

---

**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Examining the Employment of Indirect Communication by Donald Trump: Analyzing Verbal and Non-Verbal Strategies**

**Nazerke Kaldybekova<sup>1</sup> ✉ and Kuliash Duisekova<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PhD student, Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages (Kazakhstan, Almaty)

<sup>2</sup>Doctor of Philology, Professor, Eurasian National University named after L. N. Gumilyov (Kazakhstan, Astana)

**Corresponding Author:** Nazerke Kaldybekova, **E-mail:** [nazerkekaldybekova.13@gmail.com](mailto:nazerkekaldybekova.13@gmail.com)

---

**| ABSTRACT**

Indirect communication is a fascinating aspect of human interaction, offering valuable insights into the complexities of human behavior, persuasion, and the influence of communication styles on public perception. Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States, employed various verbal and non-verbal strategies to convey his messages indirectly, capturing the attention of researchers, journalists, and the public. This article aims to explore Trump's use of indirect communication techniques, examining their impact on public perception and providing insights into the intricacies of his communication style. Drawing upon the work of researchers and scholars in the field, the article synthesizes theoretical frameworks and concrete examples from Trump's speeches and interviews. By analyzing verbal techniques such as hyperbole, ambiguity, sarcasm, loaded language, and non-verbal cues including facial expressions, gestures, and personal style, the article sheds light on Trump's communication style and its influence on public opinion. The article contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of Trump's use of indirect communication, offering practical and theoretical implications for understanding the dynamics of political rhetoric and its role in shaping public discourse. The findings from this investigation provide valuable insights into the complexities of indirect communication and its relevance in contemporary political contexts. The article also considers the impact of Trump's communication style on public discourse, political rhetoric, and the broader understanding of indirect communication in politics. It employs a qualitative approach, combining descriptive and interpretative methods, to analyze the data and present a comprehensive understanding of Trump's indirect communication. The article acknowledges the limitations of subjectivity in interpreting communication techniques and the reliance on publicly available sources, making an effort to include diverse viewpoints to provide a balanced analysis. Overall, the article offers a unique and in-depth exploration of Trump's use of indirect communication, contributing to the understanding of political communication and its impact on public perception. It presents new insights and perspectives on the subject matter, making it a novel contribution to the field.

**| KEYWORDS**

Indirect communication, verbal tactics, non-verbal tactics, emotional appeals, communication style, impact.

**| ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 01 November 2023

**PUBLISHED:** 13 November 2023

**DOI:** 10.32996/jpda.2023.2.2.3

---

### **1. Introduction**

We are never entirely free from social contacts in daily life. Everyone needs interaction to socialize with others because we are social creatures. In this instance, productive interactions require that everyone speak the same language. The success of an interaction will be determined by how well you comprehend the language. Everyone exchanges knowledge and ideas through communication with others. The community's function depends on communication. A pleasant social environment can be developed through communication. To connect with the environment and other people, a person or group of people, an organization, or a community must create and use information.

**Copyright:** © 2023 the Author(s). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). Published by Al-Kindi Centre for Research and Development, London, United Kingdom.

The majority of communication is verbal, which both parties can understand. Assume that your partner is unable to communicate verbally. In that instance, specific body gestures like smiling, shaking the head, and shrugging the shoulders can still be used to communicate. This form of communication is referred to as nonverbal language. Of course, each communication actor needs to be well-versed in the communication process.

This is done in order for the interlocutor to properly transmit and comprehend the thoughts or information in question. Humans are unable to communicate their ideas without language. Language is therefore a vital tool in human life. Language is a reflection of a person's thinking; the more proficient a person is with language, the clearer and more vivid his thoughts will be. Only through practice, and lots of practice, can skills be learned and perfected. Thinking skills are improved through language practice. To obtain a deeper understanding, we also need to recognize how closely related successful speaking and effective communication skills are. To effectively communicate an idea, one must be adept at adjusting their style to the situation. It will be extremely susceptible to misunderstanding if you don't adapt to the situation. In this situation, pragmatics is essential for delivering ideas in accordance with context.

