

A Pragmatic Study of Persuasion in Declaring Wars

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Abstract

Persuasion strategies are crucial in presidents' speeches during wartime for mobilization, legitimacy, alliance building, public opinion, historical context, addressing concerns, shaping the narrative, and emotional appeal. These strategies help rally the nation behind a common cause, maintain credibility, and foster unity. They also help build international alliances and partnerships, persuade the public that the war is just, necessary, and in the national interest, and shape the narrative both domestically and internationally. Emotional appeal is also essential, as it evokes patriotism, sacrifice, and a sense of duty, fostering a powerful connection with the public. This study aims to reveal the kinds of persuasion strategies, and classifying and describing these strategies used by the Russian President 'Putin' in his speech. Also, to reveal if these strategies were to persuasion or to make Putin more effective. The study is a descriptive qualitative design. To collect the data Aristotle (trans, 2007) and Lucas (2007) persuasion strategies were used. The data are some speeches of the Russian President concerning the war against Ukraine in 2022 were gathered from the websites. The findings revealed that three strategies proposed by Aristotle in the art of persuasion, the Russian president used only two strategies, namely Logos (Logic) and pathos (passion) in close proportions that the Logos strategy was used with a percentage of 56% , as for pathos strategy it was used with 46% percentage. Also, the analysis of the Russian president's speech revealed that Putin used persuasion strategies to persuasion people to support his decision against Ukraine and not to affect them.

Keywords: persuasion strategies, Putin, Aristotle strategies, War, Ukraine, Russia.

دراسة تداولية للإقناع في إعلان الحروب

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الخلاصة

استراتيجيات الإقناع ضرورية في خطابات الرؤساء أثناء الحرب من أجل التعبئة ، والشرعية ، وبناء التحالفات ، والرأي العام ، والسياق التاريخي ، ومعالجة المخاوف ، وتشكيل السرد ، والنداء العاطفي. تساعد هذه الاستراتيجيات على حشد الأمة وراء قضية مشتركة والحفاظ على المصداقية وتعزيز الوحدة. كما أنها تساعد في بناء تحالفات وشراكات دولية ، وإقناع الجمهور بأن الحرب عادلة وضرورية وتخدم المصلحة الوطنية ، وتشكيل السرد على الصعيدين المحلي والدولي. الجاذبية العاطفية ضرورية أيضًا ، لأنها تستحضر الوطنية والتضحية والشعور بالواجب ، مما يعزز ارتباطًا قويًا مع الجمهور. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أنواع استراتيجيات الإقناع ، وتصنيف ووصف هذه الاستراتيجيات التي استخدمها الرئيس الروسي "بوتين" في خطابه. أيضًا ، الكشف عما إذا كانت هذه الاستراتيجيات تهدف إلى إقناع بوتين أو جعله أكثر فاعلية. الدراسة عبارة عن تصميم نوعي وصفي. لجمع بيانات أرسطو (عبر ، 2007) ولوكاس (2007) تم استخدام استراتيجيات الإقناع. البيانات هي بعض خطابات الرئيس الروسي بشأن الحرب ضد أوكرانيا في عام 2022 تم جمعها من المواقع الإلكترونية. كشفت النتائج أن ثلاث استراتيجيات اقترحها أرسطو في فن الإقناع ، استخدم الرئيس الروسي استراتيجيتين فقط ، وهما الشعارات (المنطق) والشفقة (العاطفة) بنسب متقاربة بنسب متقاربة ، حيث تم استخدام استراتيجية الشعارات بنسبة 56٪. أما بالنسبة لاستراتيجية شفقة فقد تم استخدامها بنسبة 46٪. كذلك نتائج التحليل أظهرت ان الرئيس الروسي استخدم استراتيجيات الاقناع لغرض اقناع شعبه وليس للتأثير عليهم في قراره اعلان الحرب ضد اوكرانيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية : استراتيجيات الإقناع، بوتين، استراتيجيات أرسطو، أوكرانيا، روسيا.

