



Current Issues of Mass Communication, Issue 38 (2025)

Journal homepage: <https://cimc.knu.ua/index>

RESEARCH ARTICLES ДОСЛІДНИЦЬКІ СТАТТІ

<https://doi.org/10.17721/CIMC.2025.38.08-17>

The 2025 Inaugural Address of Donald Trump as a Tool of Political Public Relations: Rhetorical Strategies of Persuasion

Ellina Tsykhovska

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

The article examines the 2025 inaugural address of Donald Trump as a significant PR tool in the process of political communication. Special attention is given to the analysis of strategies for constructing the image of a “strong leader”. The study explores the main rhetorical techniques, narratives, and mechanisms for shaping public opinion through communicative tactics. **The aim of the research** was to identify the key PR strategies and instruments used in Donald Trump’s 2025 inaugural address and to assess their effectiveness in shaping the image of a strongman leader. The article applies content analysis of the U.S. President’s address of January 20, 2025, to explore the most frequent narratives, frames, and core messages; discourse analysis to examine how Donald Trump uses language to construct the image of a strongman leader; and rhetorical analysis to trace the linguistic means of persuasion and emotional influence on the audience. Additionally, the study includes media analysis of selected American and British media outlets, such as “The New York Times”, “The Washington Post”, “Bloomberg”, “The Wall Street Journal”, “Newsmax”, “CNN”, “BBC News”, “The Guardian”, and “Fox News” among others — to assess the media reaction to Trump’s speech. To support the hypotheses with sociological data, the author refers to findings from the Pew Research Center. **Conclusions.** Donald Trump’s 2025 inaugural address was not merely a ceremonial political statement but a well-calculated PR tool that positioned the U.S. president as a strongman leader with messianic undertones. The rhetoric, carefully tailored to the target audience, contributed to anchoring his political messages in the public consciousness.

Keywords: inaugural address, Donald Trump, PR strategy, political communication, image, strongman leader, populism, narrative, rhetoric, messianism, brand, public opinion, frame

Citation: Tsykhovska, E. (2025). The 2025 inaugural address of Donald Trump as a tool of political public relations: Rhetorical strategies of persuasion. *Current Issues of Mass Communication*, 38, 08–17. <https://doi.org/10.17721/CIMC.2025.38.08-17>.

Copyright: © 2025 Ellina Tsykhovska. This is an open-access draft article distributed under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY)**. The use, distribution or reproduction in other forms is permitted, provided the original author(s) or licensor are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted if it does not comply with these terms.



Інавгураційна промова (2025) Дональда Трампа як інструмент політичного PR: риторичні стратегії впливу

Елліна Циховська

Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка, Україна

У статті розглядається інавгураційна промова 2025 року Дональда Трампа як важливий PR-інструмент у процесі політичної комунікації. Особлива увага приділяється аналізу стратегій створення образу сильного лідера. Досліджено основні риторичні прийоми, наративи та механізми формування громадської думки через комунікативні техніки. **Мета дослідження:** визначити основні PR-стратегії та PR-інструменти в інавгураційній промові (2025) Дональда Трампа та оцінити їхню ефективність у формуванні образу сильного лідера. У статті використано контент-аналіз інавгураційної промови президента США Дональда Трампа від 20 січня 2025 року для вивчення найчастотніших наративів, фреймів та основних меседжів; дискурс-аналіз – щоб дослідити, як американський президент використовує мову для побудови іміджу strongman leader; аналіз фреймінга – для розуміння рамок мислення, в яких Трамп подає своє бачення світу в промові, риторичний аналіз – для простеження мовних засобів, застосованих для переконання та емоційного впливу на глядачів. Також приділено увагу медіааналізу певних ЗМІ, здебільшого – американських («The New York Times», «The Washington Post», «Bloomberg», «The Wall Street Journal», «Newsmax», «CNN», «BBC News», «The Guardian», «Fox News») для того, щоб простежити реакцію ЗМІ на промову Трампа. Для підкріплення гіпотез соціологічними опитуваннями автор звертався до досліджень Pew Research Center. **Висновки.** Інавгураційна промова Дональда Трампа 2025 року стала не просто ритуальним політичним зверненням, а продуманим PR-інструментом публічного позиціонування американського президента в іміджі strongman leader з месіанськими проявами. Обрана відповідно до цільової аудиторії риторика Трампа сприяла закріпленню політичних меседжів у свідомості слухачів.

