Degree Project
Level: bachelor’s
An analysis of political discourse: First-person personal pronoun ‘I’ in Joe Biden’s speeches

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Subject/main field of study: Linguistics
Course code: EN2035
Credits: 15 ECTS-credits
Date of examination:

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This study investigates the use of the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ in political discourse and, more specifically, the functions of Represented ‘I’ and Situated ‘I’, including subcategories, present in Joe Biden’s speeches. A corpus was compiled, consisting of 12 speeches that brought up the topic of the war in Ukraine. The aim of the analysis was to examine the frequency of the pronouns in the speeches and their functions. The study is based on categories from Roitman’s (2014) and Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor’s (2019) research on presidential debates. The results reveal that Represented ‘I’ is the most frequent use of the pronoun, which presents speakers as politicians in the real world rather than positions them in the discursive situation, as in the case of Situated ‘I’. Since Situated ‘I’ was categorized only with regard to the discursive verbs of the current discourse, it might have contributed to the big difference in frequencies between Represented ‘I’ and Situated ‘I’.
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1. Introduction

In political speeches, politicians use personal pronouns to impart an intended message. The presentation of “selves” through the usage of first-person personal pronouns reflects how politicians’ reality is constructed in discourse. Pronouns may also signal relationships between individual entities (“selves”) and members of different groups. The specific objective of this study is to identify the functions of the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ used in the presidential speeches given by Joe Biden on the topic of the war in Ukraine and assign them into particular categories of Represented and Situated ‘I’, based on the specific context of statements made. More specifically, the study involves a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’, so as to be able to suggest in what ways the speaker uses it in the discourse.

The analysis focuses on the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’, on account of its importance in political discourse. In light of recent events in Ukraine, which have global effects not only on the countries directly involved in the war, it is crucial to take a closer look at political discourse and the phenomenon of pronouns. Plenty of research has been conducted on the effects of pronouns, and much work has been done on political discourse analysis; however, no research, to my knowledge, has been carried out on Joe Biden’s speeches and the event of the war in Ukraine. Due to people’s expectations to speak up about this topic, and the fact that this is a very recent subject, particular interest has been directed to Joe Biden, the head of one of the most powerful countries. The pronoun ‘I’ was of particular interest to see how Biden formulates statements with a pronoun used for self-identification. Joe Biden is a well-known figure, whose words and moves are followed by the whole world. His utterances are crucial not only to his nation - Americans but also to the wider audience. His is observed by people all over the globe and so are his statements, that is why they have a considerable impact not only on Americans. From this perspective, it is crucial what he says and how he says it. Thus, the
analysis of his utterances contributes to the perception of his stance in the ongoing war in Ukraine through the uses of the ‘I’ pronoun in different discursive situations.

This thesis will elaborate on the division presented by Roitman (2014) of Represented ‘I’, which refers to the speaking entities in discourse and constitutes the persons presenting the topics of the communicative event, and Situated ‘I’, which introduces the empirical subject and presents the actual speaker behind the discourse (pp. 746-747). Both types are illustrated in the following examples:

(1) May I remind people that under your leadership over these last 5 years, public spending has increased by 2%. (Roitman, 2014, p. 751) [Situated ‘I’]

(2) I’ve made a certain number of commitments, the number of public sector employees will be stabilized globally over the next five years and public spending will not increase by more than 1% per year. (Roitman, 2014, p. 748) [Represented ‘I’]

Situated ‘I’ is analyzed in terms of metadiscourse, described as “a cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community” (Hyland, 2005, pp. 37-38). Situated ‘I’ mainly deals with the discourse organization by using discursive verbs such as speak, tell, and announce. Represented ‘I’ involves acts performed outside of the world of discourse. Situated ‘I’ was analyzed in terms of the discursive expressions that refer only to the current discourse of the speaker, which was described in Roitman’s analyses as “formulas which express the act of maintaining the floor, interrupting the other, excusing oneself for interrupting the other, commenting on and reinforcing what one has said, as in ‘Let me finish’, ‘I’m going to answer you’, etc” (Roitman, 2014, p. 756).
The research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent is the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ used in Joe Biden's speeches?

2. What functions do the occurrences of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ have in the speeches, based on Roitman’s (2014 & 2019) and Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor’s (2019) models of Represented ‘I’ and Situated ‘I’?

3. What do these functions tell us about Biden’s discourse?

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Discourse analysis

Political discourse has been widely studied in discourse analysis. The field of discourse analysis can be divided into many different subfields. Discourse analysis “is based on the details of speech or writing that are arguably deemed relevant in the context, and that are relevant to the arguments the analysis is attempting to make” (Gee, 2014, p.136). There are numerous definitions of the term discourse, but overall, it has been defined as language in use and language beyond the sentence (Schiffrin, 2003). From the perspective of the social dimension, Wodak (2009) suggests that discourse affects how social groups are built, and how they determine the relations of power on different levels and between different groups.

From the perspective of discourse as language-in-use (Gee, 2014, p.19), discourse refers to the meaning of language that emerges from the specific context. It is, therefore, analysed not with regard to the grammatical system, as in the case of syntax, but to the context in which the sentence or utterance is embedded, whether in written or spoken discourse. Discourse as language-in-use has been said to be “like the study of how people actually interpret films as they watch them” (Gee, 2014, p.20). This view is supported by Chilton (2003) who argues that language-in-use “consists of utterances generated and interpreted in relation to the situation in which the utterer(s) and interpreter(s) are positioned” (p.56).
Discourse analysis is conducted both at the level of the use of language in a particular context, for example in one sentence, and at the level of the relationship between sentences (Gee, 2014). Paltridge (2022) emphasizes that discourse analysis “examines patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural context in which it is used” (p.2). In this way, discourse analysis investigates how language contributes to communicative events and how people accomplish their communicative goals through the usage of language. The social and cultural context is taken into account as communication is accomplished at the social level with other groups and cultures (Paltridge, 2022). That is why discourse is also seen as “both shaped by the world as well as shaping the world” and “shaped by the people who use the language as well as shaping the language that people use” (Paltridge, 2022, p.7).

2.2 Political discourse

Persuasion in political discourse is sometimes viewed from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In terms of persuasiveness, Van Dijk (1993) argues that “if powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise exhibit their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done. And if they thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audiences, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process” (p. 259). He also argues that “for power to be exercised, legitimized and reproduced, it must also be expressed and persuasively conveyed in discourse and communication” (Van Dijk, 1989, p. 21). It implies that any persuasive measures introduced in the discourse may contribute to influencing the audience’s mindset and thoughts. Persuasiveness is often brought up with regard to the discourse, as many scholars advocate for a strong relationship between political discourse and persuasiveness (e.g. Van Dijk, 1989, 1993; Mutz, Sniderman & Brody, 1996; Diamond &
It has been stated that politics, par excellence, is inherently related to persuasion, which is a fundamental goal of political discourse (Mutz et al., 1996, Wodak, 1995).

