



# The Anatomy of Charisma: Reflections on Political Language and Leadership in Light of Nataliya Petlyuchenko's Study<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Overview of the Monograph's Structure and Key Arguments

Nataliya Petlyuchenko's *The Linguistics of Charisma* is a recent monograph that ambitiously tackles the age-old question of what makes certain public figures so charismatic in their communication. It synthesises nearly two decades of the author's research on charismatic communication. Petlyuchenko herself notes that this work is a culmination of research projects (some sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) and earlier publications on political charisma [see: Petlyuchenko 2009a–2009f; 2010; 2014; 2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b; 2020; 2021a; 2021b; 2022; 2023a; 2023b; 2024a–2024b; Petlyuchenko, Artiukhova 2015; Petlyuchenko, Chernyakova 2019; Petlyuchenko, Potapenko 2024; Petlyuchenko et al. 2021].

From the outset, the author frames charisma as a double-edged phenomenon – an “innovative, dynamic and inspiring force” [p. 13] that can equally have “a seductive and manipulative side”. The central objective of the book is to uncover which linguistic aspects contribute to a person's charisma and to determine why so many politicians appear to possess this elusive quality. Petlyuchenko approaches these questions by examining a broad spectrum of political leaders, past and present, and by developing a methodological toolkit to identify and even index charisma. The monograph is divided into four main chapters [pp. 15–126], with an introduction [pp. 13–14], a conclusion [pp. 127–132], an afterword [pp. 133–134], a list of references [pp. 137–156] and

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1 The review is based on the following work: Nataliya Petlyuchenko, *The Linguistics of Charisma*, Frank & Timme, Berlin 2024, pp. 215.



appendices [pp. 157–209] providing additional context. This structure reflects a logical progression: from theoretical foundations, through case studies in various cultural contexts, to proposed methods for analysing and even forecasting charisma. Such construction makes the book a comprehensive tour of the topic, guiding the reader from abstract theory into concrete analysis and finally into methodological innovation.

Petlyuchenko's monograph explicitly sets out a two-fold aim. First, it aims to answer why and how certain political figures command charisma through language – essentially, identifying the linguistic markers or indicators of charisma. Second, it aims to provide new methodologies for detecting and even predicting charisma. This hints at a forward-looking approach: not just analyzing historical examples but also creating a model that could foresee who might emerge as charismatic leaders. The construction of the monograph supports these aims: Chapter 1 lays theoretical groundwork; Chapters 2 and 3 present rich case studies across Western and Ukrainian political contexts; Chapter 4 introduces research methods and models for charisma detection.

The monograph begins by tracing the theoretical foundations of charisma, emphasizing Max Weber's pivotal role in introducing the concept to social science as a form of extraordinary, almost mystical authority [Weber 1947]. She explores its evolution through later scholarship, presenting charisma as a contested concept – both a source of inspiration and a tool of manipulation. Building on this, the second chapter explores how charisma is constructed in contemporary media discourse across Germany, France, the UK, and the U.S. Through case studies ranging from Merkel and Churchill to Obama and Trump, Petlyuchenko shows how diverse rhetorical styles – whether moral, pragmatic, or performative – can produce charismatic appeal. The third chapter turns to Ukraine, examining how charisma functions as a media weapon in political and wartime contexts. From Tymoshenko and Yushchenko to Zelensky, the author demonstrates how leaders strategically craft their public image through language, especially during times of national crisis. She also highlights the emergence of new charismatic figures – regional officials, communicators, and women in war – whose calm, relatable communication captured public trust. In the final chapter, Petlyuchenko introduces a linguistic methodology for analyzing charisma. Combining rhetorical analysis, perceptual experiments, and computational tools, she proposes a “charisma coefficient” [p. 119] to quantify key linguistic features such as *emotional tone*, *metaphor use*, and *vocal delivery*. While acknowledging the limits of such measurement, she convincingly argues that language is central to understanding how charisma is perceived and performed.

