Lexical and Grammatical Means of Distancing Strategy Performed in American Political Discourse

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This article provided a survey of the English lexis and grammar constructions that serve to realize communicative intention of request aimed at distance enforcement in the American political discourse. The research method was the discourse analysis and the statistics data analysis and its interpretation. As a result, the most common and effective lexical and grammatical language means expressing the communicative intention of request were singled out and their choice explained. The results showed that in the course of the political discourse the opponents used those linguistic means that helped to minimize the pressure and save the face, thus having discussed topical disputable issues. Moreover the study showed the importance of further investigations in order to explain how communicative intentions will be received by its targets and thus how it may succeed (or fail) as a form of persuasion and influence.

Keywords: political discourse, briefing, distancing strategy, politeness, request

The process of communication with a foreign partner is a well-known difficulty, which is frequently associated with lack of proficiency in etiquette models use, existing in the language of communication. This article is focused on the need to build knowledge of etiquette models for solving specific communicative tasks in the political discourse with a clear definition of the pragmatic meaning of used models and the possibilities of further effect on the interlocutor. It is also necessary to formulate ways of application of the communication models in political discourse in the resolution of a particular situational problems.

During the presentation a politician must not only inform the audience about any aspect of public life, but also achieve the audience attention, convince listeners to accept a particular position, and enlist the support of the citizens – it is a struggle for power and obtaining the confidence of listeners.

It is not possible to form and memorize the behavioral strategy for the resolution of a particular communicative problem in the discourse of any type, so the most productive way would be the analytical approach to strategies in our case, it is the strategy of (polite or negative) distancing that has its own national-cultural specificities and pragmatic ways of implementation. Within this article we turn our attention to the strategy of polite and negative distancing in political discourse, which used both lexical and grammatical means.

The topicality of political discourse from the point of view of the category of politeness, and from the perspective of the research of the verbal

implementation of distancing strategies is defined by the fact that in modern society the importance of political communication and the study of political discourse is one of the most rapidly developing areas of communicative linguistics.

Polite verbal behavior, as noted by V.M. Glushak, "is based on speech rules observance" and can be "distancing in case of asymmetrical interaction in the context of various social and hierarchical status of participants" (Glushak, 2009). In order to follow these speech rules speakers use various distancing strategies.

Speech strategies are seen as a complex of the following communicative intentions:

- those aimed at supporting already existing relationships with the interlocutor;
- intentions aimed at distancing with an addressee;
- intentions aimed at solidarity with an addressee;
- intentions aimed at distancing enforcement with an addressee conditioned by communicative course of events;
- intentions aimed at solidarity enforcement with an addressee conditioned by communicative course of events (Larina, 2009).

Demonstrating solidarity and keeping distance is the essence of polite behavior. According to politeness theory every participant of a communicative event has their face which is not only the territory but mostly cognitive space.

A. P. Chudinov mentions distancing as a characteristic feature of the language of politics (Chudinov, 2008). This feature is realized with the distancing strategy.

The main goals of the distancing strategy are achieved by implementing the linguistic means of distancing: modal verbs, modal modifiers, subjunctive mood, interrogative constructions, passive voice and time shift (Larina, 2003).

The distancing strategies may be realized through special language means expressing the communicative intention of request. Due to this fact request obtains polite conventional form, which lets the interlocutor show respect to the cultural, linguistic and personal environment of the communicators (Karnyushina, 2010).

Materials and Methods

Political Discourse as Object of Linguistic Research

Many studies devoted to the analysis of text and discourse are based on the attempts to give the distinctive characteristics of these two categories:

1. A category of discourse is regulated by the area of sociolinguistics, whereas text relates to linguistics (Kress, 1985, p. 30). Text is defined as a verbal presentation ("verbal writing") of a communicative event (Mikhalskaya, 1998, p. 432), and discourse as a text in the event-driven aspect, speech immersed in life (Arutyunova, 1990, p. 137), the functioning of a language in real-life communication, language assigned by the speaker (Benvenist, 1974, p. 296).

2. Text and discourse are connected by realization relations: discourse finds its expression in the text; according to G. Kress, a discourse occurs and can be detected in the text and through the text. At the same time, this relation is not unambiguous: any text can be an expression of realization of multiple, sometimes competing and contradictory discourses. Each specific text, as a rule, has the features of several varieties of discourse (Kress, 1985, p. 27).

3. Discourse and text are contrasted in the binary, "actuality / potentiality". Discourse is seen as a real speech event, as "the coherent text created in the speech" (Koneckaya, 1997, p. 106). Text is deprived of rigid attachment to real time, it is an abstract mental construct that is realized in the discourse (Schiffrin, 2001, p. 470).

A significant feature of discourse is its nondiscreteness, which is understood as the irreducibility of discourse to individual communicative events. The discourse is continual, having no time boundaries for the beginning and end – it is impossible to determine when one discourse has ended, and when another one has started. At the same time, of course, the discourse is discrete in the sense of dividedness – the units of dividedness and of discourse analysis are communicative course, remark, change, transaction (Makarov, 1998, p. 30). In this regard, the study of discourse is the most obvious method of investigating social phenomena; at the core of the discourse there is a certain structure of human experience. Fragments of reality find reflection in the discourse, when reality is an external situation, which is a substantial subject, topic of discussion and communicative environment or situation constituting the subject of interlocutors' environment in time and space during the process of language interaction.

Modern society is characterized by extreme politicization and increasingly growing interest of the general population is directed to the language of politicians, to their speech behavior. Due to the wide spread of media, the most open and accessible form of political process is the political dialogue, so the language of politics is of great interest not only among professional politicians, but also among researchers of

language.

Political processes are carried out on the basis of the accumulated mental material and actively influence on society, speeding up or slowing its development. Politics is born, develops in society, in the process of human activity. By its nature politics is reflected in the language, as society and social life cannot exist without language (Grushevskaya, 2002, p. 13). Thus, "language is a particular extremely important component of policy: perception of political realities is formed with the help of means and figurativeness of language" (Gorbacheva, 2007, p. 143). Language serves the policy as its main tool, i.e. political communication is based on language system (Litovchenko, 2003, p. 3).

A feature of political language (according to E. I. Sheygal, as well as other researchers) is its availability to understanding by practically all members of the language community as a result of despecialization of political terms (Sheygal, 2000, p. 20). It means that not only professional politicians, but also the people who do not have politological education can speak language of policy.

As characteristic features of political language A.P. Chudinov highlights the semantic ambiguity (politicians often prefer to express their opinions in the most generalized form), phantom (many signs of political language have no real denotation), irrationality (reliance on the subconscious), esoteric feature (the true meaning of many political statements is understandable only to the elite), distancing and theatricality (Chudinov, 2008, p. 20).

Language personality can be described from the standpoint of linguistic consciousness and verbal behavior, i.e. from the standpoint of linguistic conceptology and discourse theory. The concept of language personality gets the particular interest and a visual manifestation in the political discourse because it is the most influential concept on the public consciousness and is widely distributed in mass communication (Shapochkin, 2012, p. 84). According to A. P. Chudinov, the term 'political discourse' has a composite structure with plenty of elements that provide a multi-level structure of this concept and bring a certain difficulty in the description and interpretation (Chudinov, 2001, p. 50).

A system of attitudes, beliefs, opinions and knowledge of the recipient is of particular importance in the political discourse. Therefore, a special role is played by such strategy. The speaker differentiates between assertions of knowledge and opinion: first, the facts matter, then there is a turn to conclusions, and finally interpretations are spotted. The aim of the speaker is to convince, give evidence of positive or negative development of the situation. The existence of the real world is objective reality, that is, the real world acts as a criterion of the truth of propositions.

