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First Person Pronouns in Political Speeches: United Nations on Situation in Ukraine

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Abstract

The use of personal pronouns has been widely discussed in political discourse. Politicians tend to be evasive during their speeches or interviews mainly using personal pronouns to achieve that. In this paper 25 speeches taken from United Nation's meetings about the situation in Ukraine were analyzed. There were five speeches selected for each of the country to be analyzed: Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Russian Federation and France. The aim of this paper was to find out which country uses personal pronouns most frequently as well as to find out which semantic referents and which pragmatic functions are the most common among the five countries. The results of this paper showed that all the countries used pronoun *we* most frequently. The most common semantic referents of *I* were *I as a politician* and *I as a person.* The most common referent of *we* was *we (exclusive) – I and the government.* The main reason for the use of these referents was to share the load of responsibility and to avoid subjectivity.

1. Introduction

The study of personal pronouns usage has become an important aspect of analyzing political speeches. It is not a secret that politicians tend to be evasive during their speeches and through the different use of personal pronouns ambiguous meaning can be formed. As Bramley said in his work (2001) politicians exploit the flexibility of pronominal reference to construct a view of themselves and others that is favourable to their image.

The general features of personal pronouns are well known. The definition provided by Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2016) describes the personal pronoun as a type of pronoun (such as *I*, *you*, *they*, or *it*) that is used to refer to a specific person or thing. On the other hand, it is more complex and is usually employed by politicians as one of rhetoric devices. The main reason why pronouns are one of the most favourable rhetoric devices by politicians is that through the different uses of pronouns they can create multiple identities. The particular identities that politicians construct with pronouns include the identities of 'selves' as individuals, as well as 'selves' as members of collectives, including the politician's own political party (Bramley, 2001: 1). However mostly politicians do not deliver speeches as individuals, but rather as representatives of political parties, governments, or nations (Irimiea, 2010:44).

The use of personal pronouns has been widely discussed in various genres: research articles, interviews, political debates, speeches. As mentioned by De Fina (1995) one of the pioneering works in this field was a paper by Brown and Gilman (1960) in which they discuss the origins of power and solidarity in western European languages, through the proposed forms of T and V (from the latin *tu* and *vos*). In a sense that superiors would say T and receivers V. In cases were speaker and receiver are equals or there is solidarity between them pronoun form is the same. Pennycook (1994) states that pronouns are political in a sense that they always refer to people and groups which always imply the relations of power. He analyses such pronouns as W*e, He, She, You, They, It, One* and *I*. According to the author, pronoun *we* shows claiming of authority and communality, authority to speak for others; *they, you* shows otherness by distancing speaker and those supposedly addressed; *one, it* - objectivity, conceal the specifically located subject.

In political discourse the largest part of researches are concerned with political debates and interviews. For example, Bramley's (2001) investigation shows that politicians use pronouns to create multiple 'selves' and 'others': these constructions are politician's reality and not an

objective representation of facts (Bramley, 2001: 11); also his analysis also revealed such unresearched usages as affiliation or creation of distance between people. Bull and Fetzer (2008) argued that two main pronominal shifts are over-inclusion and under-inclusion, both used to force the argument as well as to equivocate. Karapetjana (2011) investigated pragmatics of pronominal choice in political interviews and her finding showed that the pronominal form I implies a personal level: it enables the politician to show his personal involvement and commitment, authority and personal responsibility (Karapetjana, 2011: 43). By applying the exclusive personal pronoun we, a politician may wish to share the load of responsibility (Karapetjana, 2011: 43). By using the inclusive personal pronoun we, a politician might aim at establishing rapport with the interlocutors, thereby encouraging solidarity and creating interpersonal involvement with the audience (Karapetjana, 2011: 44). Also Proctor and I-Wen Su (2010) analyzed self-identification in political interviews through pronominal choice and their findings were that self-identification is revealed through the use of pronouns of whom they support as well as indicating the strength between an interlocutor and a speaker.

The amount of research papers done about the use of pronouns in political speeches is rather small. De Fina (1995) in her work suggested that pronominal selections reflect different objectives and purposes in political speeches as well as reflect different choice in involvement and identification. Bello (2013) argued that pronouns used to index self, like 'I' and 'me', simply show alignments with positive realities of achievements, humility and personal integrity all as commodities to be used in exchange for political acceptance. The use of 'we' and 'us' creates multi-faceted dimensions and groupings all serving different political purposes. Finally Allen's (2006) research showed that pronominal choice is made in order for the politician to be reflected in a positive way.

Personal pronouns in interviews and debates in political discourse were widely discussed by scholars. However, in speech genre it lacks more investigation. Therefore, speech was chosen as a genre for the analysis. Also, due to significance of the first person pronouns, only these instances were analyzed. The speeches were taken from United Nations meetings with a subject of Situation in Ukraine, since it was the most discussed topic in politics at the time. Analysis was made out of Great Nations speeches: United Kingdom, USA, France, Russia and the country of the incident – Ukraine. A total of 25 speeches were analyzed, 5 speeches for every country from 5 different meetings.

The aim of this analysis is to find out to whom personal pronoun I and We is referring to and to investigate the purpose behind it. Also, this paper will try to find out which pronoun and

with which referent is the most frequent throughout the speeches. Lastly, since the analyzed speeches are from different countries, differences and similarities among them will be inspected. The hypothesis of this paper is that the personal pronoun *we* will be most frequent. The reason is that in the United Nations politicians deliver speeches on behalf of political party/country and the pragmatic function would be to avoid subjectivity.

The remainder of this paper is divided into four sections. The second section is *methods and materials*. The beginning of this section is *materials*, here the data and size of the corpus is introduced. *Materials* are followed by *methods* were the way of analysis is described. The second section is finished with the *limitations* part. The third section is *results* where the results of the analysis are introduced. This section is divided into five parts, one for each country and country's results are divided into two subparts for personal pronoun *I and we*. The last section is *conclusion* in this section aim of the paper is reviewed and key findings are summarized.

2. Methods and Data

2.1. Materials

The corpus for the study was compiled from 25 speeches taken from the Official United Nations website. Speeches were selected from five random Security Council's meetings about the situation in Ukraine. From each meeting one speech was taken for every country: United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Ukraine and Russian Federation. These countries were selected since their speeches were the longest and occurred in every meeting. The total size of the corpus is 24324 words. The individual corpus of United Kingdom consists of 3562 words, United States – 5971, France – 3124, Ukraine – 4581, Russian Federation – 7086. For the purpose of quantitative analysis, the frequencies of pronoun occurrences were normalized. The frequency was normalized per 10000 words and the formula used was 10000 / size of corpus * instances. In the process of designing corpora, all Security Council's meetings were downloaded electronically and converted from PDF format to MS Word. Once PDFs were converted, all irrelevant speeches from other countries were excluded, as well as Security Council's president remarks, footnotes and acknowledgements. Every speech has its own abbreviation. France speeches are marked as FR 1, FR 2, etc., United States – US 1, US2, etc., Russian – RU 1, RU 2 etc., United Kingdom – UK 1, UK 2 etc., Ukraine – UA 1, UA 2, etc. The list with abbreviations can be found in References list. Speech 1 was made on 1 March 2014, speech 2 on 13 March 2014, speech 3 on 18 July 2014, speech 4 on 21 July 2014 and speech 5 on 17 February 2015.

