AN INVESTIGATIVE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN SPEECH MANIPULATION STRATEGIES IN REPUBLICAN DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Donald Trump's sophisticated use of speech manipulation strategies has inspired numerous research studies. O.I. Nazarenko and O.Ye. Nesterenko (2023) looked beyond Donald Trump at the Republican Party at large and found a pattern of manipulative effect in Republican discourse supporting Russia in the Russian-Ukrainian war. This raises many important questions for researchers. What is the political motivation for Republicans to side with Russia against Ukraine? How did this come to be? To answer these questions, this article presents the first recorded history of Russian speech manipulation strategies in Republican discourse. Continuous sampling of Republican discourse employed pattern analysis and purposive and random selection to establish a corpus of 10 quotes presented as a series of historical episodes forming a narrative with a plot. Pragmatic analysis and critical discourse analysis identified manipulative strategies consistent with Russian thinking of reflexive control connected across speakers and generations. The findings reject the "ideological asymmetry hypothesis" and support the novel "freedom grift hypothesis" which proposes conservatives' unique susceptibility to political misrepresentations is the result of covert Russian information warfare. This exploratory study supports the need for further speech manipulation research of Republican discourse from a historical perspective as a matter of urgent global security.

Key words: Manipulative Effect, Speech Manipulation, Political Discourse, Russia, Ukraine, History, Republican.

Introduction

Valentina E. Chernikova et al. (2015) argue that manipulation of mass consciousness is one of the most serious and widely discussed problems of our time. Manipulation is a form of deception employed to serve the manipulator's aims and needs (Abuelwafa, 2021) against the best interests of dominated groups (van Dijk, 2006). Interpersonal Deception Theory tells us that all forms of deception come with risk (Buller & Burgoon, 1996). The manipulator must weigh the risks of detection against the rewards of success. This makes motive a key parameter to discriminate manipulation for analysis (Akopova, 2013).

Nazarenko and Nesterenko (2023) conclude that because politicians are motivated by winning, the manipulative effect they found in Republican discourse must be aimed at convincing Republican voters of the need to support Russia in the Russian-Ukrainian war. If this is true, then Republican politicians are assuming the deception risk to benefit Russia against their own best interests. According to Aysa Akopova's (2013) motive parameter, the Republican speaker is the victim in this scenario and Russia must somehow be the manipulator. Nazarenko and Nesterenko (2023) don't address this point but suggest, "researching the problem with further analysis of various types of discourse concerning the implementation of manipulative influence using all possible linguistic methods and means" is appropriate.

Essential elements of speech manipulation

Definitions of manipulation vary slightly in the literature. Kuralay Kenzhekanova et al. (2015) offer a general academic definition of manipulation as, "impact on the person with the purpose to induce him [to act or change behavior] unconsciously or contrary to his own desire, opinion and intention." Language offers a whole arsenal of means to realize manipulative aims and there is no comprehensive dictionary of manipulative techniques (Akopova, 2013).

David Buller et al. (1994) identify three types of deception: falsification (lying), equivocation (distortion), and omission (concealment). A distinction between falsification and manipulation is that a lie stands up against semantic truth while manipulation opposes pragmatic truth (Akopova, 2013).

Akopova (2013) divides linguistic manipulation into rational and emotional components. The rational sphere uses convincing facts and arguments that impact people's consciousness. Emotional manipulation uses the speaker's expression of emotions to acquire an emotional response from the listener that would lead to changes in his behavior. Emotional manipulation can be "direct" where the speaker openly presents his demands, or "indirect" where the speaker does not openly express his intentions.

Literature review

Historical literature on the matter is documented from two academic perspectives. One corpus comes from discourse analysts and primarily focuses on investigating specific speech manipulation concepts in political discourse. The other corpus comes from security and intelligence analysts and focuses on the history of Russian information warfare against the United States.