1.1. Introduction

The year 2022 witnessed the emergence of the great event that caused a gap and division among the countries of the world, which is the Russian-Ukrainian war. The real timing of the outbreak of war between the two countries goes back since February 2014, because of the dispute over the official status of Crimea and Donbas. According to Johannesson and Clowes (2022), Ukraine is a source of threat and a competitor to Russia in the field of energy export which results in Russian annexation of Crimea. Russia launched a large-scale invasion campaign on February 24, 2022, which created a state of severe tension between the two countries, which led to the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia by some countries of the world that declared their support for Ukraine against Russia (Funakoshi et al., 2022). From this perspective, the Russian president found himself in a fierce confrontation in front of the world and most importantly in front of his people to convince them and to provide the necessary clarifications to persuade his people of the feasibility of the war and thus ensure the loyalty of his people.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Declaring war and persuading people to accept such decisions may be considered more important than the battle itself (Burke, 2009). However, the gap between being persuading and being effective might be unrecognizable excepts in the use of some linguistic strategies. Some studied investigated the effect of using persuasion strategies in declaring war or involving in military actions such as Al-Zubidi (2014), Ghazani (2016), Husein & Adel (2018), and Harutyunyan & Yeghiazaryan (2021) who found that using persuasion strategies have positive significant effect of people reactions and life. Putin's strategic approach to international relations and military actions is influenced by various factors, thus he usually seeks to adopt persuasion strategies in his speeches. This study is

an attempt to reveal these strategies and their functions which Putin used for the purpose of gaining: domestic support, geostrategic interests, perceived threats, diplomatic maneuvering, demonstration of power, creating a narrative (Putin may use persuasion strategies to create a specific narrative around the conflict, shaping public perception both domestically and internationally), and influence on international actors (Putin's persuasion strategies are often aimed at influencing other international actors, such as neighboring countries, regional powers, or global superpowers). This study is an attempt to investigate the kind of kinds of persuasion strategies used by the president Putin in his decision of declaring war and military actions against Ukraine, and also the nature and trend of these strategies on the Russian people.

1.3 The Aims

This study aims at revealing the kinds of persuasion strategies, and classifying and describing these strategies used by the Russian President 'Putin' in his speech. Also, to reveal if these strategies were to persuasion or to make Putin more effective.

1.4 The Questions

1. What are the kinds of persuasion strategies used by Putin?
2. Are the persuasion strategies adopted to persuasion or to make Putin more effective?

1.5. The Significance

This study hopes to contribute in giving contribution to the pragmatics era and to the students interested in persuasion strategies and techniques. Moreover, researchers who are interested in this topic will have directions in their next researches. To the researcher's best knowledge this study may fill the literature gap concerning Putin's persuasion strategies used in his speeches.

1.6 Limits of the Study

1. The study is a pragmatic one.
1. The chosen data is the Russian president speech.
2. This study was conducted by following the working principles of descriptive research and qualitative design. This study involves an analysis of the strategies of persuasion used in political speech via Aristotle (trans, 2007) and Lucas (2007), the strategies of persuasion used are: *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. The data in this study is a linguistic unit that shows persuasions strategies used in the Russian President's speech concerning the war against Ukraine in 2022.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Previous Studies

Persuasion is one of the linguistic topics that has attracted a significant amount of attention from researchers and linguists as follows: Hilda's study "Persuasive Strategies in Joko Widodo's Political Speeches" (2016) included an analysis of two political speeches using Aristotle's theory of persuasion. The results revealed the use of the three strategies proposed by Aristotle for persuasion.

Another study also dealt with persuasion, which is Sufyan's study "A linguistics study of persuasive strategies in English religious sermons" (2018). The aim of the study is to shed light on religious discourses and methods of persuasion used in them. The researcher used Aristotle's theory of persuasion, speech acts suggested by Searl, and persuasive methods. The study proved that religious discourses used the three strategies proposed by Aristotle in addition to speech acts and rhetorical methods.

Prayogi and Laili's research "Donald Trump's persuasion techniques in the U.S. presidential debate 2016" (2022) aim at finding out the techniques of persuasion used by Donald Trump in his political speeches in American presidential election 2016, and the analysis was done by using an approach

based on the Gorys Keraf's theory of persuasion. It was found that Donald Trump used several techniques of persuasion to get support from the audience and invest his idea in delivering his speeches.