It has been suggested that the goal of persuasive discourse may be partially achieved by self-mentions, including first-person pronouns (Hyland, 2001). It is a key challenge for politicians to sustain a favourable image and present credible arguments throughout discourse with genuine evidence for their utterances (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrió-Pastor, 2019). On account of that, great pressure is put on what Chilton (2003) and Wodak (2009) conceptualize as a “spin doctor”. These are the entities responsible for the factual part of discourse, to be perceived as a credible, and favourable representation of the speakers, as this is the aspect of the political discourse on which the audience relies.

In terms of pronouns in political discourse, Bramley (2001) argues that through the politicians’ presentation of reality by means of “selves” structures, the objectivity of facts remains dubious. Using these “selves” structures, speakers may either present identities as individuals or refer to identities as part of some collective they belong to (Bramley, 2001). It takes place through switching from the ‘I’ pronoun, referring to the speaker’s identity as an individual, to the ‘we’ pronoun, referring to the speaker’s identity as a member of a collective. As can be seen from the example below, the speaker uses the first-person pronoun ‘I’ and ‘my’ to express her/his individual perspective, and then switches to express different “selves” on behalf of a bigger group by using the first-person pronoun ‘we’ (Bramley, 2011, pp. 218-220).

(3) […] I can’t understand why at the same time they are not also demanding as loudly […] I heard Mrs Carnell say before that it could go on for months. It’s my understanding it’s been going on for months […] So we’re very concerned about that what the time frame is. […] As mister Osborne said we we don’t know the whole story we
certainly aren't interested in making any judgements at all and so we want to try and understand where the process is going in terms of time’ (Bramley, 2001, p.219).

Chilton’s (2003) findings suggest that even though the referents of political discourse may remain the same, politicians may conceptualize the message differently through different usage of language and the language may be vague itself. He provided an example of the phrase “company wives” which triggered a different feeling for an ambassador of Saudi Arabia, who initially used it, and for his receivers, who considered it an offensive and undiplomatic phrase. It shows that each speaker may have different impressions of the meaning of a given word and phrase, even though the referent remains the same. Different syntax, in this case conceptualizing the idea as “wives of employees of the company”, may lead to a completely different interpretation of meaning (Chilton, 2003).

Chilton also refers to the first-person plural pronoun in political discourse as a marker of group or party identification for the audience, either internally or externally. Under these circumstances, pronouns are seen as a system of deixis, and are not seen only in relation to physical space, time, and person, but are rather loaded with political markedness and reference. Deixis is defined as “[l]anguage-in-use [that] consists of utterances generated and interpreted in relation to the situation in which the utterer(s) and interpreter(s) are positioned” (Chilton, 2003, p. 56). Deixis derives from a Greek word for pointing. It means "pointing via language" (Yule, 2020). According to Yule (2020), “deictic expressions are interpreted in terms of which person, place or time the speaker has in mind” (p.152). For example, “nowadays” may not be related to the actual time of the discourse, but to the current time and events of the war. Likewise, spatial deixis accounts for the pivotal aspect of political discourse as they are frequently a subject of politics, and politicians are always positioned against a given location, time, and group (Chilton, 2003).
2.2.1 Previous discourse analyses of presidential speeches

Plenty of linguistic research has been conducted on US presidential speeches over the years, with a focus on various topics. Two analyses of US presidential speeches will be presented next to provide an overview of this type of work. They were selected based on the speakers, who were former American presidents, and the topic connected with serious events, for example, terrorist attacks or a pandemic. Two of the speeches was also analysed, among other criteria, with regard to first-person pronouns, so it was relevant to the aim of this thesis.

The first analysis was conducted based on Fairclough’s (1995) theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focuses on three dimensions of discourse: Social, Processing, and Text Analysis (Locke, 2004, p. 42). Al-Deen Awawdeh and Al-Abbas (2023, pp. 393-401) analysed two speeches delivered by the then-president of the United States Donald Trump during a Coronavirus press conference in 2020. The study was based on analyses of vocabulary choice, grammatical forms, comparative and superlative adjectives, and uses of pronouns to see the extent of the ideology exposed and power exercised in his speeches and to map explicit or implicit linguistic strategies. The results revealed a significant number of words of identity and belonging such as Americans, all, together, number one priority used to stress American Unity or the nation. Additionally, words of thoughts and beliefs such as I think were used by the President not to make any commitments and avoid expressing certainty. As regards pronouns, the results showed a predominant usage of the ‘we’ pronoun compared to the ‘I’ pronoun in order to highlight a connection between the speaker and the audience. The usage of comparative and superlative forms, such as greatest expert, greatest people, and bigger than any country, aimed to stress the superiority of the United States over other countries. Based on these linguistic devices analysed, the nationalism of Trump and the superiority of Americans were identified. Trump’s egoism, exaggeration, and self-glorification were also detected as a result of discourse analysis.
The second analysis that was conducted by Tarish (2019, pp. 128-134) was based on a pragmatic approach and involved two former US presidents’ speeches: Barack Obama and George Bush. The study aimed to analyse the linguistic differences and communicative approaches of the two speakers. Since the author applied a pragmatic approach, he examined the context and circumstances of the speeches in relation to the communicated meaning. President Bush’s speech was on the topic of the terrorist events from September 11, and it was considered full of patriotic and compassionate messages, with the assurance of unity and strength. The speech was compared with his inaugural speech and it was found that, after the terrorist attack, he used much shorter and more succinct sentences to express the gravity of the situation.

The phenomenon of dichotomy also prevailed in his discourse after September 11. In the following two sentences, it is clear that first, the negative aspects of the situation are stressed, but this is then followed by a description of the certainty of America’s strength (Tarish, 2019).

(4) Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. (September, 2001)

The analysed discourse of President Obama revealed the use of both simple and complex sentences, alternately. He was considered to adapt his vocabulary and overall style to the “Internet Age” to be easily understood and accepted among different audiences:

(5) America’s possibilities are limitless, for we possess all the qualities that this world without boundaries demands: youth and drive; diversity and openness; an endless
capacity for risk and a gift for reinvention. My fellow Americans, we are made for this moment, and we will seize it – so long as we seize it together. (January, 2013)

The study shows Obama’s tendency to use ‘we’ and ‘our’ pronouns over ‘you’ and ‘your’, which stresses his American citizenship and unity with the audience. It was especially visible in the speech given after the Boston Marathon bombing, as by the use of the pronoun ‘we’, he emphasizes affiliation with other Americans and reflects on the positive side of the whole situation (Tarish, 2019), as we can see in Example (6).