The truth or falsity of indicative statements is determined by the complex representations of the addressee about the real world and his communication willingness to agree with the speaker. Therefore, if the addressee has knowledge contrary expressed by the proposition, then the truth of the statements may be subject to question. This moment is significant for political discourse. The effectiveness of oral speech, obviously, will also be determined on the basis of what evidence leads the speaker to prove personal point of view, and how true is the contained information.

From the standpoint of politeness category political discourse research, namely its distancing strategies verbal realization aspect, is topical today due to the growing significance of political communication in society. Therefore, political discourse research is one of the progressing trends in communicative linguistics. The problems of political discourse study were discussed in the works of A. N. Baranov, A. P. Chudinov, E. I. Sheygal, V. N. Bazylev, P. B. Parshin, O. L. Mikhalyova and others.

The following definition is taken as a basis for our research: political discourse is a corpus of all speech acts used in political discussions as well as public politics regulations formed by tradition and experience. The most important goal of the political discourse is power race (Baranov, 1997).

E. I. Sheygal figured out the following main functions of political discourse (Sheygal, 2004, p. 15):

- integration and differentiation of group agents of policy;
- agonistic function and harmonization of relations of participants of political process;
- action function (in politics "to speak" means "to do");
- interpretation function (creation of "language reality" of the field of policy);
- supervisory and regulatory functions (manipulation of consciousness and control over the actions of politicians and the electorate).

Political discourse almost always has a pragmatic basis, that is, focused on achieving certain goals. The speech of the politician is directed to affect the addressee.

The task of political discourse analysis is primarily to investigate the relationship between linguistic and political behavior. The syntax and lexis in the discourse are interesting as means of expression of complex meanings by the speaker. The conduction of discourse analysis is focused on separate words and expressions as the subject of study, as they embody the values that are decoded and interpreted by the listener, due to the correlation with life values and beliefs (Maximov, 2006, p. 51).

The intention of the struggle for power is a specific

feature of political discourse, presented in such genres as campaign speech, debates, discussion, political interviews, and briefings which are the central object of consideration in our research. Briefings aim at covering the topical issues and events of the country as well as expressing attitudes about some issues. It usually lasts for 30 minutes; during a briefing a politician is trying to answer questions on a particular topic expresses his point trying to convey it to his voters as well as his ideas, all is done to influence the public. Therefore, a briefing can be considered an instrument for a politician even if it does not always help to achieve the goal set (Rusakova, 2004).

So, summing up, different approaches to the study of the concept of discourse are noted, as the essence of discourse can be subdivided into many different types that attract the attention of researchers. Political discourse is the totality of all speech acts used in political discussions, as well as rules of public policy, "consecrated by tradition and proven by experience" (Baranov, 1997, p. 88). This is a special sign system of any national language, designed for political communication.

Distancing Strategy as a Phenomenon of Language Communication

As a characteristic sign of the language of policy A. P. Chudinov highlights the dissociation (Chudinov 2008, p. 20). This characteristic is achieved through the implementation of distancing strategy.

Strategy in its broad sense is a common, non-detailed way to achieve challenging goals covering a long period of time. There is another meaning for a strategy as a model of behavior.

A verbal strategy refers to the situationally determined system due to the gradual actions of the communicant, which has a specific purpose, intentions for your partner in communication, which are implemented by a particular tactic or set of tactics (Glushak, 2010, p. 28).

In "The Category of Politeness and Communication Style" T. Larina gives the following definition of verbal strategies as "a complex of the speech act aimed at achieving communicative goals" (Larina, 2009, p. 169).

Verbal strategies can be based on one of the following complexes of intentions:
- Intentions to maintain the existing relationship with the recipient;
- Intentions to distancing from the recipient;
- Intentions to rapprochement with the recipient;
- Intentions to enhance the distance with the addressee due to the course of communication;
- Intentions to strengthen convergence with the addressee, due to the course of communication.

In scientific literature many attempts to systematize the strategies of politeness in two subtypes are described. According to tradition, ascending to the work by P. Brown and S. Levinson "Politeness: some universals in language usage" (1987), and supported by some Russian researchers (R. Rathmayr, E. Zemskaya, and N. Formanovskaya), there are two kinds of politeness: 'negative' and 'positive' politeness, determined by two main desires: by the desire not to experience interference in personal actions and by the desire to obtain approval. These desires determine the overall behavioral strategies to mitigate threats to the self-esteem of a person.

'Positive' politeness serves to strengthen the positive image of the interlocutor: the speaker expresses his sympathy and solidarity with the addressee. The manifestation of attention, compliments, creating an atmosphere of intra-group identity, the desire to avoid controversy are the examples of 'positive' politeness.

'Negative' politeness serves to preserve the independence of the individual, and the necessity of the inviolability of individual territory and borders. It presupposes the existence of social distance and awkwardness in communication. Restraint, formality and an expression of respect are examples of 'negative' politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1978, pp. 135-137; Holmes, 1995, p. 154).

'Positive' and 'negative' politeness reveal the basic mechanism of human relations based on opposite actions committed by communicants in the process of communication: closeness and distance. It is necessary to bring closer the interlocutor and to reduce the separating distance when coming into contact and trying to support it further. For this purpose, the strategies of positive politeness are used. At the same time it is impossible to come nearer or too close; the partners resort to distancing strategies to demonstrate mutual respect for the independence. In other words, politeness is the maintenance of a balance between demonstration of solidarity and distancing of relations.

Rapprochement and distancing can be called hyperstrategies of courtesy used to achieve the most common communicative goals, which define these two types of politeness. Each of them in turn, is achieved by means of a system of more specific strategies, some of which it would be better to call tactics, as they represent one private action that contribute to the implementation of a more general strategy.

Different types of strategies are associated with different speech acts. The strategies of 'positive' politeness, which are aimed at bringing interlocutors together, a demonstration of mutual sympathy, are associated primarily with expressive units which main function is to express the speaker's relationship to the events (greeting, gratitude, assess, compliment, etc.).

The strategy of 'negative' politeness, which main goal is a demonstration of respect for personal autonomy of the recipient, associated with directive speech acts in which the speaker has the communicative pressure on the interlocutor.

The basic language means to implement the distancing strategy are:

- modal verbs (a large number of modal verbs, which available to the English language, allows to convey a variety of shades of meaning of the modals, thereby to convey different degrees of politeness);
- modal modifiers (units of subjective modality). Markers of modality can perform the function of downgrading, and upgrading. To implement the distancing strategies mainly downgraders are involved;
- the subjunctive mood (the verb in the subjunctive mood expresses assumption and hypothesis on the part of the speaker, which are absent in the indicative verbs, and thus can reduce the directness of the statement. In a motivation situation the recipient is given a great choice, and the speaker at the same time expresses a fraction of a doubt in the ability or desire of the addressee to perform the action: *If you could very kindly leave a note on his door to explain this. Thanks.* Subjunctive is widely used in the statements that contain request. The questions with *could/would* sound more polite than *can /will-questions*, as they express even a greater share of doubts about the ability or desire of the addressee to perform an action, with the result that he is given even a greater choice, which reduces the impact on it);
- interrogative structures (may express doubts of communicant, thereby reducing the pressure upon him);
- the passive voice (the passive voice allows to represent the expected action from the side of recipient not as a duty, but as a general rule, which is another strategy of distancing. Due to this, the speaker avoids any direct pressure upon the addressee, necessity and prohibition are transmitted mostly in indirect way);
- shift of time plan (the use of past or future tense instead of the present makes the statement less direct. There is a gap between the action named in the statement and reality. That is the communicative frame "I-you-here-now" is disturbed. As a result, the intention of the speaker seems to have lost its relevance, and the caused action is obligation of execution) (Larina, 2003, pp. 190-192).