According to security and intelligence analysts, both the United States and the Soviet Union used covert disinformation tactics to challenge each other's ideological systems (Evans, 2022). Russia and the Soviet Union have a rich tradition of conducting this type of warfare and "Target No. 1 was the United States…The objective was to hurt the United States wherever and whenever it was possible" (Jones, 2025). Despite the threat, no historically significant event or operation by either side is reported to have occurred during the Cold War.

The earliest records of Russian means of manipulative effect in Republican discourse occur during the 2016 US presidential election where Russia used trolls, bots, and fake news websites to disseminate large amounts of disinformation supporting Donald Trump (Matherly et al., 2020). This strategy proved effective as conservatives are more often fooled by bots purporting to share their ideology than liberals (Garrett & Bond, 2021).

Luiza-Maria Filimon (2016) provides the most relevant source among the discourse analysts. Her work investigated the history of "dog whistle" politics in Republican discourse. A Dog Whistle Effect is observed when "respondents hear something in the question that researchers do not… these quasi-subliminal messages seem innocent to a general audience but resonate with a specific public attuned to receive them" (Filimon, 2016).

Filimon (2016) found a pattern of manipulative effect in Republican discourse which she calls "a deliberate strategy pursued for over fifty decades by the conservative members of the Republican Party… tracing it back to Republican figures such as Lee Atwater, Barry Goldwater or Ronald Reagan". Filimon (2016) cites previous research in concluding strategic racism to be the motivation. Racial dog whistles allow politicians to expand their voter base by covertly appealing to the existing bigotry in the voting public while concealing the racism from opponents.

Filimon (2016) had no reason to suspect the possibility of Russian involvement in the propagation of racial dog whistles to create division or schismogenesis amongst the American populace and exert coercive control over Republican politicians by making them reliant on manipulative strategies to win elections. Motivated by Nazarenko and Nesterenko (2023), the theoretical framework presented in the next section explores this possibility.

Other discourse scholars have investigated specific manipulative strategies used in political discourse, though not necessarily from a historical perspective or limited to Republican discourse. Semantic shifts, doublespeak, and euphemisms/dysphemism are among the most relevant strategies to this study. Semantic shifts include changing word meaning, shifting meaning in contexts, and exploiting emotional or cultural connotation of words with strong meanings (e.g. freedom) to subtly lead public opinion (Meisuri & Al-Haddad, 2025). Doublespeak is language carefully constructed to stretch the truth in ways that impart a reality that is most desirable for the speaker (Walker et al., 2021). Euphemisms represent reality in a more favorable light. The opposite aim is pursued by dysphemism based on underlining a certain negative feature (Kenzhekanova et al. 2015; Walker et al., 2021).

The bulk of recent research in this area is forward-looking, focusing on discursive models and linguistic features observed in Donlad Trump's statements (Moghadam & Jafarpour, 2022). The aim of this article is to look back and provide the first history of Russian speech manipulation strategies in Republican discourse to answer the following research questions:

1. When and how did speech manipulation benefiting Russia become integrated into Republican discourse?
2. What strategies and techniques were used to produce the manipulative effect?
3. How did these speech manipulation strategies evolve over time?
4. What were the hidden messages and motivations behind the speech manipulation?
5. Why are Russian speech manipulation strategies targeted to conservatives rather than liberals?

Theoretical background

R. Kelly Garrett and Robert M. Bond (2021) found that conservatives are uniquely susceptible to political misperceptions and tend to exhibit higher sensitivity than liberals to claims that threaten their political interests, regardless of the claims' accuracy. Garrett and Bond (2021) offer the "ideological asymmetry hypothesis" as a possible explanation which says conservatives are more motivated by a need for certainty and order which leads them to be more resistant to contradictory evidence, a concept now known as knowledge resistance (Glüer & Wikforss, 2022). This leads conservative media to generate or amplify misleading content in response to consumer demand (Garrett & Bond, 2021). Garrett and Bond (2021) conclude that their study fails to provide definitive evidence about ideological asymmetry and does not rule out other possible explanations.

