Pronouns in Putin's Public Discourse: Features and Peculiarities

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Abstract

The paper discusses the connection between language, political setting, "code" of the target audience, and context of the presidential public appeals. The study addresses the claim that politicians strategically use language for specific purposes (Windt 1986; Ceaser et al. 1981; Hahn 1998; Wilson 1990) in order to sound persuasive and justify their leadership (Eshbaugh-Soha 2003; Kernell 1997). The study elaborates on the political setting in Russia, traditional views on politics in the country and examines the context of two addresses delivered by Putin with the aim to understand what impact they have on the usage of personal pronouns in his public narrative. The study implements intercoder reliability test to determine if it can be effective in the analysis of the linguistic devices used in the presidential public addresses. The study explores pragmatic functions of pronouns in two addresses delivered by Putin in relation to the context of the addresses, distinct culture and psychology of the target audience and general political setting in the country.

1. Introduction

Based on the previous research in political language and presidential rhetoric, the study examines notions of political persuasion, to be more precise, pragmatic implementation of pronouns in the presidential public discourse in contemporary Russia. We focus on the pronouns in Putin's public narrative with the aim to detect discursive strategies used to create self-portrait and we-portrait in his public appeals. Our objective was to understand if Putin's language (in particular the usage of pronouns) is adjusted to the traditional representation of a national leader accepted in the Russian "code". For this reason we have investigated personal and possessive pronouns used in different dimensions of Putin's rhetoric with the aim to detect their persuasive potential.

The study follows a president-centred approach and addresses contextual variables that shape presidential communicative conduct. Among these variables we have distinguished a general political setting, context of the addresses and a distinct code of the target audience that will be discussed further in the paper. We sought to detect patterns of pronominal usage in the addresses delivered by one political leader on two different occasions in the same political and cultural environment. Moreover, the study elaborates on a relatively recent field of research that investigates the connection between the political language (personal pronouns) and its reliance on the shared values, culture and history of the target audience. In addition, we have noticed a limited amount of studies that focus on the investigation of Putin's public eloquence, particularly in his addresses on nationhood.

2. Literature Review

The idea that presidential rhetoric reveals features of a specific community including common culture, distinct psychology and history has its roots in the propositions made by G. Philipsen (1992) in his ethnographic study of cultural communication. The scholar claimed that every ethnic group possesses a distinct "code" defined as a "historically transmitted, socially constructed system of symbols and meanings, primes and rules, pertaining to communicative conduct" (Philipsen 1992: 124). Thus, the analysis relies on the principle that suggests that "a speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric" (Philipsen 1992: 127).

According to speech code theory, phenomenon of presidential verbal behaviour needs to be contextualized, i.e. it should be explored in the light of societal, cultural factors on the

background of historical development of the given society or in the light of a distinct national "code" (Philipsen 1992: 124).

Following Saussure's ideas of language being a direct representation of reality (Saussure 1916) which according to Halliday's theory functions within a social context (Halliday 1973 in R. Cockcroft and S. Cockcroft 2014) and is evolved for specific social purposes (Chilton 2004) and Wittgenstein's propositions that language is not static and meaning of the words is diverse depending on the context (Wittgenstein 1963), we propose that political discourse and speeches should be analyzed in the light of time and interest and be examined in the specific context (Lorenzo 1996).

Saussure's theory of vertical/pragmatic axis which postulates that a word is chosen from a range of semantic options (Saussure in R. Cockcroft & S. Cockcroft 2014) expanded by Halliday (1973) who argued that "every language user has multiple options or paradigms available within the system of grammar, phonology and lexis" leads to the conclusion that "these language choices whether in spoken or written form, are always determined by audience, context and purpose" (R. Cockcroft & S. Cockcroft 2014: 43). The present study relies on this proposition and focuses on the analysis of all three domains (audience, context and purpose) of the political communicative event (in our case presidential public appeals).