P. Brown and S. Levinson call 'negative' politeness *"heart of respective behavior"* (Brown, Levinson, 1987, p. 129). It is a well-developed set of conventional strategies to demonstrate to the communicant the recognition of independence, personal autonomy, to assure the absence of intentions on the part of the speaker to violate existing borders between him and the addressee, and if necessary, to minimize an imposition or the impact on the addressee in case of assassination on the freedom.

Therefore, the ways of keeping the distance are quite numerous and can be expressed by both lexical or grammatical means. The most important part of the distancing strategy is 'negative' politeness, as it is the foundation of respectful behavior. 'Negative' politeness is achieved in various ways, such as indirect expression, giving to the listener the opportunity not to perform an action, evasiveness in case of questions. It is important to maintain harmonious and equitable social relations, despite the need to transmit messages that would impair the dignity of the interlocutor.

Method

The article represents a part of the materials collected by continuous sampling from January to April 2015. The total of 368 examples from 8 briefings published on the US Department of State was studied. The total length of all briefings is 5 hours and 40 minutes which makes up a transcript of 236 pages. The United States Department of State is an executive department in the US government functioning as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by US Secretary of State.

This research includes the US Department of State briefings run by Marie Harf. Marie Harf was an official representative of the US Department of State, former official representative of CIA, took part in Barack Obama's election campaign in 2012.

Briefings under discussion were thoroughly studied in order to find and analyze all the examples of verbal distancing strategies realization. As a result all the examples were grouped according to their grammar structure and lexis usage. Afterwards the results were provided with their statistics shown in the form of diagram.

The variety of methodological approaches suggests that the political discourse cannot be considered in without taking into account the interpenetration of separate discourse elements. As research method we have selected the elements of discourse analysis by T. van Dijk, M. L. Makarov and H. Rehbock.

The analysis of the pragmatic context involves introspection from the listener, which must have a clear understanding of the nature of their activities, as well as be aware of their knowledge, desires, relationships, emotions. In addition to the information extracted from the pragmatic context, the text itself

provides a clue to determining the illocutionary force of the utterance. Thus, from the point of view of T. A. van Dijk, it makes sense to start the analysis of the text from the semantic level where the following parameters can be highlighted:

- Reference: identification of the participants of communication;
- The designation of the existing objects;
- The designation of the characteristics of the pragmatic context and the relationships between the parties;
- The designation of states, events, actions;
- The designation of modalities, time, possible worlds, obligations, etc.;
- World knowledge (frames).

At the syntax level, the following settings can be allocated:

1. Types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, imperative).
2. Word order; the structure of complex sentences. They are associated with the topical structure.

The syntactic functions (subject, indirect object, etc.) are closely connected with the semantic features and the distribution of participants in a pragmatic situation. Then in the next stage of the analysis it becomes possible to determine:

3. The time will show, when has or will have effect.
4. The category of the type and method steps related to method of action.
5. The order of sentences, which fixes the boundaries of speech acts (van Dijk, 1989, pp. 31-32).

In addition to the knowledge gained in the course of such detailed analysis, there is also some information identified to characterize the discourse as a whole.

To build presuppositions about the further course of events with the same accuracy for all types of discourse is impossible. But even when individual sentences cannot be predicted in detail, the theme of many discourses is more or less stereotyped and so predictable. Consequently, the majority of types of discourse, has limitations on the range of possible topics, which can be called "thematic repertoire" of a certain type of discourse. Such thematic repertoires are also associated with specific culture or subculture, a communicative context or situation, roles, functions, or status of members of the society and, finally, gender, age or personal characteristics of interlocutors. Moreover, the choice of certain topics is influenced by goals, interests, opinions, or attitudes of participants of communicative action.

In this phase, it is possible to systematize various blocks of the contextual information used for determination of possible topics of discourse or its fragments. User of the language, however, can jump through the most common cultural levels, depending on the communicative context and individual cognitive base of the communication parties. The following table presents, followed by T. A. van Dyck, possible topics for speakers:

General cultural knowledge.
- Normal for this group activities and goals.
- Specific events, actions (rituals).
- Specific biophysical circumstances (e.g., climate, landscape and so on).
- Specific objects (for example, industrial tools)

Socio-cultural situation.
- The types of situations (Breakfast, ride the bus, marriage, and the like).
- Categories of participants:

Functions (judge, doctor);
Role (mother, friend);
Social characteristics (sex, age);
Individual characteristics (personality, interests, goals).
- Typical events and interactions (to help, to advise, to pay).
- Convention (laws, rules, habits)

Communication situation.
- General or communicative interaction.
- Global or local speech acts.
- Relevant referential context (presence of people, objects) (van Dijk, 1989, p. 51).

After a detailed discourse analysis the examples of lexical and grammatical language means used by the political discourse interaction participants to form the communicative distance were thoroughly parsed and categorized.

Results

The speech is means of the strongest impact on audience, and such property is fully manifested in political discourse. Properties of speech and political discourse provide ample opportunities for exposure. Political discourse as a kind of persuasive discourse marked by manipulative characteristics, which is expressed in the provision of speech influence on the addressee with the aim to make the cognitive changes in his world view, which will entail the regulation of the dispositions and activities of the recipient in favor of the addressee. Under the term of 'persuasiveness' researchers treat the impact of the author's oral or written messages to his target to convince of something, the call to commit or not to commit the certain actions. In persuasive communication a person deliberately produces statements that are intended to cause a certain reaction in the recipient.

Speech influence is exercised through

communicative strategies and tactics, which essence is in the operation on the knowledge of the addressee, on his value categories, emotions and will. The communicative strategy can be called a set of measures on realization of the communicative intentions of the speaker, taking into account the conditions in which communication occurs.

The implementation of a particular strategy occurs due to tactics, which represent a specific stage of the implementation of a communication strategy characterized by a certain set of techniques governing the use of certain linguistic means.

The main objectives and tasks of the distancing strategy is achieved through the use of language means of realization of distancing strategy. In our research we use six basic techniques that are the most effective in the implementation of the distancing strategy: the use of modal verbs, modal modifiers, the subjunctive mood, interrogative constructions, the passive voice and shift in time plan. Further we will also consider the distancing techniques together to prove that for the achievement of objectives and tasks of the distancing strategy in political discourse it is not enough to use only one method.

The article represents the sampled examples from 8 the US Department of State briefings run by Marie Harf from January to April 2015. Briefings under discussion were thoroughly studied in order to find and analyze all the examples of verbal distancing strategies realization. As a result, all the examples were grouped according to their grammar structure and lexis usage. Afterwards the results were provided with their statistics shown in the form of diagram.

The current study examined briefings in order to find lexis and grammar constructions that serve to realize communicative intention aimed at distancing enforcement. Moreover, the research explored the factors that affected the choice of verbal instruments.

As is known, in English there are many verbs that can show different shades of modality. The majority of them in a varying degree express extents of obligation, these are such verbs as must, have to, should, to be to, ought to, and modal verbs with a shade of permission or requests: can, could, may, might.

Indeed, basing on the examined material, such modal verbs are used for the implementation of the distancing strategy in the American political briefing.

For example, the Marie Harf's statement in a situation when she seeks to finish the briefing, calling to ask the last question: *Last one, guys. I really have to go*. In this case, the modal verb expresses a shade of emergency, the speaker is trying politely but firmly to express the fact that a briefing has come to an end.

