

**HYPERBOLE AS A PERSUASIVE STRATEGY IN BRITISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A RHETORICAL AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH***Shomurodova Naima Muxtarovna**Phone number: +998995998989**Atajanova Anna Andreyevna**Master's degree student of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages**Phone number: +998900770445**E-mail address: aatajanova0@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** This paper explores the rhetorical and pragmatic use of hyperbole as a persuasive device in British political discourse, specifically in political reactions to the Salisbury poisoning incident. Through analysis of speeches by key political figures—Karen Pierce, Theresa May, and Boris Johnson—the study demonstrates how hyperboles intensify political messages, appeal to ethos, pathos, and logos, and create heightened representations of events. The strategic embedding of hyperbolic language, often coupled with rhetorical tools such as metaphor, alliteration, analogy, and anaphora, enhances the emotional and cognitive impact on audiences. The article highlights the role of hyperbole in framing political narratives, shaping public opinion, and reinforcing speaker authority, emphasizing its evocative and manipulative potential.

**Keywords:** Hyperbole, political discourse, persuasion, ethos, pathos, logos, rhetorical devices, metaphor, representation, British politics

**INTRODUCTION**

Hyperbole has long been examined in philosophy, linguistics, and literary studies. Traditionally, researchers have focused on its linguistic classification and semantic properties. Recent studies in psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics have extended this understanding, framing hyperbole as both an evaluative and persuasive instrument. As noted by scholars such as Claridge (2011), Cano Mora (2006), and Ritter (2010), hyperbole enhances not just the emotive tone of discourse but also contributes to argumentation by influencing the cognitive and affective responses of recipients. Despite being a common trope in political rhetoric, hyperbole has received comparatively limited scholarly attention within political discourse analysis. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining the persuasive function of hyperbole in British political speech concerning the 2018 Salisbury poisoning incident.

**Methodology**

Hyperbole is understood here as a rhetorical exaggeration that presents reality in extreme terms to fulfill specific pragmatic objectives (Kalkhoven & De Landtsheer, 2016). The study draws upon Quintilian's classical rhetoric, modern pragmatic frameworks, and Ritter's theory of hyperbolic

metamorphosis, where exaggeration disorients the audience to reorient their perceptions and attitudes (Ritter, 2010). Ethos, pathos, and logos are considered critical components in assessing the effectiveness of hyperbole. The corpus comprises speeches and public statements from key UK political figures addressing the incident involving Sergei and Yulia Skripal.

### **Hyperbole in Karen Pierce’s UN Speeches**

Karen Pierce, the UK’s Permanent Representative to the UN, uses military metaphors and hyperboles to portray the Salisbury incident as a national and international crisis. By likening the event to a “chemical weapons attack” and labeling the substance used as a “weapon of mass destruction,” she elevates the scale of the incident. The alignment of Salisbury with Syrian warzones through analogy and alliteration (e.g., “Syria and Salisbury”) amplifies emotional and rhetorical impact. Her statements also construct a chain of escalating hyperboles using gradation and anaphora to argue that failure to act equates to betraying both national and global responsibilities. This framing not only evokes fear but positions Pierce as a rational authority whose words demand serious consideration.

### **Hyperbole in Theresa May’s Parliamentary Speeches**

Theresa May, as Prime Minister, characterized the poisoning as an “unlawful use of force” and part of a broader “pattern of Russian aggression.” Her language escalates the event from an isolated attack to a geopolitical crisis, utilizing terms usually reserved for war and international conflict. By referring to threats to “our national security” and “fundamental values,” she frames the incident within a national and continental identity, aligning the UK with Europe against a perceived common threat. These hyperboles engage logos by citing established security doctrines and pathos by eliciting emotional responses from her audience. The credibility and role of the speaker—ethos—further legitimizes these persuasive strategies.

### **Hyperbole in Boris Johnson’s Media Publications**

Boris Johnson's opinion articles deploy metaphorical hyperboles to critique the Russian government. Phrases such as “a deluge of lies,” “an avalanche of disinformation,” and “a torrent of absurdity” serve to ridicule and discredit Russia’s public stance while casting Johnson as a decisive and informed political actor. Unlike parliamentary speech, Johnson's journalistic style permits a blend of figurative language and persuasive rhetoric. His use of adynaton (e.g., “needle of truth in a haystack of lies”) enhances expressiveness and memorability. These expressions appeal to both pathos and ethos, targeting the emotions of readers and reinforcing Johnson’s rhetorical persona.

### **Discussion**

Across all speakers, hyperbole emerges as a powerful rhetorical tool to:

- Emphasize urgency and significance (logos)
- Arouse fear, indignation, or solidarity (pathos)
- Enhance speaker credibility and authority (ethos)

Moreover, the success of hyperboles in these political contexts depends on their seamless integration into the communicative environment. When well-embedded, they may be interpreted literally, thus enhancing their persuasive effect. In journalistic and publicistic discourse, metaphorical hyperboles allow for even greater expressive freedom, reinforcing ideologically charged narratives.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis confirms that hyperboles function as a strategic instrument of persuasion in British political discourse. They operate through appeals to logic, emotion, and speaker character, amplifying the perceived importance of political events. Hyperboles interact with other rhetorical devices to intensify discourse and can shape public perception by altering the qualitative and quantitative representation of events. Their persuasive power lies in their evocative nature—generating vivid representations that often diverge significantly from factual reality. In modern political rhetoric, hyperbole serves both expressive and manipulative purposes, and its use requires careful critical evaluation.

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