

# HATE SPEECH IN AMERICAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A FUNCTIONAL-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The aim of this paper is to analyse how the concept of hatred is represented in American political discourse. The problem of intensified hate speech requires thorough linguistic investigation as political discourse is becoming more openly conflictual. The empirical material of this study comprises public speeches by American politicians, politically themed analytical articles in the press, and posts and statements of politicians in social networks. The main method used in the analysis is the functional-linguistic analysis of discourse. The author analyses confrontational communicative tactics, e.g. discrediting, scorn, insult, accusation, mockery, etc. The objects (or victims) of such rhetoric are political opponents of the subject of speech, who may have different points of view, religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds and social status. Hate speech, which is an extreme form of how the concept of hatred can be verbalized, may be directed against confessional and ethnical groups. The paper places a special emphasis on the communicative goals and intentions of discourse participants who resort to hate speech. Usually it is the desire of the subject of speech to publicly demonstrate disrespect, mock, belittle the authority of opponents and favourably represent oneself in the eyes of the audience. The rhetoric of hatred comprises such typical means as negative and offensive epithets and metaphors; hyperbolic, comparative, rhetorical and lexical constructions with the pragmatical meaning of irony. In situations when the subjects of speech emphasize the difference between them and their opponents (national, religious, social etc.), the functional fields of the concept of hatred and the “in-group/out-group” concept may overlap. In these cases, the communicative goal of the speaker is to alienate political opponents and emphasize their dissidence in a negative way.

**Keywords:** political discourse, communicative tactic, functional linguistics, verbal aggression, professional communication, hatred, speech manipulation, pragmalinguistics

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Modern American political discourse is antagonistic in nature, thanks in large part to its institutional and national features (democratic, public, media-oriented, dialogical, and bipartisan). This leads to a constant struggle among candidates for various public positions for power. This often leads to conflict situations, the linguistic marker of which is the use of words from the semantic field “hate,” or words “of various parts of speech whose meanings have a common semantic feature” (Kulikova, Salmina 2013), in this case an expression of hatred towards the object of the statement. In the context of the ongoing functional and pragmatic evolution of modern English-language discourse and the transformation of the linguo-pragmatic norms of speech interaction in the political sphere as observed by many researchers, the deliberate deviation from the rules of verbal behaviour, as well the deregulation of discourse and the violation of the prescriptions for correct non-conflict interaction, can be seen as an effective rhetorical technique for exerting pragmatic influence on opponents<sup>2</sup> (Khranchenko 2017). Undoubtedly, hate speech, as a discursive phenomenon, can be attributed to such persuasive means.

Features of the implementation of the concept “hate” typically include the verbalization of such pragmatic meanings as disgust, enmity, hostility, loathing, ill will, malicious intent, dislike, etc. (Epifanova 2019). The American Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word “hate” as follows: “*HATE: to feel strong aversion or intense dislike for [...] HATE implies an emotional aversion often coupled with enmity or malice*”<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the semantic field “hate” may include those linguistic units whose lexical meaning includes a deliberate and extremely negative attitude on the part of the subject of the statement towards a certain object or person.

An extreme way of expressing the concept of “hate” in political communication is the use of so-called “hate speech.” Hate speech can be understood as various statements of the communicator that deliberately convey or express hatred towards a specific population group, such as an ethnic, religious or national minority (Smits 2016). Hate speech, as E. V. Koval notes, is based on the differentiation of people into “us” and “them,” and is at the same time designed to arouse the sympathy and understanding among those who agree with the person talking, while at the same time discrediting “them” (Koval 2019). Accordingly, hate speech primarily targets the listener’s emotions, appealing to their insecurities, fear of danger, and their sense of inequity in relation to those social groups that are the object of their hatred.

The communicative act of hatred is made up of the following semantic components: the subject of the statement, an emotion, a process, and the object of hatred. We will include any statements by politicians aimed at demonstrating hostility towards and disrespect for their opponent among such acts.

<sup>2</sup> Khranchenko D. S. 2014. *Funktsionalno-pragmaticheskaja evoliutsia anglijskogo delovogo diskursa* [Functional-Pragmatic Evolution of English Business Discourse]. Abstract of doctoral dissertation. Moscow. MGIMO University.

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary by Merriam-Webster Online. 2020. URL: <https://www.merriamwebster.com> (accessed 10.05.2020).