2.2. Methods

The analysis of this paper is divided into five parts, each part for each country. Country is divided into two subtypes one for *I* and one for *we*. Each subtype begins with the quantitative analysis and is followed by qualitative. This study is empirical analysis, therefore each pronoun was manually selected and analyzed as well as double-checked by MS Word's 'Find' function in order not to overlook any of the first person pronouns. The analyzing process began with calculating the frequencies of the pronouns. The second step was to analyze the type of semantic referent as well as identify the pragmatic function of it. In order to do so, whole speeches were read and afterwards the analysis began. Once the semantic referents were identified all instances were grouped by type. After this, the individual analysis results were compared in conclusion section.

2.3. Limitations

One of the main limitations of this paper was that some of the countries delivered speeches in their mother tongue. For example: France, Russian Federation and Ukraine. Therefore, there might be inaccuracies compared to the original. However, since the translations were put on the official United Nations web page it was considered as a valid translation.

The second prominent limitation was the well-known fact the politicians not always write speeches themselves and they often get help from the speech writers. It was assumed that the speech writers were of the same origin and conveyed the same meaning as politician intended.

The last major limitation of this paper was that the length of the speeches. It was not the same and the frequency of the pronoun occurrences had to be normalized.

3. Results

As already mentioned in the introduction this section is divided into five parts, one part for each of the countries to make results clearer. Each section represents quantitative analysis of pronouns *I* and *We* as well as qualitative analysis which shows the referents of pronouns *I* and *We* and also highlights the meaning behind it. Due to the amount of pronoun occurrences the research does not overlook every instance in the speeches. Pronouns are grouped by the meaning to whom they are referring and each category is represented in the results section as well as distinctive cases. Frequency was normalized per 10000 words in order to make analysis more comparable.

Table 1. Raw and normalized frequencies per 10000 words of pronoun *I* and *WE*

	UA	**Norm.**	UK	**Norm.**	US	**Norm.**	RU	**Norm.**	FR	**Norm.**
Words	4581	**10000**	3562	**10000**	5971	**10000**	7086	**10000**	3124	**10000**
I	23	**50,2**	4	**11,2**	4	**6,7**	35	**50**	12	**38,4**
We	36	**78,6**	51	**143,2**	76	**127,3**	64	**90,3**	34	**108,8**

3.1. Results in Ukraine speeches

In speeches carried out by Mr. Sergeyev (UA 2 – Mr. Yatsenyuk), representative of Ukraine distinction of pronouns are quite visible. There were 25 occurrences of pronoun *I* and 37 occurrences of pronoun w*e*. However, based on the corpus size pronoun *I* in Ukraine's corpus was the most frequent. As we can see from Table 1, after normalization pronoun *I* frequency is 54,5. On the other hand, pronoun *we* is the least used by Ukraine compared to other countries with the frequency of 78,6.

The hypothesis which was that pronoun w*e* will be most common was correct. Nonetheless, number of pronoun *I* in Ukraine speeches is prominent as well. The reason behind this frequent use of pronoun *I* is that it expresses personal opinion or belief. They are self-references and all of them appear in expressions like 'I'd say' (line 5), 'I wouldn't agree' (line 14), 'I would like to mention' (lines 35-36), etc. Self-reference is, in other terms, always related to the expression of opinion or personal belief (De Fina, 1995: 396). Also, the most motivating reasons for a politician to use the pronoun I in his speech is to come across as good and responsible, to describe himself in a positive way and highlight personal qualities (Håkansson, 2012: 10). These may be: being responsible; being in touch with the electorate;

being a person of principles; being a person of action; showing lack of knowledge; being a person of power; and problematic personal issues (Bramley, 2001: 28). Bull and Fetzer (2008) divided the reference of personal pronoun *I* into such categories: the following linguistic devices were identified to mark the discursive identity of a politician: (1) an explicit reference to the identity of a politician as in *I am the politician* (2) an explicit reference to the politician's leadership as in *the Labour Party I'm leading today* or *me as leader of the Labour Party*. To mark the politician's discursive identity of self, the following devices were found, viz., an explicit reference to the personal sphere of life as in *I personally*, in *I set myself certain clear objectives*, in *I myself said*, in *I give my absolute personal guarantee* or in *a vast majority of parents including myself* (Bull & Fetzer, 2008: 14). To sum up, based on previous research personal pronoun *I* can be classified into such semantic referents: I as the politician, I as the leader and I as a person with the following pragmatic functions of expressing personal belief or opinion and highlighting personal quality.

The study of Ukraine's speeches has similar results. Figure 1. Represents the semantic referents of pronoun *I* found in all five speeches.

All the instances of personal pronoun *I* were divided into three categories – I in acknowledgments, I as a person and I as a politician. I in acknowledgements category was chosen due to statement made by Vladimirou - it seems that I in acknowledgements bears a somehow unique status, standing between I as a researcher and personal I. This is actually the expression of the personal, social as well as the scholarly self of the writer. This category, I think, deserves to be treated separately, as it constitutes one of the strongest expressions of the interpersonal function (Vladimirou, 2007: 145). Even though she analyzed research article and the study of this paper focuses on political speeches due to vast usage of I in acknowledgments in speeches and due to the strong interpersonal function it carries separate category was created. Instances of *I* in the category of I as a person consists of such cases as biographical self-reference and expressing personal opinion. I as a politician consists of such cases were speaker is referring to himself as a representative of a government/nation or as a person delivering the speech.

3.1.1. Pronoun I in Ukraine's speeches

Figure 1. Semantic referents of *I* in Ukraine's speeches
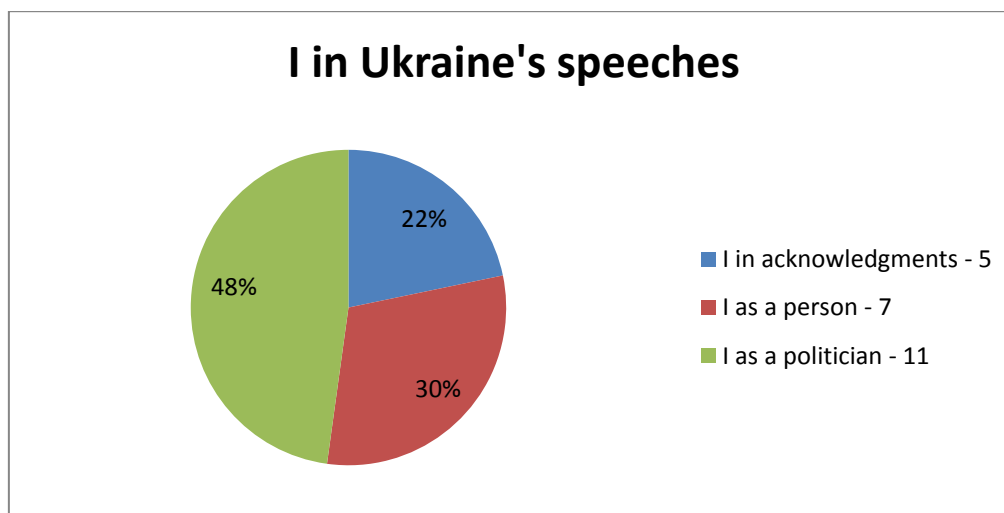
Out of 23 instances of pronoun *I* in Ukraine's speeches there were a total of 5 cases of *I in acknowledgments*. This referent was least used in the speeches by Ukraine as presented in Chart 1. All of them appeared at the beginning of the speech at expressed gratitude towards the previous country or the president of Security Council. For example (UA – 1):

(1) *I thank you very much, Madam, for agreeing to have this meeting at such short notice. I thank Mr. Eliasson for his comments and for presenting to us the statement of the Secretary-General, which is very promising.*

There were no ambiguous cases and they all start with the same structure I + thank. It can be argued that this pronominal choice was chosen to highlight a politician's personal qualities, that he or she is humble and appreciates the participation of other colleagues. Also, since all the cases appeared at the beginning, it can be stated that it is used as a signpost for the audience to transit from one speech and to focus on another.

