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“LOVE TRUMPS HATE”: PROVERBIAL AND IDIOMATIC
LEITMOTIFS OF THE ANTI-TRUMP SOCIAL MEDIA DIS-
COURSE

Abstract: The present paper explores different aspects of the use of proverbs and popular idioms found in anti-Trump social media posts. It draws on the analysis of 700 texts posted on Facebook and Twitter during September 2019 and January 2020 by a number of opposition communities. First, we offer some introductory remarks about the topic, methods, and the practical material. Second, we present a thematic classification of the sampled media texts. Third, we discuss the idiomatic portrayal of the President and the Republican Party and the use of multiple codes (i.e. phenomenon of creolization) in the collected posts. Fourth, we look into how culture specific proverbs, mostly modified, are employed as a form of structuring American socio-political reality and verbalizing the present-day phenomena, and, then, highlight the problem of paremiological creativity. Last, we specify what cognitive-discursive functions the analyzed proverbs and idioms fulfill in the anti-Trump social media discourse. The study has confirmed the proposition that proverbs and idioms as lingua-cognitive signs possess significant potential for influencing mass audiences and molding public opinion.

Keywords: Donald Trump, anti-Trump discourse, social media, Facebook, Twitter, proverbs, idioms, modifications, creolized texts, politics, public opinion, media image

Introduction

In the recent decades, the scholarly interest in the language of the mass media has been growing. Combined with a cognitive approach, media linguistics explores the role of media texts in structuring the information picture of the world, cultural and ideological factors affecting the production and interpretation of mass media texts, and also the linguistic means of creating stereotypes and media images of public figures (Добросклонская 2005:7).

With their currency, popularity, and incredible penetration rate, media texts serve as channels of informing audiences about the happenings in all spheres of life; become the platform for

sharing opinions, judgements, and expressing attitudes to all sorts of events. The language of the mass media can also be regarded as one of the instruments of social and political power. Language scholars worldwide have been engaged in the investigation of, among other things, the means of creating media portraits of political figures and the potential of the media for molding public opinion. It has been noted that “a prominent feature of political communication in the 21st century is the normative use of social media”, especially Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Malala and Amienyi 2018: 1). With that in mind, we set out to examine how proverbs and popular idioms function in anti-Trump social media posts with the focus on their role in painting the media portrait of the POTUS [President of the United States] and forming the public opinion about him and his administration.

Methods and data

For the analysis, we sampled 700 texts posted on Facebook and Twitter during September 2019 and January 2020; 60 of them contain proverbs and/or idiomatic expressions. We chose to study the texts by such opposition internet groups, as “We Resist”, “Middle Age Riot”, “Yes She Can”, “Trump Repercussions”, “The Other 98%”, etc. Based on the stated missions of these communities, their main goals are “to find provocative news items, biting commentary, and clever memes” proving that the Trump administration and Republican Party are wrong, “to amplify progressive voices of the resistance”, and to create a political wave to boost the numbers of voters in the 2020 presidential election and prevent D. Trump from being re-elected.

The research was carried out within the framework of the cognitive-discursive paradigm in linguistics; contextual analysis, the method of linguistic description, sampling method, and the method of statistical data analysis were employed. One of the basic postulates in our work is Veronika N. Teliya’s statement that phraseology constitutes the greatest culture-bearing layer of a language (Телия 2004: 11). We, therefore, study proverbs and idioms as precedent phenomena, that are the core elements of the cognitive base (“background knowledge”) shared by a lingua-cultural community, with a special focus on paremias as communicative set expressions (or micro-texts per se) encapsulating certain cultural prescriptions (Konstantinova 2017: 159 – 160). Thus, the

proposition behind the research is that paremias and idioms as lingua-cognitive signs possess significant potential for influencing mass audiences and molding public opinion.