This clear and logical structure guides the reader from foundational theory through detailed case studies to practical methodological tools. Petlyuchenko not only develops a conceptual framework for understanding charisma as a communicative phenomenon but also offers empirical instruments for its study. However, the monograph's strength lies not only in its structural coherence but also in how the author situates charisma within a broad interdisciplinary context.

Petlyuchenko approaches charisma not merely as a linguistic curiosity but as a complex cultural, psychological, and media-related phenomenon embedded in specific rhetorical traditions and social imaginaries. Her work aligns with cultural linguistics and draws extensively from sociology, cultural anthropology, cognitive psychology, and media studies. This wide-ranging theoretical scope enables the author to demonstrate that political leaders' charismatic communication arises from a multifaceted interplay of language, culture, and context – rather than from any fixed personal trait.

## **2. Cultural Linguistics and Interdisciplinary Positioning**

One of the monograph's strengths is the way it situates itself at the intersection of cultural linguistics and multiple other disciplines. Petlyuchenko makes it clear that charisma is not merely a linguistic curiosity but a phenomenon embedded in culture, media, psychology, and politics. She explicitly invokes a broad interdisciplinary landscape, drawing on concepts from sociology (e.g. Max Weber's theories), communication studies, cognitive psychology, and even computational science. In doing so, the author aligns her work with the emerging trend of treating linguistic phenomena as culturally situated and multifaceted. This is very much in line with the ethos of cultural linguistics, which examines how language reflects and influences cultural conceptualisations. Throughout the book, Petlyuchenko underscores that charisma must be understood in context – both the cultural context of the audience and the media environment in which communication takes place.

A clear example of the cultural-linguistic approach is the author's discussion of "mythologemes as ethnospecific 'imprints' of charisma." This intriguing concept (covered in Chapter 1) suggests that each culture carries its own mythic archetypes or narrative templates for charisma [p. 25–27]. In other words, what counts as "charismatic" may differ across cultures because people draw on their cultural lore and collective memory to recognise charisma. Petlyuchenko illustrates this by examining, for instance, how different nations have historically conceptualised charismatic authority – whether as a divinely gifted hero, a revolutionary tribune, or a celebrity-like figure. By positioning charisma within ethnospecific mythologies, she connects linguistics with anthropology and

cultural history. The analysis of “mythologemes” implies that speeches of charismatic leaders often tap into culturally resonant symbols and stories, effectively speaking to the national soul. This perspective enriches the study far beyond a simple linguistic analysis; it shows how language and culture intertwine in the construction of charismatic images.

Furthermore, Petlyuchenko engages with cultural linguistics through her cross-national comparisons. The monograph spans examples from Germany, France, Great Britain, the United States, and Ukraine (Chapter 2). By doing so, it inherently deals with multiple languages and discourse traditions. Petlyuchenko is attentive to the fact that charisma does not exist in a vacuum; a politician’s linguistic style may be charismatic in one cultural sphere and fall flat in another. For instance, the everyday pragmatism of Angela Merkel’s rhetoric (whom Petlyuchenko dubs an exemplar of “everyday charisma” [p. 50]) resonated with German audiences in a way that might not translate directly to, say, American expectations of flamboyance in leadership. Likewise, Boris Johnson’s bumptious, metaphor-laden oratory is analysed in terms of British rhetorical traditions (even likened to a playful “Cossack Johnson” persona [p. 63]), highlighting how he draws on both classical education and pop culture in a uniquely British charismatic performance. By comparing such cases, Petlyuchenko effectively shows how charisma is cultured: each leader’s language is filtered through the norms, values, and even historical memories of their culture.

The interdisciplinary range of the book is equally noteworthy. Petlyuchenko explicitly claims an integrated approach that crosses traditional academic boundaries. She encourages an integrated methodology combining linguistic analysis with experimental paradigms. Indeed, the book doesn’t only discuss speeches and texts; it also delves into psychology and media studies. For example, there are sections on how media discourses in Europe and America portray charisma and how mediatisation transforms charismatic appeal. This indicates that Petlyuchenko sees charisma as a communication phenomenon that spans spoken words, visual gestures, and mass-mediated images. Her interdisciplinary stance positions the work within a broad scholarly conversation: she dialogues with sociological theories of charisma, incorporates experimental phonetics methods, and addresses how charisma operates in the theatre of mass media. Such breadth is ambitious, and the author largely succeeds in weaving these strands together. The reader is invited to see charismatic communication not just as language in the narrow sense, but as a tapestry of language, culture, and performative context – where a booming voice, a pregnant pause, a metaphor, and a televised gesture all converge to produce the charismatic effect.