Moving on to another type of referent, which is *I as a person* we can see from Chart 1, that this is the second least/most used type throughout the speeches. In total it occurred 7 times and played the key role of building a politician's identity. As already discussed in the results section (3), semantic referent *I as a person* consists of instances were politician expresses his opinion or showing personal qualities. As we can see in example (UA – 5):

(2) *I think it will not be a surprise to any member of the Council to hear that heavy weapons and equipment continue to be shipped to the east of Ukraine.*

This case illustrates how representative of Ukraine through the use of personal pronoun *I* and verb *think* expresses his opinion and forms his identity as a politician. Based on the context we can see that he expresses his opinion and speaks on behalf of the whole Security Council, thus representing him as a self-confident, assured and powerful politician.

Special case was made in the second meeting (UA − 2) where ambiguity between referents *I as a person* and *I as a politician* can be seen:

> (3) *As the Prime Minister of Ukraine, which for decades had warm and friendly relations with Russia, **I** am convinced that Russians do not want war, and **I** hope that the Russian Government and the Russian President will heed the wishes of their people and return to the negotiating table to engage in dialogue and solve this conflict.*

This example shows how the representative of Ukraine expresses his opinion as the Prime Minister of Ukraine. Thus, the category of pronoun *I* should be *I as a politician*. However, he chose such verb forms as *convinced* and *hope* which is indicating to his personal opinion or beliefs forming his identity as a person and not as a politician. Also, as already mentioned in the introduction, politicians, usually, do not deliver speeches as individuals, but rather as representatives of political parties, governments, or nations (Irimiea, 2010: 44). Therefore, this instance was assigned to the semantic referent category of *I as a person*.
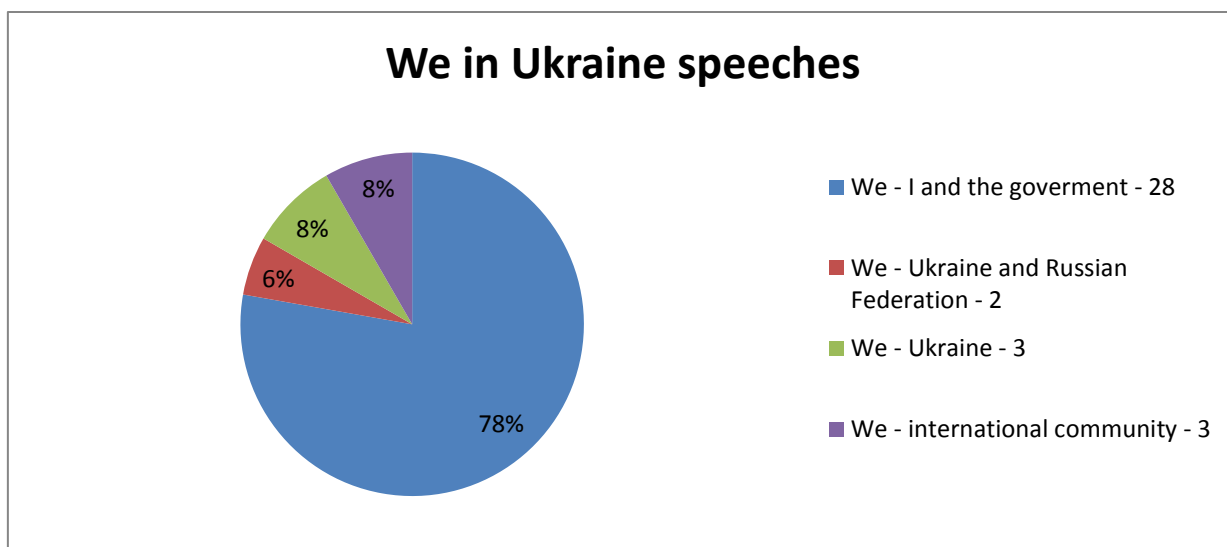
Last category is *I as a politician*. This category was most frequent and it occurred 11 times throughout the speeches. As already mentioned in section 3, *I as a politician* can also be referred to as *I as a representative*. The reason behind it is that most of the instances occurred with the meaning of signposting within the speech. These are the most common cases: *What I am going to say now, as I said, I would like to reiterate, I shall now address, I would like to start by.* These cases indicate that the politician is speaking not as a person, but as a representative of the government/nation or politician who is delivering the speech. One of the examples best representing the meaning can be seen in the following sentence from UA − 3:

> (4) ***I** would like to start by expressing my Government's sorrow and deep condolences to all the Missions whose citizens were killed in the terrible crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.*

This example directly illustrates that he is delivering the speech on behalf of the Government. Also, with this indication that he is expressing his Government's sorrow and deep condolences he creates self and other between him and the Government. It distinguishes self from other and puts self in a mostly positive light (Håkansson, 2012: 11).

3.1.2. Pronoun We in Ukraine's speeches

Figure 2. Semantic referents of w*e* in Ukraine speeches

We in Ukraine speeches

- We - I and the goverment - 28
- We - Ukraine and Russian Federation - 2
- We - Ukraine - 3
- We - international community - 3

8% 8% 6% 78%

In Ukraine's speeches semantic referents of pronoun w*e* were mostly exclusive. Only 3 instances were inclusive and they were referring to the entire international community (United Nations) and as we can see from figure 2 it only occupied 8% of total instances. The Same amount of time occurred *we (exclusive) – Ukraine and Russian Federation,* slightly less, 2 times – *We (exclusive) – Ukraine.* The most common semantic referent was *we (exclusive) – I and the government.*

According to Van Dijk, vast usage of same pronominal choice depends on which reference group is most relevant for each argument, whether it is *we* in the West, *we* the people, *we* American citizens, *we* Democrats, *we* in the government, or indeed *we* the President (Van Dijk, 1995: 34). In this case, since the speech is delivered at Security Council and the speaker is representing its country/government he is excluding the audience and speaking exclusively on behalf of country/government and himself. For example (UA – 2):

(5) ***We*** *would like to be very clear and say that the military presence has been clearly identified. This is a Russian military presence, with Russian number plates on its vehicles.* ***We*** *urge the Russian Federation to pull back its military forces deployed in Crimea to their barracks and to start real talks and negotiations in order to tackle this conflict.*

This example illustrates how Mr. Sergeyev is speaking on behalf of his government. From the first instance, we can see that pronoun *I* would be logical choice, since he is the one speaking. However, he uses *we* because he is representing his government. The reason behind such

usage of pronominal choice might be to show solidarity with his government. De Fina (1995: 385) defines it as a consistent indication by the Speaker of the existence of another agent as a principal of the speech, and a principal with whom he/she Signals (through nominal choice and continuity of reference) an organic (as opposed to a tactical) identification. Another reason might be to avoid subjectivity and to soften the statement in order not to sound so direct.