(6) So if you want to know who we are, what America is, how we respond to evil – that’s it. Selflessly. Compassionately. Unafraid. (April, 2013)

2.4 Pronouns

A basic framework for pronouns describes them as a linguistic device that functions as a reference for a noun and aims to sustain coherence throughout the text. Pronouns are used to replace a noun (Bernard, 1975) and are “used in place of noun phrases, typically referring to people and things already known” (Brown & Yule, 2020, p. 94).

The study of personal pronouns in political discourse has moved beyond the traditional definition of pronouns as a system of anaphora\textsuperscript{1} and deixis (Bramley, 2001, p.1). Not only are they no longer perceived of merely as a singular and plural number or as the first, second, and third person, but they are also considered in terms of the context of the interactions they appear in, and as a device of identification (e.g. Malone, 1997, Watson, 1987, Schegloff, 1996). The phenomenon of pronouns and their functions has been extensively developed in the

\textsuperscript{1} Anaphora represents the relationship between a term (called “anaphor”) and another one (called “antecedent”), when the interpretation of the anaphor is in a certain way determined by the interpretation of the antecedent (Devi et al., 2009, p.5)
The work of researchers such as Brown and Gilman (1960), Hanks (1990), Rumsey (2000), and Wilson (1990). What these scholars do is they go beyond the morpho-syntactic features of pronouns and consider them as functions of social relations. Brown & Gilman (1960) focus on social relations by means of the usage of “you” in different languages in Europe. They elaborate on the difference between power hierarchy expressed through pronouns and through specific titles or proper names. Based on a French example, they conclude that pronouns and verbal expressions of power entail a coding of power, compared to the usage of titles and proper names where power can be uncoded in discourse (Brown & Gilman, 1960). They argue that “[o]ne person may be said to have power over another in the degree that he is able to control the behaviour of the other”, however, as they state, “power is a relationship between at least two persons, and it is nonreciprocal in the sense that both cannot have power in the same area of behaviour” (Brown and Gilman, p. 255).

2.4.1 First Person Personal Pronoun ‘I’

The first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ denotes the presence of the speaker or writer in discourse (Fortanet, 2004). Cherry (1988) and Tang and John (1999) identify three roles applied through the usage of the first-person pronoun ‘I’. First, it is a social role where the identity is inherent to a person (e.g. American). Secondly, it is a role in discourse, where identity is adopted from a given discourse community (e.g. lawyer in a legal discourse community), and thirdly, genre role which is typical for a particular genre within a discourse community (e.g. writer as a guide through the essay) (Fortanet, 2004, p. 47). This suggests that speakers may adopt different roles, sometimes called “participation status”, depending on who they identify with as a speaker. The role of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ has been highlighted by many researchers. For example, its functions in academic writing are to help guide through the discourse and arguments, help to determine terms, express personal opinions, feelings, and claims, announce the methodology and procedures, and recognize other individuals (Harwood, 2007). On top of that, the first-
person pronoun ‘I’ aims to construct the speakers’ identity in relation to their audience (Kuo, 1999, Goffman, 1974, 1981). Even though these functions are ascribed to written discourse, the study conducted in this thesis shows that they are applicable to spoken discourse as well.

2.4.1.1 Represented and Situated I

The distinction between Represented and Situated ‘I’ was created by Roitman (2014) based on Ducrot’s (1984) notion of ethos. The general idea of ethos is framed as a “discursive phenomenon consisting of any form of explicit expression which assists speakers in enhancing the credibility of their message in a given context” (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrió-Pastor, 2019, p.86). This has to do with the notion that the person who produces the sentence may not necessarily be the same person to whom the responsibility for the sentence is assigned. There is a difference:

“between the speaker ("locuteur") as the subject to whom is attributed the responsibility for the utterance and the empirical author as the one actually producing it. The former is ascribed to the discourse itself, whereas the latter belongs to the outside world.” (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrió-Pastor, 2019, pp. 88-89).

This perspective resulted in Roitman’s (2014) distinction between two dimensions of the first-person pronoun ‘I’. Represented ‘I’, according to Roitman (2014), regards “the speaking entities in the discourse – the protagonists of the interaction – and constitutes the persons presenting the topics of the communicative event.” (p.746). Represented ‘I’ is used when the pronoun ‘I’ refers to the subject of actions and interactions which is emphasized by Roitman (2014) as “This I [Represented] certainly refers to the speaker but not as speaker, rather as a subject of other (past, present or future) actions or properties – for example, as future president, rather than as speaker.” (p. 746). It is visible in the following example where a speaker is presented as a future president, rather than as a speaker:
(1) I must say [situated I], this evening, what a president I will be [represented I] if the French people place their trust in me. (Roitman, 2014, p.746).

The Represented ‘I’ pronoun “represent[s] the two protagonists and provide, together with their verbs, the topics of the discourse. They can thus be contradicted, agreed with, etc.” (Roitman, 2014, p. 747).

Situated ‘I’, as opposed to Represented ‘I’, portrays the speaker as the current speaker, the one who produces the discourse. By means of first-person pronoun usage, the speaker permeates into the discourse and controls the progress of the interaction and the arguments of discourse (Roiitman, 2014). Situated ‘I’ is especially important to political discourse as “it stages the utterances and imposes itself explicitly by commenting on its own discourse and arguments as well as those of the other” (Roiitman, 2014, p.746). Through the use of Situated ‘I’, the speaker may comment on his/her own discourse and he/she is positioned against the arguments present in the discourse and able to follow the interactive progress (Roiitman, 2014). Situated ‘I’ is, therefore, a metadiscursive use which, used with discourse verbs, guides the audience throughout the utterance and marks its purpose. The speaker refers to his/her own discursive actions. Situated ‘I’ is summarized as “introduce[ing] language acts in the truest sense: what is ‘said’ is what is being ‘done’ here” (Roiitman, 2014, p. 756). Situated ‘I’ additionally imparts information about the speaker’s discursive activity. The following example from a political debate shows that the speaker is in control of discourse and is referring to his own discourse events.

(2) “I am not your pupil [represented I]. I will respond to that [situated I] once I have told you what I need to tell you [represented I].” (Roiitman, 2014, p. 746)
The distinction between Represented and Situated ‘I’ is the main framework for the present analysis; however, it has been supported by other subcategories presented by Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor (2019) (based on Tang and John (1999)). Their aim was to elaborate on the role of Represented ‘I’ and Situated ‘I’. The analyses for the present study have been conducted applying the following categories: with regard to Represented ‘I’, Evidential ‘I’, ‘I as the opinion-holder, Reflexive ‘I’, Action and fortitude ‘I’, and Willingness ‘I’, and with regard to Situated ‘I’, Art of governing discourse and Positioning of power. The subcategories are presented in Table 1 with selected examples from Roitman (2014) and Albalat-Mascarell & Carrió-Pastor (2019). Even if their studies are based on presidential debates, the categories were suitable for the present analysis of presidential speeches.

