MOBILIZING HASHTAGS IN THE LIGHT OF THE SPEECH ACT THEORY: A CASE STUDY OF TWITTER POSTS RELATED TO RESTRICTIVE MIGRATION POLICIES

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ABSTRACT: The article implements an integrated approach to examining the mobilization potential of *Twitter*, which incorporates an analysis of intentions stated by the authors of hashtags and messages. The study cited in the article proceeds from J. Austin and J. Searle's approach who argued that any utterance is essentially preparedness to perform an action, and examines the Internet space and social networks from the standpoint of the Speech Act Theory. The article explores the illocutionary goals set by the authors of topical tweets containing an explicit evaluation of Donald Trump's restrictive immigration policy, and establishes the combinatory power of mobilizing hashtags (which call or appeal for action) and of directive speech acts. Established in the article are the most common patterns for the formation of mobilizing hashtags, along with the regularities of how directive speech acts and mobilizing hashtags are interrelated. To classify hashtags, lexical, semantic and folksonomic analyses are employed. The interrelation of hashtags mobilizing for action is represented graphically in Gephi software. The article suggests that to realize an appeal for action, the users rely mostly on the mobilizing potential of hashtags or tend to employ a combination of a directive speech act and a mobilizing hashtag, whose meaningful explicit appeal coincides in its communicative potential with the imperative verb realizing the directive speech act. It is concluded that in modern online communication hashtags appear to be a powerful autonomous instrument as far as mobilization is concerned.

KEYWORDS: the speech act theory, hashtag, Twitter, mobilization, migration policy

Introduction

At present, modern digital technologies permit effecting public political communication in real time. Social networks are of particular importance in this process, as they allow politicians to address their electorate directly, without media go-betweens. Moreover, average web users take an active part in political communication, initiating network discussions of relevant political events such as TV debates, protests, and canvassing campaigns.

User-generated content has become a characteristic feature of *Web 2.0.* in general, and of social networks in particular. Zappavigna (2012) classifies user-generated content into three types of auto-publications: web-logs or blogs (websites showing posts in the reverse time order), vlogs (video-blogs which are mainly represented on the *Youtube* platform), and microblogs. At the rise of social networking and microblogging, users would share their opinions of daily events or come up with thoughts on miscellaneous topics. However, with the developments in the functionality of the platforms, people started using them more extensively. The hashtag is one of the most popular instruments, which social network users resort to when they wish to share their personal opinion and make it known to as many readers as possible. Integrating such a topical marker into the text makes the latter accessible for keyword search within the network. It can be stated that nowadays, the # symbol has become the epitome of digitalization. A number of social movements have arisen due to the hashtag, and the language of millions of people around the world has changed. In 2015, *hashtag* was acknowledged as the word of the year among young people in Great Britain (The Guardian, 2015). The hashtags *#BringBackOurGirls*, *#blackLivesMatter*, and *#Metoo* have turned into something more than just topical tags for labelling the topic of messages in the information flow of social networks. Jost et al. (2018, p. 86) indicate that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a protest that does not have its own distinctive hashtag on *Twitter*. Such hashtags labelling significant social causes have become their common names and found a way from the virtual space into the real world. According to Segeberg & Bennet (2011, p. 201), the hashtag is a cross-cutting network mechanism, which, as Tremayne (2014, p.113) stresses, permits uniting people of distant and disparate backgrounds. A vivid example of how social networks can be involved into real political events is Executive Order 13769 issued in the USA in March 2017 banning citizens of seven countries from entering the US. As a reaction to this event, *Twitter* users formed two feuding factions. The supporting group marked their messages with the hashtags *#MAGA* (Make America Great Again), *#makeAmericasafe*, *#build thewall*.

The opposing faction used the hashtags *#resist* and *#noban* urging their fellow-countrymen to boycott the order and take the line of resistance.

