POLITICAL IMAGE IN SOCIAL NETS

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the analysis of modern information space, namely to the opportunities of social networks when forming politician image. Different types and the main functions of social networks are considered, presence of social media at modern political process is proved. The article aims at mechanism of political image making by means of tweets got from personal pages of the American politicians, who participate in pre-election race on the U.S. presidency 2016. The continuous sampling method is used there. The amount of sampling is 250 units (the tweet is taken as research unit). Research was conducted by means of the social network Twitter.

Key words: *image, politician, model of image making, social nets, Twitter*

Image represents the individual characteristics of a person, a complex of personal and professional qualities which are perceived by society in the form of gestalt (a complete picture of a person). To reduce the distance between the government and society image plays an essential role in success of the modern politician. Image makes it possible to facilitate politician's perception by the audience, and generally sets the stage for temporary and permanent support of the political leadership on the part of voters.

The policy, undoubtedly, can't exist out of mass audience. The presence of the political leaders in the social networks is a unique opportunity to promote the politician and to create his own image [2, page 39]. The politician has to be unique, but at the same time is similar to the voters. In social networks this alternative can be easily fulfilled. The growing attention to study the opportunities of social media usage as an instrument of the politician image formation is the noticeable phenomenon of today's political discourse.

The purpose of the present article is to analyse the mechanism of image formation of the modern American politician in social networks.

At the present stage social networks are one of the most widespread forms of speech interaction between communicants in information space [9, page 27]. The social network is an interactive multiuser website, where the participants of a network fill the content. The automated social environment allows the group of the users, united by the general interest, to communicate. Communication is carried out by means of web service of internal mail or an instant messages exchange [12, page 43-49].

It is rational to divide the existing social networks into the following groups: regional, federal and international. The purpose of the regional social networks is the informing the users about news in the region, communication with friends, updating of your own and your friends` location. An example of such network is Foursquare. federal social networks are becoming rather popularity in each country. They allow to create a profile with information about yourself, to make and extend content, to interact with other users privately (through personal messages) and publicly (by means of the records on the "wall", and also via the mechanism of groups and meetings), to trace activity of friends and communities through a news line. Except opportunity to write messages, the users can leave comments under recently published content. It is possible "to attach" photos to the messages, audio files and videos (including feature films), documents and polls. Famous federal social networks in Russia are VKontakte and Schoolmates. The international social networks possess similar functions, but are known worldwide. They are Facebook and Twitter which promotes a public exchange of short messages.

The personal social page of the American businessman, representative of Republican Party, the candidate for U.S. president 2016 Donald Trump was taken as a data for study. Tweets were the unit of research. "Tweet" is understood as the short informative message set which makes a tape of a certain page in the social network Twitter. The total amount of the studied material makes about 250 units.

From the point of view of social media role in politician image formation, we are interested in, first of all, possibilities of one of the most popular social media – Twitter. The choice of this social network is explained by the following circumstances: the first is the brevity and accuracy of a statement, all messages have a limit – 140 symbols. Twitter represents a news stream of short announcements. D. Sagolla, describing the social network Twitter, noticed that these short messages "create the market of ideas which can be expressed in a short format of words, symbols and hypertext references" [10, page 183].

The second reason is that, the simple handshake and confidentially communication are considered to be the best way to earn support of the voters [1, page 78]. But it is difficult to use this method in practice. In this case, Twitter helps to fill "emptiness", allowing to carry out a virtual handshake and dialogue. Therefore, Twitter is an effective platform for informing the target audience and communication with it.

The third reason is that the growth of the Internet influence in political process generated society mistrust to traditional mass media [5, page 93]. The manipulative opportunities of mass media, including deliberate distortion of information, concealment of one facts and protrusion of others, the publication of false information with the purpose to induce audience to think according to the concepts which are thought over earlier, serve as an explanation to it [11, page 112]. In a case with Twitter, it is certainly impossible to exclude the similar scenario. But at the same time, Twitter helps politicians "to be closer to the people" [3, page 74], it is an opportunity to show yourself not only as the statesman, but also as a simple person, who possess the weaknesses and habits peculiar to his voters. Twitter shows identity of the person, his nature. However, you shouldn't forget that all blogs on this social network are created intentionally for maintenance of already existing image.