Nazarenko and Nesterenko (2023) suggest a scenario where Republican speakers are the victim and Russia is the manipulator. The "means, motive, and opportunity" (MMO) framework is a multidisciplinary tool of analysis used to examine the likelihood of a given action or evaluate the conditions necessary for an action based on the convergence of three domains: means (capability to act), motive (reason to act), and opportunity (chance to act) (Bird et al., 2022). With motive established by previous research (Nazarenko & Nesterenko, 2023), this theoretical framework will examine the means and opportunity domains to determine the likelihood of such a scenario.

Means

Since 2016, there is a growing body of evidence of Russian influence in Republican discourse. Intelligence analysts call this reflexive control, "a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specially prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make the predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action" (Matherly et al., 2020). Reflexive Control Theory stipulates that "the adversary who better understands their opponent's decision-making process and utilizes it against them is more likely to succeed" (Matherly et al., 2020).

In 2024, the US Justice Department unsealed an indictment accusing two Russian nationals of recruiting conservative commentators to unwittingly propagate Russian propaganda (Schmunk, 2024). The news media quickly identified these conservative commentators as members of Tenet Media, sharing clips such as Tenet commentator Tim Pool shouting to his audience: Ukraine is the enemy of this country [America]! (Nimrod Kamer, 2024). Vladimir Putin views enemy image as the primary perception to be exploited, constructed, and advanced (Pagen, 2020). With enemy image, "one considers the other nation as evil, opportunistic, and motivated by self-interest" (Alexander et al., 2005).

According to P.B. Craik (2019), Russia's information warfare strategy applies postmodernism to manipulate an enemy's psychic condition. Postmodern propaganda is a form of propaganda that manipulates the audience into believing that truth does not exist or that the truth is impossible to know. Postmodern propaganda is different from the old alternate reality propaganda that the Soviets used. Alternate reality propaganda tells the audience to believe a lie, even when the lie conflicts with reality.

Information warfare belongs to the psychological Domain of War. All domains have entry and exit points into other domains (Ajir & Vailliant, 2020). Primary research is required to determine if the entry point of Russian means of manipulative effect in Republican discourse predates the earliest literature records in 2016 (Matherly et al., 2020). Russian means of manipulative effect should be observed to exploit enemy image and align with Russian thinking of reflexive control.

Opportunity

Historians Donald Critchlow and Nancy MacLean (2009) document the conservative movement beginning in 1945 with William F. Buckley Jr., founding editor of the *National Review*, and Senator Barry Goldwater as the genesis. Sampling selection began here as the earliest possible point of entry opportunity for Russian agents. Continuous sampling of conservative political discourse was used to identify the first historically significant instance where means of manipulative effect were observed to exploit enemy image and align with Russian thinking of reflexive control (applied postmodernism would not be reflected in the corpus during the Soviet era).

Aaron Helmbrecht's (2025) theoretical work on polarization of reality (Alesina et al., 2020) and factual belief polarization (Lee et al., 2021) identified a manipulative effect in the language of these conservative principles: *Conservatives gained power because of their commitment to individualism, free markets, limited government, traditional family values, and a strong defense… Above all else… Conservatives believed that communism was a direct threat to the United States* (Critchlow & MacLean, 2009, p. VII-14).

Helmbrecht (2025) argues these conservative principles represent the genesis of speech manipulation in Republican discourse aligning with Russian thinking of reflexive control: *This declaration cannot possibly be genuine because the principles conflict with each other. Individualism is mutually exclusive to traditional family values. Limited government is mutually exclusive to a strong defense. Declaring to support all of these principles simultaneously is absurd. Clearly deception is present in the messaging. Why would a "communist" Russian agent want to advocate for these principles?*

Hypothesis

The theoretical framework suggests that sometime after the start of the Cold War in 1945, Russian agents developed conservative principles as a means of reflexive control and recruited Buckley and Goldwater among others to unwittingly propagate them using speech manipulation strategies. The next section will define tools of analysis and apply them to conservative principles to determine if this opportunity represents the entry point of Russian means of manipulative effect in Republican discourse.

