

<https://doi.org/10.31861/mediaforum.2019.7.211-220>

УДК: 811.111'42:32(71)(092)

© Зоя Куделько<sup>1</sup>

## ПОЛІТИЧНІ ПРОМОВИ ДЖАСТІНА ТРЮДО: ВИВЧЕННЯ ПОЛІТИЧНОГО УСПІХУ

*Стаття досліджує зв'язок політичного успіху з умінням політика передавати свою основну ідею вербально, володіти мистецтвом переконувати аудиторію, знаходити зв'язок з нею на прикладі політичних промов прем'єр міністра Канади Джастіна Трюдо. Ефективність політичних промов Джастіна Трюдо досягається певними загальними характеристиками: довірою слухачів, істинністю проголошеної інформації, пристрасністю промовця та хронометражем доповідей. Якщо оратор не викликає довіри аудиторії, це означає, що його повідомлення не буде сприйнято, не вплине на реципієнтів: чим більше довіри, тим більший ефект. Промова вважається переконливою і ефективною, якщо вона передає істину і сенс, а не просто наповнена вишуканими засобами мови та має бездоганний стиль. Промова повинна виражати причину і мету, яку потрібно досягти. Ефективна доповідь відображає поточний момент, пов'язана з контекстом і відповідає вимогам сьогодення. Виголошуючи промову доповідач повинен вірити всій інформації, яку він розкриває своїй аудиторії. Спікери повинні любити людей, з якими вони розмовляють, а їхні виступи повинні бути наповнені пристрасстю та довірою, бути автентичними та щирими. Промовам Джастіна Трюдо притаманні всі названі вище риси. Для досягнення цих характеристик в його політичних промовах використовуються різні мовні засоби. У статті дослідженні лінгвостилістичні особливості політичних виступів Джастіна Трюдо, де він активно використовує різні лінгвостилістичні засоби створення експресивності. На синтаксичному рівні це синтаксичний паралелізм, емфатичні конструкції, інверсія; на лек-*

211

<sup>1</sup> Кандидат філологічних наук, завідувачка кафедри сучасних іноземних мов та перекладу Чернівецького національного університету імені Юрія Федьковича, Україна, E-mail: z.kudelko@chnu.edu.ua; <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3331-6154>

сичному рівні лексичні повтори, епітети, метафора, метонімія, гіпербола, антитеза, аналогія, використання займенників, пасивного стану та мовне перекодування. Використання різних типів мовних засобів робить виступи прем'єр міністра емоційними, образними і таким, що запам'ятовуються, високий ступінь експресивності дозволяє ефективніше впливати на свідомість аудиторії і отримувати передбачуваний відгук.

**Ключові слова:** прем'єр міністр Канади Джастін Трюдо, довіра, істина, пристрасть, хронометраж, метафора, метонімія, антитеза, аналогія, мовне перекодування.

### **Justin Trudeau's Political Speeches: a Study of Political Success**

212 — *The article explores the cohesion of political success and the ability of a politician to convey his or her core idea verbally, politician's skill to persuade an audience, to find a connection with it. The study is based on the political speeches of the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau. The effectiveness of Justin Trudeau's political speeches is accomplished by certain general characteristics: listeners' trust, truth of the proclaimed information, speaker's passion and timing of the reports. Various linguistic means are used to achieve these characteristics in his political speeches: metaphor, metonymy, antithesis, analogy, etc.*

**Keywords:** Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, trust, truth, passion, timing, metaphor, metonymy, antithesis, analogy, code-switching.

**Problem statement.** Political success and political speaking are integral and inseparable. The skills of conveying your main idea, the art of persuading the people, the ability to find connection with the public are pivotal factors that stipulate successful political speech. And the language, mainly its strategies, used in political speeches, how effectively they are operated by politicians to lure supporters to their side (Charteris-Black 2011, 2013) and the way of speaker's presenting are of vital significance. The speeches are primarily prosperous not because they are true and correct, instead their success depends how valid their arguments are for the audience (Kulo, 2009). Being a brilliant speaker Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, is aware and armed with all the strategies of an eloquent speaker to impose certain values, his convictions and ideas on the recipients. His originality, persuasive language of his speeches, rhetorical strategies and motivation of using different linguistic means are the main focus of this

analysis. The aim of this study is to distinguish rhetorical devices and uncover implicit statements in Justin Trudeau's political speeches used to find rapport, support and public response in favor of his policy. The topicality of this study is stipulated by revealing of the rhetoric and linguistic strategies used by Justin Trudeau to convey the ideas he wants to share and the ways he persuades the audience.

