

Language tools in political discourse

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Abstract

In this article we will address some language tools used in political discourse. Given the early studies of the political notion, old rhetoricians like Aristotle finds that there are three factors: Ethos, Pathos and Logos used by politicians in political discourse. Firstly, we will also base ourselves on Burkhardt's techniques and his analysis of this study. We explain the object of political discourse and above all the difference between *speech* and *discourse*, where we accept the use of the term *discourse* as the most globalized one. Secondly, we distinguish three main areas of discourse: a) the use of language, b) the communication of knowledge, c) the interference in certain situations. Thirdly, among the most commonly used linguistic tools in the political discourse are the rhythm, repetition, phonemic variation, morphs, locutions, stylistic figures, indirectly manner with ellipses, tropes, dialogue, narration, the use of first-person singular in *us*, which is also known as phenomenon called "*nosismi*". One of the main language tools are the phrasemes and phraseotems on which our article is based, binary concepts, constructions like "*us*" "*them*". Finally, the use of metaphors and modal verbs illustrated in the discourses of Albanian and English politicians.

Keywords: Discourse, nosism, phrasemes, phraseotems, binary concepts.

Introduction

The word "politics" derives from the Greek word Πολιτικά, meaning; "Politika". The word in Greek comes from *pólis*, "state city" or "multiple congregation". It was modeled in *Politics* according to Aristotle's work by this name (4th century BC) devoted to the administration of the polis and its governing.

Politics is a process by which politicians make collective decisions. This term is generally applied for the behavior within civil governments. Also, it has to do with the involvement of other groups such as corporations, academic and religious institutions.

The meaning of politics would deepen after the coming up of two main studies by *Aristotle* and *Machiavelli* that emphasized the qualities that politics should have as such: *ethics* and *moral* on one hand, and *hegemony violence* on the other. All this can be summed up in Machiavelli's words (Machiavelli): "*Governing means, making others believe in you*".

Thus, in order to succeed in conveying the thought to a social group, the politician has to use "violence" to communicate. This mutual connection was noted by the scholars, who founded one of the earliest disciplines named *rhetoric*, which has since its early beginnings taken on the aspect of political communication in ancient times (Holly, 1990, 6-8).

The main purpose of rhetoric was to educate the ability to discover in every argument

what is able to persuade. This fundamental characteristic of rhetoric, so, the ability to create obedience to the public through discourse, satisfied the needs of political subjects, which by they exercised power through word. This idea also made clear to scholars of discourse: "The object of a political discourse is to show the acceptance of an opinion through arguments or vice versa, to take as an opinion in order to reach further conclusions. In the second case we are dealing with the discourse of classical propaganda" (Baldi, 2010, 181).

There are three factors that politicians own to convince and influence on public. According to Aristotle's categorization are *Ethos*, *Pathos*, and *Logos*. The old rhetoricians felt that every good speech should "inform", "entertain" and "move the public". Some politicians pay more attention to ethics (*Ethos*), the other politician plays with the feelings of the people (*Pathos*), and some other tries to argue with reasonable logic (*Logos*).

After World War II, studies in the field of linguistics and politics are found in the footsteps of the authors' publications Harold Lasswell and Nathan Leites (1959), who published one of the most important studies in the field of linguistics and politics, developing furthermore the studies on communication and great research in all the media.

Politics is closely related to language. Without communication we would have no politics. According to Habermas (1967) "*Language is an average domination and a social force. It serves to legitimize the bonds of organized power ...*".

"*Political language*" was the first attempt to integrate scientific studies with the analysis of political discourse in academic discipline. Klein (1998) argues that the "*The linguistic study of political communication*" is a sub-discipline of linguistics, which has been developed mainly in German-speaking regions since the 1950s. According to Klein, Critical Language Studies of Klemperer (1947, 2005) and Sternberger (1957) have been the initiators of this new discipline. However, even these studies under a critical view, were considered as insufficient from the perspective of language theory. Thus, it felt necessary to start a new methodology study in the late 1960s. It influenced the pragmatic and later in the late 1970s in language texts as well as in media studies. The term "*political language*" was originally proposed by Burkhardt (1996), which would include "*all kinds of public affairs, institutions and private speeches on political affairs, all types of political texts as well as the use of linguistics lexical and stylistic as characteristic elements of talks about political contexts*" (Burkhardt, 1990, 78).