Mobilization Aspect of Hashtags and Speech Act Theory

The form of hashtags used on *Twitter* is called integrated metadata, i.e. information on the data, which is in-built into the linguistic structure of tweets (Zappavigna, 2015). Within a tweet, the use of the # tag establishes attributive relations between the tweet as a token marked with a label and the tag as its type. In other words, hashtags integrate a keyword into the tweet as metadata, thus specifying the topic of the message, which the user ascribed to it. These relations between the tweet and the hashtag imply that other users will also include hashtags and use them when commenting on the topic given or discussing it. Generating keywords in the likeness of hashtags allows *Twitter* users to get involved in the creation of collective tags or, in folksonomy. Folksonomy is a practical branch of semantic analysis envisaging the users' collective classification of the online space by means of tags or hashtags, the former being understood as text labels, which are logically associated with the informational object classified. Hashtags help create popular subjects, which are called *Trending Topics* on *Twitter*. If a tag sets a trend it becomes influential, widespread, and consequential amongst a multitude of other words (Page, 2012, p.183). It is particularly true of big events in culture, sports, and politics, e.g. *#election2018*, *#olympics2018*, *#worldcup*, etc. The hashtag *#MAGA* appeared on *Twitter* at the beginning of 2016 and reached a peak of its spread in the period after the US presidential election in November, 2016. As per the statistical data cited in Tomchak (2014), the hashtag was daily used over 200 thousand times from the Election Day to May 1st, 2016. The *#Resist* hashtag, which was coined to counterbalance *#MAGA*, gained popularity after Donald Trump's inauguration in January, 2017. Starting from the Inauguration Day and toward May 1st, 2018, the hashtag would not lose ground, recurring in approximately 60 thousand tweets a day (Ibid.).The contemporary studies, numerous as they are, have not yet given an unequivocal answer as to whether hashtags feature mobilization potential. Jost et al. (2018), for instance, examined over 7,000 tweets related to the New York protests of May 1st, 2012, and elicited the mobilization power of messages realized via retweets. Theocaris et al. (2014) considered appeals supposedly contained in the actual text of messages and concluded that direct appeals are hardly found there. The researchers' findings documented a very limited use of *Twitter* for political purposes, after the manifest content of messages in this network had been analyzed. Tremeyne (2014, p.112) argues that even if *Twitter* is not capable of staging major off-line protests, it is certainly able to cause a scale shift or a process by which a small or local action becomes a sweeping social movement.

The present research attempts to implement an integrated approach to examining the mobilization potential of *Twitter*, which will combine an analysis of intentions stated by the authors of hashtags and messages. Having in mind J. Austin's approach, who argued that any utterance is essentially preparedness to perform an action, we can characterize the Internet space on the whole and social networks in particular from the standpoint of the Speech Act Theory and find an answer to the question how speech acts are realized in the users' communication with each other (Cf.: Ambroise 2015:338). The fundamental theory of speech acts suggested by J. Austin (1967) and J. Searle (1969) distinguishes three aspects in them, which can be realized simultaneously: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects. Further research pointed out the drawbacks of such a classification when applied to different text types. For instance, A. Wierzbicka, who made a significant contribution to the theory of speech acts, argued that questions should be excluded from directive acts, as they express "a wish to know" rather than a request (Wierzbicka, 1986). She also suggested supplementing the given classification with interrogative acts or, interrogatives, which, along with representative speech acts (declarative sentences) and imperative acts (hortative sentences), are the basic and universal types of speech (Wierzbicka, 1986, p. 251-257). Of great interest for the study of speech acts in online communication is D. Ambroise's research (2015), which examines e-mail messages and such functions of *Facebook* platform as *poke* and *like*. Ambroise looks into how the theory of speech acts can be implemented on the Internet, and puts forward a suggestion that a *virtual speech act* (the author's own term) is not the standard act as Austin saw it, but rather a written one, for whose success certain conditions are required (Ambroise, 2015, p.340).

Ambroise (2015, p. 343) considers flexibility to be a crucial feature of virtual speech acts, which, on the one hand, underlies their appeal and diversity, but, on the other hand, imposes certain

limitations related to their dependence on the technology available. Given the fact that our study is devoted to examining the content of *Twitter* social network, we can apply Ambroise's hypothesis about the *like* and *poke* functions of *Facebook* to the similar functions on *Twitter* – *retweet* and *comment*. When performing these actions, which are conventional for the platform, the user informs the others of it, and, furthermore, the names of these functions can be used in the text of the message as a call for action – for spreading the content in question:

(1)   Please **retweet/like/comment** on this call for science without borders or other barriers! #OpenScience #TravelBan.

Thus, by exploring the illocutionary goals set by the authors of topical tweets containing an explicit evaluation of Donald Trump's restrictive immigration policy, we shall attempt to establish the combinatory power of mobilizing hashtags (the ones calling or appealing for action) and of directive speech acts.

The research questions posed in our study are listed below:

1.   What is the grammar pattern for the formation of mobilizing hashtags?

2.   How are directive speech acts and mobilizing hashtags interrelated? Are hashtags with an appeal for action always built in the text of messages, which constitute directive speech acts; or can the invocatory function incorporated in the hashtag be realized independently of the actual text of the message?

The choice of Trump's 'travel ban' as an object of the study was motivated by the fact that at a certain point of time it had an obvious appeal and generated a lot of interest among users of Twitter all over the world. Thus, the data obtained seemed sufficient to deepen our understanding of the mechanisms underlying hashtags' creation and dissemination, and the suggested approach could be employed in similar studies on other topics.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on the theory of speech acts by J. Austin (1967) and J. Searle (1969), and on A. Ambroise's theses (2015) about the features of such acts in social networks. The material of the research comprises entries in the English-language segment of *Twitter* social network over the period January 27, 2017 – November 12, 2018. Entries with the *#travelban* hashtag were included in our sample of 350 thousand characters. It is essential to point out that the examples in the text are only empirical material and that the authors of the article dissociate themselves from the slogans that the texts contain.