It should be noted that nowadays the social network Twitter is becoming especially popular among representatives of the government as it possesses a set of the functions necessary for politicians to capture the audience and maintain the communication with it. These functions are:

- the information function – blog is an ideal mean to receive and exchange the information. Many blogs are constructed actually as news feeds: users periodically share the professional thoughts and experience;
- the communicative function – the communication among people is carried out by means of blogs;
- the psychological function – helps people to show discontent with any events or circumstances or, on the contrary, to share pleasure;
- the socialization function – blogs allow to support the communication which was interrupted in the real life, and also it promotes the acquisition of new one;
- the self-presentation function is the most important function. According to A. Maslou's pyramid, self-expression is the highest need of a person, advancing even recognition and communication. Social resources have become a kind of personal secluded space, where everyone can create his own virtual ego [4, page 36-42];
- the estimated function – according to various blogs it is possible to estimate this or that person;
- the manipulating function – some blogs comprise advertizing, promotion, slogans, etc. which in a varying degree influence consciousness of the recipient.

In the management of political parties the need to attract social networks for a political propaganda is more and more realized [13, page 12]. Creation of political image of (parties, leaders) in social networks demands professional approach and perfectly developed model [6, page 174]. As social

networks consist of language signs, the positive image formation is enabled by means of the communicative strategy and its tactics. The concept of communicative strategy is widespread in the linguistic researches, studying the ways of interlocutors` influence on each other in speech communication [14, page 538]. Communicative strategy is understood as techniques of a choice, structuring and supply of the necessary information in the statement, which is subordinated to the purposes of communicative influence [14, page 549]. Communicative tactics are a set of practical ways of communicative strategy realization in the real process of speech interaction. So, having analysed Donald Trump's tweets, we found three communicative strategies – introduction, cooperation, and confrontations.

Strategy of introduction is understood as emotional "self-presentation" of the speaker, indirect demonstration of mental qualities of his personality, his Ego with the purpose to create a certain impression about him and his ideas. The research of speech behavior of the politician in Twitter allowed us to allocate tactics by means of which the strategies stated above are realized in a political discourse, and to group them depending on the use frequency which is given in percent a ratio from the total sample.

1. "onlooking Ego" tactics (11, 4%) convicts, as a rule, positive opinion of people about the politician. So, not to be unfounded, Donald Trump doesn't directly call his strong points, but refers to the opinion of the voters who admire him. The electorate gives the positive characteristic to the actions and personal qualities of the candidate therefore such citing attracts the maximum number of voters on Trump's party. Using lexical units with a positive connotation, the audience describes the presidential candidate as exclusively professional and intelligent person who is capable to become the head of the USA and to solve all its problems.

(1). *@vegas_sports: Good for @realDonaldTrump* ***he's smart*** *on business. Maybe If corporations weren't overtaxed they would stay. Voting for #Trump*

(2). *@w4djt: "Under a* ***Trump*** *presidency, America* ***will make brilliant new trade*** *deals!*

(3). *@ScottAdamsSays:* ***Trump's speech today is the best persuasion*** *I have ever seen. Game over. Now running unopposed*

(4). *@justininglv: @realDonaldTrump great speech today!! It's all about America and that's why* ***you will become president!!!!***

2. "ideal Ego" tactics (10, 4%) allows the politician to speak openly about his wins, merits, etc. It characterizes D. Trump from the point of view of the ideal person ("the perfect person", " the future greatest president, ever created by God", "the only person, capable to defeat Hillary Clinton"), deprived all defects (the independent and incorruptible point of view "I am a billionaire, impossible to buy me") whose main task is to service people. The politician promises to bring the country to a new, best standard of living and not to fail people. A frequent use of this tactic shows some signs of a narcissism peculiar to the billionaire.

(5). *Such a great honor to be the Republican Nominee for President of the United States.* ***I will work hard and never let you down****! AMERICA FIRST!*

(6). *For too many years, our inner cities have been left behind.* ***I am going to deliver jobs, safety and protection*** *for those in need.*

(7). *Obama has blocked ICE officers and BP from doing their jobs.* ***That ends when I am President****!*

(8). *Hillary Clinton's open borders are tearing American families apart.* ***I am going to make our country Safe*** *Again for all Americans.*

3. "real Ego" tactics (6, 4%) allows to see the real identity of the candidate, his work, experience, views, values, interests, preferences, hobbies, etc. So, D. Trump grieves over the victims who died in acts of terrorism that speaks about his personal involvement, unindifference to the events; explains his position, governed by the desire to make America great, that points to his good intentions; justifies the negative image presented in mass media with their aspiration to discredit him. All this says that the politician tries to create positive image, thereby to be pleasant to people.

