Armine SIMONYAN＊
Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF BRITISH POLITICAL IDENTITY

The present paper dwells on some theoretical and practical issues related to British identity in political discourse. Political identity implicitly involves the combination of the personality traits of a politician and the collective characteristics, qualities of the addressee. Compliance with the extralinguistic, distinctive features of the audience, especially its ethnolinguistic and cultural characteristics, is extremely important for the effective implementation of political communication.

Key words*: political discourse, national identity, collective identity, individual identity, strategies*

Introduction

In recent years, a lot of research has been devoted to the notion of identity. "Identity exits between constant pull of opposing forces. It is both singular and plural, real and imagined, individual and collective, defined by sameness and by difference" (https://globalejournal.org/global-e/december-2010/individual-and-collective-discussion-identity-and-individualism).

Identity is a complex and multifaceted concept that includes different aspects. Personal identity refers to the unique traits and qualities that distinguish an individual from others. It is shaped by a variety of factors, including our genetics, our experiences, and our relationships with others. Social identity is the aspect of identity that comes from belonging to a social group or category. It provides individuals with a sense of belonging, shared

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＊ sim-var@hotmail.com ORCID: 0000-0001-5837-1988

values, and a framework for understanding themselves in relation to others. Cultural identity is the sense of identification with a particular culture or cultural group. It is shaped by our beliefs, our values, our traditions, and our language. Collective identity is a shared identity and a shared sense of belonging within a community. Our identities are not static; they are constantly evolving as we experience new things and meet new people. They can also be influenced by the social and cultural context in which we live. Constituents of national identity have an invariable character as they have been developed by a significant part of the population over a long historical period. It is important to be aware of our own identities and we should also be respectful of the identities of others.

Literature Review

There are several widespread theories on national culture and identity articulated by Stuart Hall, Leszek Kolakowski, Ruth Wodak and others. Stuart Hall, a British cultural theorist of Jamaican origin, postulated in his work "The Question of Cultural Identity" that identities are shaped by national cultures. He noted that the concept of the nation and the corresponding sense of identification emerge through narratives about the nation, linking its past to its present. Hall identifies several components contributing to the construction of a national cultural narrative. These include stories found in literature that attribute meaning to daily life within a nation. Such narratives, according to Hall, attach significance to ordinary existence, establishing a connection between individual lives and a national destiny that transcends both past and future. Furthermore, he emphasizes the notions of timelessness and tradition noting the invention of tradition in the storytelling process, which he terms the "narration of the nation". Hall also highlights the incorporation of foundational myths contributing to the shaping of national identity (Hall, 1996).

Leszek Kolakowski, a Polish philosopher, provides a meticulous understanding of the complexities of human existence and the challenges individuals combat when facing historical and social pressures (Kolakowski, 2001).

Ruth Wodak, an Austrian linguist, is known for her studies of language, power, and identity. Wodak's work often highlights the role of political discourse in shaping public perceptions and understanding of identity. She

examined how political leaders and institutions use language to frame issues related to immigration, multiculturalism, and nationalism (Wodak, 2015).

Anthony D. Smith, a prominent scholar is widely recognized for his contributions to the study of national identity. He proposed an ethno-symbolic approach that considers the importance of shared myths, memories, and symbols in shaping national identity. Nations have ancient, inherent, and unchanging characteristics, often tied to ethnicity or biology. He explored how certain events from the past are selected, remembered, and mythologized to create a coherent and shared national narrative. While acknowledging the challenges posed by globalization, he argued that nations continue to play a crucial role in people's identities, and national peculiarities persist despite globalizing forces (Smith, 1992).

Svetlana Ter-Minasova outlines the role of national heritage in shaping national identity. Classical literature and culture have been worshiped by many generations and served as a main source of inspiration and survival (Тер-Минасова, 2008).

Norman Fairclough, a famous British linguist, emphasizes the role of ideology in shaping national identity. He states that language can serve as a tool through which dominant ideologies are reinforced or challenged (Fairclough, 2003).

Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that involves the study of language in its social context, with a particular focus on how language is used to reflect and shape power relations, ideologies, and other social structures. CDA is effective when it can generate meaningful and pertinent insights into how discourse perpetuates social and political inequality, as well as instances of power abuse or domination. This methodology has been applied to analyze the rhetoric in political speeches and other types of communication that might be employed to influence the perception of the audience. CDA analyzes both written and spoken language, considering various forms of discourse such as media and advertising, politics in its broad sense, institutional practices, and other types of communication. Various discourse analysis techniques are utilized to explore the linguistic elements that contribute to the construction of meaning. The examination of historical context is also crucial for understanding how languages reflect and shape social realities.

The approach to analyzing identity is part of Critical Discourse Analysis and the methodology involves the examination of construction and representation of identity in political contexts.

Textual analysis of identity contains a close analysis of linguistic features of texts, including vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical devices.

Intertextuality investigates the boarder discursive context and the historical, cultural, or social influences on identity construction.

Power relations contribute to the reproduction or transformation of power structures, particularly in relation to identity.

We have made an attempt to study British political identity, applying Fairclough's critical approach and Wodak's discourse-historical approach. Fairclough's methodology involves examining the language of power, and exploring how political discourse contributes to the construction of national identity. Wodak's approach considers the historical and contextual dimensions of identity. She acknowledges that identity is not a static phenomenon and is shaped by historical developments, social changes and specific contextual factors.

Winston Churchill: Shaping British Identity

Political communication is closely linked to the cultural, socio-economic, and historical characteristics of a particular ethnic community. These aspects reveal political national identity with its collective self-perception, cultural and psychological integrity, values, feelings of pride and patriotism, love, responsibility, obligation, etc. (https://sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/national-identity). A politician must take into account all the above-mentioned notions as they attach stability to a politician's background. However, value preferences in politics change quite often and are associated with the state policy of a given country or the political doctrine of a particular politician. Here comes the interaction between collective and individual identities.

 Throughout history, the representation of British identity in politics has been complex and subject to different interpretations. During the 20th century, British political values and preferences underwent significant changes. To prove this point, we have analyzed the discourse of Winston Churchill, one of the most influential political figures of the 20th century.

For his outstanding achievements, Winston Churchill was compared with Caesar and Cicero. The choice of this politician is not accidental, it is

due to the fact that Winston Churchill, with the help of brilliant oratory, proclaimed and disseminated British identity with its values and beliefs. During his politically saturated life, he personified the state policy of Great Britain.

A diachronic examination of W. Churchill's speeches makes it possible to single out several stages of the British policy: a) 1910–1939; b) 1939-1945 years of World War II; c) the post-war years.

In politics the creation of a firm, stable understanding of national identity is vital and the simplest and most effective way to strengthen it is to unite its citizens against a common enemy.

The role of a common enemy has historically played a significant part in shaping British identity. Throughout different periods of history, the presence or external threats of adversaries have often led to a sense of unity among the people of Britain.

To prove this Winston Churchill masterfully executes the strategies of self-presentation and negative other presentation. He presented his personal point of view, and the interests of his country in the best possible way, meanwhile, the policy of his opponents was sharply nailed and criticized.

The period of his political career, stretching from the beginning of the century to the post-war years, is characterized by an open hatred towards Soviet Russia and Germany. Here is how he put it on December 11, 1925:

> *"Behind Socialism stands Communism. Behind Communism stands Moscow, that dark, sinister, evil power which has made its appearance in the world – band of cosmopolitan conspirators gathered from the underworld of Europe and America – which has seized the great Russian people by the hair of their heads and holds them in a grip, robbing them of victory, of prosperity, of freedom. The plaguish band of conspirators are aiming constantly to overthrow all civilized countries and reduce every nation to the level of misery to which they have plunged the great people of Russia." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 89)*