Tools of analysis

Kenzhekanova et al. (2015) discuss the main means of verbal persuasion used in political discourse and their functions in the text. According to Kenzhekanova et al. (2015), lexical tools of speech manipulation are the most extensive and frequently used means of realization, allowing for systematization based on their sign properties (semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics). This section provides a summary of relevant tools of speech manipulation as well as corresponding tools of analysis applied in this study.

Lexical semantics is the study of word meanings and word relations.
   a) *Tools of speech manipulation:* Metaphors can be constructed so multiple presuppositions lead the listener to access only the sub-optimal set of contextual assumptions by exploiting emotive connotation (emotional or cultural meaning, both positive and negative, that a word, phrase, or ideology carries beyond its literal definition)
   b) *Tools of analysis:* Content analysis and linguistic interpretation

Lexical syntactics refers to the rules governing how a string of characters is broken down into the smallest meaningful units.
   a) *Tools of speech manipulation:* Elliptic and parallel constructions (Elliptic language forces the listener to finish the sentence or thought by admission or omission of some elements of the utterance. Parallelism is a compound of two or more words or sentences that implies meaning through the strict compliance of their structure.)
   b) *Tools of analysis:* Component analysis and lingo-stylistic analysis

Lexical pragmatics is the study of how word meanings are modified in context, going beyond their literal "encoded" sense.
   (a) *Tools of speech manipulation:* Semantic shift strategies use words with strong positive or negative connotation and redefine them in context, effectively applying the connotation to a new definition desirable to the speaker using stylistic connotation (implied meaning of a word or phrase that indicates its suitability for a particular functional style, register, or context)
   (b) *Tools of analysis:* Contextual analysis and pragmatic analysis

Example analysis

Let's apply the tools of analysis to these conservative principles: *individualism, free markets, limited government, traditional family values, and a strong defense… communism was a direct threat to the United States*. These principles individually carry a positive connotation. The positive elliptic construction of the series forces the listener to define them as positive. Cognitive mechanisms which govern interpretation of context subsets will only allow the listener to access contextual assumptions positive to the speaker, crucially preventing access to the dissonant, although optimal, set (Maillat, 2013).

"Free markets" is a parallel construction. Freedom is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint (Oxford Languages Dictionary, 2025). Freedom has a strong positive emotional and cultural connotation, particularly to Americans who lacked freedom under British rule and gained freedom through revolution. Here freedom is realized through self-government and lost through surrender. Surrender means to cease resistance to an enemy or opponent and submit to their authority (Oxford Languages Dictionary, 2025).

Freedom in the context of "free markets" means a market in which citizens have no political influence or control. Lexical pragmatics imply a "free market" should be controlled by an "invisible hand." The positive presupposition assumes the "invisible hand" is metaphorical, meaning a free market functions without controls. The negative presupposition assumes the "invisible hand" is

literal, meaning a free market is controlled by the invisible hand of the speaker. The listener's positive emotional and cultural association with "freedom" will lead them to surrender their political stewardship over the market in order to realize freedom, and act against those who exercise their political stewardship over the market to defend the realization of freedom. The definitions of "freedom" and "surrender" have semantically shifted in context. Traditional family values that restrict freedom and compel submission such as abortion, marriage equality, and transgender health care have a positive connotation in this context.

If freedom is realized by surrendering your will for political power, then the stylistic connotation of "individualism" and "limited government" imply those who exercise their political power are the enemies of freedom. During the Cold War, "communism" in the context of "a direct threat to the United States" referred to the Soviet Union and Soviet-aligned states. The enemy image of a hostile state (the Soviet Union) is semantically shifted in context to the word "communism" and applied in context to the United States. After the fall of the Soviet Union, lexical pragmatics imply Russia and other hostile states are now potential allies against communism (the United States and the West). This explains how Republicans justify their support for Russia against Ukraine (Nazarenko & Nesterenko, 2023; Reinhart, 2018).