The study of pragmatics focuses on how language is used in relation to its context. If the context is known, the language's meaning can be comprehended. Pragmatic limitations are guidelines for language use that relate forms and meanings to speaker intent, context, and circumstance. A person who is adept at pragmatics can effectively communicate ideas or facts. There is an inferred meaning that lies behind sounds, words, and phrases that is very reliant on when, where, who is speaking, who is the interlocutor, and under what circumstances.

Politicians frequently use indirect communication as a tactical technique to negotiate the challenging political terrain. First of all, it enables them to carefully control public opinion. Politicians can tailor their statements to diverse audiences while providing room for interpretation by employing indirect language. Indirect communication also gives politicians a line of defense known as credible denial. They can negotiate delicate subjects without fully committing to a certain stance by refraining from making formal declarations or pledges. Last but not least, indirect communication enables politicians to reduce the dangers of direct communication. Politics is a field where skepticism and division are commonplace. Politicians can reduce the likelihood that their words will be easily construed negatively or exploited against them by employing indirect language. They can carefully tailor their words to prevent backlash and keep support from various factions within their own party or from the general public as a result of their circumspect attitude, which helps them maintain political capital.

Indirect communication is a form of rhetoric used by presenters to express a message or argument without explicitly asserting it. This approach employs various techniques, including metaphor, allusion, and implication, to guide the audience to the desired conclusion. In politics, advertising, and other persuasive forms of interaction, indirect communication is prevalent.

## 2. Literature Review

Indirect communication is a complex and multifaceted field of study that has been investigated by numerous academicians from diverse academic disciplines. This article will focus on Russian, Kazakhstani, and international scholars who have made notable contributions to the field of indirect communication (Tikhonova, 2019).

Russian scholars who have contributed to the study of indirect communication include Dmitry G. Gromov, Elena Yu. Khramtsova, and Irina V. Gvozdeva. Gromov is known for his research on nonverbal communication, including facial expressions, gestures, and body language. Khramtsova has focused on the role of indirect speech acts in communication, whereas Gvozdeva has studied indirect communication in the context of intercultural communication.

Gulsim Kairzhanova and Saule Kassymova are two Kazakhstani researchers who have played a huge role in the study of indirect communication. Kairzhanova has studied indirect speech acts in Kazakh language and culture, while Kassymova has investigated indirect communication in the context of business negotiations in Kazakhstan.

Herbert H. Clark, Richard J. Gerrig, and Penelope Brown are three foreign scholars who have made significant contributions to the study of indirect communication. Clark is acknowledged for his contributions to the theory of common ground in communication, which include indirect speech acts. Gerrig has examined the role of context in indirect communication, whereas Brown has examined how language is used to convey civility and indirectness across cultures (Satybaldina; Ismagulova, 2021).

## 3. Theoretical Framework

In general, the study of indirect communication is a complex and varied field that has been investigated by academicians from a variety of academic disciplines. Whether they are Russian, Kazakhstani, or foreign, these authors have made significant contributions to our comprehension of the complexities of communication and the use of indirect strategies to achieve specific objectives.

Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States, is one of the well-known individuals who frequently used indirect communication strategies in the context of political communication. Trump's communication style has drawn the interest of academics, journalists, and the general public alike and has been the topic of intensive examination and critique.

Trump has used a variety of verbal and nonverbal techniques to subtly communicate his thoughts throughout his political career. Hyperbole, ambiguity, loaded language, and non-verbal indicators like gestures, facial expressions, and personal flair were all part of his distinctive communication style. Trump successfully engaged his audience, attracted media attention, and influenced public conversation by using these strategies.

This article aims exploring Donald Trump's unique use of indirect communication, focusing on both the verbal and nonverbal strategies he used to get his point through. We may learn a lot about the complexity of Trump's communication style and how well it works to persuade his audience by analyzing the numerous methods he uses and how they affect public opinion.

#### **4. Methodology**

To conduct this study on Donald Trump's use of indirect communication, a comprehensive analysis of various sources was undertaken. These sources included speeches, interviews, public appearances, and social media posts by Donald Trump during his tenure as the 45th President of the United States. Additionally, scholarly articles, academic research, and analyses from reputable sources were reviewed to provide theoretical frameworks and contextual insights.