Burkhardt suggested to make a distinction between *the language of politicians* and *the language in politics*: the term "*political language*" proposed by him (politico-linguistics) here in will be called *discipline*. According to Burkhardt there are 4 processes related to different levels of language, which can also be used as ideological reconstruction:

- Lexi-semantic techniques (analysis of *cliché expressions and words of value, euphemisms and ideological polysemy*);
- Text-semantic sentences and procedures (e.g.: *analysis of tropes, isotopes, as well as internal and external strategies*);
- Pragmatic techniques and language techniques of texts (*analysis of address books, speech works, allusions, assumptions, conversations, arguments, rhetoric, sayings, genres, and intertextuality*).

-Finally semiotic techniques (*icons, symbols and semiotic analysis*).

The object of political discourse or its authors are politicians. *What are the politicians?* They are a group of people who are paid for their political activities, who are elected or appointed as central political players. This way of determining political discourse is much different from identifying and defining lectures in the medical, legal, or educational fields, arts or culture.

But politicians are not the only authors of political discourse in the field of politics. Regarding the spirit of cooperation, seen from this perspective of analytical discourse, we should also include other political participants in communicative events such as the public, people, citizens, and masses or groupings of people. That is to say, once politics and discourses have been localized in a public sphere, much more participants in political communication will participate. The media also play an important role. So, politicians talk politically whether their speeches are contextualized as communications such as meetings in the cabinet of government, parliamentary sessions, electoral campaigns, competitions, media interviews, bureaucratic practices, demonstrations and protests, and so on.

Speech or discourse

The *discourse* term began to appear around the '90s. It originates from lat. *discursus* with the meaning of weaving, wandering and distribution. In linguistics, the notion in word is conceived as a conversation or a logical point of view. Along with this term, the term *discourse* also appeared. The difference in the language specifications of the meaning of the term *discourse* is also taken as a distinction of use by the Anglo-American academic community on the one hand, and the European researchers on the other. The first use the term *discourse* with the literal meaning. In French, *the discourse "lecture"* has more to do with the connection between language and thought, in the sense, for example, of "*creating and maintaining a society of the complex knowledge system*" (Enhlich, 2000, 162). In Germany in functional pragmatics, the term *Discourse* defines "*a structured group of discourse actions*".

In the Albanian language, students generally use the term *discourse* (Vehbiu, 2007). This term in many cases in the Albanian language only takes the meaning of verbal communication. For us Albanians, more widely *the discourse* can be used when referring to a linguistic characteristic of different social situations such as classroom discussions, conferences, (lectures), advertising, parliamentary discussions, etc.

The meaning of *discourse* in "*language games*" of Wittgenstein (1967) and "*Speech acts*" Austin (1960) is largely defined as "*a linguistic action*", whether written, visual or oral, verbal or nonverbal communication used by social actors at a certain time determined by the social rules, norms and conventions of that society.

Since *discourse* has been introduced from English into the world's linguistic literature extensively, not just as a term that names speech but also scriptures, we think¹ it is fairer to use this term in our studies.

¹ In fact, today also in the new researchers we find the term *discourse*: Sahadete Limani – Beqa, "Analiza kritike e diskursit dhe studimet për rolin e ligjërimin publik në krijimin e raporteve të pushtetit në shoqëri", in Media 3, Prishtina, 2011, f.23-39. Majlinda Bregasi, "Angazhimi në konversacionin politik -Gjuha dhe strategjitë e diskursit politik" [May 31, 2013](#).

In our work, we have dealt with the discourse in the form of a social practice, a kind of language used to construct some aspects of reality from a particular perspective, such as in our case of free discourse in the field of politics.

Language tools used in political discourse

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary analysis. According to Teun A. van Dijk, one of the most prominent scholars of the Discourse Analysis, we discern three main spheres:

- a) the use of language
- b) the communication of knowledge
- c) the interaction in certain systems.

Relied on the first sphere, *the use of language*, the scholars have noted that "Regarding to the problem of political discourse, in the narrower sense of the word, it is undeniable that, in the public procurement of power, discourse plays a decisive role, not only in terms of performance, but above all, on the ways it is used to gaining and retaining compliance (Santulli, 2005, 15)."

Political discourse has its own information disclosure strategies that aim at manipulation. The politician uses the historical and cultural tradition of the mass touching her emotions.