Ключові слова: інавгураційна промова, Дональд Трамп, PR-стратегія, політична комунікація, імідж, strongman leader, популізм, наратив, риторика, месіанізм, бренд, громадська думка, фрейм

The presidential inaugural address is not merely a political ritual, but also a powerful instrument for constructing the image of a newly elected head of state. In this regard, the 2025 inaugural address of Trump merits particular attention, as it was delivered amid a period of geopolitical instability, full-scale wars, and military conflicts worldwide – issues Trump, even as a presidential candidate, had vowed to resolve. Therefore, Trump's inaugural address of 2025 was a long-anticipated presentation of the political agenda of one of the most influential countries in the world, led by a controversial leader.

Although inaugural addresses have been the subject of research in linguistics, political science, rhetoric, and history, their dimension as PR strategies within presidential communication remains insufficiently explored.

Literature review

In their work “Presidents Creating the Presidency” (2008), Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson understood inaugural speeches as a separate rhetorical genre with certain

Ellina Tsikhovska  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2524-9991>

This article was first published online on September 24, 2025.

Ellina Tsikhovska is Professor at the Educational and Scientific Institute of Journalism, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Doctor of Philology. The author declares no conflict of interest. The sponsors were not involved in the research design, collection, analysis or interpretation of data, or writing of the manuscript.

Corresponding author's email: Ellina Tsikhovska ellina.tsikhovska@knu.ua



functions and structure. Scholar Xiuying Zhou, in “Critical Discourse Analysis of an Inaugural Speech Based on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar” (2024), analyzed Joe Biden’s inaugural address through the lens of linguistic strategies used to construct power and ideology. Maya Vassileva also explored Joe Biden’s rhetoric in her study “A Political Communication Model of the Inaugural Address Speech of President-Elect Joseph R. Biden” (2021), focusing on rhetorical strategies aimed at national unity. In the article “Comparative Study of Linguistic Features Used in the Inaugural Speeches of American Presidents” (Lodhi et al., 2019), the authors compared the linguistic features of the inaugural speeches delivered by George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

There is a substantial body of research on Trump’s first inaugural address, in particular, “The Function of Repetition in Trump’s Inaugural Address” (2017) by Habeeb Al-Saeedi, “Make the Inaugural Great again: a rhetorical analysis of Donald J. Trump’s Inaugural Address” (2019) by Danielle F. Dickerson, “Syntactic Analysis of Donald Trump’s Inaugural Speech” (2020) by Olusegun Oladele Jegede et al.

There are several books that directly or indirectly discuss the perception of Trump as a messianic leader, including “God and Donald Trump” (2017) by Stephen Strang, “The Power Worshippers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism” (2020) by Katherine Stewart, “Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation” (2020) by Kristin Kobes Du Mez, “Trump, the Messiah, and the Third Temple: A Prophetic, Theological, and Political Analysis of the Future of Israel and the World” (2024) by Rab Dan ben Avraham.

Political communication, as the process of constructing and disseminating politicians’ narratives in the public space, is aimed at influencing public opinion through verbal, paraverbal, and media means. Its impactful genres include presidential speeches, campaign debates, and public campaigns designed to influence attitudes towards different topics (Perloff, 2014, p. 32).

The presidential inaugural address is a powerful tool for shaping public opinion, traditionally influencing both the domestic audience (residents and citizens of the country) and the external audience (the world community). As part of the procedural etiquette, it is not limited to a ceremonial function but serves as an important PR tool for building a positive image of the state leader. In terms of its symbolic significance, the inaugural address can be equated to a form of initiation, as it is the first original text of the new president in this position, from which citizens learn about their leader’s agenda. In fact, it sets the tone for the entire presidential term and aims to unite the nation after an election process where some voters opposed others in voting for another presidential candidate. As CNN’s Steven Collinson notes, the inaugural address has traditionally been used by newly elected presidents to “bind up the lingering wounds of bitter election campaigns and try to get a divided populace pushing, for a few months at least, in roughly the same direction”¹.

