Political speeches, the purpose of which is “primarily persuasion rather than information or entertainment” (Dedaić 2006: 700), can be seen as a purposeful interaction between the speaker and the audience, in which the communicative intention of the speaker is to manipulate the audience to accept the speaker’s views and support his/her suggestions. In order to achieve his/her communicative purpose, the speaker uses discourse strategies and a variety of related linguistic resources aimed at creating a credible representation of him/herself, aligning him/herself with the views of others, claiming solidarity with the audience, modulating power relations and legitimising the proposed ideology and course of action.

This talk focuses on strategies the orator can use to open a dialogic space and construct a representation of the world imposing ideologies, social roles and identities of interactants, while projecting and maintaining an existentially coherent image of him/herself (and the institution he/she represents), i.e. the representation of his/her behaviour and attitude to people, values, facts and ideas as consistent and continuous (Duranti 2006). The repertoire of linguistic resources taken in consideration are forms of address, nominal categorization, deictic reference expressions, conceptual metaphor, epistemic and deontic modality. The discussion of persuasion strategies, such as direct appeal, self-disclosure, narrative of belonging, narrative of achievements and casting the present as a natural extension of the past, draws on several contexts and genres of political discourse, e.g. opening addresses delivered within the UN system, inaugural speeches, speeches given within the framework of electoral campaigns.