Data and methods

The first stage of research considered all recorded political discourse from 1945 to the present attributed to conservative politicians and commentators generally recognized as historically significant. Continuous sampling identified the first instance of speech manipulation suspected to exploit enemy image (Alexander et al., 2005; Pagen, 2020) and align with Russian thinking of reflexive control (Matherly et al., 2020). A continuous sampling plan employed pattern analysis and a mix of purposive and random sampling to reduce the corpus to 10 quotes presented as a series of historical events forming a narrative with a plot.

The next stage adopted a pragmatic analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. Pragmatic analysis is suited to the practice of "specific history", in which "analysts reconstruct, through emplotment, historical episodes that were meaningful to historical actors before they became meaningful as objects of analysis. Analysts endeavor to recover this meaning in order to understand agents' actions and thereby to understand why events turned out the way they did rather than some other way" (Gavan Duffy, 2008, p. 168). CDA is suited to investigate how semantic shifts occur in political discourse and how speech manipulation is used as a tool of domination (Meisuri & Al-Haddad, 2025; van Dijk, 2006).

Data collection

Sampling began with purposive selection of two famous Goldwater quotes suspected to exploit enemy image and align with Russian thinking of reflexive control. The third quote was randomly selected from Buckley's archived political discourse on YouTube by searching for a quote on government. Pattern analysis of this data led to the purposive selection of two famous Ronald Reagan quotes.

A series of three quotes were selected surrounding the historical significance of Sarah Palin's use of falsification. One famous Palin quote was randomly selected as a representative sample. Two quotes from just before and after this event were randomly selected to observe Palin's effect on the historical pattern. One by P.J. O'Rourke was selected based on suspicion that applying Enlightenment-era philosophy to modern democracies was a discursive strategy. The other by Michele Bachmann was selected based on suspicion that Tea Party messaging was intended to exploit enemy image. Postmodernism as a means of reflexive control begins to apply during this period.

Two final quotes representing the modern era were purposively selected using keyword match and pattern analysis. One by Tucker Carlson was selected based on suspected use of sophisticated discursive strategies. The last quote attributed to The Heritage Foundation was selected to diversify the corpus and reduce selection bias.

Limitations

The corpus of 10 quotes was determined to be sufficient to support the objectives of the study without exceeding word count expectations for a research article. It was not possible to review the full archive of Republican political discourse from which the corpus was selected. The continuous sampling plan relied on pattern analysis and a mix of purposive and random sampling to limit selection bias and ensure data attributed to individual speakers was representative of Republican discursive strategies of the time. As qualitative research employing non-probability sampling methods, this study should be considered exploratory.

Data analysis

In this section, I provide analysis applying Kenzhekanova et al.'s (2015) tools of speech manipulation to 10 historical quotes by Republican public figures. I will, to the best of my ability and without bias, identify speech manipulation strategies and techniques, interpret hidden messages and political motivations, and note patterns of interest within the data. I believe these quotes to be accurately transcribed and fairly representative of the speakers' communicative intent and the historical context of the speech. Positive identification of deceit and corrupt motivation does not imply corrupt intent by the speaker. It is likely many or all of these speakers unwittingly propagate speech manipulation they believe to be legitimate. To the best of my knowledge, no evidence challenging the basis for the analysis has been omitted.

1. *Barry Goldwater (July 17, 1964): Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice.*

"Extremism" typically carries a negative connotation as in the context of terrorism (use of violence to achieve policy goals). The connotation changes to positive when extremism is "in defense of liberty". Lexical pragmatics presupposes defense of liberty is necessary because there exists some enemy of liberty. Note how the speaker never identifies this enemy of liberty. The listener is now primed for "extremism" to "defend liberty" against a phantom enemy.

The listener must either deduce the identity of the enemy of liberty based on the speaker's implication and suggestion or wait for confirmation from the speaker. The longer the listener is made to wait, the more paranoid they will become, leaving them more likely to view outsiders as potential enemies and increasing their reliance on the speaker as a source of information and security.