Present paper tests the assumption that political language, being a socially constructed phenomenon linked to politics and rhetorical leadership, is modified by a political leader who choses words from a range of semantic options and adjusts them to a distinct political context with the aim to persuade public, create a particular brand, and justify his presidential authority.

3. Data and Method

As noticed earlier, we narrowed the scope of data to the examination of two public appeals: an inaugural address and a Victory Day address delivered by Putin in 2012 and 2015. The selection of the addresses is justified by our intention to explore a wider spectrum of pronominal usage implemented in different contexts of the presidential public domain. The study shows how political orators benefit from the flexibility of pronominal usage to brand their leadership, administration and nation on different socio-political occasions: the first being the inauguration and the second – an important historical event that shapes public identity and perception of history (victory in the Second World War).

The study expands the traditional grammatical paradigm of pronouns and claims that the pronominal usage in political oratory should be contextualised rather than investigated in

relation to the fixed deictic properties. This idea was discussed by Watson (1987) and Sacks (1992) who argued that pronouns contribute to the identity formation and go beyond their referential roles (Watson 1987; Sacks 1992). This hypothesis additionally justifies our choice of two addresses delivered on different occasions by one political leader who appeals to the public that shares the same socio-cultural and political knowledge. Thus, our objective is to understand what role pronominal references play in the process of identity formation in the addresses delivered on different occasion.

We have structured the analysis as follows: We start with the exploration of the elements that create a unique context and influence the "code" of the audience: political setting in Russia, Putin's rhetorical image and views, context of the investigated addresses with the aim to detect their main peculiarities and potential impact on the lexical choices. The analysis proceeds with the investigation of the personal self-references, then focuses on the examination of the plural forms *we* and *our*. Conclusion and ideas for future research follow at the end.

To make our study as transparent as possible, we have implemented intercoder reliability test and coded sentences that include self-references and we-references. In addition, we examined utterances that contain a possessive form *our* to understand what features are attributed to this pronoun in Putin's narrative.

To conduct the test, we have chosen four people with similar background and interest in politics, native Russian speakers with high level of education (one Master and three PhDs) who currently live abroad. We aimed to maintain consistency in our coding and reduce external factors that may have an impact on the results of the test. As intercoder reliability test indicates the degree to which two or more independent coders agree on the coding of the content with the usage of the same coding scheme (Mouter & Noordegraaf 2012), the number of interviewers in our study (four) is considered to be sufficient to access the reliability of the coding.

To achieve reliability in content analysis of the presidential public appeals, we have followed the framework proposed by Mouter & Noordegraaf (2012) and started with the definition of the categories and subcategories that we consider to be the most relevant for the study. We relied on the previous research devoted to the functions of pronouns (Pennycook 1994; Chilton 2004; Roitman 2014; Wilson 1990; Karapetjana 2011; De Fina 1995; Malone 1997; Wales 1996; Hahn 1998; Simon & Wiese 2002; Bello 2013; Janney 1996) and distinguished the following coding criteria for the investigation of the utterances that contain self-references: **functions, image, target** and **tone.** Moreover, in each category we distinguished several subcategories.

Functions: *share of responsibilities, identification with the public/raise of solidarity, expression of an individual opinion, praise of the public, references to ideology/shape of public opinion, giving orders, other*

Self-image: *president, citizen, individual, speaker, other*

Target: *citizens, administration, international community, particular groups*

Tone: *positive, negative, neutral*

We followed the same procedure for the analysis of we-references in order to understand what functions *we* references perform in the addresses and what images Putin creates and how. The coding criteria are based on the previous research that focused on the investigation of pragmatic function of the plural form *we* (Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990; Pennycook 1994; Pyykkö 2002; Wales 1996; Quirk et al. 1985; Janney 1996). Although the coding categories remained the same, there are differences in subcategories presented below:

Functions: *share of duties, identification with the public/raise of solidarity, expression of power, praise of the public, references to ideology/shape of public opinion, acceptance of responsibility, other*

Image: *administration, citizens, international community, heirs of the past, other*

Subcategories in **target** and **tone** remained the same.