Results

We started the analysis of the sampled material with its thematic classification. The distinguished thematic groups are given below:

- *criticism of D. Trump as president*

Here we shall consider the following highly charged post:



Figure 1

The image highlights one of the principal promises of D. Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign – to build a larger wall on the border with Mexico to stop the influx of illegal immigrants. The proverb “Been there, done that” in combination with the very conspicuous symbols (the flag of the German Nazi Party with the Hakenkreuz [“hooked cross”] and the flag of the Soviet Union featuring the iconic hammer and sickle design) immediately arrests the attention and alludes to the outcome of the given promise – the so-

called “border crisis” involving the separation of thousands of parents and their young children, keeping the children in the detention centers, and multiple cases of child abuse and deaths. One might assume that all of these facts prompted the media to liken the detention centers to concentration camps and evoked the use of the two symbols labeled with the proverbial captions. Thus, the modern proverb “Been there, done that” is split into two parts to offer a powerful warning comment on the current situation by referring to the two lessons from history – Hitler Germany and the Stalin oppression regime in the Soviet Union;

- *criticism of D. Trump’s personality*

The self-explanatory modern proverb “You can’t fix stupid” appears in one of the plethora of brilliant comic tweets by John Harzell (aka Middle Age Riot):



Figure 2

The paremia is used in its traditional (non-modified) form to convey the author’s strong opinion about D. Trump’s persona and, at the same time, it substantiates the plea to remove the man who poses a threat to the well-being of the country from the Oval Office (“nuclear codes”, we believe, can be interpreted here as a metaphor for the President’s right to take drastic actions or make momentous decisions).

The following tweet uses the discursive strategy of directly addressing the whole American nation in the form of an email:

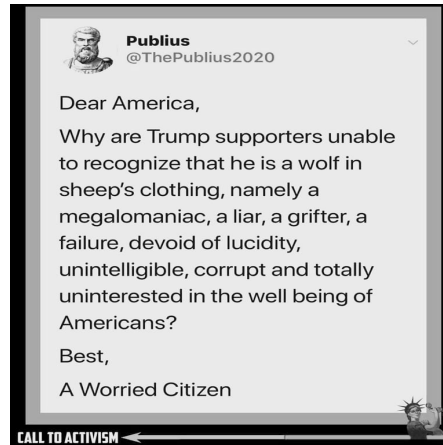


Figure 3

In the cited context, the sender of the tweet succinctly expresses his view of the current president’s true personality with the help of the popular idiom “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” (“somebody who appears to be harmless but is really dangerous”). Due to its cognitive nature, the set expression, used as a summary at the beginning of the paragraph (superphrasal unit), serves as an epitome of the list of unflattering epithets compiled by “a worried citizen” and presents the point of emotional and cognitive intensity of the text;

- *criticism of D. Trump’s appearance*

The next post features a sophisticated modification of Nike’s well-known slogan “Just do it” which has already entered the English language as a *paremia* and has been included in the *Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (Doyle, Mieder and Shapiro 2012: 57).

Turned upside down – but easily recognized, however, – the brand’s logo becomes a part of a caricature image of president Trump’s infamous hair. Thus, the meme containing a proverb with a morphological modification of the verb (do → undo) makes an urgent plea to correct the mistake (undo the metaphorical hair) and not to allow D. Trump to be re-elected in 2020.



Figure 4

- *criticism of Trump's family*
In the following post, the President's eldest son Donald Trump Jr. is compared to the member of the British Royal family – Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex:



Figure 5

As we see, the authors draw up a list of both young men’s accomplishments. While highlighting the examples of Prince Harry’s philanthropic work and active service with the army, they claim D. Trump Jr. to be involved in a number of illegal or, at the very least, unethical activities. This vivid comparison is efficaciously completed with the proverbial summary: “The rotten apple doesn’t fall far from the tree”. The sender of the post chooses to expand the traditional proverb “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” by introducing the strongly suggestive epithet “rotten”, which serves to pinpoint the same nature of the father and son and promote the negative image of D. Trump and his family on the social media.