The following situation of distancing with the use of less obligatory verb: *Marie, could I ask on the UN part of this? <...> Can I ask what your understanding is of the*

kind of mechanism that **might** – you **might** be thinking of putting in place for a snapback. The example verbs play a major role in distancing politeness, positioning the addressee to the speaker without encroaching on addressee's territory and exerting any pressure.

Most of modality markers in the studied examples function as mitigation for the distancing strategies. They are the most important means of engaging in political speech. The most frequently used markers are: *I think /1 suppose /1 am wondering*.

In the following example, the distancing strategy is implemented by means of a marker that expresses the orientation to the speaker.

MS HARF: Well, again, we are sort of unclear on what basis it issued the warnings to the U.S. military plane that's been referenced in a lot of these reports. **As I think you know,** *Secretary Kerry in Beijing raised the issue of China's land reclamation, the pace and scope of it, with Chinese leaders across the board, and our concerns about that and the possibility that this could lead to tensions in the region. So it's an issue we're very focused on.*

The marker *I think you know* in this case is a modal modifier, as it expresses the commutation of the speech act, while minimizing the intrusion of the speaker into the area of independence, thus, distancing from the interlocutor, and thereby reducing the directness of the statement.

I think consists of the subject *I* and the predicate expressed by a verb in the present tense *think*, consists of subject and the predicate expressed by a verb in the present tense think, which semantics is expressed in the assumption, in a mental act that expresses the assumption that, in turn, softens the directness of the speech and thus gives to the expression *I think* the function of a modal modifier, assisting the distancing strategy to be achieved.

Further, it is worth considering the use of minimizers *little, a little, a bit, small,* which reduce the degree of an impact on the recipient by reducing pressure on the execution of the request.

QUESTION:- they're going to be released very, very soon. Like, in the next 30 seconds or so? (Laughter.) **Can you be a little bit more specific?** *MS HARF:Well, if it's released in the next 30 seconds, then I'm just going to run away from this podium.*

According to its syntactic structure «*Can you be a little bit more specific*?» is a simple interrogative sentence. As the subject there is the plural second person pronoun – *you*, as the predicate there is a compound verbal predicate of *can* in the present with the verb *be* in the form of an infinitive. By means of the distancing function of language it is possible to issue the request without violating the speech etiquette.

The journalist uses the minimizer «*a little bit*» in order to alleviate the pressure on the addressee in the request. Using a following technique, the reporter reduces the possibility of a negative reaction from the opponent.

It is necessary to mention the fact that the lexical fillers of pauses *(well, now well, so)* are widely spread among representatives of the US State Department, and among journalists. In our opinion, all these lexical fillers of pauses play a general role as easing the pressure in answering the question.

MS HARF:*Well, I think this is a situation – again, and I'm not a military expert – but where on the battlefield things ebb and flow.*
QUESTION:*Well, I mean, look --*
MS HARF:*Well, they're not, I think, technically a part of the coalition.*
QUESTION:*Correct.* **So** *I just wanted to make sure that there is a concern.*

There is another example of the consideration of the distancing strategy implementation, built by the lexical fillers of pauses.

MS. HARF:*Those are just categorically different things, Matt. And you're buying into the Russian propaganda if you equate them, quite frankly.*
METTEW LEE:*Well, no. I'm just trying to --*
MS. HARF:*Well, you are, actually, I think.*

The situation between the speakers is quite tense, and the journalist is trying to remove this strain using a marker of modality, while the speaker, putting forward an accusation, is trying to distance herself by means of a modal modifier «*I think*».

It is noted that in the selected examples, the technique of constructing the distancing strategy with modal modifiers is used quite often. The reason for such tendency is in the modal modifiers' characteristics that they are essentially clichéd phrases of politeness as well, thus, they provide an opportunity to the speaker to show both politeness and distance.

Distancing is also productively expressed by means of the subjunctive mood, which allows to express assumption and hypothesis on the part of the speaker, thereby reducing the directness of the sentence. Inducing to any action, the speaker provides more choices and expresses the element of doubt in the ability or desire of the addressee to perform the action.

The subjunctive mood is one of the fundamental factors of indirect expression of statements. In the following speech situation, the journalist resorts to the subjunctive mood to build a polite request. He begins the phrase with a modal modifier «*I just wondered*» and continues the request using the subjunctive mood.

QUESTION:*Okay.* **I just wondered if you could talk** *– I'm sorry, I'm a little bit underprepared – the – we're reporting that there are some U.S. advisors who have landed in Ukraine to help with –*
MS HARF:*The National Guard training*?

In this situation, the request is subject-oriented, i.e. it contains an indirect question about the possibility of performing actions that, as noted by T. Larina, is extremely polite.

A means to shift a time plan is involved in order to reduce the straightness of the statement. In our research, there is a hypothesis that in the English language it is possible to notice quite often the shift from the present tense to the past. Here are a few examples of this phenomenon.

MS HARF:*We're still working on Iraq, actually, I think.*
QUESTION:*Sorry, I* **thought** *that a visit --*
MS HARF:*No, I think it's the visit to Iraq, right?*
QUESTION:*My apologies.*

The use of the Past Simple of the verb *think* helps to the journalist to ask his question as politely as possible, according to the requirements of etiquette. It is worth noting that he also does not forget about such an admission as 'apology', the reporter apologizes, once he has convinced of the infidelity of his judgment.

As a result of the shift of time plan, the intention of the speaker seems to have lost its relevance, and the encouraged action seems to have lost its enforceability.

QUESTION:*It seems – I* **wondered** *if I could just ask one, because it seems one of the issues or one of the problems might be that the Iranians are asking for a 24-day delay for authorized visits from the –*

The verb *wondered*, which is in the form of the past tense helps to construct a request using the subjunctive mood. The use of the Past Simple helps to achieve greater unreality, thereby to provide the listener a greater choice of responses to the request. One of the most important criteria of communicative behavior in English-speaking countries is the understatement of the will imposition.

Also, in the English language, the Progressive tense is used instead of the Simple Present to reduce the pressure on the interlocutor:

QUESTION: *But then you also said that* **you're looking – reviewing** *the strategy. How far along is that review of the strategy and –*

In the dependent clause the predicate is expressed by means of the *Present Progressive*. In the dependent clause the predicate is expressed by means of the Present Progressive time. In our opinion, the journalist used a similar linguistic means to express the duration and incompleteness of the action, thus, he reduces the pressure on the U.S. State Department Spokesperson, elaborating the transformation of new strategies.

Having studied a number of examples of the passive voice use, it was found out that the speaker really got the opportunity to remove the addressee

from the discourse, and, thus, to realize the distancing strategy. In this case the described effect is impersonal in its nature, and it sounds the least dangerous to the recipient.

In a communication situation when the journalist asks M. Harf a question about arms supplies the passive voice is used, mitigating the statement: *So what is the decision to send in more arms to the coalition – what kinds of weapons are we talking about?* ***How quickly can they be delivered?*** *And is it envisioned that at some point the U.S. might be joining the air war against the Houthis?*

The question is formed by the interrogative pronoun *how* and the adverb *quickly*, followed by the modal verb *can*, the subject expressed by the pronoun *they*, and the passive voice expressed by the verb *to be* and the past participle form of the verb *deliver*. Thus, it is seen that, instead of a direct question, for example, «*How quickly are you going to deliver the weapons?*», the speaker shifts the focus from the recipient to an impersonal appeal, making the speech less categorical, thereby successfully implementing the distancing strategy.