We have conducted a separate coding of the possessive form *our* in order to see what nouns Putin modified with its help and what images he sought to create. Thus, we analyzed sentences that included possessive *our* and coded them according to the following criteria: **references**, **image**, **target** and **tone.** The subcategories distinguished in each category are shown below.

References: *values, founding documents, people, general traits of character, national traits of character, country, duties, economy, government, past/history, education, other*

 Images: *administration, citizens, international community, heirs of the past, other*

Subcategories in the categories **Target** and **Tone** remained unchanged.

During the next stage of our analysis we trained the coders in using the coding and gave them a sample of the body content (around 10%) to code. As the sample test proved the consistency of the coders, we gave them an executive test. At the end we assessed how much the obtained data differed from the perfect reliability using Krippendorff's alpha as a measurement coefficient. The results showed that the participants were highly consistent in their coding and the score test is above accepted reliability standards for the selected coefficient. It should be mentioned that

data loss reached 12% in the analysis of self-references, 11% in we-references and 15% in the possessive form *our*. We proceeded with the evaluation of the coding results by means of a simple manual calculation in the Excel programme that showed the prevalence of each subcategory.

3.1. Inaugural Address 2012: Setting and Peculiarities

Putin's inaugural address delivered on 7th May 2012 was described as "brief" (Williams et al. 2012: 1746). Before the inauguration for his third term, in 2008–2012 in time of Medvedev's presidency, he served as prime minister (2008–2012). Important is the context and the events that preceded the inauguration. Several days before the ceremony Russia saw massive public protests since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the result, Putin sought to choose a right tone and direction, inspire the audience, meet its expectations, and change its critical vision of politics. Thus, Putin's intention to present a change was driven by the political exigence that existed in the society by this time (Williams et al. 2012: 1746). The need for the changes that was evident in Russia in 2012 is seen as a controlling exigence that exists in any rhetorical situation and "functions as its organizing principle" (Bitzer 1992: 7).

3.2. Victory Day Address: Setting and Peculiarities

Traditionally, the celebration of the Victory Day in Russia is marked by ritualised military parades and flyover by military aircraft, patriotic presidential speech which glorifies those who died in the War, spectacular fireworks, war-related films and programmes on TV, and the concerts where popular singers sing patriotic war songs. In short, as observed by The Independent, the 9th of May, the Victory Day, is considered to be Russia's "most important secular holiday" (The Independent 2017).

It is necessary to outline a political context of the commemoration. Recently the Russian government has formulated the so-called historical policy, a policy on the country's history that aims to unite the nation around a single version of the past. This approach "tends to glorify Russia's imperial legacy and encourages citizens to conform to an oversimplified historical account" (Kolesnikov 2017: 7). It was proposed that this policy on the contrary causes divisions in the Russian society as all citizens are reluctant to accept an official single version of the collective memory (Kolesnikov 2017).

According to the Putinist model inspired by the past (18th and 19th century history and the Soviet legacy), Russia's power "rests on a triad": renewed economic strength, armed forces, and

ideology of nationalism and patriotism (Lyne 2015: 10). In other words, Russian leadership promotes Russia's role in the world as a successor of the Soviet Union and reminds the Russians of the enemy and the two great powers of the Cold War (Kolesnikov 2017; Meister 2016).

Opinion polls conducted by the independent Levada Centre in 2016 revealed that history remains an important criterion for self-identification for the majority of the Russians. Thus, in March 2016, 45 percent of the Russians stated that they are "definitely proud" of the country's Soviet history (Levada Centre 2016). A greater number of respondents (54%) in 2016 regarded Stalin as a figure who had at least somehow positively influenced Russian history (Levada Centre 2016).

Taking Russia's historical policy into account, we propose that the Victory Day is used by the political authority as an important vehicle to construct a national identity on the basis of collective memories, glorification of history, Soviet legacy and its achievements.