The verbal communication strategies used by Trump were isolated through a careful analysis of his speeches, rally appearances, and public pronouncements. In order to comprehend how hyperbole, ambiguity, sarcasm, loaded language, and innuendo affect the transmission of subliminal information, examples of each were gathered and analysed.

Similar to this, Trump's nonverbal communication strategies were scrutinized. To spot patterns and their function in indirect communication, his social media presence, body language, gestures, dress preferences, and facial expressions were all investigated.

To provide a comprehensive analysis, a qualitative approach was employed, focusing on descriptive and interpretative methods. The identified examples of Trump's indirect communication were analyzed within the context of political communication, media discourse, and public perception.

By contrasting and comparing several examples of Trump's indirect communication, evaluating their influence on forming the public's opinion, and analyzing the criticisms and controversies surrounding his communication style, the results were interpreted.

The inherent subjectivity in assessing communication tactics and the study's reliance on publicly available materials are its two main limitations. However, in order to present a balanced perspective, efforts were made to make sure a wide variety of sources and viewpoints were included.

Overall, by analyzing the precise verbal and nonverbal strategies used by Donald Trump and their consequences in influencing public opinion, this study aims to contribute to the knowledge of indirect communication in political discourse.

Subtlety is one of the primary characteristics of indirect communication. Instead of directly asserting a message or argument, the speaker employs various rhetorical techniques to suggest or imply their intended meaning. A politician might, for instance, use a metaphor to cast their opponent in a negative light, without directly stating that their opponent is unqualified or unscrupulous. This indirect approach allows the speaker to impart their message without appearing excessively aggressive or confrontational.

Indirect communication is also characterized by its capacity to generate a sense of intrigue or mystique. By omitting certain details of the message, the speaker can stimulate the interest of the audience and encourage them to seek out additional information. This is especially effective in advertising, where marketers frequently use indirect communication to generate interest around a product (Kosheleva, 2020).

Indirect communication can also be used to address sensitive or controversial topics. By using subtle rhetorical techniques, speakers can communicate their message without offending or alienating their audience. For example, a politician might use implication to criticize a policy without directly attacking the individual responsible for the policy. Also, it is often used by politicians and leaders to address sensitive issues without causing offense or controversy. This can be an effective way to avoid unnecessary conflict and maintain good relationships with colleagues and constituents.

It is also possible to communicate indirectly about sensitive or controversial topics. By employing subtle techniques of rhetoric, speakers can convey their message without offending or alienating their audience. A politician, for instance, may use implication to disparage a policy without explicitly criticizing the individual responsible for the policy. Also, politicians and leaders frequently use it to address sensitive issues without causing offense or controversy. This can be a useful strategy for avoiding unwarranted conflict and maintaining positive relationships with colleagues and constituents (Vorobyova, 2020).

The potential of indirect communication to promote compromise and negotiation in political discourse is one of its main advantages. Politicians can avoid offending people and seek to create common grounds with those who hold different views by phrasing their ideas in a way that is less aggressive. This is particularly crucial when there are stark political or ideological differences between the opposing parties because it enables politicians to build partnerships and identify points of agreement that can serve as the starting point for future discussions.

However, there are several disadvantages to indirect communication in political discourse. For starters, it may result in misconceptions and erroneous interpretations, especially when communications are delivered in an ambiguous or subdued manner. Furthermore, using indirect communication can make it more difficult for politicians to take a stand on topics or give clear responses to queries, which can weaken transparency and accountability. As a result, while indirect communication can be a useful tool in political discourse, it's crucial to find a balance between nuance and clarity to ensure that messages are accurately transmitted and understood by all parties involved (Bekzhanova, 2022).

Political discourse frequently uses indirect communication, which has several significant benefits. Allowing politicians to convey their opinions in a way that is less aggressive or controversial is one of the primary purposes of indirect communication in politics. Politicians can communicate their ideas without explicitly criticizing their opponents by employing indirect language, which can serve to prevent confrontations and uphold a more polite conversation.