To classify hashtags, lexical, semantic and folksonomic analyses were employed, along with frequency analysis conducted in *Atlas.ti* software. To elicit the relation between the use of directive speech acts and mobilizing hashtags, we resorted to closed encoding in *QDA Miner Lite* software. To find out the hashtags, which were used to call for action most often, we deployed network analysis (building a graph in *Gephi* software).

The research cited consisted of two stages. At the first stage, we conducted lexical and semantic analysis of hashtags used in tweets and of the topical hashtag *#travelban*. The most frequent hashtags were singled out, to be then divided into lexical-and-semantic groups. The morphological composition of hashtags with elements of appeal was examined, and several models representing the formation patterns of mobilizing hashtags were distinguished.

At the second stage, we turned to examine the realizations of directive speech acts in the text of messages (tweets), and in hashtags. In particular, we sought to find out whether *Twitter* users employ direct or indirect strategies to encourage one another to act within the topical segment under consideration. To achieve this, we had to determine the tweets where directive speech acts were realized. It was done with the aid of *Gate Developer* software. In this way, we discovered the tweets in which the authors used verbs in the imperative mood. Next, by applying closed coding we correlated the verbs in the imperative mood with the presence of hashtags with a verb in this mood (V_{imp}+N) within one tweet. After that, a conclusion was made as to which of the strategies of appeal or call for action was most frequently pursued by *Twitter* users in this semantic segment.

Results

Altogether, we examined 6,229 hashtags included in 2,408 tweets. Each tweet contained one hashtag at least; 808 tweets included two hashtags, and 627 tweets – three or more hashtags. The maximum number of hashtags used in one tweet was 19, and in this case, the whole message consisted

solely of hashtags and links to photographs. The average number of hashtags per one tweet was 2.58. For the tweets selected, a frequency analysis of hashtags was conducted in Atlas.ti software. Table 1 presents ten hashtags, which users include in their tweets most often in combination with the *#travelban* hashtag.

	Hashtag	Frequency of occurrence
	travelban	2424
	MAGA	244
	muslimban	193
	Trump	181
	SCOTUS	157
	AmericaFirst	88
	Undo_family_ban	55
	trump's	53
	Extremevetting	50
	BuildTheWall	49

Table 1 Frequency of Hashtags

Sixteen groups were distinguished as a result of the lexical, semantic, and folksonomic analyses of hashtags. Among them, eight groups were selected, in which either the overall number of hashtags exceeds 150, or the number of unique and nonrecurring hashtags is larger than 30. These eight groups are as follows: *Islam*, *President Trump*, *Protection of National Interests*, *Migration, Terrorism, Countries*, *The Judiciary*, *Personalities*. Furthermore, it was revealed that in each group there is one or two hashtags that hold the leading position. They constitute 35-50% of all hashtags within the group. Thus, it could be concluded that the appeal for action is transmitted via the primary hashtag (two hashtags) and secondary ones play the supportive role.

Research Question 1: What is the grammar pattern for the formation of mobilizing hashtags?

In the lexical and semantic analysis of hashtags used for marking the tweets related to the US migration policy and to Order 13767, several regularities were established. Apart from hashtags labelling the topic of tweets (label hashtags), we distinguished a number of other hashtags which contain elements of appeal for action. The specific morphological composition of such mobilizing hashtags permits building several models of their formation. The first and most common model follows the structure V_{imp}+ N. This type of formation is the most frequent, accounting for 295 of 808 hashtags (37%). With regard to the second element of the formula, it is represented by acronyms (*DACA, ISIS, NRA, ACA, MIGA*) and nouns performing the attributive function (*family ban, chain migration, visa lottery, sanctuary cities, white rabbit, travel ban, Islamic terrorism, radical Islam*, etc.). Hashtags containing a verb in the imperative mood, a possessive pronoun, and a noun also follow this model, e.g. *#knowyourhistory*, *#enforceourlaws*. Furthermore, among the hashtags with this formation pattern, there are some, which consist of a verb in the imperative mood, a preposition, and a proper noun: *#learnfromeurope*, *#prayforparis*, *#prayforlondon*. The second model of mobilizing-hashtag formation is essentially a verb in the imperative mood V_{imp} without the specification of its object, e.g. *#resist*, *#retweet*, *#vote*, *#deport*, *#block*, etc. The examples provided are topically related to migration policies and Order 13769,but for the *#retweet* hashtag, which is universal for the platform and permits labelling any messages, which need not be topically related. Another model of hashtag formation follows the pattern V_{imp}+ postposition, e.g., *#riseup*, *#wakeup*, *#standup*, *#walkaway*, *#fighton*, etc. These phrasal verbs are of universal rather than topical character, as they are not directly related to the topic of the tweets. It is the tweet itself that conveys the thematic meaning in this particular case.The three models mentioned above include a verb explicitly, while the models listed below either imply one, or conceal it as part of an abbreviation. The fourth hashtag-formation model follows the pattern No+N, e.g. *#noban*, *#norefugees*, *#nomigrants*, *#noburkas*, etc. The model does not contain a verb, but it can easily be restored from the context. It should be noted that this pattern can repeat itself several times within