Semantic referent *we (exclusive) – Ukraine* is the category were speaker is indicating to the whole nation or people of Ukraine (also referred as patriotic *we* by Allen, 2006). Such ambiguous cases were the meaning was unclear whether it was the government or people of Ukraine were assigned to *We (exclusive) – I and the government.*

(6) *Russia has been trying to tell us how* we *should develop and what our constitutional order should be — what the next Constitution should look like. Everything was clearly stated to our people.*

The first sentence of example 6 (UA – 5) has ambiguous meaning, based on the sentence it is unclear whether *we* stands for *I and the government* or *We as people of Ukraine.* However, the last sentence clearly indicates that the speaker is referring to people of Ukraine. The reason behind such usage might be that the speaker wants to highlight his personal qualities such as responsible, liable and also to show that he cares for his people.

Exclusive category of *we – Ukraine and Russian Federation* occurred twice and it carries a function of bringing the countries together. The meaning behind such usage represents positive notion and showing nations as equals. For example (UA – 2):

(7) *The Russian Federation has violated a number of bilateral and multilateral treaties that were signed between Ukraine and Russia.* **We** *strongly believe that Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that "all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations" is not questioned by anyone.* **We** *still believe that* **we** *have a chance to resolve this conflict in a peaceful manner, and* **we** *commend and praise the Ukrainian military that have refrained from the use of any force.*

After analyzing the paragraph we can see that the first, second and fourth instance is referring to the government of the Ukraine and the third instance refers to Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Inclusive cases of we as Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) said refers to an original source of a group including the speaker, listener and possibly some other people. But then it can be divided into two subcategories called (a) an integrative use, which include both speaker and hearer(s), and (b) an expressive use, which is just as (a) but it also expresses solidarity.

(8) *Today, colleagues have presented some evidence of the deteriorating situation on the Ukrainian-Russian border. Every day during the month of July, **we** have observed such violations, including the shooting-down of Ukrainian jets.*

Example 8 (UA − 3) illustrates the expressive use. We can see that in the first sentence the speaker refers to the audience as colleagues and in the second sentence he introduces the pronoun *we*, thus including the audience and the speaker. This symbolizes unity between the speaker and the audience and solidarity.

3.2. Results in United Kingdom speeches

All the speeches were delivered by Sir Mark Lyall Grant. As table 1 presents, the corpus of United Kingdom speeches was one of the smallest compared to the other great countries. However, despite the small corpus it had 51 occurrences of the personal pronoun *we*. Normalized frequency shows that United Kingdom had the highest frequency of personal pronoun *we* among all the countries. It occurred 143,2 times (after normalization). On the other hand, personal pronoun *I* had one of the lowest frequency among the countries - four in total, same as United States and fourth after normalization.

3.2.1. Pronoun I in United Kingdom speeches

Contrary to Ukraine, personal pronoun *I* did not play significant part in United Kingdom's speeches. It only occurred four times, three of them were in *I in acknowledgments* and one instances was *I as a politician.* All the cases were straight forward with no ambiguity. For example in UK − 4:

(9) ***I** would like to warmly thank Australia for its leadership in steering the resolution to adoption. **I** would also like to acknowledge the presence here today of the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.*

In this example, through such words as *thank* and *acknowledge* speaker clearly states his recognition and gratitude towards the other United Nation members.

Also, a direct example is of the referent *I as a politician* (UK − 1):

(10)   *As the Permanent Representative of Russia has suggested that some European Union (EU) member States were somehow involved in making the crisis in Ukraine worse, **I** should like to set out clearly my Government's position.*

Example 10 illustrates how politician is referring to himself as a representative of the Government.

The reason behind such rare usage of first personal singular might be that the speaker is avoiding personal involvement. By avoiding the usage of *I* he avoids the subjectivity and without subjectivity speech is less likely to raise a conflict.

3.2.2. Pronoun We in United Kingdom speeches

Figure 3. Semantic referents of *we* in United Kingdom speeches
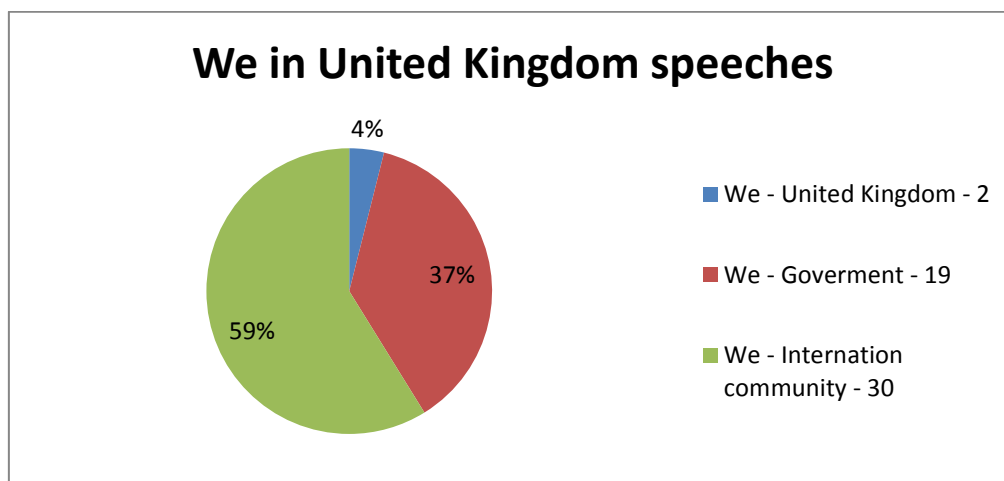
United Kingdom has the highest ratio of pronoun *we* occurrence in speeches among the countries. However, there were only 3 categories of different referents in total and two of them were the most dominant – *we – I and the government* and *we* – International community. *The exclusive – inclusive* ratio was roughly similar. *Inclusive*, where pronoun *we* includes both the speaker and the audience were 59% of the instances and *exclusive* were pronoun excludes the audience – 41%.

Starting from the least used referent were the speaker referred to as *We as a Nation (United Kingdom)* it was used twice throughout the five speeches. As mentioned in previous section this category consists of cases where the speaker indicates that he is speaking on behalf of the nation or the people. These cases were easy to identify and they had no ambiguous meanings. As we can see from example 11 (UK – 3):

(11)   *In the United Kingdom, **we** are mourning the loss of at least nine British citizens who were passengers on the flight.*

Next category was *we (exclusive) – I and the government*. It occurred 19 times in United Kingdom speeches. Most of the cases were used to encounter or confront Russian Federation. For example (UK – 1):

(12)   ***We** condemn any act of aggression against Ukraine. **We** have therefore sought an immediate and full explanation from the Russian Federation for the decision to authorize military action on sovereign Ukrainian soil, and of the basis for it under international law.*

As example 12 shows the speaker is avoiding pronoun *I* to reduce subjectivity. In this argument where he confronts Russian Federation he chose the safe variant *we*. With first person plural statements looks reported and less likely to arise the conflict.