According to Claire Jerry, the characteristic features of the president’s inaugural address are (Re)Unification of the audience, Reaffirmation of national values, Setting forth political principles of the people’s elected representative, as well as Enacting the presidential role, as “presidents must demonstrate an understanding of their role within the wider system” (Jerry, 2025). Scholars Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson identify five attributes of an inaugural speech, namely: 1) unification of the audience after an election, 2) celebration of the nation’s communal values, 3) establishment of political principles or policy goals for the president’s term in office, 4) demonstration of understanding executive power’s constitutional limits, 5) focusing on the present while incorporating elements of the past and future (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008).

Exploring the origins and elements of inaugural addresses since George Washington, Colleen Shogan notes that from the very beginning, “presidents have used their first speech to speak about the nation’s past, hopes for the future, and their general policy goals for the next four years” (Shogan).

¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/20/politics/analysis-trump-inaugural-speech-great-power/index.html>



Political leaders use inaugural addresses as a demonstration of their main messages, and primarily for image management, which, along with media management, internal communications of the organization, and information management, is viewed as one of the types of political activity in the field of public relations (McNair, 2011, pp. 122–123).

Method

The study is based on the official transcript of Trump's inaugural address on 20 January 2025. Three main methods of analysis were employed in the article: content analysis, discourse analysis, and rhetorical analysis. *Content analysis* was used to investigate the main narratives, linguistic patterns, and media perception of Trump's speech. We analyzed the reactions of six media outlets to Trump's speech, which were selected to represent ideological diversity: conservative ("Fox News", "Newsmax"), liberal ("CNN", "The New York Times"), and international English-language media ("BBC News", "The Guardian"). The analysis covered the first 48 hours following the speech (January 20–21, 2025), focusing on Trump's key messages and the tone of their coverage. In addition, the Flesch-Kincaid readability test was used to assess the accessibility of the speech to the target audience, which made it possible to determine the educational level required to comprehend the text.

Discourse analysis was used to study how Trump constructs his political identity and relationship with his audience, namely: creating the image of a strongman leader with messianic traits through linguistic means, constructing images of opponents through the opposition of "Self vs. Other" and using the pronoun "we" and other linguistic means to create a sense of closeness with the audience.

Rhetorical analysis was used to identify persuasion techniques (emotional appeals, demonstration of confidence, justification of decisions), historical references (use of references to American history, prominent presidents and national myths, in particular "Manifest Destiny") as tools of persuasion and audience unity, and Frank Luntz's rules of communication (use of simple words and short sentences, repetition of key messages, presentation of old ideas in a new format, appeal to emotions through inspiring language).

Results and Discussion

Donald Trump's 2025 inaugural address is designed as a powerful PR strategy aimed at strengthening his image as a strong leader of the country. In political science, the image of a strong leader is traditionally called a "strongman leader", based on such traits as extreme nationalism with calls to restore the country's former greatness, blaming others, responding to often non-existent threats to the nation (Davis, 2020, p. 280). CNN reporter Steven Collinson highlighted the strongman style of the forty-seventh US president's inaugural address: "Trump, in the manner of a classic strongman leader, leveraged his personal mythology after he was sworn in for a new term, inspiring his supporters but leaving those who fear him anxious that dark days may be ahead"².

In general, Trump has been repeatedly labelled a "strongman leader". For example, British journalist G. Rachman in his book "The Age of the Strongman" examines the rule of authoritarian leaders through the prism of the strongman leader image, including V. Putin, R. Erdogan, Xi Jinping, V. Orban, and D. Trump. The researcher lists virtually the same features as other researchers before him, narrowing them down to four common characteristics of the strongman style: cult of personality, disregard for the rule of law, populism, and nationalism (Rachman, 2022, p. 20). He also emphasizes the trait of all strongman leaders, which is also found in Trump, including his inaugural address: "Their goal is to convince people that they alone can save the nation. "I alone

² <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/20/politics/analysis-trump-inaugural-speech-great-power/index.html>



can fix it”, Trump told Americans” (Rachman, 2022, p. 20). Such statements by Trump are in line with populist narratives representative of a “cult of the leader” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 63), criticism of the establishment and positioning of himself as the savior of ordinary people, as discussed in detail in the book “When Democracy Trumps Populism” (2019), namely Trump’s presidency as populism (Weyland, 2019).