This interdisciplinary and methodologically rich approach provides the foundation for Petlyuchenko's nuanced engagement with classical theories of charisma – most notably that of Max Weber. Drawing on the theoretical groundwork laid in earlier chapters, the monograph transitions into a deeper exploration of charisma as a socially constructed and perceptually grounded phenomenon. Here, Petlyuchenko situates her analysis within the Weberian tradition, using his concept of charisma as attribution – not essence – as a critical pivot point. This allows her to further refine her argument: while charismatic communication is indeed rooted in specific linguistic and cultural practices, its effectiveness ultimately depends on audience recognition and interpretation. It is this relational, performative dimension that Petlyuchenko takes up in the next section.

### **3. Charisma in Weberian Perspective: “In the Eye of the Beholder”**

No study of charisma can escape the long shadow of Max Weber, whose early 20th-century formulation of charisma as a form of authority has set the terms of debate. Petlyuchenko engages directly with Weber's concept and interpretation, using it as a critical reference point in her theoretical framework. She cites Weber's famous notion that charisma is not an innate or intrinsic quality of a person, but rather something that exists in the perception of others. In her own words, “charisma is not a person's intrinsic quality, but a projection: one does not have charisma, one is attributed it” [p. 21]. This phrasing, echoing Weber [1922], underscores a key idea: charisma lives in the eye of the beholder. A leader may exhibit certain traits, but it is ultimately the followers or audience who endow that leader with the label “charismatic” based on their own perceptions and needs.

Petlyuchenko's interpretation aligns with this: throughout the monograph, she highlights the relational and context-dependent nature of charisma. For example, she notes that some figures are considered charismatic by one group but not by another (mirroring the notion that “your charisma is our preferences” [p. 21] – i.e. the audience's preferences define charisma). In line with Weber, she provides cases: a cult leader like Jim Jones was charismatic to his followers but not to outsiders; similarly, in contemporary politics, a divisive figure might be a hero to supporters and a charlatan to opponents. By including such examples, Petlyuchenko drives home Weber's insight that charisma is fundamentally interactional: it requires a receptive audience who is willing to see the leader as extraordinary. In more technical terms, she frames charisma as a performative phenomenon – it is “performed” by the leader but only becomes “real” if validated by the audience's belief.

Yet, an interesting nuance in Petlyuchenko's work is her engagement with a debate: Is charisma something the speaker generates (a personal creative force) or purely an audience's projection? She outlines two scholarly approaches: (1) charisma as a state of inspiration emanating from the speaker, a kind of psychological energy or emotion that the leader projects; (2) charisma as pure attribution by the audience, essentially Weber's view that it exists only in the followers' eyes. According to Petlyuchenko, both approaches have merit, but they lead to different research focuses. In her earlier work, she leaned towards the first approach (treating charisma as something detectable in the speaker's expressive behavior) [Petlyuchenko, Chernyakova 2019]. However, in *The Linguistics of Charisma*, she tries to reconcile them. Her solution, as evidenced by the model she proposes, is to view charismatic communication as a dynamic interplay: the leader's inspired performance triggers the attribution of charisma by the audience, and this attribution can then feed back into the leader's perceived authority. It's a kind of feedback loop. We can infer that Petlyuchenko regards Weberian "attribution" as the core truth of charisma – no matter how passionate a politician is, if no one buys into it, there is no charisma – but she also insists that linguistic and paralinguistic techniques are the means by which leaders attempt to cultivate that very belief in their audience.