The last semantic referent was *we (inclusive) – international community*. This category was the most common. Such high number of same referents was caused by rhetorical device – repetition. Throughout the speeches there were a number of cases where a similar or the same parallel structure was used. The number of same parallelisms varied from two, three to five times. For example (UK – 2):

(13)   ***We** all agree that Ukraine needs our support in this time of transition. **We** all acknowledge that Ukraine has a pressing need for reform, for improvements to its political culture, for political stability and inclusiveness, and for an end to corruption. **We** all support the call for investigations into the violence of the past three months, **we** all back fresh elections under international observation, and **we** all agree on the importance of protecting minority rights.*

Repetitions of the same word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences are called – Anaphora (Harris, 2009: 15). The main function of this repetitive parallel structure is used to strengthen the argument. A carefully planned and executed repetition strategy can increase the effectiveness of your message (Lewis, 2016). The communicative strategy of over-inclusion enables a speaker to extend the referential domain of their arguments from self's beliefs and ideologies to that of a larger and more relevant social group, for instance a political party and its ideology, or even society as a whole (Bull & Fetzer, 2008: 19).

However, frequent repetition or repetition not well chosen can have the opposite effect. Harris (2009: 15) argued that the speaker who uses too much repetition can sound rhetorical and bombastic. Lewis (2016) suggested that too much repetition has an adverse impact and can lead to stronger disagreement with the argument being made. As a solution, speaker should use moderate or low levels of repetition, low to moderate levels of repetition within a message tend to create greater agreement with the message, along with greater recall (Lewis, 2016). Such strategy was adopted in UK - 4. For example:

(14) ***We have all seen*** *the images of the blackened earth and the twisted metal.* ***We have all seen*** *those countless wooden stakes, each tied with a piece of white cloth fluttering in the cornfields of eastern Ukraine, marking the place of a family member or loved one.* ***We owe it to*** *the memory of those 298 victims to ensure that their remains are treated with dignity and respect.* ***We owe it to*** *them to find out exactly what happened on the afternoon of 17 July.*
<...>
*What **we have witnessed** over the past days has been sickening and appalling beyond belief. **We have seen** separatist thugs trampling over the site of the crash, showing no respect for the bodies of the victims, rifling through their belongings and even looting their personal effects.*

As we can see this example illustrates how speaker used three different parallelisms which were repeated twice. It can be interpreted as a means to create greater effect on the audience as well as to highlight the key phrase. All of the cases were expressive, showing solidarity with the audience.

3.3. Results in United States speeches

United States corpus was one of the biggest compared to the other countries and the speeches were delivered by United States representative – Ms. Power. However, first person pronoun diversity was one of the smallest. Personal pronoun *I* occurred only four times which is the same as United Kingdom, but after normalization (as per Table 1) we can see that the frequency in United States speeches is 6,7 compared to United Kingdom's 11,2 which makes United States the country which used personal pronoun *I* the least. On the other hand, personal pronoun *We* had one of the highest frequency – 76 in total and 127,3 after normalization, only lower to United Kingdom's - 143,2.
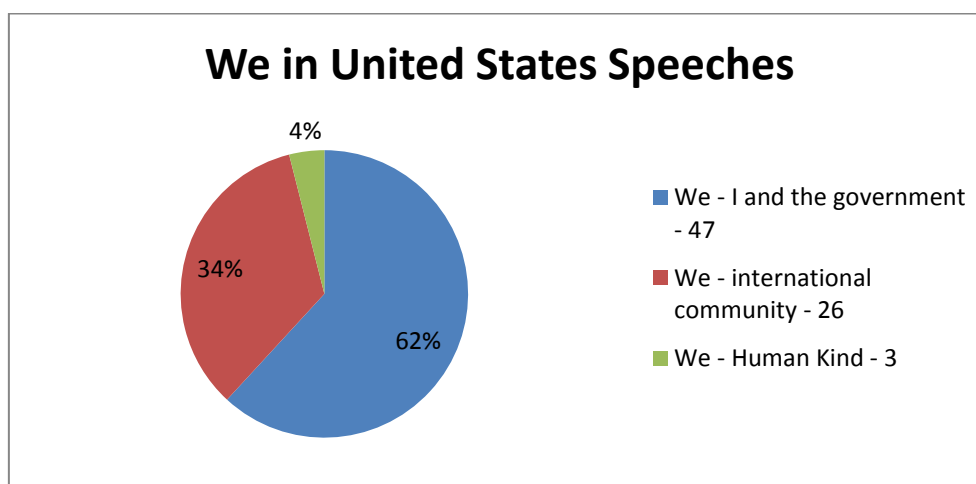
3.3.1 Pronoun I in United States Speeches

Personal pronoun *I* did not have any differences in United States speeches. It was used four times and all of the instances had same semantic reference – *I as a politician.* There were no ambiguous cases, they were straight forward and they had no hidden meaning. These pronouns were used as a signpost or explanation during the speech. These cases were: ***I** would like to take a moment to respond to the* comments; in *closing, **I** would like to reiterate my Government's belief*; ***I** just want to be clear in response to my Russian colleague.* There were only one ambiguous cases, it was (US – 5):

(15)   ***I** assure him that **we** will be the first to take notice, and it will actually be very easy to see whether or not the commitments are being met.*

This example illustrates how through personal pronoun *I* and verb *assure* the speaker gives a strong personal opinion which should classify this instance as *I as a person.* However, the second pronoun *we* indicates that she is speaking on behalf of the government as a representative. Thus, separate category was not created for United States.

3.3.2 Pronoun We in United States Speeches

Figure 4. Semantic referents of *we* in United States Speeches

During the analysis of *we* in United States speeches new semantic referent category was found. The category is *we – human kind.* It is self-explanatory, it refers to all the people in general and it took place in US – 4 speech.

(16)   *That has not happened. Instead, armed thugs have walked around the site with little regard for where they step. **We** have literally heard the sound of debris, all of it*

*evidence that needs to be carefully preserved, crunching beneath their feet. **We** have seen separatists moving human remains around and carting away evidence from the site. All around the world this weekend, people of all cultures and faiths had similar reactions to seeing the footage of the separatists damaging the site. "Stop, those are people! Those are peoples' lives!", **we** all said.*

Throughout the paragraph we can see that the meaning of pronoun *we* is ambiguous. It is not clear to whom the speaker is referring, whether it is government, nation, international community or people in general. However, the last sentence reveals that the true meaning is people in general and proves again that the key point during the analysis of pronouns is context. As Benveniste said personal pronouns are empty signs that only become full when used in actual discourse. The purpose of this semantic referent can be interpreted as an effort to appeal to the human heart to gain sympathy and support.

The most used referent by United States was *we (exclusive) – I and the government*. It occurred 47 times with a total of 62% of all instances. Since Ms. Power used personal pronoun *I* 4 times and personal pronoun *we* 47 it can be seen that she has taken "institutional identity". An "institutional identity" is achieved when a person speaks on behalf of, or as a representative of, an institution. In other words, the speaker takes on the participation status of a representative of a particular institution. In the context of political interviews, taking on an "institutional identity" typically means the IE (interviewee) speaks as a representative of his/her political party. However, taking on an "institutional identity" is not limited to speaking on behalf of a political party; an IE can set his/herself up as the representative of any group (Bramley, 2001: 77). The pragmatic function of this "institutional identity" can be a powerful representation of the interviewee's political party (in this case, the speaker's government) or to deflect individual attention from the speaker (Bramley, 2001: 76). Example can be seen in US-3:

(17)   *Yesterday **we** were all shocked by the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17. All 298 people aboard — 283 passangers and 15 crew members — were killed. As **we** stared at the passanger list yesterday, **we** saw next to three of the passangers' names a capital "I". As **we** now know, that letter stands for "infant". To the families and friends of the victims, it is impossible to find words to express our condolences. **We** can only commit to them that **we** will not rest until **we** find out what happened.*

This example represents how the speaker is speaking on behalf of the whole government. First sentence says: *we were all shocked*, it is subjective and unrealistic, but it creates sympathy for

the United States government as well as empathy. Other clauses: *as we stared, we saw, as we now know* are also an unrealistic impersonation of the government with a similar effect.