In his rhetoric, Trump does not stop at criticizing the establishment: he intensifies the “Self vs. Other” opposition, creating an image of an enemy who, in Trump’s view, hinders the prosperity of the United States and its citizens. The enemies in Trump’s rhetoric are the previous government, illegal migrants, and everyone who did not contribute to Trump’s rise to power. Steven Hassan, analyzing the components of the Trump phenomenon, calls this narrative of the American president one of the classic influence techniques: “He creates false enemies... to engender us versus them thinking, which renders people more fearful and obedient” (Hassan, 2020, p. 13).

It is impossible to ignore the fact that Trump’s role as a leader closely borders on messianism. Emphasizing the US messianism in global processes, supported by the concept of manifest destiny – the ideology of exclusivity and privilege of the American nation, to which he directly refers in his speech (“And we will pursue our manifest destiny into the stars, launching American astronauts to plant the Stars and Stripes on the planet Mars” (Trump, 2025), Trump does not stop there, identifying himself with the Messiah. In his inaugural address, he mentions the assassination attempt on July 13, 2024 during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, explaining his survival as God’s will: “But I felt then and believe even more so now that my life was saved for a reason. I was saved by God to make America great again” (Trump, 2025). Trump’s Messiah complex is also highlighted by Francis Bown in his article “Donald Trump, the Mob Boss with a Messiah Complex” published in “The Guardian” (March 2025): “Since he dodged the assassin’s bullet, another dimension of Trump’s personality has appeared: a Messiah complex. The bullying narcissist now believes that he is the savior of the world”³.

In fact, Trump’s Messiah complex did not emerge after the assassination attempt. Trump’s messianic functions have long been attributed to him. One evangelical leader, Lance Wallnau, in his book “God’s Chaos Candidate: Donald J. Trump and the American Unraveling” (2016), noted Trump’s significant role in restoring Christian influence in the United States, asserting that “he is anointed of God”. Wallnau further argued that Trump is a “secular reformer” who aims to establish an environment conducive to a “spiritual reformation” among Christians (Wallnau, 2017).

The messianic role of the state implies creating a better future for the world, as well as the function of a world savior, which the United States assumed after the end of the Cold War. However, scholar Adarsh Badri argues that this mission of the United States has diminished since the election of Barack Obama in 2009, and that “the decline of the US as a messianic state gained intensity with the election of President Donald Trump, who had vowed to ‘quickly and decisively bomb the hell out of ISIS’ (Badri, 2024).

Given this, the messianism of America as a state under Trump’s presidency has been overshadowed by Trump’s desire to assume the role of a Messiah. However, we believe that Trump’s messianism is selective, as the forty-seventh US president tends to provide assistance to certain countries over others.

Robert A. Lehrman and Eric Schnure, in “The Political Speechwriter’s Companion”, note that “politicians must stay upbeat” in their speeches, as voters want to hear not only an acknowledgement of existing problems, but, more importantly, their solutions, for which they elect a strong leader: “In a sense, they want speeches to resemble a well-made Hollywood feature, raising serious issues, like corruption, but providing a happy ending by the closing credits” (Lehrman & Schnure, 2019, p. 15). The authors call Trump a master of this technique, who appeals to the anger and

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/14/donald-trump-the-mob-boss-with-a-messiah-complex>



frustration of Americans, but promises them to “Make America Great Again”. No wonder he kept this slogan for his second presidential term. Gideon Rachman refers to this technique as “nostalgic nationalism”, characterizing it as an element of strongman politics and emphasizing that “almost all strongman leaders use local variants of Donald Trump’s famous promise” (Rachman, 2022, p. 25).

