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## STUDY OF GEORGE W. BUSH POLITICALLY CORRECT PREFERENCES IN HIS ADDRESSES TO THE NATION DURING THE 2ND PRESIDENTIAL TERM

*Стаття досліджує дискурс Джорджа Буша та його політ коректні вподобання у висловлюваннях на тему Іраку. Проаналізовано роль політ коректного вокабуляру президента у його звертаннях до американського народу під час другої каденції.*

**Ключові слова:** політкоректні вподобання, політкоректний вокабуляр.

*The article makes an attempt to conduct the research of George W. Bush politically correct preferences in his discourse on Iraq during his second presidency. The focus is put on the role of politically correct vocabulary in president Bush Addresses to the Nation.*

**Key words:** politically correct preferences, politically correct vocabulary.

These are politicians and presidents in particular whose activity is of vital importance for the whole societies. The activity itself is reflected in politicians' discourse, and many scholars who conduct their research in the field of political discourse find it **topical** to analyse the semantic and pragmatic peculiarities of political discourse as well as the way reality is presented in politicians' discourse [3, p. 23]. It is also important to mention that for the time being American political discourse is one of the far and away the most disputable issues among linguists who undertake the study of this subject.

For example, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 *The Washington Post* reported that the Bush White House had concluded that George W. Bush – who was facing sinking polling numbers regarding the war in Iraq – needed to “*shift strategies*”. He would (of course) not be implementing any policy changes, the paper noted; his new approach would be “*mostly rhetorical*” [10].

At the same time, a range of political experts such as David Corn, the Washington editor of *The Nation* magazine, highly doubted the perspective of that rhetorical change in president Bush discourse on Iraq war and predicted the further use of the rhetoric that would distort the reality [12].

Consequently, under the circumstances when famous scholars who analyse political and military discourse of the U. S. officials have not reached the agreement on whether the rhetoric of George W. Bush second presidency underwent significant changes as regards the addressing the U. S. Nation on Iraq, it appears to be **topical** to undertake the comparative study of changes that took place in president Bush rhetoric since 2005 and to follow the effects of the second term discourse as far as focus on common Americans is concerned.

On the grounds of a range of weekly radio addresses, states of the Union and other speeches on Iraq, it is possible to surely state that political correctness was widely used by George W. Bush. According to our study results, the politically correct vocabulary was mainly referred to such spheres as:

- Freedom and Democracy;
- Security;
- Helping Iraqis (military aspect);
- US and Coalition Military Activity in Iraq;
- Military Campaign in Iraq.

The **purpose** of the article is to analyze the role of politically correct vocabulary in George W. Bush discourse on Iraq during his second presidency and to follow the rhetorical changes as regards the politically correct preferences of the 43<sup>rd</sup> American president. To successfully achieve the given aim means to research the way politically correct vocabulary was used for the description of U. S. military, to find out the preferences of George W. Bush towards the politically correct groups as well as to analyze whether the presidential discourse was used with aim of manipulating the public opinion.

Having come to the office for the second time George W. Bush considered Iraq and victory in war on terror in Iraq to be his primary task [3, p. 7]. At the dawn of Bush second presidency the situation in the Middle East seemed to be gradually improving, even though it was still perilous. Development of democracy in Iraq led to both, positive and negative outcomes. On the one hand, such democratic events as the 2005 Parliamentary election in Iraq created favourable conditions for further democratic changes and improvement of people's life inside the country. However, on the other hand, acts of violence inside the country continued [8].

As a result of increasing insurgency, there was a huge rise in political correctness usage by president of the United States. Never before has he used notions *Freedom* and *Democracy* so many times in order to avoid uncomfortable discussion about all the atrocities of the war. Having delivered only 30 speeches during the year 2005, George W. Bush used the term **Freedom** in politically correct sense 67 times and the term **Democracy** 37 times.

While there were constant pictures of violence on the TV and in newspapers, George W. Bush expressed optimism and continued persuading the public that "*the advance of freedom will lead to peace*" and that "*freedom in Iraq will make America safer for generations to come*" or that "*encouraging democracy in that region is a generational commitment*", "*a watershed moment in the story of freedom*", etc. [11] President used his rhetoric to prove that it was vital to support Iraq in its "*march toward democracy*" or that "*the ideal of liberty was worth defending*" [11].