Winston Churchill using the strategy of negative other presentation, characterized Moscow and the ideas of socialism in an extremely negative way. The text is saturated with adjectives of negative connotation, such as dark, sinister, and evil. Describing the leaders of the communist movement as *a gang of conspirators from the criminal world of Europe and America*, Winston Churchill wanted to draw the attention of the audience to the idea that the leaders of the country were people with a criminal record. For British

mentality this is unacceptable. Speaking about Russians as a nation, Winston Churchill changed his approach drastically and characterized them as the great Russian people *from whom freedom and prosperity were taken away*. Relations between Russia and Great Britain played a huge role in the world history. Disagreements between these countries were followed by the time when they both tried to maintain friendly relations. The British also highly esteemed the last Queen of Russia, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, who was murdered in captivity during the Revolution.

Speaking about the Soviet leaders, Winston Churchill said:

> *"Of all tyrannies in history, the Bolshevist tyranny is the worst, the most destructive, and the most degrading." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 77)*

To escalate the negative image and have a strong impact on the addressee, the politician used inverted syntactic construction with negatively loaded adjectives in superlative degree such as *the worst, the most destructive,* and *the most degrading*. Undoubtedly, the use of the discrediting strategy cannot cause an outbreak of positive emotions in an ordinary Briton.

Before the Second World War, the majority of the population of Great Britain were Christians and the appeal to the Bible should have a powerful effect on them. Criticizing the communists, he decisively exaggerated the biblical truth ("All mine is yours") and represented it as ("All yours is mine"). Two strategies merge in one sentence. On the one hand, the principles of the Bolsheviks were downgraded and discredited; on the other hand, he presented himself as a follower of biblical truths.

Politicians' speeches should reflect those values and traditions that are close to their own ethnic community.

Meanwhile, time brings forward new challenges, and a politician must be up-to-date; he must introduce into political communication those features that are crucial and inherent at this particular historical moment. The correct correlation of past, present, and future makes the political discourse historical and situational at the same time.

In the early thirties of the 20th century in the political life of Britain, Winston Churchill positioned himself as a harsh opponent of Bolshevism. At that time the militarization in Germany was rapidly gaining ground. Winston Churchill was one of the few who saw evil in the image of Hitler and predicted a terrible future for the countries of Europe. But at that time he

remained unheard. On November 23, 1932, in the House of Commons, he said:

"Now the demand is that Germany should be allowed to rearm. Do not delude yourselves. Do not let his Majesty's Government believe – I am sure they do not believe – that all that Germany is asking for is equal status… That is not what Germany is seeking. All these bands of sturdy Teutonic youths, marching through the streets and roads of Germany, with the light of desire in their eyes to suffer for their Fatherland, are not looking for status. They are looking for weapons, and when they have the weapons, believe me they will then ask for the return of lost territories and lost colonies…" (Churchill, Never give in, p. 101)

Repetitive use of discrediting negative constructions in imperative sentences *Do not delude yourselves, do not believe, negative sentences, such as That is not what Germany is seeking. They are not looking for status* drew the attention of the audience to the real goals of Germany. Churchill wanted them not to be misled by the false narrative of the German politicians. The lexical reiteration of the word *weapons*, and the reference to the Germans as Teutons, retained in British mentality exclusively negative connotation and accordingly aggravates the destructive atmosphere. Teutons were Germanic tribes, in the second century BC they invaded the Roman Republic. The history of Europe recorded several aggressive wars led by them. Later, in general, the Teutons were called the Germans. Very often history repeats itself. The idea that history holds lessons for the present is widespread in political discourse. So, this is how Churchill warns the nation of the growing threat coming from Nazi Germany. Years ahead Churchill's predictive phrase: "Europe is plunging into darkness" will become a slogan.

During that particular time, Winston Churchill's foreign policy was mainly focused on the criticism of the Soviet Union and Germany. The strategy of disgracing and dishonoring prevailed in most of his speeches. Discrediting others he praised the democratic foundations of the British Empire and some of Britain's allies, mainly the United States and once hostile country – France.