However, these narratives can also be interpreted as messianic. In his inaugural speech, Trump promises prosperity to the American nation, its worldwide recognition and a return of the golden age under his leadership, which he reinforces through a repeated refrain: “The golden age of America begins right now” and “The future is ours, and our golden age has just begun” (Trump, 2025).

In addition to projecting the image of a strongman leader, Olha Meleshchenko identified six strategies, that Trump employs to construct a positive public image, following the analysis of the president’s political messages on Twitter. They include the roles of PATRIOT, EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC MANAGER, TIGHT POLITICAL LEADER, GOOD FRIEND, POPULAR POLITICAL LEADER, and BELIEVER (Meleshchenko, 2021, p. 110). In our opinion, Trump embodies these roles to varying extents in his inaugural address.

Notably, Trump uses intimation tactics in his rhetoric, addressing the audience as “one of his own”, creating a sense of closeness to the audience, which is based on the use of the pronoun “we”: “We will stand bravely, we will live proudly, we will dream boldly” (Trump, 2025). Iryna Holubovska and Tetiana Orlova observed this communicative technique, combined with Trump’s tactic of positive forecasting, in his first inaugural speech in 2017, by repeating “a single syntactic construction of futuristic grammatical semantics: Pron + aux. verb will + main verb + noun...: “We will determine the course of America ...; “We will face challenges”, “We will confront hardships” (Holubovska & Orlova, 2017, p. 15).

The semantics behind everything Trump presents in his speech is better understood through the rhetorical techniques that he seems to have borrowed from the ten rules of successful communication proposed by Frank Luntz in his book “Words that Works” (2007). The American president consistently follows the first rule, “Simplicity: Use small words”, according to which “Avoid words that might force someone to reach for the dictionary... because most Americans won’t” (Luntz, 2007, pp. 4–5). In fact, in his entire thirty-minute speech, there are one to three words that the average American may not fully understand: “sovereignty”, “weaponization”, and “escalating”. For the same purpose, Trump resorts to short sentences, in line with Frank Luntz’s second rule “Brevity: Use short sentences” (“*Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced*” (Trump, 2025)). Similarly, Trump used short sentences in his first inaugural speech (Jegede, 2020, pp. 324–325).

The application of the Flesch-Kincaid readability tests to Trump’s 2025 inaugural speech demonstrates that the speech has a level of complexity for the students in the 10th to the 12th grade (Grade level score: 9.48) of an American school and is aimed at a moderately educated audience (Flesch Kincaid Calculator). The speech is written in accessible language (fairly difficult to read), typical of a political speech, the purpose of which is to be understood by a wide audience, including both US citizens and international audience.

The political beliefs of Trump’s first term (tough migration policy, selective isolationism⁴, climate skepticism, and an anti-establishment discourse) repeat in the narratives of his second term in office: the “America First” narrative (“*During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first*”, “*Instead of taxing our citizens to enrich other countries, we will tariff and tax foreign countries to enrich our citizens*”), the narrative of “Restoring America’s Greatness” related to the previous point (“*Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored*”, “*we will begin the complete restoration of America*”), criticism of predecessors (“*For*

⁴ Leonhardt, D. Is Donald Trump an Isolationist? Oct. 21, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/21/briefing/is-donald-trump-an-isolationist.html>



many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens”, “*We now have a Government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home*”), the “National Unity” narrative (“*Together, we will end the chronic disease epidemic and keep our children safe, healthy, and disease-free*”, “*National unity is now returning to America*”) (Trump, 2025).

It is worth noting that the narrative of “national unity” in Trump’s inaugural address has been questioned by many media observers. In particular, an article in “Bloomberg” on January 21, 2025, is titled “Surprise: Trump’s Inauguration Didn’t Offer Unity After All”, stating that Trump “invoked the world but not the sentiment”⁵.