one hashtag: *#NoBanNoWall*, *#nobannowallnoraids*.The pattern No+N appears to be the most frequent, and users tend to include other parts of speech in it. For instance, an adjective or a noun in the attributive function can be included between the determiner *no* and the noun – *#NoMuslimBan*, *#nosanctuarycities*, *#nosharialaw*, etc. The hashtags of the kind can also contain adverbs either between *no* and the noun, or after the noun – *#nomuslimbanever*, *# nomorerefugees*. The fifth pattern includes abbreviation hashtags, e.g. *#MAGA*, (or, *Make America Great Again*). Users posted this hashtag 225 times. When the abbreviation is spelled out, it becomes clear that the call for action in this case is realized through the combination of a verb and an adjective – *make great*. The hashtags *MIGA* (*make Italy great again*), *MASA* (*make America safe again*), and *KAG* (*keep America safe*) follow this pattern too, the latter also including a noun in the function of an object. The total number of abbreviation hashtags amounts to 232, while they were spelled out only in 20 cases. When the abbreviation is deciphered, the hashtag passes into the group with an explicit use of the mobilizing element (the verb).We referred the hashtag *#AmericaFirst* to the group with an implicit call for action, as it implies a verb, generally, *put* or *keep*, before the collocation *America first*. This is confirmed by the actual usage, with these verbs added to the hashtag: *Why are people in such shock about this #TravelBan? @POTUS Trump is staying true to his promise of **putting #AmericaFirst**. Simple as that.*

Revised *#travelban has officially been signed by President Donald Trump. Thank you for **putting #AmericaFirst**. Let's continue to #MAGA!! pic.twitter.com/e75GYLU3bo.*

We also distinguished hashtags, which contain a direct address alongside a verb in the imperative mood. With the help of these, the user addresses a particular person, group of people, or an organization – #congressdoyourjob (the legislature of the US Federal Government is appealed to here). With regard to hashtags used by the supporters and opponents of the US restrictive migration policy, a certain regularity can be observed. The advocates of such a policy, which prohibits the citizens of several countries from entering the USA, typically use the V_{imp} +N hashtag pattern and its variations described above. They also commonly employ the *#AmericaFirst* hashtag. The No+N pattern has proved to be far less common. Overall, the hashtags used by the supporters of the restrictive migration policy accounted for 70% of the total number of mobilizing hashtags, which call for certain actions.The No+N pattern is prevalent in the group of hashtags used by the opponents of the policy in question, with the V_{imp}+ N pattern to be encountered much less often. At the same time, the users from this opposing faction tend to use single verbs as mobilizing hashtags more frequently – *#resist*, *#repeal*, etc. The number of hashtags posted by the adversaries of the restrictive migration policy was 25% of the total number of the hashtags with the mobilizing potential.

Another 5% was constituted by the hashtags used by both the groups. Generally, hashtags consisting of a single verb (*#vote*, *#retweet*) belong to this category, as well as hashtags following the V_{imp}+ N pattern, without the topical markers specifying the user's attitude – *#prayforparis*, *#prayforlondon*, *#wakeupAmerica*, etc. We built a graph in *Gephi* software indicating the interconnection of hashtags mobilizing for action (generally, through a verb in the imperative mood, which is present either explicitly or implicitly). Users posted these hashtags in the *Travel Ban* topical segment. The graph is shown in Fig. 1. It is essentially an oriented graph with 137 junctions or, nodes, and with 176 edges, to lay out which the Fruchterman Reingold method was employed.

Fig 1. Hashtags with the Imperative Component in *Travel Ban* Segment

As a result of the network analysis conducted, we can distinguish the following pairs of hashtags, which are related most closely:

1) *#MAGA* and *#AmericaFirst*;
2) *#MAGA* and *#BuildTheWall*;
3) *#MAGA* and *KAG*;
4) *#MAGA* and *#MakeAmericaSafeAgain*;
5) *#Undo_family_ban* and *#RepealTheBan*;
6) *#MAGA* and *#Resist*;

In five of the six pairs, the *#MAGA* abbreviation hashtag is one of the members. It features the strongest relation with the *#AmericaFirst* hashtag (35). Next in strength come the ties of *#MAGA* with *#BuildTheWall* (21), *#KAG* (13), and *#MakeAmericaSafeAgain* (11). It is exactly these hashtags that the advocates of the restrictive migration policy make use of. In general, users from this group post hashtags with imperative components most often, thus trying to force their readers into some action or impose their opinion upon them. The opponents of the restrictive migration policy use only one hashtag combination from the pairs with the highest degree of relation. This combination is *#Undo_family_ban* and *#RepealTheBan* (16), and it is the most popular and widespread in this group.