The purpose of this article is to study the implementation of the pragmatic meaning of “hate” in American political discourse based on the functional-linguistic approach. Accordingly, we aim to solve the following tasks:

- to highlight, based on the speeches of American political figures, the most frequently used methods of expressing a hateful attitude among the subjects of statements;
- to analyse the speech tactics typically used in conflict situations;
- to determine the goals of the subjects, the functions of their speech acts, and the features of the images of the objects of hate that they build.

### Research Methodology

This article examines the functional and pragmatic features of speech acts that imply hatred in American political discourse. By analysing linguistic methods for achieving the semantic component “hate” in institutional discourse, we are able to identify the communicant’s target preferences and clarify the manipulative tactics that influence the addressee’s picture of the world.

As the empirical material for our study, we used the speeches of high-ranking American politicians, as well as their posts on social networks. A functional-pragmatic analysis reveals key tactical ways in which the participants in American political discourse actualize the meaning of hatred in their words.

### Research Results

The concept of HATE is most often expressed in the speeches of politicians through pejorative and discrediting means of expression. Take the following expressions by U.S. President Donald Trump:

(1) *They’re going to put him into a home, and other people are going to be running the country, and **they’re** going to be **super-left, radical crazies**. And Joe’s going to be in a home and he’ll be watching television<sup>4</sup>.*

(2) *She said she was Indian. And I said that **I have more Indian blood than she does, and I have none**. I’m sorry, and we drove her crazy and that’s a good thing, not a bad thing<sup>5</sup>.*

(3) *Looks to me like it’s going to be **SleepyCreepy Joe over Crazy Bernie**. Everyone else is fading fast!<sup>6</sup>.*

<sup>4</sup> Sargent G. 2020. Trump’s new attack on Biden exposes his own unfitness. *The Washington Post*. 03.03.2020. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/03/03/trumps-new-attack-biden-exposes-his-own-unfitness/> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>5</sup> Seipel B. 2019. Trump swipes at Warren: “I have more Indian blood than she does, and I have none”. *The Hill*. 08.01.2019. URL: <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/455875-trump-swipes-at-warren-i-have-more-indian-blood-than-she-does-and-i-have/> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>6</sup> Donald J. Trump. 2019. “Looks to me like it’s going to be SleepyCreepy Joe over Crazy Bernie. Everyone else is fading fast!”. Twitter. 10.05.2019. URL: <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1126839450330382346> (accessed 10.05.2020).

(4) *Disgraced and discredited Bob Mueller and his whole group of Angry Democrat Thugs spent over 30 hours with the White House Council, only with my approval, for purposes of transparency*<sup>7</sup>.

(5) So interesting to see *“Progressive” Democrat Congresswomen*, who originally *came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe, the worst, most corrupt and inept anywhere* in the world (if they even have a functioning government at all), *now loudly and viciously telling the people of the United States*, the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth, *how our government is to be run*<sup>8</sup>.

In Statement (1), Trump uses the negative definitions of “super-left” and “radical crazies” to characterize the team of his rival in the presidential race from the Democratic Party, Joe Biden. The prefix *super-* and the adjective *radical* underscore the differences between the political views of the two rivals, and the medical assessment of crazies suggests that Biden’s supporters are reckless. With the hyperbole *Joe’s going to be in a home and he’ll be watching television*, Trump is clearly mocking his opponent’s age and health, creating in the minds of the audience the image of an ordinary man living out his retirement, suggesting that his team will be running the country instead of him. Accordingly, in this speech act, Trump resorts to verbalizing a pragmatic meaning of hatred in order to show voters that Biden is helplessness and lacks independence, and that his team is excessively radical.

Discursive fragment (2) is an attack by Trump on Senator Elizabeth Warren, built around Trump’s ridiculing the senator’s claims about her ethnicity as a member of racial minorities. The ironic phrase *I have more Indian blood than she does, and I have none*, allows us to indirectly accuse Warren of hypocrisy, of an inappropriate attempt to build her political career on a sensitive issue that has been a sore point for the United States for years. Trump uses the colloquial idiomatic expression *we drove her crazy* and the lexical repetition *that’s a good thing, not a bad thing* to actualize the concept of “hate,” thus approving the mass condemnation of his opponent and any attempts to rattle Ms. Warren.

