

**ФИЛОЛОГИЯ. ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И  
СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА  
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**ДИСКУРС БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ В РАМКАХ МЮНХЕНСКОЙ  
КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ: ЛИНГВО-КОМПАРАТИВНЫЙ АСПЕКТ**

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**Аннотация.** В статье представлен сравнительный лингвистический анализ выступлений лидеров Великобритании и США на Мюнхенской конференции по безопасности. Основная цель исследования заключается в выявлении роли языка в формировании позиции говорящих по вопросам глобальной и национальной безопасности. Методологическую основу работы составляют методы критического, когнитивного, сравнительно-сопоставительного, описательного и количественного анализа, которые позволили отобрать наиболее репрезентативный и достоверный речевой материал. Доказано, что лидеры государств используют определённый набор языковых средств и приёмов, характерных для их национальной идентичности и внутренней политики страны. Это помогает им транслировать собственные мысли, установки, ценности и приоритеты, а также формировать политический имидж и речевой портрет.

**Ключевые слова:** политический дискурс; дискурс безопасности; лингвистический метод; сравнительный анализ; речевой портрет

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**SECURITY DISCOURSE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE  
MUNICH CONFERENCE: LINGUO-COMPARATIVE ASPECT**

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**Abstract.** The article deals with a comparative linguistic analysis of the reports of Great Britain and USA leaders within the framework of the Munich Security conference and is aimed at distinguishing the role of language in shaping the speakers' attitude towards the issues of global and national security. The research methodology is based on the critical, cognitive, comparative, descriptive and quantitative methods that has enabled us to single out the most efficient and reliable actual speech material that include personal pronouns, modal verbs, and emotive-evaluative vocabulary. It is proved that the country leaders make use of a certain set of linguistic tools and devices.

es peculiar for their national identity and the policy of their country, which helps to deliver the thoughts, attitude, values and priorities of the speakers and model their political image and speech portrait. The authors come to the conclusion, that Biden's speech was assertive and forward-looking, while Johnson's rhetoric was more circumspect balancing criticism and optimistic perspective of Britain's role on the international relations.

**Keywords:** political discourse; linguistic method; political discourse analysis; speech portrait; comparative analysis

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The beginning of the 21st century is accompanied by radical socio-political transformations in relations between states, various social communities, and ethnic groups. There are fundamental changes in a person's attitude to himself and his civic position, to the events in the world, which has a significant impact on the conditions and mechanisms for providing global security and order. As Trusov states, in the course of its development mankind was exposed to various types of danger, primarily from natural phenomena, wild animals, and crop failure [1, p. 28], but with the invention of different weapons the sources of threats have extended – both to the physical security of the individual and the national security of the state.

According to political dictionaries, security is a multifaceted concept that covers all spheres and levels of public life, and is understood as “the internal state and international position of the country, ensuring its freedom, independence, integrity, interests and excluding the real threat of internal destabilization and external attack” [2]. As Trejis points out, security reflects a positive characteristic of social well-being, and, is associated with different risks, as well as the fact that its absence can lead to a significant, even catastrophic, outcome [3].

In the modern political space, which is under the powerful influence of information society, the discourse of security stands out as a tool in the hands of state leaders in domestic and foreign political activities. As it was assumed by Bunde at the Munich Conference 2021, election interference, cyberattacks, and the strategic use of corruption have shaped a strong preference for cooperative relations, support for a more competitive approach, while some key leaders warn that talking up a dichotomy

between democracies and autocracies may actually become a self-fulfilling prophecy, cementing the kind of global bifurcation it anticipates [4, p. 21-26]. Thus, due to the instability of the political situation in the world, all states are interested in global partnership and collaboration; at summits and conferences country leaders try to find solutions to burning issues, whose statements shape the image of the country and its place in the international arena, its relations with other states, and its role in the activities of the world community.

The correct and appropriate use of language tools is a key factor in achieving the goals in any communication. Thus, as Nikolayev believes, “security can only be studied in terms of semantic systems of specific natural languages and cognitive processes” [5, p. 121]. The use of expressive language means, like stylistic devices and grammatical units enables to construct the speaker’s vision of feasible threats to security and ways to overcome them.