On September 24, 1936, Winston Churchill said:

"There are three kinds of nations in the world at the present time. There are the nations which are governed by the Nazis; there are the nations which are governed by the Bolshevists, and there are the

nations which govern themselves. It is this third class of nations in which the French and English peoples are most interested… I am sure that the French, British, or American democracies would be very miserable if they were suddenly put under Nazi or Bolshevist rule. France and England are the chief architects of modern civilization, and the United States is the heir and champion of our ideas." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 135)

Relations between Great Britain and France remained tense for centuries. For Britain France was considered as 'the other', and it was supported by the fact that Britain was mainly protestant and France was catholic. Only from the beginning of the 20th century, did they pave diplomatic cooperation. Summarizing the role of the Soviet Union and Germany Winston Churchill did not use too many abundant discrediting markers that characterize political regimes in these countries, only by two lexical units *Bolshevists* and *Nazis*. Then he drastically changes the direction of the narrative towards creating a collective political identity with allies. The citizens of Great Britain and France are obliged to consider themselves the successors of the traditions of the Western European parliamentary system, the free market, the rule of law, and freedom.

The British identity is closely related to commitment to education. In this particular field were framed, fueled, and revitalized British values.

Winston Churchill used to visit schools quite often. Here is an excerpt from a speech ar Harrow School on October 29, 1941.

"Almost a year has passed since I came down here at your Head Master's kind invitation in order to cheer myself and cheer the hearts of a few of my friends by singing some of our own songs. … But for everyone, surely, what we have gone through in this period – I am addressing myself to the School – surely from this period of ten months, this is the lesson: Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 307)

It is not strange that Winston Churchill visited schools. Education in Britain has been a constant priority for centuries. The image of the UK, along

with the ideas of parliamentarism and democracy, is associated with fundamental education. Oxford and Cambridge, many British schools, colleges and universities are highly ranked and popular all over the world. The British national mentality perceives the years of schooling in its own way, and if the school with its special inner world, traditions, and songs is destroyed, then part of the history of Britain will be destroyed.

Anaphoric repetition of the phrase *never give in*, internal rhyming of the phrase, and inverse syntactic constructions have a strong impact on the audience. Lexical units with striking positive connotations as convictions of honour and good sense are used together with phrases of negative implications such as yield to force, and yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. The opposing ideas are meant to instill in young people courage, strong will, and determination to win.

British identity is closely associated with leading wars. Resilience, bravery, courage, and commitment to defending the British throne were glorified.

Throughout the history conflicts such as the Hundred Years' War, the Spanish Armada, and the Napoleonic Wars also played roles in shaping the British identity. The notion of standing together against external threats has been ingrained in the collective consciousness and has contributed to the development of a sense of Britishness. During World War II, the threat posed by Nazi Germany became a unifying factor for the British people.

Then hoping for unity and mutual understanding based on common values, Winston Churchill addresses the citizens of these countries. It is worth mentioning that the idea of creating the European Union was first introduced by Winston Churchill. But he formulated it as the United States of Europe.

Here is an excerpt from his speech in the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, Winston Churchill said:

"...we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps

forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.'' (Churchill, Never give in, p. 218)

So, Great Britain emerged into an unequal struggle with the German and Italian troops that had invaded almost all of Europe. In this situation, Winston Churchill saw his mission as boosting the confidence, and the self-esteem of the nation. He demonstrates brilliant oratory skills, the knowledge of history and culture. The rhythmic repetition of the phrase *we shall fight* shows his stable and unwavering policy. Churchill deliberately introduces a contrast, and then to support his people he speaks of the island, which must be defended by no means, and then, to support his people, he recalls the Empire, which will always come to rescue, and in the end, he turns to the United States, calling them as the *New World*, who will definitely lend a helping hand to the Old One. To encourage the nation, the politician highlights the possibility of addressing the allied states. The lexical units used in this passage are aimed at raising the spirit of a small country, behind which are the countries of the once powerful British Empire.