The examples of rhetoric given above presented the eternal American values as well as the tight connection between the U. S. soldiers and those

values. However, it distorted the real situation in Iraq and hid the negative consequences of "*the advance of freedom*" [6, p. 83]. Still, the amount of politically correct expressions from Freedom and Democracy group was gradually reducing in George W. Bush discourse while addressing the nation on U. S. military activity in Iraq (from 20% in 2005 to 5% in 2007 and 12% in 2008).

Furthermore, Helping Iraqis group of politically correct expressions, delivered by George W. Bush, in many cases included examples of expressions that hid the real intentions of the U. S. troops commanders. According to the rhetoric of George W. Bush, the U. S. troops were expected to help Iraqis "*build a free nation; take more responsibility for their security; lay the foundations of a strong democracy that can defend itself*", etc. [11]

Still, the Iraqi forces were far from being ready to take such responsibilities, and thus, the U. S. troops had to conduct main military fights against terrorists and extremists [10]. Under those circumstances, quick withdrawal of US troops seemed to be impossible. As an evidence for this statement in 2006 more American troops were moved to Baghdad with the aim "*to end security crisis*", which began after bombing of the country's the most holy Shia shrine in Samara [8].

Meanwhile, the analysis of George W. Bush rhetoric concerning sending more American troops to Baghdad discovered a significant focus on the security issue in different aspects, and in politically correct aspect in particular. First of all, military operation of U. S. militaries sent to Iraq to eliminate source of violence there was presented as a job connected with security: "*to restore security*", "*to secure the peace, to bring security to Baghdad*", "*to ensure the existence of an Iraqi security presence in the neighbourhoods*", "*to focus on improving the security situation*", etc. [11]

Second of all, president Bush vividly pointed to the link between security in Iraq and national security of the United States, claiming that the mission of troops sent to Baghdad was: "*to make Americans and Iraqis and the world more secure*" or "*to make America more secure and the world a better place*" [11]. Additionally, one could regular hear the statements like: "*The security of our country is directly linked to the liberty of the Iraqi people*", "*If we don't succeed in Iraq, our country is less secure*", "*Success in Iraq is necessary for the security of the United States*" [11].

Finally, president reminded of his intention to transfer the military responsibilities to the Iraqi security forces so that the U. S. troops could come home. However, before the U. S. soldiers had to: "*ensure the smoothest and most effective assumption of security responsibility by Iraqi forces*"; "*transfer security responsibilities to the Government of Iraq*"; "*expand the security presence as Iraqi citizens help them root out those who instigate violence*" [11]. This rhetoric paid people's attention to the fact that the U. S. military

activity in Iraq was necessary and vital for the international security. The risks for the U. S. soldiers and the timetable for troops' withdrawal, however, were never mentioned [2, p. 12].

The survey of the polls results on public opinion concerning Iraq in the given period proved that situation on the ground in Iraq influenced common Americans more than the addresses of their president with the emphasis on the need to protect values of Freedom, Democracy and Security, and to continue the *"noble cause of helping Iraqis"* in the Middle East [8]. The survey has brightly underlined the growing mass disappointment with the White House policy in Iraq. For example, the polls taken right after 6 April 2006 speech on Global war against terror showed 57% of public opposition against 42% of those Americans who continued to support the U. S. decision to invade Iraq [9].

Furthermore, the general analysis of the discourse proved that year 2007 was unique. Never before had president Bush delivered so many speeches on the topic of Iraq (78) and simultaneously, never before had he paid as little attention to the Freedom and Democracy theme (only 31 time of the Freedom and Liberty terms usage and 30 times of Democracy term usage), which was very popular in 2005 and 2006. A few politically correct expressions stressed the need for American soldiers to stay the course and continue *"ensuring the survival of a young democracy"*, *"stand with this young democracy"* and *"advancing liberty across a troubled region to defend our freedoms"* [11].

Such obvious shift in tone of president Bush was caused by the fact that new strategy was needed not only on the ground but in the rhetoric as well. Polls constantly showed the growing disappointment in the military campaign on the whole. People got tired to listen about the need *"to defend freedom in Iraq and spread democracy in a troubled region"* [8; 11].

As a result, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2007, there was officially pronounced the need to change strategy in Iraq. A new feature of president Bush appeared in his tendency to compare himself with common Americans while delivering the speech: *"The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people – and it is unacceptable to me... It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq"*, said George W. Bush underlining that he and Americans wanted the same things as regards Iraq [11].