Table 1. Subcategories of Represented and Situated ‘I’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories of Represented ‘I’</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidential ‘I’</td>
<td>“By stressing their [politicians’] first-hand knowledge of some facts, or quoting someone else’s words (usually bringing the voice of well-respected figures into the debate), the candidates can present themselves as well-informed politicians committed to developing evidence-based, responsive policies and strategies.” (Albalat-Mascarell &amp; Carrió-Pastor, 2019, pp. 98-99)</td>
<td>“But I will tell you, I've been all over. And I've met some of the greatest people I'll ever meet within these communities.” (Albalat-Mascarell &amp; Carrió-Pastor, 2019, p. 99)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subcategories of Situated ‘I’</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>Examples</td>
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<td>‘I’ as the opinion-holder</td>
<td>“This category is often realized through the pairing of first person pronouns with verbs depicting mental processes of cognition such as <em>think</em>, <em>believe</em>, <em>feel</em>, <em>agree</em>, and so on (Halliday, 1994).” (Albalat-Mascarell &amp; Carrió-Pastor, 2019, pp. 99)</td>
<td>“And <em>I believe strongly</em> that commonsense gun safety measures would assist us.” (Albalat-Mascarell &amp; Carrió-Pastor, 2019, p. 99)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflexive ‘I’</td>
<td>“The reflexive I in political discourse draws attention to the speaker’ autobiographical self. But it can be further divided into two sub-categories: the <em>individual self</em> […] and the <em>political self</em> […].” (Albalat-Mascarell &amp; Carrió-Pastor, 2019, p. 100)</td>
<td>“<em>I was also raised</em> in a wonderful family of faith. It was a church on Sunday morning and grace before dinner.” (Albalat-Mascarell &amp; Carrió-Pastor, 2019, p. 100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action and fortitude ‘I’</td>
<td>“If we assume that the candidates are aware of the image they wish to portray during the debate, these qualities would naturally be those that give them the most credibility. [It] mainly relate to the image of being a man of action, having the power to implement envisaged projects, persisting in this position, having political visions for the future […]” (Roitman, 2014, pp. 748-749)</td>
<td>“<em>I will implement</em> a flat rate which will mean that consumers, up to a certain point, a certain volume of consumption, will pay the same tariff.” (Roitman, 2014, p. 748)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness ‘I’</td>
<td>“Politics is nothing without the will of male and female politicians to change areas of society that are not running as well as others: the poor financial situation, injustices, inequalities, etc.” (Roitman, 2014, p. 749)</td>
<td>“<em>I want to mobilize</em> public money, not for those who are already employed but for those who are looking for work.” (Roitman, 2014, p. 749)</td>
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</table>
The art of governing discourse “assists in the management of discursive activity and the positioning of the speaker” (Roitman, 2014, p. 750). By means of metadiscursive verbs, the speaker is able to monitor the progress of the interaction and comment on the current discourse. That is why he is referred to as a “discourse-internal” rather than a “discourse-external” speaker (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019, p.98). A discourse-internal position gives the speaker the opportunity to control the speech and organize and govern discourse (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019; Roitman, 2014).

The second subcategory of Situated ‘I’ - Positioning of power - reveals the truth that underlies a given statement as proof of authority behind the discourse (Roitman, 2014, p. 751). It “reinforces the claims of authority that they introduce and function as factual verbs, underlying the ‘truth’ behind the arguments that follow” (Roitman, 2014, p. 751). It is also associated with the dominance of the speaker and his/her full control of discourse. The image that the speaker creates through Situated ‘I’ by the positioning of power allows him/her to demonstrate his/her authority.
Evidential ‘I’ is connected with the “discourse-external” position of the speakers as they present themselves as politicians in real-time. In this function, speakers may cite other people, often those who are frequently admired by others, and emphasize their experience. In this way, they want to be seen as well-informed, so it often involves “those pieces of information they choose to foreground to provide evidence for their arguments” (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019, p.98).

‘I’ as the opinion-holder allows speakers to express their opinions, feelings, and stance toward specific issues. That is why the function is common for the first-person pronoun and most often refers to mental processes of cognition, for example, think, believe, feel, and agree (cf. Halliday, 1994).

Reflexive ‘I’ presents details from the speaker’s personal and professional life. He or she shares information with the audience. Even if the term itself (“reflexive”) could indicate a metadiscursive category that would align with Situated I, the role of this function is more relevant to the usage of Represented I. It is either based on strictly personal information about one’s private life outside of politics, which gives the audience a feeling of affiliation, unity, and commonality, or the life of a political figure, focusing on one’s accomplishments and outstanding performance during candidacy.

Action and fortitude ‘I’ refers to actions that the speaker promises to fulfil and accomplishments he/she wants to achieve and which are exposed publicly to the audience. In this way, a speaker may portray himself as a man of action (Roitman, 2014, p. 748) who is capable of implementing important steps and making a genuine change. Through the use of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ and accompanying verbs, the speaker presents his/her visions for future actions and his will to accomplish them (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019).

Willingness ‘I’, as the name itself indicates, highlights what the speaker is or will be willing to do. “Politics is nothing without the will of male and female politicians to change
areas of society that are not running as well as others: the poor financial situation, injustices, inequalities, etc.” (Roitman, 2014, p. 749).

3. Material and method

The corpus used for this study consists of 12 speeches given by Joe Biden from 2022-2023 included in an appendix in a separate file. The transcripts of the speeches were extracted from the live performances of Joe Biden and published online on the website of the newspaper of ABC News, and The White House official website. Furthermore, all transcriptions were verified in terms of their accuracy against the actual recorded speeches, unless recordings were unavailable. Minor discrepancies were detected between the actual speeches and their transcripts, e.g. the use of articles; however, they have no impact on the present analysis. There was no transcription available for Speech 5; thus the whole speech was transcribed manually, word by word from the actual video published on the website of the newspaper of The Guardian to extract first-person pronoun occurrences. All transcriptions of the speeches are included in an Appendix along with the particular categories assigned to each occurrence of the ‘I’ pronoun.

The topic of the speeches is not arbitrary, as it concerns the recent events of the war in Ukraine. The criterion for selecting speeches was applied exclusively in terms of the subject which had to be oriented around the topic of the war in Ukraine; thus the corpus consists of different-length speeches and varying presence of the first-person personal pronoun. The figure of President Joe Biden was selected as a subject of analysis as a head of the country which is one of the parties that actively delivers resources and intelligence but is not directly involved in the war.