In statement (3), the U.S. President uses verbal labels in relation to his opponents, based on the comical combination of their names and caricatures of them (*Sleepy-Creepy Joe over Crazy Bernie*). The dismissive and hateful tone represents Trump’s flip-pant attitude towards his opponents in the presidential race, and points to a lack of concern that he could lose his post as leader of the country. The metaphor *fading fast* emphasizes the lack of a serious political struggle among the Democrats and other worthy presidential hopefuls. This creates an image of Donald Trump in the minds of voters as a shoe-in at the upcoming presidential elections.

<sup>7</sup> Donald J. Trump. 2018. “Disgraced and discredited Bob Mueller...” Twitter. 20.08.2018. URL: <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1031503298967363586> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>8</sup> Donald J. Trump. 2019. “So interesting to see “Progressive” Democrat Congresswomen...” Twitter. 14.07.2019. URL: <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1150381394234941448> (accessed 10.05.2020).

Statement (4) contains the negative epithets *disgraced* and *discredited* with regard to prosecutor Robert Mueller, who led the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. The story was a blow to Trump's reputation, as he was suspected of collaborating with the Russian intelligence services. The negative prefix *dis-* emphasizes the fact that the president was able to overcome the Mueller ordeal, and the invective phrase *his group of Angry Democrat Thugs* points both to the political affiliation of those involved in the investigation, and to its lack of grounds. Trump thus presents himself as a victim of political persecution, which is pointless and takes up a lot of his time (*spent over 30 hours with the White House Council, only with my approval, for purposes of transparency*).

In statement (5), Trump uses indirect insults as a tactic against a congresswoman from the Democratic Party. The deliberate use of quotation marks and a capital letter when writing the epithet "*Progressive*" is a graphic demonstration of the president's mocking tone towards his rivals, and the discursive element *originally came* emphasizes their origins as immigrants and implicitly allows his opponents to be categorized as "them," that is "aliens," or "foreigners." Trump also uses hate speech when talking about the countries of origin of these politicians. The metaphorical constructions *complete and total catastrophe, the worst, most corrupt and inept anywhere in the world*, contrasted with the antithesis *the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth*, paints these countries as undeveloped and backward compared to the United States, and connecting his opponents with their historical country of origin indirectly emphasizes their affiliation with a foreign culture, as well as their hypocrisy and disrespect for the American people (*now loudly and viciously telling the people of the United States how our government is to be run*).

The concept of "hate" can appear through the very use of the communicative tactics of discredit, accusation, insult, reproach, and positive representation in speech:

(1) *I think **this president is a coward** when it comes to helping our kids who are afraid of gun violence. I think that **he is cruel** when he **doesn't deal with helping our Dreamers**, of which we are very proud of. I think **he is in denial about the climate crisis**. However, that's about the election<sup>9</sup>.*

(2) *I think the president is making clear that the Democrats have been parroting Iranian talking points and **almost taking the side of terrorists and those who were out to kill the Americans**. I think the president was making the point that the Democrats seem to **hate him so much that they're willing to be on the side of countries and leadership of countries who want to kill Americans**<sup>10</sup>.*

<sup>9</sup> "I Pray for the President All the Time". Nancy Pelosi Had an Angry Response When Asked If She Hates Trump. 2019. *Time*. 05.12.2019. URL: <https://time.com/5744706/nancy-pelosi-trump-impeachment-hate/> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>10</sup> Trump amplifies incendiary tweets about Nancy Pelosi after her comments on Iran protests. 2020. *The Washington Post*. 13.01.2020. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/01/13/trump-pelosi-iran-retweets/> (accessed 05.12.2023).

(3) So I'd like to talk about who we're running against, **a billionaire who calls women "fat broads" and "horse-faced lesbians."** And, no, I'm not talking about Donald Trump. I'm talking about Mayor Bloomberg<sup>11</sup>.

(4) I'm a New Yorker. I know how **to take on an arrogant conman like Donald Trump**, that comes from New York. **I'm a mayor** or was a mayor. **I know how to run a complicated city**, the biggest, most diverse city in this country<sup>12</sup>.