2. *Barry Goldwater (June 19, 1964): I am unalterably opposed to discrimination or segregation on the basis of race, color or creed, or on any other basis… I wish to make myself perfectly clear. The two portions of this bill to which I have constantly and consistently voiced objections… are those which would embark the Federal Government on a regulatory course of action with regard to private enterprise in the area of so-called "public accommodations" and in the area of employment… I find no constitutional basis for the exercise of Federal regulatory authority in either of these areas; and I believe the attempted usurpation of such power to be a grave threat to the very essence of our basic system of government, namely, that of a constitutional republic in which 50 sovereign states have reserved to themselves and to the people those powers not specifically granted to the central or Federal Government.*

This speech by Barry Goldwater using states' rights to justify discrimination is probably history's most famous example of euphemistic speech manipulation. The lexical semantics say racist tendencies are negative, but the lexical pragmatics say racist acts are an exercise of freedom, which is positive. But the racism aspect of the euphemism is arguably not the primary motivation. Note

how the syntax refers to the "Federal Government" as a "usurper" and the "exercise of Federal regulatory authority" as "a grave threat to… sovereign states… and to the people." Historically, "the Federal Government" and "the people" are one in the same (e.g. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth; Courts of law refer to the prosecution as "the government" or "the people" interchangeably). Goldwater uses the language of the 10th Amendment (The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people) to semantically separate "the people" and "the Federal Government" into opposing entities in conflict with each other.

3. *William F. Buckley Jr. (1971): It's quite true, for instance, that if governments fail in statecraft, it is necessary for them to conduct wars. By the same token, it is necessary for a government, for instance, the government of Castro Cuba, to ration sugar in the greatest sugar producing country in the world. By the same token, I think Mr. Friedman and I would agree that there are circumstances under which a government might so screw things up that for a period of time it becomes necessary to undertake responsibilities that it ought never to have undertaken.*

Buckley is arguing against the idea that wage and price control regulation should be a proper function of government. The syntax references *governments* (plural), *a government* (hypothetical), and *the government of Castro Cuba* (communist enemy state) in conjunction with the pejoratives: *fail in statecraft, conduct wars, ration sugar, screw things up*. The stylistic connotation combines communism (the government of Castro) with the enemy image of a hostile state (Castro Cuba) and applies it to the United States (a government) and the West (governments).

4. *Ronald Reagan (1986): The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the Government, and I'm here to help.*

The stylistic connotation presents this message in the context of a joke. However, the semantic meaning shifts when removed from the context of the oral presentation. If the nine most terrifying words in the English language are, I'm from the government and I'm here to help, that means the government is our enemy. We see this strategy still employed today in the common internet meme: You might be suffering the side effects of Northern Virginia called Stockholm Syndrome. While presented in the context of a joke, if I have Stockholm Syndrome, that means the government is our enemy.

5. *Ronald Reagan (1975): We've asked so much of government, and we've gotten into the habit over the last 40 years of thinking that government has the answers. There's very little that government can do as efficiently and as economically as the people can do themselves, and if government would just shut the door and sneak away for about three weeks, we'd never miss them.*

The semantically correct version of this statement should be: There's very little that government can do as efficiently and as economically as *individual persons* can do themselves. Again, we see the semantic separation of "government" and "the people" into opposing entities in conflict with each other. The same message repeated across speakers and generations: The citizen is sovereign and the government is their enemy.

6. *P. J. O'Rourke (2005): The Wealth of Nations argues three basic principles and, by plain thinking and plentiful examples, proves them. Even intellectuals should have no trouble understanding Smith's ideas. Economic progress depends upon a trinity of individual prerogatives: pursuit of self-interest, division of labor, and freedom of trade.*

The stylistic connotation implies logical reasoning by "plain thinking and plentiful examples" is positive and the scientific method of "intellectuals" is negative. The speaker's direct motivation is

advocacy for ideological policies such as "freedom of trade". Conservative support for presidential tariff actions (Congress.gov, 2025) suggests "freedom of trade" was never a genuine conservative principle. The true motivation is to promote "plain thinking and plentiful examples" over critical thinking and peer review.