Any politician is aimed at influencing the minds and emotions of the addressees, that’s why they plan and build their speech skillfully via a specific range of arguments and reasoning [6, p. 502]. The ability to apply these speech tools appropriately in a communicative situation demonstrates the communicative competence of the speaker and makes his rhetoric effective and conflict-free [7, p.139], especially related to such a vulnerable issue as “security” on a global scale.

Security issues make up an integral part of political discourse within which such concepts as “security”, “military power”, “threat”, “danger”, “nuclear weapons”, “national security” are increasingly used.

For many researchers, political discourse in the real time dimension is of great interest. Behind the discourse, you can see a fragment of the author's mental world, his way of seeing the world, which he himself creates. Consequently, political discourse in different societies is characterized by features of cultural specificity [5]. Each country has its own language, history and traditions; its mentality and the model of political communication formed over centuries. Each politician lives in a certain linguoculturological space with its peculiar conceptual sphere.

Linguistic analysis of political discourse can be carried out on the basis of critical, cognitive, descriptive and quantitative methods [8].

Critical discourse analysis gained its popularity in the west world. Thus, such universities as Lancaster University (Great Britain), Amsterdam University (Holland), a number of scientific centers in Spain and Latin America, and others are closely involved in discourse analysis. They look at political discourse from three directions: (a) the use of language, (b) "implantation" of certain representations into public consciousness and (c) the interaction of social groups and individuals [5].

The cognitive method "is based on the assumption that human cognitive structures are inextricably linked within the framework of one common task - explaining the processes of assimilation, processing and transformation of knowledge, which, accordingly, determine the essence of the human mind" [9, p. 46].

The descriptive approach primarily deals with the linguistic tools the politician uses to convey his thoughts to the audience. Here linguists study the speeches of political leaders, their rhetorical strategies, reconstructing the linguistic personality [10].

Speaking about the quantitative method, we mean content analysis, where by the quantitative characteristics of the text at the level of words and phrases one can judge the content of the text, the peculiarities of the author's thinking, his intentions and value orientations.

This article provides a comparative linguistic analysis of the reports of politicians from three countries within the framework of one topic and made in the "space" of one international conference in order to identify the national specifics of political discourse, analyze the role of language in the formation of a speech portrait of a political leader. The descriptive method of the speech analysis allows us to highlight a certain set of lexical expressions and grammatical forms peculiar to each politician.

The material for the study is the texts of the speeches of the former Prime Minister of Great Britain Boris Johnson and the US President Joe Biden at the Munich Security Conference 2021. The choice of the research object is not accidental. Firstly, the annual Munich Security Conference is one of the most important multilateral dia-

logue platforms that helps to reveal the alignment of forces on the world stage and understand the mood and strategic guidelines of key players. Secondly, the US and the UK occupy the leading positions in the international political arena; have a similar purposeful course on many issues. Thirdly, both politicians are known as extraordinary personalities, causing different feelings in the public: from surprise to indignation. The analysis of their speeches allows us to trace the development trends and changes in political rhetoric in the United States and Great Britain.

The Munich Security Conference 2021 was held online, and was marked by the restoration of transatlantic cooperation, which had cracked during the four years of the Republican Donald Trump presidency in the United States. That very day the United States officially reverted to the Paris Climate Agreement, which America withdrew being under Trump. This was a joyful event not only for the United States, but for all participants of the conference. This joy and confidence in the justice of the return can be traced throughout the whole speech of the American President. Biden starts with a statement about his previous performance in Munich, and a promise to return. Accordingly, he solemnly declares that “America is back!” And this return means the restoration of the transatlantic alliance.

*And two years ago, as you pointed out, when I last spoke at Munich, I was a private citizen; I was a professor, not an elected official. But I said at that time, “We will be back.” And I’m a man of my word. America is back. [11]*

The British Prime Minister, on the contrary, is less optimistic in his statements. Words of reproach and criticism against the Munich Conference, actualized in emotional adjectives and nouns (*locked in terminal decline, Atlantic alliance is fractured, dear risks, oblivion*) create a vector of "emotional intensity" in Boris Johnson's speech, which decreases significantly by the end of his speech, notes of hope and trust appear (*the gloom has been overdone, drawing together, combining formidable strengths once again*).