3.3. Political Setting and Elections in Russia

Contemporary Russian political system can be described as "a specific type of governance" characterised by "paternalism, the state domineering over the individual, isolation from the outside world, and ambitions to be a great power" (Shevtsova 2005: 6). Russia's "cultural predisposition for authoritarian leaders" was explained by the fact that the country has been ruled by dictators, czars and Communist party politicians for so long that "it became difficult to imagine a different kind of political system" (McFaul 2001: 1). Polls in 2002 and 2003 proved the existence of the proposed "cultural predisposition" and demonstrated that no more than a third of the Russian population considered themselves democrats, while a large number of people believed that authoritarianism "was the only path for their country" (Baker & Glasser 2005: 3).

The results of the presidential elections in 2004 were as predictable as they were in 2000 with Putin being almost a certain victor. (Shevtsova 2005: 73). Moreover, he became more confident in 2004, establishing within Russia "a personal myth of himself as the strong man who had brought stability and prosperity", believing that he is "indispensable" (Shevtsova & Wood 2011: 54). Thus, Putin's "successful super-centralization of power" proved to be "the optimum formula for governing Russia" (Shevtsova & Wood 2011: 56).

In December 2008 there was another constitutional amendment which extended the presidential term from four to six years, allowing Putin to serve twelve more years as president, until 2024. Thus, Medvedev's presidency proved that "Russian remains a government of men,

not laws" (Lynch 2011: 135). In other words, Putin's regime was described as "authoritarian, oligarchic, and bureaucratic" which exists "under the guise of democratic institution" (Shevtosva & Wood 2011: 43).

As indicated by Bacon et al. (2006), Putin's approach towards politics moves Russia back "towards a more managed, less democratic system of government with authoritarian overtones" (Bacon et al. 2006: 189). In other words, state unity and threats to the state dominated the official Russian discourse under Putin. Among other motifs which shaped Russia's discourse of security were "the concept of national identity, national pride, and the national idea" (Bacon et al. 2006: 179). Another "key signifier" in the Russia's discourse was the question of morality elaborated by Putin to highlight "the threat posed to Russian society from the West from a moral perspective" (Bacon et al. 2006: 181).

3.4. Putin's Political Views and Rhetoric

Before the 2000 presidential elections Putin's image was described as "an obedient appointee", "a mere functionary rather than a notable person or a leader", who was "wary of responsibility and was afraid of his own experience", as he was possibly worried that Yeltsin could change his decision and appoint a new heir (Shevtsova 2005: 68).

Putin's image at the beginning of the presidency was vague and blurred, making him "a tabula rasa on which everyone could write what he or she wanted", as he "tried to be all things to all people", an "Everybody's man", who combined clarity of the military and "a certain amorphousness" to refer to all citizens and avoid concrete answers to the question which worried Russia (Shevtsova 2005: 71). Gradually, he managed to adjust his image to the public needs and presented himself as "a strong, effective leader" building this image on almost nothing (Shevtsova 2005: 74).

Putin managed to cultivate "a charismatic aspect of his political power" that portrayed him "as a leader of all the people" and helped him gain the highest "approval rating ranged from 68 to 87 percent throughout most his presidency" (Lynch 2011: 88). In other words, Putin's political image underwent significant changes and reflected his intentions to identify himself with the traditional representation of the superior political leader, i.e. a strong, powerful authoritative patriot who leads the people and protects them (Sakwa 2011). Consequently, Roxburgh summarized Putin's image as follows: "courteous" but "boorish", running Russia "with a strong, and tightening, grip", creating a top-down system, "the vertical of power" which "stifles initiative" and terrify his subordinates to contradict him (Roxburgh 2012: vii).