- *criticism of D. Trump’s supporters*

In the example below, the author mocks Trump voters and those Americans who still support him with the help of the expanded popular proverb “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me”, which, in the context of the opposition to the Trump administration, can be treated as an anti-proverb:



Figure 6

The cleverly modified proverb “Be careful what you **vote** for” (Cf. “Be careful what you **wish** for”) works powerfully as a caption to the photo shot of State Senator Pete Lucido taken at a Trump rally in the following post:



Figure 7

Like the traditional *paremia*, meant to warn people to be cautious with their desires for the result may be disappointing, the altered saying prompts the audience to thoughtfully consider what choices they will make in the upcoming elections;

- *criticism of the Trump administration*

In the following post by the very prolific blogger The Middle Age Riot the idiom “the lesser of two evils” (“faced with a choice between two unsatisfactory/immoral options”) is employed to comment on the situation when, after the potential removal of the President from office as a result of impeachment, Vice President Mike Pence (who has been severely criticized by the opposition or even considered politically more dangerous than Trump) will step up into the Oval office:



Figure 8

The idiom here is used as a building block for a sustained metaphor contained in a telling statement constructed on the common syntactical pattern for expanding proverbs or proverbial sayings **If ... P..., (then)...**;

- *criticism of the Republican party*

A sarcastic expansion of the popular quotation “I think therefore I am”, that started as a dictum by the French philosopher René Descartes (Mieder 2006), makes the following text a brilliant example of conciseness and meaning.

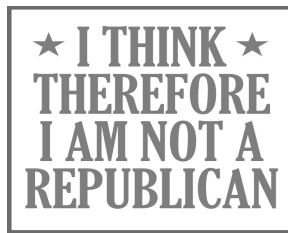


Figure 9

- *allegations of D. Trump’s criminal acts*

The emotionally and semantically charged post given below caricatures the case of D. Trump’s alleged extortion of the Ukrainian government that served as the ground for his recent impeachment trial.

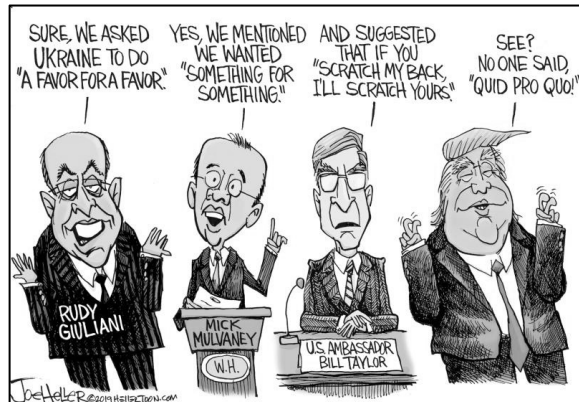


Figure 10

Three memetic politicians (R. Giuliani, M. Mulvaney and B. Taylor) offer their own verbalizations of the “quid pro quo” phrase, that was at the center of the inquiry, demonstrating its common usage meaning – “giving one valuable thing for another”, while D. Trump denies “quid pro quo” ever happening in its legal meaning, i.e. as a violation of the law. In case with the former US Ambassador to Ukraine Bill Taylor, the alternative expression is a popular proverb “Scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours”. Along with the other two phrases it serves to ridicule the way the truth and facts can be misrepresented in politics.

- *impeachment*

When the possibility of starting the impeachment trial of D. Trump was first being discussed, the following post appeared on “The Volatile Mermaid” Facebook page:



Figure 11

In this case we find the discursive strategy of a direct address which contains the altered proverb “Practice what you impeach” (*Cf.* “Practice what you preach”). With the clever paremic modification involving wordplay (lexical substitution “preach” → “impeach”) and the reference to one of the two precedents in the US history – Bill Clinton’s impeachment hearings, the author urged the Republicans to be consistent and admit that President had committed impeachable offenses and his actions gave enough ground for the inquiry.

