SPECIFICITY OF MODUS MEANINGS AS SEEN ON THE EXAMPLE OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE CATEGORIES OF PERSUASIVENESS AND PARTITIVITY

The paper examines modus meanings reflecting interaction between the persuasiveness and partitivity categories. The aim of this work is to identify and substantiate the types of interaction between the two categories under study. Modus meanings are studied using the following research methods: comparative analysis, pragmatic method, distributive analysis, component analysis, content analysis, definitional analysis, discourse analysis. Indicators of the studied persuasiveness and partitivity modus categories perform different functions in the text: a) the pragmatic function (foregrounding the persuasion semantics, “calling for unification”); b) the function of text formation (explication of formal and semantic coherence and integrity of the text/text fragment; the modus key function); c) the compositional function (influencing the compositional pattern of the text/text fragment, providing different types of composition). Despite both studied modus categories possessing a wide array of means of expression at the lexical, grammatical, and syntactic levels, partitivity, being a separate category, is one of the ways for manifesting the category of persuasiveness in political discourse.

Keywords: persuasiveness, persuasion, partitivity, modus categories, political discourse, lexics, grammar.
скной связности и целостности текста/текстового фрагмента; функция модусного ключа); в) композиционную (влияние на композиционный паттерн текста/текстового фрагмента, обеспечение разных типов композиции). Несмотря на то, что обе изучаемые модусные категории обладают широким арсеналом средств выражательности на лексическом, грамматическом и синтаксическом уровнях, партитивность, будучи самостоятельной категорией, является одним из способов манифестации категории персуазивности в политическом дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: персуазивность, партитивность, модусные категории, политический дискурс, лексика, грамматика.

Introduction

Mental processes associated with information storage, reproduction and verbalization have always been of exceptional interest to linguists and practicing interpreters due to the nature of their professional responsibilities.

The subject of the study are the linguistic means of manifesting these categories in the aspect of interaction thereof, as well as in the aspect of organizing the information field of the political text.

The relevance of this study is determined by the text- and anthropocentric approach to the functional features of means of expressing the “persuasiveness” and “partitivity” modus categories in the aspect of their interaction and engagement in text formation: the implementation of the modus key involvement in organizing the text/text fragment ensuring the functioning of text categories. The theoretical basis of the research is comprised of studies on semantic syntax, functional grammar, and text linguistics by Russian and foreign linguists.

Methods and material

The empirical basis of the study is a sampling from the materials of speeches by American politicians for 2020-2021, mainly containing explicit indicators of the stipulated modus categories.

The paper utilizes traditional linguistic methods of analysis, as well as techniques of definitional, distributive, component analysis, the transformational and mathematical-statistical methods.

Methods used:
1. The method of comparative analysis (the analysis of similarities and differences in texts possessing attributes of categories of persuasiveness and partitivity and belonging to political discourse).
2. The pragmatic method (the semantic adaptation of persuasive tactics and strategies discovered in the research materials in order to improve the understanding thereof by the target audience).

3. The method of distributive analysis (the possibility of further application of the findings from this work for further development of the theoretical basis in the field of translating political discourse in the “English-Russian” language pair).

4. The method of component analysis (deconstructing the linguistic meaning into minimal units in order to study the meaning of words).

5. The method of content analysis (the quantitative analysis of texts and text arrays in order to identify and further interpret the revealed patterns).

6. The method of definitional analysis (the analysis of the meaning of words and definitions).

7. The method of discourse analysis (the array of analytical methods for interpreting texts or statements of different types as products of human speech activity, carried out in specific socio-political circumstances under cultural and historical conditions).

Literature review

Political text is an object of many approaches. Most linguists unanimously agree upon taking into account the objectives, personal beliefs and qualities of communicants; the conditions of text perception, intertextuality and other factors, when studying the political text. In other words, nowadays political text is studied as a discourse acting as a tool for manipulating the public opinion. Authorship of political text, targeting of political text, strategy and tactics in political communication, as well as directly political narrative are listed among the most important features of political discourse by A. P. Chudinov and E. V. Budaev [Budaev, Chudinov, 2010]. Due to the crucial role of media in the modern world, the manipulative possibilities of political discourse are constantly increasing [Schwartzenberg, 1992]. Discourse, according to T. Van Dijk [Van Dijk, 1989, pp. 163-183] and E. Buyessence [Buyessence, 1943, p. 99], is a communicative event that occurs between a speaker and a perceiver throughout context-based communication. It may possess both verbal and nonverbal components. The language of politics as a linguistic subsystem is a sphere of high speech responsibility.