7. *Sarah Palin (2009): The America I know and love is not one in which my parents or my baby with Down syndrome will have to stand in front of Obama's 'death panel' so his bureaucrats can decide, based on a subjective judgment of their 'level of productivity in society,' whether they are worthy of health care. Such a system is downright evil.*

With Sarah Palin we see speech manipulation begin to incorporate falsification on a large scale. Here we see the traditional strategy of semantic separation of "America" and "bureaucrats", but adds obvious falsification like "death panels". The historical perspective of this work provides valuable insight into why these obvious falsifications are undetectable to so many conservatives (Garrett & Bond, 2021). Conservatives have been programmed to rely on "plain thinking" while perceiving outsiders to be potential enemies.

8. *Michele Bachmann (2011): The Tea Party is a dynamic force for good in our national conversation… Many of you implored Washington to please stop spending money that we didn't have, but instead of cutting, we saw an unprecedented explosion of government spending and debt. It was unlike anything we've seen before in the history of the country… Instead of a leaner, smarter government, we bought a lot of bureaucracy that now tells us what light bulbs to buy, and which may put 16,500 IRS agents in charge of policing President Obama's health care bill… In the end, unless we fully repeal Obamacare, a nation that currently enjoys the world's finest health care might be forced to rely on government run coverage that could have a devastating impact on our national debt for generations to come.*

To Americans, The Tea Party is symbolic of justified violent revolution on the basis of taxation without representation. The stylistic connotation omits the "taxation without representation" part. The enemy image of a hostile state (the British) is replaced with: *Washington, IRS agents, bureaucracy, government*. The parallel syntax implies that a "leaner" government would be a "smarter" government. We now see obvious falsifications are fully incorporated into the strategy: *bureaucracy that now tells us what light bulbs to buy, 16,500 IRS agents in charge of policing President Obama's health care bill, a nation that currently enjoys the world's finest health care*. Recall also how Bachmann gave this speech staring awkwardly off to the side instead of speaking directly into the camera. This produces a manipulative effect of disorientation, reducing the listener's ability to focus attention on detecting deceptive language.

9. *Tucker Carlson (2017): There's construction going on. There always is in Washington, the richest city in America. We want to thank you for that, for sending your tax dollars here. It's built a pretty nice place. Well, Bill Nye the Science Guy is now aspiring to a new title, Bill Nye the Psychoanalyst Guy. During a Facebook Live event with Senator Bernie Sanders today the mechanical engineer and TV personality said skeptics of climate change suffer from the psychological delusion of cognitive dissonance. That's a slight bump up from last year, when he was open to the idea of imprisoning skeptics of global warming as war criminals. Is that the choice? Bellevue or Nuremberg? Bill, it's great to see you. That doesn't sound like science to me, Bill Nye the Science Guy. That sounds like something very different.*

The first red flag of deception is that Tucker Carlson is *debating* Bill Nye the Science Guy on the issue of climate change. Bill Nye is the proper authority on the matter and climate change science is taught at the middle school level. Carlson opens by reinforcing "Washington" as the enemy with obvious falsification, *the richest city in America*. The stylistic connotation of *sending your tax dollars here*

implies misappropriation. Carlson then refers to Nye as a *mechanical engineer and TV personality*. Mechanical engineer implies Nye is not a proper authority because climate science is outside his area of expertise. TV personality implies Nye and Carlson share the same title and thus speak with equal authority. Carlson then semantically redefines the word "skeptic." There is no such thing as a climate change skeptic. Skeptics can be persuaded by logic and evidence. Climate change deniers are either deceivers or manipulation victims. Carlson then emotionally manipulates his audience with the terms: *imprisoning skeptics, war criminals, Bellevue or Nuremberg*. This tactic of manipulation and coercive control exploits lexical pragmatics to imply that the victim will suffer a worse fate from a dangerous world if they choose to leave their protection.