The domain of political speeches, the art of their making and the impact they can produce on the receivers have been explored by Steven A. Beebe and Susan J. Beebe (Steven A. Beebe and Susan J. Beebe 2006). The concept of language and politics is of particular interest in research of Chilton and Schäffner (Chilton and Schäffner 2002). They investigate the relationship and interaction between these two categories, the ways the language can facilitate gaining of political success. J. Charteris-Black (Charteris-Black 2011) studies the significance of language in the political speeches, the way it defies or strengthens predominant social and political attitudes. Adrian Beard explores some common linguistic features characteristic for all political speeches. A political speech is not necessarily a success because of correctness or truth, rather it may be a matter of presenting valid arguments (Beard 2000, 18).

213

If a politician mastered the art of delivering political speeches he is paving right way to the political Olympus, to achieve his political goals. The person who conquered this highest peak is Justin Trudeau. It was he who led his party to victory on October 19, 2015, winning a majority government with seats in every province and territory across the country. He was sworn in on November 4, 2015.

As Prime Minister, Justin leads a government that works hard every day to build an economy that works for the middle class and people working hard to join it. His team is focused on creating new jobs, fostering strength out of Canada's rich diversity, fighting climate change, and achieving reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. A proud feminist, Justin appointed Canada's first gender balanced Cabinet. And by all means Trudeau is an eloquent speaker possessing all the techniques and strategies of an excellent orator.

Obviously evaluating the effectiveness of a speech is a subjective endeavor. What one calls political suicide, another calls a strong stand of integrity. What one calls passionate, another calls bombastic (Eric Geiger, 2016).

Eric Geiger distinguishes some common characteristics to a great presentation: trust, truth, timing and passion.

If a speaker does not inculcate credibility in audience it means that his message is not going to be comprehended. His message will influence recipients if they really trust him: the more trust, the bigger the effect. And vice versa it does not matter how significant a speaker's idea is if there is no trust it will be unheard by the audience. Or perhaps you have observed two very similar messages where one is received while the other is rejected. Often the difference between a message being received or rejected is simply trust (Eric Geiger, 2016). Trudeau evokes this trust by building up the bond between him and the audience, for instance in his speech on June 14, 2019, broaching the subject of environmental pollution, he underlines that it is his team who helps him and he is its part, he mentions him being a Dad which again makes him an ordinary man who lives next door to you and gives examples demonstrating horrors of plastic pollution: "Plastic pollution is a global challenge.

214

— You've all heard the stories, and seen the photos. And to be honest, as a dad, it's tough trying to explain this stuff to my kids.

How do you explain dead whales washing up on beaches around the world, their stomachs jam-packed with plastic bags?" (Justin Trudeau, June 14, 2019)

A message is considered to be persuading and forcible if it conveys truth and sense, not just possessing flowery means of speech and refined style. It has to bear some reason and goal to be achieved. "For a message to be powerful and effective, it must not only be delivered by a passionate person with credibility (trust), but there also must be truth and logic in the message" (Eric Geiger, 2016).

"Plastic pollution is becoming a real challenge.

The biggest culprits are single-use plastics – things like plastic grocery bags, coffee lids, and plastic bottles. We all know that these things are easy to produce, and even easier to throw away.

Canadians have taken notice of this trend, and spoken up – they're tired of seeing their beaches and their parks littered with plastic waste. They're tired of plastic garbage lining our streets and our shorelines." (Justin Trudeau, June 14, 2019)

A productive message keeps up with the current moment and the background. It has to be related to the context and meets the requirements of the present and therefore to be understandable, simple and clear. Being

aware of one of the most pressing environmental issues of today: plastic pollution, Trudeau made the so-called Plastics announcements: introducing Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste in the fashion it awakes resonance and convince people to actively participate.

Delivering a message a speaker must really believe all the information he reveals to his audience. Speakers are supposed to love the people they are talking to and make their speeches being filled with passion and credibility, they must authentic and sincere and their speeches have to be thought-provoking and they should know how to tug the audience's heart-strings. "My friends, I want to be able to give my kids the experience I had growing up – swimming in clean water, exploring our parks, and enjoying the great Canadian outdoors.

As the home of the longest coastline in the world, and one-quarter of the planet's fresh water, Canada has a responsibility to reduce plastic pollution.

Imagine some of your greatest memories – maybe you're camping or cottaging, canoeing or fishing. Now imagine those memories punctuated by dead birds or fish. Or maybe a pile of coffee cup lids and shopping bags, covering the ground or floating all around you.

That's the reality for our kids, if we don't act now. If we want to let our kids be kids, we have to ensure that the environment they're playing in is clean and safe.