The consistency and repetitiveness of Trump’s political messages are in line with Frank Luntz’s fourth rule of “Consistency Matters” (Luntz, 2007, p. 11). At the same time, Trump presents old ideas, supporting them with new ideas and details, which echoes the fifth rule of “Novelty: Offer Something New” (Luntz, 2007, p. 13). The issue of migration and the fact that Trump declares the problems of the United States as a priority exemplifies how old ideas rephrased in a new way. This repetition of key ideas in different configurations makes the speech more convincing and memorable, and forms the foundation of Trump’s personal brand, where mission – “America First”; vision – the primacy of the United States as a superpower on the world stage; values – perseverance, anti-globalism, strength, directness; promise – “Make America Great Again”; philosophy – act decisively.

The inspiration with which the American president delivers the key points of his inaugural speech deserves special attention. Frank Luntz calls it “Speak aspirationally”, explaining the seventh rule by saying that “Each president was reminding Americans of what Lincoln called “the better angels” of their nature” (Luntz, 2007, p. 19). Trump uses this rhetorical strategy to great effect when he talks about the revival of American auto manufacturing, stating that “We will build automobiles in America again at a rate that nobody could have dreamt possible just a few years ago. And thank you to the autoworkers of our Nation for your inspiring vote of confidence” (Trump, 2025). Trump uses this rule of successful communication almost like a textbook example when he describes the efforts of the American people in historical terms: “Ambition is the lifeblood of a great nation, and, right now, our Nation is more ambitious than any other. There’s no nation like our Nation. Americans are explorers, builders, innovators, entrepreneurs, and pioneers” (Trump, 2025).

To mobilize his audience, Trump uses historical references in line with Frank Luntz’s seventh rule, referring to the activities of Americans as pioneers of the Wild West and the construction of the Panama Canal by Americans. All these references imply the key role of the United States in both local and global processes, and a call for Americans to reconnect with their heroic past. They also imply a strongman leader who will lead the US to a new golden era, a central theme in the populist discourse of Trump’s speech. By focusing on “social identity” – belonging to the American nation – Trump elevated the self-esteem of citizens through pride in collective achievements.

Thus, by using references to US history, Trump pursues two goals: he strengthens the sense of national unity and highlights the uniqueness of Americans, demonstrating his own connection to the long-standing institution of the presidency by mentioning the names of past American presidents (William McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt).

It should be noted that the manner in which the American president presents information also contributes to the impact of the address on listeners, namely the confidence with which Trump proclaims each sentence and the reasoning behind it – the reasons why he will act in a certain way. According to Frank Luntz’s third rule of successful communication “Credibility is as important as philosophy”, one should “tell people who you are or what you do” (Luntz, 2007, p.11), which is what Trump does. He outlines the situation in a particular industry and proposes solutions.

⁵ <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2025-01-21/trump-inauguration-speech-did-not-offer-unity-after-all>



Specifically, in his inaugural address, he promises to sign prepared orders to resolve the problems, which he immediately does after the address is over⁶.

In this way, Trump uses his presidential inaugural address as a publicity event, publicly demonstrating live the fulfilment of his promises and attracting public attention. Moreover, the public act of the president signing orders, witnessed by viewers and attendees of the inauguration, also engages them as witnesses to a historic moment, which strengthens the emotional connection between the president and the people. These actions contribute to the implementation of the PR strategy of positioning Trump as a strong and decisive leader. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser in their book “Populism: a very short introduction” describe a populist leader as a man of action: “Many political leaders present themselves as strong leaders, but populist strongmen take it a step further, crafting an image of a man of action” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 64). Moreover, such a leader emphasizes the urgency of decisive action: he usually argues that the situation (“crisis”) requires “bold action” and “common sense solutions” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 64). For example, in Trump’s 2025 inaugural address, the word “crisis” is mentioned four times, and “common sense” twice.

Leading US media painted a positive picture of Trump’s activities during the inauguration, focusing on his signing of orders (“The New York Times”⁷, “The Washington Post”⁸, “Bloomberg”⁹, “The Wall Street Journal”¹⁰). It is likely that the convincing rhetorical strategies of the president’s inaugural address, contributed to the approval ratings. The latest national poll by the Pew Research Center, conducted from January 27 to February 2 among 5,086 respondents, showed that 47% of Americans approved of Trump’s job performance (Pew Research Center, 2025).