By engaging deeply with Weber, the book situates itself firmly in the tradition of charisma studies, but it also pushes gently at Weber's boundaries. Weber largely discussed charisma in the context of revolutionary or prophetic figures and emphasised its irrational or supernatural perceived nature. Petlyuchenko, operating in a modern secular context, broadens this: her examples include thoroughly institutionalized figures (like Angela Merkel) who are not "prophets" but still have a kind of understated charisma. She invokes Weber's core idea to argue that even such contemporary charisma is bestowed by followers – e.g. Merkel's charisma might lie in the eye of beholders who appreciated her calm steadiness during crises, rather than any flamboyant traits in Merkel herself. In doing so, Petlyuchenko validates Weber's relevance today, and uses his theory as a lens to interpret media phenomena (for instance, she might say that media narratives help shape the audience's eye, collectively constructing charisma around a person who fits a certain need or image). The review finds Petlyuchenko's integration of Weberian theory to be sound and clearly articulated. She honours the classic definition and builds upon it, showing that while charisma may be in the eye of the beholder, the beholder's eye can be guided – or even trained – by the leader's communicative skill. In essence, the monograph affirms that Weber's concept still holds water, but it also demonstrates

that examining the linguistic how of that attribution enriches our understanding of the phenomenon.

Building on this nuanced reinterpretation of Weber, Petlyuchenko turns theoretical insight into analytical architecture. If charisma, as she persuasively argues, is not a fixed trait but a perceptual attribution rooted in interaction, then the next logical question is: how does that attribution actually occur? What mechanisms link a leader's expressive behavior to an audience's perception of charisma? This is where her work moves from conceptual framing to model-building. In the subsequent chapter, she introduces the "Model of Charismatic Communication," a structured attempt to capture the communicative dynamics through which charisma is ignited, recognized, and potentially sustained. This model does not reject Weber's foundational insights; rather, it operationalizes them – rendering charisma not merely as a sociological abstraction, but as an emergent effect of multimodal interaction.

#### **4. The Model of Charismatic Communication: Contributions and Constraints**

One of the most significant theoretical contributions in Petlyuchenko's work is the proposed "Model of Charismatic Communication" [p. 23, accompanied by Figure 1]. This model presents a schematic representation of how charisma is initially constructed within the communicative dynamic between leader and audience. It illustrates the process by which a leader's multimodal communicative behavior – delivered through various channels – leads to the attribution of charisma by the audience.

Based on Petlyuchenko's textual elaboration, the model appears to comprise several interrelated components: (1) the speaker's traits and actions (e.g., emotional expressivity, inclusive rhetoric, confident non-verbal cues); (2) the audience's receptivity, shaped by pre-existing expectations and cultural or political mythologemes; and (3) contextual mediators, such as media amplification or the broader socio-political environment (e.g., crisis conditions, moments of transition). The outcome of this interaction is the audience's attribution of charisma, which Petlyuchenko treats not as an intrinsic quality but as a socially constructed perception.

Petlyuchenko employs a compelling analogy in describing charisma as a "spark" ignited when a leader's performative signals align with audience expectations. This moment of alignment constitutes the "initial attribution" of charisma. For instance, a relatively unknown political figure may deliver a resonant public address (leader's action), satisfying latent desires within the audience (expectation), resulting in media and public discourses labeling the individual



as charismatic (attribution, amplified by the media environment). The model refines traditional sender–message–receiver communication models, adapting them to the charisma context. Here, the leader encodes affective and rhetorical cues, which the audience decodes and interprets through the lens of existing cognitive and cultural schemas, ultimately producing the perception of charisma.

From an analytical standpoint, the model offers considerable value. It provides a visual synthesis of the multi-causal nature of charismatic communication, emphasizing its emergent character. By representing both the leader's communicative performance and the audience's interpretative response, Petlyuchenko effectively bridges speaker-centric and audience-centric approaches to charisma. The incorporation of an "initial" attribution phase is theoretically astute, acknowledging the provisional and potentially ephemeral nature of charisma. History offers ample empirical examples of leaders whose perceived charisma fluctuated over time, often in response to shifting socio-political contexts or performance inconsistencies. Moreover, the model appears to allow for iterative attribution processes – whereby charisma is either reinforced or diminished through successive communicative acts – thus accommodating feedback loops.