Table 2 presents detailed information in terms of each speech, 13,465 words in total, and the location of the delivery. For speeches 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12 the actual word count was higher; however, statements given by people other than Biden were excluded to be
in line with the topic of this thesis. This means that e.g. Q&A sections at the end of a speech, statements given by other Presidents, and representations of laughter or applause in the transcript (e.g. (Laughs), (Applause)) were not considered for the analysis.

The study is limited to subject forms of the personal pronoun ‘I’, which is the personal pronoun that performs an action of a certain verb, that is a subject of the verb. Due to the limited scope of the thesis, possessive pronouns were not included. All speeches were read and all occurrences of the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ were extracted manually by searching for ‘I’ in the speeches, including contractions, such as I’m and I’ll. They were subsequently analyzed in terms of their pragmatic context and assigned to particular categories and subcategories described in the ‘Represented and Situated I’ subsection. They were calculated based on the normalized frequencies to a basis per 1000 words. “Normalization is a way to adjust raw frequency counts from texts of different lengths so that they can be compared accurately. The total number of words in each text must be taken into consideration when norming frequency counts” (Biber et al., 1998, p.263).

In the analysis, the pragmatic context of the utterance was especially crucial, as it helped assess the most relevant category of Represented and Situated ‘I’. Sometimes the context was insufficient and some statements were appropriate for more than one category, depending on how one approaches the analysis, for example: “Vladimir Putin has been planning this for months, as I’ve been as we’ve been saying all along” (Speech 1). Moreover, in some cases, even if the statement could be categorized as Situated ‘I’ due to the presence of the discursive verbs, such as ‘joke’ and ‘speak’, it was ultimately assigned as Represented ‘I’ as it did not refer to the current discourse, for example:

“And as a practicing Catholic, I joked with him that he was more conservative than my views were.” (speech 11)
Certain occurrences were excluded from the analysis due to their non-conformity with the established criteria. This included occurrences of pronouns uttered by others and cited by Biden, e.g. “One little girl said, Mr. President – she spoke a little English – is my brother and my daddy, are they going to be okay? Will I see them again?” and the entries of the pronoun ‘I’ which indicated the first-person plural pronoun ‘we’, for example, “Tonight, Jill and I are praying for the brave and proud people of Ukraine.” Repetitions of pronouns were also excluded from the final number of frequencies, e.g. “And by the way, I – I don’t say this often […]”.  

Table 2. Detailed information about the analyzed speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Date of the speech delivery</th>
<th>Word count</th>
<th>Location of the speech delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech 1</td>
<td>24/02/2022</td>
<td>1,996</td>
<td>White House, USA, East Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 2</td>
<td>26/03/2022</td>
<td>3,327</td>
<td>Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 3</td>
<td>21/04/2022</td>
<td>1,669</td>
<td>White House, USA, Roosevelt Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 4</td>
<td>23/02/2022</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>White House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 5</td>
<td>16/02/2022</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>White House, East Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 6</td>
<td>25/01/2023</td>
<td>1,373</td>
<td>White House, Roosevelt Room, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 7</td>
<td>21/12/2022</td>
<td>1,565</td>
<td>White House, East Room, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 8</td>
<td>21/12/2022</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>Oval Office, East Room, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 9</td>
<td>20/02/2023</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>Kyiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 10</td>
<td>21/03/2023</td>
<td>2,710</td>
<td>The Royal Castle in Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data analysis and Results

The collection of data extracted from the speeches includes 175 occurrences of the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ which gives 12.9 occurrences per 1000 words. Detailed calculations were essential for the analysis of Represented and Situated ‘I’ and their subcategories, based on Rotiman’s (2014) and Albalat-Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor’s (2019) models. Both Represented and Situated ‘I’ perform various functions in the discourse depending on the category they are assigned to. The distribution of the two main categories in each speech can be found in Table 4. Additionally, as per the quantitative approach, both ‘you’ and ‘we’ pronouns were counted in the speeches to be able to compare the frequencies of ‘I’ with regard to other pronouns that occurred in the statements. It can be clearly seen in Table 3 that the difference between ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘we’ is considerable. The second-person pronoun ‘we’ was the most frequent choice among these three pronouns and was applied as many as 243 times in all speeches. Moreover, the number of the ‘we’ pronoun used amounted to 18 occurrences per 1000 words, in comparison to 12.9 occurrences of the ‘I’ pronoun, which was the subject of this analysis. In terms of the ‘you’ pronoun, it was applied in 13.5 occurrences per 1000 words which is just a little over the normalized number of the ‘I’ pronoun.
Table 3. Frequencies of ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘we’ in the speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Number of words per speech</th>
<th>First-person pronoun ‘I’ (raw F)</th>
<th>First-person pronoun ‘I’ (norm. F)</th>
<th>Second-person pronoun ‘you’ (raw F)</th>
<th>Second-person pronoun ‘you’ (norm. F)</th>
<th>First-person pronoun ‘we’ (raw F)</th>
<th>First-person pronoun ‘we’ (norm. F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,996</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,327</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,669</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>282</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,373</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,565</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<td>15.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>114.3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>177.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,465</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Analysis of Represented and Situated ‘I’

Table 4 illustrates the frequencies of Represented and Situated ‘I’ identified in all speeches along with the unclear occurrences that were difficult to categorize. Eleven examples of statements assigned to either Represented ‘I’ or Situated ‘I’ were perceived as unclear.
Table 4. Frequencies of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ classified based on Represented and Situated ‘I’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech 1</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 2</td>
<td>3327</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 3</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 4</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 5</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 6</td>
<td>1373</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 7</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 8</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 9</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 10</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 11</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech 12</td>
<td>1161</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.465</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1 Art of governing discourse

Examples 1-5, which were selected out of all statements, illustrate Situated ‘I’ applied to arrange the discussion. This use of ‘I’, which is called the art of governing discourse (Roitman, 2014, p. 750), was identified in most examples of Situated ‘I’ in the speeches. The President
governs his speech, and by means of discourse verbs, such as *announce, say, repeat, and share* he leads discourse, comments on it, and is in control of the discursive interaction, as examples 1, 3, 4 and 5 reveal. The discursive verbs make it clear that the speaker is not a protagonist of the interaction but the person who utters the sentence.

This function of governing discourse is primarily focused on the speaker’s management of discourse rather than experiencing discourse by himself/herself. It is mainly highlighted in example 2, where he guides the audience through discourse. It is associated with the assumption that the speaker is situated mentally and physically in discourse. The examples illustrate that the President refers to himself, by means of Situated I, as a speaker of discourse, rather than as an individual or politician (Rotiman, 2014, Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019). This means that he is able to control the utterance and monitor the progress.