Another laconic text using the earlier discussed evocative and asserting ad slogan turned proverb “Just do it” prods the House of Representatives to initiate the procedure:



Figure 12

Of special interest in any discursive study of proverbs and other culturally laden linguistic phenomena are the instances of their multiple use which creates phraseologically saturated contexts (Konstantinova 2017: 176). Such contextual confluence of phraseologisms, proverbial sayings and a proverb makes the following tweet stand out and catch the reader’s attention:

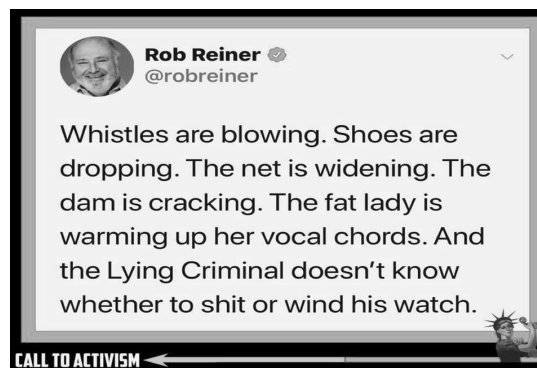


Figure 13

In the given post we find the chain of the following linguistic units:

- “Whistles are blowing” – the idiom “blow the whistle” alluding to the whistleblower who filed the complaint

about D. Trump's phone call to the Ukrainian president, which triggered the whole impeachment process.

- “Shoes are dropping” – the idioms “to wait for the other shoe to drop” (“await a seemingly inevitable event to happen”) or “drop the other shoe” (“do the next obvious thing”) meaning this will lead to a legal inquiry into the case.
- “The net is widening” – the criminology term “net widening” stressing that more individuals are being controlled by the criminal justice system in connection with the alleged violation of the law.
- “The dam is cracking” – the metaphor “dam failure” employed to denote a catastrophe characterized by a sudden and uncontrolled release of water, i.e. the worst case scenario for the President.
- “The fat lady is warming up her vocal chords” – the phrase containing a sustained metaphor built on the proverbial plot (*Cf.* The opera isn't over till the fat lady sings) – predicting that this is going to be a lengthy process;
- “the lying criminal doesn't know whether to shit or wind his watch” – a slang expression “to shit or wind his watch” denoting, according to the Urban Dictionary, a panicked state of confusion suggesting what the President must have been feeling at that time.

Marked by brevity of expression due to the listed concise, but nonetheless charged with meaning and emotion expressions, this phraseologically saturated short instance of a text reveals the author's attitude and hope that the events will unfold according to his idiomatic scenario.

- *2020 election*

Some of the posts/memes in our practical material dealing with the coming elections are stylized as social issue ads, e. g.:



Figure 14

The modern anti-proverb “Friends don’t let friends vote Republicans” brimming with heartfelt political advice is based on the paremiological pattern – modern proverb that originated as a social campaign slogan “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk” (also parodied in a number of anti-proverbs “Friends don’t let friends die”, “Friends don’t let friends forget where they come from”, “Friends don’t let friends drink and tweet”, etc.). The recognizable format of an ad containing important pieces of information to promote social well-being and educate about serious social issues adds to the effect of representing the 2020 elections as an event of paramount significance for the future of the nation.

Idiomatic Portrait of Donald Trump and the GOP in Social Media Posts

In this part of the article we are going to look into the most common and conspicuous idioms that make a composite portrait of president Trump as created on the social media:

- “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” (= “somebody who appears to be harmless but is really dangerous”) (see Fig. 3);
- “sweep (something) under the rug” (= “to hide something that is illegal, embarrassing, or wrong”).

This idiom consistently appears in the social media posts we are dealing with in our research. Republican Senators, who are deemed by anti-Trump activists to be accomplices to President’s cover-up in the impeachment trial, are shown sweeping the dirt under the metaphorical rug, thus trying to hide the ugly truth under its cover:



Figure 15



Figure 16

The poignant “sweep under the rug” image given below echoes the “blood on one’s hands” (Fig. 21) and “a stain on one’s reputation” (Fig. 22) idioms (discussed further on in the article) as the President is depicted leaving dirty footprints on the Preamble to the Constitution with the momentous “We the People” opening phrase:



Figure 17



Figure 18

- “be born with a silver spoon in one’s mouth” (= “be born into a wealthy family”)