Putin referred to different epochs in Russian history with the aim to appeal to the political symbolism. He reintroduced Soviet national anthem, associated by many Russians with the Second World War and the victory. In addition, the Russian leader adopted the double-headed eagle with three crowns as Russia's state emblem in czarist era (Lynch 2011: 87). He chose a strategy that pertained to the past, referring to the Russian values such as "traditions, patriotism, collectivism, statism, and social justice", the principles of the Russia's "special path" popular in the country in the Soviet times (Shevtsova 2005: 71).

Gradually, after the 2004 presidential elections, Putin embodied "the president of hope" who appealed to both those who were afraid of the changes and to those who wanted them, creating "a schizophrenic game" which gradually led "to a split in national identity", and emergence of "the conflicting moods and incompatible trends in the society" (Shevtsova 2005: 295). After 2008, Russia's foreign policy under Putin became more nationalist, where Putin did not aim to challenge Western capitalism following "old Soviet ideological manner" (Lynch 2011: 96).

4. Results and Discussion

The following section presents the results of the empirical analysis of personal pronouns in Putin's addresses.

4.1. Self-references

Table 1 introduces the results of the reliability test and summarises our major findings on the usage of self-references in two addresses.

Table 1. *Usage of Self-references in Putin's Addresses*

	Inaugural Address	**Victory Day Address**
Image	President (5) Individual (3)	Speaker (1)
Function	Acceptance of Responsibility (6) Expression of Opinion (2) Expression of Power (1) Elaboration on Ideology (1)	Praise of the Public (1)
Target	Citizens (7) Administration (1)	Citizens (1)
Tone	Positive (6) Negative (2)	Positive (1)

The results prove that in the inaugural address Putin referred to himself with the aim to target the citizens and present himself as a **president**.

Example (1)

*Вступая в должность Президента Российской Федерации, **понимаю** всю свою ответственность перед Родиной*

'Taking the office of the Russian President, **I realize** my responsibility in front of the Motherland'

In addition, he depicted himself as **an individual** to express his own opinion.

Example (2)

***Я верю** в силу наших общих целей и идеалов*

'**I believe** in the power of our common aims and values'

Positive self-references were predominantly used in Putin's discourse with the aim **to stress his acceptance of responsibility** and **express an individual opinion**. Usage of self-references proves the claim that Putin aimed to present himself as a strong leader, an individual and a president who recognises his duties and distances himself from the audience.

Example (3)

***Считаю** смыслом всей своей жизни и своим долгом служение Отечеству*

'**I consider** it to be the sense of my life and my debt to serve the Motherland'

On the contrary, we have noticed almost a complete absence of self-references in his Victory Day Address. Putin referred to himself only once in the **speaker** function with the aim to praise the audience.

Example (4)

Поздравляю вас с 70-летием Победы в Великой Отечественной войне!

'**(I) congratulate** you on the 70-th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Fatherland War!'

We propose that in the inaugural address Putin attempted to present himself as a president to justify his authority. In order to fulfil this task, he relied on the traditional image of the political leader that is embedded in the Russian code: an authoritative, powerful governor who enjoys his superiority. In the Victory Day Address he sought to identify himself with the public and conceal his strong presidential ego. For this reason, he referred to himself once to congratulate the Russians with the holiday and substituted self-references with we-references that will be discussed in more details in the following section.

4.2. We-references

Table 2 presents the results of the reliability test and summarises our major findings on the usage of we-references in two addresses.

Table 2. *Usage of We-references in Putin's Addresses*

Category	Inaugural Address	Victory Day
Image	Citizens (11)	Citizens (6) Heirs of the Past (5) International Community (2)
Functions	Authority to Speak for Others (5) Share of Duties (3) Motivation of Public (3) Giving Orders (2) Appeal to Unity (2) Reference to Achievements (1) Praise of the Public (1)	Authority to Speak for Others (12) Appeal to Unity (4) Appeal to Equality (1) Praise of the Public (1) Giving Orders (1)
Target	Citizens (11)	International Community (6) Citizens (5) Particular Groups (Veterans) (2)
Tone	Positive (6) Neutral (5)	Positive (7) Negative (4) Neutral (2)

In his inaugural address V. Putin implied the plural form *we* to create an image of **a citizen**.