1. And today — today, *I'm announcing* that the United States will be sending 31 Abram tanks to Ukraine, the equivalent of one Ukrainian battalion. (Speech 6)
2. I talked about what *I'm about to tell you* about today, [...]. (Speech 3)
3. So, tonight, *I speak once more* to the people of Russia. (Speech 10)
4. Well, I have just come from a visit to Kyiv, and *I can report*: Kyiv stands strong! (Speech 10)
5. And so, it’s the single-most consequential alliance, and *I would argue* maybe the most consequential alliance in history, that — not just modern history, but in history. (Speech 11)

4.1.2 Positioning of power

The other usage of Situated ‘I’, although not equally common, was associated with argumentation. As below examples demonstrate, the first-person pronoun ‘I’, used with factual verbs, precedes the arguments of discourse, creating a function of the *positioning of power* (Roitman, 20014, p. 751). Situated ‘I’ is used as a framework for authority claims revealing the
truth of the following arguments (Roitman, 2014). In spite of the fact that both functions, an act of governing discourse and positioning of power, underlie Situated ‘I’, the switch from the speaker who governs discourse to the speaker who provides an argumentation, results from the speaker’s confidence in his points and arguments, claiming he is right about the statement. Nevertheless, some cases were unclear in terms of this function, and considering the following discursive verbs and the pragmatic context of the statement, they could be assigned to both Situated ‘I’ as the positioning of power, and Situated ‘I’ as the act of governing discourse. It is visible in example 6 where the speaker refers to his own discourse by means of the discursive verb *make clear* which guides the audience through discourse, but at the same time, he provides the argumentation for the claims made. Furthermore, as it can be assumed from example 7 the speaker adds some kind of emphasis to the discursive verb and involves emotional attachment.

6. *As I made crystal clear*, the United States will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of American power. (Speech 1)

7. Three hundred days of Ukrainian people showing Russia and the world their steel backbone, their love of country, and their unbreakable determination — and *I emphasize “unbreakable determination”* — to choose their own path. (Speech 7)

Apart from providing evidence and proof of arguments, the President also tends to emphasize his power in order to show that his authority, control, and domination over discourse are undisputed. The below examples demonstrate the abilities of the speaker to dominate the statement and ensure his control and certainty of power (Roitman, 2014).

8. *I'm telling you the truth*, this war is not worthy of you, the Russian people. (Speech 2)

9. *And I'll repeat tonight* what I said last year in this same place […]. (Speech 10)
The distinction between Situated and Represented ‘I’ is further illustrated in the below examples. Represented usage of ‘I’ outweighs the usage of Situated ‘I’ in Biden’s speeches and was found in 129 examples among all speeches, compared to 46 occurrences of Situated ‘I’. The particular functions of Represented ‘I’ are illustrated in the below statements.

4.1.3 Evidential ‘I’

Evidential ‘I’, in comparison to the above functions of Situated ‘I’, includes a “shift from referring to themselves as speakers in the world of discourse to referring to themselves as politicians in the real world” (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019, p. 98). This function, like the Positioning of power in Situated ‘I’, is connected to proving the reliability of arguments that underlie the statements. However, speakers primarily refer to their direct and personal knowledge, or cite other reputable people, as all examples demonstrate. This function may help speakers to be perceived as credible politicians with first-hand knowledge and experience and as having an authoritative manner. This is reflected in example 13 where Biden recalls his meeting with President Zelenskyy, who is respected by many people nowadays. Furthermore, this function is closely associated with action verbs common for politicians, such as meet and travel, which occur in examples 11 and 12 (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019).

In example 10, the wider context must be taken into account for the analysis. Even though it is additional information from Biden’s life, the pragmatic context shows that his friend in question could set an example for the Ukrainian people as a figure fighting for democracy to motivate the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom.

10. She was a friend with whom I served (Speech 2)

11. Today, in Kyiv, I am meeting with President Zelenskyy and his team for an extended discussion on our support for Ukraine. (Speech 9)
12. *I also look forward to traveling* on to Poland to meet President Duda and the leaders of our Eastern Flank Allies [...]. (speech 9)

13. And yesterday, *I had the honor* to stand with President Zelenskyy in Kyiv to declare that we will keep standing up for these same things no matter what. (Speech 10)

4.1.4 Reflexive ‘I’

Similarly to *Evidential ‘I’, Reflexive ‘I’*, which Albalat-Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor (2019, p.100) categorize as a function of Represented ‘I’, aims to present autobiographical and personal facts from the speaker’s life. This function of Represented ‘I’ was present in numerous examples from Biden’s statements, distributing his experiences from the past, and showing previous professional events. Example 14 reveals information from the past with a visible connection to Russia and what his role as a politician was then through the use of the ‘I’ pronoun. In example 15, Biden is trying to highlight his performance and actions taken on the professional level, whereas examples 16-17 tell a story and date back to his beginnings in politics as a senator and his meeting with Pope John Paul II, which was extracted from a wider context. The strategy of mentioning the secular authority of the Church probably aims to present himself as a religious and trustworthy person.

14. *I worked with Russian* leaders for decades. *I sat across* the negotiating table going all the way back to Soviet Alexei Kosygin to talk arms control at the height of the Cold War. (Speech 2)

15. Yesterday *I met with the troops* that are serving alongside our Polish allies to bolster NATO’s front line defences. (Speech 2)

16. *When I was a young senator, I wrote a report* and had a very senior staff member on the Foreign Relations Committee who was — and that was a committee — the next youngest person on that committee was 32 years older than me. (Speech 11)
17. And I went to see him, and we finished the conversation, and it was all about Poland. (Speech 11)

Additionally, example 18 describes his meeting with a Polish President. Even though the story primarily relates to a professional meeting, it can be also interpreted as a personal experience that had a meaningful impact on his person. Example 19 describes his autobiography with a mention of his early childhood, whereas example 20 recalls his early involvement in politics as a Vice President, and later as President.

18. But, you know, I was here last year, and we visited the base where Polish and American troops were, and standing side by side, showing our strength and determination. (Speech 11)

19. I was kidding with the President. I was — as a young man, I was born in a coal town of Scranton, Pennsylvania, in north-eastern Pennsylvania, in an Irish Catholic neighbourhood. (Speech 11)

20. And I’ve come here six times as Vice President, once as President. (Speech 12)

Both personal and professional anecdotes may be easily confused with the Evidential I function, as in the case of some examples, it is hard to determine whether they reveal some personal information or highlight proof for the arguments in question. It, therefore, could be assigned to the category with unclear examples as well.