Nevertheless, the model is not without limitations. As with any schematic representation of complex social phenomena, there is an inherent risk of oversimplification. Charisma often develops not through a singular communicative act, but through a sequence of performances embedded within broader institutional and historical trajectories. While the model emphasizes communicative factors, it may underrepresent the role of structural and material conditions, such as media ownership structures, institutional legitimacy, or socio-economic volatility. For example, the attribution of charisma may be substantially influenced by prior reputation or media framing practices – factors that extend beyond the immediate communicative interaction.

Furthermore, although the model is explicitly focused on the "initial attribution" of charisma, it leaves unanswered questions regarding the maintenance, routinization, or dissipation of charismatic perception over time. This is a critical gap, particularly in light of Weberian theory, which highlights the routinization of charisma as a central sociological process. While Petlyuchenko's focus on the performative and linguistic genesis of charisma is valid and appropriately delimited, a more comprehensive theoretical model might integrate additional dimensions – such as institutional embedding, affective contagion in networks, or the differential media affordances available to competing leaders.

In this regard, the model can be seen as an important starting point – a conceptual framework that lends itself to empirical operationalization and further theoretical elaboration. Future research might test the model's components



through experimental or observational methods, quantifying variables such as prosodic features in speech or audience emotional arousal to assess their correlation with perceived charisma. Similarly, longitudinal designs could explore the durability of initial attribution and the communicative strategies required to sustain or rebuild charismatic perception.

In sum, Petlyuchenko's Model of Charismatic Communication represents a valuable conceptual innovation. It offers a clear, pedagogically effective tool for theorizing the communicative genesis of charisma, anchoring abstract concepts in a visualizable schema. While its scope is necessarily constrained, it opens important avenues for further theoretical and empirical inquiry. As an initial foray into modeling a highly elusive and dynamic phenomenon, it succeeds in demystifying the interplay between leader performance and audience reception – what might be termed the “charisma engine.” Expanding this model to capture charisma's lifecycle would be a productive direction for future research.

### **5. Methodological Scope and Innovation**

One of the most impressive features of Petlyuchenko's work is its methodological range. Chapter 4 effectively doubles as a mini-handbook for charisma research, outlining an eclectic mix of linguistic tools – from classical rhetorical analysis to modern computational techniques. Rather than committing to a single paradigm, Petlyuchenko adopts a multimodal approach that integrates textual, phonological, and gestural data. For example, she analyzes speech transcripts for rhetorical and lexical patterns, audio recordings for prosody and voice quality, and visual materials for gestures and facial expressions. This triangulated method reflects an important insight: charisma is not merely what is said, but how it is said – and how it is seen. Petlyuchenko treats political speech almost like musical performance, using her background in phonetics to interpret international “waves” and rhythmic patterns as indicators of charismatic appeal.

This is especially evident in her phonological analysis. Drawing on her expertise in computational phonetics, she quantifies “prosodic intensity” in charismatic speech – showing how leaders modulate pitch, volume, and pace to convey emotional force. Charismatic figures often begin phrases softly and rise to a crescendo, creating what she terms an “appellative wave” – a melodic pull designed to engage the audience. These observations are supported with PRAAT-generated spectrograms and pitch contours, giving the work empirical weight. Importantly, her findings echo broader research in sociophonetics, which shows that vocal dynamism and pitch variation are commonly perceived as charismatic. By grounding such traits in acoustic data, Petlyuchenko pushes the study of charisma beyond subjective impressions into observable phenomena.

The book also incorporates experimental methods. Petlyuchenko describes associative experiments in which participants responded to speech samples with free associations, as well as perceptual identification tests where listeners rated charisma in short clips. These add a psycholinguistic layer to the research, enabling her to correlate listener judgments with linguistic features – a classic strategy in communication studies. This triangulation between perception and production enhances the book’s methodological rigor and guards against anecdotalism.