As another example can be presented the following question: ***Is that list actually to be negotiated?*** Grammatically, the question consists of the verb *to be* in the form of third-person, Present tense, the subject expressed to be expressed by a noun *list*, and by a predicate *is negotiated* in the passive voice, which, in turn, is formed by the auxiliary verb *to be* and the form of the Past Participle of the verb *negotiate*. The Passive voice in this example is used to divert attention from the agent, i.e. from the person, who should perform the action, not being included in this action, what is also the implementation of the distancing strategy. The speaker avoids to get pressure on the recipient.

It can be concluded that the use of the Passive voice is one of the effective means of the removal of the addressee from the discourse and implementation of the distancing strategy. However, such a language means is used less frequently than modal verbs or modal modifiers that according to the above-mentioned statistics are the most used means. Based on the analysis of all examples, one can conclude that the most frequent and effective linguistic means of realization of the distancing strategy are modal verbs. 40% of all researched examples are the examples of the use of modal verbs. Also there is the extensive use of modal modifiers, allowing us to affirm that this method is not less effective because it covers 32% of all researched examples. It is interesting that in the structure of different tense forms in the English language, the shift of time plan is the least common, this method has gained only 6%.

All the researched briefings can be described according to M. L. Makarov (Makarov, 2003, p. 207) and

H. Rehbock (Rehbock, 2001), as follows:
1. The kind or genre of conversation
1.1. prepared;
2. The space-time relationship (situation)
2.1. communication 'face to face': at the same time and being close;
3. The participants of the conversation
3.2. the conversation in small or large group;
4. The degree of formality of the conversation
4.1. official communication;
5. Social relationships of the interlocutors
5.1. symmetric (social distance between the speaker and recipient);
6. Direction of communicative actions in the conversation
6.1. discursive, argumentative;
7. The degree of familiarity of the interlocutors
7.1. strangers, unfamiliar people;
8. The degree of preparedness of communicants
8.1. specially prepared for the dialogue;
9. The fixity of the topic
9.1. the particularly fixed specific topic;
10. Communication relation to practical activities
10.1.included in the practical activities;
11. The purpose of the communication;
11.1 the official conversation with the officer.

It is necessary to consider a fragment of one of the briefings with analytics of several techniques. The following speech situation takes place between Matt Lee, the Associated Press representative, and Marie Harf, the US Department of State representative. The topic of the briefing is Russia providing weapons to the Ukrainian separatists. The journalist is asking to provide proof. M. Harf would not be able to do it and switched to another topic while Matt Lee increased pressure on the speaker to attain the correct proof to the declared above.

METTEW LEE: ***I would like to know*** *what you're basing this new evidence that the Russians intend to send any heavier equipment.*
MS. HARF: It's based – uh-huh. It's based on some intelligence information. I can't get into the sources and methods behind it, but I was able to be able to tell you that.
METTEW LEE: Is there a YouTube video or something that you can point us to --
MS. HARF: Do you have any other Mettew Lees?
METTEW LEE:– that would show? ***I'm just wondering if you*** *– what it is. I mean --*
MS. HARF: ***I just said I wasn't going to give*** *you the underlying source for it.*
METTEW LEE: Marie, did you --
METTEW LEE: But that --
METTEW LEE: So look, it's not – the Mettew Lee is --
MS. HARF: So ***if you prefer – if you prefer*** *I don't*

give you more information and just say nothing if I can't give you the source –
*METTEW LEE: **I'd prefer** –*
*MS. HARF: No, **I'm actually asking you** a Mettew Lee here. If I can't give you the source and method, **would you prefer** I not give you the information?*
*METTEW LEE: Marie, I think **that it would be best** for all concerned here –*
MS. HARF: Are there any other Mettew Lees?
METTEW LEE: – if when you make an allegation like that, you're able to back it up with something more than just "because I say so."
MS. HARF: Okay. That's not what I said. It's based on intelligence, it's not because I said so.
*METTEW LEE: Well, it's not me that's making these allegations. I mean, **you guys** get up at the UN Security Council and make these allegations. The Secretary gets on the Sunday shows to make these allegations. And then when you present your evidence to back up those allegations, it has appeared to, at least for some, fall short of definitive proof. Do you --*
*MS. HARF: **I would strongly disagree** with that.*

The sentence *"I would like to know what you're basing this new evidence that the Russians intend to send any heavier equipment"* request is expressed with construction *"I would like"*. As to T. Larina "in cases the speaker makes addressee act to his own interest the implied impulse expression is preferred in English, therefore, it is followed by subjunctive mood *"I'm just wondering if you"* to distance from the speaker as much as possible.

Examining the context pragmatics we can assume that the expression analyzed is a request in the form of the subjunctive mood. Thus, the journalist using various speech strategies was trying to obtain specific data, but he did not meet any agreement to his request. As T. Larina notes, request is a verbal action traditionally examined within speaking etiquette formulae as a speaker tries to hold on to the rules of politeness in this exact communicative action, otherwise he might not reach his goal. The result of request is directed to benefit the *I*-speaker and *I*-appealing: *I am asking you to do this*. One has to be polite to achieve something "for himself" (Larina, 2009). The communicative event of request is complicated from the point of keeping communicative intentions as it is a face threatening act (FTA). It claims a detailed selection of lexical and grammatical means and strict following the speech etiquette, especially in public situations.

In situation described the distancing strategy is observed in the very first question. The journalist begins with *"Would you…"*. Using the modal verb in subjunctive mood decreases pressure on the addressee. It should be noticed that M. Harf is trying to minimize

her being involved and answering indefinably. The journalist is pressing down his interlocutor decreasing distance between them. He calls her name to do it and then speaks more freely: *you guys*. As noted by L. Visson this address is impolite. «*Guys* is a pretty familiar word which sounds abusive when addressed to educated and elderly people» (Visson, 2005).

It is an interesting fact that M. Harf is also using distancing verbal means showing her disagreement to the journalist. This distancing tactics is expressed by a phrase "*I would strongly disagree*". As to L.Visson "the argument participants try to lessen significant differences in opinions by many means, including compromise, and they show their respect to the opposite opinion…" (Visson, 2005). To characterize the choice of lexis in this phrase: pronoun *strongly* – highlights negative connotation of the word *disagree* and altogether with modal verb *would* helps the one who replies to distance from this situation.

The following situation takes place between M. Harf and journalists. The topic of the discussion is US giving Ukraine a billion dollars loan in case its government invests them to reform its economics. The journalist is asking questions to specify the US intentions.

QUESTION: And given the violence that you mentioned, the bus attack and Donetsk Airport
MS. HARF: Yeah. Mm-hmm.
*QUESTION:--**does this make the Administration reassess in any way its opposition**, up to now, to provide defensive military equipment to the Ukrainians?*
*MS. HARF: **Well**, our position on that hasn't changed. **We** obviously have an ongoing conversation with the Ukrainians about how we can help, but nothing new on that front. On the monetary side, though, today the Treasury Department did announce just – I want to draw people's attention to it – a loan guarantee of one billion dollars to the Government of Ukraine in the first half of 2015. If Ukraine continues making concrete progress on the economic reform side – I know that's not what you asked about – but on the economic reform agenda, **we** would be willing, working with Congress, to provide an additional one billion. So **we** think there are ways to assist Ukraine that doesn't include lethal assistance. Obviously, **we** continue talking to **them**, though.*
*QUESTION: So **I'm just wondering** – so you said there was the one billion, and then you're talking to Congress about giving an additional one billion.*
*MS. HARF :In late 2015, so if they – if Ukraine continues making concrete progress – excuse me, I was up a little late last night – progress on its economic reform agenda, **we** will consider giving **them** another one billion in the later half of*

*2015. **We** obviously work with Congress on that. **They** have to do things like continue to overhaul the energy sector, repair **their** financial system, tackle corruption, things like that, that if **they** keep making progress on, **we** will provide an additional loan guarantee.*

*QUESTION: And **I would assume that** additional money also would be contingent on a deal with the IMF?*

MS. HARF: I can check on that. I know that on – what I have here is that our additional loan guarantee would be contingent on them meeting these conditions, but I can check on the IMF piece of that.

