified person by any means. The tactic is implemented by means of accusation and double-crossing techniques.

The "accusation" technique is realized in the process of speculation while the journalist acts as a prosecutor and claims the opponent with actual or simulated accusations. The following example illustrates the technique by means expressive and evaluative language and metaphors (bully/death spiral).

*(18)   Hunter Biden **likened the president to a bully**, and said, "**I don't feed bullies**." In another jab at Trump, Hunter Biden told Robach he takes "no pleasure in this as watching this **death spiral of this administration** - this president and the people that surround him."* (ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021).

Biden, both provokes a negative reaction from his opponent and seeks the audience support.

In most cases, the utterances of any politician are of self-presentational nature, since anyone "plays up" to himself. However, sometimes a careless or ambiguous statement can have the opposite effect - self-discredit. It seems that in the example below, this happened to Hunter Biden, who commented on his resignation from Chinese company board of directors. To do so, he used the phrase *open one's kimono*, which looks rather dubious in this situation:

*(19) "Look, I'm a private citizen," he said. "One thing that I don't have to do is sit here and **open my kimono** as it relates to how much money I make or make or did or didn't. But it's all been reported*
(ABC News, Thompson et al., 2021)

7. Conclusion

The research provides a wide range of linguistic means for discrediting strategy implementation in political interview.

Table 1. Tactics and language means used in political interview

	Tactics	Language means
1.	*unsupported authority derogation*	negative connotations euphemisms subtext creation labeling
2.	*comparative*	lexical level comparison antagonism-built metaphor opposites evaluative statements
3.	*quoting the object of discredit*	specific language context
4.	*accusation*	negative connotations
5.	*bullying*	fixed phrases with negative connotations
6.	*insult*	insulting vocabulary obscene names reduced or completely tabooed vocabulary emotionally expressive language
7.	*polarizing*	personal pronoun repetition
8.	*precedent text "hooking"*	specific associations intrusive commentary amphibology visualization (specific political situation, historical facts, situations described in parables, myths, folklore, works of fiction, commercials)
9.	*aggressive opponent*	expressive and evaluative language metaphors

Thus, the "unsupported derogation of authority" tactic is realized via negative connotations, euphemism, subtext creation and labeling (word or expression associated with a negative phenomenon). Comparative tactics exploit the means of different linguistic levels: lexical level comparison, antagonism-built metaphor; opposites; evaluative statements. The "quoting the object of discredit" tactic deals a specific language context to be assessed. Accusation tactics implement words and expressions with negative connotations. Bullying tactics often employs fixed phrases with negative connotations to turn them into the form of mockery. The tactics of insult uses insulting vocabulary, obscene names, reduced or completely tabooed vocabulary, emotionally expressive language. The polarizing tactics is associated with personal pronoun repetition. Tactics of a precedent text "hooking" deals with specific associations, intrusive commentary, amphibology, and visualization aimed at specific political situation, historical facts, situations described in parables, myths, folklore, works of fiction, commercials. The tactics of "aggressive opponent" exploits the expressive and evaluative language and metaphors.

The analysis shows that American politicians' interviews most often use such discrediting tactics as precedent text "hooking", as well as "polarization".

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