3.   **Research Question 2: How are directive speech acts and mobilizing hashtags interrelated? Are hashtags with an appeal for action always built in the text of messages, which constitute directive speech acts; or, can the invocatory function incorporated in the hashtag be realized independently of the actual text of the message?**

When expressing their opinion of various public, social, and political phenomena, users realize a certain intention and provide an emotional evaluation of people and events. By applying the theory of speech acts to the tweets labelled with the *#travelban* hashtag, we aim to elicit intentions realized by the users who expressed their opinion on the Order restricting the entry of people from several countries to the USA. At first, the bulk of the material was processed in *Gate Developer* software. One of the functions, which this program offers, is search by grammar categories in text documents. Therefore, we supposed that in order to find directive speech acts in the tweets with the *#travelban* hashtags, we should run a search according to the V_{imp} pattern. The program, however, failed to locate all the verbs in the imperative mood, and the tweets were re-processed manually. At the next stage of the research, the tweets realizing directive speech acts and the hashtags containing an appeal for action were analyzed with the aid of the closed coding method. On this basis, we have compiled an index, whose categories are listed below:

1) a directive speech act as such (in this category, the appeal for action can be realized both in the tweet and the hashtag, i.e. users can choose whether to use the mobilizing hashtags or not. In the latter case the appealing component is realized in the text of the tweet);

2) a directive speech act in combination with other speech acts (within this category, the mobilizing appeal can also be realized both in the tweet and the hashtag. Users can include several sentences into the hashtag, therefore, it can contain several speech acts. The presence of hashtags calling for action is not obligatory);

3) other speech acts, which include hashtags calling for action (it should be stressed that this group cannot contain tweets without hashtags, as the tweet, otherwise, would not contain a mobilizing component at all).

A distinct fourth group was also singled out in the course of analysis. It includes tweets consisting of mobilizing hashtags only. All the four categories are presented in the table below:

No.	Category Denomination	Category Denomination Deciphered
1	Dir	Directive speech act
2	DirCom	Directive speech act in combination with other speech acts
3	Other	Another type of speech acts
4	None	No speech acts

Table 2 Categories for Coding Tweets according to the Type of Speech Acts

As a result, the text will take the following form when coded: DirCom2, where letters designate the category, and figures – the number of hashtags containing an appeal for action.Closed coding was effected in *QDA Miner Lite* software, which permits conducting a qualitative analysis of tweets, labelling the categories we distinguished, and then downloading them as both quantitative indices (the correlation of categories) and qualitative ones (the tweets classified can be downloaded in a separate file). The analysis has revealed the predominant frequency of the *Directive Speech Act* category, which accounts for 68% of all the cases. This category includes the majority of hashtags with the mobilizing component – 626 all in all. The category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Speech Acts* is the second in frequency, accounting for 24% of the total and incorporating 114 hashtags. The *Directive Speech Act* category is the third most frequent, making up 7%; it includes 64 hashtags. The *No Speech Acts* category ranks last in this gradation.

A more detailed description of categories will be given below. The category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Acts* includes 153 instances of such usage and 4 tags, which correspond to tweets with 1, 2, 3, and 4 hashtags (see Table 3).

Tag categories	Number of instances	Percentage of the total number
DirCom2	23	1.60%
DirCom0	70	4.80%
DirCom1	56	3.80%
DirCom3	4	0.30%

Table 3
Tag Frequency in the Category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Acts*

As we are concerned with the directive speech act as such, the coding does not specify which types of speech acts it combines with. The category may also include tweets without mobilizing hashtags (at the same time, each tweet contains at least one *#travelban* hashtag, which was the criterion for selecting these entries).

The *DirCom0* tag appears to be the most frequent in this category, being included in 70 tweets. An appeal is realized in them through a directive speech act, and they do not contain mobilizing hashtags, which could call for a certain action:

(2)   #TravelBan is bogus. **Work on fair & proper immigration reform**.

(3)   **Watch this video to see what's wrong with our society**. These peoples son admitted to making & trying to use a pipe bomb to kill as many people as possible. Thankfully, he is a moron. They are outraged at how police have treated people as a part of the investigation?? #TravelBan

In some cases, a labelled hashtag preceded by a verb in the imperative mood becomes a sort of auxiliary element in expressing the appeal:

(4)   How many more Americans need to die for the #ReligionOfPeace and Allahu Akbar? **Expand the #TravelBan!**

The author uses the *#travelban* hashtag in this tweet, which, due to its combination with an imperative verb, permits expressing the call for action in a concise form in the text of the message. It is noteworthy that the number of tags without mobilizing hashtags considerably exceeds that of tags with such hashtags included: 114 hashtags from this category are distributed across 83 tweets, which makes an average of 1.37 hashtags per tweet containing a directive speech act in combination with other acts. Among the tags containing hashtags, the *DirCom1* tag prevails, which corresponds to the category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Acts* and to one hashtag calling for action:

(5)   **Say it LOUD! Say it over and over!** You canNOT make America safe again by banning immigrants! #TravelBan @UndoFamilyBan **#Undo_Family_Ban**

Among the tags containing two mobilizing hashtags, there are relatively frequent cases when one hashtag is a part of the tweet and the second serves as a label:

(6)   As we **#PrayForLondon (1)** over the Parliament Attack, should the U.S. #TravelBan be re-imposed? **Vote & Visit #RETWEET (2)**

As it was specified above, a hashtag with a verb in the imperative mood can also be a part of the tweet, which allows this verb to be somewhat reinforced, especially if it is not of performative nature. This permits referring the whole sentence to directive speech acts:

(7)   Congrats on your great success, **please be our voice to #RepealTheBan**, I am a young physician working in Boston, separated from my husband due to #TravelBan, both of us are depressed and frustrated....