> 10. *Thomas Spoehr and Wilson Beaver (2023): Defense Dollars Saved Through Reforms Can Boost the Military's Lethality and Capacity: Defense spending should be tied to a national defense strategy that is designed to protect the nation's security interests. Economic security is also national security, and out-of-control federal spending has helped contribute to the current inflation and the ever-expanding national debt threatening the nation. To this end, Congress should look carefully at potential defense savings and efficiencies as it seeks to decrease the amount spent on non-defense spending and inefficiencies. To the extent that they are able, the Department of Defense and Congress should identify efficiencies within the defense budget and ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being allocated responsibly and to the right priorities.*

Here "lethality" is defined as positive connecting it to *capacity, efficiency, responsibility, the right priorities*. "Federal spending" is defined as negative with the terms: *out-of-control, ever-expanding, inefficiencies, threatening the nation*. The stylistic connotation implies a positive correlation between lethality and security. Other critical security aspects such as intelligence, public education, and economic growth are implied through omission to be *non-defense spending and inefficiencies*. The aim of verbal communication is depoliticization (Federal spending is negative) and radicalization (lethality is positive) of the American populace. The message is (say it with me now): *The government is our enemy.*

Results and discussion

Analysis presented in this article support Filimon's (2016) conclusion that speech manipulation in Republican discourse is, "a deliberate strategy pursued for over fifty decades," and advances academic thought with the following findings:

- Conservative principles employ discursive strategies that semantically shift the definitions of "freedom" and "surrender" and project Russia's enemy image onto the United States government.
- Discursive strategies used by William F. Buckley Jr., Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Michele Bachmann exploit enemy image consistent with Russian thinking of reflexive control.
- Conservatives have been programmed to trust "plain thinking" while perceiving outsiders to be potential enemies.
- Republican discursive strategies evolved to incorporate obvious falsifications concurrent with Russia's adoption of applied postmodernism.
- The aim of verbal communication is depoliticization and radicalization of the American populace. The key message is: *Let's tell the American people the government is their enemy*. This suggests Republican discourse employs military grade manipulation strategies.

These finding date Russian means of manipulative effect in Republican discourse well before the earliest records in 2016 (Matherly et al., 2020). The findings also reject the "ideological asymmetry hypothesis" and support the novel "freedom grift hypothesis."

Conclusions

A post-truth era does not emerge by accident or happenstance. Russian speech manipulation strategies in Republican discourse originated with conservative principles introduced by William F. Buckley Jr. and Barry Goldwater, became mainstream under Ronald Reagan, incorporated obvious falsification under Sarah Palin, and continues to grow under Donald Trump.

By studying this history, we now know the strategy works by manipulating lexical units to change word meanings, modify word meanings in context, and exploit emotional or cultural meanings of strong words such as government, freedom, and communism. Perhaps most importantly, we know the motivation (depoliticization and radicalization of the American populace) and the key message (the government is our enemy). If all this can be discovered from this short work, imagine what knowledge lies beneath the surface. Imagine how that knowledge might guide the present and shape the future.

Enas Naji Kadim (2022) closes her work with a plea for manipulative politicians to abandon their manipulative strategies for the sake of the people's interests and suggests manipulation victims should "develop their critical literacy and critical language awareness skills". This author's plea is to the academics and the investigators. The historians and political scientists. The psychologists and journalists. The security and intelligence community. We must understand the history of how things came to be before we can recommend a plan of action to the public.

Albert Einstein famously said, "I know not with what weapons WWIII will be fought, but WWIV will be fought with sticks and stones". Einstein's implication is that WWIII would be fought with weapons more technologically advanced and destructively powerful than the atomic bomb he helped create. Perhaps we misinterpreted Einstein's guidance all along. Perhaps WWIII will be a war of words, the main battle space in the minds of the people. A war of words asks scholars to be patriots.

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Declaration of conflicting interest

The author declares that he has no competing interests.

Data availability

Data and links referenced in this article are available in the article appendix.

Appendix

Historical quotation data was transcribed by the author from the following sources and are listed here in order of appearance.

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