2.2. Definition of Persuasion

Although many definitions are presented to define persuasion, most of them are characterized with sharing two factors: conscious intent and the transmission of an effective changing message. Perloff (2003) defines persuasion as changing others' attitudes though a symbolic process .Mutz et al. (1996) links persuasion to politics by asserting that the core of politics is about persuasion since it relies upon the number of people that can be persuaded to leave one side to another when required in the appropriate time and place (Mutz et al., 1996). This makes persuasion the central aim of political interaction. Philosophically, the art of using speech for persuasion is called rhetoric and the first philosopher who presented the theory of rhetoric and regarded persuasion as the center of it was Aristotle in the fourth century BC (Dillard and Pfau, 2002). The primary concerns of persuasion in the field of rhetoric, in comparison to more scientific or empirical approaches, are a strong focus on persuasion in political or civic contexts, as well as a pervasive emphasis on ethics (Hogan, 2013).

2.3. Aristotle Strategies of Persuasion

To achieve the process of persuasion, different strategies are presented by many scholars and researchers. However, strategies of persuasion presented by Aristotle attract the scholars and researchers interest and are still, up to date, used by them. Three strategies are mentioned by Aristotle which are the following (trans.2007: 37)

2.3.1. Logos (Logic)

In order to make a persuasive speech, there should be two elements correlated together in the speech which are : Evidence and reasoning. Thus, logos is ,as Aristotle referred to , evidence and reasoning (Aristotle, trans.2007:40) . Evidence involves materials such as examples, statics, testimony to support the speaker's speech which , hence, result in producing reasoning to draw conclusion(Lucas, 2009: 357). Lucas (2009:361) illustrates how reasoning can be made:

- *My physical education course was easy.* (instance: 1)
- *My roommate's physical education course was easy.* (instance: 2)
- *My brother's physical education course was easy.* (instance: 3)
- *Physical education courses are easy.* (general conclusion)(ibid.)
- *All people are mortal.* (general conclusion)
- *Socrates is a person.*
- *Therefore, Socrates is mortal.* (specific conclusion)
- *If you are good at racquetball, you'll be great at Ping-Pong.*
- *Smoking causes cancer*(ibid.)

2.3.2. Ethos (Character)

The focus in ethos includes not only the speech, but it the speaker's character that attracts the main concern. Aristotle (trans.2007: 112) illustrates that it is considering the character of the speaker (ethos)not only the content of the speech. Moreover, he states that the speaker's persuasiveness depends on three reasons : 'practical wisdom', 'virtue' ,and 'good will'. Additionally, Lucas (2009:353) mentions that ethos also involves the speaker's credibility which is under the effect of two factors: first, competence: which includes the speaker's sincerity, trustworthiness, expertise, to intelligence, and knowledge. Second, character: which is about how audience evaluate speaker's reputation, sincerity, physical

appearance, and trustworthiness. A speaker can persuade by *ethos* by *advertising* his background and explaining his experience, opinion, and competence, on that topic (Lucas, 2009:355).

Examples of the strategy of pathos include:

- *Barry Devins is the information technology manager for a major nonprofit research information.- Most of us have no idea what it means to be poor and hungry. But before returning to school last year, I spent I spent three years working at a local assistance centers. I can't begin to tell you what I have seen –how poverty destroys people's souls...antibacterial soaps and antibacterial all-surface cleaner for my apartment...(ibid:354)*

2.3.3. Pathos (Passion)

Pathos is the speaker's conveyed feeling or passion in his subject. Aristotle (trans.2007:39) illustrates that persuading audience is successful "when they are led to feel emotion by the speech". The speaker's feelings are among the most important means of persuasion. The more the speaker reflects the feelings of suffering, the more persuading his speech will be(Thompson, 1998:9). Aristotle (trans. 2007:116) states that the state of mind is framed by emotions including: *pity, fear, shamelessness, contempt, friendly feeling, goodwill, indignation, anger, envy, enmity, shame, calmness, emulation, love, favour, etc.* Lucas (2009:370) presents the emotions frequently evoked by public speakers: Fear, Compassion, Pride, Anger, Guilt.

3. Design and Data Collection

The study is a descriptive qualitative design. To collect the data Aristotle (trans, 2007) and Lucas (2007) persuasion strategies were used. The strategies of persuasion are: *logos, pathos* and *ethos*. A linguistic unit is used to collect the data. The speeches of the Russian President concerning the war against Ukraine in 2022 were gathered from the websites.