The category of persuasiveness (from Latin persuasioonis — persuasion, suggestion) falls within the scope of modus categories. According to E. A. Goncharova, it is “one of the possible components of the com-
municative strategy in the text” [Goncharova, 2001, p. 120]. This category is overall interdisciplinary, as it is under study in the field of psychology, as well. In the 1980s, a new field of study, called “**the new rhetoric**”, was formed in linguistics. Based on the classical rhetoric, aimed at teaching the art of eloquence, the “new rhetoric” is more focused on the representation of a person’s statements and judgments in speech, namely, on their formation. E. A. Goncharova states that the “new rhetoric” is not strictly limited to linguistic frameworks, but “is also interdisciplinary, …as it comes into contact with psychology and social psychology, culturology, semiotics, etc.” [Goncharova, 2001, p. 120]. A. V. Golodnov believes the category of persuasiveness to implement “an addresser’s attempt at influencing the recipient in order to drive the latter to make an independent decision on the necessity, desirability or possibility of performing an action”. [Golodnov, 2005, p. 22]

**Partitivity** is a categorial semantic feature peculiar for human linguistic display. It is presented through the “part-whole” abstract opposition, which is underlied by the mental process of dividing the whole into parts and assembling parts into the whole. The “part-whole” relation is one of the fundamental categories characterizing the material and the spiritual world. The absolute majority of items, both physical and spiritual in nature, possess a structure comprised of effectively or potentially distinguishable parts, which collectively comprise the whole. The categories of persuasiveness and partitivity belong to the sentential level; based on their meaning that reflects a person’s thoughtful approach to a statement, they are called modus categories [Boldyrev, 2005a]. These categories are certainly communicative in nature, as they serve the process of communication and enhance understanding.

The categories under consideration are the product of the interpretative function of consciousness. They combine certain linguistic means based on the commonality of their conceptual (interpretative) function. The interpretative nature of modus categories emphasizes their special nature and position in the general system of linguistic categorization, namely, as forms of reflecting the ontology of human consciousness and its interpretive function, as well as forms of manifesting the individual experience, knowledge, and assessments.

The conjoint frequent occurrence and overlapping of the persuasive and partitive component are not accidental. The addressee concentrating the addressees’ attention on the particular, separated from the general, provides for placing the semantic emphasis, which is the most vital part of political speech. Semantic emphasis, being in the right place, allows one to highlight the importance and topicality of an issue or a problem on the
agenda, as well as to address the group of listeners requiring a persuasive suggestion. One of the speaker tactics potentially applicable in this case is a targeted address indication of such a group belonging to a value cluster, the importance of which is recognized and shared by the addressees. No less important is the possibility of creating a “we — they” dichotomy, quite valuable for a politician, which enables the weaponization of the very same value cluster in order to create the image of an adversary inimical to the interests and values shared by the addressees. This tactic is more applicable in foreign policy discourse, being nonetheless effective in the discourse of domestic politics, allowing a politician to shift attention onto their respective opponents and competitor parties and undermine their authority in the eyes of potential voters.

Results

Let us proceed with considering the interaction of the two modus categories on the communicative level. During the research and work with the collected materials, we have selected and divided the examples into 9 semantic groups categorized by the interaction of the categories of persuasiveness and partitivity in political discourse.

Group 1 — semantic emphasis is put on the moment of speech, reinforced with shifting from the whole to the part.

**Today — tonight,** *I’m announcing that the Transportation Safety Administration — the TSA — will double the fines on travelers that refuse to mask.*

The linguistic representation of the “representation of a part and a whole” structural component is the ratio of *today* — as a whole and *tonight* — as a part of this whole.

Group 2 — the aspect of importance of the core idea, the importance of the whole implemented using the part.

Each part has a spatial localization within the whole, occupying a certain place in it. For a speaker, as a politician, peripheral components hold no significance. Instead, they focus the listeners’ attention on the central, core part of the message, emphasizing the importance of the general/whole. We can observe the linguistic manifestation of this general/whole based on the example of such lexemes as *center, heart, critical, key, top.*

**Each and every one of these issues is enough to give us a victory in Georgia, a big beautiful victory. Make no mistake, this election was stolen from you, from me and from the country.**
Before I close, let me say this: Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by this virus. And as we continue to battle COVID-19, we will ensure that equity continues to be at the center of our response.