Figure 19

- “throw someone under the bus” (= “to harm someone through deceit or treachery”; “to avoid blame, trouble, or criticism by allowing someone else to take responsibility”):



Figure 20

- “a stain on one’s reputation/character” (= “a symbol of discredit and disgrace”)



Figure 21

Multiple codes in anti-Trump social media posts

Another notable feature of the sampled texts to be discussed here is the efficacious use of multiple codes. Of special scholarly interest are the instances of text creolization, i.e. the synthesis of verbal and non-verbal means for creation of such “media products”, wherein the visual element is explicitly present (or is dominant) whilst its successful interpretation relies on the implied verbal component. Such ingenious pictorializations of proverbs and idioms present semiotic objects with a phraseological centerpiece vital for decoding the message.

The idiom “have (someone’s) blood on (one’s) hands” (“to be the cause of someone’s death; to bear the guilt or responsibility of someone’s death or injury”) is encrypted in the following creolized text.



Figure 22

The informed target audience unmistakably perceives the allusion to D. Trump’s October 2019 decision to allow Turkish troops to invade northern Syria, thus ceasing to support the Kurdish people which resulted in their bloodshed. This act of turning back on US allies was vastly condemned by the media as abandoning or betrayal of the Kurds by the President. Therefore, an unspoken accusation conveyed through a screaming image possesses significant potential for influencing the opinions of the social media users.

Next we shall consider the following example:

In this caricature image the idiom “throw someone under the bus” (“to harm someone through deceit or treachery”; “to avoid blame, trouble, or criticism by allowing someone else to take responsibility”) is present as a “phraseological splinter” (V.

Mokienko's term) ("We're gonna need a bigger **bus!**"), thus offering the clue for the correct interpretation of the conveyed pictorial content. The given example features visual dephraseologization of the idiomatic expression: D. Trump is shown throwing the Kurds under a bus thus adding to the pile of victims including top US officials and some of his closest supporters, and proclaiming that there is more to follow ("We're gonna need a bigger bus!"). The author's vision of the POTUS's behavior as, at the very least, immature and unethical, his inability to admit his own mistakes and the tendency to blame others for his failures, is clearly traceable in this eye-catching and memorable creolized text.



Figure 23

Culture specific proverbs in the posts about D. Trump's presidency

From the point of view of cognitive linguistics, proverbs are mental models of recurrent situations. Being symbols of important bits of human experience (history, social mindsets and stereotypes, world view), paremias serve as ways of making sense of, or processing, experience. Their discursive use in standard form is linked to their authority and tradition, while frequent modifications of proverbs in communication are called for by the need to name novel or renewed concepts. Proverbs, therefore, become peculiar metalanguage of different events and can be utilized as an instruction for interpretation of attitudes, assessments, judgments, and opinions delivered by authors of different social and political

stripes. In this part we are going to deal with the proverbs specific to American culture or of American origin that take on a unique discursive role – that of subtle commentators of the current happenings in the socio-political life of the country.

We shall begin the discussion of certain aspects of employing culturally specific pemiias in the opposition groups’ posts about D. Trump by pointing out that some modern proverbs trace their origin to presidential discourse; a number of proverbs symbolic for American culture and socio-political life of the nation are inextricably associated with the names of prominent US presidents.

Our sampled material contains the aforementioned gems of wisdom that help paint the portrait of the present “leader of the free world” strikingly contrasting the images of his iconic predecessors. The authority of the following “presidential” proverbs refers the audience to the lofty rhetoric permeated with patriotic feelings (F. D. Roosevelt’s “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”), (J. F. Kennedy’s “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country”), formulation of the governing philosophy indicating the presidents’ ability to assume ultimate responsibility and possession of leadership qualities (T. Roosevelt’s “Speak softly and carry a big stick, H. Truman’s “The buck stops here”), and is opposed to D. Trump’s statements (real and imagined but still epitomizing his rhetoric, views, and actions) and biting remarks about him in the posts given below:



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

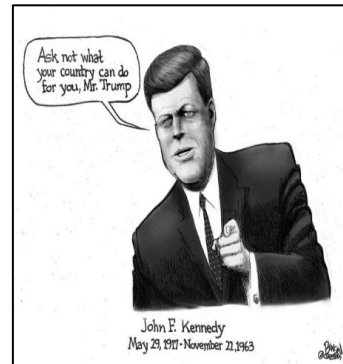


Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29

Of special interest is the following meme titled “Past Trump-like Presidents” making an advantageous use of the collage technique – in our case, bringing together a number of culturally laden texts and legendary images.