Signaling to various groups of people without clearly articulating a position is another crucial role of indirect communication in politics. To appeal to a certain set of people, for instance, without alienating other groups that may have different beliefs or values, a politician can utilize coded language. This enables politicians to win over more voters without alienating significant voting blocs (Musin, 2019).

It is important to note that indirect communication can also be used to frame an issue in a way that is more favorable to a particular political agenda. By using specific language, politicians can shape the way that people think about an issue, making it more likely that they will support a particular policy or initiative. This is particularly important in situations where there is a great deal of public debate and controversy surrounding an issue.

Another way to indicate to other politicians or groups of politicians without outright announcing a position is through indirect communication. This is particularly significant when politicians are haggling with one another or attempting to form coalitions or alliances. Politicians can express support for specific ideas or viewpoints by employing ambiguous language without endangering their reputation or alienating other constituencies (Kokoeva, 2020).

During his administration, Donald Trump, a divisive figure in modern politics, enthralled audiences with his unusual communication style. He was able to communicate his ideas well by using indirect communication methods, which frequently left room for interpretation and attracted a lot of media interest. This article examines Trump's verbal and nonverbal communication techniques, demonstrating their uses and effects.

#### **4.1 Verbal Indirect Communication Techniques:**

**Hyperbole and Exaggeration:** Trump's adeptness in using hyperbole and exaggeration helped him emphasize his points effectively. For instance, his famous slogan, "Make America Great Again," utilized hyperbole to convey his vision of restoring the nation's former glory.

**Ambiguity and Vagueness:** By employing ambiguous language and vague statements, Trump often left his audience speculating about his true intentions. This allowed him to maintain flexibility and adaptability in his messaging. Examples include statements like "Something big is going to happen" without providing explicit details.

**Sarcasm and Irony:** Trump frequently employed sarcasm and irony to make political points, highlight contradictions, or ridicule opponents. His use of sarcasm was evident in tweets such as, "Just tried watching Saturday Night Live - unwatchable! Totally biased, not funny and the Baldwin impersonation just can't get any worse. Sad."

**Loaded Language and Emotional Appeals:** The use of loaded language and emotional appeals was a prominent feature of Trump's communication style. He often used powerful words and phrases to evoke strong emotions and rally his base. For example, terms like "fake news" and "deep state" triggered negative connotations, influencing public perception.

**Insinuation and Innuendo:** Trump regularly used innuendo and insinuation to imply thoughts subtly rather than outright declaring them. He was able to make contentious assertions using this strategy while yet having a strong defense. His remarks about political rivals and electoral meddling are notable examples (Huang, 2021).

**Verbal Examples:**

Trump's remarks on immigration: "They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists."

During the 2016 election campaign, Trump's comment about Hillary Clinton's emails: "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing."

Trump's response to criticism: "Some people say I'm too brash or rude. I'm just telling it like it is!" (Tannen, 2019).

#### **4.2 Non-Verbal Indirect Communication Techniques:**

**Facial Expressions and Body Language:** Trump's facial expressions and body language played a significant role in conveying messages indirectly. His confident demeanor, hand gestures, and facial expressions, such as smirking or raising an eyebrow, often added subtext to his spoken words.

**Gestures and Hand Movements:** Trump's hand movements, including pointing, thumbs-up signs, and open palm gestures, were extensively used to emphasize key points and establish rapport with his audience. These non-verbal cues helped create a visual impact and enhance his message's memorability.

**Clothing and Personal Style:** Trump's unique personal style, including his signature hairstyle, long red ties, and tailored suits, became iconic and reinforced his public image. These visual cues served as non-verbal communication tools, projecting his brand and conveying a sense of authority and success.

**Social Media Presence:** Trump used social media sites, primarily Twitter, to interact with the general population. His use of expressive language, exclamation points, and unique capitalization in his tweets allowed him to circumvent traditional media and rapidly connect with a large audience (Abdullah; Rakhmawati, 2022).

**Non-Verbal Examples:**

Trump's iconic thumbs-up gesture during rallies, which symbolized approval and optimism.