(8)   The Least Of Us, Unfortunatly The Loudest Of Us DEFEND CIVILIZATION **#RISEUP PATRIOTS** #TravelBan **#NoSharia #StopIslam** pic.twitter.com/gFqmswSBMe"

As many as three hashtags are integrated into the text of a message from this category:

(9)   The #Midterms2018 are a referendum on many things, including the Federal Courts and #SCOTUS. District Courts stood illegally in the way of @POTUS policies these past two years. The #travelban was one. **Put a stop to this when you #VoteRed #KAG #MAGA**

The average number of mobilizing hashtags was 1.37 per tweet in the category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Acts*.

Based on the results of the hashtag analysis in *Gephi* software, we built a graph representing the correlation of hashtags in the category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Acts* (see Fig. 2):

Fig. 2. Hashtags of the Category *Directive Speech Act in Combination with Other Acts*

As the graph suggests, the closest ties are observed between two hashtags: *#RepealTheBan* and *#Undo_family_ban*. This combination occurs four times in this category, which is the highest value. Obviously, the use of these two hashtags is aimed at resisting the Order and the restrictions imposed by it (both hashtags have the characteristic component *ban*). The authors of the tweets urge their readers to stand up against the Order, and, for this purpose, they use both directive speech acts in combination with other acts and hashtags with a verb in the imperative mood. The *#MAGA* hashtag has proved to be the one with the greatest number of ties (see Fig. 3), which is actually six. Here, we can observe a close relation of this hashtag with the fundamentals of restrictive and protective policies. Its users call for resistance, a ban on the Sharia, the supremacy of the US national interests, and for ensuring the country's security – in order to make America great again. The Directive Speech Acts category comprises 48 cases, in which users realize their intention to make a mobilizing appeal through both the tweet text and the hashtags. Overall, five tags are present in this category, which correspond to tweets with 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 hashtags (see Table 4).

Tag categories	Number of instances	Percentage of the total number
Dir3	8	0.50%
Dir2	11	0.70%
Dir1	14	1.00%
Dir0	14	1.00%
Dir4	1	0.10%

Table 4 Tag Frequency in the *Directive Speech Acts* category

Appeals for action are explicitly realized in the tweets from this category, as the mobilizing elements are present both in the tweet text and in the hashtags. The category also includes tweets without mobilizing hashtags (at the same time, each tweet contains at least one *#travelban* hashtag, which was the criterion for its selection as empirical material). The *Dir1* and *Dir0* tags appear to be the most frequent in this category, each being represented by 14 examples. The *Dir1* tag includes tweets whose authors make an appeal via a directive speech act and one hashtag with the mobilizing potential. As a rule, the authors express their appeal in a fairly laconic form, as the tweets only consist of few words:

(10)   **Get Out Of Our Countries!** #TravelBan #IslamIsTheProblem **#BuildTheWall**.

(11) **Vote for the most credible news source** #mondaymotivation #NationalOreoCookieDay #morningjoe #travelban #obamagate **#maga** #trumptrain.

However, the most popular appeal in this group is *Retweet*, with the help of which users call for the spread of information from the tweet or a media file attached to it:

(12) **RETWEET if you agree that AMERICA wins with yet another victory for our esteemed #MAGA** pic.twitter.com/QJOxS1oQ6y.

The *Dir0* tag demonstrates that users can choose not to use appealing hashtags in their tweets where the directive speech act realizes the mobilizing potential:

(13) #NothingToDoWithIslam... **WAKE UP #PATRIOTS AND DEFEND #CIVILIZATION No More** #Islam #BordersClosed #TravelBan #London **READ TO RT** pic.twitter.com/WWTBFpbUs.

The *Dir2* and *Dir3* tags have proved to be fairly widespread, accounting for 11 and 8 instances respectively. In the tweets from this category, users intensify the appeal contained in the directive speech act with not just one but several hashtags, which appear important to them and which have the mobilizing potential:

(14) **DONT DO IT!** #mondaymotivation #MondayMorning **#banradicalislam #BanSharia** #TravelBan **#BuildTheWall** pic.twitter.com/i9XJTfjKyn

(15) STOP IMPORTING TERRORISTS! P **#NoRefugees** #TravelBan #ExtremeVetting **#LookAtLondonNow #NEVERFORGET911** #ObamaLegacy pic.twitter.com/PgTo8OTA6b.