This iconographic post depicts an imagined world of Trump-like presidents and is built on perverted words and captioned deeds by the former US leaders that put the Trump’s presidency in a proverbial nutshell before the social media users’ eyes. Thus, the legendary act of honesty – chopping down the cherry tree by a young George Washington and admitting the wrongdoing to his

father – is blamed by the memetic figure on a Mexican immigrant. The liberation of slaves by Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy’s inauguration speech patriotic appeal turned proverb “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country” are presented as an attempt by the fantasy presidents at a quid pro quo. Another proverbial gem – Franklin D. Roosevelt’s elevating assertion “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” – radiates a prejudiced attitude towards other cultures and religions. All of the alterations, one can conclude, have been inspired by D. Trump’s racist diatribes and his choice of political methods in the recent years.

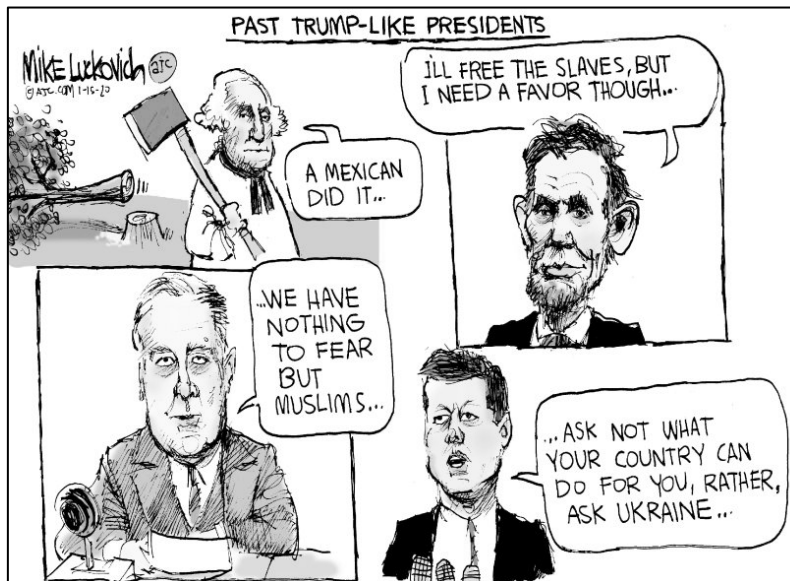


Figure 30

A number of examples in our practical material feature a witty employment of another American dictum “In America anyone can grow up to be president.”

The given posts manifest a drastic change in the perception of the once powerful social mantra encouraging to aim high in life: in the first case (Fig. 31) it is achieved through the use of the proverb as a part of a rhetorical question (“Can we just admit we may have taken this “anyone can grow up to be president” thing just a

bit too far...?") – which is in itself an effective discursive device; and in the second example (Fig. 32) through the use of a contradictory summary ("Now it's a warning") in the coda position of the tweeted text.



Figure 31



Figure 32

As our study of the collected media texts has revealed, the modern proverb "Love it or leave it" has yet again become a frequent ultimatum-like statement in the contemporary American immigration media discourse. The use of this jingoistic slogan (Doyle, Mieder and Shapiro 2012: 152), last extensively utilized in the Nixon era, is now invoked in connection with the nationalist stance in the policy and rhetoric of the President and the GOP. D. Trump's post containing the phrase and telling the four female lawmakers of colour ("the squad") to return to their countries, if they don't like it in the USA, stirred the media and triggered a heated exchange of tweets.