Example (5)

Мы вместе прошли большой и сложный путь, поверили в себя

'**Together we went through** a long and difficult way, we believed in ourselves'

Most frequently we-references were used to express Putin's **authority to speak for others** and **motivate the audience**.

Example (6)

Мы хотим и будем жить в успешной России

'**We want and we will live** in a successful Russia'

Example (7)

И мы будем работать с верой в душе, с искренними и чистыми помыслами

'**And we will work** with faith in our soul, with sincere and pure thoughts'

In addition, Putin **shared his presidential duties** with the audience and **gave orders**.

Example (8)

нам потребуется решать *задачи принципиально иного уровня*

'**We will have to solve** tasks of a different level'

Example (9)

историческая перспектива государства и нашей нации зависят сегодня именно

от нас

'historical perspective of the state and our nation depend only **on us**'

As any other politician, Putin pursued the aim to consolidate the audience appealing to unity, praising the citizens and referring to their collective achievements.

Example (10)

Мы вместе прошли *большой и сложный путь, поверили в себя*

'**Together we went through** a long and difficult way, we believed in ourselves'

In addition to the **citizens** image in his Victory Day address, Putin created **heirs of the past image**.

Example (11)

Но ***мы помним*** *и о наших союзниках по антигитлеровской коалици*

'But **we remember** about our alliances in the anti-Hitler coalition'

Example (12)

Помним *историческую встречу союзников на Эльбе*

'**We remember** a historical meeting of the allied forces on the Elbe'

Similar to the inaugural address, Putin, being a spokesman for the nation, most frequently used his authority to speak for others. However, in contrast to the inaugural address, where Putin endeavoured to motivate the audience, his Victory Day address revealed **appeals to unity**.

Example (13)

Мы преклоняемся *перед всеми, кто насмерть стоял за каждую улицу*

'**We bent our heads** to commemorate those who bravely fought for every street'

Example (14)

Мы приветствуем *сегодня всех наших зарубежных гостей*

'**We greet** all of our foreign guests'

Furthermore, in his Victory Day narrative, Putin targeted a wider spectrum of the audience including the citizens, international community and particular groups (veterans). Thus, Putin several times appealed to the international guests.

Example (15)

Мы приветствуем *сегодня всех наших зарубежных гостей*

'**We greet** all our foreign guests'

Moreover, Putin addressed veterans and thanked them for their heroism and contribution to the Victory in the war.

Example (16)

Склоняем головы *перед светлой памятью сыновей, дочерей, отцов, матерей, дедов, мужей, жен, братьев, сестер, однополчан, родных, друзей*

'**We bend our heads** to commemorate sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, fellow soldiers, relatives and friends'

Another peculiarity of Putin's address on nationhood is the presence of the negative tone in addition to the positive and neural delivery style. Thus, Putin reminded the audience of the tragical consequences of the war.

Example (17)

*Всех, кто не вернулся с войны. Всех, кого уже **нет с нами***

'Those who did not return from the War. Those who are **not with us**'

In other utterances, negative style assisted the president in the construction of the insiders-outsiders dichotomy with the objective to unite the Russians against an external enemy not elaborated further in the address.

Example (18)

видим, *как набирает обороты силовое блоковое мышление*

'**we see** how the block thinking is accelerating'

4.3. The Possessive Form *Our*

Table 3 presents our major findings on the usage of the possessive pronoun *our* in two addresses.

Table 3. *Usage of 'Our' in Putin's Addresses*

Category	Inaugural Address	Victory Day
References	People (4) Aims and Duties (4) General Traits of Character (4) Values (4)	History (4) County (3) People (1)
Images	Citizens (14) Heirs of the Past (1)	Heirs of the Past (4) Citizens (3) Administration (1)
Target	Citizens (15)	Citizens (5) International Community (3)
Tone	Positive (10) Neutral (5)	Positive (7) Neutral (1)

As it can be seen, in the inaugural address, possessive form *our* equally referred to people, aims and duties, general traits of character and values.