4.1.5 Action and Fortitude ‘I’

Making certain promises is what is called by Albalat-Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor (2019, p. 99) as ‘I’ as the policy-maker and action and fortitude ‘I’ by Rotiman (2014, p.747). Since Biden is not making any policies in the utterances, the label proposed by Roitman is more appropriate to use. The examples illustrate how Biden announces what he is going to do in order to contribute to solving the issues. Even though he is not able to end the war and solve the problem on his own, by sharing the promises through Represented ‘I’, he switches from highlighting his
attitude to taking particular actions. As can be seen, such representation of Represented ‘I’ frequently refers to verbs describing promises and intentions such as promise and swear, and the use of future tense. Even though Biden does not directly use commissives, e.g. I promise, the following examples from 21 to 24 demonstrate solid statements of decisive actions that Biden commits to. Examples 22-24 describe particular actions that Biden is going to take up, namely, signing into law the Act, meeting with G7 counterparts, and hosting NATO members, whereas example 23 is more general with a promise to de-escalate the issue with oil for Americans. Nevertheless, both statements lead to some commitments and promises.

21. I will do everything in my power to limit the pain the American people are feeling at the gas pump. This is critical to me. (Speech 1)

22. I will also sign into law the National Defense Authorization Act, which includes [...]. (Speech 7)

23. Tomorrow, I will meet with my G7 counterparts in the morning and then speak to the American people to announce the further consequences […]. (Speech 4)

24. Next year, I will host every member of NATO for our 2024 summit in the United States. (Speech 10)

4.1.6 ‘I’ as the opinion-holder

The penultimate category that was ascribed to Represented ‘I’ by Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor (2019) is ‘I’ as the opinion-holder. As it is evident from the examples, cognitive verbs including think, agree and believe are common indicators of this function. The verbs think and know are predominant verbs and allow for expressing the speaker’s personal opinion and sharing his/her feelings and attitudes. The below statements demonstrate Biden’s beliefs and allow for stating his position and stance towards particular events, behaviours, and people. It is clearly supported by examples 25 and 26, where Biden expresses how he perceives a current situation and spells out what his standpoint is. Furthermore, based on the context, example 27
shows his assumption of the events, whereas examples 28 and 29, by means of the cognitive process verb *think*, express his understanding of the situation and referents involved in discourse, e.g. Americans, people who have lost family members. This function did not stand out from others when it comes to frequencies, probably due to Biden’s willingness to feature his understanding and views.

25. And, by the way, I — I don’t say this often, but *I think* we should give enormous credit to the folks in your agencies that are on the ground in Ukraine, in these spots. (Speech 3)

26. But all kidding aside, *I think* we’re in — if we keep our head and we are focused, *I think* we’re in a better position than we’ve ever been. (Speech 11)

27. My message to the people of Ukraine is a message I delivered today to Ukraine's foreign minister and defense minister, who I believe are here tonight. (Speech 2)

28. *I know* not all of you believed me and us when we kept saying, they are going to cross the border, they are going to attack. (Speech 2)

29. Having lost children myself, *I know* that's no solace to the people who've lost family but he, Putin, thought Ukrainians would roll over and not fight. (Speech 2)

4.1.7 Willingness I

The last subcategory of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ is a function of Willingness I, however, its importance is understated by Roitman (2014) in comparison to other functions of Represented ‘I’. As could be concluded from the analysis of all statements, it is frequently paired with the verb *thank*, constructing a polite greeting and a speech act of thanking, as examples 30 and 31 demonstrate. It was addressed to different referents, including the Polish President, and the Chancellor. Furthermore, willingness is also used as a means of assurance in example 32 through ‘I want you to know that’ which is followed by an additional explanation and
information. Above all, the act of Willingness ‘I’, is applied to express the goodwill of the speaker and show acts of politeness and courtesy.

30. *I want to thank* the Chancellor for his leadership and his steadfast commitment to our collective efforts to support Ukraine. (Speech 6)

31. *And I want to thank you,* President, for how Poland is supporting Ukraine. (Speech 11)

32. *But I want you to know,* President Zelenskyy — *I want you to know* that — all the people of Ukraine to know as well: The American people have been with you every step of the way, and we will stay with you. (Speech 7)

### 4.1.8 Unclear examples

A few of Biden’s utterances were identified as unclear, although they were ultimately assigned either to Represented ‘I’ or Situated ‘I’. From example 33, it is not apparent whether the beginning refers to the current speech or the beginning of the war; however, it was believed that it was the beginning of the conversation that was not transcribed in the speech. Similarly, the mention of 200,000 Russians could not be found in the transcripted part of the speech. The assumption that Biden uttered these words in the current discourse was governed by the fact that he probably would not expect somebody to remember his exact words uttered at the beginning of the war or other discourse, and he would specify it in such a case.

33. As you know, Mr. President, *I said to you at the beginning,* he’s counting on us not sticking together. (Speech 12)

34. Is it any wonder *as I said* that 200,000 Russians have all left their country in one month. (Speech 2)

Likewise, the below statement may be also perceived as unclear since even though the discursive verb ‘quote’ refers to the current discourse and was categorized as an occurrence of
Situated ‘I’, the words cited do not refer to the current discourse. Thus, it could be also seen as an instance of citing a reputable figure in Evidential ‘I’

35. And I don’t know that you remember what you said to me, but you said, and I quote, “Gather the leaders of the world. (Speech 12)

Examples 36 and 37 are somewhat vague when it comes to categorization. They contain discursive verbs, e.g. speak (example 36), and could be assigned to Situated ‘I’, but they do not refer to the current discourse, and, therefore, were classified as the Evidential function of Represented ‘I’. In the statement illustrated in example 37, the action of ‘having a conversation’ can be seen as a discursive verb, even though there is an evident reference to other figures and political experiences.

36. I’ve also spoken with Defence Secretary Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Milley, about preparations for additional moves should they become necessary to protect our NATO Allies and support the greatest military Alliance in the history of the world — NATO. (Speech 1)

37. This morning, I had a long conversation with our NATO Allies — German Chancellor Scholz, French President Macron, Prime Minister Sunak, and the Italian Prime Minister, Meloni — to continue our close coordination in our full support of Ukraine. (Speech 6)

4.2 Summary of the functions of ‘I’

The analyses of the study investigated seven functions of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ discovered in the analyzed statements of Joe Biden. Two of them, Art of governing discourse and Positioning of power, were classified as Situated ‘I’, and the remaining ones as Represented ‘I’. The art of governing discourse showed how speakers organize their discussion and lead the statement in a given way. It makes the whole discourse more organized and helps the audience
follow the speaker and be more focused. Positioning of power, in turn, revealed that in addition to discursive verbs in the statement, there is proof of the following arguments.

The functions of Represented ‘I’ revealed more about the external events behind discourse. For example, both Evidential and Reflexive ‘I’ frequently involved other people’s presence and highlighted stories from the past told by the speaker. Similarly, Action and Fortitude ‘I’ and Willingness functions often referred to future events and promises given to the audience. It aimed to make the speaker look more credible and concerned with the audience. The last function ‘I’ as the opinion-holder showed the speaker’s emotions and attitudes toward the particular issues brought up in discourse.