In the following example, for instance, the proverb serves as metalanguage in the discourse:

The Fox Channel hosts tried to justify the notorious President's tweet by stating that it is free from racist content ("when did 'love it or leave' become racist?"). To contradict this post, however, the "Call to Activism" authors published an old picture of a sign (decades ago welcoming the visitors to the town of Smithfield) that features the proverb "Love it or leave it" as a slogan proclaiming the dominance of the Ku Klux Klan nationalist idea in the area.



Figure 33

In the context cited below, the proverb is lexicalized and is used as an attribute in an address to the anti-Obama people supporting the current president (« “love it or leave it” folks») that condemns their hypocritical use of the phrase under discussion:



Figure 34

Another politically charged popular paremia “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” (see, e.g. Mieder 1997 about its use in the Cold War period cartoons) has recently reentered the media discourse as well. The latest additions to our practical material,

that kept being posted during the impeachment trial of D. Trump, feature the proverbial three-monkey image, as in the following posts:

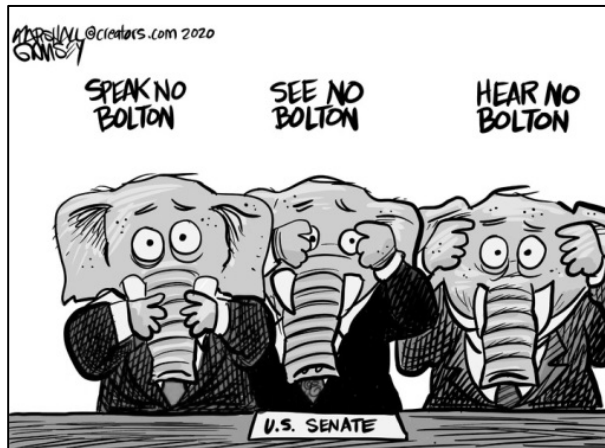


Figure 35



Figure 36

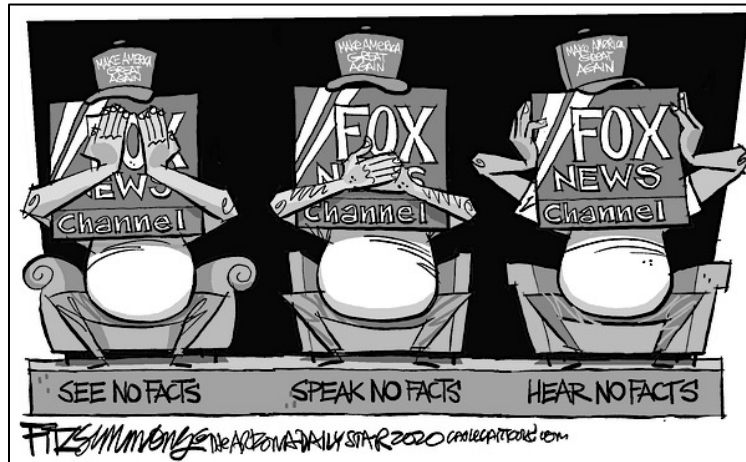


Figure 37

The memetic GOP senators and the Fox News Channel people covering the impeachment trial are depicted as figures refusing to acknowledge the facts or allow those facts to be known to public due, as the traditional proverb implies, to the lack of moral integrity and responsibility.

Paremiological creativity in the anti-Trump discourse

In his 1996 encyclopaedic article on proverbs, Wolfgang Mieder claimed that “modern-day America represents yet another “heyday” of the proverb” and argued that proverbial neologisms do appear on a regular basis (Mieder 1996: 598). This statement can be seemingly applied to the present socio-linguistic situation in the USA, wherein important realia necessitate the emergence of concise and powerful verbal packaging. Thus, the problem of paremiological creativity will be briefly touched upon here (for it deserves to be the object of an independent study) in connection with the two pseudo-proverbial (or, one might argue, neo-proverbial) expressions – the Democrats’ slogan “Love trumps hate”, involving the wordplay with the President’s last name, and the clever dictum “Build bridges not walls”. Both formulae have been frequently appearing in the anti-Trump discourse to comment on his hatred-filled rhetoric against immigrants and the border wall project. Built on the traditional paremiological patterns (*Cf.*, e.g.