Example (19)

*Сделаю всё, чтобы оправдать доверие миллионов **наших граждан***

'I will do everything to justify the trust of the millions of **our citizens**' (people)

Example (20)

***нашей настойчивости** в обустройстве огромных российских пространств*

'**our persistence** in improving the huge Russian spaces' (general traits of character)

Example (21)

*Мы добьёмся **наших целей***

'We will achieve **our aims**' (aims and duties)

Example (22)

*на **нашу тысячелетнюю историю***

'on **our millennium history**' (values)

The usage of the possessive pronoun *our* proves that the aim of the inaugural address was to underline duties of the citizens and define their values. Peculiar is absence of the discussion

devoted to the national traits of character that were substituted with the general characteristics not attributed to a particular nation. The Victory Day address reveals another picture. Most frequently Putin referred to history, country and only once to people.

Example (23)

*которые стали **нашим общим наследием***

'that became **our common heritage**' (history)

Example (24)

*героической вершиной в истории **нашей страны***

'heroic top in the history of **our country**' (country)

Example (25)

*Мы приветствуем сегодня всех **наших зарубежных гостей***

'We greet all **our foreign guests**' (people)

We argue that Putin maintains his image of a strong politician as in both addresses, he intended to give orders, impose ideology and shape public opinion. He attempted to identify with the public appealing to general, not national traits of character, which proves the idea that there is no clear understanding of national identity in contemporary Russia, where the vision of the society balances between different periods of the country's past. Thus, present-day political discourse in Russia is based on the image of a strong politician, an authoritative leader who guides the public and sets tasks rather than elaborates on his vision of society.

As it has been pointed out earlier, Victory Day has an important role the historical policy in Russia, which has been recently introduced by the Russia government in order "to glorify Russia's imperial legacy and encourage citizens to conform to an oversimplified historical account" (Kolesnikov 2017: 7). For this reason, Putin uses this occasion to impose ideology and shape public opinion referring to country's past. Again, it can be noticed that the president does not rely on a particular vision of the society or traits of national character aiming to refer to general notions instead. Peculiar is that in the Victory Day address, he attempted to hide his strong presidential ego and underline national pride, collective memories and patriotism instead.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of pronouns in Putin's addresses proved:

a) Close connection between language, context, political setting and code of the target audience which are interdependent and interconnected and have a strong impact on presidential communicative conduct.

b) Significant role of pronouns in presidential public appeals and their ability to expose certain peculiarities of the political environment, code of the target audience and views of the political leaders.

c) Persuasive nature of presidential public addresses which are not produced to simply inform recipients or excite their aesthetic pleasure, but to shape their perception (van Eemeren 2012). Putin, similar to other political leaders, uses public speeches to construct an ideal image of a political leader embedded in the Russian code.

d) Necessity to contextualize linguistic devices and examine them in a particular setting taking into account the context of the event on which the address is delivered, peculiarities of the code of the target audience, views of the president and an overall political environment.

e) Possibility to apply intercoder reliability test make the analysis more effective and transparent.

Overall, it can be stated that Putin's inaugural address reflected his intentions to identify with a traditional representation of a political leader, a strong, powerful authoritative patriot who leads people and protects them (Sakwa 2011). Victory Day address on the contrary revealed his intentions to be seen as a personification of history, a fellow-Russian who shares the same memories and knowledge. In other words, Putin adjusted his image to the context of his addresses.

For future analysis we propose to expand the scope of data and set the analysis in the intercultural context, i.e. to compare rhetorical devices implied in different types of addresses delivered by politicians who come from different codes and have distinct backgrounds and visions. For instance, we propose to investigate Trump's and Putin's rhetoric with the aim to determine main factors that can explain the differences in the language these politicians use in their public appeals.

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