

**КОМУНІКАТИВНО-КОГНІТИВНИЙ, ЕНЕРГЕТИЧНИЙ,  
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ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ ДИСКУРСУ**

**INTERPLAY OF LANGUAGE MEANS CONVEYING SUBLIMINAL  
POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC ADDRESSES (A CASE STUDY  
OF VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY’S POLITICAL ADDRESS)**

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***Abstract.** The paper outlines the interplay of verbal and prosodic means that serve to convey the subliminal potential of public addresses by a political leader. The study is based on the speech delivered to a joint meeting of US Congress on December 22, 2022 by the current President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky.*

***Key words:** subliminal potential, public address, language means’ interplay, prosodic organisation.*

Historically, a person has been accompanied by one of the most universal phenomena related to the human psyche, i.e. subliminal or suggestive influence. This phenomenon permeates many spheres of our life since in any activity, consciously or unconsciously, a person undergoes this influence. A number of signals of various nature and origin coming from the person’s macro- and microspheres (Klymeniuk, 2010) that enter the brain can affect the human psychic sphere and determine the nature of their behaviour. In other words, subliminal effect involves the use of subtle cues or stimuli that are below the threshold of conscious awareness that influence a person’s behavior or thought patterns. Apart from a number of non-verbal extralinguistic means having subliminal potential, like subtle changes in sound or music to create emotional responses or using scents or other sensory cues to evoke certain associations or feelings, the most effective subliminal influence is contained in paralanguage and especially in intonation that accompanies verbal means of communication (Kalyta & Taranenko, 2012).

The aim of the present paper is to outline a set of verbal and non-verbal means whose interplay is capable of producing a subliminal suggestive influence on the recipient thus assisting in conveying a political leader’s ideas.

As is known from research practice (Kalyta, 2016), from the functional perspective, the need for the use of subliminal stimuli in communication arises mostly due to the speakers' need to encourage an individual or their various groups to do specific actions or restrain them from certain actions by way of changing their viewpoints and opinions.

To achieve these goals there are certain technologies, that we understand as a clear sequence of the speaker's communicative actions, which, taking into account extralinguistic factors of communication, should lead to a certain quite specific result of subliminal influence.

In view of this, as a study material we chose a public address delivered to a joint meeting of US Congress (22 of December, 2022) by the current President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky (Zelensky's Address, 2022), who is already commonly perceived by international audiences as the one who can influence his listeners.

Since taking his office, Volodymyr Zelensky has been known for delivering various types of public addresses noted by deviation from the formal style and characterised by the strong emotional appeal, achieved by the interplay of the following set of verbal and non-verbal means:

- hypophora, i.e. asking a question and immediately answering it, which creates in the audience the feeling of having a dialogue with the speaker, e.g.:

*We have artillery, yes. Thank you. We have it. **Is it enough? Honestly, not really.***

Observing a prolonged pause before giving the answer, the speaker, on the one hand, shows his control over the situation and, on the other hand, draws the listeners' attention arousing their curiosity.

- repetition of a word or a phrase in successive sentences or clauses that serves to highlight the idea being enforced by regular rhythmic patterns, e.g.:

*We already built **strong** Ukraine, with **strong** people, **strong** army, **strong** institutions **together with you**. We developed **strong** security guarantees for our country and for entire Europe and the world, **together with you**. And also **together with you**, we'll put in place everyone who will defy freedom.*

***Let's** do it. **Let** terrorist — **let** the terrorist state be held responsible for its terror and aggression and compensate all losses done by this war. **Let** the world see that the United States are here.*

At the suprasegmental level the repeated words acquire additional prominence due to being singled out by a short pause and pronounced with increased loudness, slowed down tempo and a high-falling tone of a wide range.

Thus, repetition of the same word or phrase having specific intonational organisation is recognised as an effective tool of fixing the key notion in the interlocutors' consciousness and memory.

- parallel constructions, i.e., a series of words or phrases having similar syntactic structure, being rather set, rhythm and duration and often identical intonation pattern aimed at producing a powerful impression by way of emphasising some key ideas, e.g.:

*“I know that everything **depends on us**, on Ukrainian armed forces,” “yet so much **depends on the world**. So much in the world **depends on you**,”*

- the use of key words that have evaluative connotation, especially for the definite targeted audience. These words acquire additional prominence by being repeated and emphasis by high-falling nuclear tones.

*And we don't, don't have to know everyone's wish, as we know that all of us, millions of Ukrainians, wish the same: **Victory. Only victory.***

- the word play. In the analysed speech the president uses the word *patriot* referring both to the U.S. promise to provide advanced air-defence batteries and making direct reference to Ukrainian military serving as true patriots of their country.

*“If your **Patriots** stop the Russian terror against our cities,” he said, “it will let Ukrainian **patriots** work to the full to defend our freedom.”*

- the use of variety of stylistics devices: metaphors, similes, metonymies.

- the use of quotations as the appeal to the history to confirm the speaker's opinion. In his speech Zelensky quoted President Franklin D. Roosevelt when he spoke to the nation after the Pearl Harbor attack:

*“No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”*  
*“The Ukrainian people will win, too, absolutely,”*

- the use of persuasive imperatives, uttered in a confident voice, having falling intonation pattern with a widened voice range.

No matter what language means are used, president Zelensky speaks with zest, conveying his firmness and confidence, always emphasising the key points and taking his time for pausation so that the key ideas are digested by the audience. Among other prosodic means that ensure the president's conviction and thus convey the subliminal suggestive effect of his speech are as follows: isochronous pronunciation of the adjacent intonation groups, identical intonation patterns and rhythmic structures, the use of falling tones of the same rate of their movement, the identical number of rhythmic groups in the adjacent intonation groups, the same

duration of pauses within the utterance, prevalence of short intonation groups, highlighting of keywords by a high falling kinetic tone having an upward-downward configuration.

The prior results of the analysis prove that the specificity of prosodic organisation of the public address enables a listener to perceive the information, focusing on the key elements that can activate cognitive processes in their psychic sphere. The interplay of contrasted parameters of melodic, dynamic, and temporal prosodic subsystems favors the attraction of the listener’s attention to the speaker’s message and its pragmatic aim.

To conclude, the subliminal influence as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon requires tools of speech energetics analysis being able to ensure a comprehensive study of both the speaker’s and the listener’s behaviour in various communicative situations using verbal and non-verbal communicative modes: speech, image, sound, body-language, graphics, etc.

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