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EVALUATIVE STATEMENTS WITHIN AGONAL STRATEGIES
IN AMERICAN POLITICAL ELECTORAL DEBATE

The central concept of political linguistics is political discourse, which is a set of speech acts used in both monologue and dialogical forms. The existence of political discourse lies in the struggle for power and American political discourse, demonstrates a huge number of evaluative statements aimed at gaining political power through direct persuasion or manipulation. Moreover, gaining of power lies in competitiveness, i.e. agonality that has become one of the constituent phenomena of political culture. The aim of the research is to identify these utterances as components of agonal strategies in one of the political discourse genres, i.e. electoral debate.

J. Burckhardt introduced the term «agonality» (from the Greek ἀγών (agon) competition) in his book "History of Greek Culture" published in 1898-1902 [1]. Nowadays this term implies the struggle of two ideas that defend competing sides in emotional and emphatic manner. The extensiveness of agonism or ritualized "adversariality" covers many domains of human discourse [2]. It has become a part of ritualized argumentative competition organized according to certain strategies.

The present study of evaluative statements in political debates showed the connection of strategies "to raise" and "to lower" [3] with the negative sematic zone and the strategic agonality of these statements lies in the intentionality which may have direct or covert meaning. These strategies, we believe, are disclosed in the analysis of evaluative statements as fallacies used as violations of rules for critical discussion.[4]   Material used for the analysis is the first and second Trump-Clinton Debate Transcripts (2016).

In electoral American campaign the key strategy of demotion is the strategy of creating one's own positive image by negatively presenting the opponent as in the statement as statements by D. Trump about H. Clinton: *She doesn't have the look. She doesn't have the stamina. To be president of this country, you need tremendous stamina.* Evaluative statement is a direct personal attack which shows doubt of the opponent's expertise and expressing doubt about Hillary's ability to run the country. Agonal strategy lies in the field of *ad hominem* fallacy as a direct attack.

One more type of is circumstantial attack when a positive evaluative statement about the opponent in fact expresses a negative attitude : *You know, Donald was very fortunate in his life, and that's all to his benefit. He started his business with $14 million, borrowed from his father.* Defamation and partial denunciation tactics serve as the basis for the positive evaluation. The <subject>(Donald Trump) is presented by the positive evaluation "very fortunate" and "that's all to his benefit". This statement is followed by a statement that can be interpreted as a fallacy *ad hominem* casting doubt as to the image of the opponent.

Although the position of the statement on the rating scale remains unchanged. One more agonal strategy concerns high self-grading as in the following statements of D.Trump (*I think my strongest asset, maybe by far, is my temperament. I have a winning temperament. I know how to win. (TCD-2)*or H.Clinton (*And by the way, my tax cut is the biggest since Ronald Reagan. I'm very proud of it. It will create tremendous numbers of new jobs.* where agonism lies in the field of such fallacy as *argumentum ad populum* . This strategy concerns

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putting pressure on the electorate by symptomatic argumentation scheme where agonism lies in the field of appropriate or inappropriate communicative environment.

Emphatic agonality is forcing the opponent to justify and defend himself/ herself, while losing his/her credibility in the eyes of potential voters ."Blame game" strategy is often connected with the shifting the burden of proof in some other direction. Thus, evaluative statements are used as effective means of such agonal strategies as self-assertion, constructing an enemy image, discrediting the opponent with such fallacies as argumentum ad hominin, ad populum.

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