4. Findings and Discussion

To answer the first question which is stated " What are the kinds of persuasion strategies used by Putin?", the analysis of the Russian president's speech yielded some results that show how the Russian president appeared in the midst of one of the most important political crises that have sparked controversy at the present time. The analysis revealed that the strategies of persuasion that the Russian president followed in his speech to the world while he was waging war against Ukraine.

Among the three strategies proposed by Aristotle in the art of persuasion, the Russian president used only two strategies, namely Logos (Logic) and pathos (passion) in close proportions in close proportions that the Logos strategy was used with a percentage of 56% . as for pathos strategy it was used with 46% percentage. The Russian president has used facts and evidence, along with a surge of emotion, to galvanize motivation and gain acceptance from his people and the world. Ethos strategy as not used in the speech

(1)

"I would like to emphasise again that Ukraine is not just a neighboring country for us.by family ties".

President Putin opened his speech by addressing the status of Ukraine and the social and cultural interpenetration of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples, where the emotional side dominated this paragraph of the speech. The Russian president began his speech by addressing the emotional side, reminding his listeners that he will talk about brothers, not enemies, in a clear attempt to win over the Ukrainian people.

(2)

"So, I will start with the fact that modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia or, to be more

*precise, by Bolshevik, Communist Russia.
Nobody asked the millions of people living there
what they thought”.*

In this paragraph, reason prevailed over emotion, when the Russian President touched on historical facts concerning Ukraine and Russia, citing real dates and personalities for confirmation and persuasion. Going deep into history, the Russian president mentioned his historical facts along with an accurate description of the feelings that accompanied these facts, as he merged the two strategies logos and pathos.

(3)

“Then, both before and after the Great Patriotic War, Stalin incorporated in the USSR and transferred to Ukraine some lands that previously belonged to Poland, Romania and Hungary.this is how the territory of modern Ukraine was formed”

In this paragraph, the Russian President mentioned the history of Crimea, which is the point of contention between Russia and Ukraine, replacing emotional discourse with logical words that carry historical evidence with names and dates, paving the way for other facts that support his view of waging war on Ukraine. In an attempt to work on the principle of divide and rule, the Russian president mentioned historical facts about the fact of the formation of Ukraine, hinting to the aforementioned countries that they too were subjected to injustice.

(4)

“Of course, we cannot change past events, but we must at least admit them openly and honestly, without any reservations or politicking”.

Avoiding being criticized for delving into history and mentioning bygone personalities, the Russian president combined facts with emotion, in which he admitted that he might have exaggerated in mentioning bygone eras.

(5)

“Despite all these injustices, lies and outright pillage of Russia, it was our people who accepted the new geopolitical reality that took shape after the dissolution of the USSR, and recognised the new independent states”.

The current paragraph carries clear incitement against Ukraine. The sentences are full of reasons with the feelings of injustice that Russia was subjected to, and thus the preparation for convincing the public opinion of the feasibility of the decision to wage war on Russia.

(6)

“Not only did Russia recognise these countries, but helped its CIS partners,Our country provided this assistance while respecting Ukraine’s dignity and sovereignty”.

Mentioning Russia's favors over Ukraine is not only presenting facts as much as it is inciting the Russian people to demand respect for Russia and not to underestimate it and meet its favors with denial. Here the Russian president presented evidence along with indirect incitement and displayed feelings of disbelief and disappointment

(7)

“Essentially, the so-called pro-Western civilisational choice made by the oligarchic Ukrainian authorities was not and is not aimed at creating better conditions reverently accommodating the geopolitical rivals of Russia”

The facts mentioned by the Russian president regarding the Ukrainian government carry a sense of disapproval and sympathy for the Ukrainian people as one of the means of persuading that Russia is right and that the Ukrainian people are also victims, and therefore they must stand with Russia against their government.

(8)

“In other words, acquiring tactical nuclear weapons will be much easier for Ukraine than for some other states I am not going to mention here”

Mentioning facts may be covered by different feelings that the listener absorbs according to the information that was touched upon. Here, the Russian President presented facts about Ukraine's possession of nuclear weapons, indirectly instigating other countries that wish to possess nuclear weapons, but they are being fought by the West.