However, this richness comes with trade-offs. The ambition to combine so many methods means some are presented in broad strokes. Readers with a methodological interest may wish for more transparency about sample sizes, statistical significance, or data sources – especially regarding experimental findings and the derivation of “charisma coefficients” for political figures. These coefficients are intriguing, as is her attempt to model “charisma cycles” across history, but the computational logic behind them remains opaque. Without more detail, the replicability of some analyses may be questioned.

Another limitation concerns data selection. The book largely relies on publicly available recordings and transcripts, which may skew toward polished, high-stakes speeches rather than everyday discourse. Moreover, while non-verbal communication is acknowledged, the analysis of gesture remains largely descriptive. Statements such as “Leader X gestured with open palms” are insightful but lack systematic quantification. In a multimodal study, this unevenness makes voice and text more analytically central than gesture or embodiment.

In sum, Petlyuchenko’s methodological approach is ambitious, innovative, and largely successful. The combination of qualitative insight, acoustic precision, and experimental grounding gives the work a unique position within charisma studies. Her integrated method encourages us to think of charisma as something that can be dissected – diagnosed, even – using scientific tools. She offers a kind of communicative anatomy: rhetoric as the skeleton, prosody as the heartbeat, gesture as the body language. Future researchers could extend this framework with larger datasets, more granular gesture analysis, or longitudinal tracking. As it stands, Petlyuchenko’s contribution is both foundational and forward-looking, pointing toward a more empirical and systematic science of charismatic communication.

## **6. The Author’s Scholarly Background and Its Influence**

Understanding Petlyuchenko’s scholarly background sheds light on certain choices in the book. Having been a professor at the Odesa National Academy of Music and a visiting scholar of linguistics in Dresden, she brings an eclectic

blend of expertise in music, linguistics and computational phonetics to the analysis of political discourse. This interdisciplinary training is evident throughout the monograph. For instance, her background in phonetics and acoustics is evident in the detailed attention she pays to prosody – intonation, stress, and rhythm – in charismatic speech. Much like a musicologist dissecting a symphony, Petlyuchenko analyses political oratory for its tonal and rhythmic patterns. She even refers to certain delivery styles as “rhapsodic prosody” [p. 82], treating charismatic speech as a kind of spoken music. This approach yields compelling insights, such as the observation that charismatic oratory intensifies the dynamic, tonal, and temporal aspects of the voice (e.g. wider volume swings, pitch variation, and shifts in pacing), creating an impression of passionate emotional energy that captivates audiences.

However, her grounding in Eastern European academic traditions and the humanities may also contribute to a tendency towards broad generalisations. Petlyuchenko often makes large-scale theoretical claims, such as generalising about “female charismatic expressiveness” [p. 36] or mapping “charisma coefficients” for historical leaders in Germany and Ukraine [p. 191]. These attempts to quantify and classify are intellectually provocative and reflect a scientific inclination, which is probably rooted in her experience of computational analysis. However, there is a risk that, in seeking to systematise an amorphous and highly contextual phenomenon such as charisma, the analysis can become overly simplistic. For instance, her typology of charismatic leadership styles – inspirational, practical, provocative and moral – is intriguing, but at times seems to impose overly rigid categories onto complex political figures such as Brandt, Schmidt, Strauss and Gauck.

Nevertheless, it is precisely this intellectual ambition that gives the book its distinctive character. Petlyuchenko’s deep familiarity with political oratory in different languages enables her to establish links that might escape scholars with a more limited focus. Her perspective also enriches a field that is often dominated by Anglo-American case studies.

## **7. Relevance to Polish Linguistic Research and Comparative Reflections**

Although Petlyuchenko’s monograph does not explicitly focus on Polish leaders, its insights are highly relevant to Polish linguistic and discourse studies – especially given Poland’s rich history of charismatic figures in politics and social movements. A Polish reader or researcher can readily apply Petlyuchenko’s framework to local examples. Take, for instance, Lech Wałęsa, the Solidarity leader and former president of Poland. Wałęsa is often regarded as