(5) What a wonderful country we have. The **best known socialist** in the country **happens to be a millionaire with three houses**. What did I miss here?<sup>13</sup>

(6) You know, when we talk about **a corrupt political system, bought by billionaires like Mr. Bloomberg**, it manifests itself in a tax code in which not only is Amazon and many other major corporations, some owned by **the wealthiest people in this country not paying a nickel in taxes**, we have the **insane situation that billionaires today, if you can believe it, have an effective tax rate lower than the middle class**<sup>14</sup>.

In fragment (1), speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi ascribes numerous negative characteristics to President Donald Trump (*a coward, cruel*) and emphasizes, through the use of the negative constructions *doesn't deal* and *denial about*, his backward views on immigration policy and the problem of global warming. The possessive pronoun *our* (*our kids, our Dreamers*), the demonstrative *this* (*this president*), and the personal pronouns *I* (the words *I think* appear three times in the fragment) and *we* (*we are very proud*) actualize the concept of "us against them," which the communicant uses to implicitly place the country's leader in contrast to the American people, thereby indicating that Trump's actions are contrary to the interests of his own citizens and the values of the United States. Pelosi uses the remark *that's about the election* to point the attention of listeners to the fact that they are the ones who elect their presidents. Accordingly, the concept of "hate" is implemented here in relation to the personality of Donald Trump, and not the status of the President of the United States as a whole.

In fragment (2), White House press secretary Stephanie Ann Grisham is speaking out against the U.S. Democratic Party, which had criticized Trump's anti-Iranian foreign policy. By substituting concepts (*Iranian – terrorists, those who were out to kill the Americans, countries who want to kill Americans*) that create a negative image of the people of Iran as criminals and enemies of the United States, she paints Trump's opponents as traitors and accomplices of terrorists. At the same time, the use of constructions indicating probability (*I think, almost, making the point, seem to*) creates a certain distance that allows the speaker to avoid directly accusing the Democratic Party of

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Warren, Criticizing Bloomberg, Sent a Message: She Won't Be Ignored. 2020. *The New York Times*. 19.02.2020. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/us/politics/elizabeth-warren-debate.html> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>12</sup> Full transcript: Ninth Democratic debate in Las Vegas. 2020. *NBC News*. 20.02.2020. URL: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/full-transcript-ninth-democratic-debate-las-vegas-n1139546> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



supporting criminals. Grisham also stresses the Democrats' hatred of Donald Trump (*hate him so much that they're willing to be on the side of countries and leadership of countries who want to kill Americans*), indicating that their opinion is conditioned not by the interests of the United States, but by personal political ambitions and selfish motives.

In statement (3), Senator Elizabeth Warren accuses her rival in the election, Michael Bloomberg, of being a chauvinist and a homophobe. Deliberately comparing Bloomberg to Trump emphasizes the similarities between the two politicians (*a billionaire who calls women*), even though Bloomberg is no Trump supporter himself. The deictic construction *who we're running against* allows the speaker to actualize the "us against them" concept, thus highlighting Bloomberg's belonging to the "out-group" – the people Warren and her supporters vote against. In this way, Warren paints her opponent as an opponent with different views and priorities, despite the fact that they represent the same political party.

In turn, Michael Bloomberg uses the tactic of positive representation in statement (4) and stresses that the only thing he and Donald Trump have in common is the fact that they are both from New York (*I'm a New Yorker – Donald Trump, that comes from New York*). The pejorative phrase *an arrogant conman* in this context allows Bloomberg to express his contempt for the president and indirectly indicates that Trump, unlike him, acquired his fortune through fraudulent means, and that this is also an important difference between the two billionaires. The syntactic parallelism and lexical repetitions in the last two sentences highlight the managerial and political experience of the speaker, and the epithets expressed by superlative adjectives (*the biggest, most diverse*), form an implicit comparison of New York and the United States, since this city is the most accurate representation of the country in terms of its ethnic composition. Consequently, Bloomberg's track record of success in governing the nation's largest city makes him the Democratic candidate's best candidate for president.

In statement (5), Bloomberg uses the tactic of reproaching Bernie Sanders for his hypocritical stance towards millionaires. The rhetorical constructions *what a wonderful country we have* and *what did I miss here?* are clearly ironic in tone and point to the absurdity of the situation in which the participants in the election find themselves. *The nominations the best known socialist and a millionaire with three houses* are contextual antonyms in this fragment, emphasizing the discrepancy between the political views of the opponent and his real way of life. Accordingly, Bloomberg is attempting to create a negative image of Bernie Sanders in order to neutralize his social agenda and devalue his image as a fighter for social justice among working-class voters.