(9)

“I am not trying to put the blame on anyone.¹ The situation in the country at that time, both before and after the Civil War, was extremely complicated; They call it decommunization”

When addressing all this historical information, the Russian president has enveloped his words in the nature of seriousness, but in fact, his words carry many accusations against Ukraine of being treacherous.

(10)

“However, there was more to it than that. By the end of 1991, the USSR owed some \$100 billion to other countries Russia undertook to pay back all Soviet debts and delivered on this promise by completing this process in 2017”.

Mentioning Russia's sacrifices and positions that contribute to protecting neighboring countries from accumulated debts is feelings of disapproval and a clear accusation of Ukraine of selfishness and exploitation. It is a sentence inciting the Russian people and paving them for cooperation with their leadership in the war on Ukraine.

(11)

“However, Kiev failed to ratify these agreements and later simply refused to honour them by making demands for a share of the Diamond Treasury, gold reserves, as well as former USSR property and other assets abroad”

Ukraine is thieves and do not respect conventions, This is what was included in these facts presented by the Russian President, explaining to the world and to his people what the Ukrainian government is, with implicit feelings of disapproval and rejection.

(12)

"Nevertheless, despite all these challenges, Russia always worked with Ukraine Ukraine's trade with all EU countries combined was below this "

In presenting facts and providing documented evidence with numbers and dates, the Russian president included some feelings of sarcasm and gloating at the Ukrainian government for its cooperation with the West in a way that did not generate profits like the one that Ukraine obtained from its cooperation with Russia.

(13)

“I can add that Kiev tried to use dialogue with Russia as a bargaining chip in its relations with the West, using the threat of closer ties with Russia for blackmailing the West to secure preferences by claiming that otherwise Russia would have a bigger influence in Ukraine”.

This paragraph includes facts related to the European side regarding Ukraine. The Russian President clarified some facts about the exploitative reality of Ukraine in an attempt to win the Western side this time.

(14)

“At the same time, the Ukrainian authorities – I would like to emphasise this – began by building their statehood on the negation of everything that united us,developed into aggressive Russophobia and neo-Nazism”.

Accusing the Ukrainian government of inciting its people against Russia, the Russian president has reached the point of no return in convincing both his people and the people of Ukraine of the need to put an end to the Ukrainian government. His words and expressions were lined with muffled anger accompanying the facts he mentioned.

(15)

“In 2021, the Black Sea Shipyard in Nikolayev went out of business. Its first docks date back to Catherine the Great.and it has now deteriorated to an extent that using it creates major risks and comes at a high cost for the environment”.

In a tone full of pride on the one hand, and gloating over Ukraine on the other hand, the Russian president boasted that what Ukraine possesses is in fact built by Russian hands, in an indirect reference to the unequal power in the event of a war between them convincing the Ukrainian side of the futility of stubbornness and a fruitless challenge to Russia

(16)

“A few words about Crimea. The people of the peninsula freely made their choice to be with Russia..... that such aggressive actions are being taken with support from Western security services”.

As for the disputed Crimea, the Russian president chose to place the responsibility for the decision in the hands of the people of Crimea, in an attempt to convince the listeners that respecting human rights and freedom is Russian behavior, unlike what Ukraine is doing.

(17)

“As we know, it has already been stated today that Ukraine intends to create its own nuclear weapons,

and this is not just bragging. Ukraine has the nuclear technologies created back in the Soviet times”

Not underestimating the Ukrainian danger is one of the feelings reflected in the current paragraph, as the presentation of all these reasons was supported by the agitation of peoples and world opinion against Ukraine.

(18)

“Obviously, such undertakings are designed to be a cover-up for a rapid buildup of the NATO military group on Ukrainian territory..... To flights by US strategic and reconnaissance aircraft and drones that conduct surveillance over Russian territory”.

The feeling of injustice enveloped the phrases of the current paragraph, where he mentioned the main reason for the invasion of Ukraine, which is that Ukraine currently poses a direct threat and a potential land that embraces forces intending to invade and attack Russia.