Some of the strategies that are accomplished during this kind of discourse in general are the rhythm, patterns based on the repetition and variation of phonemes, morphs, words, locutions, stylistic patterns such as the indirect way of speaking, elips, tropes, dialogue, figures literature and details, narrative etc. In the cases when, apart from direct information, it is required to put in motion also the imagination, or even the public's feelings, the politician builds up or obtains *phrasemes*.

One of the most prominent language tools used is the overuse of the first-person singular in *us*. Such usage is known with the term "*Nosismi*"², which implies the practice of referring to the singular per plural. The word comes from Latin *nos* "*we*". Originally this word was used when someone was speaking on behalf of a group rather than an individual.

Such use by politicians comes up because political discourse is characteristic of *binary concepts*. Most politicians try to introduce themselves in a more positive way and portrait their political opponents as negatively as possible. Constructions where the first pronouns of the plural in the angel are displayed, *we* (AL. *ne*), *they* (AL. *ata*) lie in most of the compelling of discourses.

Binary concepts are also used in determining a range of characteristics of *us* and *those* that emphasize positive and negative connotations.

If we take the speech³ on September 12, 2001, when the United States had been overwhelmed by the national assault of two twin towers, we would notify the addresses with *us*, *ours*, and *they*, (AL. *ne*, *ai*, *tonë*, dhe *ata*).

² The early usage of the term nosism come out in 1829.

³ George w. Bush, "The Deliberate and Deadly Attacks... Were Acts of War", President's Address from Cabinet room following cabinet Meeting 12the September 2011, underlining by RM: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911cabinetroomaddress.htm>.

"I just completed a meeting with our national security team and we've received the latest intelligence updates. The deliberate and deadly attacks, which were carried yesterday against our country, were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war. This will require our country to unite in steadfast determination and resolve. Freedom and democracy are under attack. The American people need to know we're facing a different enemy than we have faced. This enemy hides in the shadows and has no regard for human life. This is an enemy who preys on innocent and unsuspecting people, then runs for cover, but won't be able to run for cover forever. This is an enemy that thinks its harbors are safe, but they won't be safe forever. This enemy attacked not just our people but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world. The United States of America will use all our resources to conquer this enemy. We will rally the world. We will be patient. We will be patient. We'll be focused and we will be steadfast in our determination. This battle will take time and resolve, but make no mistake about it, we will win. The federal government and our all agencies are conducting business, but it is not business as usual. We are operating on heightened security alert. America is going forward and as we do so, we must remain keenly aware of the threats to our country".

This phenomena is noted even in the discourses of Barack Obama;

"We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people, and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan with old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat and roll back the specter of a warming planet. We will not apologize for our way of life nor will we waver in its defense, and for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you (Goal) now that our spirit is stronger and we cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and will defeat you⁴".

"Nosism" is also a feature in the discourses of the Albanian politicians:

As a man you've been floating out in politics from the aspect of journalism, we live on a very fertile ground of conspiracy theories. There is no secret that we have also established partnerships with Turkey and it is no secret that we have good relations. All this happened at a time when we were in opposition and we had no contact with the Turkish side. This can be easily proven. It is my belief that among our neighbors that we are, as the Greeks and Albanians have done vastly. I never forget that we have so many Albanians living in Greece, but after being welcomed as brothers and sisters from the Greek population, not very generously welcomed by the Greek politics. Like when they were hungry because of the war ... so there are many fantastic examples of what we have done for each other. In the moments when we have problems, we need to talk more, include ourselves willingly, as we live in a region where from the smallest things can happen major explosions".⁵

Another linguistic phenomenon that faces political discourse is the use of metaphors and their placement by phrases. It is the main tool for the formation of phrases in Albanian language.

The literation, V. Memisha (Memisha, 2011, 87) notes it as one of the general tools of the phraseological units (besides the neutralization of the inner syntax, the value of the word by the categorical meaning of the function in the discourse), is closely related to the metaphor. Moreover, this researcher notes that even in units constructed by comparison, the phraseology (phrases, our note) has a metaphorical essence.

⁴ On November 4, 2008, Barack Obama gave a victory speech in Grant Park of Chicago to appreciate his supporters and celebrated the success of elections. About 400,000 Americans got here and witnessed the happy moment.

⁵ <http://albanians.gr/intervista-e-plote-e-edi-rames-ne-televizionin-grek-skai.html>.