Build bridges not walls ← Make love not war; Love trumps hate
 ← Familiarity breeds contempt), the sayings have been gaining currency and undergoing modifications.

Furthermore, it seems highly significant that Hillary R. Clinton chose to conclude her 2016 presidential campaign employing in her Philadelphia rally speech the compelling combination of the two phrases under consideration: “When your kids or grandkids ask what you did in 2016, you’ll be able to say you voted for a stronger, fairer, better America. An America where we **build bridges, not walls**. Where we prove, conclusively, that yes: **Love trumps hate**.”

Below we shall give several examples of the two neo-proverbs used in the social media memes/posts (their application, however, is not restricted to Facebook and Twitter; they appear on mugs, T-shirts, bumper stickers, and banners):

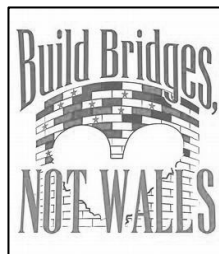


Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42

Cognitive-discursive functions of proverbs and idioms in the posts about D. Trump

The last aspect to be considered in the present paper is the cognitive functions the sampled paremias and idiomatic expressions fulfill in discourse (Konstantinova 2017). In our practical material, they are as follows:

- 1) semantic highlighting (serve as cues for discourse explication and interpretation);

- 2) emotional highlighting (help mark the focal points of foremost emotional intensity in discourse and convey attitude);
- 3) cognitive economy (function as succinct linguistic codes/compact markers of fragments of reality in discourse);
- 4) phatic function (serve as markers of sociality. They are also meant to arouse curiosity and involve the audience in a peculiar intellectual game of identifying the idioms and proverbs and, especially, their nonce transformations. The acquisition of “cultural linguistic competence” (V. Telia’s term meaning the ability to discern idioms in discourse and grasp their intended meaning) is vital for forming the feeling of association with or belonging to the community of Americans engaged in political life of the country and taking a stand against the Trump presidency).

Conclusion

In the course of the study of the empirical material we distinguished several principal thematic groups of social media posts wherein paremias and idioms appear (criticism of D. Trump as president, criticism of D. Trump’s personality, criticism D. Trump’s appearance, criticism of Trump’s family, criticism of D. Trump’s supporters, criticism of the Trump administration, criticism of the Republican party, allegations of criminal acts, impeachment, 2020 elections). Instances of employing unaltered proverbs and idioms as well as their modified versions were noted. The latter present special scholarly interest as they are used to encapsulate the elements of the *contemporary worldview* (“picture of the world”) shared by the Americans of the anti-Trump political stripe.

The media texts under consideration feature universally known proverbs and idioms (e.g. “wolf in sheep’s clothing”, “the lesser of two evils”) and also expressions peculiar to American culture (for the most part they are proverbs, e.g. “In America anyone can grow up to be president”, “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country”). Such culture specific paremias undergoing creative change serve as a form of structuring and verbalizing renewed or novel cognitive content – modern socio-political realia and phenomena.

Beneficial use of creolized texts in anti-Trump social media discourse, involving the rich Anglo-American phraseological and, primarily, paremiological strata, accounts for its complex, multi-

layered nature, and gives it an edge, thus increasing the potential for influencing Internet users.

The research has demonstrated that the main goal of the analyzed Facebook and Twitter posts (affecting mass audiences, creation of unfavorable media images of D. Trump, and molding negative attitude to President and his policies) is realized through a specific linguistic expression – culturally laden units of phraseology (proverbs and idioms) that participate in various sorts of creative modifications (language play, parody, anti- and pseudo-proverbs, etc.).

The acquired lingua-cultural content of the posts about the US President, his administration and supporters, therefore, makes media texts conspicuous and efficacious elements of the discourse, endows them with significant potential for influencing mass audiences and molding public opinion. We, therefore, can conclude that our hypothesis has been proven by the study.

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