That's what today is all about" (Justin Trudeau, June 14, 2019).

Any political speeches are made by using strategies of persuasion to impose certain moral and ethical values on people. Political speeches are not primarily prosperous because they are correct or true, instead their success depends how valid are the arguments they contain.

In this study I would like to emphasize such rhetorical strategies as metaphors, metonymies, analogies, pronouns, the active or passive voice of transitive verbs, soundbites, and contrastive pairs used to convey certain views. Speaker's ideas and ideologies need be expressed through language so that they find reflection and response in the minds of those who may read or hear a speech afterwards in the media. Words and expressions are used or omitted to influence meaning in different way. What is more, political speeches are composed by a team of professional speech writers who are experts in the use of persuasive language. Adding rhetorical devices to a pre-composed speech may be of crucial importance.

Successful political speaker must appeal to attitudes and emotions that are already within the listeners. When the listeners perceive that their beliefs are understood and supported the speaker has created connections to the policy that they wish to communicate. Putting forward his arguments a speaker has to communicate at an emotional level and take outlooks which are morally correct. Besides, the listener must perceive that the arguments are relevant for this issue. It is surely a combined use of rhetorical strategies which bring a political speech to success. Therefore it is interesting both to consider their interaction and each of them individually.

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or an action to which it is not literally applicable. It is often used in political speeches due to perceived similarity between objects and concepts as regards particular features that one wants to convey.

In his victory speech on October 25, 2015 Justin Trudeau used a number of metaphors, for example

216 — “Sunny ways, my friends, sunny ways. This is what positive politics can do”.

“Sunny ways” is an example of metaphor revealing the message that the way the Canadians have chosen is associated with warmth and well-being as the does to the nature.

In his foreign policy speech on August 21 the Canadian Prime Minister states:

“This willful blindness to the threat of climate change contributed to the decline of Canada’s stature and influence worldwide”

Using metaphor “willful blindness” Justin Trudeau emphasizes that the Conservative Party doesn’t understand the existential threat the environmental issues could bring.

So metaphors are not merely linguistic instruments, they permeate perception, thought and behavior, and what is more important the metaphors not only represent the concept but conceal some aspects, emphasizing the message the author wants to be understood (Lena Kulo, 2009).

A metonymy is when idea or a concept is replaced by a single word or feature that is connected to it. The foundation of metonymies is conceptual as is also the case with metaphors. They are useful in political speeches as they reduce or increase responsibility. For instance, using the metonymy “the effective bulwark against destructive populism” (Justin Trudeau, August 22, 2019) instead of the middle-class people the Prime Minister

demonstrates his confidence that middle-class people are the basis of the Canadian society, the people he can rely on.

In his address to the 72d session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 21, 2017 while sharing some of the difficult lessons that Canada learned along its historic way talking about the mistakes they have made as for indigenous people Justin Trudeau says “we robbed Canada of the contributions these generations of indigenous people would have made to growing our great country” comparing previous governments to robbers. Using this metonymy he underlines the great loss Canada experienced discarding the indigenous people heritage and a great shame connected with it”.

Analogies, where contemporary situations are compared with historical events or myths are the common features in political speeches. Ideas and concepts are intended to be clarified in an analogy by comparing them with supposedly well-known phenomena (Beard 2000:27). Analogies may be used to support an argument, if, for instance, real examples or precedents are close in time or if it is extremely sensitive issue. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s post-election speech is abundant in analogies:

“One of my favourite prime ministers, Wilfried Laurier, often talked about patriotism and the unifying power of common goals and aspirations ... In my conversations with Canadians right across the country, I’ve seen firsthand that there is so much that unites than divides us” (Justin Trudeau, October 22, 2019).

Analogies are also used in Justin Trudeau’s speeches to underline the continuity of power in Canada and to point out that he is a worthy successor of previous country leaders.

Justin Trudeau uses antithesis while addressing the 72d Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Antithesis occurs when the two opposed notions are introduced together for contrasting effect and refer to the same object of thought or to different objects. Antithesis is based on the use of antonyms, the combination of non-associable things: “The failure of successive Canadian governments to respect the rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada is our great shame” (Justin Trudeau, September 21, 2017). The usage of antithesis emphasizes a great amount of mistakes made by the Canadian governments while pursuing their policy concerning indigenous people.

Trudeau’s speeches are also rich in other linguistic means. The following example of hyperbole used by Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau effec-

tively draws the attention to a message he wants to emphasize: ‘...We know that the world expects Canada to strictly adhere to international human rights standards’ (Justin Trudeau, September 21, 2017).