His facial expressions, often featuring raised eyebrows and exaggerated expressions, to convey skepticism or disapproval.

Trump's deliberate use of bright red ties to command attention and project confidence.

### **5. Results**

Both Trump's indirect communication strategies' proponents and opponents were present. His ability to cut through conventional political jargon and speak straight to his supporters was respected. His communication methods, according to detractors, encouraged conflict, propagated falsehoods, and compromised the integrity of public dialogue.

Trump's use of ambiguous language drew some criticism. Detractors claimed that it caused divisiveness, misinformation, and decreased accountability. His use of coded language to appeal to particular groups while maintaining convincing denial was compared to dog whistling by some (Lauring; Selmer, 2020).

### **6. Conclusion**

The analysis of indirect communication in political discourse, as demonstrated by Donald Trump's communication approach, offers insightful knowledge into the complexity of political messaging and its influence on public opinion. This article has clarified the role of indirect communication in influencing political discourse and achieving certain goals by a thorough analysis of the verbal and non-verbal strategies used by Trump.

Politicians can carefully manage public opinion, handle touchy subjects, and reduce dangers connected with direct contact thanks to the benefits of indirect communication. Politicians can tailor their statements to diverse audiences while leaving opportunity for interpretation by using rhetorical devices including hyperbole, ambiguity, sarcasm, and loaded language. They may preserve their

political standing, stay out of trouble, and cultivate support from diverse groups within their own party or the general public thanks to their calculated approach.

The findings of this study highlight that subtlety, intrigue, and the promotion of compromise are key characteristics and advantages of indirect communication in political discourse. However, there are also limitations to consider, such as the potential for misconceptions and difficulties in taking clear stands on issues, which may weaken transparency and accountability.

This study adds to our understanding of indirect communication in political speech by focusing on the unique verbal and nonverbal strategies used by Donald Trump. It emphasizes how crucial it is to strike a balance between complexity and simplicity in order to ensure correct information transmission and comprehension among all parties concerned.

In the future, study in the area of indirect communication should dive into its consequences in a variety of fields, including corporate negotiations, intercultural communication, and advertising, in addition to political discourse. We can continue to gain a deeper grasp of human communication and its complex dynamics by increasing our expertise in this field.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**ORCID iD:** [orcid.org/0000-0002-7036-5182](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7036-5182), [0000-0002-8641-0777](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8641-0777)

**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

## References

- [1] Abdullah, M. H., & Rakhmawati, E. (2022). The Use of Indirect Communication Strategies in Maintaining Harmonious Communication among Indonesians. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 51(1), 68-87.
- [2] Bekzhanova, G. B. (2022). The role of non-direct communication in conflict resolution. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 33(1), 58-72.
- [3] Huang, Y., & Lin, Y. (2021). Indirect communication in intercultural business negotiation: A comparative study of Chinese and American negotiators. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 171, 103-115.
- [4] Kosheleva, E. V. (2020). Indirect communication strategies in cross-cultural communication. *Bulletin of Moscow State Regional University*, 1(73), 48-53.
- [5] Kokoeva, Z. K. (2020). Non-direct communication in Kazakhstani media rhetoric. *Science and Education: Contemporary Trends*, 1(19), 72-75.
- [6] Luring, J., & Selmer, J. (2012). The effects of indirect and direct communication in a cross-cultural business context. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 12(2), 25-41.
- [7] Musin, R. K. (2019). The role of non-direct communication in intercultural communication. *Bulletin of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Psychological, Pedagogical, Sociological Series*, 2(88), 129-134.
- [8] Satybaldina, G., & Ismagulova, G. (2021). *Non-direct communication in Kazakhstani business negotiations*. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 6(2), 15-22.
- [9] Tannen, D. (2019). Indirectness in discourse: Ethnicity as conversational style. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 19(4), 335-353.
- [10] Tikhonova, N. (2019). Non-direct communication in political discourse. *Journal of Language and Education*, 5(1), 25-33.
- [11] Vorobyova, T. S. (2020). Use of non-direct communication in advertising discourse. *Russian Language in Science and Education*, 24(1), 62-78.