We’re gathered together in the heart of our nation’s capital for one very, very basic and simple reason: To save our democracy.

But our commitment is about more than just financing; that’s a critical piece of it. We’re also going to support solutions across the board.

As I recently released the key parts of my pandemic preparedness plan so that America isn’t caught flat-footed when a new pandemic comes again — as it will — next month, I’m also going to release the plan in greater detail.

Reducing that cost and concern is one of my top priorities.

Group 3 — the aspect of inclusiveness, absence of exceptionalism; emphasis is put on the importance to everyone.

The recognition of an item as a part of a whole is determined by the degree of its participation in creating the integrative properties of the whole. Only the item directly involved in the creation of the properties of the whole will be considered a part thereof, for example: “these issues”, “family”, “nation”, “audience”, “world”. On the other hand, the category of persuasiveness is found in communicative situations that “emerge out from the communicative pragmatic strategy of persuasion and manipulation of an interlocutor’s consciousness and behavior”. It applies to the language tools aimed at convincing the listener to undertake further actions, as well as at “tempting the interlocutor to change a certain behavioral socio-individual position and make a desirable decision” [Goncharova, 2001, p. 123].

Using the indefinite pronoun each and the determiner word every, the speaker, when addressing the public, convinces the listeners of their rightness. They tempt the public to change a certain socio-behavioral position, and also encourage it to make a political decision beneficial to themselves by convincing the listeners of the rightness of their respective party, as well as the popularity of their ideas. In this way they encourage the addressee to make a small but significant contribution (the “part” expressed using the issue lexeme) to a certain common cause, which, in this case, is a “big, beautiful” victory (here epithets enhance the attractiveness of the idea (whole/general) for the addressee.

What about children under the age of 12 who can’t get vaccinated yet? Well, the best way for a parent to protect their child under the age of 12 starts at home. Every parent, every teen sibling, every caregiver around them should be vaccinated.

My first responsibility as President is to protect the American people and make sure we have enough vaccine for every American, including enough boosters for every American who’s approved to get one.
Tonight, I’m asking each of you to reach out to your unvaccinated patients over the next two weeks and make a personal appeal to them to get the shot.

In a second term, I will EXPAND charter schools and provide SCHOOL CHOICE to every family in America.

In the past few months, the United States has experienced all of this, and every region of the world can tell similar stories.

In the examples under consideration, the use of the pronoun ‘each’ and the determiner ‘every’, which may be considered as verbalizers of the ‘representation of a part’ structural component, emphasizes the importance and significance of each person and region. In the examples given, synonymous repetition acts as a medium of manifesting persuasiveness, while involving shades of partitive meanings.

**Group 4 — the contributory aspect.**

The examples presented in this group convince the addressee to contribute to a common cause, motivating them to facilitate the strengthening of the community, the nation and the whole world in general.

We’re also going to try to do our part when it comes to helping the rest of the world take action as well.

In another era when our democracy was tested, Franklin Roosevelt reminded us, in America, we do our part. We all do our part. That’s all I’m asking. That we do our part, all of us.

But while we wait, we’ve done our part. We’ve bought enough boosters — enough booster shots — and the distribution system is ready to administer them.

My friends, if we are to recognize that a better, more hopeful future of — every nation has to do its part with ambitious targets to keep 1.5 degrees in reach and specific plans as to how to get there, especially the major economies.

But it’s time for corporate America and the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans to just begin to pay their fair share. Just their fair share.

The peculiarity of the “part-whole” relationship is in their dual nature, since the ontological categories of the part and the whole are defined by means of each other: “a part is an element of a certain whole; the whole is something that consists of parts”.

When we say “whole”, we clarify mentally: the whole of what? — and then we answer: the whole of parts. When we say “part”, we attempt to imagine what these parts belong to, what this whole is. The parts and the whole do not exist without each other. The speaker encourages the target audience to change a certain social and behavioral position and to
contribute to a good common cause, to play a role in the life of the nation. This position is expressed using such lexemes and word combinations, as *to do one’s party, to pay one’s fair share*. In the latter case, the usage of semantic repetition is observed once more, which is expressed via ellipsis and constitutes an emphatic construction. This construction is highlighted with the adjective fair and the adverb just. Combined with each other, these means of expression once again demonstrate the productive interaction of the categories of persuasiveness and partitivity, allowing the speaker to have the desired impact on the addressees.