It can be noted that the actual message of the first tweet is fairly general in nature, and one can hardly understand what the author is calling for. The message is closely connected with the image attached to it, and its topic is defined by the hashtags, in particular, the *#travelban* thematic marker. The nature of the appeal in this hashtag is revealed due to the use of *#banradicalislam*, *#BanSharia*, and *#BuildTheWall*.

In the second tweet, however, the user directly expresses an appeal, which, at the same time, serves as an indicator of his/her attitude to the restrictive migration policy. The *#Norefugees* hashtag further confirms it, while the two other hashtags illustrate two cases of terrorist attacks (the user mentions them in the text of the message).

The *Dir4* tag is represented with one tag only, and in this instance the user integrates hashtags into the message text, thus using mobilizing hashtags as a part of the directive speech act.

(16) #WednesdayWisdom **#PrayForLondon #PrayForFrance** AND... ACT **#Deport invaders Enact #Trump #TravelBan #VOTE** #Marine2017 #AuNomDuPeuple #FN.

Despite the fact that the majority of users' appeals are commonly addressed to a wide public audience rather than to a particular person, there are tweets whose addressee is known:

(17) President Trump @POTUS ˜**Go Full Andrew Jackson' Mode' Ignore Interference from Activist Judges. Activate** #TravelBan **#MakeAmericaSafeAgain** pic.twitter.com/DBlYtGe4xk

In this message, the directive speech act is realized in the text of the tweet, and the appeal it contains is reinforced by the *#MakeAmericaSafeAgain* hashtag.

The average number of hashtags calling for a certain course of action is 1.88 in the *Directive Speech Act* category (tweets with hashtags included).

We have built a graph in *Gephi* software, which represents the interrelation of hashtags used in messages with directive speech acts. The graph is shown in Fig. 3.
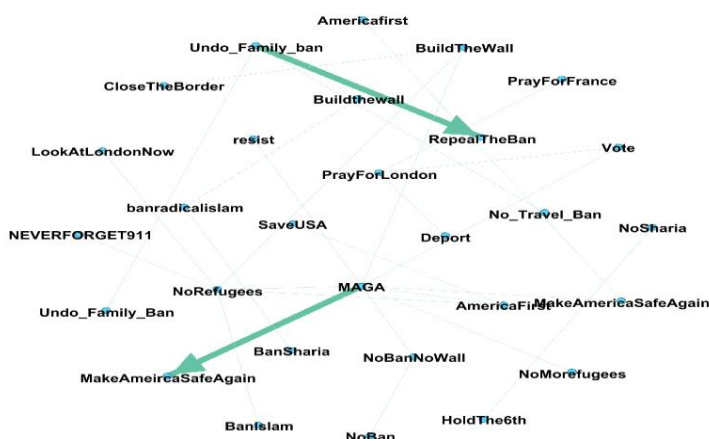
Fig. 3. Hashtags of the *Directive Speech Act* Category

As the graph suggests, the closest ties exist in the following two pairs of hashtags:
1) #*MAGA* and #*MakeAmericaSafeAgain*;
2) #*RepealTheBan* and #*Undo_family_ban*.

These combinations occur two times each within the category, which is the highest rate as compared with the other hashtags. It appears that these combinations represent two alternative approaches to the issue of the restrictive migration policy. The first pair is used by the supporters of the restrictions who put the US national interests (greatness and security) before the humanitarian ones, while the second combination is aimed at resisting the Order and the limitations imposed by it (both hashtags contain the *ban* component). The *Other Speech Acts* category includes 438 cases, in which users realize their intention to appeal for action with the help of hashtags only. The category contains five tags, which correspond to tweets with 1-7 hashtags (see Table 5).

Tag categories	Number of instances	Percentage of the total number
Other1	314	21.40%
Other2	104	7.10%
Other3	20	1.40%
Other4	6	0.40%
Other5	1	0.10%
Other6	1	0.10%
Other7	1	0.10%

Table 5
Frequency of Tags in *Other Speech Acts* Category

In tweets from this category, the intention to call for action is solely realized via hashtags. Hence, only directive speech acts were taken into account for coding.

The *Other1* tag features the highest occurrence in this category, accounting for 314 instances of use. In the cases with one hashtag, we encounter a user's commentary, who first ventures his/her opinion on the restrictive migration policy, its aspects and the related events, and then expresses an appeal with the help of a hashtag:

(18)   I am a United States citizen but I can not bring my wife here because of travel ban. #TravelBan is tearing families apart, separates couples and bans parents from visiting their children **#undo_family_ban.** We would wish if you would care for US citizens and permeant residents. In tweets containing more than one hashtag, an appeal for action is expressed in the same format:

(19)　　　EVIL preaches tolerance until it is dominant, Then it preaches intolerance. **#BanSharia #MAGA** #TravelBan pic.twitter.com/EJ5kP2Xkge"

(20)　　　#GOP is now fighting @realDonaldTrump **#resist #RiseUp** #travelban #MuslimBan

Most messages from this category are not directly addressed to a particular person; however, there are tweets, which are targeted at people who are concerned with migration policies but do not have a *Twitter* account:

(21)　　　"Madam Ginsburg, continue napping during this case. Your bias is clear & presents danger. #TravelBan **#MAGA #MASA**

The average number of mobilizing hashtags per tweet is 1.38 in the *Other Speech Acts* category. This group also contains the highest general number of hashtags, which were closely examined earlier. Overall, it may be concluded that users prefer expressing their opinion on the restrictive migration policy in the text of the message without a directive speech act, the actual appeal being realized via hashtags numbering 1-7 per tweet.