The bottom line of the speech was to convince the American public to support the surge of US troops in Iraq in order to reduce the violence on the ground in Iraq. Again, coming to statistical data, Gallup poll results fixed next results few days before the speech, on the 5-7<sup>th</sup> of January 2007: answering the question *"In a view of the developments since we first sent our troops to Iraq, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq, or not?"* 57% said "Yes" and 41% of Americans disagreed [9].

Obviously, president Bush and his speechwriters were aware of that statistics and the aim of the speech was to change it [12]. Since the vast majority

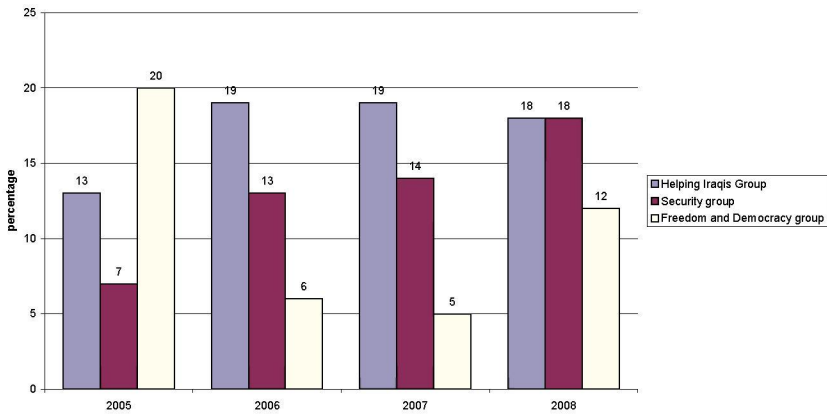
of Americans wanted the troops withdrawal from Iraq, the focus was put on the assistant role of US troops to the Iraqi security forces. In addition, the U. S. assistant mission in Iraq was presented by George W. Bush as the main aspect in the strategy change: *"This is a strong commitment. But for it to succeed, our commanders say the Iraqis will need our help. So America will change our strategy to help the Iraqis carry out their campaign to put down sectarian violence and bring security to the people of Baghdad... Our troops will have a well-defined mission: to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs"* [11].

The intent-analysis of the political discourse discovered a wide range manipulation and distortion of the important facts [3, p. 84]. As regards the study of the discourse examples given above and real situation, it has showed the evidence of manipulation that was used by George W. Bush to get the public support. In fact, description of the U. S. troops' role as helping Iraqis to overcome the violence did not reflect the reality since the U. S. army was still the crucial and key participant whose mission was to take the direct fight to the terrorists in Baghdad and to improve the security conditions. True, that the Iraqi army did become more professional and was ready to perform in the fight, but it was still far from being ready to act as a main participant in the battlefield. Thus, president Bush distorted the facts while describing the new mission of the U. S. troops in Iraq. And it was political correctness that was used as a rhetorical tool for that distortion.

So, was a new technique of conviction successful? In terms of public reaction to the new rhetorical strategy of president Bush the same Gallup poll, taken the next day after the speech (on the 11-12<sup>th</sup> of January 2007) brought not favourable results for president and his speechwriters as statistics did not change. Moreover, while the percentage of the White House proponents remained the same as before the speech and was 41%, the percentage of Americans opposed to the course increased to 58%. In addition to that, numerous groups organized demonstrations in response to a January 10, 2007 speech by George W. Bush. That showed the incapability of presidential rhetoric to gain people's support as it was during his first presidency [12].

The tendency of falling in support rates continued and as far as year 2008 is concerned, the study of vocabulary has discovered further interest of George W. Bush to the security theme connected expressions with politically correct shadowing that took 18% of all politically correct expressions in his rhetoric. To better follow the dynamics of the Political Correctness in George W. Bush discourse let us have a look at the diagram below:

Dynamics of Political Correctness in George W. Bush Rhetoric on U.S. Military Activity in Iraq (2005-2008)



In 2005 – 2009 the majority of Bush speeches on Iraq included politically correct emphasis on the military activity of the U. S. troops in Iraq without mentioning the negative aspects of their “job”. To create more precise picture let us make an attempt to chronologically follow how the main tasks of the U. S. soldiers were stressed by George W. Bush with the help of politically correct vocabulary in different periods of his second presidency.