**Group 5 — the historical and temporal aspect, an indication of the features of the time period, during which the politician addresses the audience; an indication of the voter’s involvement in significant historical events.**

“A part is a component, a side, a moment of the whole, the qualitative certainty and functioning of which bear the specifics of the whole” [Goncharenko, 1968, p. 40].

Lexical verbalizers of the ‘representation of a part’ structural component, characterized by varying degrees of the presence of the ‘part’ semantic feature, are synonyms of the invariant lexeme, for example:

*We must be united at home to defeat our adversaries abroad. This new era of cooperation can start with finally confirming the more than 300 highly qualified nominees who are still stuck in the Senate.*

*Together, we will write the next chapter of the Great American Story.*

*As I stand here tonight before you in a new and vital hour of life in democracy of our nation, and I can say with absolute confidence: I have never been more confident or optimistic about America.*

*The transcontinental railroad, interstate highways, united two oceans and brought a totally new age of progress to the United States of America.*

*And I know our hearts are with everyone who will feel the effects of this storm. And we’ll be with you every step of the way.*

In the examples under consideration, the traditionally non-discrete denotation (*cooperation, story, life, progress, way, extraordinary times*) of immaterial names may have a partitive understanding.

In the interaction of the whole and the parts, the priority of the whole exists, since it actively affects the parts and transforms them in accordance with its own nature; it determines the form of existence of an item as its part. The parts, being subordinate to the whole, have relative independence, their existence as part of the whole is only characterized by a certain degree of freedom. And, nonetheless, the parts are integral and important components of the whole, important for a potential voter, — the value ide-
al, expressed using the lexemes *progress, American Story, era of cooperation*. Addressing the public, the speaker emphasizes the path to cherished ideals and goals being not monolithic, but rather comprised of multiple consequent steps and actions that need to be taken collaboratively. Here, they urge voters for national and political unity, which would facilitate this cooperation greatly and bring closer the achievement of the cherished goals. The desirability and the coveted nature of these goals are expressed through epithets, such as *next, totally new, vital, every*.

**Group 6 — the inspirational, motivating, encouraging gradation of the part.**

Let us consider the following example:

*And more than half of all the adults in America have gotten at least one shot. The mass vaccination center in Glendale, Ariz., I asked the nurse, I said, “What’s it like?” She looked at me, she said, “It’s like every shot is giving a dose of hope” was her phrase, a dose of hope. A dose of hope for an educator in Florida, who has a child suffering from an autoimmune disease, wrote to me, said she’s worried — that she was worried about bringing the virus home.***

The language medium of implementing this category is the combination of a partitive noun with an abstract noun. The partitive noun *dose*, combined with the expressive possibility of the indefinite article *a* to indicate the insignificance and the nonuniqueness (the preference of any, even the most insignificant amount of hope is implied), as well as the syntactic repetition of the word *hope*, combined with gradation, may increase the level of hope. Thus, the speaker soothes and reassures the addressees, motivating them to vaccinate against COVID-19. Here the inspirational component may be observed, expressed through utilizing a skillful combination of the categories of persuasiveness and partitivity.

**Group 7 — the aspect of urgency, emergency, the indispensable importance of the current moment for undertaking political action.**

One of the most prominent and frequently repeated ways of expressing persuasiveness is repetition/recurrence. In the example under consideration we can see a synonymous repetition, during which a semantic shift in connotations is visible while maintaining synonymy which is shifting from the whole to the part. This indicates the presence of a partitive constituent.

*This is the time to reignite the American imagination. This is the time to search for the tallest summit and set our sights on the brightest star. This is the time to rekindle the bonds of love and loyalty and memory that link us together as citizens, as neighbors, as patriots.*
Using the demonstrative pronoun *this* as the subject, and the phrase combining the definite article *the* and the noun *time* to perform the predicator function makes it possible to isolate the part (the current moment) from the whole (the time), and simultaneously put a semantic emphasis on the exceptional importance of this particular moment of time for undertaking political actions. Semantic repetition and gradation allow strengthening and consolidating the persuasive component in this message, directing it in the area necessary for the speaker (*to reignite — to search — to rekindle; citizens — neighbors — patriots*). The epithets *tallest* and *brightest*, as well as the phrase *bonds of love and loyalty and memory*, containing a polysyndeton and noun denotations of important human values contribute to maximizing the attractiveness of this goal for a potential voter.