In statement (6), Bernie Sanders himself describes the American political system using the negative adjective *corrupt* and the participial construction *bought by billionaires like Mr. Bloomberg*, indirectly accusing his rival of bribing other politicians and the shadow management of the country's public institutions. The hyperbole *the wealthiest people in this country not paying a nickel in taxes*, the nomination *the insane situation*, and the conditional construction *if you can believe it*, point to the absurd-

ity of the U.S. tax reforms, and the comparative clause (*that billionaires today have an effective tax rate lower than the middle class*) is used to confirm the thesis that the country is corrupt. Thus, the communicator creates a negative image of American billionaires, representing them as greedy people who use the U.S. tax system for their own purposes in order to increase their own wealth.

In addition to the desire to blame the opponent and belittle his authority, the speaker's goal when employing the "hate" concept may be rattle the opponent, to elicit a response from them, and to openly demonstrate ignorance, neglect and hostility in the dialogue. In such cases, the tactics of ridicule and mockery are actively used:

(1) ***Let's dumb this down for me, because I don't know what a class 1 is, and I don't have the Book of Mormon over there like you've got to read from... I tried...***<sup>15</sup>.

(2) ***As you are speaking as the oracle of science, tell us, what exactly is a Y chromosome?***<sup>16</sup>.

(3) ***Sen. Cruz, while I understand you judge people's intelligence by the lowest income they've had, I hold awards from MIT Lincoln Lab & others for accomplishments in microbiology. Secondly, I'm surprised you're asking about chromosomes given that you don't even believe in evolution***<sup>17</sup>.

(4) - ***Romney's in isolation? Gee, that's too bad.***

- ***Do I detect sarcasm there?***

- ***No, no, none whatsoever***<sup>18</sup>.

(5) - ***My family has served this nation in uniform, going back to the Revolution. I'm a daughter of the American Revolution. I've bled for this nation ... Families like mine are the ones that bleed first.***

- ***I had forgotten that your parents came all the way from Thailand to serve George Washington***<sup>19</sup>.

(6) ***In three short years, President Trump has doubled the growth of the greatest economy in all of human history. And you know what our Democratic friends have done for him? Speaker Nancy Pelosi is trying to impeach him! I don't mean any disrespect, but it must suck to be that dumb!***<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Caffeinated Thoughts. 2017. Matt McCoy Mocks Jake Chapman's Faith During Debate on Fireworks Bill. 22.03.2017. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNEY-ubqj9I> (accessed 07.12.2023).

<sup>16</sup> Ted Cruz. 2020. "As you are speaking as the oracle of science, tell us, what exactly is a Y chromosome?" Twitter. 27.02.2020. URL: <https://twitter.com/tedcruz/status/1233130604436369409> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>17</sup> Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. 2020. "Sen. Cruz, while I understand you judge people's intelligence by..." Twitter. 28.02.2020. URL: <https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1233409167085449216> (accessed 10.05.2020).

<sup>18</sup> The Hill. 2020. President Trump: "Romney's in isolation? Gee, that's too bad". 23.03.2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p37XPqHH7eU> (accessed 05.10.2023).

<sup>19</sup> Illinois Senator Draws Fire for Racially Charged Attack on Opponent's Family. 2016. *NBC News*. 28.10.2016. URL: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/mark-kirk-questions-tammy-duckworth-s-family-s-service-heritage-n674331> (accessed 05.12.2023).

<sup>20</sup> "It must suck to be that dumb!" Louisiana senator mocks Nancy Pelosi for welcoming public impeachment war with Donald Trump as president grins during raucous rally. 2019. *The Daily Mail*. 07.11.2019. URL: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7660671/It-suck-dumb-Louisiana-senator-mocks-Nancy-Pelosi-welcoming-impeachment-war.html> (accessed 07.12.2023).



Statement (1) is from Iowa Senator Matt McCoy, a Democrat. Here, he is ridiculing Republican Jack Chapman, who, while promoting legislation in the Senate to allow the sale of fireworks in the state, tried to explain the different classes of fireworks. The use of substandard vocabulary in the imperative construction *let's dumb this down for me* demonstrates Mr. McCoy's disdain towards his opponents address, and the comparative construction and parcellation (I don't have the Book of Mormon over there like you've got to read from... I tried ...) allow him to employ the tactics of mockery with regard to Chapman's religion. Accordingly, the speaker turns to the conceptual areas of "hate" and "us against them" to demonstrate hostility towards Mormonism in general, and to indirectly diagnose his opponent as being insane, which thus devalues his bill.