The strategy of self-presentation is implemented based on the invariable nature of the values developed throughout history, the concepts of a politician, the British people, and the peoples of the countries of the British Empire are integrated into one whole.

Lord Palmerston, a prominent political figure during the height of the United Kingdom's colonial power articulated a guiding principle: '*We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests we must follow.''* (Palmerston, 1848). This statement has become a guideline for British foreign policy, it laid a solid foundation of a new political value, a sense of identity with a state.

The notion of political interest has become the cornerstone, a vital representation of British identity. To realize its political interest Britain was forced to make alliances with former enemies.

The political interests of Britain set forward new tasks. During the Second World War British foreign policy is characterized by active cooperation with the USSR. The approach towards the former malicious enemy was changed dramatically. Here is what Winston Churchill said on May 10, 1942:

"The Russians, under their warrior chief, Stalin, sustained losses which no other country or government has ever borne in so short a time

and lived. But they, like us, were resolved never to give in. They poured out their own blood upon their native soil. They kept their faces to the foe. From the very first day to the end of the year, and on till tonight, they fought with unflinching valour. And, from the very first day when they were attacked, when no one could tell how things would go, we made a brotherhood with them, and a solemn compact to destroy Nazidom and all its works." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 332)

Being an excellent military expert, he is heading for cooperation with the USSR and, to gain support from the British people, he is trying to find common grounds that might join former enemies. The positive presentation is implemented by identifying the actions expressed in the sentence *they, like us, were resolved never to give in.* Or, with the idea of uniting joint actions, we made a brotherhood with them, and a solemn compact to *destroy Nazidom*. To arouse the compassion of the British, Winston Churchill is trying to be more argumentative, presenting the heroic struggle of the Soviet people against Nazism. Evaluative sentences *They sustained losses. They poured out their own blood* aiming to have an emotional impact on the audience show the commitment and the significance of their struggle against the enemy.

During the war, Churchill did everything possible to strengthen the unity of the Allies. Several agreements against Germany were resolved within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Language plays a significant role in processes related to identity construction. The English language serves as a powerful tool for the dissemination and expression of British identity. English is intricately linked to British culture and significantly contributes to the formation of narrative identities, as individuals construct their personal stories and narratives of Englishness through the use of the English Language. Nowadays the widespread use of English facilitates communication and interactions on a global scale.

Let's see how Winston Churchill evaluates the role of the English Language.

"The English Language is the language of the English-speaking people, and no country, or combination or power so fertile and so vivid exists anywhere else on the surface of the globe. We must see that it is not damaged by modern slang, adaptations, or intrusions. We must endeavor to popularize and strengthen our language in every way.

Broadly speaking, short words are best, and the old words, when short, are the best of all. Thus, being lover of English, we will not only improve and preserve our literature, but also make ourselves a more intimate and effective member of the great English-speaking world, on which, if wisely guided, the future of mankind will largely rest." (Churchill, Never give in. 2003. p. 453)

Winston Churchill emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting the English language, viewing it as a valuable asset for the English-speaking people.

He admits the strength and vividness of this linguistic community and suggests disseminating English as a unifying factor worldwide. He expresses his desire to maintain the purity and integrity of the language and encourages efforts to popularize the English language. Advocating the use of short words that can contribute to clarity and simplicity in communication, he predicts broadening of the English-speaking world. And finally, he expresses positive and optimistic view of the potential impact of the English language on global communication and cooperation. Lexical units of positive evaluation, such as *fertile, vivid, best, lover of English, effective, great* characterize the English language and the English-speaking world as the foundation for the future mankind.