QUESTION: And then has there been direct contact or, say, between the – Secretary Kerry and Lavrov to express your anger at the continuing violence?

*MS. HARF : Not – the Secretary has not spoken to **Foreign Minister** Lavrov in the past few days. I know other officials have been in touch with the Russians. I don't have specifics for you, though.*

QUESTION: Since you mentioned the Russians, there were calls from Russia recently to restart counterterrorism working group or counterterrorism talks. Is that being – are you positive to that?

MS. HARF: I can – let me check with our team. We've talked to the Russians, including the Secretary with Foreign Minister Lavrov, about counterterrorism, just in their normal bilateral discussions. Certainly, the Russians are very focused on it, as are we. But in terms of that specific dialogue, let me check.

Following the pragmatic context it looks obvious that the distancing strategy in the example described is built on the linguistic means used by the speaker. Such grammatical means as using modal verbs *"can, will, would"* is marked to convey the various tones of must and subjunctive mood to express supposition. At the same time there is the usage of such lexical means as fillers *"well, so"*.

The communicative event under study begins with direct and not distancing question *"does this make the Administration reassess in any way its opposition, up to now, to provide defensive military equipment to the Ukrainians?"*. M. Harf, however, begins her reply with *"well"*, which, following T. Larina, is one of the distancing strategy means used to soften the phrase. Then, the State representative is using the personal pronoun *"we"*. Many scientists note that pronoun *"we"* is commonly used to decrease distance and involve interlocutor in the common space. However, the State representative saying *"we"* means the government opposing it to *"they"* (Ukraine) trying to keep distance

and minimize her effect and the administration involvement in this situation (*how we can help, but nothing new on that front, if they keep making progress on, we will provide an additional loan guarantee*). The example of the subjunctive mood usage as *"if they keep making progress, if they – if Ukraine continues making concrete progress"*, minimizes the supposition about somebody to do action, thus, helping the speaker to relieve his responsibility.

As a matter of interest, M. Harf answering the direct questions is using strategy of going out of discourse. Thus, the first time she starts talks about finance, admitting, though, she switched the topic, and second time she shifts from business to personal facts: *"On the monetary side, though, today the Treasury Department did announce just – I want to draw people's attention to it – a loan guarantee of one billion dollars to the Government of Ukraine in the first half of 2015; excuse me, I was up a little late last night"*.

It is also necessary to indicate the usage of last names and titles in political discourse patterns. Referring to the talks with Russia the journalist is asking if secretary Kerry talked to Lavrov. M. Harf points to his position replying that *the Secretary* did not talk to the *Minister of the Foreign Affairs Lavrov*.

Therefore, we can see what language means M. Harf uses to follow the distancing strategy. She follows double distancing between her and journalists on the one hand and Ukraine actions on the other hand, because she is not aware of all information and she tries to minimize her involvement. The State Secretary uses these distancing strategy means to decrease the journalists' pressure on her as her declarations need to be rechecked.

The next speech situation occurs between the journalist Mathew Lee, the representative of Associated Press, and the Senior Advisor for Strategic Communications to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at the U.S. State Department Mary Harf. The representative of Associated Press asks her to comment on the maneuvers in the West of Ukraine with NATO military participation and on the alliance plan of creating the immediate reaction force with the command staff in Poland and the executive staff in Eastern Europe which are not far away from Russian Federation border. The journalist correlates the facts in return Mary Harf blames him for falling under Russian propaganda influence. It is an interesting fact that the journalist builds the distance and asks the questions as polite as he could but M. Harf reacts negatively in reply.

*METTEW LEE: Okay, and another one. Yesterday, **if my memory serves me right**, Wall Street Journal claimed in an op-ed that President Obama should listen to his own State Department and*

to send arms to Ukraine. **I'm not asking for a comment, but just to clarify: Is there** *anybody in State Department who supports sending arms to Ukraine?*

MS. HARF: The State Department is a very big place; I can assure you of that.<...>

METTEW LEE: **Sorry, you said that the – and you said this yesterday, and I believe Jen said it the day before, too** *– that the exercises are not related to any current event.*

MS. HARF: Correct.

MS. HARF: In part to – in part because of – wait, **let me rephrase this**.*<...>*

MS. HARF: **Wait, let me rephrase**, *Matt, and then go on.<...>*

MS. HARF: **Well**, *I don't have – I'm not – I don't have anything like that to outline for you. Obviously, we're focused on Ukraine, which, as you said, is not a NATO member.<...>*

MS. HARF: I'm not sure what you don't understand about this, Matt

METTEW LEE: Well, **it just seems to me that if it is true – if what you say is true** *about – and* **I'm not going to argue** *with it, but* **if what you say is true** *about Russia's escalatory actions in Ukraine, I don't understand why it is that you say or why it is that NATO putting together a rapid reaction force to station close by so that it can respond to crises like this in the future --<...>*

MS. HARF: Respond is the key term there. That's a defensive measure. Wait, wait. **Let me finish, Matt**.*<...>*

METTEW LEE: So I'm saying – and you didn't want to get into escalatory actions that you've seen Russia take with regards to countries that are members of NATO -

MS. HARF: Matt.

METTEW LEE: -- and which Article V would apply to, so that's --

MS. HARF: <...> There is nothing confrontational about it. It is not designed to confront anyone. That's not how it's being used. That's not how it's designed. I – in no way – I just don't understand logically how you can look at what – something NATO is doing to protect our countries and compare it in any way to Russia sending surface-to-air missile systems across the border into Ukraine, which are by definition an offensive weapon.

METTEW LEE: My --

MS. HARF: Those are just categorically different things, Matt. And **you're buying into** *the Russian propaganda* **if you** *equate them, quite frankly.*

METTEW LEE: **Well**, *no. I'm just trying to --*

MS. HARF: **Well,** *you are, actually, I think.*

METTEW LEE: No, I just --

MS. HARF: The tone of the question does.<...>

MS. HARF: You are. I actually think the tone of your questions on this – on these exercises has been a little bit.<...> No one's going to sit by and not stand up for our principles and say, "Go ahead, Russia. We're not going to take any steps to protect ourselves."

METTEW LEE: Marie, **you guys** *object to other countries' objections about your military exercises all the time, and you think that they're perfectly legitimate. You say* **they're perfectly – your concerns are perfectly –** *that their concerns are* **not –**

MS. HARF: Every case is different.

Studying this example we can underline the means the journalist uses in order to get an answer. The correspondent uses the subjunctive mood to minimize the pressure on the opponent: *"if my memory serves me right», «I'm not asking for a comment, but just to clarify», «I'm not going to argue with it, but if what you say is true about Russia's escalatory actions in Ukraine".* Furthermore it is worth to mention that M. Lee does not invade distance. One of the main means of expressing the negative politeness is an implied expression, consequently his politeness has a negative shade. According to T. Larina "The verb in the subjunctive mood expresses supposition, hypocritical character of the speaker, which is in the lack of verbs in the indicative mood and as the result mitigates the straightforwardness of the expression" (Larina, 2009). Also using the modal verb "*would*" tells us that the journalist's speech is indirect, so that he provides the answers choice. In spite of that the addressee has to perform the act (answer the question), there is a semblance created that he is provided with the possibility of choosing – weather to react to the question positively or negatively, weather to take steps or not. The effective mean of distancing strategy is the mean of minimizing the pressure on the opponent, because this speech pattern contains semantic option in situation, but intends no option indeed (Larina, 2009). By reference to the analysis of the pragmatic context it is possible to claim that different means of distancing strategy realization can operate together.