**Group 8 — the negative part.**

Let us consider the interaction of the two reviewed categories as seen in this example:

*That’s where we need to focus our energy — not in the past, not on divisive culture wars, not on the politics of grievance, but on a future we can build together.*

The lexical medium of expressiveness in the sentence is semantic-stylistic synonymy; the grammatical medium is negation in an emphatic, expressive form that conveys important connotations and makes this grammatical category attractive for the speaker as an effective tool of persuasion. The whole in this statement is represented by *future*, while the homogeneous parts of the sentence represent the parts: *past, culture wars, politics of grievance*. This phenomenon is called “the negative part” [Herskovits, 1986, p. 42]. The mental representation of the missing part is important in the conceptualization of the whole; in the example under consideration — *future*. This very future is supposed to be built using the whole — *we*, the way of building being *together*. Thus, we may conclude that ways of manifesting a part of the whole serve as an effective tool for influencing the addressee.

**Group 9 — the aspect of equating the part and the whole.**

Now we shall turn to considering the example below:

*In recent months, our nation, and the rest of the world, has been hit with a once-in-a-century pandemic that China allowed to spread around the globe.*

The speaker draws the attention of the recipients to the fact of the USA as a part (a state) belonging to a common whole (the world community). But, applying the connective union *and* and putting the lexeme
**our nation** at the first place in the phrase **our nation and the world**, and, most importantly, using the quantifier **the rest of** (which allows to separate the USA from the world community and equalize them by the degree of importance), they make the USA as whole and indivisible in the eyes of listeners. Thus, they manipulate the American sense of national superiority, utilizing a profitable and effective communicative-pragmatic strategy of persuasion which, again, involves both the category of persuasiveness and the category of partitivity.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

This study provides support for the statement on the two categories under consideration being modus categories, which possess linguistic representation and reveal the conceptual-linguistic or the logical-linguistic nature. The fact of them performing the interpretative function and rendering the individual experience, consciousness and evaluations, is not in doubt. Our results are in general agreement with scholars to have previously considered this topic, such as N. N. Boldyrev (Russia) and N. A. Kobrina (Russia). The internal discreteness of the whole as a product of human cognition turns into a trait of any item, and dismembering an item as a mental operation becomes the basic principle of human perception of the world. The conceptualization of objective reality through the category of partitivity is an internal demand inherent to human consciousness, an inner mental law of the mind that puts the outlook on the characteristics of the whole as of paramount importance in interpreting all things. It also clarifies the informational and emotional concept of political discourse. The research methodology used made it possible to identify nine modus meanings of interaction between the two categories under consideration.

The indicators of the studied modus categories perform different functions in the text, such as: a) the pragmatic function (the actualization of the “persuasion” and “call to unification” semantics); b) the function of text formation (the explication of formal and semantic coherence and integrity of the text/text fragment; the modus key function); c) the compositional function (influencing the compositional pattern of the text/text fragment, ensuring different composition types). The considered modus keys are of different lengths (be it a word, a phrase, a part of a complex sentence, an introductory unit or an independent sentence). Our study provides the framework for future studies to specify the methodology used for discovering modus meanings based on the intertwining of any other couples of modus categories.
Despite the fact of both studied modus categories possessing a wide arsenal of means of expression at the lexical, grammatical and syntactic levels, partitivity, being an independent category, is one of the ways of manifesting the category of persuasiveness in political discourse.

Our research results are encouraging and should be validated in the professional environment during the real-life simultaneous interpretation process exercised by qualified specialists in the field. However, the findings concerning the intertwining of the persuasiveness and partitivity modus categories remain to be determined. Our findings should be explored furthermore both by scholars in linguistics researching modus categories and the interaction thereof as a theoretical phenomenon, and simultaneous interpretation practitioners in real-life professional circumstances. Future work in this field of research should focus more on the interaction of the modus categories under consideration on a deeper syntactic level in order to determine a greater amount of modus meanings which might facilitate a deeper understanding of the impact provided by the category of persuasiveness on the political discourse.

Sources


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