a charismatic figure who galvanized a nation in the 1980s. How might the author approach illuminate Wałęsa's communication? We can draw parallels with figures Petlyuchenko does discuss. Wałęsa's charisma had an earthy, populist flavour – he was a shipyard electrician-turned-union leader who spoke plainly, used folksy humor, and embodied the hopes of ordinary Poles. In Petlyuchenko's terms, Wałęsa might be seen as an "inspirational charismatic" akin to Willy Brandt (who inspired through authenticity and emotional connection), combined with a bit of "provocateur charisma" akin to Franz-Josef Strauss (given Wałęsa's sometimes blunt, provocative remarks). Petlyuchenko's emphasis on cultural mythologemes is pertinent here: Wałęsa consciously styled himself as a champion of the people, even adopting casual language and religious references that resonated with Polish Catholic workers – a cultural imprint that amplified his charisma.

Polish linguistic research could use Petlyuchenko's methodology to dissect Wałęsa's speeches and interviews: analyzing his use of the Polish language's rich repertoire of honorifics or diminutives when addressing people (to build camaraderie), or examining his intonation patterns when rallying crowds in Gdańsk. Did Wałęsa use the same "appellative waves" and prosodic intensifications that Petlyuchenko found in other charismatic leaders' speech? Preliminary observation suggests yes – recordings of Wałęsa show him modulating his voice passionately, though not with the polished oratory of a JFK, rather with a raw authenticity that itself became charismatic. Furthermore, Petlyuchenko's notion that charisma can be a media weapon is relevant to Poland's post-1989 politics as well. The Polish press and international media were fascinated by Wałęsa's persona – his mustachioed everyman image – and this media packaging contributed to his aura. Petlyuchenko's Chapter 3 on mediatisation of charisma (with Zelensky as a case study of a performer-turned-politician) might inspire a comparative analysis: Zelensky leveraged TV and social media effectively, whereas Wałęsa's era was pre-internet but he still mastered the television interviews and photo-ops (like holding the pen high after signing the August Agreements in 1980) to create iconic charismatic moments.

Finally, Petlyuchenko's work invites Polish researchers to consider comparative studies with figures she analysed, such as Willy Brandt, who has a special connection to Poland (his famous Kniefall in Warsaw in 1970, a gesture of humility, is an iconic moment of moral charisma). Brandt's charismatic image as an "inspirational charismatic" and a reconciler could be compared to Polish leaders like Tadeusz Mazowiecki or Bronisław Geremek, who also carried themselves with moral authority and calm inspiration during Poland's transition. Alternatively, one could compare Poland's charismatic leaders with the

more populist strains Petlyuchenko examines (like Donald Trump's business-entertainer charisma). Poland has seen populist communicators as well; examining, for instance, the rhetoric of Szymon Hołownia (a television personality-turned-politician) through Petlyuchenko's framework might yield insights into how celebrity and anti-establishment style function in Polish charisma, much as she looked at Zelensky and Trump.

In conclusion, **the monograph's relevance to Polish linguistic research is significant.** It provides not only a framework and methodology that can be transplanted to Polish data, but also a sense of how to situate Polish experiences of charismatic leadership in a broader context. Petlyuchenko's work encourages looking at language, voice, and gesture together – something Polish linguists could apply to their own corpus of political speeches (e.g. analyzing Lech Wałęsa's 1995 presidential debate with Aleksander Kwaśniewski for charisma signals, or the contrasting speaking styles of Donald Tusk *versus* Jarosław Kaczyński in contemporary politics). Additionally, Petlyuchenko's interdisciplinary reach means that Polish scholars can dialogue with international charisma research armed with her findings – connecting local insights (like the Polish cultural trope of the “szlachetny przywódca” – noble leader) with global patterns. If anything, the book might inspire a dedicated study or volume on *The Linguistics of Charisma* in Polish Discourse, applying similar analyses to Polish leaders. Given Poland's ongoing interest in the power of oratory and leadership (dating back to Piłsudski and beyond), Petlyuchenko's monograph is a timely and enriching resource that could spur both retrospective studies (on historical figures) and forward-looking ones (on how charismatic communication might shape Poland's future leadership narratives).