(9). *The media is so dishonest. If I make a statement, they twist it and turn it to make it sound bad or foolish. They think the public is stupid!*

(10). *Due to the horrific events taking place in our country, I have decided to postpone my speech on economic opportunity- today in Miami.*

(11). *Prayers and condolences to all of the families who are so thoroughly devastated by the horrors we are all watching take place in our country.*

(12). *The reason I put up approximately $50 million for my successful primary campaign is very simple, I want to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!*

Strategy of cooperation represents aspiration of the politician to cooperate with people, other countries, various parties, trade companies, etc. Here personal Ego is replaced with the collective one. The audience vote for the political leader, relying on the images of the "superman" or the average person. If any of applicants isn't the prominent person, possessing unique outstanding abilities, people will prefer to choose a politician similar to them. There are various tactics realizing this strategy, in particular, we distinguish:

1. "consolidation" tactics (5, 4%) consists in demonstration of symbolical belonging to a certain social, status or political group. If the leader is perceived by voters as "friend", who sounds problems which are close to his potential audience, the politician can rely on a certain support of electorate. This tactic is staked on in political advertizing. Image sets the approved ways of the object identification. The object as a result becomes recognizable. Donald Trump identifies himself with the common people, proving to be the representative of audience ("I am the same, as you"), and the audience sees a part of itself in the candidate.

(13). *New GOP platform now includes language that supports the border wall. **We** will build the wall and MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN!*

(14). *Today and every day **We** Celebrate Our Independence*

(15). ***We** must suspend immigration from regions linked with terrorism until a proven vetting method is in place.*

(16). *America is proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder w/a free & ind UK. **We** stand together as friends, as allies, & as a people w/a shared history.*

2. tactics of "moralization" (5%) appeals to morals, common sense, logic. The vast majority of people estimate these categories positively therefore designation of the general messages includes the voter in collective Ego. D. Trump mentions problems (terrorism, nation disorder, crime, violence) which have arisen during the government of the current President Barack Obama. Besides, he specifies that these problems are beyond control and to solve them, Trump urges people to rally. Thereby, the politician appears as resolute and precisely knowing what to do.

(17). ***Horrible killing*** *of a 13 year old American girl at her home in Israel by a Palestinian* ***terrorist****. We must get tough*

(18). *Look what is happening to our country under the WEAK leadership of Obama and people like Crooked Hillary Clinton. We are a* ***divided nation****!*

(19). ***Crime*** *is out of control, and rapidly getting worse. Look what is going on in Chicago and our inner cities. Not good!*

(20). *This election is a choice between* ***law, order & safety*** *- or* ***chaos, crime & violence****. I will make America safe again for everyone*

3. tactics of "monolitization" (3, 4%) is close to tactics of "consolidation" and to tactics of "moralization". Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate them. This tactic realizes aspiration to make impression of a common ground, fellow feelings of the "psychological harmony" between the speaker and audience. D. Trump, using this tactics, seeks to show that he is "with the people", shares their problems and is ready to solve them.

(21). *My prayers and condolences to the victims and families of the terrible tragedy in Nice, France.* ***We are with you*** *in every way!*

(22). ***I am with you*** *THE AMERICAN PEOPLE*

(23). *The third mass attack (slaughter) in days by ISIS. 200 dead in Baghdad, worst in many years.* ***We do not have*** *leadership that can stop this!*

(24). ***We must do*** *everything possible to keep this horrible terrorism outside the United States.*

Strategy of confrontation separates one politician from another, differentiates their ideas, views, images. Here the politician shows his Ego separately from others. D. Trump's popularity is based on this strategy. The analyzed candidate differs from the rivals, being allocated to that he isn't afraid rectilinearly and, sometimes, sharply to express the opinion which, most often, criticizes the Washington authorities and traditional establishment. The purpose of this strategy – to undermine authority of the rivals, to humiliate, to discredit, mire their image in the opinion of the voters. It is necessary to consider that in a political discourse this strategy assumes publicity of speech actions and is calculated, first of all, on reaction of observers (i.e. voters). Besides this purpose – to discredit the political opponent, strategy of confrontation can pursue a task to bowl down the rival with insults, lie, slander; to ruffle feelings; to force to protect and thanks to that to deprive the rival of opportunity to state his position. Bright tactics in realization of the strategy of confrontation are tactics of "charge" and tactics of "ridicule".