*There is a habit of turning up at occasions such as these and announcing portentously that the West is locked in terminal decline, the Atlantic alliance is fractured,*

*and NATO is in peril, and everything we hold dear risks being cast into oblivion. And that industry of pessimism has thrived recently, perhaps even in Munich. [12]*

*So ... let me respectfully suggest that the gloom has been overdone and we are turning a corner, and the countries we call the "West" are drawing together and combining their formidable strengths and expertise once again, immensely to everybody's benefit. [12]*

Among the manipulative techniques used by the leaders of the two countries, there is a certain set of lexical and syntactic constructions, grammatical forms and stylistic figures aimed at forming an emotional, motivational and semantic attitude towards it.

The use of personal pronouns in the speeches of the politicians creates not only a special effect, but is also an essential aspect in representing their political image as the most reliable and suitable representative of the country.

Throughout the speech, Mr. Biden uses the personal pronoun *we* quite often (81 times), conveying the meaning of unity and closeness to the people of the United States or the whole world. The idea of political leadership is actualized with the help of the personal pronoun *I* (39 times), implying personal experience, personal decision, personal opinion, etc.; there is practically no identity between the individual and the state.

*We continue to support the goal of a Europe whole and free and at peace. (we = America) [11]*

*We cannot allow ISIS to reopen and regroup and threaten people in the Middle East, in Europe, in the United States, and elsewhere. (we = the whole world) [11]*

The Prime Minister of Great Britain by the pronoun "*we*" (38) means the state, its allies and partners. The frequent anaphoric use of the pronoun in Boris Johnson's speech emphasizes and reinforces the idea of the unity and cohesion of the people of the country that has taken the right course for the Green Industrial Revolution, building a peaceful future.

*We were the first industrialised nation to adopt this goal and we have made it legally binding and published our plan for a Green Industrial Revolution to show how we will get there, so I hope that other countries will follow the UK's example.* [12]

Johnson uses the pronoun *I* (14 times) less often than his colleague, mainly expressing approval, hope or indirect involvement in certain events

*And I sense a new resolve among our European friends and allies to come together and act again with unity and determination, and we witnessed that spirit after the attempted murder of Alexei Navalny, as he recovered in a hospital bed in Berlin.* [12]

Modal verbs used by political leaders help to create the picture of reality they need, make any thesis politically correct and impose their point of view.

In the speech of the American president the verbs of obligation and necessity *must* (15 times) and *have to* (10 times) are in the lead. Using the pronoun *we* followed by the modal verbs the American politician imposes the intense manipulation, the urgent need to establish a democratic world order, resist economic abuses (particularly by China), and comply with all generally accepted laws and moral values.

*Democracy doesn't happen by accident. We have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it. We have to prove that our model isn't a relic of our history; it's the single best way to revitalize the promise of our future.* [11]

*We have to push back against the Chinese government's economic abuses and coercion that undercut the foundations of the international economic system.* [11]

The most frequent markers of the epistemic modality in Biden's speech are the verbs *can*, *be able to*. Thus, the president demonstrates the ability of his country to withstand threats from outside, and absolute confidence in the leading role of the United States in solving global problems and determining future prospects.

*The United States must renew America's enduring advantages so that we can meet today's challenges from a position of strength.* [11]

*We can own the race for the future. I know we can do this.* [11]

*You know, this is also — this is also how we're going to be able to meet the threat from Russia.* [11]

The corpus of the British leader Boris Johnson's speech is notable for the meagre use of modal verbs; there are a few cases of using verbs of hypothetical modality, namely *can*, *able to*, *should* and *may*, which make his speech less categorical and cautious and helps to maintain a diplomatic tone of communication, thus “proposing ideas and initiatives about resolving global problems without making demands” [13] and direct statements.

*If anything good can possibly come from this tragedy, we have at least been given the chance to build a global recovery on new and green foundations, so that humanity can prosper without imperilling the planet.* [12]

*If climate change and pandemics are silent and insidious threats, hostile states may seek to harm our people in direct and obvious ways...* [12]

The emotional mood of political statements is performed through various stylistic devices, emotive vocabulary, comparative constructions and other expressive means. Despite the big amount of emotionally neutral political vocabulary (*security, democracy, a treaty, citizenship, sanctions, diplomatic expulsions, repression, violation, build a coalition, global economic growth, allies, defend*, etc.), Boris Johnson and Joe Biden's speeches are replete with emotive nouns and epithets, which reveal the speaker's attitude to some political events.