An ambiguous case is example 18 (US – 5):

> (18) **We** *are caught in a deadly feedback loop. International leaders engage in rigorous, exhaustive negotiations to get Russia to commit to peace — in Geneva, in Normandy, in Minsk in September, in Berlin in February, again in Minsk on 12 February when the implementations were signed, and now in New York — yet Russia's commitments have no bearing on the actions of its soldiers and the separatists they back on the ground.*

In this example it is not clear to whom the speaker is referring to. It could be the United States government, but it could also be the whole international community. One way it can be interpreted is that the speaker is letting the audience to decide whether to be part of this group or not. Also, it can be interpreted as *we (exclusive) – I and the government* (to which this case was assigned). The second sentence refers to international leaders as *they*, thus creating the pattern of *us* vs. *them.* Therefore, this instance was assigned to this category.

The last category is *we (inclusive) international community.* In total it occurred 26 times and was the second most frequent referent in United States speeches. Most of these instances had no ambiguity and were used to describe collective act which took place at the meeting, thus the use of this inclusive referents were expressive. These are the main cases: *but there is one party from which* **we** *have heard too little condemnation, why did* **we** *still feel the need to meet today in order to demand one? As* **we** *take that step,* **we** *are joined by the Dutch and Australian Ministers, the resolution* **we** *have adopted provides clear directions*.

In United Kingdom's speeches vast usage of inclusive pronoun *we* was due to repetition. In United States speeches repetitions were not frequent. One of the examples is from US – 2:

> (19) **If we do not come** *together,* **if we do not send** *a clear a signal of our shared commitments,* **we will live** *with the consequences in Crimea and well beyond.* **We will look** *back on this moment and wish* **we** *had come together with a unified voice before the consequences became dire and innocent lives were lost.*

This example shows how the speaker with the help of repetition enforces her argument. Ms. Power creates contrast between present tense (*If we do not come)* and future tense (*we will live)* to represent negative reaction and finishes her statement with the argument which needed to be done (*we had come together)*. By doing so, she encourages the audience to participate.

3.4. Results in Russian Federation speeches

The Russian Federation had the largest corpus in five meetings. The main reason for that is that it is believed that Russia had provoked the conflict in Ukraine. Throughout the meetings it can be seen that most of the countries accuse Russian Federation. As a response Russian representative Mr. Churkin had to insert comments and responses to the other countries. That effected the use of personal pronouns as well. In total there were 35 instances of pronoun *I* which was one of the highest compared to the other countries. Also, pronoun *we* 64 times, but after normalization, we can see in table 1, that it was fourth by frequency.

3.4.1 Pronoun I in Russian Federation speeches

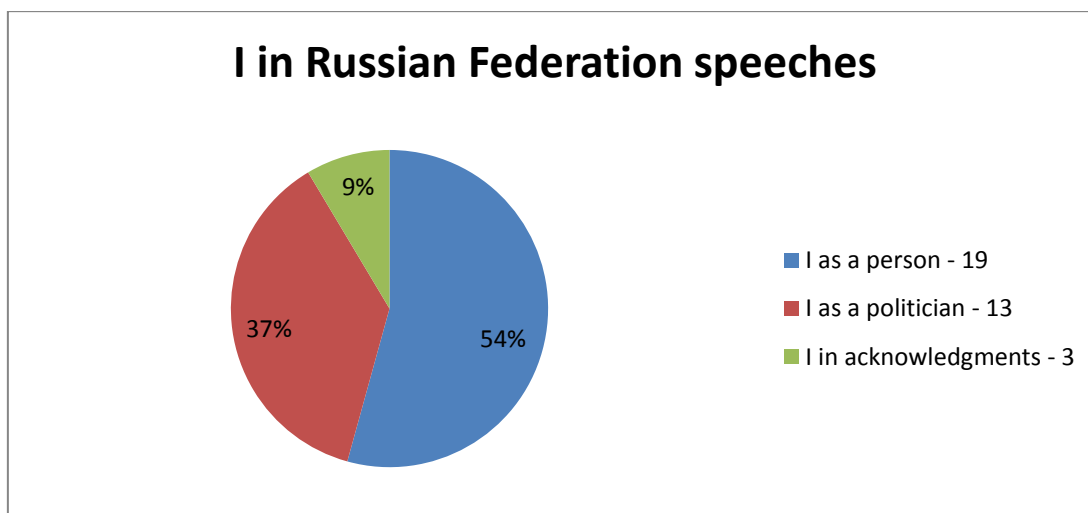Figure 5. Semantic referents of *I* in Russian Federation speeches

Figure 5 shows the distribution of semantic references of personal pronoun *I*. There were a total of three semantic referent categories found in Russian Federation speeches: *I as a person, I as a politician* and *I in acknowledgments*. The most frequent was *I as a person* and it occurred 19 times. Throughout the analysis only Russian Federation had the highest frequency of *I* as a person, this shows that Russia's representative Mr. Churkin was very subjective. The second most frequent category was *I as a politician* with 13 occurrences. As already mentioned this was impacted by speech alterations with comments and responses the speaker had to make. The least frequent category was *I in acknowledgments* with 3 occurrences.

Starting with most the frequent category *I as a person*, it had most occurrences in RU – 1 and RU 5 speeches. This category is used usually used to express opinions and belief, but it also can be used to express power and authority. That can be seen in example 20 (RU – 1):

(20)   *In recent reports that **I** have received, including the statement issued by the press representative of the President of the Russian Federation, the President of the Russian Federation has not taken a decision on the use of armed forces on the territory of Ukraine.*

This example illustrates how Mr. Churkin is drawing attention to himself and showing that he is a man in power and authority. He is the one who is receiving reports and he is the one who received the report from the President of the Russian Federation. Similar example is 21 (RU – 5):

(21)   *I would very much like to have left the last word to my Lithuanian colleague; **I** would have loved to, if **I** could. **I** am probably abusing my speaking time, but after what she said **I** cannot help but respond with a couple of words. "Capitulate one's territory." Has the full meaning of the Minsk agreements been understood?*

In this example the speaker is presenting himself as a humble, responsible politician who wishes with his remaining time to fulfill his speech goals. However, we can see that the last sentence shows the true purpose of the message. He is engaging the opponent into conflict/argument. Thus, creating his identity in front of the opponent as strong and powerful politician and in front of the audience he is highlighting his positive features.