Tactics of "charge" (18, 2%) differs from tactics of "ridicule" in a way that it doesn't assume intention to humiliate, wound, and stultify. Charge consists in attributing to someone fault, representation of a situation and the opponent in negative way. The speaker tries to convict the opponent, to disclose his negative qualities and intentions. To realize the "charge" tactics lexical means with negative connotation are used. So, D. Trump is outspoken in his statements towards his main rival – Hilary Clinton, and also towards the current authority – the President Barack Obama. In the tweets the politician accuses opponents and the government of falsity and corruption, specifying that the country goes fast to inevitable crash. Therefore, Trump has an image of "glad-hander" who always says what he thinks and does not especially care about the consequences.

(25). *As the days and weeks go by, we see what a total mess our country (and world) is in - Crooked Hillary Clinton led Obama into bad decisions!*

(26). *Crooked Hillary Clinton lied to the FBI and to the people of our country. She is sooooo guilty. But watch, her time will come!*

(27). *Crooked Hillary will sell us out, just like her husband did with NAFTA.*

(28). *Crooked Hillary Clinton is bought and paid for by Wall Street, lobbyists and special interests. She will sell our country down the tubes!*

When using tactics of "ridicule" (18, 2%) the speaker sees humiliation and derision of the partner as a communicative task. This tactic differs in emotional coloring which replaces the use of the facts and proofs. According to our supervision, this tactic characterizes D. Trump as a conflict and aggressive politician. The impudence, arrogance and Trump's courage are boundless. He derides candidates who back away from the pledge; law enforcement agencies, whose work "leaves much to be desired"; and also those who spends huge money for advertizing which doesn't bring any positive results. Frequent use of exclamations (Sad!; Incompetent!; So dump; Dummy!; Pathetic!; Devastating!) influence consciousness of voters and helps to create a bright negative image of the rivals whom Trump "fights" with. Trump reminds the political gladiator that isn't characteristic for the politicians pursuing a career. At the same time in a difficult situation such person is also necessary as the fighter for the rights of the Americans.

(29). *Very sad that a person who has made so many mistakes, Crooked Hillary Clinton, can put out such false and vicious ads with her phony money!*

(30). *The media is spending more time doing a forensic analysis of Melania's speech than the FBI spent on Hillary's emails.*

(31). *Despite spending $500k a day on TV ads alone #CrookedHillary falls flat in nationwide @QuinnipiacPoll. Having ZERO impact. Sad!!*

(32). *I am somewhat surprised that Bernie Sanders was not true to himself and his supporters. They are not happy that he is selling out!*

Thus, we considered the strategies and tactics of the image creation in the social network Twitter on the example of a personal page of the American politician – Donald Trump. During the research we allocated three communicative strategies and tactics realizing them which in different degree are used in tweets of the politician. Each tactics allows to create certain personal positive image and thanks to that, to win love and votes. The usage of all tactics with identical rate is impossible as it can lead to the creation of a difficult and multilayered image which can be hardly acquired in consciousness of the individual. For this reason, D. Trump resorts to use two tactics – tactics of "charge" (18, 2%) and tactics of "ridicule" (18, 2%). Trump is a "beginner" in policy, he isn't too informed in government functioning therefore he tries to suppress this fact by ridiculing and charging of the opponents. In Donald Trump's behavior we can obviously see his exaggerated feeling of the importance and greatness that is shown in the use of "ideal Ego" tactics (10, 4%). He takes the place of all candidates and parades all his advantages. Besides, an integral part of its personal image becomes offensive language. On a political Olympus of the USA, Trump is so remarkable figure that he is considered not from the point of view of leadership skills, but as the phenomenon which generated into "Trump's phenomenon". Trump greatly differs from his opponents and from the representatives of Americans. He is full of contradictions, but these contradictions organically get on in its image and become part of his charisma.

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