For example, speaking about such global problems as a pandemic and climate change, Johnson's epithets emphasize the threat emanating from Russia, whose “direct and frank” actions seem not sensible (*reckless abandon*) and powerless in the face of the unshakable block of a cohesive Transatlantic Alliance (*immovable rock of trans-Atlantic solidarity*), coordinated action on sanctions and diplomatic expulsions, which are regarded by the speaker as an outstanding act of collective security.

*If climate change and pandemics are silent and insidious threats, hostile states may seek to harm our people in direct and obvious ways, as the Russian state did with reckless abandon in Salisbury three years ago, only to collide with the immovable rock of trans-Atlantic solidarity, sanctions and coordinated diplomatic expul-*

*sions, an outstanding act of collective security, for which I once again thank our friends.* [12]

Joe Biden also praises the strength and power of the transatlantic alliance in the international arena, using such epithets as *strong, significant, vital*, etc..

*It comes down to this: The transatlantic alliance is a strong foundation — the strong foundation — on which our collective security and our shared prosperity are built.* [11]

*He wants to undermine the transatlantic unity and our resolve, because it's so much easier for the Kremlin to bully and threaten individual states than it is to negotiate with a strong and closely united transatlantic community.* [11]

Frequent use of the emotive nouns such as: *challenge (the challenges we face today, to meet the range of shared challenges we face, today's challenges from a position of strength, the challenges with Russia); coercion (a threat of violence or coercion), burden (the burdens of addressing the world's toughest problems)* emphasizes the confrontation with China, whose monopolistic actions in the international economic arena are regarded as intrusive and dishonest.

*We have to push back against the Chinese government's economic abuses and coercion that undercut the foundations of the international economic system.* [11]

*When expressing his attitude towards Russia, the American president uses the expressive noun with a negative connotation bully and calls on allies to resist Moscow's efforts to destabilize democracy.* [11]

Using the metaphor *Force for Good in the world* the British politician contrasts the United States, being the leader of democracy, with the firm position of Great Britain, which, after leaving the European Union, has only strengthened its confidence and acts as a peacemaker in foreign policy issues,

*As you've seen and heard earlier, America is unreservedly back as leader of the free world and that is a fantastic thing.* [12]

*Now that we have left the EU, Parliament has a greater say over foreign policy and this has only reinforced our national determination to be a Force for Good in the world.* [12]

As the examples prove, each politician has his own way of speaking, implies a peculiar set of linguistic means. The analysis of Joe Biden's speech shows that the use of specific linguistic means, such as the personal pronoun *I* and the modal verb *have to*, underlines his categorical and anti-Russian attitude: he expresses a slight contradiction in the fact that he openly criticizes Putin's policy, and at the same time mentions possible cooperation according to the extension of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty. The key message of his report is that the United States is returning to the traditional approach to the transatlantic partnership that was outlined during Barack Obama's presidency. The report contains a great number of epithets and hyperbole that represent "the unique spirit of American nobility", readiness to support partner countries in resolving any issues, since the United States is the defender of human rights, global peace and order.

As for Boris Johnson, he is less straightforward and radical in his statements and is more focused on defense cooperation and revolution in the ways of warfare. He also states that democratic countries must adapt to the aggravation of intensifying political and trade competition in the world, as well as strengthen cooperation in confronting traditional security challenges. Mention is made of sanctions against Russia, China and Belarus in relation to human rights violations. The key message of the speaker is the reunification of America and Europe, as models of free nations, who will succeed united.

Thus, it can be assumed that the aim of a political statement is the desire to influence the audience. An important role is played by the geographical position of the country, which is represented by speakers on the world political stage; each politician carries out his goal in his own manner, and with a peculiar set of linguistic means: Biden sounds more assertive and direct, while Johnson seems more regardful and conservative. However, consciously or unconsciously, the politician's speech reflects

the national mentality, country's values, historical background. Certain concepts are filled with different meanings which significantly complicates the understanding of the speech by those (representatives of other countries) to whom it is addressed.

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