Furthermore, *I as a politician* was mostly used as a signposting technique to elaborate his speech for the audience and to create a bridge between the speech and the response or comment to the previous arguments. These were the main cases of *I as a politician* with the pragmatic function of signposting: *I must note, I repeat, I will just reiterate the facts, I therefore draw the Council's attention, I will now quote the statement, I shall respond.* Instances with pragmatic function of response can be seen in example 22 and 23 (RU 5 & 4):

(22)   *I should also mention the expression used by Ms. Power in referring to an "upside-down world".*

(23)   *I was going to conclude there, but **I** have an additional comment to make.*

I in acknowledgments did not have any distinctive cases from other countries. These instances were used to as gratitude and acknowledgment with the function of forming positive/ humble politician's identity. For example (RU – 1):

(24)   *I would like to thank Mr. Eliasson for his briefing and **I** support his conclusion that, in the current situation, cool heads must prevail.*

3.4.2 Pronoun We in Russian Federation speeches

Figure 6. Semantic referents of *we* in Russian Federation speeches
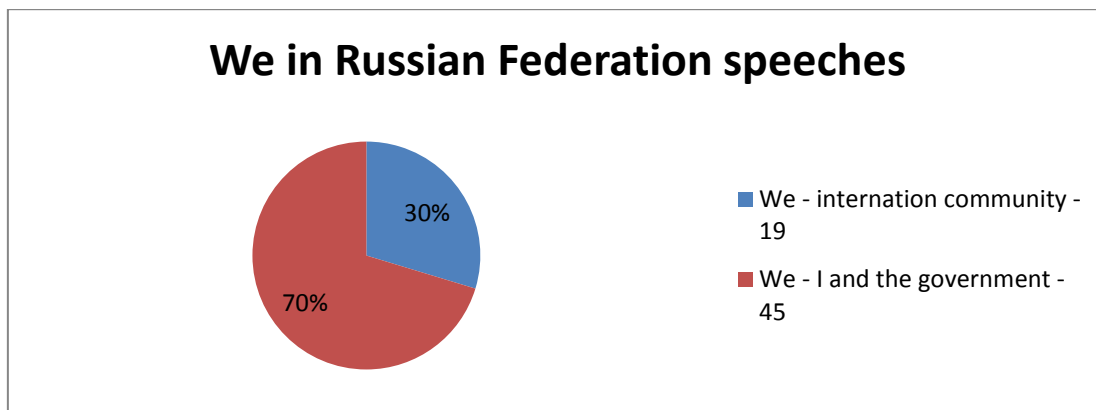
As we can see from Figure 6, there were only two semantic referents in Russian Federation speeches. That is *we (inclusive) – international community* and *we (exclusive) – I and the government.* Referent of international community occurred 19 times and took place of 30% of all instances while referents of government occurred 45 times with 70%.

As mentioned in the introduction, by applying the exclusive personal pronoun we, a politician may wish to share the load of responsibility (Karapetjana, 2011: 43). The Russian representative used personal pronoun *I* to engage into the argument and as a contrast he used personal pronoun *we (exclusive)* to equivocate and to share the load of responsibility. Example 25 from RU - 5 represents how the speaker shares responsibility and equivocates from the accusation:

> (25) *I should also mention the expression used by Ms. Power in referring to an "upside-down world". She accused Russia of starting the crisis, but did **we** topple the legally elected President? Throughout all of the events that took place in Ukraine a year ago, Russia continually called for a bloodless political solution. **We** supported the 21 February agreement. **We** then insisted on its implementation, even after the lawfully elected President had been toppled.*

In this example United States representative accuse the Russian Federation of violating all agreements and escalate the violence in Ukraine. The Russian representative responds with counter claiming that they were supporting agreements, but also equivocating from the fact that they are violating those agreements.

Most of the cases of inclusive *we* were used to agree with the common opinion. This can be interpreted as a way to sympathize with the audience to create solidarity. For example (RU – 1):

(26)   ***We*** *need to go back to the agreement of 21 February and establish a national unity Government, and* ***we*** *need to put an end to attempts to converse with our ethnic or political opponents in the language of force.*

This example illustrates how by including audience into the argument it creates solidarity (expressive use). Also, parallelism *we need to* enforce the argument for more positive effect.

3.5. Results in France speeches

The corpus of France speeches was the smallest of all five countries. However, the frequency of pronouns was not. France speeches took a middle place by frequency compared to the others. Western countries – United Kingdom and United states had the highest frequency of pronoun *we* and eastern countries – Russian Federation and Ukraine had the highest frequency of pronoun *I*. France was in the middle in both categories (after normalization). In total there were 12 instances of pronoun *I* and 34 instances of pronoun *we* throughout the corpus. Speeches were delivered by Mr. Araud (FR – 1, FR – 2 and FR – 3), Mr. Bertoux (FR – 4) and Mr. Delattre (FR – 5).

3.5.1 I in France speeches

Figure 7. Semantic referents of *I* in France speeches
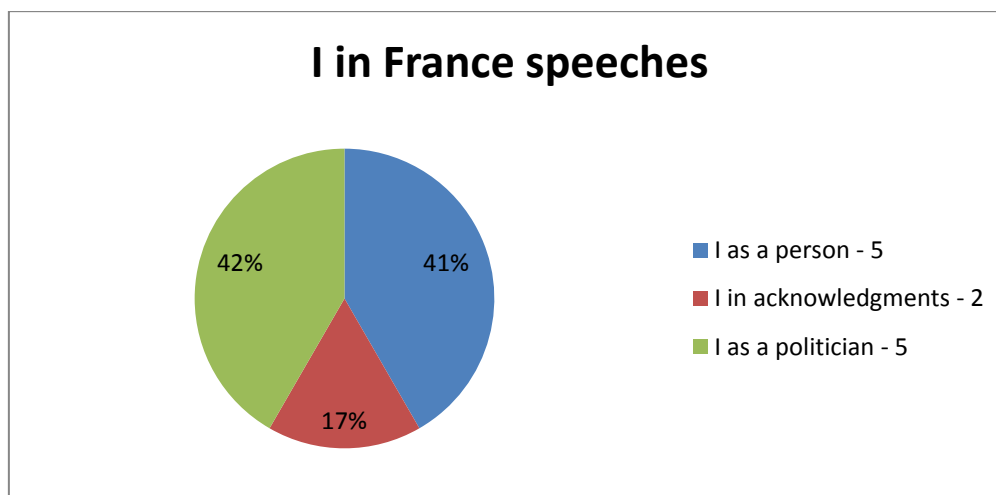
In speeches made by France there were three types of categories: *I as a person, I in acknowledgments* and *I as a politician.* The least used category was *I in acknowledgments* which occurred twice. Same amount of times occurred *I as a person* and *I in acknowledgments* – 5.

Throughout the whole corpora most of the cases of *I as a person* were used to express speakers' beliefs or opinions. In France's speeches the main aspect was to define personal qualities or personal agendas. For example (FR – 2):

> (27)   **I** *play chess pretty badly, but* **I** *see here above all the immaturity of a player who cannot help but try to take the rook and ends up losing the game.*

In example 27 we can see that through the use of personal pronoun *I* speaker expresses his personal skills. The first clause highlights his poor personal skills and with the second clause he shows that he is still able to see through deception. This technique is used to increase the significance of the argument.

> (28)   **I** *wish to extend my deepest condolences to all the Permanent Representatives of the countries that lost citizens in this tragic event.* **I** *would like in particular to extend our condolences to our colleagues from the Netherlands and Malaysia.* **We** *also mourn with the people of the Netherlands.*

This example (FR – 3) illustrates how the speaker expresses his personal feelings in order to draw the attention and sympathy from the audience to himself. The first instance shows *I as a person* highlighting his personal willingness to express condolences and in the second sentence personal pronoun changes his reference to politician side of the speaker who is no longer expresses his but governments condolences.