Winston Churchill delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1946. This speech marked a crucial moment in the early post-World War period. This is how it starts:

"I am glad to come to Westminster College this afternoon, and are complimented that you should give me a degree. This name "Westminster" is somehow familiar to me. I seem to have heard it before. Indeed, it was at Westminster that I received a very large part of my education in politics, dialectic, rhetoric, and one or two other things." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 414)

Westminster in this context should be viewed as a toponym. Toponyms, or place names, can serve as powerful representations of identity. They can be analyzed from various dimensions of identity, including historical, cultural, national, social, political, and personal aspects. Winston Churchill dwells on this notion, as Westminster is the administrative and political heart of the United Kingdom.

Westminster is home to several iconic landmarks, including the Big Ben clock tower and Westminster Abbey. These landmarks are symbols of British history, tradition, and cultural heritage.

The next quoted passage marked the onset, the beginning of a new historical period marked by geopolitical division.

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an "iron curtain" has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia; all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow. (Churchill, Never give in, p. 423).

The metaphor of the "iron curtain" is a powerful and evocative image that Churchill uses to describe the division of Europe. It suggests a barrier that separates Eastern Europe from Western. This metaphor portrays the Soviet influence as a force that isolates countries. The enumeration of towns emphasizes the geographical extent of the Soviet expansion and dominance. The negative evaluation of a former ally suggests a need for reevaluation and action.

Rhetorical questions in political discourse are meant to provoke genuine answers. They are meant to lead the audience to a predetermined conclusion. Creating a negative image of the situation, Churchill invites the audience to participate and come up with personal conclusions with the issues raised.

"Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts – and facts they are - this is certainly not the Liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace." (Churchill, Never give in, p. 423)

"The iron Curtain" speech manifested the beginning of Cold War. Winston Churchill's input in framing the ideological landscape was huge. His political vision to struggle against the Soviet influence and call for Western Alliance highly contributed to shaping geopolitical strategies of the Cold War era.

Conclusion

The study of identity is critically important as it exceeds various fields of study and has significant implications for individual and collective understanding. Determined by a set of cognitive stereotypes of nations developed over a long period, the analysis of ethnocultural peculiarities in political discourse includes the concept of national mentality, national way of perceiving, understanding, and interpreting reality. Winston Churchill played a significant role in shaping British identity. Being a symbol of resilience, leadership and determination, he instilled a sense of national unity and pride. His powerful speeches and unwavering resolve fostered not only national identity but also a collective identity that transcended borders and social divides.

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А. Симонян – *Дискурс-анализ британской политической идентичности.* – В настоящей статье рассматриваются некоторые теоретические и практические вопросы, связанные с британской идентичностью в политическом дискурсе. Политическая идентичность имплицитно предполагает сочетание личностных качеств политика и коллективных характеристик, качеств адресата. Соблюдение экстра-лингвистических, самобытных особенностей аудитории, особенно ее этнолингвистических и культурных особенностей, чрезвычайно важно для эффективного осуществления политической коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: *политический дискурс, национальная идентичность, коллективная идентичность, индивидуальная идентичность, стратегия*

Ա. Սիմոնյան – *Բրիտանական քաղաքական ինքնության խոսութային վերլուծություն.* – Սույն աշխատությունը անդրադառնում է բրիտանական ինքնությանն առնչվող հարցերին խոսույթում: Քաղաքական ինքնությունը յուրօրինակ համադրություն է, այն անուղղակիորեն ներառում է քաղաքական գործչի անհատակա-նությունն և հասցեատիրոջ հավաքական որակների ամբողջությունը: Քաղաքական հաղորդակցության արդյունավետ իրակա-նացման համար չափազանց կարևոր է հանդիսատեսի արտալեզվական, տարբերակիչ հատկանիշների, հատկապես նրա էթնոլեզվական և մշակութային բնութագրերի պահպանումը:

Բանալի բառեր. *քաղաքական խոսույթ, ազգային ինքնություն, հավաքական ինքնություն, անհատական, ինքնություն, ռազմավա-րություն*