## 8. Conclusion: A Source of Inspiration for Further Research

Despite a few ideological overtones, *The Linguistics of Charisma* succeeds in providing a fertile ground for future scholarship. In fact, one of the most valuable aspects of the monograph is how it sparks new questions and suggests avenues for additional research. Petlyuchenko's integrated approach – combining qualitative discourse analysis with quantitative and experimental methods – serves as a methodological template that researchers can adapt and refine. For instance, she includes Appendix A with sample questionnaires used in her charisma perception experiments [p. 159]. This transparency is an invitation for other scholars to replicate or build on her studies. A researcher interested in charismatic speech could take these questionnaires (originally in German, as noted) and apply them in another context, say, to test how Polish audiences perceive the charisma of different speakers. The fact that Petlyuchenko not only

presents findings but also shares her tools makes the book a practical springboard for further investigation.

Moreover, Petlyuchenko frequently points out unresolved questions in the text, implicitly encouraging others to take up the mantle. For example, when discussing the dark sides of charisma (like its “toxic” or manipulative manifestations), she raises ethical and psychological questions that lie beyond the scope of her linguistic focus. These questions – such as how do we objectively evaluate charisma’s ethical implications? – are explicitly acknowledged in the book (she wonders about evaluating charisma from “ethical, aesthetic or other perspectives” [p. 21]). While Petlyuchenko herself stays mostly within the linguistic lane, she effectively flags that charisma studies would benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration. This could inspire joint research between linguists, ethicists, and psychologists to examine, for instance, the fine line between charismatic influence and demagoguery.

The breadth of case studies in the book also means that many stones are left unturned, which is good news for future researchers. Petlyuchenko analyzes a wide range of figures across different eras, but due to space constraints, each case is relatively concise. A motivated scholar could easily pick one of her examples and delve deeper – say, perform a dedicated study on Margaret Thatcher’s “iron charisma” [p. 60] (one of Petlyuchenko’s intriguing labels), exploring aspects that the monograph only hints at. Likewise, Petlyuchenko’s concept of charisma coefficients for historical leaders (in Appendix B [p. 191]) provides a rough quantitative measure that others might refine with more data or different criteria. It is not hard to imagine a follow-up study that takes her idea of indexing charisma and applies advanced computational techniques – for example, mining social media or large speech corpora with machine learning to validate what linguistic features truly correlate with perceived charisma.

In addition, the monograph’s comparative cross-cultural angle can inspire parallel studies in other cultural spheres not covered by Petlyuchenko. She focuses on Europe and the U.S., with a special emphasis on Ukraine. This leaves open the question: how does charismatic communication manifest in other cultures? Scholars from those regions might be inspired by her methodology to examine their own charismatic leaders in a similar fashion, perhaps uncovering new “mythologemes” and culturally specific charisma patterns. The integrated approach would work well – combining local linguistic analysis (e.g. examining metaphors and proverbs a charismatic leader uses in an African context) with perceptual experiments on local audiences. Petlyuchenko’s work thus acts as a catalyst, showing a way to marry quantitative and qualitative insights. The creative analogies she uses – at times describing charisma in terms of “divine

grace” versus “theatrical performance” [p. 39] – also encourage researchers to think outside the box and perhaps explore charisma through the lens of performance studies or religious studies.

Finally, the book’s own questions about the future of charisma research are a prompt. Petlyuchenko ponders how to identify future charismatic politicians – a somewhat speculative endeavor. This forward-looking challenge could be taken up by political scientists and data analysts: can we predict which rising politician will become widely charismatic using Petlyuchenko’s index? Although that may verge on political fortune-telling, it’s a stimulating idea that merges linguistics with predictive analytics. In summary, *The Linguistics of Charisma* is more than a study of past and present leaders; it is a rich source of inspiration. Its interdisciplinary and innovative methods provide a toolkit that others can refine, and its broad vision of what charisma entails opens many doors for further exploration in adjacent fields.

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares that there were no conflicts of interest in this study.

#### AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

The author assumes sole responsibility for: preparing the research concept of the article, the way it is presented, developing the method, collecting and analyzing data, formulating conclusions, and editing the final version of the manuscript.

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