Matthew Lee uses another one distancing strategy as apology: *"Sorry, you said that".* The apology is the strategy of negative politeness. Moreover these types of situations are seen as an attempt to attack on the addressee's personal and cognitive space, but under various circumstances the speaker has to use it. He has to apology for committing the dangerous speech act to save his image having said it. It gives us the ground to prove that M. Lee saves the distance.

It is important to draw attention to the way

Mary Harf reacts to the journalist's questions. At the beginning of the communicative situation Mary Harf answers the question with a tone of sarcasm, which is not polite and respectful: *"The State Department is a very big place; I can assure you of that"*. It is also important to note that the representative of U. S. Department of State Mary Harf often uses negotiation. As the journalist correlates the facts and brings visible evidence there is little left to do to Mary Harf as to negotiate them: *"I don't have – I'm not – I don't have"*. In a substantial way it decreases the distance and causes the harm to the one who asks the question.

Further on she blames the journalist for falling under Russian propaganda influence, in other words going into personals, which is inexcusable if we speak about politeness. *"Matt. And you're buying into the Russian propaganda if you equate them, quite frankly"*. The sentence discussed is built up with the help of subjunctive mood, consequently it determines the distance during the speech, and nevertheless the situation appears to be vice versa. M. Harf uses the word *"equate"*, which means – to make equal or equivalent, to reduce to a standard or an average; equalize. For American people it is impossible as according to L. Visson: "The USA just like other countries constitutes itself as the best country in the world" (Visson, 2005). And she also adds personal attitude: *"quite frankly"*, *"I actually think"*.

The following sarcastic phrase is based on a hyperbole: *"Go ahead, Russia. We're not going to take any steps to protect ourselves"*. This kind of phrase is considered to be rude and diminishes distance.

After these words the journalist decreases the distance, which indicates his assertiveness to get the neat answer. He calls M. Harf by her first name and then speaks more freely: *you guys*. As noted by L. Visson this address is impolite. «*Guys* is a pretty familiar word which sounds abusive when addressed to educated and elderly people» (Visson, 2005).

The journalist uses the colloquial "okay" in his replies. Although as noted by L. Visson OK is not that popular among the Americans compared to the other countries. It is not informal in this case, though, colloquial. OK is not commonly used in formal communication (Visson, 2005). Ok is close to "clear", which makes us suppose that the journalist knew most replies ahead, but went on to ask Mary Harf to spotlight the issue in the media as much as possible.

In the situation discussed there are the communicative situations with intention of request. According to T. Larina "request is a motivational speech act influencing a listener to perform an action for speaker's interest and the performer is free to choose whether to execute this action or not. Request is more or less dangerous communicative act as it contains threat for both communication participants: threat to the object, whose freedom is attempted and threat to the subject, who can get refusal. The speaker is to smooth request's inherent "impoliteness" by following the principles of politeness strategy. This "impoliteness" is connected with the fact that it combines the speaker's expression of will on the one hand and call to addressee to act on the other hand" (Larina, 2009).

M. Harf repeated the request three times: *"Let me finish, Matt"*, *"Wait, let me rephrase, Matt, and then go on"*, *"Let me rephrase this"*. The request is expressed with the verb in imperative mood, but despite it we can assume it to be polite as far as the semantics of the word *"let"* lets us state that it is intended not to intrude in personal space of a journalist but to ask a permission for further explanations.

On the basis of the pragmatic context it becomes obvious that the expression analyzed is a request expressed as an imperative.

Thus, the removal of the addressee from the discourse is an important means of saving face and achieving the distancing strategy. One of such means are passive constructions. They help to make impersonal and less dangerous comments for the person. In our research, the passive constructions take 12% from all other linguistic means.

Despite the fact that the indirection of statements is the basis of the English politeness, the subjunctive mood takes only 10%. This can be explained by the fact that the allotted amount of time for the briefing are limited, so journalists and politicians prefer to use the shorter and faster language means as modal verbs and modal modifiers to achieve the distancing strategy.

In order to reduce the directness of the statements, the journalists and the US State Department representatives have dismissed the time plan from the present tense to the past or from the Present Simple for the Progressive tense. As a result there is a gap between the action, named in the statement, and reality. In our research, such tool takes 6% of the total number of all researched examples.

It was needed to analyze speech situations, to see how the distancing strategy realized in the set of all considered lexical and grammatical means.

Discussion

Political discourse is one of the most famous and thoroughly analyzed varieties of discourse. The research of political discourse is complicated by the diversity and heterogeneity of the political sphere of society, which is a subject to the analysis in the studies of political discourse.

The objectives were to analyze what linguistic means are used to implement the distancing strategy.

The current study shows that the most common and effective linguistic means of distancing strategy realization were modal verbs, which made up 40% of all examples. A wide use of modal modifiers makes us conclude this means is effective too as it takes 32% of all examples. As a matter of fact, with the tense form structures in English so varied the time shift strategy is the least one used– 6% (see Figure 1).

The most frequent lexico-grammatical means were:

- **modal verbs** (total 158 cases of usage) – **should** (12%), **could** (15.8%), **would** (48.1%), **may** (1.8%), **can** (17%), **must** (0.5%), **might** (3.1%), **have to** (1.8%) (Figure 2)
- **modal modifiers** (total 118 cases of usage) – **think** (49.15%), **say** (0.85%), **wonder** (9.3%), **suppose** (0.85%), **believe** (3.39%), **be sure** (1.7%), **be aware of** (1.7%), **guess** (3.39%), **well** (13.56%), **perhaps** (0.85%), **probably** (5.08%), **possibly** (0.85%), **specifically** (0.85%), **a little (bit) more** (4.24%), **maybe** (4.24%) (Figure 3)

As the figures show, the most popular lexical-grammatical means of expressing intentions in the briefings under discussion were modal verbs **would**, **can**, **could** and **should**, and modal modifiers **think**, **well**, **wonder** and **probably**. The greater variety of verbal realization is observed in the second group. The results prove that the speakers mostly prefer to use the same language means (*would*, *think*) in order to stay on the safe side of the discussion and save face. These linguistic signs can be referred to as conventional clichés of expressing intentions.

One of the major functions of political communication is to regulate human behavior, the influence of partners on each other to achieve the planned results. In the texts of political speeches the speakers widely use both messages with ascertaining of general truth, and the messages containing private
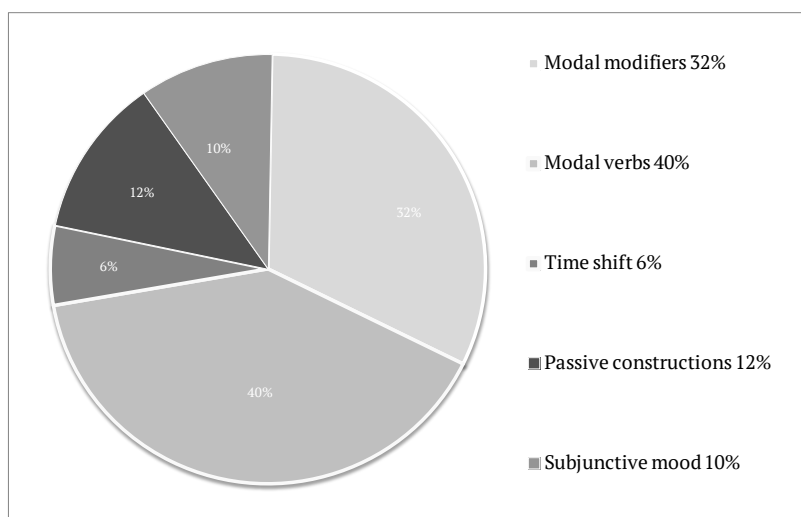