Statement (2) was spoken by Republican Senator Ted Cruz, who was attempting to ridicule Republican Member of the U.S. House of Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for criticizing the appointment of Vice President Mike Pence, a politician with no medical, as head of the White House coronavirus task force. The nomination *the oracle of science* is a thinly veiled jab at the authority of the opponent's statements, since she is a politician, and not a scientist. Cruz then uses the interrogative construction (*what exactly is a Y chromosome?*) to indirectly accuse Ocasio-Cortez of hypocrisy, since, according to him, she too lacks the necessary knowledge of medicine and biology (the very thing for which she criticizes Pence) to make such a judgement.

Statement (3) is Ocasio-Cortez's retort, in which she criticizes Cruz for disdaining people based on their financial status (*you judge people's intelligence by the lowest income*) and positively represents herself as a person with certain achievements in the field of biology (*I hold awards from MIT Lincoln Lab & others for accomplishments in microbiology*). Ocasio-Cortez uses intensifying constructions (*I'm surprised, you don't even believe*) to ridicule her opponent's religious beliefs, which contradict scientific principles. Consequently, both communicants attempt to belittle the other's authority in their statements.

In statement (4), Donald Trump ridicules the fact that his Republican colleague Mitt Romney, a frequent critic of the president who voted in favour of his impeachment, had decided to self-isolate. The exclamation *gee* is mocking in tone and allows Trump to express open disrespect for his fellow party member, and the intensifying constructions *too bad* and *none whatsoever* point to a certain sarcasm, although officially he expresses regret about the restriction of Romney's freedom. In this way, the president openly demonstrates hostility towards his colleague, gloating over the fact that he is isolating.

Fragment (5) is a dialogue between Democratic Senator Tammy Duckworth and Republican Mark Kirk. In it, Duckworth appeals to the past and paints herself as an heir to the American Revolution (*I'm a daughter of the American Revolution*). In response, Kirk uses irony (*I had forgotten*) and hyperbole (*your parents came all the way from Thailand to serve George Washington*) to make fun of Duckworth's Asian appearance (her mother was Thai), thus actualizing the concept of "us against them" by point-

ing out the hypocrisy of his opponent, who is trying to earn political points on a topic that is important to all Americans. What we thus see is Kirk's attempt to neutralize Duckworth's tactic of appealing to the past and belittle her authority.

Statement (6) was uttered by Republican Senator John Neely Kennedy. Here, he is ridiculing Democratic politicians who called for the impeachment of Donald Trump. The rhetorical question and the ironic *our Democratic friends* point to the non-cooperative behaviour of democratic senators and members of Congress with respect to the president, and the invective vocabulary in the rhetorical exclamation (it must suck to be that dumb!) is employed in order to express the speaker's dissatisfaction with and indignation at this behaviour. The remark *I don't mean any disrespect* is used to soften the offensiveness of the statement and give it a more conventional character. The goal of this communicative act is thus to ridicule and express indignation at what Kennedy believes to be the hypocritical and illogical behaviour of his opponents, and not to insult members of the Democratic Party.

## Conclusion

The concept of "hate" is employed in numerous ways in American political discourse. These include various communication tactics: discrediting, accusation, insults, scorn, ridicule, mockery, etc. The goal of the communicant when resorting to hate speech may be the desire to express hostility towards or disrespect for the opponent, to belittle their authority and positively represent themselves as a more worthy candidate. Our analysis of the material in this article revealed that the reason for expressing hatred is often tied to certain characteristics of the object of criticism: the person's nationality, religion, beliefs, political views, age, and so on. Often the speaker actualizes the concept of "us against them" in order to draw attention to the "alienness" of the political opponent. Invective and pejorative epithets and metaphors are commonly used as speech markers for expressing hatred and hostility towards opponents, as are hyperbole, lexical repetition, and rhetorical and comparative constructions with an ironic meaning. The specific features of the functioning of different linguistic tools depending on the communicative situation are, in our opinion, of particular interest and deserve further study.

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### Conflicts of interest:

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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