The media effect of Trump’s inaugural address varied depending on their political alignment. Right-wing conservative media outlets, which generally support Republicans (Gramlich, 2020), such as “Fox News”, portrayed Trump’s return to power as an era of success and the revival of traditional values.

The new president’s positive vision for governance manifests in “Fox News” headlines: “Trump vows ‘new era of national success,’ says America’s ‘decline is over’ in inaugural address”¹¹, “Trump vows to ‘act with historic speed’ after presidential inauguration that brings redemption”¹², and the “Fox News” lead from January 20, 2025. Two days before Trump’s inauguration, the conservative “Newsmax” TV channel also quoted Republican politician Brian Babin as saying that the newly elected president would restore the United States “to its rightful place as the number-one superpower in the world”¹³.

In contrast to “Fox News”, liberal left-wing media outlets that are often targeted by Trump for their criticism of his administration, such as “CNN” and “The New York Times”, have traditionally been skeptical about the narratives of Trump’s inaugural address. In a CNN article of January 21, 2025, titled “Trump Wields Huge Power to Kick Start His New “Golden Age”, Stephen Collinson openly criticizes the content of the statements made by Trump. He writes: “But Trump also laced the pageantry of Inauguration Day with rally-style grievance politics and vast doses of untruths, twisted facts and an increasingly messianic sense of his own power, which was a foreboding omen for the rule of law”¹⁴. Another CNN headline from the same issue, “Trump Touts Political

⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-inauguration-swearing-capitol-b3549ebe5dae74a872502aa79def7a11>

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/20/us/politics/trump-executive-orders-list.html>

⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/01/20/trump-inauguration-speech/>

⁹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2025-01-21/trump-inauguration-speech-did-not-offer-unity-after-all>

¹⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/politics/trump-to-call-for-revolution-of-common-sense-in-inaugural-address-a6d94c59>

¹¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-vows-new-era-national-success-says-americas-decline-over-inaugural-address>

¹² <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-vows-act-historic-speed-presidential-inauguration-brings-redemption>

¹³ <https://www.newsmax.com/newsmax-tv/babin-trump-us/2025/01/18/id/1195603/>

¹⁴ <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/21/politics/donald-trump-golden-age-analysis>



Firings and Retaliation as He Begins Government Overhaul in His Image", reflects a similar negative assessment of Trump's inaugural statements.

Reporter David E. Sanger of "The New York Times", in his article "A Determined Trump Vows not to Be Thwarted at Home or Abroad" of January 20, 2025, calls him "Mr. Trump" instead of "Mr. President" or simply "Trump", describing him as "the great disruptor" who "wasted no time on lofty appeals to American ideals. Instead, he spoke with a tone of aggression intended to be heard by domestic and foreign audiences"¹⁵.

If we analyze the reaction of the international media to Trump's address, we can observe concerns about the radicalization of Trump's planned initiatives, evident from the headlines of January 20–21, 2025. For example: "BBC News" ("Trump Vows to Leave Paris Climate Agreement and 'Drill, Baby, Drill'", "Trump Makes 'Two Sexes' Official and Scraps DEI Policies", "Best of 'Frenemies': Trump's Relationship with Europe This Time May Be Very Different"), "The Guardian" ("Beware, Trump: The American Spirit is Indefatigable", "Trump Sworn In as 47th President as US Braces for a New Era of Disruption and Division", "Fee, Fi, Fo...Trump: How an Ogre Won Back the White House").

Conclusion

Presidential inaugural addresses are a powerful PR tool for political leaders. Besides communicating the political direction and values of the new administration to the public, they also serve the essential function of presenting a positive image of the president.

Trump used his address as a publicity event to demonstrate his image as a strongman leader – a decisive man of action. This PR strategy aligns with his messianic strategy as the savior of the American nation, which he implements through the rhetoric of rescue after the assassination attempt, as well as by promoting national interests under the slogan "America first" as his strategic vision of the US brand.

These PR strategies are applied in the address through populist rhetoric of antagonizing the establishment and strengthening the "Self vs. Other" opposition by constructing an enemy image, as well as positioning himself as the only solution to the problems of American citizens. Trump actively used classic PR tools of political communication: simple language and short sentences, repetition of key messages, presentation of old ideas in a new way, use of emotional triggers (anger, hope, pride). He appealed to patriotism through historical references and mentioned the national myth – Manifest Destiny.