We built a graph in *Gephi* software indicating the correlation of hashtags with a verb in the imperative mood. The hashtags were employed by the users along with other speech acts. The resultant graph is presented in Fig. 4.
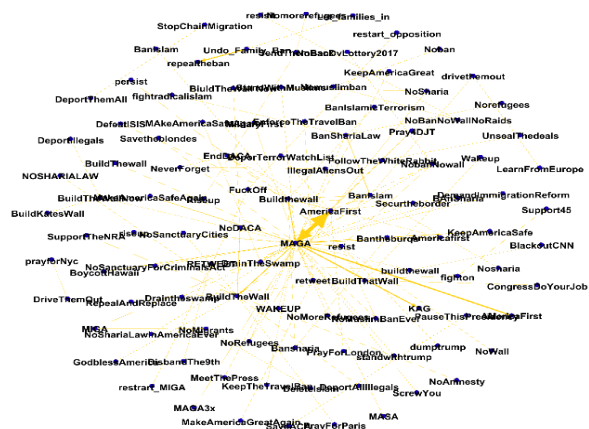

Fig. 4. Hashtags of the *Other Speech Acts* Category

As it appears from the graph, the closest relations exist between the following hashtag pairs:

1) #MAGA and #AmericaFirst;

2) #MAGA and #BuildTheWall;

3) #MAGA and KAG;

4) #MAGA and #MakeAmericaSafeAgain;

5) #MAGA and #DrainTheSwamp.

The supporters of the restrictive policies commonly post these hashtags, the *#MAGA* abbreviation hashtag being the key one among them and in the whole category in general. It both is the most frequent one and has the greatest number of connections, i.e. it is used in combination with the maximum number of other hashtags. The total number of these connections is 45 in this category.

Thus, the method of closed coding has yielded three categories of tweets with mobilizing hashtags, which call for a certain course of action.

Discussion

The study conducted allows us to draw a number of conclusions, which are listed below.

1. From a grammar perspective, five basic patterns of mobilizing hashtag formation can be distinguished: 1) hashtags consisting solely of a verb in the imperative mood; 2) hashtags consisting of a verb in the imperative mood and of a noun (several variations are possible); 3) hashtags where a verb

in the imperative mood is not explicitly present but implied; 4) hashtags consisting of the determiner *no* and nouns; 5) abbreviation hashtags.

2. It has been established that the *imperative utterance* is the speech model characteristic of a directive speech act. It is according to this model that appeals for action are realized in topical tweets labelled with the *#travelban* hashtag.

3. By implementing the closed coding technique we have singled out three categories of tweets containing mobilizing hashtags: tweets realizing a directive speech act; tweets realizing such an act in combination with other speech acts; and tweets realizing speech acts other than directive ones but, at the same time, containing hashtags that appeal for action. It has to be stressed that a category cannot include tweets without hashtags, as such tweets would not contain an appealing or mobilizing component in principle.

4. Based on the results of the analysis, the *Other Speech Acts* category has proved to be the most numerous, accounting for 68% of all the instances. Within this category, appeals for action are realized through hashtags with a mobilizing component, and such hashtags are 626 in number, which is the highest index.

5. The second frequent (24%) is the category *Directive Speech Acts in Combination with Other Acts*, where the appeal for action is realized through both directive speech acts and hashtags with a mobilizing component. The number of the hashtags is 114. The users who resort to this combination pursue one of the following strategies:

– they realize their intention via a speech act embedded in the tweet text, and do not use hashtags which call for action explicitly;

– along with the directive and other speech acts, they include a hashtag as an integral part of their text, and they label the topic of the message with it;

– they add this hashtag as a short and meaningful explicit appeal, which corresponds in its communicative purpose with an imperative verb realizing a directive speech act.

Conclusion

The study contributes to the fundamental theory of speech acts, adjusting it to the demands and challenges of online communication, and to the study of mobilizing potential of hashtags. The research conducted was aimed at revealing the interrelation of directive speech acts, as the primary means of encouraging people to take an action, and a popular online instrument – a hashtag – whose mobilizing potential has not been fully disclosed yet. The results suggest that to realize the appeal for action, the users rely mostly on the mobilizing potential of hashtags or tend to employ a combination of a directive speech act and a mobilizing hashtag, whose meaningful explicit appeal coincides in its communicative potential with the imperative verb realizing the directive speech act. It can be concluded, therefore, that in modern online communication hashtags appear to be a powerful autonomous instrument as far as mobilization or calling for action is concerned.

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