Through the metaphor, the meaning of a word expands, extends to other words that are similar to the first one. The use of metaphors by politicians was very evident in the language of the regime politicians that we passed. They were rewritten as ready-made formulas, removing the simple man from the right of thought and self-creation, but given ready-made lecture models to this man. The idea was for the individual to turn into an extraterrestrial audio instrument, or the word “up” (Vehbiu, 2007, 184). At that time, these metaphorical phrases, such as:

The Party is the forefront of the working class; The party is the tip of the sword of the working class; The enemy has us in the mouth of the rifle, we have it in the mouth of the ball; Power stems from the throat of the rifle; Albania, a fortress on the Adriatic coast; We live and work in siege; we are all party soldiers; Fist united around the party; Shoulder to shoulder like mountains; We fight for life or death; We keep the gunpowder dry; The enemy will bite the goat; Albania, light bulb, etc.

In the above mentioned speech of George W. Bush-it, there are used the phrasemes created over the metaphor that qualify the enemy as “*enemy hiding in the shadows*”, while We “*We will shake the world*”. This politician, thus creates a contrast to the discourse between light and darkness: where light is related to the description of democracy, freedom, patience and the freedom of the whole world; darkness personifies a small group of enemies who are hiding and have no kind of compassion and love for human life and who commit acts of terror. Contrast constructions serves rhetorical arguments units: convincing internal groups (we, all Americans, the free world) that the war that awaits America is inevitable. He tries to convince Americans that for this reason war seems an inevitable measure against the enemy.

The use of modal verbs

Even the verbs have their own characteristics of use in political discourse. The use of modal verbs is characteristic. They grammar the personal attitude of the politician to those to whom he is addressed. Thus, through the modal verbs, the lecturer’s attitude regarding the action named by the follow-up verb is considered as feasible or impossible, permissible or impermissible, compulsory and indispensable or non-compulsory, safe or uncertain, necessary or unnecessary and so on.

Regarding the construction, verbal modal verbs are half-hearted verbs with faded lexical meaning, thus losing their independence as common verbs and, therefore, if taken away from the group where they are part, they are not able to perform the function of the predictor (Agalliu, 2002, 261). In Albanian, they are used followed by a verb in to infinitive or in some (past participle form). As a modal verb in Albanian language there are used:

Can (AL. *mund,*), followed by a verb with *to infinitive*, *Must* (AL. *duhet* (have to), followed by a verb in participle form or *to infinitive*; *will* (AL. *do*)followed by a verb in participle tense; *have* and *to be*, (AL. *kam and jam*) followed by a participle form such as: *to have washed* (AL. *për të larë*).

In difference with the Albanian language, the English language the modal verbs are rich in variety. Based on the modality they express, they can be divided into: modal verbs expressing:

certainty, such as: *will*, *won't*, *shall*, *must*, *can't*; strong obligation and necessity, such as: *must*, *have to*, *need to*; possibility, such as: *may*, *might*, *could*; probability, such as: *should*, *ought to*; permission, such as: *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*; prohibition, such as: *can't*, *may not*, *must not*; request, such as: *will*, *would*, *could*; offer, such as: *will*, *shall*; promise, such as: *will*; advice or suggestion, such as: *should*; ability such as: *can*, *could*; general truths such as: *can*, *may*.

Depending on the degree of modality they express, they may be absolute, those who express the action as compulsory and necessary (such as in the Albanian: the verbs *must* + verb in to infinitive, *will* + verb in the participle, and *have / to be* + the participle form of the type *to wash*, and in English: *must*, *have*, *need*, *must*, *will*, *shall*, *can not*), or relatively those who express the action as possible or permissible (in Albanian: verb *can* + verb in to infinitive, and in English: *can*, *might*, *may*, *might*, *should*, *could*, *would*, *ought to*). Absolute modal verbs signal necessity, need, urgency and studies have shown that they are characteristic of the male language. Whereas, relative modal verbs express indecision and reluctance. Examples:

"I am optimistic that Albania will be able to get the status of candidate this autumn. It is clear that integration into the European Union is a process that forces us and we must all work hard to deserve membership". (Bujar Nishani)
"It is worthwhile and we should talk about Commissioner Hahn's letter not to allow stagnation in the country. I must say that not only in Commissioner Hahn's letter, but in all contacts the message is very clear: justice reform, vetting vote will decide the European fate of Albania". (E. Rama, "Koha Jone, 14, 5, 2017).

Certainly, there are other tools to characterize political discourses, but this allows us to work on this article, which we will expand in the future.

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