And one of the most characteristic features of Justin Trudeau’s messages, a striking instance used in all his speeches is surely code-switching. Code-switching is a practice of speaker’s alternating between two languages in the context of a single speech act. Code-switching is widely used by bilingual speakers, as J. Trudeau is, and in bilingual communities, such as Canadian, to make communication not only more effective and expressive, but for expressing harmony and gratefulness, group identification or affiliation to a particular social group: “Nous allons avancer ensemble, we will go forward together to a better future” (Justin Trudeau, October 22, 2019).

Linguistic elements are clearly not used for clarification reasons only, on the contrary, they may be used to conceal elements in a situation. As is also the case with metonymies, the use of pronouns may tell us a lot about how much responsibility a speaker wants to assume for an idea. The pronoun I clearly declares who is responsible while we makes the status of responsibility more unclear, but on the other hand it involves others to make actions together.

218

—

I didn’t make history tonight; you did.

We believe in our hearts that this country’s unique diversity is a blessing bestowed upon us by previous generations of Canadians (Justin Trudeau, October 22, 2019).

Furthermore, to what degree a speaker wants to be related to various ideas may also be shown by putting sentences in the active or passive voices. The active voice demands an actor, while the actor does not have to be mentioned in a sentence with passive voice.

“Canada is built on the ancestral land of Indigenous Peoples – but regrettably, it’s also a country that came into being without the meaningful participation of those who were there first” (Justin Trudeau, September 21, 2017).

Analyzing the speeches of Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau it is evident that he preferably uses such pronouns as I, we, you and active voice which is a sufficient evidence that he is a man of word, a politician who takes all responsibility in this country on the one hand, on the other hand he is a part of the society working for its good and benefit.

Some statements of a political speech could serve as sound-bites as well. A sound-bite is a short piece from a speech usually sent to media so that it



can be reported as quickly as possible. The sound-bite is chosen because it will sum up the content of a long paragraph in a fewer words, suitable for a headline (Beard 2000:37). The words and the word order in sound-bites are usually adjusted by the speech writers or politicians in ways to make them suit each other. Consequently, the arguments are conveyed in sound-bites because the sound-bites are easy to memorize. They communicate clarity and self-confidence

“We beat fear with hope” (Justin Trudeau, October 2015)

“And we can’t build a better world unless we work together, respect our differences, protect the vulnerable, and stand up for the things that matter most” (Justin Trudeau, September 21, 2017).

“They envision a world where Canada flirts with the forces of populism, whipping up fear and spreading misinformation” (Justin Trudeau, August 21, 2019).

Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is a perfect embodiment of an effective politician who is keen on public speaking who grasped the main rules of urging and encouraging political speaking: connection, context, construct, catchphrases, complexity, repetition and call for action. And it is this art which brought him and Liberal Party to success and put Canada in a good light internationally.

219

Consequently, in the modern era of tweets, posts, hashtags and blogs, free access to digital platforms you have to stand out from the crowd, to be a real artist on the way the country changing, having not only bright ideas of the society advancing, but to be a compelling, transparent and honest speaker.

#### **References:**

1. Adrian Beard. *Language of Politics*. Routledge, 2000 – 121 p.
2. Arina Nikitina. *Successful Public Speaking*. [https://www.isbtweb.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/successful-public-speaking.pdf](https://www.isbtweb.org/fileadmin/user_upload/successful-public-speaking.pdf)
3. Beebe, S.A. and Beebe, S.J., (2006). *Public Speaking: An audience-centered approach* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education
4. Charteris-Black J. *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. – 296 p.
5. Charteris-Black J. *Politicians and Rhetorics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. – 370 p.
6. Eric Geiger (2016). *Political Speeches and Four Characteristics of a Great Message*. <https://ericgeiger.com/2016/07/political-speeches-and-four-characteristics-of-a-great-message/>

7. Lena Kulo. Linguistic features in political speeches – how language can be used to impose certain moral and ethical values on people. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1028973/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

8. Site of JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/cabinet/right-honourable-justin-p-j-trudeau>

9. Site of JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2019/06/14/prime-ministers-speaking-notes-plastics-announcement>

10. Site of Macleans. <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/transcript-justin-trudeaus-post-election-speech/>

11. Site of CBC/Radio-Canada. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-foreign-policy-speech-1.5254773>

12. Site of JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2017/07/01/canada-day-address-prime-minister-justin-trudeau-parliament-hill>

220 13. Site of JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA  
— <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2017/09/21/prime-minister-justin-trudeaus-address-72th-session-united-nations-general>