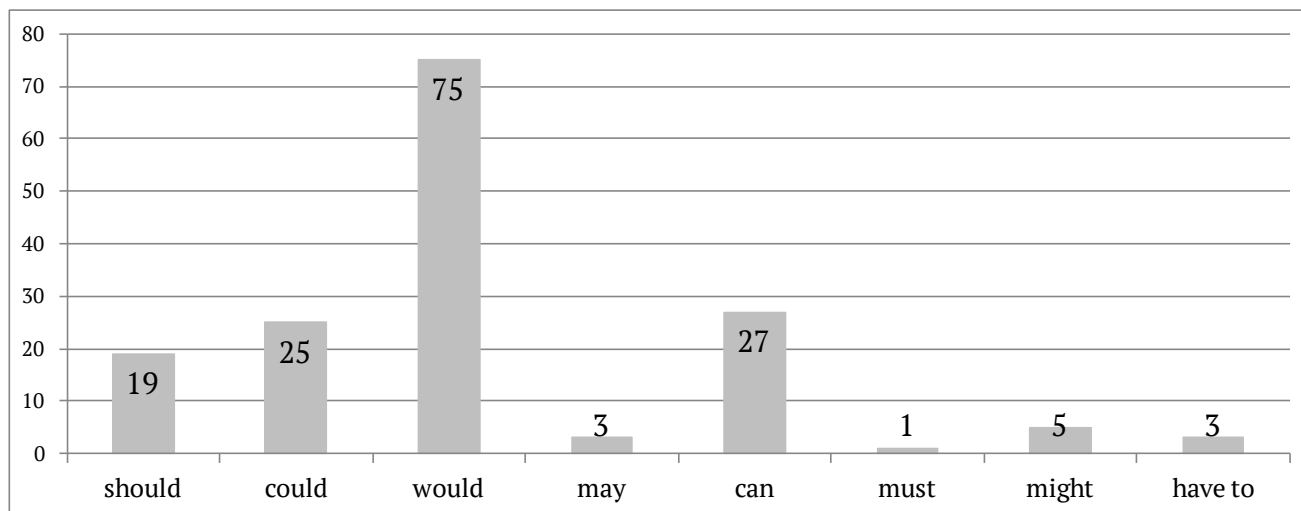*Figure 1.* Grammatical means of distancing strategy realization.

Figure 2. Comparative diagram of modal verbs usage in distancing strategy realization.
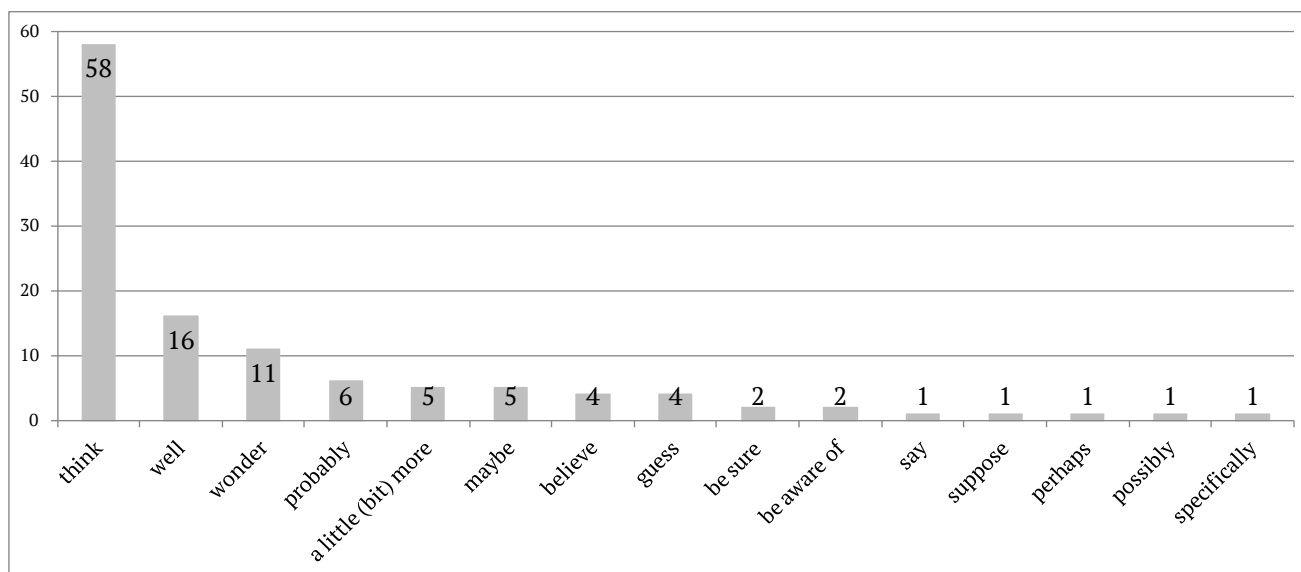
Figure 3. Comparative diagram of modal verbs usage in distancing strategy realization.

information.

The choice of lexical units in political speeches is mainly determined by their pragmatic focus on the goals of persuasion and creating a positive image of a politician. Rhetorical questions and exclamations are also a common means of expressive syntax. Through such questions, the addressee is involved in the reasoning or experiences, becoming more active. In political texts there are modal verbs, euphemisms, and other stylistic tools of indirect assessment as the techniques of disguised, alternative representations of reality by means of indirect estimation.

Modality of political discourse – is an ideological aspect that simulate a particular reality. Considering the category of modality from the point of view of cognitive linguistics, it can be concluded that objective and subjective modalities are not opposed, but presuppose and determine each other. The world is not given to a person directly, it is created and interpreted by him. The ability of language to create illusions and to design a specific reality based on objective and subjective factors.

It is necessary to emphasize the dependence of 'the subjective' from 'the objective' and critical 'objective' for understanding 'the subjective'. So it is possible to figure out subjective and objective modality of political discourse.

Conclusion

Studying verbal realization of distancing strategies in political discourse helps to explain how communicative intentions will be received by its targets and thus how it may succeed (or fail) as a form of persuasion and influence. Moreover we may deduce the most effective verbal means that help to make communicative interaction successful in the field of politics. However, a study of this type also highlights ways in which a full understanding of distancing strategies in political discourse requires a broader research agenda. Future studies may need to examine other verbal strategies intended at persuasion via mass media or in the course of personal interaction, this work should include further distinguishing recipients perception and the consideration of some individual impact factors.

Summing it up the current study has demonstrated the importance of verbal realization of distancing strategies concerns and their effectiveness in the course of political discourse. Thus, the effectiveness of political discourse depends on how convincing the speaker was, whether he was able to impress upon the audience the necessity of certain actions and assessments, whether he prompted the audience to decisions and actions in the interests of the given political strength. Text modality is inherent to the whole text, separate statements are modal-painted so that the recipient is prepared to accept subjectivated values of the whole text. The centerpiece is the objective modality, which affects its subjective realization in the speech of the speaker. There is a forming process of the model of beliefs, the head of which – is the concept of objectivity.

In terms of possible cognitive deficits a politician simulates the reaction of the people both familiar and new, weird socio-political situation. For this purpose, the speaker resorts to the method of "objective statements", that is, his personal evaluation is presented as objectively-existing, necessary, possible or desirable state of affairs. Therefore, the objective

modality can be defined as a tool of manipulative influence on people's minds.

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