I in acknowledgments did not have any distinctive cases. It was used to express gratitude and appreciation. As seen in example (FR – 2):

> (29)   **I** *welcome the dignified statement we just heard from the Prime Minister of Ukraine.*

The last referent, *I as a politician* was mainly used to elaborate the flow of the speech or to signpost. These were the main phrases representing that: *I even cited, I say, I reiterate.* However, there were cases there it was used in a parallel structure to emphasize the argument. For example (FR – 2):

(30)   *If the illegal referendum is held on Sunday, if Russia responds unfavourably, as it has announced it would, we will be forced to let Russia suffer all the political and economic consequences. **I say "forced" because we** do not want to follow a path leading backwards. **I say "forced" because we** will not have a choice in the face of such a major violation of international law on our continent.*

As example 30 illustrates, the speaker puts emphasis on repetition that the audience would reflect on the idea that economic sanctions are unwanted.

3.5.2 We in France speeches

Figure 8. Semantic referents of *we* in France speeches
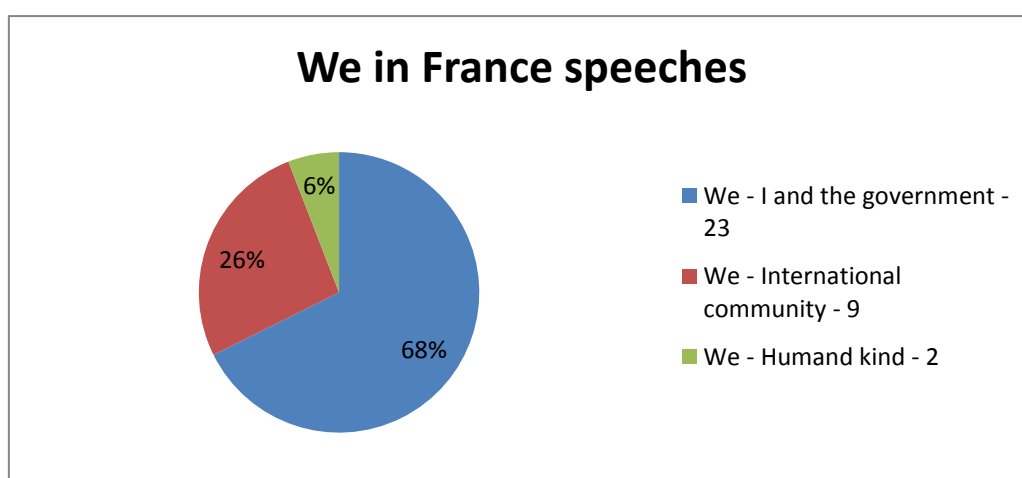
Similarly to the first person singular, *we* had three semantic referents. The most frequent was *we (exclusive) - I and the government* with a total of 23 instances. The second referent by frequency was *we (inclusive) – international community with* 9 instances and last referent was *we – human kind* which occurred twice.

The major part of *we* instances were exclusive and referring to the government of France – 68%. The reason behind it was that all the speakers were adopting institutional identity. With institutional identity the load of responsibility is shared and the level of subjectivity is minimum: this lowers the chance of creating a conflict. For example (FR – 4):

(31)   ***We*** *would like to express our grave alarm about the fact that reports available to us continue to indicate repeated obstruction by the separatists. **We** demand that the disaster site no longer be profaned, that it not be altered and that it not be manipulated. The revolting, shameful and, ultimately, inhuman actions must stop.*

Through the use of the exclusive pronoun the demand in this example is less direct. The verb has strong and clear meaning, but the subject *we* is not the one who uttered the sentence, it is him plus the government. Therefore the demand is less likely to cause conflicts since it is not entirely his.

The analysis of the inclusive personal pronoun had few main effects. One of them was to create solidarity and unity with the audience (expressive use). These cases were: *I welcome the dignified statement **we** just heard from the Prime Minister of Ukraine*, h*ow can **we** imagine reconciliation between the spoiler and the dispossessed, **we** have gathered to act, **we** owe it to the families*. These examples show how the speaker includes the audience to create shared experience and responsibility thus creating solidarity. Another effect inclusive referents had were to emphasize the argument (integrative use). For example (FR – 2):

(32)   ***Are we not aware that*** *certain independent States had been conquered by the Russian Empire before Crimea?* ***Are we not aware that*** *there are Russian and Russian-speaking minorities everywhere across that space?*

This example shows how with the parallel structure the speaker emphasizes that the audience and the speaker are aware of the past crimes of the Russian Federation. Thus creating shared knowledge, unity and providing confidence to act.

4. Conclusion

The analysis showed that studying pronouns is the key point in understanding political speeches. Through the use of different pronouns politicians can easily persuade as well as equivocate. Therefore, the aim of this analysis was to find out the key features of different politicians from different countries, to find out their most common semantic referents, most frequent used pronouns and the purpose behind the usage.

Among all five countries there were different cultural features in quantitative and qualitative analysis. Some of them had similarities, some of them differences. One feature was applicable to all of the countries. The feature which was common to all the countries was the same as the hypothesis – that every country will use *we* more frequently than *I*. Differences in frequency were such that eastern countries were more fond of using first personal pronoun *I* while western countries were exclusively only using *we.* The "middleman" in the analysis was France which used *I* more frequently than the United States and the United Kingdom but less frequently than Ukraine and Russian Federation. Same situation was with pronoun *we.* The most frequent referents of personal pronoun *I* were *I as a politician (*United States, United Kingdom and Ukraine) and *I as a person* (Russian Federation). France again was in the middle with both referents used equally. The most frequent semantic referents of *we* were *we (exclusive) – I and the government* (Ukraine, United States, Russian Federation and France) and *we (inclusive) – international community* (United Kingdom). The purpose of exclusive referent usage is that most of the speakers took institutional identity and spoke on behalf of the government. In the case of Russian Federation it was used to equivocate and to share the responsibility with the government. Inclusive referent was used to show solidarity with the Security Council or strengthen the argument.

To conclude, the use of pronouns needs to be investigated further. They were widely analyzed in interviews and debates. Speeches did not get such wide attention. Special consideration should receive cultural analysis, since the current analysis revealed that different parts of the continent use pronouns differently, especially in different languages. With the cultural and political background the true meaning of the speech can be revealed.

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6. Summary in Lithuanian

Asmeniniai įvardžiai yra plačiai naudojami politiniame diskurse. Pagrindinė to priežastis - jų lankstumas, kuris padeda politikams išvengti konkretumo. Asmeniniu įvardžių naudojimas buvo plačiai nagrinejamas pokalbiuose ir debatuose, tačiau politinės kalbos vis dar nėra plačiai aprašytos moksliniuse darbuose. Būtent dėls šios prižasties yra svarbu tęsti šią tradiciją.

Šiame darbe buvo išnagrinėtos 25 kalbos, po penkias kiekvienai šaliai: Jungtinei Karalystei, Rusijai, JAV, Ukrainai ir Prancūzijai. Šio darbo tikslas buvo išsiaiškinti, kurie pirmojo asmens įvardžiai yra naudojami dažniausiai, kokie jų referentai ir kokia jų funkcija.

Analizė parodė, kad labiausiai naudojamas įvardis - *mes*. Dažiniausias vienaskaitos pirmojo asmens referentas yra *as politikas* arba *as žmogus*, daugiskaitos – *mes (išskiriantysis) – aš ir vyriausybė*. Pagrindinė šių įvardžių panaudojimo funkcija – demonstruoti solidarumą ir išvengti subjektyvumo.