As for the second question, which included whether the Russian president was persuasive or influential in his speech, the answer lies in knowing the difference between persuasion and influence. According to De Falco (2019) Persuasion is the provision of means, evidence, proofs, and facts to change the listeners' thoughts, ideas, orientations, and convictions. As for influence, it is the charisma that the speaker possesses based on a long history of trust that the recipients give him to make others behave or do what they want without actually saying it in words. So, according to the available data, which is discourse analysis and knowledge of the identity of the speaker, the Russian president used two persuasion strategies, achieving the desired goal, which is gaining the support of his listeners. He talks about himself. He knows who he is, and his listeners know who President Putin is. He is not a new presidential candidate or a new party leader trying to gain confidence.

Answer of the Second Question

To answer the second question which states " Are the persuasion strategies adopted to persuasion or to make Putin more effective?", the answer lies in knowing the difference between persuasion and influence. According to De Falco (2019) Persuasion is the provision of means, evidence, proofs, and facts to change the listeners' thoughts, ideas, orientations, and convictions. As for influence, it is the charisma that the speaker possesses based on a long history of trust that the recipients give him to make others behave or do what they want without actually saying it in words. So, according to the available data, which is discourse analysis and knowledge of the identity of the speaker, the Russian president used two persuasion strategies, achieving the desired goal, which is gaining the support of his listeners. He talks about himself. He knows who he is, and his listeners know who President Putin is. He is not a new presidential candidate or a new party leader trying to gain confidence.

The analysis of the Russian president's speech revealed that Putin used persuasion strategies to persuade people to support his decision against Ukraine. He used persuasion strategies, Logos and Pathos persuasion strategies which are crucial in war speeches, as they can significantly influence the audience's perception, emotions, and decision-making. Putin has succeeded in his choice of the two persuasion strategies to persuade his people.

For the reasons of Putin's successes, Logos persuasion strategy involves logical reasoning and evidence, while Pathos appeals to emotions and values. These strategies can shape public opinion, rally support, and motivate action.

Putin used of Logos persuasion strategy had made the speech more convincing by using logical arguments, facts, and data. It had clarified the purpose of the conflict, engage the audience's intellectual faculties, and counter opposition by refuting counterarguments or debunking misinformation. Pathos persuasion strategy had evoked strong emotions such as patriotism, unity, fear, or outrage, and connect the audience's

emotions to the cause of the war. It had also tapped into a sense of empathy and moral duty by highlighting the suffering of innocent victims or emphasizing injustice.

Both strategies had rally public support for the war by providing logical justifications and stirring emotional responses. Emotional appeals can motivate individuals to take action, such as enlisting in the military or contributing resources. Pathos had fostered a sense of national unity and identity, making individuals feel part of a shared cause. Both strategies had shaped public perception of the war and its objectives, potentially swaying opinion in favor of the government's stance.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of Russian President Putin's speech regarding his country's declaration of war against Ukraine has produced results that may be disputed, but what was relied upon is that the analysis relied on scientific foundations in the science of persuasion according to Aristotle's theory, which is still followed to this day. The first results of the analysis proved that the Russian president used only two persuasion strategies which are logos and pathos and he did not use the third strategy which is ethos. The Russian president's use of the two strategies in close proportions, side by side, has almost certainly strengthened his rhetoric. Whereas, presenting the reasons, evidence, and proofs pertaining to Ukraine and its relationship with Russia was not fruitful if it was not accompanied by a pure expression of the feelings that accompanied these facts. Emotions such as disappointment, gloating, disapproval, anger, and a sense of injustice, when emanating from a well-known head of state, may have a profound impact on the listener. Therefore, the Russian president was not satisfied with mentioning the reasons and motives only, but he accompanied them with different feelings that reflect in line with all that was mentioned and thus give the desired effect. The failure to use the third strategy, which is ethos, may be due to several reasons, the most important of which is that announcing a serious and fateful decision such as war does not imply a display of the speaker's personality, his achievements, his importance, or his status. The issue is greater than a person showing the importance of himself. The other reason may be specific to the Russian president, because when he did not mention anything about his

achievements or his actions, he did not want to distract the listener from the achievements of his country, Russia, and the machinations of the neighboring country, Ukraine. Moreover, the failure to use this strategy may be the Russian president's attempt to evade responsibility for a serious decision such as declaring war, or it may be a veiled recognition of his importance and well-known status that does not need to be shown or boasted. As for the third strategy that was not used,, the real reason may not be among what have been mentioned, as it is a matter for the Russian president alone

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