For example, in 2005 the message: *“We will confront this mortal danger to all humanity. We will not tire, or rest, until the war on terror is won”* seemed to leave no other option but continue military operation in Iraq. It was also stressed that: *“There’s still a lot of difficult work to be done in Iraq”*, which also reduced the odds for the U. S. troops to quickly come home. President did not forget to emphasise that there was a clear strategy of the U. S. being in Iraq and that there were positive results as regards the given military conflict: *“We are making steady – steady gains with a clear objective in view”* [11].

However, the objective became very clear in 2006 when almost every speech out of 72 speeches delivered by president Bush on war in Iraq presented the information about the objective and necessity to achieve that objective: *“We do hard work necessary to achieve stability and to achieve the objective”*; *“We need to achieve the objective, which is an Iraq which can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself”* [11]. Still, the way to achieve the objective was hidden with the help of Bush rhetoric that did not describe the peculiarities of “hard work” the U. S. troops had to do to achieve stability in Iraq. That proved the way George W. Bush used words to manipulate public opinion [2, p. 8].

In addition to regular emphasis on the objective that was *“Iraq which can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself”*, George W. Bush reminded his audience about the possibility of another terrorist attack at the United States

of America: *“We bring our enemies to justice before they hurt us again”*. Traditionally, the main task was described as helping Iraqi democracy succeed: *“We deal with the elements that are trying to prevent this young democracy from succeeding”* and thus, get the victory in the war on terror in Iraq: *“We take great strides on the march to victory”* [11].

In 2007, according to George W. Bush, U. S. soldiers continued not only to: *“devote their lives to finding the terrorists and stopping them”*; *“accomplish great things for the future of our Nation and for the future of a free Iraq”*; or *“volunteer to serve the United States in uniform during a time of war”*; but what they also did was *“make sure that extremists like al Qaeda doesn't have safe haven”*. Frequent connection of Al Qaeda to Iraq brought the images of 9/11 and reminded about necessity to prevent another attack: *“They volunteer to go into a tough zone to protect the American people from future harm”* [11].

Regardless of the growing public demands to withdraw troops from Iraq and the fact that George W. Bush publicly agreed with those demands, year 2008 showed that president was inclined to continue the U. S. military mission in Iraq even though the odds of achieving the complete victory were against him [8]. On a regular basis George W. Bush sent messages, which provided no answer to the question about possible finish of military campaign in Iraq and, simultaneously, masked the dangerous activities of US troops:

*“We are not going to allow these terrorists to find respite anywhere in Iraq..”*;  
*“We are not going to allow them to regain the strongholds that they've lost...”*;  
*“We will stay on the offense”*, etc. [11].

Following his manner, president Bush continued to convince the American community that the U. S. presence in Iraq meant safety on the ground in America: *“We deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security”* [11].

One could have also observed a wide range of politically correct substitutes for the term *“War”* and *“Military Campaign in Iraq”* in the speeches delivered by president Bush during different periods of his second presidential term, and the purpose, of course, was to show the importance of that war for the United States of America, Iraq and the whole world [2, p. 14]. In most cases George W. Bush description of war in Iraq had a bright politically correct shadowing that took people's attention from the negative outcomes of that campaign:

### 2005

*“Our generational commitment to the advance of freedom”*.  
*“A momentous time in the history of the Middle East”*.  
*“The struggle for peace and moderation in the Muslim world”*.

### 2006

*“Our nation's military response to an unprecedented attack on our soil”*.  
*“One of the most innovative military campaigns in the history of modern warfare”*.  
*“Historic and challenging time for our Nation”*.  
*“These are challenging times”*.

**2007**

*"The fight against the enemy that would do us harm".*

*"It is a decisive ideological struggle, and the security of our nation is in the balance".*

*"The ideological struggle that our Nation faces in the 21st century".*

*"It's a noble cause. It is a just cause. It is a necessary cause".*

**2008**

*"Our mission in Iraq".*

*"The fight against the extremists".*

*"The fight against the forces of extremism".*

*"The great ideological struggle of our time", etc. [11]*

Thus, at this moment it is possible to conclude that discourse on military progress in Iraq and politically correct description of the U. S. troops remained to be the important tool, which was used by George W. Bush to hold people's support for the U. S. military activity in Iraq during his second presidential term. The new rhetorical approaches proved to be to some extent successful since in many cases the study of public opinion after the speech of George W. Bush showed the temporary increase in support or the tendency of slowing in terms of support falling rates. However, the rhetoric alone did not stop the general support decrease for the war among American and international public.

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