An analysis of media coverage of Trump's address demonstrated the consistency of polarized perceptions of the forty-seventh president's narratives, with conservative media outlets ("Fox News", "Newsmax") traditionally covering the speech as a positive trend for the United States, liberal media outlets ("CNN", "The New York Times") criticizing it, and international media outlets ("BBC News", "The Guardian") expressing concerns.

Overall, Trump's inaugural address successfully reinforced his personal political brand, which he has nurtured throughout his career.

Declaration of generative artificial intelligence and technologies using artificial intelligence in the writing process.

The authors did not use artificial intelligence tools in the preparation of this article. The authors of the article bear full responsibility for the correct use and citation of sources.

¹⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/20/us/politics/trump-sworn-in-president.html>



References

Badri, A. (2024). The United States is a messianic state: Rhetorical roots in US foreign policy since 1991. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 79(1), 150–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2024.2415113>.

Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K. H. (2008). *Presidents creating the presidency: Deeds done in words*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Character Calculator. Flesch Kincaid Calculator. <https://charactercalculator.com/flesch-reading-ease/>.

Davis, K. C. (2020). *Strongman: The rise of dictators and the fall of democracy*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

Gramlich, J. (2020, April 8). 5 facts about Fox News. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/04/08/five-facts-about-fox-news/>.

Hassan, S. (2019). *The cult of Trump*. New York: Free Press.

Holubovska, I. O., & Orlova, T. V. (2017). Політичний дискурс як інструмент маніпулювання свідомістю електорату (на матеріалі інавгураційної промови Дональда Трампа 20 січня 2017 р.) [Political discourse as a tool for manipulating the consciousness of the electorate (based on the material of Donald Trump's inaugural speech on January 20, 2017)]. *Studia Linguistica*, (11), 9–28.

Jegede, O. O. (2020). Syntactic analysis of Donald Trump's inaugural speech. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 3(3), 317–327. <https://doi.org/10.34050/elsjish.v3i3.11068>.

Jerry, C. (2025, January 14). A brief history of presidential inaugural speeches, from George Washington to today. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/a-brief-history-of-presidential-inaugural-speeches-from-george-washington-to-today-246125>.

Lehrman, R. A., & Schnure, E. (2019). *The political speechwriter's companion: A guide for writers and speakers* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Luntz, F. (2007). *Words that work: It's not what you say, it's what people hear*. New York: Hyperion.

Meleshchenko, O. O. (2021). *Дискурсивні стратегії англомовного політичного твітінгу Дональда Трампа: когнітивний мультимодальний аналіз* [Discursive strategies of Donald Trump's English-language political tweeting: A cognitive multimodal analysis] (Diss., V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University).

McNair, B. (2011). *An introduction to political communication* (5th ed.). London; New York: Routledge.

Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2017). *Populism: A very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Perloff, R. M. (2014). *The dynamics of political communication: Media and politics in a digital age*. New York: Routledge.

Pew Research Center. (2025, February 7). Public anticipates changes with Trump but is split over whether they will be good or bad. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/02/07/public-anticipates-changes-with-trump-but-is-split-over-whether-they-will-be-good-or-bad/>.

Rachman, G. (2022). *The age of the strongman: How the cult of the leader threatens democracy around the world*. New York: Other Press.

Shogan, C. The inaugural address: Origins, shared elements, and elusive greatness. *White House Historical Association*. <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-inaugural-address>.

Trump, D. J. (2025). Inaugural Address (2nd term). *The White House*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/01/the-inaugural-address/>.

Wallnau, L. (2017). Why Trump is “God’s chaos candidate” and “wrecking ball”. *CBN News*. <https://cbn.com/news/us/lance-wallnau-why-trump-gods-chaos-candidate-and-wrecking-ball>.

Weyland, K., & Madrid, R. L. (Eds.). (2019). *When democracy trumps populism: European and Latin American lessons for the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Received 27.05.2025
Approved 11.09.2025
Published 24.09.2025