For some of these functions, like for example, Evidential and Reflexive ‘I’ there was a fine line when it comes to differentiation and categorisation of the examples. As will be mentioned in the results, many of them could be assigned to both functions simultaneously.

5. Conclusion

The study aimed to analyse and categorize the occurrences of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ in selected speeches given by Joe Biden. The quantitative analysis found 175 occurrences of the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ in all speeches. The qualitative analysis focused on the particular categories of Represented and Situated ‘I’, and their subcategories, and was guided by the accompanying verbs and broader context of Biden’s statements.

The findings showed that Represented ‘I’ accounted for 74% of all occurrences of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ whereas Situated ‘I’ accounted for only 26% of the total number. Represented ‘I’ was used almost three times more than Situated ‘I’, which is quite a big difference overall. The most frequent use of Represented ‘I’ was found in Speech 10 and Speech 11 and the least frequent in Speech 1 and 7, based on normalised numbers. As regards Situated
‘I’, the analysis showed that the highest number was also present in Speech 10, however, there were no occurrences found in three of the speeches. It was not always possible to clearly identify the occurrences of ‘I’ as either Represented or Situated which is described in Unclear examples section. Eleven occurrences of the total number of Represented or Situated ‘I’ were considered unclear as it was unclear from the context whether the example referred to the current discourse or not. The normalized frequency of Represented ‘I’ amounts to 9.5 occurrences per 1000 words, and 3.4 occurrences of Situated ‘I’ per 1000 words. It confirms the calculations of raw frequencies that indicated a big difference between the two categories. With regard to the frequencies of all three pronouns quantified in Biden’s statements, ‘I’ was found to be the least frequent. The majority of ‘we’ occurrences can be associated with the serious topic of the speeches, and Biden's intention to show unity and solidarity that is best achieved through the use of the 'we' pronoun. However, thorough analyses would be necessary to identify the referents of 'we', as it can refer to Biden and, for example, Americans, the West, NATO, the current audience, and so on. When it comes to the second-person pronoun ‘you’, similarly to 'we', it may have various types of referents since it can be both used with reference to one specific speaker or the audience group, or a general group of people (Thurman, 2003 & Swick, 2011) because “the second person you is similar to we in being used with different intended referents” (Biber, et al., p. 329)

The corpus of 12 speeches is not sufficient to make generalisations about Biden’s use of ‘I’ in political discourse, however, it can attest to his tendency of using Represented ‘I’ more frequently when speaking on the topic of the war against Ukraine. Likewise, the findings suggest that Biden is more willing to use Represented ‘I’. It may be because of the numerous anecdotes and different stories included in the speeches that account for the frequent uses of Represented ‘I’. Furthermore, Represented ‘I’ has more functions than Situated ‘I’, so Biden rarely refers to the discourse itself. Instead, he tries to give promises and refer to real situations
and specific actions. This may be due to the seriousness of the events. It would not be possible if he only referred to discourse itself the whole time. Similarly, the subject of the speeches had a meaningful impact on the results and the majority of Represented ‘I’ examples. First of all, apart from governing the discourse, Biden probably did not want to overuse the power and expose his dominance and control in the circumstances of war. That is why functions of, for example, the positioning of power were not identified in many statements. Due to these factors, it appears to be more appropriate to apply the functions of Represented ‘I’ while speaking about the war and addressing, among others, the Ukrainian people. Telling stories, sharing personal and professional details, showing willingness, making promises, and expressing attitudes through the use of the pronoun ‘I’ were more suitable in terms of the subject of war, and it would not be possible to accomplish it through the use of Situated ‘I’. Based on that, the overall results add to the understanding of the uses of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ with regard to Represented and Situated ‘I’ and their main functions, especially in the particular circumstances of the war.

Apart from that, the examples of Situated ‘I’ were classified with the verbs referring to the current discourse the speaker referred to, so it also had an impact on the majority of Represented ‘I’ occurrences. For example, “[...] I would argue NATO is stronger than it’s ever been” (Speech 11). It means that other examples with the discursive verbs that did not refer to the current discourse were not considered as occurrences of Situated ‘I’. In the sentence “[...] I joked with him that he was more conservative than my views were” (Speech 11), even if the verb ‘joke’ is a discursive verb, it did not refer to the current discourse itself, hence was assigned as an example of Represented ‘I’. It also had an impact on the prevailing occurrences of Represented ‘I’ category in the analysed speeches. The potential conclusion of the analyses may be therefore that some occurrences of the pronoun ‘I’ could be relevant to more than one category simultaneously, depending on from which perspective discourse is analysed.
The obtained results are in line with Rotiman’s (2014) and Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor’s (2019) analyses where Represented ‘I’ also outweighed the uses of Situated ‘I’. However, their case studies differ from the one in this thesis as they involved more subjects to analyse. The results could be also similar from the perspective of the area. Both studies refer to political discourse, even if one concerns political debates and the second concerns speeches during the war. Thus, the similarities of the obtained result may stem from the common field of politics. Even though the USA is not a direct party in the war, it takes active participation in commenting, supporting, and following the situation. Biden, through the numerous uses of the pronoun ‘I’ within the subject of the war in Ukraine, emphasizes his involvement in the topic and his support for Ukraine.

Further studies could be conducted in a matter of a few years by applying the same categories. It would be useful to compare the frequency and tendency of Biden’s, or any other president, usage of the ‘I’ pronoun with regard to the war in Ukraine in a matter of a few years. It would reveal if there is any difference in using the first-person personal pronoun ‘I’ from the perspective of time difference, and see if the quantitative results were obtained to a similar extent.

In general, the division of Represented and Situated ‘I’ was found to be useful for the analysis of political discourse, as it allowed for the distinction between the speaker within and outside the discourse. From the perspective of Situated ‘I’, it is crucial, for example, to guide the audience through the current discourse, especially when speaking about serious events like war to have it planned and organized. Regarding Represented ‘I’, the study revealed how Biden was portrayed as “the subject of the actions, states and events discussed” (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019, p. 89). However, a further study could also analyse ‘Situated I’ in relation to metadiscursive verbs that are not limited exclusively to the current discourse. It would involve all occurrences of Situated ‘I’ where the ‘I’ is involved in some kind of
communicative event, but it does not refer to the current discourse. If it was the assumption of this thesis, the quantitative results of Represented and Situated ‘I’ would be probably very similar without a significant dominance of Represented ‘I’ occurrences. Moreover, if it was a different kind of discourse and different speech event, for example, lectures, the results could be opposite, with the majority of Situated ‘I’ occurrences. In the previous research of Roitman, the results were also very similar with the majority of Represented ‘I’ applied in political debates. Thus, perhaps another possible assumption would be that politicians tend to apply the functions of Represented ‘I’ to a higher extent, however; such assumptions would require conducting more analyses.
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https://doi.org/10.1515/TEXT.2007.002


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